

Expedition Sponsorship

**ALUMINESS
Front Bumper
Update**



2010 ARMY GREEN FJ

FJ C Magazine

January 2010 - Volume 3 Issue 1

One of the first
Army Green FJ
Cruisers in Colorado
enjoys the view of
Garden of the Gods
in Colorado Springs



CONTENTS

6 2010 Army Green FJ Cruiser

10 Expedition Sponsorship

14 BajaRack for Stock FJ Rack

20 Introduction to Adventure Travel



6

TECH

22 Our Storage Solutions



22

FEATURES

17 Aluminess Front Bumper Update

18 Featured Rig

24 New Products

26 FJ Cruiser Groups & Clubs

27 Events Calendar



14



24



Disabled Explorers

Adapt Overcome Explore

It is said that "what doesn't kill me makes me stronger", but that doesn't mean it leaves you happier or able to do everything you once could. However, we at Disabled Explorers believe that there is a peace and joy to be found in the wilderness, and regardless of physical mobility issues we want to help get you out there!

Our goal is to create a resource for vehicle based back country access by the disabled. Our motto is Adapt, Overcome, Explore and we are working to live up to that motto in the following ways:

Adapt: Vehicle modifications, equipment reviews, recovery methods, driver training, and more.

Overcome: Feature stories of those who are out there already, from amputees to those with spinal cord injuries

Explore: Trail ride-along events to introduce the disabled to the outdoors, presenting at land meetings to fight against trail closure, adapted trail guides and more.

For those of you who are currently able bodied, we could use your help with many of our activities while providing you with a chance to learn how to wheel with the disabled. Our desire is not to change the trails that already exist, but to keep them open so that people with mobility impairment can enjoy the same wilderness access that the able bodied have.

To find out how we can help you, or how you can help us, go to our website (www.disabledexplorers.com), email us at info@disabledexplorers.com, or call 602-451-6079.



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From The Staff

As we begin 2010, there are plenty of changes marking the way ahead. While we're preparing for large scale events like the FJ Summit, Cruise Moab, and Thrill on the Hill, the battle continues across the country to maintain our access to the back country.

We're proud to have partnered once again in 2010 with Stay the Trail to help spread the word of responsible off road driving throughout the Rocky Mountain Region. We're also excited to announce that we're now a Tread Lightly Media Member. We'll be helping to promote their mission of promoting responsible outdoor recreation in all forms. The responsibility for maintaining our access to all the beauty this country has to offer falls on every one of us.

Here are some things you can do to help in this cause:

- 1) Practice Stay the Trail and Tread Lightly driving techniques every time you're on the trail
- 2) Adopt a trail in your area, or help other groups with regular trail maintenance
- 3) Contact your local, state, and national representatives and let your voice be heard. Those looking to restrict our access certainly do.

We're very excited about what 2010 has in store, and hope you are too! If you see us at an event be sure to stop by and say hi, the only reason FJC Magazine is such a great success is because of your support. We'd love to say Thank You in person.

Get a printed copy



For FJ Cruiser Owners & Enthusiasts
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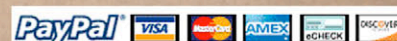
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Ready To Run!

With an upgraded engine, a few mechanical tweaks, and the gorgeous new Army Green color. The 2010 FJ Cruiser is ready to hit the trails!

The 2010 FJ Cruiser's have been available at dealers for a couple of months now. We were lucky enough to get in contact with Mike from Colorado Springs, who trekked all the way to Salt Lake City to pickup one of the first Army Green 2010 FJ Cruisers. We've already had one run with Mike in his '10, and in mid-December we were able to meet up to get some great up close shots of some of the changes for 2010.





From the outside, the color is the only thing that sets this '10 FJ Cruiser apart from earlier years. The Army Green is very close to what we expected from Toyota. I know many FJ Cruiser lovers were hoping for a 'matte' finish,

but we think the glossy-subdued-forest-green look works quite well for the FJ. Mike's Army Green (AG) came with Upgrade Package 2, so the door inserts are the same color. Overall this new color is now our favorite.



After popping the hood some of the bigger changes for the 2010 FJ Cruiser become very apparent. The newly redesigned engine looks very different. One issue we found on our initial trail run is that the engine cover is no longer bolted down. Instead Toyota is using simple clips to allow the cover to pop off more easily. This is not a great feature if

The glossy-subdued-forest-green look works quite well for the FJ

you're doing any major off road driving as it has a tendency to pop loose on moderate terrain.



