

Welcome thrill-seekers! Today was quite a day... And there were "warning signs" along the way that I did (thankfully) recognize.

See the below upside-down barrel? That's the marker to a crucial turn-point to Burro Schmidt tunnel...



...but (usually) nobody looks for "words" just follows the arrow (in this case, the wrong way). As I often pass this site, I'm irked.

Below is the history of "Burro" Schmidt...



...and here's where he lived...



...and (below) the entrance to his tunnel. Actually the narrowest opening to the main shaft is this entrance. "Bigger inside"...



The wide-angle view...



Spooky...



Should I enter? Note "look of concern"...



Go for it! Mighty-TW has the power and (lack of?) size...



Then... Tracks? Going left? I'm in approx 200'...



I decide "no turning". Continue onward! Mighty TW putt-putt...



Note (above) the unique rock-fault as (below) seen close-up...



Getting "eerie"...



Wow "big room"... Significance of red-paint unknown...



What? Dead-end? Note the boards are an "arrow" pointing left ...



...but "daylight" is right (I'm in approx 1/2 mile)...



WooHoo! Victory over darkness!



Beautiful view, eh?



Here's the SPOT map I sent (via satellite), I am **GREEN ARROW**...



...and note the tunnel exit 100' right of the arrow. Now, "the plot thickens". I did not want to return via tunnel. "Easy" I thought to follow the path ("single track" in dirt-lingo) heading up the pic.



I was (for the moment) a Happy Guy, took a nice break...



...and pondered the gravesite of a dirt-biker not-so-fortunate...



Pretty sad.

Below is the "easy way home"... Just up & around-corner...



Below: So near, and yet so far. "Up around the corner" got steep/ slippery. Crash. Between soft-sand (either side) and stony-path, hopeless.



As is typical, the camera cannot capture "steep". I "backed-down" as far as I could, then came to a slight-uphill (too steep to "back myself up") so...

Below: I laid the bike over, and inch-by-inch "swiveled it" to get pointed in the right direction (back toward the tunnel and as you see in the background, the grave).

New problem: The fatty-tires are slipping sideways, forcing me to take the alternate trail to the right...



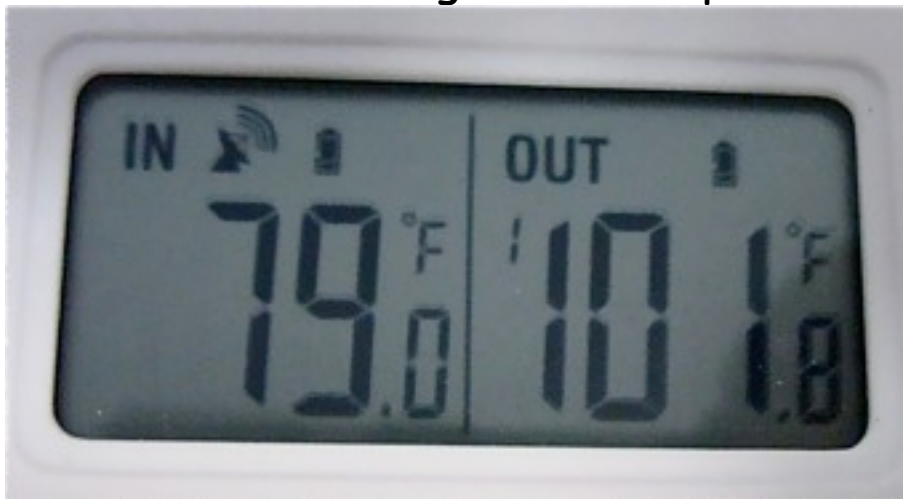
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Why no pictures? Because it is dark. Black. I am in the tunnel, "not exactly" lost but overheated (both engine and me) so "thinking". In heading toward the tunnel-exit, I had my "head down" due to lowering-rock. I missed a tunnel heading right (back toward start-point). But I saw it on the way back, "wrong turn". Uh-oh. Then came across the "arrow" (while I mentioned it in a previous pic, that was only because of "now"). I mistakenly ignored my "correct, left" turn and went straight. Bad move. I knew that was wrong because that tunnel ended in a 90-degree right turn. Back I went, made the correct turn, exited (after a half-mile)...



Burro Schmidt perfect for 1st-time mine-exploration. From 90% away from the main-entrance you can see daylight. From main-shaft-end you can see exit-end daylight. Tunnels are straight, 6'+ headroom, 4' wide at least. There is cell-phone coverage from both tunnel entrances, good (dirt) road-in to the tunnel from pavement, and "help" an easy walk away (Bickel Camp). There are *no* vertical shafts. Temp inside the tunnel "very cool". Solid granite!

The entire trip was 4 hours (my "budget" was 2 hours). I was super-tired from wrestling the bike up on the hill. Home was pleasant a/c...



A fine day! Thanks for reading along! Paul P. pencipa@yahoo.com