



Trail Torque



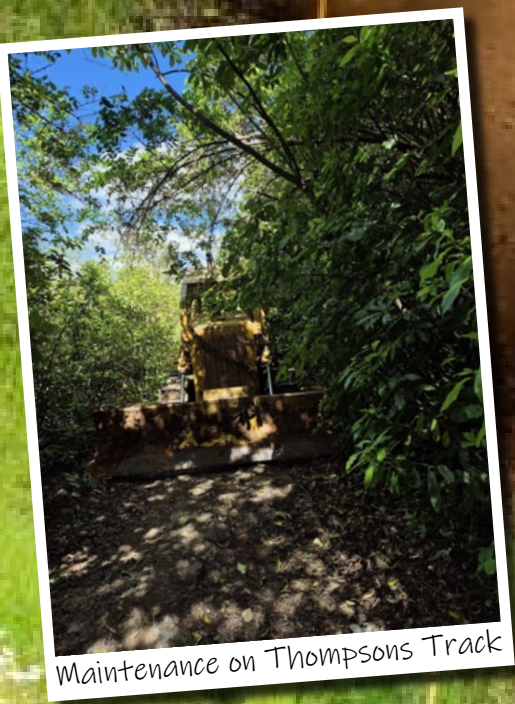
The official Magazine of the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association

December 2025/January / February 2026

NATIONAL TRIALS SEASON KICKS OFF!!



Our Clubs lend a helping hand



Maintenance on Thompsons Track

INSIDE:
Paper Roads/Unformed Legal Roads
Waitarere Working Bee
PLUS MUCH MORE!

This edition is proudly
brought to you by:



4X4 ACCESSORIES

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Established in 1974,
The objective of the
Association is to
grow, develop
and improve
recreational four-
wheel drive activities in New Zealand.
As a member of the NZFWDA, you
become an integral part of this effort
to ensure that present and future
generations can continue to enjoy
our country in four wheel drive
vehicles.



Contact:
NZFWDA Secretary
secretary@nzfwda.org.nz

NZFWDA ONLINE:
[NZFWDA Website](#)
[TidyHQ](#)

FACEBOOK:
[NZFWDA Facebook](#)

Anything underlined in
this edition will either
open up in your internet
browser or open your
email to send the person
a query.

Deadlines for Trail Torque Submissions

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2026
Deadline: 13 February 2026
Out to Members: 8 March 2026

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2026
Deadline: 7 June 2026
Out to Members: 28 June 2026

If you would like to share your
Club's achievements, events or a
story in Trail Torque, send them in
to editor@nzfwda.org.nz

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COVER PIC: Angus Hamilton & Daniel Howat - Photo by TJW Photos

THE NEW ZEALAND FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION

Our Behaviour
Affects Our
Future



- * Values the highest safety standards before, during and after all 4WD activities.
- * Endorses respect and care while participating in 4WD activities in the Environment.
- * Acknowledges the contribution of its members and their values.
- * Values and respects land owners and land users.
- * Encourages non-discrimination of all participants.

ARTICLES AND LETTERS NZFWDA DISCLAIMER.

The views and opinions of contributors to this publication are those of the author(s) and unless stated otherwise do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of NZFWDA. Responsibility for the views and information in articles lies with the author(s) concerned. The NZFWDA and its editor reserve the right to edit abridge or discard any or all material submitted for publication. **Copyright.** The New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association claims copyright and the right to be acknowledged as the publisher of Trail Torque and its contents.

Trail Torque is produced four times a year and delivered via the NZFWDA Membership email database.

Health & Safety at NZFWDA

Do you know your H&S responsibilities?

Following on from the tragic Whakaari/White Island enquiry findings the Government has indicated that it is likely to change the emphasis of Worksafe's responsibilities around incidents towards being more proactive and preventive rather than just focussing on investigation and prosecution.

Do note that, where warranted, investigation and prosecutions will still be undertaken by Worksafe as at present.

While this is directed at adventure tourism we should take notice because while it will not mean significant changes for H&S accountabilities for recreational activities it will provide more clarity as to when a recreational organisation may become, wittingly or otherwise, a "Person Conducting a Business Undertaking" (PCBU). The proposed changes will not affect the intent and application of the Health and Safety At Work Act 2015 which covers PCBU's, volunteers and recreational activities.

To assist with Clubs' decision making the following can be accessed to provide guidance information directly from the Worksafe website

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/introduction-hswa-special-guide/>

Policy clarification: Recreational access and the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) | WorkSafe

5313WKS-17-Policy-clarification-recreational-access-FAQs.pdf - Scroll down the page to "Further Information" see notes 8 & 9 in particular of the document.

NZFWDA's Tidy HQ website also has helpful guidelines for clubs for your reference. The information provided by the Association is for guidance and is not offered or intended as interpretations of official advice, regulations, bylaws or laws.

8. What happens when a landowner charges for recreational access?	A landowner that charges for access to their land is recognised as a PCBU under HSWA. They can meet their duties in the same way as any other PCBU. As with all PCBUs, they don't have to manage the risks of the recreational activity. That's the responsibility of the person doing the activity. The only exception is when the landowner/PCBU also provides the activity. Then they're also responsible for managing the activity's risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.
9. Do recreational visitors have any responsibilities?	Anyone accessing land for recreation needs to follow the PCBU's: - health and safety instructions regarding the work and workplace, and - other reasonable requests (eg shutting farm gates and not frightening stock during lambing). They should also manage the risks of their activity. This includes managing, caring for, and maintaining their own safety fixtures and equipment.

