

Hello Adventurers!

Today after my (non) glider event, in brilliant sunshine, I decided to Jeep up the sister volcano to Mauna Kea, this being **Mauna Loa**. Pretty simple logic really, climbed one already, have a Jeep, why not climb the other?

I knew Mauna Loa to be “much less touristy” and after some navigation-practice (hey the road-entrance is under construction, and hence no sign), I found the road. That’s Mauna Loa in the background, I knew the road went up from left-to-right, simple eh?



Well about a mile ahead, the road turned perfect, amazing...



A beautiful drive through the lava fields...



OK so another 5 miles ahead, the road turned not-so-good (and yeah I just realized “Why am I on the wrong side of the road?”).



And yes the **hand-painted** 1” center-stripe was ummm.. “colorful” (and at least I’m now on the correct side of the road...).



9,000' and still on good road...



Unusual for Hawaii, signs are lacking...



Wow! Just 6 miles to the summit! Piece-of-cake!



Terrific challenge! A “real Jeep trail”...



“Concern”... No worries! (200 yards from the last pic)...



Wow the Jeep was easily up to the challenge... My estimate is 12,000' here...



The road leveled-out, I'm thinking **Home free!** But uh-oh, around the next bend and up-the-slope... **Stopped dead!**



The rocks here are problematical because they are **large** meaning if my tires flip a big rock backward, I will have “dug a hole” into which my tires will fall (not so bad really) but this leaves open the possibility of the rocks under the Jeep hitting the frame, hence “hanging up” the frame on the rocks, **it’s all over at that point I’m stuck**. Close-up...



Lastly, to put this in perspective, I’m “pretty alone” up there, estimated at 12,500’ (and I might add that in the entire climb I have seen **zero** people). While I have just 1,200’ (vertical) to go, at least 4 more miles. Here’s what the terrain looks like, I have to go forward/left in the picture, then cut-right and go up the spine of the mountain...



Well, I backed-down 100' and got turned around, called it a day.

Hmmm not-so-fast... “Newer, hi-tech” 4wd vehicles have what is called a ***Descent mode*** which (“magic”) holds the vehicle to 2mph maximum in the descent. The Jeep does not have this feature. Going-down was much more ummm... “exciting” than going-up...

Great views though! (Mauna Kea across the valley)...



On the way down I stopped at the hiking trailhead to the summit...



This trail is marked by the stone towers you see in the pic (3 towers visible)...



In retrospect, I would have kept going had I been better-prepared. What (I knew) I needed was a **Come-a-long** which is a tool for winching yourself out of a hole...



Then again, a friend, food, water, SatPhone, tent etc would have also been welcome...

***Anybody out there up for an adventure? Jeep to 13,700' on Mauna Loa! My treat... plane-fare, all expenses, whatever I will make it!***

Thank you, dear readers... Sending these nightly stories (thank you Dirty Harry)... **Makes my day!**

Cheers!

Paul P.

PS>> No more Jeeping. I turned it in today after adventuring, got a \$15/day price reduction, got a Pontiac Vibe. In the end, the Jeep got 19mpg if kept under 57mph, just 14mpg at 67mph (on cruise-control, "pushing an aerodynamic brick"). Even on the street, on "street tires" it had a *punishing ride*. **Jeep Wrangler was \*amazing\* off-road.**

