

Belanglo State Forest Reccie – 17/5/9

Attendee's

Craig & Christine Wallace & family (Trip Leaders)

Jack & Pam Simpson

Michael Lynch

Sebastian Fide

Ben, Gis, Connor, Zoe

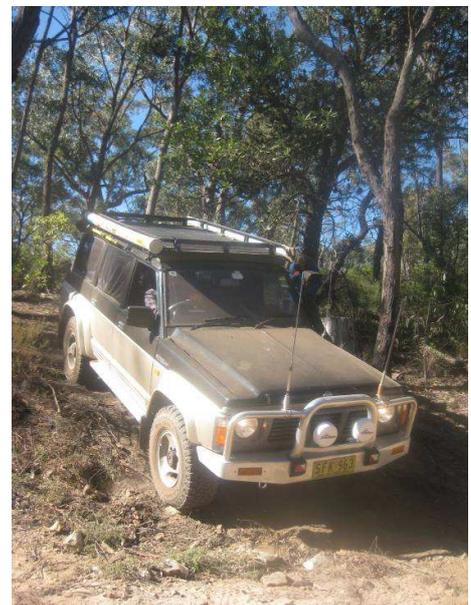
Met at Pheasants Nest at 8am for an early start (Still hopeful for a trip that can meet at Baulkham Hills at 9am so I get a sleep in, but there are none listed). Drove into the Belanglo State Forest to explore some tracks Craig had mapped out on his GPS. Off to a good start the first track we headed down led to a locked gate. We quickly turned around and headed off again to continue the exploration. After a few stops to check the stage of some log bridges that we encountered we were off again heading down tracks that lead us further into the Belanglo.



It wasn't long before we encountered our first real challenge of the day, a log too big to cut or drag out of the way was well and truly blocking our path, so we stopped and discussed our options. There was a rough path previous vehicles had taken around the obstruction with a choice of the high or low track. Each was quite challenging with the low route putting the vehicles on a steep side angle while manoeuvring through two trees, with the high route providing a lessor angle for the vehicles but a tighter turn as we negotiated around the trees.

We took our time to get around the obstacle to make sure there was no damage to vehicle or landscape; I managed to wedge my PVC tub against one of the trees but it survived and there was no damage to the tree. It was amazing how a simple obstacle turned a simple Grade 2 track into a potential Grade 4. Discussing options and walking the obstacle certainly made it much easier to negotiate the log and ensure nothing was damaged in the process.

We were off again down some tracks that saw a nice climb and decent down a rocky track with some nice steps and ruts that made the challenge enjoyable. At the bottom of the decent we encountered our third locked gate for the morning; once again it was a U-Turn and back up retracing our steps back to the last major turn-off.



We stopped for morning tea in a nice clearing that we noted would make a nice bush camp area for future reference. We stopped and chatted for a while discussing past and future trips. Michael was concerned he had a serious knock in one of the CV Joints on his Hilux, but it turned out the sole of his boot had come away from the base of the shoe and was knocking back and forth while he was driving – and walking. Some 100mile and hour tape soon fixed it, with Jack happy for a new shackle nomination to take to tomorrow nights meeting.



We packed up and decided to try a few more tracks and see if our luck was improving. Pam had jumped into the Pajero to get some practise in for next weekends assessment, putting the Mitsubishi's new Mickey Thompson's to the test. We explored a few more tracks but encountered a couple of more gates or tacks that turned out to be dead ends.

After a while we decided to try our luck on the other side of the highway so we headed off to the Meryla State Forrest for lunch. We hit the highway and didn't bother to air up – we sat on about 80k's taking it easy as we turned off and headed through Moss Vale and up into Meryla. Craig took us to the old quarry for lunch and a play which was great.



The weather was great and we stopped and had a nice picnic lunch and relaxed. The kids were glad to get out of the car and headed up the quarry to run and play – which was good for the parents watching their kid's burn off as much energy as possible, increases the potential for a quiet trip home later in the day.

A few of us wondered around looking at some of the tracks up the quarry, finally Jack got a bit restless after being cabin assistant to Pam for most of the morning and jumping in to try out the new Mickey Thompson's.

He did well climbing the more difficult of the two tracks first go, then sat at the top of the hill surveying all that he had conquered.

Not to be out done, all the men were soon in there vehicles and heading up and down the different tracks, all choosing good lines and successfully reaching the top. It was a nice play after lunch that we all enjoyed. We decided to finish the day by heading down to the Morton National Park and to check out the lookout at Fitzroy Falls so once again we headed off for the last part of the day.



Heading down into the National Park we explored a track with a potential water crossing. As taught, we all got out and walked the crossing, test water depth and discussing possible wheel placements. It was quite a technical crossing with a sharp 3ft drop to the right if you miss the wheel placement, and there was no room to snatch out if anyone got stuck. It was after 3pm on a Sunday afternoon so we decided that we didn't have to do it and took to longer track around to the lookout – rather safe than sorry.



We made the lookout in good time as the last part of our journey. We asked some other visitors to take our group photo for the trip – unfortunately it was a bit bright in the background so it didn't turn out too well. The kid's one did with them deciding to take theirs in the hollow of an old gum tree near the lookout.

We aired up and were soon heading home, listening to Craig gloat how for once he would be the first one home from a trip and how he would be enjoying a nice hot shower while we were still driving – trip leader prerogative I guess (I just turned my radio off). It was a great day with lots of fun, challenging tacks so thanks to Craig for organising the day and to everyone who attended – we had a blast.