**In Colorado,
We Stay the Trail**

www.staythetrail.org



Unlike earlier models, the engine cover is not bolted down on the 2010 FJ

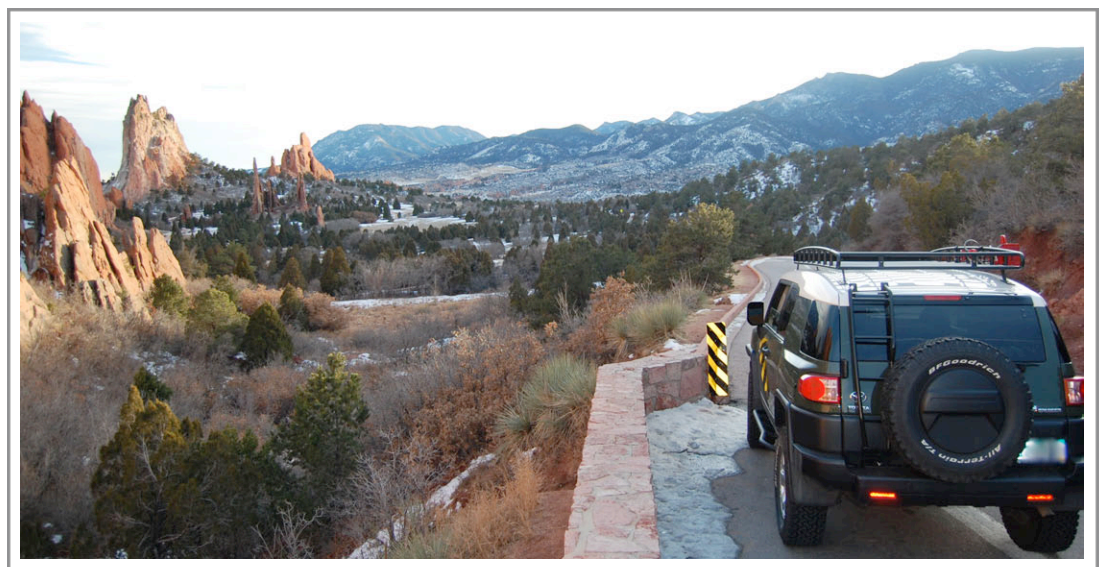
The oil filter has been moved and switched to a 'cartridge' type. This change from earlier models has not been received well since it's a little more complicated to change the filter. The idea is that since you're just changing the filter paper, there will be less waste & it will be better for the environment. While we understand this concept, we can't help but think that Toyota is hoping this will increase their in-dealership oil change revenue.

The other major change in the engine compartment is the windshield washer fluid reservoir. It's been moved down below the engine compartment and a long filler neck has been added. While at first this doesn't seem to be a big deal, if you're considering a front bumper, this change will leave the bottle exposed on the passenger side(on most aftermarket bumpers). Buying a bottle for a '07-'09 FJ Cruiser may solve this problem, but that has not been confirmed yet.

Small changes in the suspension system (most likely to improve turning radius) have not really affected the ability to lift the 2010 FJ Cruiser. Toytec Lifts has confirmed that their kits fit just fine on the new model. They did have to make a change to the swaybar relocation adapter that's included in some of their kits, but this was minor. We've not heard from other vendors yet, but we assume most other kits will work just fine as well.

While the new FJ Cruiser sports a slightly more robust stock skid set, many enthusiasts will still want a heavy duty upgrade. Due to a change in the mounting method on the front skid plate, some aftermarket skids for earlier model FJ's won't line up properly on the '10 models. Every vendor we contact is already working on a fix for this issue, so we expect to see 2010 front skid options available soon.

We're very excited to see many new 2010 owners around the community. Sales for FJ Cruisers are climbing at a steady rate, so hopefully Toyota decides to continue production of this modern day classic. The '10 models look & perform great and we can't wait to see them on the trails in 2010.



Bob's BD



Hometown: Larkspur, CO

Year: 2007

Color: Black Diamond

Tires: 285 MTR

Wheels: Pro-Comp Extreme alloy

Lift: OME

Bumper: Fab Fours

Rear Bumper: Metal Tech Wrap Around

Armor: All Pro Rear Diff Guard & T/C Cover

Winch: Warn 9500 Ti

UCA: Total Chaos

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Expedition Sponsorship

Is it really wheeling for free?

