TRAIL BOSS

Volunteer Leadership Role • West Coast 4x4 Adventures

TRAIL LEADERSHIP | ROUTE PLANNING | MEMBER SAFETY | RUN COMMAND

ROLE	Trail Boss	**STATUS**	Volunteer (Unpaid)
REPORTS TO	Club President / Board of Directors	**TERM**	One year (renewable)
EFFECTIVE DATE	October 2026	**CLASSIFICATION**	Leadership Officer — Field Operations

■ **FIELD COMMAND ROLE: The Trail Boss holds the highest field authority on any club trail run. All decisions made on the trail — route, pace, safety holds, obstacle attempts, and emergency response — rest with the Trail Boss. Every member on a run is under the Trail Boss's direction from convoy departure to final return. This is the most senior operational leadership role in West Coast 4x4 Adventures.**

1. POSITION OVERVIEW

The **Trail Boss** is the most respected and operationally critical field leadership role in West Coast 4x4 Adventures. On any given trail run, the Trail Boss is the final authority — the person who knows the route, reads the terrain, commands the convoy, calls the shots, and brings every rig and every member home safely.

This role demands deep off-road experience, unwavering situational awareness, strong leadership under pressure, and the trust of every member on the trail. The Trail Boss works in close coordination with the Trail Spotter, Off Road Recovery Team, and Safety Officer to deliver runs that challenge members appropriately, operate safely, respect the land, and leave everyone wanting to come back for the next one.

> *"The Trail Boss sets the tone for everything. The pace, the attitude, the safety culture, the willingness to turn around when it's right to — and the courage to push on when it's not. Every great run starts and ends with strong Trail Boss leadership."*

2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

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Pre-Run Planning & Route Preparation

- Select, research, and confirm trail routes appropriate to the registered group's skill level, vehicle capability, and event goals.
- Conduct a pre-run scouting trip for all new or unfamiliar routes — assessing current conditions, obstacles, hazards, and turnaround points.
- Obtain all required land-use permits, access authorizations, and trail-use permissions before the run date.
- Develop a detailed run plan including route map, waypoints, water sources, emergency access points, and estimated timing.
- Submit the run plan to the Club President and Safety Officer for review a minimum of 7 days before the event.
- Communicate trail difficulty rating, terrain type, and minimum vehicle requirements to all registered participants in advance.
- Establish a vehicle lineup order for the convoy — placing experienced members at key positions and matching skill levels to terrain.
- Confirm radio channel assignments, communication protocols, and emergency contact procedures with all run participants.
- Brief the Off Road Recovery Team on the planned route, known technical sections, and recovery staging points.

Pre-Run Member Briefing

- Conduct a mandatory pre-run safety and logistics briefing for all participants before convoy departure.
- Cover trail etiquette, convoy spacing, radio protocols, hand signals, emergency procedures, and turnaround policies.
- Confirm every vehicle has minimum safety equipment — tow points, recovery gear, water, and communications.
- Review the trail rating, known obstacles, and the day's planned timeline with all members.
- Assign a Tail Gunner for the convoy — a trusted experienced member who sweeps the rear and confirms no vehicle is left behind.
- Ensure all Trail Spotters are briefed and positioned for technical sections ahead of vehicle approach.
- Conduct a member check-in to confirm participant headcount and radio function before departure.

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On-Trail Convoy Command

- Lead the convoy from the front, setting pace, line selection, and convoy spacing appropriate to conditions.
- Maintain continuous radio communication with the Tail Gunner and key convoy positions throughout the run.
- Call mandatory stops before all technical obstacles — assessing conditions, briefing the approach, and confirming spotting coverage.
- Hold STOP authority for any section of trail — pausing the entire convoy if safety, terrain, or weather conditions require reassessment.
- Make all decisions on obstacle attempts — approving, denying, or modifying attempts based on vehicle capability and terrain assessment.
- Monitor member fatigue, vehicle condition, and group morale throughout the run — adjusting pace and rest stops as needed.
- Manage convoy regrouping at pre-designated waypoints to ensure no vehicle separation in remote terrain.
- Make the final call on route modifications, turnarounds, or early returns if conditions deteriorate beyond acceptable risk levels.
- Coordinate with Trail Spotters in real time — never committing a vehicle to an obstacle without active spotter coverage in place.

Safety & Emergency Management

- Maintain constant awareness of the convoy's position relative to emergency access points and evacuation routes.
- Serve as the on-trail incident commander in the event of a vehicle rollover, injury, or breakdown.
- Immediately halt the convoy, secure the scene, and activate the Off Road Recovery Team in the event of a serious incident.
- Initiate emergency communications — radio, satellite messenger, or cellular — to request outside assistance when required.
- Ensure no member or vehicle is abandoned on trail — the convoy does not leave until every rig is mobile or a handover is confirmed.
- Document all trail incidents, near-misses, and hazards encountered in the post-run field report.
- Brief the Safety Officer on all on-trail safety events within 24 hours of the run's conclusion.

