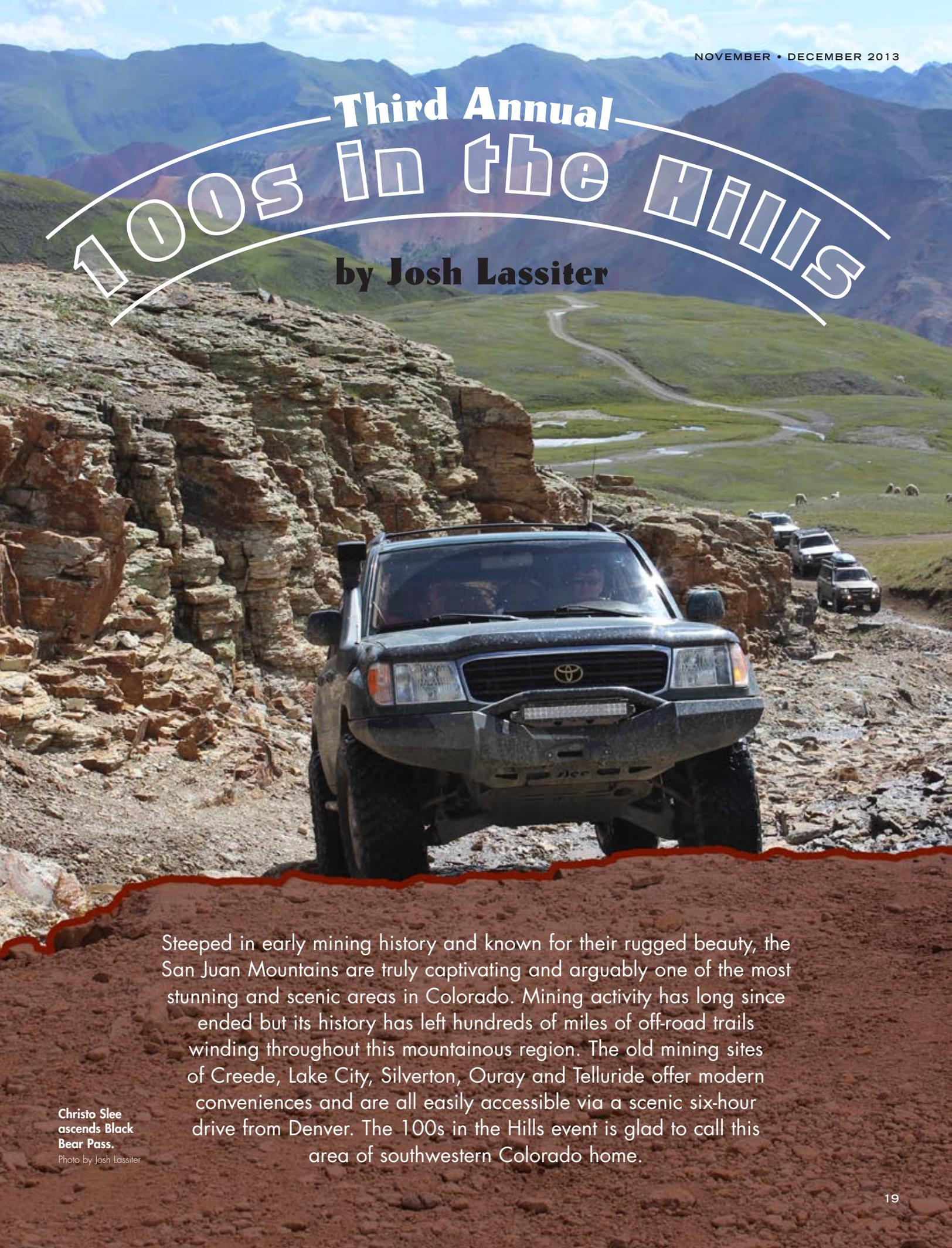


100s in the Hills

Third Annual

by Josh Lassiter



Steeped in early mining history and known for their rugged beauty, the San Juan Mountains are truly captivating and arguably one of the most stunning and scenic areas in Colorado. Mining activity has long since ended but its history has left hundreds of miles of off-road trails winding throughout this mountainous region. The old mining sites of Creede, Lake City, Silverton, Ouray and Telluride offer modern conveniences and are all easily accessible via a scenic six-hour drive from Denver. The 100s in the Hills event is glad to call this area of southwestern Colorado home.

Christo Slee ascends Black Bear Pass.

Photo by Josh Lassiter

TOYOTA TRAILS

Following Cruise Moab a couple of years ago, a group of 100 series Land Cruiser owners began considering the idea of a San Juan wheeling and camping weekend. Emails, personal messages and texts were sent out and planning began quickly. We agreed on a weekend and met in the Ironton mining district just south of Ouray in August of 2011. The weekend was spent exploring the numerous trails, ghost towns and mining settlements during the day and enjoying good food, beer and friendly company around the fire in the cool mountain evenings. It was great to gather a group of people who had a common interest in the 100 series platform and to share vehicle modification ideas and wheeling stories. The last night at camp, there was discussion of another 100 series run the following year. Everyone was on board and the 100s in the Hills event was officially born.

