



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DONALD SPUHLER
CA4WDC President

The California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC) wants you to join, and there are many reasons why you should! First, the CA4WDC is an association of member clubs, individual members, and their families all with an interest in outdoor recreation. The association also has many Associate members who are businesses that support outdoor recreation. If you're a four-wheeler or a business that sells to four wheelers you should take a look at us and become a member of our "four-wheeling family."

Let's take a look at four-wheelers in general. You may not think you fit the definition of a four-wheeler, but chances are you are one and you may not realize it. Are you a hunter, a fisherman, an outdoorsman, an explorer, a hiker, or do you just have an interest in outdoor activities? If you answer yes to any of these, then you may be a four-wheeler. Do you drive a vehicle to your favorite outdoor recreation area? Chances are if you do it is four-wheel or all-wheel drive and you need us and we need you to protect your access to your recreation!

The CA4WDC is basically a two-fold organization, dedicated to fighting to keep public lands open for use by the public and promoting family recreation. Funds from membership and monies earned by our special events are used for carrying on the battle. When I say special events, I do mean special! These events go on

year round throughout the state. We have snow runs in the winter, desert runs, and runs in the mountains. Our member clubs also have events throughout the state.

Are you new to four-wheeling and wondering where to go? Not to worry. Our events have different runs targeted toward all skill levels from the novice four-wheeler to the experienced rock crawler.

Several of our member clubs sponsor safety clinics that involve classroom training and hands-on instruction in the field on how to use your vehicle. Prices vary for our events depending on what's included. Some

include a choice of meals, and others include all of your meals for the weekend. You can learn more about our events by going to our website at www.cal4wheel.com. While you're there you can also see what we're doing to keep our lands open.

Don't forget the kids! They are welcome at all of our events. Most of

our events have kids programs that are part of the event. Our children even have their own organization called the "Voyagers." They have officers, their own page in our magazine, and participate in planning their activities.

In working to keep the lands open we maintain an office in Sacramento staffed by a full-time office manager



Drivers line up for a run at Panamint Valley Days.

who serves all of our members and is the person who answers the phone when you call. We also contract for the services of two Natural Resource Consultants (NRCs). These two individuals handle issues throughout the state divided into northern and southern areas. Our NRCs are our primary contacts with the land use

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managers throughout the state. They interface primarily with the Forest Service, BLM, and they work closely with the State's Off Highway Motorized Vehicle Recreation Commission. We also aren't afraid to litigate when necessary to protect your rights. By the way, this is where it can really get expensive, as I'm sure you know. We have our own lawyer and partner with other organizations in this area.

Another way CA4WDC works for the four-wheeler is to make sure that the agencies making rules regarding land use consider the needs of the recreational user. Sometimes the various agencies need to be reminded of our needs and we're not afraid to do it.

CA4WDC also contracts with a web coordinator who maintains our webpage (www.cal4wheel.com), and with an editor who produces the *In Gear*, our bi-monthly magazine, and its companion website at ingear4x4.com.

By far, our most important asset is our volunteers! It is our volunteers who band together to make our events possible and serve as our eyes and ears in the field, sharing information with the NRCs and each other. Our board of directors, which governs the association, is also all volunteers. One of the things that bring us all together is our common interests that include our love of the outdoors and the sport.

Our involvement in keeping the outdoors open doesn't stop here, we partner with the American Sand Association (ASA), the American Motorcycle Association District 36

(AMA 36) and the California Nevada Snowmobile Association to maintain a professional lobbyist in Sacramento who works with the legislature and the Governor on the state level to keep our lands open. We partner with national organizations to be represented in Congressional meetings on how to preserve our public lands and maintain access for our sports.



Esprit de Four safety clinic.

We also partner with nine other Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) organizations in the state that make up the California League of Off Road Voters (CLORV). This organization is dedicated to educating politicians and ensuring that they know we are out here. CLORV also has a Political Action Committee (PAC) that endorses and supports OHV friendly politicians.

CA4WDC was formed in 1959, and is currently the largest organization of its kind in California. We have grown steadily over the years and now have about 4,000 dues paying members, which amounts to roughly

10,000 people when considering family members. Along with our general memberships and associate (business) members we also have corporate sponsors. We currently have over 100 associate members. We also have about 20 corporate sponsors who donate money and product throughout the year to benefit our association. They are listed at the back of this publication.

Some other things we do include our annual sweepstakes vehicle. Each year at our convention we give away a brand new fully-loaded vehicle. This year's vehicle is a brand new Jeep Wrangler 4-door Unlimited. Tickets are sold throughout the year at \$2 each. All this will be happening at our Annual Convention that will be held in Visalia this coming February.

If you've read this far *you are* a four-wheeler and you need to belong to our extended family. Please join us in the fight to keep *our* lands open for recreation. Our dues are only \$45 per year and include the *In Gear* magazine. For much less than the cost of a tank of gas, you'll be doing your part in helping us to keep our public lands open for public use.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me by e-mail at dspuhler@cal4wheel.com. Additional information is also on our website at www.cal4wheel.com. You may also contact our office at 1-800-4X4-FUNN (1800-494-3866). Please complete the form on page 4 and join us *today!*

Thank you for your time, and welcome to the California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs. **IG**

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