



RIGHT TO THE TOP

Kim Groenendyk and friends hit the road, heading for beaches, mountains and the Parc de la Gaspésie

Destination: The Mass Pike. Time: 6am. Weather: Rain. 1,417kms (2,280mile) journey to the Gaspé Peninsula.

THE ADVENTURE started the night before, as it is wont to with Land Rovers... Jim had a few last minute preparations required on the D110 – oil change and a good wash down to remove the poison ivy we encountered on the trail during the Ottawa Valley Land Rovers picnic back in June. Between Mike and Jim's on-board refrigerator/freezers we pack food for what Pat has promised is a menu of true culinary delights. Packed up, ready to go... it's early enough in the evening to settle down for a beer and a chat... that should have been the first sign something was very wrong.

Around 10pm, Mike takes the 101 for a late night fill up. Jim's phone rings and a simple fill up turns into a four to five hour rescue mission. The 101 had failed to restart. Jim's best efforts to coach Mike through 'how to bypass a starter' by phone won't cut it. Kindly leaving me to sleep, Jim packs up a few tools and heads out for what turns out to be a night of

Above: Jim ventures onto the soft sand beach... no problems so far!

Below: The crew taking a 'day off' and experiencing a different type of driving.



gas station. I don't have all the details, but around 3am, I sleepily recall something about brake lights wired to the wipers.

As the lone Canadian, I had left my home in Peterborough, Ontario early Thursday to fly to Hartford, CT and meet up with the rest of the crew; Jim Leach and I traveled in his Defender 110, Mike Ladden and Jason Kasprzak rode in Mike's Forward Control 101, Pat Macomber and John Penwell led the way in Pat's red-hot D90 and Mike's wife Karen and her son Nick Correa joined us in an economical and manoeuvrable VW Jetta.

It was a long day of driving: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and right to the border at Houlton, ME. Exhausted, we set camp. Good food (pork chops), bad weather (torrential downpour) and no campfire. The next morning we had early departure for our destination, the Parc de la Gaspésie.

The Parc de la Gaspésie is an inland provincial park located nearly in the middle of the peninsula, covering 802 sq kms (310 sq miles). The mountainous area has a unique geography including tundra conditions at the higher

altitudes, as well as the more familiar boreal forest. It is home to the only population of woodland caribou south of the St. Lawrence River, as well as moose, white-tailed deer and black bears. Unfortunately, we don't have any wildlife sightings to report, although there were some threatening moose on the roadside signs.

Due to the mountains and the time of year, we had rain for dinner, again. Expedition by Land Rover is a very civilized way to travel – in addition to the luxury of on-board refrigeration and roof-top tent, there is enough space for to pack sufficient gear. Mike's 'easy-up' picnic shelter provided respite from rain and bugs over the evening meal.

After two days of travel, it was a relief to set camp and have time to explore. The next morning we drove north to Ste. Anne des Monts and west through to Cap Chat to visit a large wind farm development perched on the edge of the cliffs overlooking the St. Lawrence.

The rolling highway along north coast is one picturesque view after another. Leaving the wind farm mid afternoon Jim decides to take the 110 onto the beach for some