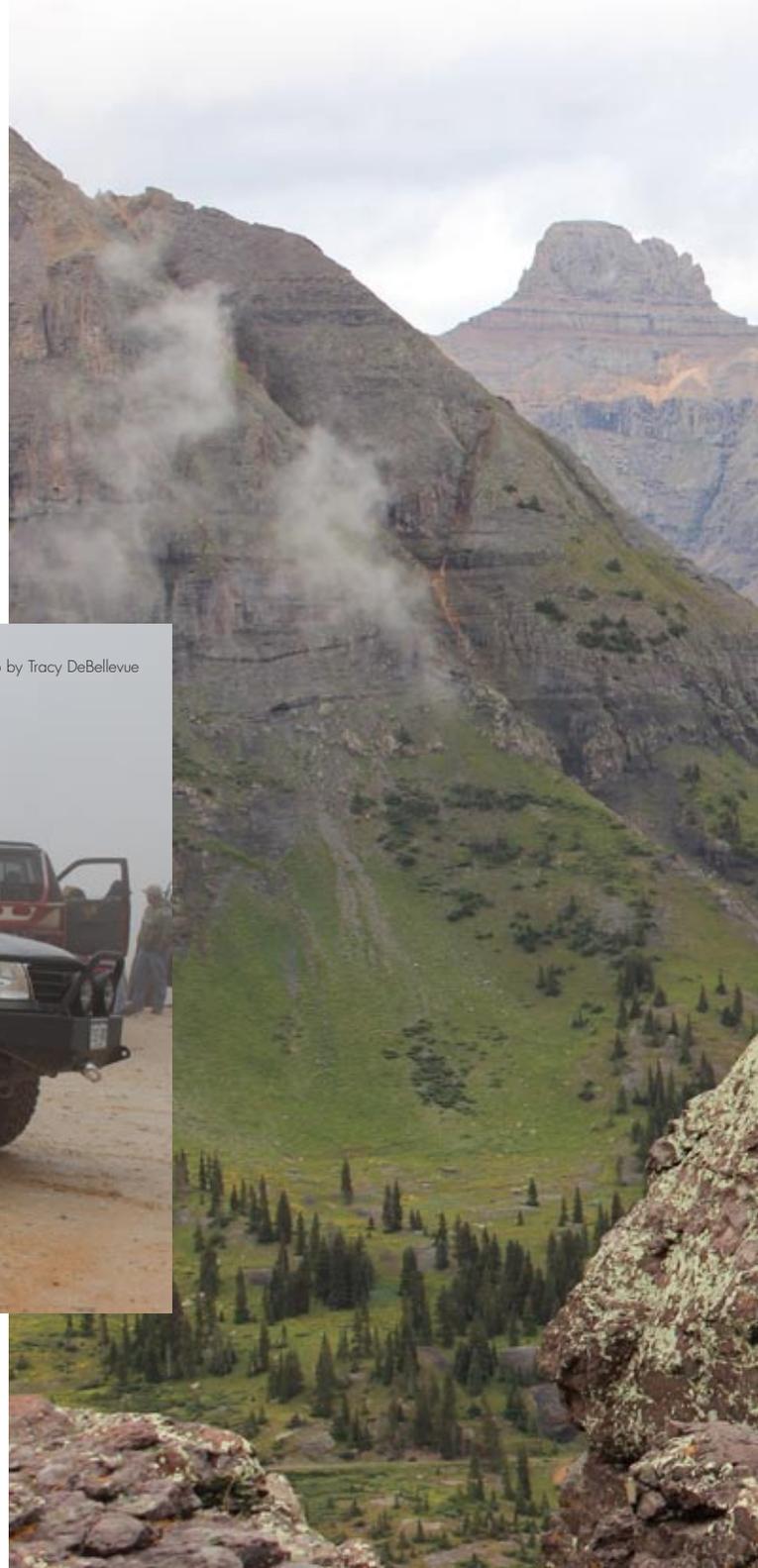
Josh Lassiter checks in on Imogene Pass.

Photo by Tracy DeBellevue



The next year, our second annual event brought even more attendees. Slee Off Road became interested—and is now a premier sponsor. We changed the camp location to a secret spot off the beaten path and pushed the date back to September. This particular time of year provided fantastic fall colors and even added some early snowcapped mountains as a bonus. The group traversed multiple trails that weekend, including the entire Alpine Loop, which covered sixty-five miles of the San Juan's most scenic areas. The event was definitely growing but we were determined to stay true to our original grassroots ideas.

This year's Third Annual 100s in the Hills event was the largest to date and completely exceeded our expectations. The four co-directors began planning months in advance and the continuous interest was overwhelming. We returned to the inaugural event's campsite in Ironton, which provided plenty of room for the twenty-seven vehicles and more than sixty-five guests. Attendees arrived with roof top tents, ground tents and off-road camping trailers, while a few stayed in the historic hotels in nearby Ouray. One thing was certain: everyone came to have a good time and explore some of the best scenery Colorado has to offer. We had a very diverse guest list this year,



with people from as far away as Virginia and California, including some making their first visit to Colorado.

