

Arch Canyon Trail Maintenance + Cat Scratch

March 14, 2026 - by Mary Turpin



Parked at the Arch Canyon exit, on

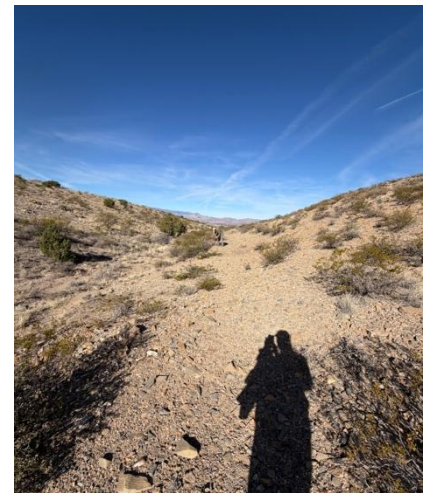


Five NM4W rigs spent yet another incredible day in the desert!!! Mary Turpin (Nellie), Doug Elkins (WHTNUX), Mike Crosby (Punda; Janet Crosby, passenger), Doug Caddell (Grey), Rich Steele (Rift Rider).

Our day didn't look much like the calendar write up I had advertised. Recent behind-the-scenes activity for the Board around the Arch Canyon trail left me wanting to get a work crew on the exit of it to do some trail maintenance. So, I did what Trail Leaders typically aren't supposed to do, and I upended our day close to the last minute. Looking at those signed up for the run I knew I had some of our regular rock crawlers and I knew their commitment to NM4W and to Gordy's. I contacted my participants mid-week, asking if they would be okay changing the plans for our day, and of course, they all came through for me!

Recently, NM4Wer Bill Bonahoom realized that the on-the-ground exit to Arch Canyon that the buggy crew was using didn't match the legal tracks we have through BLM. For many years the

buggies were the only ones traveling Arch due to its Extreme rating. Last fall, my group installed the trail sign at the Arch Canyon exit, and we noticed there weren't clear tracks. We used the GPS data on the NM4W Avenza map and placed the sign the best we could. Being a trail I've never run, I wasn't sure what it all meant, so I passed word on to Frank Whiston. It took the Board some time to figure it out, but we now understand that somewhere along the way, the buggy crew had wandered off track and began using a different exit. In the moment on any given day, it may not feel like a big concern, but the Board wanted to reestablish the legal trail to keep us on the right side of BLM and our 20+ years of hard work at Gordy's.



Trail Maintenance needed - clearing & marking the legal trail.

A few weeks ago, NM4W President Jack Dickey and NM4W Program Chair Cathy Dickey went with Frank for an off-the-calendar workday down at Gordy's. A sign for Granite Canyon landed slightly off-track last fall and has been making the crawling crew nutty every time we've passed it this winter. After they got the Granite Canyon sign moved, they navigated over to the exit of Arch Canyon. They walked the legal trail, recording video and making notes on possible remedies. They then passed that information to me and I'm now coordinating the work we need to do.

Huge thanks also to Scott Mitchell and Jason Wilson for helping with this research. While Scott and Jason are not NM4W members, many of us chat with and run trails with them outside of NM4W events. You've likely run across them without knowing it - they are a powerhouse Trail Leader team at Chile Challenge and do great work on their CrawlUSA channel on YouTube. The higher the trail rating, the happier Scott and Jason are - "You've got a L9? Let's go!" They jumped in recently to help us run Arch Canyon from the bottom all the way up, making sure to monitor the legal track on our Avenza map. Much of Arch is a solid but fun rock crawling trail, with a waterfall midway through giving it the Extreme rating. Scott and Jason's rigs and driver skills were well prepared for that waterfall. They reported back their findings and added to our collective knowledge.

Midweek, prior to my run, I passed this information along to my participants. Without any hesitation, everyone jumped in to say they would be willing change our plans for a full day of play to a TBD kind of day, tackling trail maintenance on Arch and then seeing what else



We don't usually pack loppers for rock crawling!

we wanted to do. We packed chainsaws and loppers instead of just chairs and coolers.

We headed out the Byway, taking the Chupadero Mine Road trail south towards the exit for Arch Canyon. At the exit for Arch, we were thrilled to find Scott and Jason's fresh tracks on the ground! We walked the legal trail using the Avenza map and following those fresh tire tracks, planting small yellow flags and clearing a lot of overgrown brush. We worked our way down to the top of the waterfall, the top section of trail being most in need of maintenance. That took us a couple of hours, and we appreciated the coolness of the morning to work. Once we felt like we had



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A NM4W shout out to Scott & Jason for their help with Arch Canyon!



Episode 16 - Body Damage! How Much Trail Damage Are You Willin...

Check out their podcasts on YouTube, they're funny together.



accomplished necessary trail clearing and marking, we all took a turn to run Arch from the exit down to the waterfall, getting more tracks on that section of trail. Even without running the waterfall, Arch Canyon offers some technical rock crawling which is loads of fun! After a great morning's work, we took a break and relaxed for lunch at the Arch exit, before heading over to play on Cat Scratch.