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Trail Stewardship & Land Respect

- Lead by example in Leave No Trace practice — minimizing trail impact, avoiding off-trail lines, and packing out all waste.
- Enforce WC4x4's strict no-trail-widening policy — redirect vehicles to stay within the established trail corridor.
- Respect all posted closures, sensitive habitat markings, and land-use restrictions encountered on trail.
- Report trail damage, illegal dumping, erosion, or access issues to the appropriate land management agency within 7 days.
- Represent West Coast 4x4 Adventures professionally when encountering other trail users, land managers, or the public.
- Advocate for responsible 4x4 access by modeling the behavior that keeps trails open for future use.

Post-Run Reporting & Debrief

- Conduct a post-run debrief with all participants — celebrating highlights, addressing concerns, and capturing member feedback.
- Submit a written Post-Run Field Report to the Event Coordinator within 7 days including: route conditions, incidents, trail hazards, equipment issues, and member observations.
- Update the club's trail database with current conditions, difficulty ratings, and access notes following each run.
- Recommend trail ratings, access status updates, or permit renewals to the Board based on field experience.
- Recognize exceptional member performance — spotters, recoveries, first-timers — in post-run communications.

3. WC4X4 TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEM

The Trail Boss is responsible for accurately rating all club runs using the following standardized system. Ratings must be published in pre-event communications so members can self-assess vehicle and skill suitability:

■ Level 1 Easy	Graded dirt roads, mild grades, no obstacles. Suitable for all.	Stock 4WD or AWD — any clearance	Beginner — first run welcome
■■ Level 2 Moderate	Rocky two-tracks, mild ledges, shallow crossings, some ruts.	Stock 4WD with all-terrain tires	Some trail experience recommended
■■■ Level 3 Difficult	Technical rocky terrain, shelf roads, moderate water crossings, obstacles up to 18".	4WD with lockers or LSD, skid plates, AT or MT tires	Comfortable wheeling experience required
■■■■ Level 4 Very Difficult	Serious rock crawling, steep descents, deep crossings, tight switchbacks.	Built high-clearance rig with winch, rock rails, MTTs, recovery gear required.	Experienced driver — spotter mandat

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■■■■■ Level 5 Extreme	Expert-only terrain. Significant roll, winch, and recovery probability.	Fully modified — full cage recommended, extensive recovery kit	Expert driver only — Trail Boss pre-appro

4. CONVOY POSITION ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trail Boss assigns and manages the following convoy positions on every run. Position assignments are made at the pre-run briefing based on experience and vehicle capability:

■ Trail Boss (Position 1)	Leads from the front; sets pace and line; holds run command authority.	Trail Boss officer; most experienced driver for terrain type
■ Position 2	Follows Trail Boss; assists with forward hazard spotting; relays communications to rear.	Experienced member; strong radio discipline; recovery-capable
■ Mid-Convoy	General convoy; maintain spacing; radio listening watch; support recovery operations.	All skill levels; position matched to terrain and experience
■ Recovery Vehicle	Equipped recovery rig; staged mid-to-rear; responds to stuck/off-road situations.	Off-Road Recovery Team member; full recovery kit; winch-capa
■ Tail Gunner (Last Position)	Sweeps the rear; confirms all vehicles clear each obstacle; no vehicle left behind.	Senior experienced member; strong radio skills; recovery-capa

5. REQUIRED SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

- ■ Active membership in West Coast 4x4 Adventures in good standing for a minimum of 12 months.
- ■ Demonstrated expert-level off-road driving experience across multiple terrain types — rock, sand, mud, shelf roads, and water crossings.
- ■ Proven track record of completing Level 3+ trail runs as a participant before leading as Trail Boss.
- ■ Deep familiarity with 4WD vehicle mechanics — understanding of lockers, lift geometry, approach/departure angles, articulation, and recovery technique.
- ■ Strong situational awareness and terrain-reading ability — the ability to assess a line, identify a hidden hazard, and make sound decisions quickly.
- ■ Leadership composure under pressure — calm, decisive, and authoritative when incidents occur without causing panic.
- ■ Proficiency with UHF/VHF radio communication and the club's convoy radio protocols.
- ■ Knowledge of desert survival basics — navigation, water management, heat safety, and emergency signaling.
- ■ Demonstrated knowledge of Leave No Trace principles and off-road land stewardship ethics.
- ■ Physical fitness to walk technical sections on foot for pre-run assessment and spotting coordination.
- ■ Willingness to accept full field command responsibility and be the last person to leave the trail.