Notes 8 & 9 of the Policy-clarification-recreational-access-FAQs.pdf

Club H&S Responsibilities

Trip Leaders and all other club officials have H&S responsibilities.

The NZFWDA recommends that every affiliated 4wd Club:

- Adopts its own Health and Safety Policy.
- Adopts its own health and safety processes, documents and forms.
- Reviews the NZFWDA H&S Guidelines.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to editor@nzfwda.org.nz Letters should not exceed 200 words and should carry the author's signature, name and residential address and a phone number so as to enable their authenticity to be confirmed. Letters may not be formally acknowledged and may be edited, abridged or discarded at the discretion of the editor.

**A BIG SHOUT OUT TO OUR
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
BRINGING REAL BENEFITS
TO OUR MEMBERS:**



4X4 ACCESSORIES

These 7 organisations have helped the NZFWDA bring genuine change to what it means to be an Affiliated Member.

If you are not already a Member of the NZFWDA but curious about it... here's 7 very good reasons to enquire!

If you want to know more email me, Steve - president@NZFWDA.org.nz

NZ is full of paper roads, but what are they and how can you find them?

Across New Zealand there are 55,000 kilometres of paper roads, a term which may not be familiar to many.

While these roads won't appear on Google Maps and aren't maintained in the same way as the rest of the roading network, they still carry the same right of public passage for anyone to use.

Dot Dalziell, a regional field adviser with Herenga a Nuku Aotearoa (the Outdoor Access Commission), says, while these roads may look a little different they're still there for the public to enjoy.

What is an paper road/unformed legal road?

Dalziell said when talking about an unformed legal road or paper road, what was meant was that while these roads counted legally as part of the roading network, these were not

maintained by the roading authority in an area, usually the district council.

But, these roads did carry the same right of public passage as any other legal road.

Many of these roads were formed before colonisation, Dalziell said, as tracks and trails to connect up between people and places.

In the 1800's, future towns and roads were drawn, and while some of these towns were never built, some tracks were formed.

Unformed legal roads were not on private property, Dalziell said, and were strips of public land which belonged to everyone.

How do I find them?

The best place to find paper roads was by using Herenga a Nuku Aotearoa's mapping system, Dalziell

said, which could be found on its website [here](#).

A lot of erasure of the roads had gone on over the years, Dalziell said.

"Partly what's happened is because no one is actively looking after them the public may have forgotten that they exist.

"It only takes a generation or so for local knowledge to be forgotten".

Read the full article [here](#).



Land Access

The Land Access portfolio is one that depends on being informed on matters around the country, which means we need to get the help of you, the NZFWDA members. Public notices from local Councils about road closures, and policy changes are getting harder to find as so many local newspapers vanish.

There is a monthly online discussion about access matters with diverse participation from several regions, not just NZFWDA members, but others with a passion for vehicle access opportunities too. If you have a strong interest in vehicle access matters and willing to share an hour a month, then let me know at peter.vahry@nzfwda.org.nz

I've been involved with the recent work done by NZFWDA volunteers and their machines to address the condition of Thompsons Track on the Matamata Piako District Council side on the lower Kaimai Range. The work looked great for the first week, but lots

of traffic and some wet weather has seen it deteriorate somewhat. If you visit that track, be prepared to help with maintaining it by clearing drains and any small slips that might drop onto the track.

Helping with maintenance on the tracks we use as four wheelers is something that can be simple to do and can go a long way to reducing the impacts of our activities. Just stopping to clear a drain or turning water away from running along a track can make a difference.

Which brings me to the issue of mud again. There are few places where the matter of mud is not a factor in our recreation and access to land. The generation of mud by vehicle use is not always going to prevent an activity, although it also may.

If an activity is anticipated where mud or silt may get into a watercourse, then it is wise to have a chat with the local Council environment team.

ARTICLE BY PETER VAHRY

They may accept the land use with provisos. There is material about the Resource Management Act (RMA) on the NZFWDA TidyHQ website <https://nzfwda.tidyhq.com/public/pages/guidelines-for-members-and-clubs>

If you've never been to that site, you need to go to <https://nzfwda.tidyhq.com> in your web browser. To log in for the first time, click on the Log In button at the top right of your screen. You will be prompted to enter your email address, the one registered with NZFWDA through your club (ensure there are no spelling mistakes). This is important because if you forget your password, you will be requested to enter your email address to enable a password reset email to be sent you. Then click on Next. You will see a text box appear which indicates the system recognises your email address. Click on the Send Set Password Email so that an email will be sent to your address to create a password.

4x4 ADVENTURERS INC

ARTICLE & PICTURES BY STEVE ADAM

The 4x4 Adventurers Inc is the newest club affiliated with the NZFWDA. Its inception was based on a rather unusual occurrence... a kitten found at a high-country hut by a bunch of 4 wheelers – 86 trucks in total organized and gathered for no other reason than to get together, four-wheel driving and overnight camping.

