

Recovery Points

The Middle Atlantic Four Wheel Drive Association Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 4

October 2017

...because access to YOUR public land is too important to lose

President's Message

Larry Pope

MAFWDA President

I had four months to put something together. So here it is:

Defy the flaws of your country. As water partakes of the qualities, good or bad, of the seams through which it flows, a human being absorbs the climate of his or her birthplace. Some owe more to their country than others because a happier zenith lay above them. There is no nation, even of the most cultured, without some inborn defect which its neighbors will not at once strike upon, either for their caution or their comfort. To eradicate such national weaknesses in yourself, or at least to hide them, is a commendable skill. Thus you make yourself unique among your kind, for what is least expected is most esteemed. There are weaknesses also of race, of rank, of profession, and of age, which if gathered together in one individual and not curbed, yield an intolerable monster.

Baltasar Gracián (1601-1658) Spanish Philosopher

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Land Use

Preston Stevens

MAFWDA Director of Conservation/Land Use

I have great news to share. It is official, the State of Maryland purchased 2009 acres of land in Garrett County, near the small town of Kitzmiller, right near the Potomac River. The press release stated that there are 3 parcels of land. 2 of which will be for OHV recreation. Originally, it was to be about 3,000 acres. I honestly, at this point, do not know the story there. Still, 2009 acres. Is nice.

There are already a lot of trails on this property. This will be mixed use, much like to old Paragon. This is in a beautiful area and should offer quite a variety of trail types. It is also close to the Potomac State Forest. Mind you, the drive time is not that close. But, not bad, either.

The next Maryland OHV Alliance meeting is 16th. I am hoping that there will be more detailed information, then, as some of the BOD will be have met with the DNR on the 6th.

The St. John's Rock OHV area is open, now. Right now, there is only camping and the Rock Crawl for us. But, if you were to be able to combine that with Potomac and/or Kitzmiller, then it just may be worth your while, if you like rock crawling

If you want to get a partial ideal of what the Kitzmiller property may be like, Google Wolf's Den. There is some video out there of a part of the area.

A few weeks ago, I once again took part in the Maryland review of the Recreational Trails Program grant requests. There is actually money left over. Many requests were simply horrible, unrelated to rec. trails, incomplete or simply bogus. There actually was one for an ATV park, but it is a for profit organization. They cannot receive RTP funds. The Alliance tried to get one together, but it just was not all there, yet. But, it is extremely promising for the near future. I do not know if funds could be secured this late in the game for Kitzmiller. But, the money can get carried over.

The Potomac State Forest Annual Trail Ride and Campout is set for July 5th (Thursday) through July 13th AM. Of course, the trailride and volunteer portion will be the 6th thru the 8th. This year, it looks like we

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■ Land Use

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will have some of the young folks from our Armed Forces there to help with the trail work and do some wheeling. Plus, I would truly think that the weather will be much better then, as well. This year was way not normal.

Again, this is truly a great family trip and so many things to do, in addition to the fun wheeling.

More details will be forth coming. It sure would be great if you could come up and enjoy this unique privilege.

Everyone have a great fall season.

Preston Stevens, Director of Conservation and Land Use

New State Park Slated for Western Maryland

September 20, 2017

*Ecologically-Important Area Conserved and Preserved;
Public Access and Recreation Expanded*



The Board of Public Works today unanimously approved the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) acquisition of 2,009 acres in Western Maryland for the development of a new state park. This acquisition in Garrett County consists of three parcels near Kitzmiller, with two of the parcels being adjacent to [Potomac State Forest](#).

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve a very large tract of ecologically-important land that will also provide true back-country recreation for residents and visitors,” Natural Resources Secretary Mark Belton said. “We look forward to providing expanded public access and opportunity to this beautiful, rugged and unique landscape located along the Potomac River in Western Maryland.”

This county-approved purchase provides for the permanent conservation of a variety of important natural resources, including a riparian forest along the North Branch of the Potomac River, three brook trout

streams, approximately 1,700 acres of mixed forest, an area of Wetlands of Special State Concern and extensive acreage of important forest interior bird habitat.