By Lance Blair

www.disabledexplorers.com

We all have that image of a dream rig covered in stickers, out on some epic adventure, writing our magazine articles or filming our TV show and not a penny came out of our pockets. Or maybe you have heard one of the thousands of people say something like “well I hit tons of trails and do cool stuff, company X should give me some gear”. Well what if I told you that hour for hour you will work harder when sponsored than if you just paid for things yourself? Follow along and you will see why.

First we need to clear up a few misconceptions with some questions you need to hear. Why you? Who really cares what you do or say? What have you done before that was worth knowing about? If you can't come up with some very high quality answers that you only need about 10 seconds to give, then read on, but keep those questions in mind.

It is important to know why a company might sponsor you and who your competition is. Magazine ads, racers, non-profits, the owners' brother in



Do things that people want to read/know/see so you will have a following for the sponsors

law, and even those people who pay full retail and then go post an excellent writeup on a forum or website, these are all your competition for those precious marketing dollars. And worst of all, most of these are easier and more proven than you as an unknown.

Companies sponsor in exchange for brand building exposure. Increasing sales is an indirect result (if you can show a direct result that is very powerful). You have to bring eyeballs to their product as well as influence wallets. This happens through shows, print, TV and the web. Plain and simple: if you can't reach

more people than a magazine ad then you have little chance.

So if I haven't scared you away yet, and you have some good answers to the “why you” question, then let's get down to 7 tips I can offer to get you those sponsor relationships:

#1 Go do something

Your money usually needs to come first, even if it is just taking something basic and going out. Create a blog or website to cover your trips. Practice writing, photography & video. Work on a proof of concept and audience building. Attend events and start to figure budgets, talk with companies as just a consumer & collect cards and faces.

You will work harder when sponsored than if you just paid for things yourself.

#2 Figure out your range and abilities (distance & skills)

It's almost impossible to magically make it your full time job from day 1, so you need to know your free time, the events you can attend, and start to build your skill sets. Adventures rarely would be enough for most vendors, promotion at events (or attending to seek sponsors) is also a must. Another question: will you install & document parts or work with a shop?

#3 Put together a custom proposal for each prospect and add each sponsor to the next proposal (create a train others want to ride)

Remember all those English classes you hated and those math classes full of stuff you thought was useless? Well guess what, now it is time to dust out that corner of your brain and get to work.



Pretty pictures and a nice layout are important, but you are pitching to business people who have a limited amount of time & money and a magazine ad (your competition) is a no-brainer.

Show them you are serious enough to know something about their product and make your proposal specific to them, if you can't put in that little bit of work how can they expect you to properly represent their products?

The background of the slide is a scenic photograph of a mountain lake with snow-capped peaks in the distance. The 'Adventure Insider' logo is in the top left, featuring a globe with a compass rose. Below the logo, the text 'Adventure Insider' is in large red letters, followed by the tagline 'The inside scoop on outdoor adventure' in a smaller, italicized font. A list of topics is on the left side, and the website URL is at the bottom center.

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- **Information & Instruction**

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#4 Negotiate

Every deal is different and everyone has their sweet spot. Find the happy medium that allows you to avoid burnout but still gives them a solid return on their investment. Remember it is very important to ask about and listen for the things that have value to that company. Some want help moving into social media, others don't get it and want traditional brochures handed out.

Have tiers or levels of sponsorship so that a company can find what fits their budget and hopefully move up year after year. Have some special things like visiting their company during the annual picnic, hosting a "check it out" afternoon where employees can poke around your rig to see all the cool stuff.

#5 Do what you said you would

If you list events on your proposal, you are now obligated to be there. If you list trips you plan to make you better be out there. If you mention expected magazine articles or TV news coverage, your keyboard better be burning up and your voice should be pitching those stories. Otherwise not only are you killing yourself for the future, but you are seriously messing things up for the rest of us!

#6 Tell each partner what you did, what you are going to do and give honest feedback (yours and the people you encounter including price, perception, and product name)

This is a tough one for many folks, follow through makes a huge difference but is a lot of work. Sure

you went to those events, sure you completed the Epic Trip but until you make the sponsor aware and understand the value you brought them, it was all for nothing.

Also keeping in touch on a quarterly basis will allow you to work together with your sponsor for events, tie into new marketing they might be doing and just keep

your name familiar to them.