This wasn't a club trip, or anything organized through the NZFWDA but an offroad / adventuring 4x4er - Influencer within excess of 14,000 followers put a post up on Facebook.

Back to the Kitten, said cat was photographed in the company of many 4x4s in the high-country, a photo or two posted on Facebook caught the attention and ire of a certain conservation group, assumptions wrongly made about taking cats into the conservation estate etc....

Reel forward 12 months from then, many a discussion had and a Club with a difference was conceived, formally incorporated and members vetted with 27 new to the NZFWDA plus a peppering of old hands making up the membership to date of 32.

The Club mantra is a strong affiliation to camping in remote areas necessitating responsible, safe and environmentally aware 4x4ing. The Club is currently South Island based with strong sense of belonging and comradery. Our growth is intentional and structured, primarily targeting new members to the NZFWDA.

"...club mantra is a strong affiliation to camping in remote areas..."



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4wd Community Contributions

We frequently hear stories of great efforts made by 4wd clubs where they contribute to their wider communities. Examples are planting, rubbish clean-ups, taking passengers for off-road trips on public days and more recently helping with pest eradication.

Many people have said that all these types of community-good projects should be publicised, to show the world we are actually responsible people who give something back to

the community as a gesture to recognise the privileges of land access that we enjoy.

Positive publicity like that would help assure the public, land owners and council officers that there is a lot more to organised 4wd activities than the old-time perceptions often regarded negatively.

Sometimes we get material to publish about these good deeds, and there are three such articles in this edition of

Trail Torque. Unfortunately, all too often these good deeds go unrecognised, so the Association is collecting, saving and publicising the do-good events. You are welcome to submit material to the National Land Access Officer peter.vahry@nzfwda.org.nz

Your material doesn't need to be up-to-the-minute, although fresh is best, all our stories over recent times should be worthwhile. And don't forget to include your club name, and the general area where it took place!



Muriwai Beach Clean

The annual 4WD Club's clean of Auckland's Muriwai Beach took place on Sunday 16 November with some twenty-six 4x4's from Auckland Four Wheel Drive Club, Land Rover Owners Club (Auckland) and NZ Jeep Club.

The vehicles headed out onto the beach on a falling tide, after a safety briefing from the Auckland Council Muriwai Ranger, with the plan being for groups to pick a 5 kilometre stretch of the 20km beach to work on. (A lead vehicle had dropped marked traffic cones at 5km intervals).

Two 4x4s towed trailers that were used to pick up filled bags of rubbish that people had left out on the hard sand... some contents were not always stuff you wanted in your 4x4.

Around two hours later the first vehicles returned to the Muriwai ranger station where they unloaded rubbish into a large bin, or for recyclable material, into a big trailer.

A great variety of rubbish was evident with some items showing evidence of quite a while at sea. The heaviest item was a concrete filled drum and the stump of a signpost, which must have been a challenge to get onto a trailer, it was unloaded with the help of a tractor.

Participants returning were welcomed back with a 'sausage sizzle' organised by Auckland 4WD, who appreciated the use of the Ranger's barbecue unit and facilities.

A short video of the clean up, with over 700 views, was created by one participant, Jules Lee, and posted to YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLwQHoTHC9I>

It is evident from the aerial views of the dunes and wheel tracks, that the rule that vehicles must stay off the dunes, is sadly ignored by some visitors to Muriwai.

ARTICLE BY PETER VAHRY



"...The heaviest item was a concrete filled drum and the stump of a signpost..."



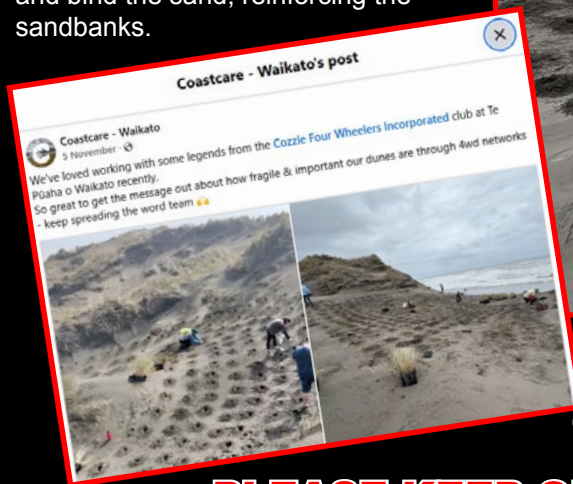


COZZIE 4 WHEELERS

Dune PLANTING

Over the past month Cozzie Four Wheelers have worked alongside Coastcare - Waikato to plant thousands of dunes in the blown out sand banks at Port Waikato.

Dunes play an important role in protecting our coastline. They help prevent erosion by acting as natural barriers that absorb wind and wave energy, while the plants' roots catch and bind the sand, reinforcing the sandbanks.



Remember how vital dunes are to our coastal areas next time you're at the beach

- PLEASE KEEP OFF THE DUNES -



CENTRAL ZONE BLITZ

WORDS BY GRANT PURDIE -
NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER, NZFWDA
PHOTOS FROM MEMBERS



A great turn out at Waitare Beach on a recent Sunday, 23 November.