The newly acquired property will provide recreational opportunities for biking, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting as well as angler access to 3 miles of the North Branch. In addition to preserving these resources, two of the properties include several miles of established off-road vehicle trails that will present an opportunity for this recreational pursuit.

Development of a strategic management plan for the North Hills property that will include recreational access and trail development, will be initiated in 2018, and will include opportunities for public comment and involvement. The area, which includes Wolfden Run, will be managed by the [Maryland Park Service](#).

The [Program Open Space](#) acquisition was leveraged by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is administered by the National Park Service. The department partnered with The Conservation Fund to complete the acquisition.

Membership Dues Dec. 31

Annual memberships in Middle Atlantic Four Wheel Drive Association expire each year on December 31. Your membership in MAFWDA is concurrent with United Four Wheel Drive Associations so that membership also in UFWDA also expires on December 31. Renewals, in order to maintain continuous membership, are thus due on December 31 as well.

For some reason, this set of dates seems to create a fair amount of confusion within our membership. Perhaps its because individual clubs vary in their membership dates or because the push for membership renewals within the clubs starts after the first of the year.

As designed, club memberships are renewed and dues paid, the designated person within the club for memberships forwards the information on new and renewing memberships to MAFWDA who then packages the information and sends UFWDA dues on to them for their use through the year. UFWDA issues membership cards and stickers and returns them to MAFWDA for distribution.

In 2017, changes at UFWDA contributed to us never getting our membership cards back or stickers from them. For 2018, we are prepared to issue the membership cards directly from MAFWDA if that recurs.

For 2018, club member dues will remain at \$20 with \$15 being passed through to UFWDA. Individual member dues will remain at \$25.

MAFWDA Recommended Businesses

The MAFWDA membership recommends these local businesses for your four wheel driving accessories and services. If you own a business or know of a business that would like to become a Business Partner contact Larry Pope MAFWDA President Director (President@mafwda.org).

Adrenaline Off Road LLC



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www.mountzionoffroad.com

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Steinjäger Inc.

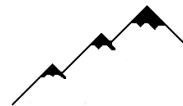


Steinjäger was founded in 2013 by principals of Midwest Control Products Corp to better serve the motorsport market with application-specific products.

www.steinjager.com

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Westminster, MD 21157
410-848-29426

News Items Wanted

The MAFWDA "Recovery Points" newsletter is always looking for interesting articles and news items for publication. If you or your club has something that you would like to share with other members of the four-wheel drive community, please shoot an email to Mike V (MAFWDA newsletter editor) at Newsletter@mafwda.org and he will ensure your contribution is included in the next published edition.

"Recovery Points" is published quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, and Oct).

Do we have your email?

As a member of MAWDA, you should be receiving periodic communications from your fellow MAFWDA Board Members. If you haven't been receiving these messages, we probably do not have your current email address. Shoot Mike V your email address at Secretary@mafwda.org and he will ensure you are added to the MAFWDA email list.

Also all current MAFWDA members are encouraged to post items of interest for fellow four wheelers on this public email list. Simply send email message to mafwda_news@mafwda.org.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR MAFWDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

Your MAFWDA Board of Directors is composed of volunteer members who contribute their free time to keep the organization going. Currently we have the following folks on the BOD:

President – Larry Pope
President@mafwd.org

Vice President – Bob Weaver
VicePresident@mafwd.org

Treasurer – Keith Holman
Treasurer@mafwd.org

Secretary – Mike Vincenty
Secretary@mafwd.org

Land Use Director – Preston Stevens (PA Jeeps)
LandUse@mafwd.org

Director of Events and Public Relations – Vacant
PublicRelations@mafwd.org

Director of Marketing – Vacant
Marketing@mafwd.org

Do you have free time and are willing to help MAFWDA? If so contact one of the Board members at the email addresses above. Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PA JEEPS 4TH - HARLEY TOY RIDE

