

Moab, UT - October 17 - 23, 2015

This Moab chapter actually began at site 65 of the Slickrock Campground on the evening of October 7, 2013 when Greg, Shaun and Steve made a pact to return after Greg had to leave after one day of “wheeling”. After two long years of communication and planning, another wonderful trip to the state of Utah was in order. It would be a crime if the irony of the trip wasn’t addressed...two of the three guys who initially planned this trip didn’t have their Jeeps in Moab. Steve encountered some issues during the summer which limited his time on the trip and Shaun had hand surgery 3 weeks before the trip that prevented him from driving. Wait, what about the third guy...Greg? Well, he actually completed the trip in its entirety.

On the calendar, the main trail days were scheduled from 19-23 October but not everyone arrived on the same days. Therefore, some folks got some extra days on the trails before the entire group arrived for Monday morning. As I understand “Cliffhanger” is a neat trail that challenges your nerves, “Metal Masher” isn’t anything special to write home about and “Fins N’ Things” remains a nice trail without too many challenges. Sunday night, Ben called a quick meeting to order to discuss which trails the group wanted to run, meeting times, etc. but even with this planning, mother nature and the rain adjusted how the week would be played out. The one constant of the trip was using Slickrock Campground as the staging grounds for each morning.

Day 1 greeted everyone with the iconic views of “Moab Rim”. After everyone cleared the obstacles on the trail ascend, the relaxing drive along the middle part of the trail imparted the beauty Moab has to offer. Of course this beauty also included an isolated shower which caused a short rain delay. Once the rain passed, we would our way to the lookout and the sand hill. Many tried and most made the trek up the hill but the best in show goes to Greg as he smoked out the crowd and burnt about a gallon of oil on his way up the hill. Once the smoke cleared, we headed out and descended bringing the Colorado directly in view for some awesome camera shots. Day one was a success without any damage.

Day 2 brought on the iconic “Hells Revenge” trail and Greg made it a point to make it past the parking lot.....and he succeeded. The group progressed through the trail until the famed “Hells Gate” came into sight. Almost the entire group accepted this challenge, some were first timers but all conquered the trail which has sent its share of vehicles backwards. Next up was the “Escalator” obstacle where only a few

decided to play. As we progressed out, Tom provided the biggest show of the day as he attempted to get his rig “Copper” in and out of the slippery “Hell’s Hot Tub”. After several valiant efforts and a cranky winch line that got wrapped around his front axle, he smartly winched out (though I think he could have made it). The rest of the trail was uneventful, sight-seeing ensued and no damage occurred as we headed back to camp.

Day 3 was the first of two pot-luck days. A few within the group took the opportunity to hit “Rusty Nail”, “Golden Spike” and “Gold Bar Rim”. From looking at the photos, it appears they had a great time without encountering any major issues or damage. Another group took in the well-known Arches National Park. Although weather was in the area Ben, Zach, Seth and Barry drove the 9-mile 4x4 trail to see some of the more secluded arches of the park. As expected no damage was sustained along the way. That could have been different had Shaun drove his Grand Cherokee on the 4x4 trail. This was the expected end to the day but as we arrived back to camp, a surprise visitor was awaiting. Steve flew in to spend the next two and a half days with the group.

Day 4 was the second pot-luck day. Several members departed for their long drive back to Texas while the heavy rains couldn’t keep Greg and Tom off the trails. They took on “Rusty Nail”, “Golden Spike” and “Gold Bar Rim” in the weather. It was a long day for these two but they reported having an awesome time while maintaining the health of their rigs. Although there was rain in Moab, that didn’t stop another group from having a little fun in the La Sal Mountains. Three vehicles make the journey upwards in elevation nearing 10K feet to play in a little snow. As the snow began to fall harder, the decision was made to start heading

down the mountain for the camp. An early day led to ample time of hanging out near the RV’s enjoying the company of our friends.

Day 5 culminated with “Pritchett Canyon” and “Behind the Rocks” as Jack, Chris, Tom and Greg tested their rigs on some of the more demanding obstacles Moab has to offer. It took five days but Greg’s rig began to show some wear as the clutch started to go. Without a care though, Greg powered through and completed the trails. There are many lines to attempt on these obstacles and all the rigs were tested to the limitations. Some technical and aggressive driving was on display but yet again...no damage was sustained. You’d think the day was over after this but more entertainment was in store. Watching Tom drive his Californian off-road only rig 15 miles back to town wearing his goggles was just as fun as the trails. He’d tell you he

was nervous as hell driving back but the smile on his face as we got back to camp said it all.

Although I didn't have my Jeep, I still had a great time with awesome people and here's another reason why. I was unfortunate to have to wear a splint on my arm during the trip but Dave aptly named it "Lamb Chop" shortly after my arrival. Even though I didn't know the character, I embraced it by the end of the week and had fun with it. I'd like to give a big shout out to Connie & Steph for their handy work in creating my Lamb Chop. I'm looking forward to our move back to Texas in a couple years so many more of these memories can be made.

~ Shaun & Stephanie Abell

SAJE Members in attendance: Jack & Connie, Dave & Debi, Chris & Samantha, Shaun & Steph, Ben & Kim, Zach & Leona, Steve S, Seth & Marisa, Barry & Terri, Steve & Elissa, Gary & Susan S., Jay, Greg, and Tom (visiting with Greg).

