

2020_August_Newsletter

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Thank you for signing up to receive my newsletters. I hope you've found the previous editions informative and helpful for your vehicle-supported adventures. I trust you will enjoy this month's newsletter. If you have comments, please email me: Bob.Wohlers@discoveroffroading.com. You can access, download, and read previous newsletters on my website here: [NEWSLETTERS](#) Look through the Newsletter Reference for a topic that may interest you, or download them all!



Upcoming Four Wheel Camper Death Valley Overland Adventure Tour – October 15-18



There's still time to sign up for this very popular iconic overland Tour. At this moment, there are only SEVEN SPOTS available. This is a not to be missed overlanding-style adventure - each night spent at a different campground. We will visit and camp at some of Death Valley's

iconic locations. This tour is ONLY for trucks with Four Wheel Campers on them, trucks with 4WD 4-Low gearing capability, moderate ground clearance, a full-size spare tire, and front and rear frame-mounted recovery points. Once all seven spots are taken, TicketLeap (my ticket and credit card company) will close the Tour.

If you have questions after reading all the Tour information on DiscoverOffRoading.com, please call Bob at: 909.844.2583.

For more information and to pay for this Tour go **HERE**.

Bob is a fully Permitted National Park Service and BLM Outfitter and Tour Guide. You can trust Bob to lead you safely through Death Valley!

4WD Courses are Starting Up Again at Prairie City



The California State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs) are slowly opening back up. I have a backlog of

students to train, but as of this writing I do have 5 vehicle spots available in next month's September 26-27 **Discovery Course – Introduction to 4X4 Off Roding.**



To sign up and pay for this course go [HERE](#) and click on the "September 26-27 Discovery Course" button.

This is Off-Road Safety Academy's two-day beginning 4WD course. However, more advanced drivers will find it useful as well.

Want to learn more about your 4-Wheel Drive vehicle? Want to improve your off-road driving skills? Interested in keeping you and your loved ones safe while off-roading? Off-Road Safety Academy™ will safely teach you in one weekend what it takes most people years to learn on their own.

Course Goal: The goal of this course is to put you on a path to safely and ecologically off-road alone. Although it is always best to off-road with other vehicles, this is not always possible or desired. Upon completion of this course you begin to understand the limitations of your vehicle and your driving skills allowing you to intelligently choose excursions and trails to match your capabilities.

Prerequisite: None (Except a desire to learn and have FUN!)

Length of Course: Two days; 8:30am to 5:00 pm.

Course Curriculum:

Day One - 1/2 day Knowledge Development (classroom). During lunch you'll get an overview of remote electronic communications, map use, and off-road survival and bushcraft. Afternoon: 1/2 day "Getting to Know Your Vehicle (Priority Customization for your Vehicle)," Tire Repair 101, 4WD Gearing, Beginning Hill Climbing.

Day Two - Airing Down and Inflating Tires, Driving a Level Rocky Trail and Spotting, Driving in Sand and Use of Sand Ladders, Methods of Lifting Your Vehicle Off the Ground (Hi-Lift Jack, Bottle/Scissor Jacks, Inflatable Jack),

Changing a tire on soft and uneven terrain, Winching 101 with Powered Winches and Hi-Lift Jack, Proper Use of Kinetic Energy ("Yank") Straps, Off-Camber Driving, Electronic Traction Control and Locker Use (for those that have these features), Trail Driving.

Target Audience: All off-road drivers that want to learn the basics of four-wheeling in relative safety and comfort. This course is for the owners of any new or used 4-Wheel Drive vehicle (e.g., Jeeps, Explorers, Hummers, Land Rovers, Xterras, Land Cruisers, Pathfinders, trucks, etc.). Even inexperienced owners of highly modified off-road vehicles are welcome at this course. The curriculum is primarily designed for novice off-road drivers owning stock or slightly modified 4-Wheel Drive vehicles. During this course, you'll begin to learn how to off-road on your own and launch adventure expeditions in relative safety and comfort.

Vehicle Requirements: Any reliable 4-Wheel Drive SUV, SUT or trucks with:

- 2-speed 4WD transfer case (must be able to shift into a 4-Low gearing)
- Street legal
- Full-size spare tire
- Full tank of gas
- Seat belts for all passengers
- Vehicle in excellent working condition, no fluid leaks, etc.