November 4 2017
Lancaster, PA
Email: events@pajeeps.org
Web site: www.pajeeps.org

WHEELIN' FOR HOPE

April 2018
Oak Ridge Estate, Nelson County, VA
Email: wheel4hope@gmail.com
Web site: <http://www.wheelin4hope.com/>

BIG DOGS – FREEZE OUT

January 27-28 2018
Gore, VA
Email: johnhuntspilot@yahoo.com
Web site: <http://www.bigdogsoffroad.com/>

BUDDS CREEK OFFROAD 4x4 EXPO 2018

June 15-18 2018
Mechanicsville, MD
Email: <http://www.bantamjeepfestival.com/contact-us/>
Web site: <http://www.bantamjeepfestival.com/>

BANTAM JEEP FESTIVAL

June 8-10 2018
Butler, PA
Email: <http://www.bantamjeepfestival.com/contact-us/>

Web site:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1375563175866634/>

OCEAN CITY JEEP WEEK

August 23-26 2018
Ocean, MD
Email: <http://www.oceancityjeepweek.com/contact/>
Web site: <http://www.oceancityjeepweek.com/>

Any additions? Contact Mike Vincenty to get them added to the MAFWDA calendar (Newsletter@mafwd.org). ❖

Quote

“Demonstrate to the world, there is 'No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy' than a U.S. Marine.” **[James Mattis]**

“Fast is fine, but accuracy is everything.” **[Wyatt Earp]**

“It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived.” **[George S. Patton]**

“It suddenly struck me that that tiny pea, pretty and blue, was the Earth. I put up my thumb and shut one eye, and my thumb blotted out the planet Earth. I didn't feel like a giant. I felt very, very small.” **[Neil Armstrong]**

Governor Larry Hogan Announces Maryland Outdoor Recreational Economic Commission

Reprint:
<http://governor.maryland.gov/2017/10/14/governor-larry-hogan-announces-maryland-outdoor-recreational-economic-commission/>

Posted: October 14, 2017

Will Strengthen the Outdoor Recreation Industry, Boost Rural Maryland Economy

ANNAPOLIS, MD – Governor Larry Hogan today announced Executive Order 01.01.2017.24 establishing the Maryland Outdoor Recreational Economic Commission (MORE). This commission will be responsible for developing strategies and making recommendations to the governor to strengthen the state's outdoor recreation industry and help ensure increased investment in our state's outdoor recreation resources.

“Maryland is abundant with natural, cultural, historical,
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■ MD Outdoor Recreational Economic Commission

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and recreational resources that contribute significantly to our economy and quality of life," said Governor Hogan. "This commission will help ensure that our state's natural heritage is strengthened, bringing new businesses, increased tourism, and ultimately preserving our resources for future generations."

The outdoor recreation economy in Maryland already generates 109,000 direct jobs, \$14 billion in consumer spending, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. Investment in outdoor recreation and nature and heritage tourism economies support many outdoor activities in Maryland, including hiking, biking, horse-back riding, paddling, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, wildlife-viewing, and visiting historic sites.

As part of their work, the commission will develop innovative strategies to market Maryland's unique outdoor and heritage recreation brand, as well as recommend initiatives to grow and attract new companies. Additionally, the commission will explore ways to retain and support Maryland's existing outdoor recreation businesses.

The commission will be co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources Mark Belton and the Secretary of the Department of Commerce Mike Gill and comprised of seventeen members appointed by the co-chairs with the approval of the governor. Members will include representatives of companies within Maryland's outdoor recreation manufacturing and retail industry; representatives of companies representing small business outdoor or heritage recreation service providers; nonprofit organizations; representatives of gateway cities, towns, or communities; and legislative members.

The commission will provide a final report to the governor by December 1, 2019.

