



AREA 51 - Summer 2008 ATV Camping Trip

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After too many years of "should have, would have and maybe" I decided this would be the year I'd finally get away on a camping trip by ATV. Myself and my like minded crew from Southern Harbour started making plans in late spring and decided that a 3 day trip on July 5-7 would be our weekend. Our trip would take us from Southern Harbour (near Arnold's Cove) along the Trail Way Provincial Park to the Terra Nova area, no particular destination in mind.

We awoke early Saturday morning to a beautiful clear day, which is rare this time of year in Southern Harbour when the community is usually clouded in fog. We got up and started packing the gear, grub, and tools that we gathered together the previous evening onto the four ATVs. With 5 riders, and 4 bikes with two racks each we had plenty of room for all the gear. Even though we started early, we were still delayed and never left Southern Harbour until after 10am.

Not 2 minutes outside of Southern Harbour we experienced our first mechanical breakdown. Tyson's '01 Honda Foreman was seriously lacking power and was unable to climb any of the hills. Already behind schedule we would have to leave that bike in Southern Harbour as time was getting short to diagnose and fix the carburetor. So myself and Tyson rode back to the house while the rest of crew went on to Megan's Gas Bar to gas up. We dropped the troublesome Foreman and loaded all the gear and the gear off my back rack into a steel ATV dump trailer (named the bush buggy) and got departed for the second time. My Foreman could certainly feel the extra weight of 2 riders, additional gear and the weight of the trailer, but these bikes were meant to work and it handled the task with relative ease. Mind you, my bike was equipped with a 1-7/8" trailer ball and the bush buggy required the 2" ball installed on another crew members bike waiting for us at Megan's Gas Bar. We took our time heading to Megan's, but half way along our 2 kilometre journey Tyson tapped me on the shoulder just as the bush buggy passed us!. It proceeded to cross the road, skid along the shoulder until the tongue dug in, pitching the trailer end over end before coming to a rest right side up in the ditch

among all the spilled contents of the trailer!!! Luckily everything was packed water tight for just such an adventure and we quickly reloaded the trailer, hooked it back to my Foreman, made a safety chain from rope and proceeded to Megan's for gas and a swap of trailer balls.

We left Megan's heading through Put and Paddle camp ground to Arnold's Cove Junction where we picked up the old railway track. Since none of us had ventured much past Clarenville we didn't know exactly where we would be camping, but we'd figure that out later. The track from Arnold's Cove to Goobies is still pretty rough so travelling with a full load is relatively slow going. Here on the east coast a snowmobile club has only recently been formed so the track is generally in rougher shape compared to the ride West of Goobies where years of grooming and trail maintenance by that club lends a noticeably smoother ride. Hopefully in the near future as the East Coast Trail Riders will become more developed, more trail passes are sold, and the funding will be there to further maintain the track Goobies East.

About 30 kilometres East of Clarenville the next surprise occurred when the Yamaha Grizzly in our group decided to spit the core of the muffler right out on the track!!! Not able to travel with no exhaust, I took out my fairly well stocked tool kit and we managed to fashion the pipe together enough to make it to Clarenville. Luckily the boys at OMB Supply in Clarenville were very helpful in loaning us some tools and self tapping screws to properly repair the exhaust. After about an hour and a half of fooling around, the Grizzly was fixed we grabbed a quick bite to eat, picked up a few last minute supplies and carried on our way.

The track winds its way through the heart of Clarenville and Shoal Harbour which is slow going, but we weren't in a rush and the scenery was beautiful. West of Clarenville the track winds its way through gorgeous hills and valleys crossing the Trans Canada Highway safely under bridges and culverts along the way. The topography flattens out as you get closer to and eventually pass Thorburn Lake. By now it was near 5:30 pm and we were getting tired and hungry so we started looking for our camp site. More importantly the bush buggy was now starting to cause trouble. Since we were in a rush leaving (for the 2nd time) that morning we didn't properly inspect the trailer. If we had we would have found that the lugs on the Left side tire were loose. The long journey caused the lug holes to wear to the

point that the wheel could come off the trailer over the lugs!!! We managed to limp the trailer just East of Port Blandford where we finally found a beautiful site to camp. It was a rather large clearing partially grown in with alders but was secluded from the track, had lots of dry sandy area for tenting, and was close to a rather large river. We quickly got unloaded and some of us set up camp while the rest gathered fire wood and got supper ready.

To say we ate well on this trip would be an understatement, we brought lots of food for our 3 day excursion and we planned on eating all of it!!! Since we ended up buying lunch in Clareville we BBQ'd hamburgers on a grate over an open fire that we let burn down to coals. This certainly cured our hunger as we continued to set up camp. Later that evening while enjoying a few beverages and entertainment provided by crew member Terry, we barbequed lovely thick Pork Chops again over an open fire burned down to coals supplemented by a bag of charcoal. Fresh fried mushrooms and onions in the pan made for a midnight snack fit for kings!!!

The next morning we woke early to the smell of bacon and eggs in the pan being cooked by the early riser of the crew and yet another beautiful sunny sky. With the bush buggy causing trouble we decided it best to make a run back to Clareville with it and drop it at Tyson's house (which we could reach by trail) since it would really hinder our progress on the return trip Monday. It was slow going back to Clareville with a bum wheel which had to constantly be reset onto the Hub, but we made it and before long we were back at the campsite.

The rest of the day was spent riding past Terra Nova Golf Course and onto the community of Terra Nova enjoying some unsuccessful trout fishing along the way. We explored many side trails with most of them leading to dead ends, and stopped for a rest at Pitt's Pond where we waded in the warm, shallow, sandy bottomed pond.

By early evening we returned to our camp site to have a relaxing evening by the fire, cook supper and unwind. On the menu that evening was Moose steak which had been cubed and soaking in a home made marinade since we left the previous day. This was cooked in the pan and topped with a selection of string beans, chopped peppers, onions and mushrooms for an awesome back woods stir fry. Our midnight snack consisted of Cheese filled juicy jumbo hot dogs and a lot of plain hot dogs roasted over the open fire. This was to be the last night of our trip and we

celebrated with more cold beverages and a lovely fire next to the river. Life certainly does not get much better and it really makes me realise how lucky we are as Newfoundlanders to be able to enjoy this sort of activity right at our doorstep.

With one of our crew due to leave for work Monday morning, we had a very early rise and rapidly broke camp packing the gear aboard the bikes. This time however we didn't have the bush buggy and we were still down one bike but with all of our food eaten we had significantly less cargo for the return trip. This time I loaded both racks of my foreman high with gear securing it with ratchet straps, and Tyson got on with one of the other boys for the return trip. Luckily with a deadline pressing the return trip was uneventful. It was a beautiful clear morning with a touch of morning dew having settled on the land overnight. We made it back to Southern Harbour in plenty of time for Young Joe to leave for work and had lots of time to relax, unpack and clean up.

In other news, I have finally gotten around to developing a new web site to share my work as well as projects from people I meet. With help from the guys at Sled-Headz.com, newfoundlandmotorsports.com and many others I have developed www.shed-headz.com Here I will present past stories I have submitted to TREK and Sledworthy, Magazines, additional pictures as well as other trips, projects and adventures of the shed-headz crew.