The toughest part though is providing that honest feedback that comes from your experiences or the comments that you received at events. In a perfect world your report would be "the axle worked perfectly and everyone we met loves Dynatrac", however in the real world it might be "the tires have shown excellent tread life but we have noticed some side wall cuts after use in shale and at events customers have reported frequent puncture problems". Of course this should be accompanied by "we would recommend additional ply's or a change in compound if XXXX has an opportunity to make product changes."

#7 Renew your relationship or move on

As if it wasn't enough to get a company on board as a sponsor, the real work comes about in keeping them (and hopefully upgrading levels). It is much easier in the retail world to keep a customer than acquire new ones. However in the sponsorship world this often isn't the case. New products, other marketing venues, limited budgets, changing personnel, your follow through, there are an endless list of reasons why a company might not renew an agreement. It might even be that you have found a better product or an equal product from someone offering a better deal.

The key is to realize when you are beating a dead horse and move on in a way that keeps a relationship positive and something that can be renewed later.

I have saved the two most important pieces of advice for the end as your reward for making it this far.

First, always remember the companies who were first to believe in you, always give them more than they pay for and always treat them the best. Maybe they are small or maybe they aren't pitching in the most money now, but there was a time when they gave you a chance and you should never forget that.

Second is that most companies fail to maximize on their sponsorship dollars, if you can become a marketing partner and supply them with high resolution pictures for ads, get a TV crew to come to the factory, make sure your testimonials are in the brochures and make sure they are getting a great return on the investment then the odds are you will be very successful.



Pictures have to tell a story and show the sponsors names

Lance Blair is an overlanding enthusiast, expedition leader, and Tread Lightly trainer. He's also the founder of Disabled Explorers, a non-profit group dedicated to helping mobility impaired outdoor enthusiasts gain access to the backcountry. He's a regular contributor to FJCruiserForums.com, the Expedition Portal, and of course FJC Magazine. Lance can be contacted through the [Disabled Explorers](#) website.

Matt's BD

Hometown: Austin, TX	Bumper: ARB w/ IPF & Kragen HID lights
Year: 2007 AT	Rails: OEM
Color: Black Diamond	Winch: Smittybilt XRC10
Tires: 285 Firestone Destination MT	UCA: Light Racing
Wheels: Granite GA9 Alloy	Other: Midland CB, Scanguage, Custom
Lift: SAW front coil-overs & Rear Springs	CO2 Tank
Shocks: OME	

A Rack Upgrade For Everyone

By Taft Babbitt

Everyone loves a great roof rack! To be classified as a great rack, it needs both form and function.

Unfortunately, the stock FJ Cruiser rack has form, but falls short in functionality. The stock rack adds to the cosmetic appeal of the FJ but the design of it lacks full functionality, specifically in the front half of the rack.

Lucky for us, BajaRack out of Vista California, has created a great looking and fully functional solution that won't break the bank. BajaRack offers a modified version of The Mule rack specifically for the FJ Cruiser OEM rack. The rack is light, easy to install, and looks great. The BajaRack fits inside the front arms of the stock FJC rack and mounts with brackets along each side. At first, I wondered how the lines of The Mule and the stock rack would align, but once the rack was in place the lines looked great and gave my FJC a tougher, more complete and capable appearance. The airdam on the front of the BajaRack really seems like the finishing touch that the stock rack lines were missing.



The construction quality of the BajaRack is what we've come to expect as very picky FJC owners. The welds and powder coating were flawless in both quality and appearance. Installation took less than an hour by myself, even though the instructions warn that installation should be done by two people. The rack holds 300lbs and comes with a cargo net that looks great and secures gear well. There has been no noticeable change in wind noise at low speeds or highway speeds with the rack installed. In addition to making the front of the stock rack fully functional, the addition of the BajaRack allows you to move all your stock cross members to the rear. This increases the functionality and load bearing capabilities of that rear area over what you would be able to do if stock cross members were spread out evenly along the roof.



Get It!
BajaRack
www.BajaRack.com
760-621-0171

Loading the BajaRack is easy with the doors open and it holds an impressive amount of gear. I was able to fit a large spare gas canister, a thermos, firewood, and a duffle bag full of recovery gear without a problem. The BajaRack is a good place for gear that can treat the inside of your FJ roughly. The netting works well in securing your cargo, it's elastic and has plastic hooks which secure tightly to the rack. While securing all the gear with the cargo net (which is included in the rack) two of the plastic hooks did break. The temperature was very cold that morning, about 12 degrees. We contacted BajaRack and they are shipping a new net, no questions asked. However, you should be careful when securing the hooks in cold temperatures. I did not use any additional means to secure the cargo and on both the trail and the highway all items stayed in their proper place.