Maryland OHV Alliance official: 'I never thought this would happen'

Reprint: http://www.times-news.com/news/local_news/maryland-ohv-alliance-official-i-never-thought-this-would-happen/article_ab65eb0-6e47-11e7-b294-176687e6db71.html

Jul 21, 2017

FINZEL — It took six years, but, on Friday on the Savage River State Forest, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources kept a promise to off-road

vehicle users by dedicating a new trail.

The St. John's Rock ORV Trail offers 12 miles of riding for a variety of rough-country vehicles. The new trail and campground lie just south of Interstate 68 and are reached by taking the Finzel exit.



Dedicated 7/21/2017

The Rock Crawl is expected to be a popular aspect of the St. John's Rock ORV Trail that was dedicated on Friday, July 21, 2017, on Savage River State Forest in Garrett County. (Photo by CTN - Mike Sawyers)

In 2011, the telephones of DNR officials and elected representatives started ringing when the agency closed two popular ORV trails because of environmental damage. One was on the Green Ridge State Forest in Allegany County and the other on the Savage River State Forest.

"When those were closed, then every trail became an ORV trail, said Mark Belton, DNR secretary, meaning users started riding trails meant for foot traffic.

"I never thought this would happen," said Ken Kyler of the Maryland (off-highway vehicle) Alliance. There were times when I regretted even getting involved, but everybody made it work."



Ken Kyler

Ken Kyler, of the Maryland OHV Alliance, says he wondered if he would see the day the Maryland Department of Natural Resources opened a trail on

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■ Maryland OHV Alliance

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public land for users. Friday, July 21, 2017, is that day.

Kyler, an avid ORV user, said he is pleased he can drive from his home in Frederick County to the Garrett County trail instead of having to travel to reach trails in other states.

Kyler said the ORV community, by way of industry grants, provided \$30,000 to the project.

BYCO Enterprises of Grantsville constructed the \$1.35 million trail.

Company owner Brian Schroyer said he isn't an ORV user, but will come to the trail just to watch others ride on his creation, which he called a combination of engineering and creativity.



Brian Schroyer 7-21-17

Brian Schroyer's company -- BYCO Enterprises, Grantsville -- constructed the \$1.35 million St. John's Rock ORV Trail on the Savage River State Forest. (Photo by CTN - Mike Sawyers on Friday, July 21, 2017)

"We started making the trail on Oct. 31 and finished on Wednesday," Schroyer said.

Use of the trail will be strictly regulated. Belton said that is necessary to ensure a good experience for the riders.

Reservations must be made online by way of the DNR's website.



St. John's Rock ORV Trail ribbon cutting 7-21-17

Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources Mark Belton -- surrounded by agency and political officials, as well as trail users -- holds ceremonial oversized scissors to cut a ribbon and open the St. John's Rock ORV Trail on Friday, July 21, 2017, on the Savage River State Forest. (Photo by CTN - Mike Sawyers)

Sen. George C. Edwards (R-Garrett) on Friday said the trail will bring people to the eastern part of the county, and local businesses can figure out how to capitalize on that.

Garrett County Commissioner Paul Edwards said the trail diversifies the county's tourism portfolio and is important because it provides recreation in a location away from Deep Creek Lake.

Maxwell Anthony of Randallstown was one of the first to reserve a day for riding his off-road vehicle on the St. John's Rock ORV Trail -- dedicated on Friday, July 21, 2017 -- that will open to the public on Saturday. (Photo by CTN - Mike Sawyers)

The new trail is the first of its kind in the state.

Belton said DNR plans to model the teamwork -- of regulators and users that created the trail -- for the construction of trails in other parts of Maryland.

Jeeps and Their Celebrity Owners

Historical and Fictional Figures Who Love to Jeep

Reprint:

<https://www.4wd.com/article/content.jsp?childEventId=famous-jeeps>

The Jeep's heritage is inextricably linked with its role as a military vehicle and when we think of famous Jeeps most of them have military ties. Movies and TV have been ideal ambassadors, bringing Jeeps into pop culture via big and small screens. Oscar winning war films featuring Jeeps include *From Here to Eternity*, *Patton*, *The Deer Hunter* and *Platoon*. Jeeps played pivotal roles on popular TV shows like *Hogan's Heroes*, *M*A*S*H*, *Mork & Mindy* and *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

Famous people associated with Jeeps range from politicians to writers to international football stars. Of course, there are always going to be a number of celebrities including actors and musicians, who opt for Super Swampers, roll bars and tooling around in Jeeps. Here are a few of the iconic characters who have linked themselves with the iconic rigs in the public's eye.