About 25 wonderful Central Zone members converged on this Horowhenua spot from far and wide: New Plymouth in the north, Hawkes Bay in the east, Wellington and Hutt Valley in the south. A three-hour trip each way for some of them. Luckily it was lovely weather.

Horizons Regional Council is faced with clearing large areas of the invasive pest plants Tree Lupin and Coastal Wattle, which at this location are the size of small trees. As their funding can only afford a small amount of contractors each year, it was a no-brainer to help with a day of hard labour.

And why would we do this? On the one hand the resilience and preservation of coastal foredunes relies on native sand-binding grasses and plants, which will be planted where we've cleared the pest plants.

On the other hand, it's what we do - make an effort to give something back to communities as recognition of our access to lands and tracks. And to show that we are responsible people who understand and work with the environment, unlike what is all too often portrayed in the media.

Starting at 10am and finishing mid-afternoon, with a BBQ for our lunch

break provided by Horowhenua District Council and run by Sharon from the Waitare Progressive Association, our members along with some local folk, also Derek and Dr Bob from MENT at Foxton Beach, and James from DOC, grappled with cutting down these dense plants, pasting poison on the stumps, and dragging them into so-called eco-piles where they will be periodically sprayed and will fairly quickly decompose.

The amount cleared was impressive, a bit hard to do justice to in a couple of photos - in retrospect we should have organised a drone to take aerial shots - oh well, next time.

While most of the NZFWDA members were from Wellington's Cross Country Vehicle Club, organised by the very able Kane, we also had Colin and Wayne representing Twin City 4wd Club, while Andy and Mary Ellen represented Taranaki Family 4x4 Club.

It was great that the Regional Council has recognised the value of our contribution and wrote a really nice letter to our National President and Zone President expressing their gratitude.

On behalf of the NZFWDA National Committee, I also wish to thank all those who came along and helped by contributing their valuable time and effort. It was very gratifying.

26 November 2025

Steve Adam
National President
New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association
president@nzfwda.org.nz

Dear Steve

Horizons Regional Council would like to acknowledge the New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association for their contribution over the weekend, 23 November, at Waitarere Beach.

Grant Purdie, from NZFWDA Central Zone, initiated the day by requesting how they could help with an environmental project. Waitarere Beach has a significant weed population of tree lupin and coastal wattle that is best managed if a large group of people help.

The NZFWDA had around 25 people arrive from Hawkes Bay (Colin Lindsay and Wayne Lovejoy from Twin City 4wd Club), New Plymouth (Andy and Mary Ellen Batchelor from Taranaki Family 4x4 Club), Wellington and Hutt Valley (Kane Hargreaves who organised over 20 members from Wellington's Cross Country Vehicle Club), with Grant Purdie and Colin Lindsay representing the NZFWDA Central Zone; plus quite a number of new recruits that are not yet members of the various clubs. This is such a significant generous turn out, particularly considering the small number of residents from Waitarere present and the hard work it was in the hot sun.

Everyone worked from 10 am to 2pm. They cleared most of the area beside the surf club and their labour resulted large piles of lupin and wattle. We will make sure this work is recognised locally, and we will follow up with further control to make sure this area is kept under control.

Yours faithfully



Craig Davey

Biodiversity, Biosecurity and Partnerships Manager

Before

"...it's what we do - make an effort to give something back to communities as recognition of our access to lands and tracks..."

After

Proud sponsor of Trail Torque:

ADVENTURE AWAITS



FIND YOUR NEAREST STORE OR STOCKIST



4X4 ACCESSORIES



THOMPSONS TRACK

WORDS & PHOTOS BY STEVE MORLEY
7 NOVEMBER 2025



The repair work is now completed for this year. Many thanks to Richard Cox for his donation of the 8 ton excavator, Flash, my tireless faithful companion and my own donation of my D4 for the weeks work.

It's not much fun tracking over rock, and it is very hard on the machines. The work was mainly bog holes, clearing of slips and re-establish water cuts to manage the annual rainfall.

Some vegetation and rocks were pushed back, but the entire track is in bad need of a vegetation cutback. Please consider assisting when the call goes out for an organised date. You don't need to belong to the 4x4 Clubs to really help.

If there are any complaints about the "fun" spots being removed...too bad. They have a way of happening due to weather events. For all the critics against Matamata/Piako Council, this is a champion example





- NORTH ISLAND

of how it works! Matamata/Piako Council were fantastic to deal with. They also assisted with funding for transport and fuel.

The track is as dry as an Arabs sandle atm, but we have 80 mm of rainfall this week coming, so go easy or the fresh earthwork will turn to mush.

For those asking "How did you

go with filling that big hole at the entrance?"

Steve says: "it's still there. I just created a high road next to it, within the legal road corridor. The track is a fantastic place for all users, so the hunters can do their thing, motor bikes like it fast, 4x4 hooners like mud. If there's no mud they dig the crap out of the water tables so the bog hole gives them an option."



ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE 4X4 COMMUNITY
"CHEERS MATE"

Why you should join a 4x4 Club...

