

Watagan Trip Reccie

Participants Chris - Leader / Pathfinder
John - Trip Reporter / Prado
Simon- TEC / Patrol

Sunday 6th May 2007

This was my first real trip as a club member and what an eye opener for me.

Meeting point was Twin Servos at Wyong at 8.30 we proceeded to The Forest via Sparks Lane – from here on I was lost and put all my trust and faith in the capable hands of Chris and Simon.

Here we go! My first obstacle looked to me like photo's of the Shotgun at Cape York – Pretty Daunting!!

It was decided to bypass this and cross the track above it, still daunting as it was deep ruts going uphill and we were crossing diagonally – once across I realized it was quite easy.

Obstacle number 2, was three mud crossings – the first two, easy, the third caught Chris by surprise at the exit, a quick reverse and another attempt and he was through. I made it through fairly easily under the guidance of Chris & Simon. Simon's Patrol made it look easy.

The next Mud Hole to negotiate wasn't too bad but the exit was a bit of a challenge we all made it up the other side successfully.

After checking maps and GPS – Chris led us up to a ridge which was deeply rutted and very muddy. Chris was the first to enter this, coming to grief at the side of the track, needing to take out the Snatch Strap for the 1st time that day. Chris then took a line on the opposite side of the track which saw him crabbing all the way through. My turn – Chris advised I should take the wheel ruts of other vehicles – (it looked too Deep to me but) – I took the advise and just too easy for me. Simon well he just rode through full of confidence.

We then encountered some Dirt Bikes on our journey who advised Chris 4 Cars were stuck in a Bog Hole two kilometres ahead. We found them still with a Hilux that had been stuck for over an hour, after following the line of a Suzuki. Chris was designated as rescuer and proceeded to join 2 snatch straps together (along with an impromptu lesson on snatch safety to the needy). Chris extracted the hilux safely and then we allowed the Hilux to show us the deepest section of the crossing, that's right his friends had to pull him through the rest of the way.

Chris was the 1st of us to attempt and after pre-attaching his snatch strap as a precaution ploughed through successfully. Simon and I followed Chris' example of snatch strap set-up and followed through. Thankfully the straps only got wet, not used.

With heart rates settled we proceeded ever upward for a well-earned lunch break, where Simon chatted to a work colleague via phone at the distant Vales Point Power Station.

With full bellies we made our way back down and drove to Muirs Lookout, along a road built so Commodores and Lancers can raise dust. While Chris and I waited at the lookout Simon went to explore a side track, and you guessed correctly we were summoned to join him. I followed Chris to the head of the track and as he disappeared over the edge I thought WHY? But with a few words of encouragement and direction from Simon at about mid descent on his hand-held radio I made it successfully only to be told we had to go back up- GREAT!

Upon reaching the top it was off to Rodgers Rocks which even though my confidence was brim-full I declined the invitation on behalf of the Prado to climb. So became a spectator as Chris had 2 attempts before resigning to not damage the Pathy. Simon was keen and after crawling hands and knees up drove the Patrol down, turned around and went back up – Very Impressed!

Simon had lost half of his passengers so while he went in search of them Chris and I discussed the day's events while we waited. Passengers found, and it was time to air-up and head for home

I would like to thank Chris and Simon for their guidance throughout the day, it was totally awesome and inspiring. I did things I thought not capable without causing damage. My confidence level is right up high now and maybe next time I might try Rodgers Rock (might?)

WATAGAN – What Again !!! Yeh !!!!

P.S.Sorry there is no track names but I was lost
Thank heavens for guides!