Ronald Reagan's Jeep

Before he became the 40th president of the United

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■ Celebrity Jeep Owners

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States, Ronald Reagan was no stranger to Jeeps. His B film career was interrupted in 1942 by World War II, and driving Jeeps was part of his active duty in the Army Reserve as an officer and eventually a captain.

When he was governor of California, Reagan purchased a ranch as a retreat in 1974. At his 688-acre Rancho del Cielo northwest of Santa Barbara, Reagan could be seen horseback riding (a throwback to his days in the movies) and running trails in his sky blue 1983 CJ-8 Scrambler Renegade or his brick red 1962 CJ-6. The Scrambler was a gift from his wife Nancy and sported a personalized license plate with his nickname GIPPER and bunk boards that read Rancho del Cielo.



Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and secret service members were among the passengers who toured the ranch in the Scrambler. When it came to a more utilitarian vehicle for odd jobs like hauling rocks and chopped wood and brush, Reagan's red CJ-6 would be pressed into service. After Ronald was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the Reagan's visits to the ranch tapered off and both of the Jeeps were donated in 1995. The ranch was eventually sold to the Young America's Foundation.

Today, Jeep fans can visit the Reagan Ranch Center on State Street in Santa Barbara to get an in person view of the Jeep Scrambler. Unfortunately, the CJ-6 is not on public display and is living out its days in a barn on the remote ranch.

J.D. Salinger's Jeep



J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye* was a popular success that catapulted the acclaimed writer into the public eye. Trouble was, he didn't appreciate folks making a fuss over him and following *Catcher's* publication, Salinger withdrew into reclusiveness. His first connection to Jeeps began a decade earlier when he was drafted into the army to fight in World War II. There are stories about him hauling around a portable typewriter in the back of his Jeep so he could work on his stories. Many of the stories he submitted to *The New Yorker* drew upon his wartime experiences and eventually Salinger wound up interrogating POWs as part of the counter-intelligence division.

Following the war and writing fame, Salinger retreated to Cornish, New Hampshire. Aside from Greta Garbo, he became one of the world's most sought after recluses and those who caught a glimpse of him often spotted him driving in his old Jeep. The Jeep had curtains in the side windows and he reportedly drove it fast like he was back on the battlefield dodging bullets.

In the later years of his life, photographs of the elderly Salinger circulated showing him in Cornish with a beige Toyota Land Cruiser. Evidently, his preference for 4x4s that began during his service in the war stuck with him when he returned to civilian life.

David Beckham's Jeep

International soccer superstar David Beckham made a splash in 2007 when he left Madrid to move to the United States and play for the LA Galaxy. A year later he was spotted in Beverly Hills driving a Jeep Wrangler. The black Unlimited Jeep sported a tube bumper and Pro Comp wheels. The Jeep community's response was a big thumbs up. Enthusiasts found it refreshing that the mega-rich athlete and owner of a Lamborghini Gallardo, a Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe and a Ferrari 360 Spider, among other cars, chose to pick his son up in a Jeep.

Silver Screen Wheeling

Jeeps appear in movies of all genres ranging from *Goldfinger* to *Clueless* to *The Great Bikini Off-Road Adventure*. Here are some of the vehicle's more notable turns on the silver screen.

Jeeps populate the landscape of countless World War II movies. When Frank Sinatra's character Private Angelo Maggio dies in the 1953 Academy Award-Winning film *From Here to Eternity*, his body is loaded into a Willys MB Jeep. A Willys MB also makes an appearance in the World War II movie *Patton*. The 1986 movie *Platoon* depicts the horrors of the Vietnam War and shows a CJ3B Jeep and Jeeps appear in *Forrest Gump* when young Forrest is chased by bullies in a Jeep and when he's stationed in Vietnam during the war.