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6. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Prior experience as a Trail Boss, Trail Guide, or Run Leader for an organized off-road club or event.
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification or equivalent field medicine training.
- Ham Radio Technician License (KG5/KD7 or equivalent) and familiarity with emergency radio protocols.
- Experience with GPS navigation systems, digital trail mapping (Gaia GPS, OnX Offroad), and paper topographic maps.
- Knowledge of AZ/CA/NV BLM, USFS, and state land access regulations and seasonal trail closures.
- Recovery rigging experience — Hi-Lift, winch, snatch block, and kinetic rope configurations.
- SAR (Search and Rescue) volunteer experience or military/law enforcement field leadership background.
- FAA drone certification or use of aerial tools for pre-run route assessment.

7. REQUIRED PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The Trail Boss must carry the following minimum personal equipment on every run. Members leading a run without this kit may be stood down by the Safety Officer:

PERSONAL & NAVIGATION KIT	VEHICLE RECOVERY & SAFETY KIT
■ UHF/VHF radio (charged + spare battery)	■ Full vehicle recovery kit — hi-lift, kinetic rope, shackles
■ GPS device or phone with offline trail maps	■ Tow points front and rear (rated)
■ Paper topo map of the run area	■ Tire repair kit (plug kit + CO2 or compressor)
■ First aid kit (comprehensive field kit)	■ Fire extinguisher (2.5 lb minimum, vehicle-mounted)
■ Emergency satellite communicator (SPOT/Garmin inReach)	■ Shovel (D-handle or folding)
■ Minimum 4L water per person in vehicle	■ Charged handheld flashlight or headlamp

8. TIME COMMITMENT

Monthly Board / Event Planning Meeting	2–3 hours	Monthly

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Pre-Run Route Research & Planning	3–6 hours	Per run
Pre-Run Scouting Trip	4–10 hours	Per new route
Permit & Access Confirmation	1–2 hours	Per run
Pre-Run Briefing & Vehicle Check	1 hour	Per run
On-Trail Run Command	6–12 hours	Per run (full day)
Post-Run Debrief	30–60 minutes	Per run
Post-Run Field Report	1–2 hours	Per run
Trail Database Updates	30–60 minutes	Per run
Annual Trail Permit Renewals	3–5 hours	Annually

Total estimated commitment: **15–25+ hours per run event**, including planning, scouting, execution, and reporting. Trail Bosses typically lead 4–8 runs per year.

9. AUTHORITY & FIELD COMMAND

Absolute Trail Command: The Trail Boss holds undivided command authority on the trail. All members are under the Trail Boss's direction from convoy departure to final return. No other officer may override a Trail Boss field decision without first relieving them of command.

STOP Authority: May halt the entire convoy at any time, for any reason, without explanation required in the moment. All vehicles must comply immediately and without question.

Obstacle Veto: May deny any vehicle an obstacle attempt at any time based on terrain assessment, vehicle capability, or safety judgment. This decision is final in the field.

Member Removal Authority: May remove any member from a run for conduct, safety violations, or inadequate vehicle preparation — in coordination with the Sergeant at Arms and Club President.

Route Modification Authority: May modify, shorten, or abandon the planned route at any time based on field conditions without prior Board approval. Significant route changes are reported post-run.

Emergency Command: Serves as on-trail incident commander for all emergencies. All club officers on trail defer to Trail Boss direction during an active incident until emergency services arrive.

10. WHAT THIS ROLE BRINGS TO THE CLUB

■ MEMBER EXPERIENCE	A skilled Trail Boss transforms a drive into an unforgettable adventure that defines club members

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■ **SAFETY CULTURE**	Consistent, competent trail leadership sets the standard that every member aspires to and relies
■ **LAND ACCESS**	Responsible trail stewardship protects access for future seasons — a Trail Boss who leaves no t
■ **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**	Experienced Trail Bosses mentor the next generation — growing the club's field leadership depth
■ **SPONSOR VALUE**	Professionally led events with documented safety records give sponsors confidence to invest in V
■ **CLUB REPUTATION**	Word travels fast in the off-road community. A great Trail Boss builds the club's reputation run by

11. HOW TO APPLY

The Trail Boss position is filled by Board appointment based on demonstrated field experience and member standing. Active members who wish to be considered are encouraged to express their interest to the Club President.

Step 1	Complete a written expression of interest to the Club President	president@westcoast4x4adventures.com
Step 2	Provide a brief wheeling history — runs completed, terrain experience, recovery skills	Attached to expression of interest
Step 3	Complete a co-lead observation run with an active Trail Boss	Coordinated by Club President
Step 4	Board review and formal appointment	Announced at next Board meeting

■ **Applications accepted on a rolling basis. The Trail Boss position may be filled by Board appointment at any time when a qualified candidate is identified. Expression of interest: info@westcoast4x4adventures.com**

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