As a member of a 4WD Club, you will be able to tap into the abundance of knowledge and experience of other members. This can be especially helpful if you are new to 4WDing and want to learn more about off-road driving techniques, vehicle maintenance and equipment advice. Club members can educate and train you on how to tackle certain tracks, and advise what gear ranges you should be on to ensure your safety is paramount.

You and your family will get the opportunity to travel with experienced drivers who have traveled far and wide and can provide expert advice on how to prepare for a trip, essentials to pack, and hazards to look out for.

Clubs meet at least once a month and these are a great place for your mental health, to catch up with mates,

create memories and meet new people with the same passions and interests.

Stronger in numbers, you are able to work together and negotiate rights to access tracks, parks and lands, to fight against possible restrictions and legislations, and to deliver new opportunities for everyone in the community. You are not only a part of a bigger movement but effectively contributing to the future of 4WDing and its development.

Check out this video about 4x4 Clubs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFtl5WqV2g>

And then, check out pages 19 & 20 of this edition for a 4x4 Club near you!

GIFFORD & THOMSEN FINALLY ON TOP AT EASTERN BAY TRIAL

POSTED ON NZ4X4TRIALS.CO.NZ BY DANIEL HOWAT



After coming so close on three previous occasions, Chris Gifford & Sam Thomsen take their maiden win in the NZ 4x4 Trials Series to kick off the 2025-2026 season!

The Superior Excavation National 4x4 Trial took place out of Whakatane in White Pine Bush, once again hosted by the Eastern Bay Twin Diff Club.

It was a hot, muggy day with changing conditions, with rain showers rolling in throughout the day to further add to the already evolving terrain! The Eastern Bay is notorious for its soft sandy ground. What might start as a rough & lumpy stage for the first team will often become unrecognisably smooth for the last team, as the terrain changes thanks to 40 trucks. That said, it doesn't stop someone from putting their foot down to dig some holes to rough it up again!

TOP FIVE

For the morning scores Scott Biggs & Phil Walton would hold a narrow two-point lead over Gifford & Thomsen. Fifty points behind them would be Ash Tonkin & Dyon Ross in third. Jarred Biggs & Fleche Crawford would be fourth, followed by Dave McKie & Reece McKie.

One of the courses that caught the teams out in the morning was Section 1, an ungraded sidling. An ungraded section is one where you must reach the finish gate (by either running over pegs or attempting a clean run), or risk taking a maximum penalty score of 100 points. There were a few rollovers on the day, with 11/40 teams failing to reach the end, with only three managing a clean run!

For the afternoon Gifford & Thomsen would keep their cool to take the win by 20 points ahead of Biggs & Walton, who suffered from a couple costly mistakes in the afternoon.

Dave McKie & Reece McKie would pull a switcheroo to take third place ahead of defending champ Jarred Biggs & Fleche Crawford in fourth.

In a sublime fifth place was Alastair Bevege & Grant MacDonald in their VQ35 powered Homebuilt, in only their

second Top 10 finish. It's the highest placing for a V6 powered buggy in over five years, when Phil Hobart finished fourth at South Waikato in 2019.

In their last appearance in C Class back in 2023, Angus Hamilton & Daniel Howat both rounded out the bottom of the score sheet. It's a different story for 2025 with The Compensator making its debut as the first 4-cylinder buggy from Nitro Customs.

Hamilton & Howat would start the day strong running second in class & ninth outright for the morning, despite also falling victim to Section 1. They would keep it consistent for the afternoon to come away with their first class win and finish 10th overall to boot! Throwing their hat in the ring for C Class honours straight off the bat, time will tell how the new kids on the block fare against the more seasoned competitors.

Rhys O'Brien & Clarrie Vazey would lead C Class in the morning and eighth outright, ultimately finishing a strong second in class and 12th overall at the end of the day for a K24 1-2.

Nathan Fogden & Mike Gibbons would take afternoon honours for C Class to

finish third in class and 14th overall. Defending champs Shayne Towers & Tony Hadland would be not far behind in fourth and 19th outright.

SUPER PRODUCTION

Paul Taylor & Danielle Taylor are back for another season of F Class, finishing the day despite their gearbox saying sayonara late in the afternoon!

BEST OF THE REST

Rounding out the rest of the Top 10... 3NZ Ash Tonkin & Dyon Ross would ultimately finish sixth overall.

Wayne Weatherly & Tayla Weatherly would continue their impressive streak of Top 10's in seventh. Shaun Nicholson & Mike Ferguson would finish in the Top 10 again with eighth.

Wayne Buckthought & Rachel Buckthought would also continue their strong form from the final to finish in ninth place.

Round 2 in Kaukapakapa took place in mid-December. Unfortunately, it is closed to the public, with the next round near Auckland taking place at Waiterimu on 21st March 2026.

For those in the lower north rejoice! As the next round open to public takes place in Whanganui on 1st February 2026.



Chris Gifford & Sam Thomsen would take their first win in "The Punisher"

TJW Photos

All you need to know about the New Zealand 4x4 Trials is available on line: Website: www.nz4x4trials.co.nz
Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/nz4x4trials>



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As a valued partner of NZFWDA, Rothbury Insurance Brokers are pleased not only to offer members our market-leading on and off-road vehicle cover, but a range of insurance options from home and contents through to business assets and liability too.