In the 1985 movie *Back to the Future*, Marty McFly, played by the irascible Michael J. Fox, skateboards to get to high school. To arrive faster, he grabs onto the back of

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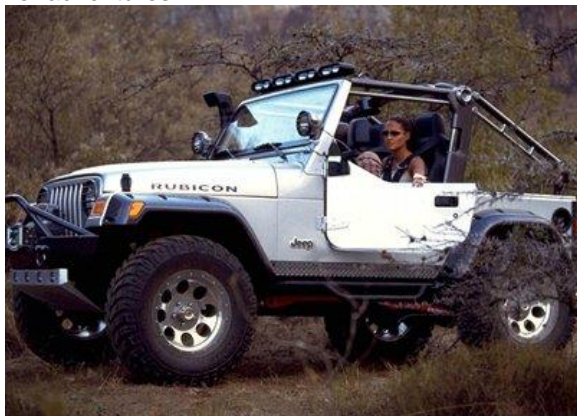
■ Celebrity Jeep Owners

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a light blue Jeep CJ-7 and hitches a ride. In *Back to the Future: Part II*, Marty time travels to 2015 in a scene that recalls him grabbing onto the CJ-7. This time, a camo Jeep Wrangler YJ zooms down Main Street and while airborne on a hoverboard, he hitches a ride. The 2015 Jeep was actually a modified, late '80s Wrangler YJ. The irony is that today in 2015 the Wrangler YJ is no longer being produced.

1993 blockbuster *Jurassic Park* featured a dinosaur theme park that required an adept 4x4 to take on the jungle terrain. Enter the Wrangler YJ, capable of outrunning velociraptors and other paleo pests.

The 2003 sequel to the movie *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* found Angelina Jolie ditching her Land Rover Defender in favor of a Wrangler Rubicon Jeep. Rubicon responded by producing a limited run Tomb Raider edition to support the sequel. Matching the Jeep in the movie, it came in bright silver and instantly became a collector's item. The Rubicon in the sequel sported Mickey Thompson 35-inch tires and a Warn winch and had no trouble spirting Lara Croft across extreme terrain on her adventures.



Blazing Trails on the Small Screen

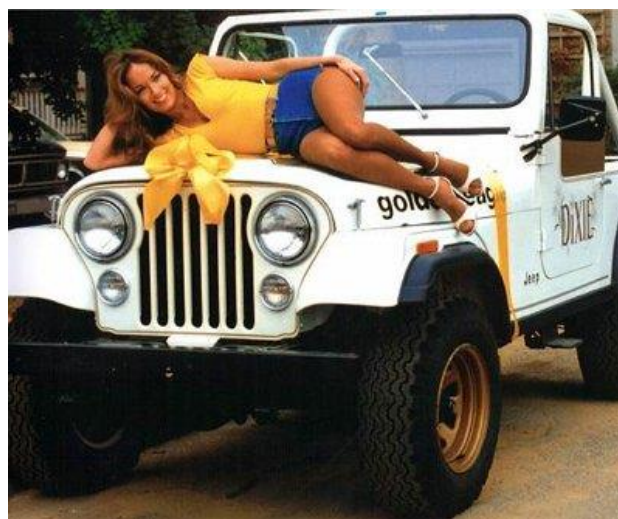
The 1970s-80s were the heyday of Jeeps on television when they went well beyond their familiar wartime settings on shows like *Gomer Pyle*, *U.S.M.C.*, *Hogan's Heroes*, *M*A*S*H* and the HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*. Whether they're World War II Willys MBs, M38s or CJ2A Willys Jeeps, they go a long way toward setting the scene for audiences.

