

## **Journey to Dragon Tree Soak - Great Sandy Desert July 2011**

We were a party of 6 people in 4 vehicles. We all met at Roebuck Plains Roadhouse near Broome in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

Our destination was Dragon Tree Soak, an oasis in the Great Sandy Desert. Only a bit over 200 kilometres away as the crow flies, on paper looks like a fairly easy journey - However the reality is different for as with most expeditions we had to be self reliant and sufficient.

We left the roadhouse on the morning of 5th July and had about 20 kilometres of bitumen road to the south before we got to the red dirt of Dampier Downs Station tracks. Soon we met the station owner and his son for a quick chat before we headed south along the old Edgar Range Track. We will see no other people except ourselves for the remainder of the trip.

The Edgar Range track is an old mining exploration track and quite obviously does not get much traffic.





A video of the track:

Australia's floral emblem, the Wattle (or Acacia) found itself in many a nook and cranny in each vehicle.

We rounded the southwestern portion of the Edgar Range the second day. We hadn't really seen much of it as it was a fair way away from the track. However it was time for a cup of coffee and I saw to my left an outcrop of rock which didn't appear to be too far away so we left the track and headed in its direction. We all were amazed when we saw a great vista of canyons and degraded rangelands - quite a surprise.





We headed on and on after that, down the Edgar Range Track and camped. The next day we came to a point where the track started to veer to the south. Here we briefly went north to the place where American Robert Bogucki made a HELP sign for potential rescuers in 1999.

[DETAILED HELP SIGN REPORT HERE](#)

Here is me by site of HELP sign which has washed away.



After that we then continued south along the track, which now has no name. It continued to be fairly rough. We could sense we were now in very isolated country. We had lunch we the track veered to the east. I had looked on GoogleEarth and had found a very old mining shotline that started about 1 kilometre to the west and continued south in a straight line towards the McLarty Track, which was a track that ran in an west east direction, and from which we would hopefully take another shotline south towards our destination.

A nice looking ghost gum along the way.



Traveling the hotline.



Not always easy going.



Day 4 and we came to the McLarty Track which showed no signs of recent use where we were, and was very overgrown. Soon, traveling west we came to the old shotline that should take us south to the soak. Two of our party had been down this line last year and had come along the McLarty track from the west. As a consequence their tracks were still partially visible and some of the vegetation had been cleared.

The McLarty Hills were about half way to the soak. These hills were named by Explorer Lawrence Wells in 1896, though not visited by him. The shotline split the hills, and we decided to visit the part of the hills to the west of the shotline.

Heading to the hills.



Almost there.



We arrived at the hills and set up camp there for the night. A very isolated spot.

View to north.



Happy Dog!!



Camel on Sandridge.



Minimal Aboriginal presence was found in this immediate area.



The next day after further exploration of these hills we drove back to the shotline and continued south to the soak. We came to a place where the track turned to the west. This was not a track per say, however were the tracks of the party that last year had visited the soak. They had decided to travel off road to another shotline to the west, and this was a short cut. Amazing that it was still visible, easily visible - and we followed it.

Dog and vehicles having break on short cut to western shotline.



We came to the western shotline towards the end of the day yet continued on towards the soak. We arrived at the soak only half an hour before sunset, after about 5 kilometers of off road driving.

A beautiful oasis it was, with much water in it, though the normal destruction by the rogue camel was not apparent. It had taken us 5 full days to get here from civilisation and the peacefulness that one can derive by these types of journeys could now be enjoyed by all.







Hope you have enjoyed the report and all the best.

Alan

Australian Desert Expeditioner...