On top of this, our collaborative approach to supporting the association includes a referral agreement where we share a portion of our income back with the association. Between offering market-leading cover to members, and supporting the association, all whilst providing personal service and quality advice, we hope you'll leave your insurance needs to us!

2026 NZFWDA AGM

The following is a description of the pre-2026 AGM trips.

Events will be run in the Marlborough and Reefton area by the Marlborough four-wheel-drive Club.

All Participants need to be affiliated to the New Zealand four-wheel-drive Association and have their affiliation number for daily registration.

All attending activities need to have themselves and vehicles prepared for

a day four-wheel driving in the great New Zealand outdoors.

All vehicles need to be fit for purpose and carry safety equipment and recovery gear as required by their affiliated Club for the activities you are taking part in.

Early in the New Year, registration will open, forms for this and payment will be sent out, after registration closes

Trip information sheets for those taking part will be sent out.

All information will be available on the Marlborough four-wheel-drive Club website by following link: <https://marlborough4x4club.weebly.com/national-agm-2026.html> or going directly to website and following tabs. If you require more information, please reach out through the website contact panel.



BIG RIVER MINE - REEFTON

Monday 18th May - Cost \$25

The mine operated from 1882 to 1942. From 1907 to 1924 operations were at their peak, and over 100 people lived in the isolated settlement 30km from Reefton.

The 4WD access track, twisting through regenerating beech forest, passes many mining sites before opening out to the barren Big River settlement. This track includes sections of gravel road and rougher rocky sections, as well as stream crossings which flood in heavy rain.

Some parts are quite rough due to corduroy road construction over boggy sections. Drive out the same way. The road is also used as a walking and mountain biking track.

Today the relics around the mine and settlement sites are a source of fascination and a major attraction in Victoria Forest Park. In 2008 the area was registered as a Category I Historic Place.



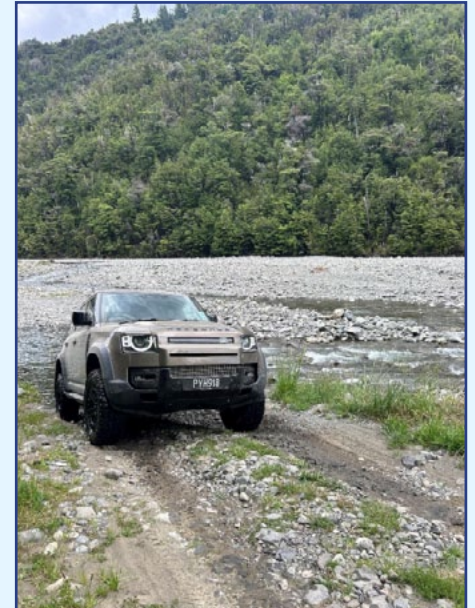
NAPOLEANS HILL - REEFTON

Tuesday 19th May - Cost \$30

The settlement of Napoleons Hill was a bustling, though rough, town during the 1860s gold rush, known for its many hotels, dance halls, and a significant amount of prostitution.

Today, the area is best known as an iconic 4WD track passing through tunnels with rivers in them, cut for gold mining many moons ago through some of the most amazing scenery. Access is through private farmland, requiring payment of a fee, but for our group the owners will provide an additional briefing covering the history of the area.

Much of the track follows river courses, so may not be accessible following heavy rainfall.



LEATHAM VALLEY - BLENHEIM

Wednesday 20th May - Cost \$25

Today takes us west of Blenheim to the once farmed Leatham Valley now regenerating back into Beach Forest.

The track follows the river up to the head of the valley, crossing it numerous times. On the way up to Gordon's Hut, we pass through Spaniards Flat an area that the Club helps control Wilding Pines.

The day offers great views and takes us into subalpine areas. The track is usually in good condition and is used by lots of anglers and hunters and has numerous stream and River crossings. None usually afford any trouble.



May 18th - 23rd
BLENHEIM - REEFTON - PICTON



Scan for more info.



TEMPELLO - BLENHEIM

Thursday 21st May - Cost \$25

The Grigg family purchased Meadowbank Station in 1913. Tony Grigg then subdivided Tempello off in 1951. Tony and wife Vivian were the first generation to run Tempello as a unit.

Since their passing, Tony's son David and wife Jo now own and operate this multi diverse long held family farm. The altitude of the property ranges from 300 to 900m above sea level, of the 4,8000 Ha of land, 2,600 Ha is effective farming. Annual rainfall is 600mm and is considered a dry land property. Situated in the Brancott Valley, it lies between the Awatere and Wairau valleys.

The development and character of the area give 4WD opportunities and challenges over rolling hills, deep gullies, rocky cliffs, streams and impressive landscape views of the immediate area and district. With elevation the Cook Strait and Wellington wind farms can be seen.

Hunting, sight seeing, tourism, 4WD and walking tracks are part of the diversification of this property, focusing on multiple landscape options and character differences e.g. Tin Pot Hut, Track Pack Gully, The Ned and more!



ORIENTEERING - BLENHEIM

Friday 22nd May - Cost \$25

Orienteering using the "what three words" app. This will take you around the Marlborough province with some questions to answer along the way. We will finish up the day at a local eatery.