*M*A*S*H* was a TV show developed from the 1970 feature film that ran on CBS from 1972-1983. The critically-acclaimed program was a period piece chronicling the drama and comedy of a Korean War MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit. Parts of it were shot at Malibu Creek State Park and Jeeps used included Ford GPWs, Willys MBs, 1953 military M38s and civil CJ2A Willys. Currently, at the Malibu filming location a burned, rusty M38 and Dodge ambulance commemorate the TV program.

The 1970s-'80s *Happy Days* spinoff *Mork & Mindy* was

set in Boulder, Colorado where Jeeps have always been popular thanks to topography and altitude. The opening credits showed alien Mork, played by Robin Williams, comically propped upside down in the passenger seat of Mindy's blue CJ-5. The open air Jeep sported a roll bar and proved so popular that a 1/24 scale model kit of it was sold (without the Mork & Mindy figures included).

The final stop on our tour of TV Jeeps brings us to Hazzard County where Bo and Luke Duke and their female cousin Daisy resided. Originally inspired by the movie *Moonrunners*, *The Dukes of Hazzard* ran on CBS from 1979-85 and featured fun car chases, comedic adventures and a Jeep nicknamed Dixie. The CJ-7 belonged to Daisy Duke, although a sizeable number of viewers would be hard pressed to describe many of its features. Often, their focus was on Daisy's racy, revealing outfits and the Jeep was an afterthought at best.



For those interested, it was a 1980 CJ-7 that shifted paint jobs and roll-bars during the show's run. As a side note, the producers cashed in on actress Catherine Bach's appeal by having her pose for a Daisy Duke poster. It was a huge success and among the poster's biggest fans was Jeep appreciator Nancy Reagan. The 2005 movie starred Jessica Simpson and reprised the role of the Jeep Dixie, but this time she was a white Wrangler Rubicon TJ.

Member Clubs



PA Jeeps

Home of the PA Jeep show
York Pennsylvania area

PA Jeeps, Inc
P.O. Box 212
Shrewsbury, Pa 17361-0212 717-309-0513
www.pajeeps.org

Eagle Valley Off Roaders



Lock Haven, PA

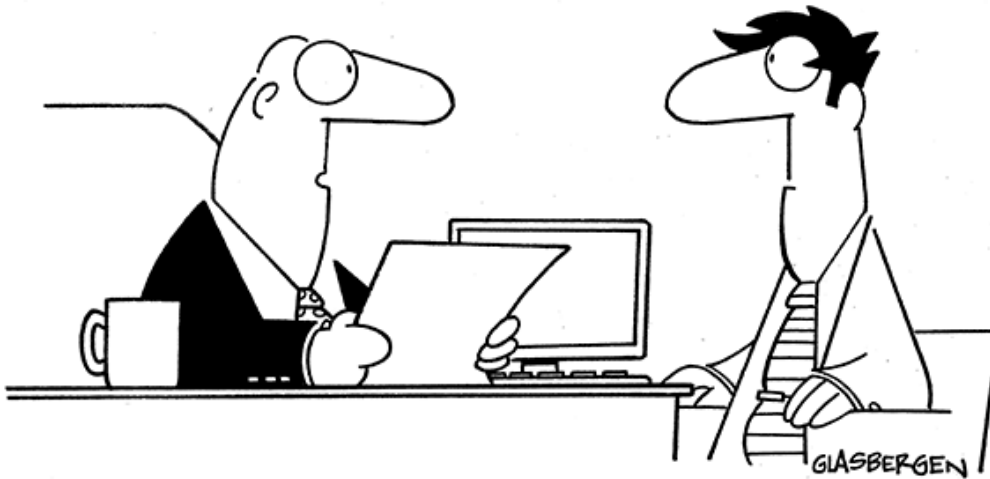
Eagle Valley Off Roaders is a family based non-profit four wheel drive club open to all makes and models of 4x4's.

