



Legends of the Catskills

By Adam Rosenfeld

In 2005, I attended my first Catskills Jeep and I was so impressed with everything that weekend, I vowed to come back...OFTEN!

Keeping true to my word, 2009 marked my ninth Jeep Jamboree and my third time at the Catskills. How they can make a good event better year after year is a sign of just how dedicated everyone involved is. Even the T-shirts are cool.

The Catskill Mountains are located between the Hudson and Delaware River valleys and are home to the legend of Rip Van Winkle.

This year marked the 13th Jeep Jamboree in the Catskills and it marked a first for me of sorts. My previous Jamboree excursions had all been done in a Jeep Liberty. My sons and I enjoyed the notoriety that came along with wheeling the KJ - along with the friendly ribbing we sometimes endured too. But this year would be different. You see, shortly after the 2008 Catskills Jamboree ended, organizer, trail guide and friend Mike Taylor convinced me it was time to step up from the uni-body and get into a solid front axle "real Jeep." Well, let's just say he was right (and you owe me \$30k, Mike!).

My boys and I came to the Catskills with our brand new, Sunburst Orange Rubicon Unlimited. Yes, we were topless, doorless, and carpetless for the first time. We showed up at the event (not our first time off road with the JK), ready to test Murphy's Law of 4WD: "4x4's get stuck in harder places to get out of!"



Anyways, let's back up a bit. The Catskills Jeep Jamboree is a well run event. Mr. Willy's, host extraordinaire, knows how us Jeepers like to roll so to speak. He provides his parking lot for staging, partying, and for camping. How's that for generous. And get this: after a long day on the trails, you pull in to the lot and are immediately greeted by his wait staff. Talk about service!

As for the trails, well, I've always said the Catskills has some of the best terrain in the northeastern United States. Woods, check. Rocks, check. Water, check. Mud...oh boy, check out Love Canal for mud! The best part is that this is all private land. That's right, you cannot access this land any other way but on the annual Jeep Jamboree so a big THANK YOU to the land owners. While I'm at it, thanks to the Sherriff, the local merchants, mechanics, stores owners, and everyone else who really welcomes "our kind." Like I've always said, they know how to roll out the red carpet - and don't mind if we track mud on it - in Monticello, New York.



This year I decided to go back and do a trail I did five years ago with my Liberty: Hummel Hollow. That is a VERY tough trail for a KJ. So I went back with my Rubi and made mincemeat out of it! That was fun.

I also had the pleasure that Friday of wheeling with Will Morgan and his co-pilot from Jeep Jamboree USA in California. They were traversing the country in their JJUSA Rubicon in a cross-country excursion, featured in this issue of JPFreek.



On Saturday, I decided to "step it up" a bit and test the aforementioned Murphy's Law by doing a trail called 12-Step. That was a pretty tough trail that would have chewed up my fearless KJ. In fact, with 3" of lift on stock 32's, it took a few bites out of my JK! Next year, I'll have to step it up to 35's.

Meanwhile, back at base camp, the usual events took place. Great food, camaraderie, conversation, bon fires, shop talk, raffles, and charity fund raising. And while there were no marriage proposals this year – there was one at the 2008 event - everyone I saw and spoke to had a blast.

I have next year's dates already marked on my calendar (9/23-9/25), and now all I need are a few items before then. Let's see: winch, 35" tires, wheels... Where did I put my OK4WD catalog, anyway?



For more information about Jeep Jamboree U.S.A. or to view the 2010 schedule, please visit www.jeepjamboreeusa.com.