Use of Instructor Equipment: During this course you will be introduced to essential off-road equipment. You will not need to own or bring equipment other than what is listed.

Four Wheel Camper Rimrocker Trail Tour Wrap-up

The 2020 Rimrocker Trail Tour for Four Wheel Camper customers is a wrap. This backcountry adventure had a total of 12 vehicles, all loaded with great people.



As some of you know, I have some very distinct qualifiers for the trails I choose for others to experience. First and foremost, the trail has to be very scenic and remote. Each of my Tours will get you away from city centers and out into the backcountry. Second, the trail has to be somewhat easy, but

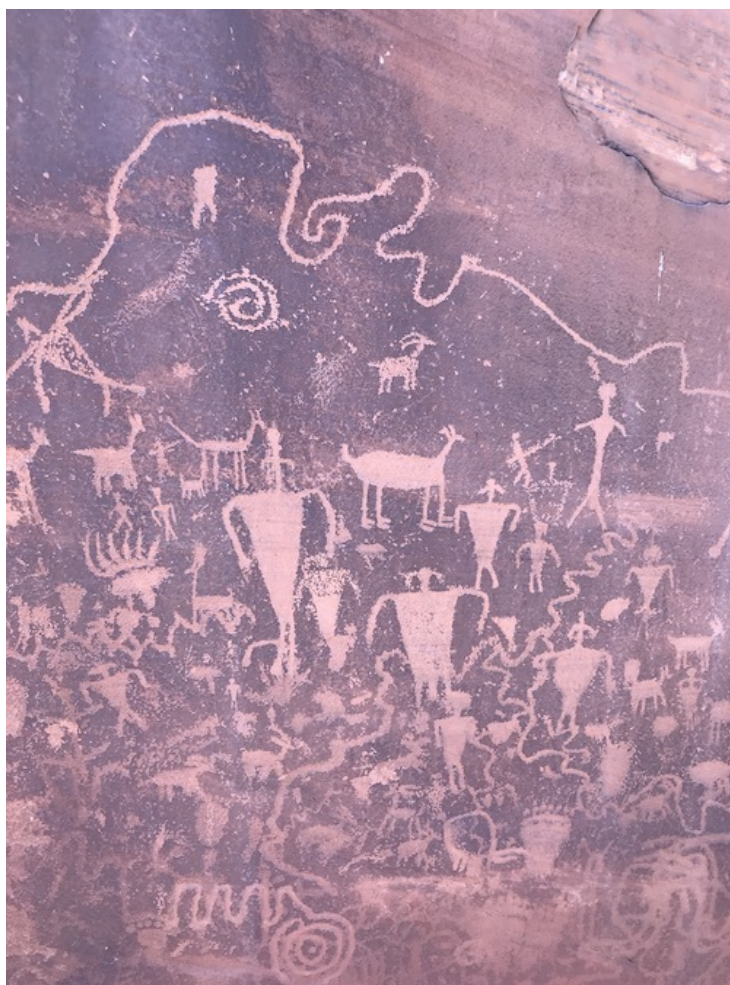
it's always fun to have a bit of challenging terrain just around the corner. Everyone loves just a "touch" of challenging terrain – rocky, narrow, or off-camber sections. That said, few off-roaders in large trucks with camper's love miles and miles of difficult and dangerous terrain. Third, the trail has to have at least a couple of "exit" points to pavement should one of the trucks have a mechanical issue or someone gets ill. Forth, the trail has to have excellent campsites that are large enough to handle up to twelve vehicles. Fifth, I like to choose trails that have a rich history, great wildlife, and lots of plant life to view and observe.

The Rimrocker Trail did not disappoint at any level. The trail journeys from Montrose, Colorado all the way to Moab, Utah – 160 miles of backcountry travel and fun. While on the trail you basically begin in the desert area of Northwest Colorado. On the first day we ascended to almost the 10,000 foot level in the Aspens and Pines. Touching that environment, we again



descended down into the Delores River Valley. This entire area is rich in mining (uranium, radium, and vanadium) and Native American history. The tour participants learned details about the rich history of the area the first night of camping. Jane Thomson, President of the Rimrocker Historical Society, was an invited guest. Besides giving us the entire history of the area, she also informed us that the uranium actually used in the Little Boy atomic bomb dropped on Japan was from a town called Uravan, just adjacent from our campsite. Another interesting bit of history is that Butch Cassidy and his "Hole in the Wall Gang" roamed and worked this entire area prior to heading to Bolivia.