The size of an FJC allows you to traverse trails and terrain that larger full size off-roaders would find difficult, but this trade off means less cargo space. Finding places for all the equipment needed for a safe and prepared wilderness experience can get challenging quickly and therefore makes the addition of the BajaRack almost a necessity, especially for longer expeditions. With great craftsmanship and excellent lines for a strong aesthetic appearance, the BajaRack is an extremely attractive option for the budget aware FJC enthusiast, costing only \$375.00.

Taft Babbitt is an avid off road enthusiast and a regular contributor to FJC Magazine. He can be contacted at taft@fjc-mag.com.



UPDATE

ALUMINESS FRONT BUMPER

We've been running the Aluminess FJ Cruiser front bumper for a little over six months now so we thought it was time to give an update on how it's working out for us.



That's another great feature of such a light bumper, it's easy to handle with just one person.

We installed the Eagle Eye Lights that were included with the bumper back in April, but didn't get the wiring done until mid-July. The wiring went OK and we used the Tacoma fog light switch to keep the same look inside the FJ <photo>. Since the fog lights are low in the bumper, they're the first

So far this bumper has exceeded our expectations. It's light, strong, and holds up well to everything we've thrown at it. It didn't take long after we installed the bumper to get a ding as well as a scuff <photos>. On a tight trail just outside Idaho Springs, CO we barely squeezed between two trees on a difficult climb, which resulted in the first scuff. Shortly after (on the same trail) we got bumped by a Jeep Wrangler that was in a bit of a hurry to get turned around. That left a small ding in the bumper that we still haven't touched up. Since this bumper is made of aluminum, we don't have to worry about rust. In fact, other than those two minor incidents, this bumper looks just as new as it did when we installed it.

thing that gets hit by any rocks or debris from the road. As a result both lights are cracked, although they still work OK. We'll be looking for a new set of 6" lights that have rock guards soon.



Overall the Aluminess Front Bumper for the Toyota FJ Cruiser has worked very well for us. We really like the fact that it weighs a scant 8lbs more than the stock plastic bumper (not including the

For the October issue we had to remove the bumper to install the Smittybilt RC8 winch. The first time we installed the bumper it took about 3 hours (with three people). When I installed the winch, it was a solo project. I was able to use a floor jack to support the lightweight bumper and lower it down after all the bolts were removed. I left the bumper supported on the floor jack while the winch was installed, and simply lifted back up with the winch so it could be re-attached.

winch), and the smooth powder coat finish holds up to the elements well and is easy to clean. We've had this bumper caked with mud, buried in dirt, and covered with ice & snow and haven't had any issues. It's as strong and great looking as the day we installed it, so we expect many years of service from this solid bumper.

Resources:
Aluminess Products, Inc.
www.aluminess.com
619-449-9930

Featured Rig

LANDSHARK

Not your **average** daily driver



Our featured rig for this issue started as a 2008 SandStorm AT FJC, but Nicholas has transformed it into the LandShark.

The mod list for this truly unique FJ Cruiser is spectacular. Let's run through all the modifications by category:

Suspension and Tires

- Total Chaos 2" long travel kit
- Sway-Away front remote reservoir coil-overs
- Custom Sway Away long travel rear shocks
- Custom long rear springs
- Beard Limiting straps
- BFG KM2's 35-12.50-R17
- Walker Evans Rims

Armor

- Budbuilt stainless steel skids
- Outrider rear link skids
- Outrider shock skids
- Outrider rear differential skid
- Manik Tail light guards

Lights

- N-Fab Front and rear light bars
- Silverstar ultra head lamps
- 2- LightForce HID's on bumper
- 5- LightForce 170 Strikers on roof
- 2- Acro HID fogs in bumper
- 4- KC Flood lights on rear rack
- Vision X rock lights

Electronics

- Garmin GPSMAP 478 with XM weather and NEXRAD radar
- Cell booster
- Scan Gauge2
- Dirty Parts Dual battery system with Optima yellow top
- 3 auxiliary fuse boxes (under hood, front passenger, rear cargo area)
- ARB onboard air compressor



Performance

- Flowmaster Muffler
- Snorkel
- TRD Super Charger
- Yukon 4.88 gears
- ARB front air locker

Interior

- Ellis Precision Handles and Battery clamp
- IMP shift knobs
- M-Pac racks
- ARB fridge/freezer
- RAM laptop mount
- Power Tank
- Raingler nets

Exterior

- Metal Tech Tube Doors
- Gobi Ladder

- Desert Camo Wrap
- Bushwacker fender flares
- Demello high lift mounts
- Four Trax Pull Pall mounts
- Camping Labs Awning

Stereo

- Clarion Marine video head unit
- Polk Marine speakers all the way around
- 2 – JL marine amps
- 12" JL sub in Wicked CAS enclosure.