MAUNGATAPU TRACK - BLENHEIM

Friday 22nd May (2ND trip) - Cost \$25

The Maungatapu Track is the main route for electrical power lines and fibre optic cable between Nelson and Marlborough.

The track passes through scenic native forest, exotic tree plantations, farmland and crosses the Maungatapu Saddle, which at 755m above sea level, is the highest point along the track. The track is only suitable for 4WD vehicles and is narrow, rocky windy and steep in places. A very scenic drive with just the right 4WD challenges for a leisurely day's outing.

The track largely follows the original route formed in the 1800s that was the main connection between Nelson and Marlborough prior to the present day Whangamoia road.

Access to the track is limited to quad bikes and 4WD vehicles who have to obtained a permit from the Nelson Council but is accessible at all times for walkers, mountain bikers, and motorbikes.



TOUGH TRUCKS - REEFTON AREA, (GRADE 5) - Cost \$25 per day.

Wednesday 20th – Friday 22nd May, We would be meeting in Reefton on Wednesday morning, so it is recommended that attendees stay the night in Reefton on Tuesday night. Friday afternoon would be reserved for the return trip to Blenheim.

Potential tracks include:

- Petrol Hill
- The Chasm
- Slab hut/Sawcut/Haydens Hill
- Trevs Hill
- Quarry Track
- Maori Gulley
- Bicycle Track
- Potentially Montgomery Hut

There will be deep ruts, rocks and very steep ascents/descents. The tracks planned are mostly Grade 5 tracks. Extreme mud tyres are recommended and a minimum tyre size of 35s. A working winch and snorkel would also be required.

Which tracks we do on which days may be weather dependant and alternative tracks may need to added if the weather doesn't permit those above.

NZFWDA AGM PICTON



The NZFWDA AGM Agenda will be sent to all Clubs by March 31st.

Pre AGM get together evening on Friday 22nd May, at a local Winery/ Brewery, meet & greet, drinks and food at own cost.

SATURDAY 23RD MAY 2026.
NZFWDA AGM, Queen Charlotte Yacht Club, Picton.

The AGM will run with the same format as last year with an auction and guest speaker through the dinner.

Auckland Four Wheel Drive Club annual picnic

WORDS & PHOTOS BY PETER VAHRY



The Auckland Four Wheel Drive Club continues its longstanding tradition of hosting an annual Christmas picnic. For the year 2025, the event took place on Sunday, November 30, at a private property located on the Kaipara South Head.

This property is owned by the chairman of the Kaipara South Head Landcare group, an organization with which the Club has collaborated for

many years on the annual Te Rau Puriri Regional Park planting project.

After a beautiful Saturday, the weather on Sunday was predicted to be showery by afternoon, which possibly deterred a few members, but those who did join in managed to mostly stay dry. Many of the members took the opportunity to explore the nearby Wilson Road sandy extension out to Muriwai Beach, before enjoying lunch

and probably the real reason to attend, the now traditional chocolate log and strawberries for dessert!

The passing rain showers relented for about an hour, allowing chairs and sun hats to be pulled out while lunch was indulged. Suitably gorged on chocolate log and strawberries and with more rain threatening, the members were packed up and heading home by 2.00pm.



Consultation for Territorial Authorities

We are still keen to receive information from anyone about any consultation opportunities that have come up.

This is mainly so that the NZFWDA can make submissions, which we can only do if we're aware of the opportunity.

The consultations we're talking about

are where a city council, district council, DOC or the Walking Access Commission or anyone else has drafted some document that is open for public consultation.

These are usually management plans of some form. Our interest is mainly anything to do with land access. On the one hand it's important to take every opportunity to suggest

amendments or additions to these documents to allow or increase opportunities for access. And on the other hand to object to anything that threatens our existing access.

Please send any information about consultation opportunities to the National Land Access Officer Peter Vahry at Vahry@nzfwda.org.nz

COMING EVENTS

Events Disclaimer. Care has been taken in entering details of these events. However NZFWDA does not take responsibility for any inadvertent inaccuracies or subsequent changes made by the event organisers. Trips and events will normally be hosted and organised by a Club or Clubs and not the Association itself. All events, trips and runs are the responsibility of the hosting Club. Potential participants should contact the relevant event organiser or Club. Email events to editor@nzfwda.org.nz

1 FEBRUARY 2026 NZ 4X4 TRIALS
2025/2026 National Trials Series.
Round 3. Whanganui. See nz4x4trials.co.nz for more.

21 FEBRUARY 2026 RURAL SUPPORT FUND RAISING DRIVE.
Hosted by the Offroad Wairarapa 4WD Club. Travel over the historic Castlepoint Station & Ica Station. Good All terrain tyres preferred & low range gear essential. \$100.00 per vehicle & driver. \$25.00 per passenger. Limited to 70 vehicles. Register by 15th of February 2026. More details on registration here. Queries bslaingnz@gmail.com or phone Bill & Sharon 06 372 6715 after 7pm.

21 FEBRUARY 2026 NZ 4X4 TRIALS
2025/2026 National Trials Series.
Round 4. Taranaki. See nz4x4trials.co.nz for more.

21 MARCH 2026 NZ 4X4 TRIALS
2025/2026 National Trials Series.
Round 5. Counties. See nz4x4trials.co.nz for more.

21 - 22 MARCH 2026 GIVE IT A GO ENDURO. Alford Forest, Methven.
Club trucks/Basic trailer trucks. \$75 for NZFWDA. Read full details and entry form here.