We took a few minutes to nerd out at the waterfall. We could see the lines to make the climb!



The Crosby's, Doug C., and Rich taking a turn to run Arch down to the waterfall.

Cat Scratch is another trail NM4W seems to have overlooked in recent years and since our trail sign work last fall, I've been wanting to get tracks on it. Cat Scratch is rated a L6. There is nothing L5 on it, but also nothing L7, so the rating fits. The Cat Scratch sign says 33" tires minimum, but we all pondered updating that to a 35" tire minimum; all of us were on 37's or larger and were happy to have them. The trail is highly overgrown, and we shared the paint on our rigs as trail offerings along the way. Skid plates and sliders acquired new shiny spots and squishes.



There is one obstacle close to the beginning that requires a stiff 4' climb followed by a tight turn. I asked Rich to take the lead and sent him up it first in his monster TJ to help us find the line to take. Doug Elkins found what he thought might be bobcat poop at the top of the obstacle, so we christened the obstacle Bobcat. :-y)!!! We all made it up easily and continued on.



Mary



A girl's gotta have goals: Tear off enough of the factory fender flares to justify the mods I want, LOL.

A section of the trail approaching the crest of the hill was a boulder garden that felt like rock crawling on marbles. Since the trail isn't well beat in right now, our tires were moving rocks like crazy as we went through. Driver input from the steering wheel was more a general suggestion of where you hoped to go, versus where the tires ended up tracking.



Doug E.

Somewhere on the uphill climb I apparently stayed too far driver. Once at the top, I found the driver front turn signal light completely dislodged and happily swinging along above the tire. The red duct tape holding the driver rear fender flare on since a Lower Amado run this winter has been joined by bright yellow duct tape at the front. I'm not a fan of the huge fenders on the newer Jeeps and have had a twisted goal of sustaining enough trail damage to the existing ones to justify getting the GenRight ones I actually want. Two down, two to go. LOL!



Doug Caddell went into the day with a known issue on his passenger-side drop-down step. He duct-taped it closed as a temporary fix, and since it wasn't mechanical we were good to go. By the time he got to the top of Cat Scratch, all duct tape had utterly failed and the whole step was barely still attached to his Jeep. More duct tape came out - he went with black.



Doug C.'s step which nearly departed the Jeep by the top of the climb on Cat Scratch.

Cat Scratch is like Doug's Dilemma in that there is an uphill boulder garden with obstacles followed by a downhill section that tests completely different skills.



Crosby's following Doug E. down into the rock alley.

A portion of the downhill side has a significant washout, and we were forced to run new tracks about 15 yards to one side of the original trail, which is no longer navigable. Our desert is constantly changing, and we always go into our rock crawling at Gordy's with a sense of adventure. Especially running some of these trails we haven't been on in a while, we're like 3-year-olds at Christmas waiting to see what we'll find the next time we go out!

The downhill side of Cat Scratch runs you through an extremely snug arroyo which water has carved through solid rock. Much of this is exactly one Jeep wide, with many sharp rocks sticking out and brazenly daring you to venture just one millimeter closer. These rocks took vengeance on Doug Caddell, who was forced to surrender his passenger-front Mickey due to **three** sidewall tears by the time we got off the trail. We filled his tire as much as possible while on the trail and made a mad dash for some open, flat space to change it out. Everyone pitched in and we got him trail-ready in about 45 minutes.



We're realizing Doug C. had a flat, ack!
He put some air in it, and we made a mad dash for a better place to deal with

We made it back to the kiosk about 4 pm. All of us were sore and tired, completely filthy, and as happy as we could be!

While I absolutely love any day rock crawling at Gordy's, this day's community service element was the best part, hands down. Talking amongst ourselves, the dedication we all share for our NM4W stewardship at Gordy's is something we all feel deep in our hearts. Never was there any hesitation about giving up play time for work time. I love this club so much! We always come together to support each other and to support the New Mexico 4 Wheelers!



Mary, Rich, Doug E., Janet, Mike, Doug C.



Doug Caddell's sense of humor on display inside his rig.



Happy Trails!
☺M3RRY

Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2026

by Sec Shirley Godfrey

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 4:52 pm.
The meeting was held at Janet and Mike Crosby's home.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Bruce Allen, Steve Allen, Jeff Boggs, Paula Boggs, Janet Crosby, Mike Crosby, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Shirley Godfrey, David Ham, Diane Henry, Ric Henry, Ralph Lied-Lopez, Cliff Meier, Matthew Ray, Lauri Rector, Jonathan Rivera, NaDeen Roland, Don Roy, Carol Sheriff, John Sheriff, Beth P. Steele, Richard Steele, Douglas Story II, Mary Turpin, William Zobel

GUESTS ATTENDING: Melissa Garner, Preston Garner, Dale Leschnitzer, Jack Lovell, Grant Mossman, Steve Nakamura, Craig Ratliff, Amy Silver, Jason Soares, Carson Stradford

PRESIDENT – Jack Dickey

Jack thanked Janet and Mike Crosby for hosting the meeting at their lovely home.