Dreaming of your next adventure?



We sure are.

The Toyota Land Cruiser Association is a club dedicated to bringing Toyota 4-Wheel Drive enthusiasts together. Visit us at www.tlca.org to learn more.



TLCA membership includes a subscription to **Toyota Trails** magazine, featuring in-depth tech and trail articles, event listings, TLCA merchandise and Land Cruiser classifieds.

Toyota Land Cruiser Association
P.O. Box 230, Verona, KY, 41092
(800) 655-3810 • www.tlca.org

Nicholas isn't done yet either! The LandShark is currently up in Oregon at [Metal Tech](http://MetalTech.com) getting a major overhaul. Here's what's currently being installed:

- Atlas Transfer case
- Metal Tech front bumper
- Metal Tech rear bumper
- Custom Exhaust
- Metal Tech custom 3 link long travel rear links
- Metal Tech rear tube door
- Light Racing Jounce bump shocks front and rear
- Total Chaos alignment tabs
- Outrider/Rocktek custom sliders

Check out this story at fjc-mag.com for pics of all the new mods!

ADVENTURE TRAVEL, AN INTRODUCTION

Erick Pound ~ AdventureInsider.com

I lick my lips and find them very salty. The sweat is now running down my face in an unsteady stream and it's becoming all too obvious that I'm rather out of shape, but this is no time for giving up. It's all I can do to just hold on much less move up. Before I knew what had happened I was sitting in my harness, rope taut, heart pumping, smiling from ear to ear. I was about



Morning Fog in
Glacier National Park

t e n f e e t
f r o m
c o m p l e t i n g
t h e l e a d o f
t h e s e c o n d
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w h a t m a y b e
m o s t
f a m o u s
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G u n k s ' H i g h
E x p o s u r e ,

and this is exactly what I had come for. The rush of the challenge and the satisfaction of overcoming them are what makes adventure travel so appealing to so many.

What is adventure travel?

Adventure travel takes many forms, from climbing Mt. Fuji to SCUBA diving the Great Barrier Reef. That said, what is considered adventure varies person-to-person. The point of adventure travel is that you are seeing areas that are generally not a major tourist destination and participating in activities that may push you outside your comfort zone.

Why do it?

Ask 100 people why they enjoy adventure travel and you are likely to get 100 different answers. Most will center around the common theme of personal satisfaction. The memories of accomplishing a climb to the top of a mountain or kayaking with whales are never to be forgotten and the rush you experience will likely have you coming back for more. While some people enjoy adventure travel for the rush or personal satisfaction, many see it as a way to explore ones self. A great amount of clarity can

be found in solitude and you can really learn a lot about yourself when perched high on a cliff face. Why people do it varies greatly but the fact that we do it gives us a commonality.

Where do I find adventure travel?

Adventure travel can be found as far as Antarctica or as close as your backyard. It can be as grand or as laid back as you desire. One of the best rock climbing destinations in the world, the Shawangunks or "Gunks", lies just 90 miles north of the largest metropolitan area in the U.S., New York City. On the other side of the coin, many travel operators offer trips to Antarctica and just recently a couple have started offering cruises through the Northeast Passage, which had been closed to foreign travelers for over five decades. Whether you are looking to just get your feet wet with Inn to Inn hiking in Vermont or go all out at a destination around the world, you will certainly find something that will suit you.

If you don't know where to start, don't worry. Although the best trips are the ones you set out to create yourself, there are many sources to help you get started. The internet has made it almost too easy to find trips both near and far. Magazines such as National Geographic Adventure are excellent resources to get you started in adventure travel. If you are looking for some simple adventures near your home, check out iPhone apps or websites such as

www.geocaching.com that will set you out on a high-tech scavenger hunt. One of the best sources can be your local outdoor or SCUBA shop. The experts there can get you set up with something that suits your needs.

Raggeds Wilderness, CO



What is required for adventure travel?