The trail system in the San Juan Mountains is relatively easy to navigate and most of the trails are non-technical. During this year's three-day event, we covered some of the most popular trails: Clear Lake, California Gulch, Poughkeepsie Gulch, Ophir Pass, Imogene Pass (the second highest pass in Colorado) and of course, the infamous, Black Bear Pass. These trails offered spectacular scenery with crystal clear alpine lakes, waterfalls, white-knuckle shelf roads, challenging obstacles and historic gold mines and ghost towns. With three solid days of mountain trails and stunning scenery, no one left disappointed.



Josh Lassiter's 100 series, with Imogene Pass in the distance.

Photo by Josh Lassiter

Each day, there were two to three groups running different trails and most of the trail rides ran late into the afternoon. After two full days on the trail, everyone met back at the campground for one of the best parts of the event: the raffle and potluck dinner. The food was incredible; everyone really put some effort into the dishes they brought. With pork adovada, green chili, gumbo, pulled pork, smoked meat, dips, salads and tons of desserts, there was something for everyone—truly a gourmet spread.

After dinner, we started the raffle. We had some outstanding prizes this year—awnings, roof racks, shocks and gift certificates—donated by our twenty-three generous sponsors. With the potluck and raffle over, everyone exchanged trail stories around the fire while the kids played—and we even had some minor campground wrenching that added to the fun.

Black Bear Pass, one of the most popular and well-known trails in Colorado, was the perfect finale for the event. This is not a

technically difficult trail but it is intimidating—especially the first time you run it. Leading the group up the trail, I stopped at a picturesque switchback where we were surrounded by spectacular scenery and before I could park, people were already out of their vehicles with cameras in hand. Further up the trail, we were greeted by a herd of free-range sheep, making for more great photos.

At 12,840 feet, you reach the summit of Black Bear Pass. Here you stand amidst the mountains with Ingram Lake far below.



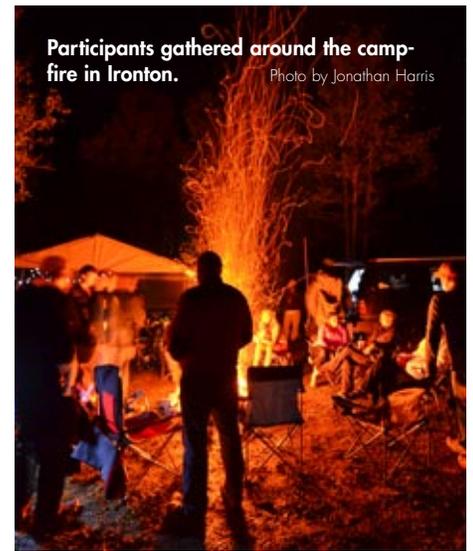
Hug the wall and remain calm....

Photo by Josh Lassiter

You don't realize how high and steep the remainder of the trail is until you come around the corner at "The Steps," which is an abrupt descent of loose rock with Ingram Falls to the left. Any mistake here can be deadly, as Telluride lies thousands of feet below. After hugging the rock wall to your right, you reach a turn where you can stop and regain your composure. Switchback after switchback, we made our way down into the canyon, finally arriving at Bridal Veil Falls, one of the tallest waterfalls in the state.

After a brief stop for photos, we headed into Telluride, where everyone had plenty of time to explore this classic mountain town before making their way home.

After the Black Bear Trail, the four event directors met up just outside of Telluride for the unofficial "Directors Run" over Last Dollar Road and back to camp. This is an easy trail that connects Telluride to Ouray but rain made for some slick and muddy conditions. Splashing and sliding down the trail, we



Participants gathered around the campfire in Ironton. Photo by Jonathan Harris

finally reached camp just before dark. After a quick bite to eat, there was mention of a night run—and we were all in. We spent a few hours exploring the old Ironton mining sites near camp with discussions over the radio about next year's event. It was an awesome way to end the trip, as we all headed home the next morning.

I look back on that first small excursion with six trucks and the friends we made and cannot believe what this event has become. We couldn't have made it happen without our sponsors and of course the folks that attended—and we look forward to planning next year's 100s in the Hills. See you in the mountains.



100s in the Hills would like to thank the following sponsors.

Slee Off-Road, Safari Ltd., Cascadia Vehicle Tents, IH8MUD, Nitro Gear and Axle, *Overland Journal*, Fox Shocks, Expedition Lighting Systems, Gamivitti, Restop, Campfire in a Can, Mountain Khakis, Lab Rak, Eagles Nest Outfitters, Camelback Toyota, Rising Sun Four Wheel Drive Club of Colorado, FJ Summit, Cruiser Outfitters, Jonsey's, Right Channel Radios, Durango Mountain Resort, TJM USA, Sticky Vinyl Graphics



Event Directors (left to right): Chris Hunt, Jonathan Harris, Josh Lassiter and Stan Wright—on Last Dollar Road.

Photo by Tracy DeBelleuve