We still need hosts for the July and August meetings. These are held at someone's home and the date and time is up to the host. Lauri Rector volunteered for the July meeting.

Cathy will do the 50/50 at the end of the meeting.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT – VP Jonathan Rivera

Jonathan explained full memberships and associate memberships.

There were 5 guests at the meeting.

A motion was made and approved by a majority of members present without discussion to vote in the following as a new member - Grant Mossman, Albuquerque, voting (full) member.

Johanthan went over this past month's transgression fines.

THERE WERE NOT FINES REPORTED!!!!!!

The fines collected over the year is raffled off at the Christmas party.

SECRETARY'S REPORT - Shirley Godfrey

Meeting minutes can be read in the Newsletter. - A motion was made and approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Rich Steele

Current balances for checking, saving accounts, and Pay Pal were provided.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer's report. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

TRIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Mary Turpin

Trip leaders/ride attendees gave a brief rundown of their ride.

Past Events and Trips (7 since last meeting)

- April 11, Rigs & Coffee, Jonathan Rivera – lots of pictures being added. There is now one folder for Rigs and Coffee. Please add the date to your pictures.
- April, 12, Don's Birthday Ride at Gordy's, Rich Steele – Up until lunch all was going well. Von Stell's tie rod broke and it took 5 hours to get him back to the Kiosk. Andrew Schwebke drove back into town, picked up his truck and flatbed, came back and got Von's vehicle back into town. Thank you Andrew!
- April 18, Alamogordo w/Desert Mountain 4WDC, Mary Turpin – Removed that 3rd fender flair.
- April 23, Ride Leader Meeting (video conference call), Don Roy - Went over the tools on the website to help the ride leaders.
- April 25, The Appalachian-to-Adobe Invitational, Frank Whiston – Explored the East side of Jeminez.
- May 3, Gordy's SUNDAY exploration / hard trails, Doug Elkins – Tried upper Amado.
- May 9, Rigs & Coffee, Lauri Rector - Largest crowd yet.

Upcoming Events and Trips

Ten trips and events with several pending are on the calendar before our next meeting, refer to website for details. Contact trip leader if there are questions.

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT - Bill Zobel

Cibola National Forest is currently at Stage 1 for fires.

Program Chair Report – Cathy Dickey - We are getting new shirts. Currently have license plates, stickers and hats. You can get our logo done on your own apparel at - ASI Custom Apparel, Banners and Embroidery.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT – Jack Dickey for Frank Whiston - There are over 24,800 photos in our gallery.

WEBMASTER'S REPORT and NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT - Don Roy – The pictures being added to the gallery are getting larger and taking up a lot of space. Don suggested making the pictures smaller and he will work it out. We have 100 gigabits that is 70% full. He asks you use good quality photos. The Newsletter is getting a new look. Don would like to receive newsy stories from other people in addition to ride leaders. I.E., fixing your vehicle, being a passenger on a ride, etc.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mary Turpin emailed Espanola two weeks ago regarding the Santa Fe Tank Trap project and had gotten no response.

Election of Officers, president, secretary, and environmental affairs will be vacant. Nominations - President – Mary Turpin, nominated by Rich Steele; Secretary – Lauri Rector nominated by Jeff Boggs; Trip Chair – Jeff Boggs, nominated by Lauri Rector; Environmental Affairs – Jack Dickey, nominated by Rich Steele; VP – Jonathan Rivera; Treasurer – Rich Steele, nominated by Bill Zobel; Program Chair – Cathy Dickey.

4-Wheeler of the year voting will open on the website after the May meeting and the award will be presented at the June meeting. Think of people who have helped the club when you vote.

Tabled – general and management liability insurance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jack Dickey – asked for approval of \$400.00 for meat and supplies for the annual picnic. A motion was made and seconded. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Allison Martinez and Anthony Weaver will be hosting this year's picnic. In case of fire restrictions, the Crosby's offered their home as an alternate site.

Proposed changes to the SOP : 1. Clarification of leader points and helping on a trail. A leader more amount of work to do than a tail gunner or a helper. 2. Change to dues/discount for trip leaders. If a trail leader has led 4 or more rides, the leader's dues would have a discount of \$18.00 for the following years. 3. The use of club logo/emblems for sale by members for profit.

Chalmers Ford has asked the Club to conduct a 4x4 driver training for new owners. Chalmers would like a 101 class for new drivers who have purchased a Bronco. They asked for 2 or 3 times a year workshops, and field days. Jack Dickey proposed the workshop would include going through recovery gear, trail etiquette, air up and down and the field day to take them out on a 4-wheel drive. The main concern is the liability and the amount of time to coordinate these functions. Jack said Chalmers would have to cover the liability and the Club would ask Chalmers to pay for all expenses. Mary made a motion to get answers to all our questions before the Club would agree to take on this task. The Club members need the have the right to say no. Bruce seconded the motion and there was a vote. 12 in favor, 7 opposed. Jack Dickey will continue with Chalmers Ford to work out the details and the Club can still say no.

50/50 raffle \$83.00. Winner Melissa/Preston Garner, \$41.50

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.

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| | | |
|--|---|--|
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