On the morning of day two of the Tour, Jane took us to view a wonderful display of prehistoric petroglyphs (*petro* Greek meaning stone and *glyphos* meaning carving). These differ from pictographs which are rock paintings with dyes. This area has some of the best petroglyphs I've seen beyond the Canyonlands NP area. This second day on the Rimrock Trail led us on a very narrow and rocky section. Again, not too challenging, but enough to make any driver sit tall in his seat and pay close attention to the trail. Our campsite on this second evening was a large clearing near Biscuit Rock. The evening talk was on satellite communications for vehicle-supported adventurers – the pros and cons of each type.



Day three took us up to altitude again to Buckeye Reservoir for lunch. We crossed into Utah and spent the night in a large clearing surrounded by tall Aspens.

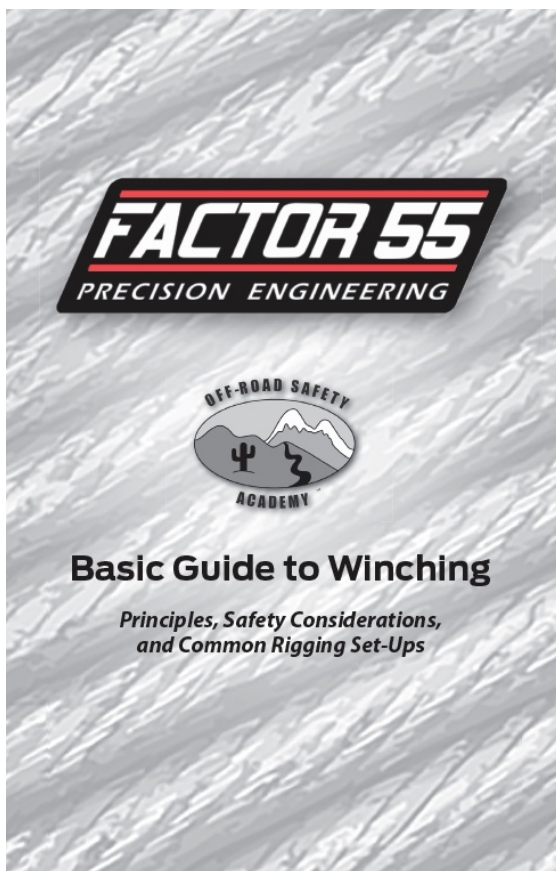
Cooler temperatures prevailed for the evening talk on in-field water disinfection techniques. I showed everyone my GuzzleH2O Stream unit for high-flow water disinfection into my 20+ gallon receptacle in my Four Wheel Camper. This device, using UV light and a pre-carbon filter, rids the water of protozoa, bacteria AND all viruses. It's the perfect device for backcountry explorers with Four Wheel Campers. See my newsletter archives on my website for a review of this great piece of equipment.

The morning of the third day closed out the Tour experience. Some headed home on nearby Highway 46, while a few of us journeyed into Moab for a brew and burgers. This was a most excellent Tour. Personally, I can't wait to offer it again in 2021. Look for dates of this and other 2021 Tours in a future Four Wheel Camper Newsletter.

Equipment Review The New Factor 55 Recovery Kits

As some of you may know, and by way of full disclosure, I have worked closely with Factor 55 for several years. That said, I've never taken one dollar from the company – I am not a paid partner, ambassador, or employee. As my readers, students, tour participants, and friends know “I only work for you.” I'm not on the payroll of any company and my opinions on equipment and accessories are only with you in mind. Period.

I have worked closely with and continue to work with Factor 55 for a couple of important reasons. First, I solidly believe in all of their products.



I can't think of one Factor 55 product I've not actually used successfully off-road and in the backcountry under actual circumstances or during my training courses. Factor 55 is quite literally a one-stop shopping company when it comes to purchasing personal recreational recovery equipment. They have in their inventory practically everything one would need to get unstuck in the remote backcountry. Their product quality is top-notch.