The only requirement is an open mind and clothing suitable to your adventure. Because adventure travel encompasses so many activities, the required equipment can vary from just a comfortable pair of shoes to thousands of dollars of mountaineering equipment. Don't worry, if you do happen to get interested in an adventure that requires a large amount of equipment, it will be acquired over time and you can generally rent it until you become more experienced. If you possess the desire to explore the road less traveled, you have all that

is required.



Quick Tips

- Travel light. You will be on the move and your luggage will be a burden. Find items that will serve multiple purposes and pack as little as practical.
- Dress appropriately. Cotton is not conducive to staying warm and dry in the outdoors. Opt for wool or synthetics to keep you dry and warm even when wet.
- If you are new to a particular activity seek expert guidance. Read the article on adventure [travel safety](#) at Adventure Insider.

Erick is an avid adventure traveler and founder of [Adventure Insider](#). He currently spends his time climbing, snowboarding, backpacking, hiking, and learning new sports.

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OUR STORAGE SOLUTIONS

As our family grows, properly organizing the limited amount of space inside the FJ has become even more important. When it was just Angie, our two dogs and I; simply dropping the seats down and stacking everything in the truck worked fine. With our first baby on the way, we decided to do a couple of quick mods to help us stay organized.

The first is one we've been thinking about for quite a while. We love the storage console between the front two seats, but the open top just increases the chance of that area getting stuffed with junk. The Roll Top Cover from Industrial Forming is a very functional, great looking, inexpensive way to organize that area. We chose the non-locking Panamint aluminum model, in black to match the TRD. Installation took literally two minutes, and the new cover works perfectly. We can now keep the bare essentials in the storage console, and all the junk can find a home elsewhere. The Roll Top Cover will also function well when the little one starts jumping around the FJ (when parked, of course), since it's designed to hold up to 160lbs.



The other major storage issue we've been experiencing in our FJ is our recovery & emergency gear. The first step in solving this problem was installation of the M-Pac rear door rack. The four large pouches are a perfect fit for most of our lighter gear. The First aid kit, jumper cables, straps, bungee cords, extra fuses, and of course duct tape all fit perfectly. The rack installed quickly & easily and looks great. That mod left our heavy recovery gear, backup air compressor, tool box, map bag, and tripods still floating around in the back of the truck.

We've seen (and covered) several different rear storage box options. From the expensive and bulletproof Tuffy drawer system to DIY wooden boxes complete with heavy duty sliding drawers, there is no shortage of ideas to organize the back



of your FJ Cruiser. For our solution, we chose to do a simple, cost effective, and easy to do DIY project. Since we have a couple Toyota Trail Teams tool bags that we already use, we don't really need a drawer or hinged top system. We just need to be able to get our gear out with the back door open. So after careful consideration of time, tools, and material, we chose to design a basic storage box.





The finished storage box before installation

The total bill for this box at Home Depot came to just \$34.60. Here's our parts list:

- ✓ 0.5" thick MDF Board pre-cut to 24" X 48" (2 boards total)
- ✓ 1 box 1.5" wood screws
- ✓ 10 foot length of 2"X6" wood board
- ✓ 24"X48" indoor/outdoor carpet runner

The only other items used for this build were a circular saw, a drill with the proper bits, black finishing nails, and wood glue.

We chose to make our box the exact same size as the all-weather cargo mat, so it would be easy to protect with the mat (41.5" wide X 28" deep). So we cut the MDF boards to 41.5" wide, and used the leftover wood to create two 4" by 41.5" strips from the third piece to fill out our top & bottom. Then we cut our three support pieces 28" long from the 2X6. To keep things tight, we pre-drilled all the holes and used wood glue to seal the pieces together. We then covered the top with the indoor/outdoor carpet and transferred the cargo



A simple, quick, and inexpensive storage solution

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hooks from the floor of the FJ to the new box. We added the all weather mat and ran a bungee cord between the hooks to hold it down. We did have to cut a small hole in the right side so we still have access to the power outlet.

As you can see now all of our FJ Cruiser bags fit perfectly in the box, and the dogs have a nice place to hang out when we're on the road. The best part is, we no longer have to worry about all of our gear flying around in the back of the FJ, and our rear storage area is very usable. This box was quick & easy to build and works great for our needs.

Have you built a custom storage box? We'd like to see it! Send your pics & description to pics@fjc-mag.com or use our photo upload form & we'll add them to this article.

Resources:

[Roll Top Cover](#)

[M-PAC Springtail](#)

[FJ Cruiser Storage](#)

NEW PRODUCTS

2010 has started out great for new products for your Toyota FJ Cruiser! Aluminess just announced two new (and long awaited) products: a rear bumper and all aluminum roof rack.