EVOR is committed to promoting stronger family bonds and raising children to both enjoy and respect their environment by maintaining existing public trails and expanding trails on private lands that are open to our use. EVOR participates in trail clean ups and cuttings to help ensure that future generations can enjoy our sport.

www.eaglevalleyoffroaders.com
jim@eaglevalleyoffroaders.com

Are you missing something? Where is your club? If you would like your club to be represented here, contact Mike Vincenty at secretary@mafwda.org for information on how your club can join and contribute to MAFWDA.

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glasbergen.com



"You can go far in this company. I go to Hell and back every day."

EPA Moves to Repeal Obama Water Rule

Timothy Cama - 06/27/17

Reprint: <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/339691-epa-seeks-to-repeal-obama-water-rule>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally proposed Tuesday to repeal the Obama administration's controversial regulation that extended the reach of the federal government over small waterways.

Under the proposal from the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, federal officials would go back to enforcing a guidance document from 2008 when deciding whether a waterway is subject to federal oversight for pollution control purposes.

It's the first formal step by the EPA to fulfilling President Trump's campaign promise to repeal the 2015 "waters of the United States" regulation, which Republicans and numerous industry groups have long argued would have subject farmers, developers and others to costly and time-intensive federal permitting for everyday activities like moving soil.

The Trump administration plans to separately write a new regulation to replace the water rule with a more industry-friendly definition of federal power over waterways.

"We are taking significant action to return power to the states and provide regulatory certainty to our nation's farmers and businesses," EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a statement.

"This is the first step in the two-step process to redefine 'waters of the U.S.' and we are committed to moving through this re-evaluation to quickly provide regulatory certainty, in a way that is thoughtful, transparent and collaborative with other agencies and the public."

Trump had signed an executive order in February formally asking Pruitt to consider repealing the rule and replacing it with a more limited one.

The Obama rule asserted federal power over ponds, headwaters, wetlands and other water bodies that feed into larger water areas, but whose Clean Water Act jurisdiction was unclear because of conflicting Supreme Court cases.

The Obama administration said that the drinking water supplies for 117 million Americans rely on protection by the rule, which it had dubbed the Clean Water Rule. Wildlife, recreation and navigation activities also depend on those waterways, the previous administration argued.

But it was controversial from the start, with accusations that it would give the federal government control over

large swaths of the country, like dry land and puddles. Numerous states and industries sued to stop it, and a federal court in Cincinnati blocked the government from enforcing it while the litigation proceeded.

Environmentalists quickly slammed the Trump administration's action as a direct attack on water protection.

"It is appalling, though not surprising, that the Trump administration is rolling back these critical protections in order to help out corporate interests," League of Conservation Voters President Gene Karpinski said in a statement.

"The Clean Water Rule is vital for protecting the small streams and wetlands that our families, communities, and businesses depend on, and we know this is the first step in the administration's effort to gut the Clean Water Act itself," he said. "But just like the attacks on efforts to tackle climate change and the proposed rollback of our national monuments, and so much more, the Trump administration will face fierce opposition."

"This proposal strikes directly at public health," said Rhea Suh, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "It would strip out needed protections for the streams that feed drinking water sources for one in every three Americans. Clean water is too important for that. We'll stand up to this reckless attack on our waters and health."

Supporters of the president applauded the action.

"The final WOTUS rule issued by the last administration was unworkable, a fact acknowledged by courts around the country, and amounted to a massive grab of regulatory authority by an EPA that was overreaching," said Bill Kovacs, vice president for environment and regulatory policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"We look forward to working with Administrator Pruitt and his team to craft a rule that protects public health and the environment, while giving clarity and certainty to our nation's farmers and job creators," he said.

"Today marks the beginning of restoring private property rights while protecting our environment," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.). "Out of state D.C. bureaucrats shouldn't impose regulations that hurt Montana farmers, ranchers and landowners."

The EPA will publish the proposal in the Federal Register within days, at which point the agency will start accepting comments from the public. After considering the comments and making any necessary changes, the agency can make the repeal final.

Finalizing the repeal would then open the door to likely lawsuits from environmental groups, Democratic states and others.

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