Secondly, I like the "personality" of the company. Factor 55 genuinely loves invention, innovation, and safety product testing. Factor 55 wants to help off-roaders and overlanders with all their recovery (getting unstuck)

problems while in the backcountry and remote. I can't talk about this aspect of the company without acknowledging Mike Costa and Justin Andrews – the heart, soul, and personality of Factor 55. Mike, the inventor of Factor 55, and previous owner continues his role today as lead engineer and inventor. Mike is like all of us, he likes to make a buck. However, having known Mike for several years I can assure you he likes to make money so he can continue to invent products that help off-roaders recover more efficiently and safer. Justin Andrews is Factor 55's lead salesman and marketer. As such, I have found Justin to be totally honest and straightforward. Unlike most salesmen in this segment of the industry, Justin will tell you the truth and genuinely try to help you purchase the right equipment for your needs. I feel honored to call both Mike and Justin my friends.

I like working with everyone at Factor 55 and that is why I personally approached them some years ago about an "educational partnership." If you aren't familiar with this fact, I was the author and developer of their two small booklets – "The Basic Guide to Winching" and "Basic Guide to Kinetic Energy Recovery & Towing a Disabled Vehicle Off Road." The content for these small booklets came directly from my book "The Total Approach to Getting Unstuck Off Road – 4WD Self-Recovery & Vehicle-Assisted Recovery." Currently this is the ONLY book on the

planet solely about recovery and getting unstuck off-road – all 353 pages. Not a “chapter” on the topic of recovery like most authors, but an entire book. You can purchase your copy [HERE](#).

During our initial dialog about my idea to help Factor 55 customers perform these types of recovery more effectively and safely, Mike said “yes” to the concept almost immediately. It was agreed that I would supply the content and photos while they would print the booklets at their expense. Currently, Factor 55 provides these booklets at no-charge to their customers and those that visit their booth at off-road and overland shows and expos. At their booth, I have watched them gladly and without hesitation hand out hundreds upon hundreds of these booklets to customers and non-customers alike, all in the effort to help individuals safely perform these potentially hazardous recovery techniques. Also, Factor 55 includes these booklets free of charge in their newly organized recovery kits.

It is these new recovery kits I'd like to share with you.

Unique Features of Each Kit

Each size Factor 55 recovery kit is named after a mountain range in Idaho; a range that harbors some of their favorite off-roading adventures. Also, each kit only contains accessories that are



totally made in the USA – even the bag. So, rest assured, you will not be purchasing “made in china” accessories, fibers, or material. In the hazardous world of off-road recovery, this “made in the USA” promise is very important.

Factor 55 Bags. The Factor 55 Large and Medium Ultimate Recovery Bags have been custom designed to hold Factor 55 recovery equipment in one accessible place.

The Medium bag interior is large enough to easily hold Factor 55's 30' x 2" 2 ply

Standard Duty Tow strap, 8' Tree Saver, and Shorty Strap II. In addition, this bag retains space for winch line extensions and multiple other pieces of rigging. Five interior stash pockets can hold shackles, pulleys, the Fast Fid, and other pieces of gear. Two exterior stash pockets provide additional storage. Four Molle loops are stitched to the top portion of the bag and can be used with Factor 55 Strap Wraps to stow recovery dampers or other equipment for quick access.

The Large bag interior can easily hold Factor 55's 30' x 7/8" Kinetic Energy Rope, 8' Tree Saver, Shorty Strap II, and Shorty Strap III. In addition, the bag features two large outside zipper compartments, large enough to hold their 30' x 2" Extreme Duty Tow Strap and other accessories. Seven interior stash pockets hold shackles, pulleys, gloves, Fast Fid, and other pieces of gear. The bag also retains space for winch line extensions and multiple other pieces of rigging. Large Velcro strips are featured on both sides of the bag for placement of Velcro-backed patches.

No vehicle recovery is the same. Some recoveries are simple, while others are more complicated. So, Factor 55 designed both of its Recovery Bags to be versatile, functional, and very durable. I throw mine around in the dirt, mud, and sand constantly. It's held up quite well and it cleans pretty easily using a soft brush. The waxed canvas protects the bags contents in the rain, and eventually shows the fine patina of use. I like the "badge of honor" when my bags get a bit dirty.