11 APRIL 2026 NZ 4X4 TRIALS
2025/2026 National Trials Series.
Round 6. Hawkes Bay. See nz4x4trials.co.nz for more.

10 - 23 MAY 2026 NZFWDA AGM & Trips. See page 8 & 9 for details.

24 - 26 JULY 2026 MAXXIS MUD & STEEL WINCH CHALLENGE Hosted by 4x4 Events. Read full details and entry form here.

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4x4 Events

28 November at 21:36 · 🌐

The dust has barely settled from the 4x4 Events - King of Canterbury, and already the stories are growing legs — climbs that looked impossible, lines nobody expected, and a few moments where horsepower was the only thing holding it all together.

If you were out there, you'll know exactly what we mean.

If you missed it... good news — Shane's just published the full video from the weekend.

It's a proper look at what makes this event one of the best on the calendar: clean camera work, tight action, and enough chaos to remind you why we do this in the first place. No hype needed — the footage speaks for itself.

Grab a beer, settle in, and watch some real off-road racing from right here in Canterbury.

Watch it here

King of Canterbury

Off-Road Enduro

YOUTUBE.COM

King of Canterbury Off-road Enduro racing New Zealand

4x4 Events put on another cracker race day. I spend a day followin...

19

Don't forget to hit subscribe on Shane's channel. The more support he gets, the more epic footage we'll see at the next event.

President's Corner

Steve Adam - Email: president@nzfwda.org.nz - Mobile: 027 228 8221

Just where has the year gone ?

As 2025 comes to an end, I have been pondering the past and the future; our Association will soon be entering into its 52nd year, some of you will still remember its inception, the things that have been achieved, the people who have come and gone all with the intent to do something good for Four Wheel Driving. My, things have changed, the vehicles, the Law, Access. The good old days of being able to pretty much go where you wanted with very little restriction. One thing that has been constant though is people with the same intent; some, you may not have agreed with at the time but looking back they all wanted the same thing.

So, what do we have to look forward to in the next 50 years? needless to say, we certainly have a head wind, Environmental issues, H&S is challenging, Access is rapidly becoming elusive, vehicles: where do I start ? Electronic this electronic that... to meet these challenges and make effective change we need those people with same resolve of the previous 50 years but going forward we, as a fraternity, must have a greater determination to have a much more robust sport / recreation.

I am delighted to say that I see that greater determination in people as individuals, in Clubs and in the Association. I would love to name names but at the risk of missing some

out, I shan't, but as a hint, I was fortunate to be able to sit in on a couple of NZFWDA working groups: Social Media and Regulatory recently, all still feeling their way but the undertone of what they are doing – Outstanding!

I feel the future for 4x4ing is looking decidedly rosy.

With the Christmas break upon us, I wish you all the very best for the holidays, please take care of yourselves. Happy 4x4ing.

Tread lightly
Steve Adam
President
NZFWDA



Obituary

Over the past two months, we have tragically lost three of our fellow 4x4 enthusiasts:

• **Ron Sturme** – At the end of September, Ron died in a car accident. Although I didn't have the pleasure of meeting Ron personally, his reputation & contribution to 4x4 Trials was considerable. He earned the 2013 NZ1 Champion title and was a formidable competitor, known for his skill, sportsmanship, and dedication to the sport. Ron served

in key roles, including Club President and NCO, and was a long-standing member of the Eastern Bay Twin Diff Club.

• **Bill Paterson** – Early in October, Bill passed away after a short battle with cancer.

• **Allan Stuart** – Two weeks later, Allan also passed away due to illness.

Both Bill and Allan were stalwarts of the Mid-Canterbury Four Wheel Drive Club, seldom missing a club event or meeting. They always had a

story to tell about their 4x4 adventures - the tracks they travelled, the rivers they forded - every trip was an adventure. Both were quick-witted, giving as good as they got, and were a delight to be around. I personally cherished the camaraderie these gentlemen brought to every outing.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of Ron, Bill, and Allan.

Steve Adam
President

The NZFWDA Governance Committee

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Tariq Wasim Vice-President vp@nzfwda.org.nz
Barb Adam Treasurer treasurer@nzfwda.org.nz
Bob Holmes Southern Zone President szpresident@nzfwda.org.nz
Sam Whalley Northern Zone President nthpresident@nzfwda.org.nz
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Chris Tomalin Comp Officer compofficer@nzfwda.org.nz
Neville Dunton Patron patron@nzfwda.org.nz

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE NZ FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION.

Awarded 2021 - Neville Dunton
Awarded 2021 - Mel Street
Awarded 2018 - Russell Quin
Awarded 2017 - Bob Holmes
Awarded 2017 - Eileen Revell (nee Austin)
Awarded 2017 - Steve McMinn
Awarded 2016 - John & Nonnie Cowper
Awarded 2015 - Ces Horan
Awarded 2015 - Kath Jaggard
Awarded 2011 - Peter Vahry

Northern Zone Clubs

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