Their Rear Bumper weighs just 70 pounds and has two swing arms designed to carry a spare tire and utility box. If you're running tires up to 32" the box will hold 3, five gallon jerry cans. Larger tires will result in a smaller utility box area. You can also upgrade to a sealed locker measuring 18" wide x 24" high x 16" deep in place of the utility box.

The bumper can be ordered without the swing arms as well, which will lower the overall weight. As far as we can tell, you cannot use the rear window with the drivers side swingarm in place. It's easy enough to swing that out of the way to use it though. Aluminess avoids the dreaded plastic cutting that many aftermarket bumpers require by building their bumper to wrap around the rear of the FJ. This bumper is compatible with the backup sonar found on many FJ Cruisers, but the rear backup camera will take a little extra modification to install on this bumper.



We look forward to seeing this bumper in action and expect that it will be included in a future rear bumper comparison.

The basic bumper starts at \$745 and will run \$1,895 with both swing arms & the utility box. Contact Aluminess for more information.



Aluminess Products, Inc.
www.aluminess.com
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If you're looking for a lightweight yet heavy duty roof rack, the new all aluminum rack from Aluminess will certainly fit the bill. While the weight limit of the stock roof rack is relatively low (mostly due to the plastic crossmember mounts), according to Aluminess this rack will "will hold more weight than the vehicle roof". This rack has been engineered to be very strong, so it doesn't matter if you're hauling wood for a custom storage box (see page 22) or adding a roof top tent, this rack will be able to handle it.



Aluminess can also increase the number and size of the cross bars in the center of the rack to hold more weight as well. Right now the rack doesn't include an air dam or tabs for lights, but we're told Aluminess is looking into both of those options. Starting at \$995 (\$1,295 including slats) this rack is very cost effective considering the features. We look forward to seeing one up close very soon.

Aluminess Products, Inc.
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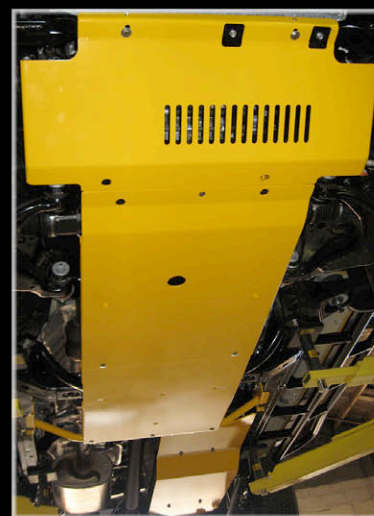
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For more Toyota and FJ Cruiser groups and clubs, visit www.fjc-mag.com. Look for the FJ Groups & Clubs link.

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FJ Cruiser Events

Lone Star Jamboree 2010

Dates: Jan 15-17 2010

Location: Gilmer, Texas

Contact: [Lone Star Jamboree Website](#)

Mud N Yer Eye Frolic

Dates: April 23-25, 2010

Location: Hollister Hills, California

Contact: [Mountain Transit Authority](#)

2010 Cruise Moab

Dates: April 28 - May 2 2010

Location: Moab, UT

Contact: [CruiseMoab.com](#)

22nd Annual Rubithon

Dates: June 15-20, 2010

Location: Rubicon Trail, California

Contact: [Rubithon.com](#)

Coal Mine Cruiser Classic

Dates: July 8-10, 2010

Location: [Rausch Creek Off-Road Park](#),
Joliett, PA

Contact: [Gotham City Land Cruisers](#)

Great Smoky Mountain Trail Ride

Dates: July 7-13, 2010,

Location: Golden Mountain ORV Park
Sparta, Tennessee

Contact: www.upstatecruisers.net/gsmtr

Black Hills Cruiser Classic

Dates: July 14-17, 2010

Location: Black Hills, South Dakota

Contact: [Dakota Territory Cruisers](#)

2010 FJ Summit

Dates: July 21-25 2010

Location: Ouray, Colorado

Contact: [FJ Summit Website](#)

2010 Thrill on the Hill

Dates: Sept 3-6 2010 (Labor Day Weekend)

Location: Cloudcroft, NM

Contact: [Thrill on the Hill Website](#)

For the latest event news & coverage, visit FJC-Mag.com and click on Event Calendar

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FJ Nation



*Have a great pic of your FJ?
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