The bottom of the bag is reinforced with 1500 denier ballistic Cordura. The 2-inch MILSPEC riggers' webbing completely wraps around the bottom of the bag adding an additional layer of strength and support. Heavy Duty powder coated steel rings are stitched on both sides to attach a wide variety of shoulder straps (not included). Featuring Heavy Duty YKK Zippers, each knotted with 550 Paracord, offer a longer gripping surface for ease of opening and closing the bag. Once the bag is unzipped it completely folds flat allowing easy access to all interior components. The bag interior is reinforced Cordura and is edged with binding tape. The 1000 denier blaze orange interior Cordura is perfect for quickly finding all components of your recovery gear, even in low-light conditions.

Once packed, each bag retains a rectangular shape for easy storage and will nest neatly with your other gear. The Factor 55 bags are built to last a lifetime.

The Pieces-Parts. I'm not going to run you through all of the kit's pieces-parts – the Factor 55 straps, ropes, shackles, pulleys, etc. You can read about those in my past newsletters and on their website. But rest assured, all are made right here in

the USA and have been rigorously tested by the Factor 55 engineers and an independent laboratory for Minimum Tensile Strength (MTS) and appropriate Working Load Limits (WLLs) numbers.



Owyhee Vehicle Recovery Kit

The Owyhee Kit is designed primarily for vehicle-assisted recoveries without a winch. Even if you have a winch, all of these items can be a great start in adding Factor 55 winch-specific products like

their Rope Retention Pulley, more shackles, the Fast Fid, or tree saver strap. There's plenty of room in the Medium Bag for these additional products (see my photo of the Sawtooth Kit – you can see that the Medium Bag can hold lots of additional products).

The 17 pound Owyhee kit contains:

- 1 HitchLink 2.0
- 1 Standard Duty Soft Shackle
- 1 Crosby 3/4" metal shackle
- 1 Standard Duty Tow Strap
- 1 Strap Wrap (individual)
- 1 Factor 55 Medium Recovery Gear Bag

Sawtooth Vehicle Recovery Kit

The Sawtooth Kit is Factor 55's medium

size kit for winching and non-winch recovery operations. The 27 pound Sawtooth's kit includes:

- 2 3/4" Crosby Shackles
- 1 Extreme Duty Soft Shackle 10"
- 1 Standard Duty Soft Shackle 10"
- 1 Shorty Strap II
- 1 Tree Saver
- 1 HitchLink 2.0
- 1 Standard Duty Tow Strap
- 1 Factor 55 Recovery Gear Bag Medium
- 1 Rope Retention Pulley
- 1 Fast Fid
- 1 Basic Guide to Winching
- 3 Strap Wraps



Borah Vehicle Recovery Kit

This kit is the *big boy!* The Borah Kit is Factor 55's large and most complete recovery kit. This kit is all inclusive and the Factor 55 recovery products are placed in their largest bag. This bag is your one-stop purchase for winching, kinetic energy, and disabled-vehicle



towing recovery efforts. The products in this bag can help YOU get stuck and help OTHERS when you find them unable to move.

The 47 pound Borah kit includes:

- 2 3/4" Crosby Shackles
- 1 Extreme Duty Soft Shackle 10"
- 1 Standard Duty Soft Shackle 10"
- 1 Extreme Duty Soft Shackle 20"
- 1 Shorty Strap II
- 1 Tree Saver
- 1 Shorty Strap III
- 1 HitchLink 2.0
- 1 Extreme Duty Tow Strap
- 1 Kinetic Rope

- 1 Factor 55 Recovery Bag- Large
- 1 Load Distribution Plate
- 1 Rope Retention Pulley
- 1 Fast Fid
- 1 Basic Guide to Winching
- 5 Strap Wraps

Due to the underestimated popularity of the new Factor 55 kits, they are on backorder until mid-September. If you want a kit, order it NOW and put your name in the queue for fast delivery. As an expert in off-road recovery, I highly recommend the Factor 55 kits. Personally, I'd purchase the Borah Kit!

In next month's newsletter I'll review Safe-Xtract's unique recovery kit and all its fine features. Stay tuned.



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