

Rough 'n ready

Mudfest comparo challenges a variety of wheels over a combination of track and terrain

By Joe Sage
Vehicle & event photos
by Doug Berger (DBPics.com) for NWAPA

The NWAPA Northwest Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year Awards comparo—popularly known as Mudfest—is a don't-miss event for us most years. Though we had a conflict this year and did indeed miss it, the results are always of interest, as there is a lot of commonality between our turf and the Pacific Northwest—elevation range, off-road, rural and urban mix—all of which help this event inform our choices here in Arizona.

The two-day event is held at The Ridge Motorsports Park, on Washington's lower Olympic Peninsula. Here, members of the Northwest Automotive Press Association (NWAPA) drive a range of vehicle types, each one on pavement and in the dirt.

Day One evaluates acceleration, braking, handling and road dynamics on paved, coned courses and a kart track (a scale version of their big track). Day Two uses custom off-pavement courses built in the Park's motocross area, to focus on tougher performance—climbing, crawling, descent and at speed—evaluating traction, clearance, extreme suspension limits, and advances in off-road tech.

This is a region that commonly features serious wet weather, for us a chance to add a dimension to our testing that is harder to come by in Arizona. (And we do enjoy the change of pace, to a point.) The weatherman went light on rain and the name-sake mud this year, but drier weather doesn't affect the ability to compare, as many of our water and mud features are event-engineered, anyway, for consistent repeatability.

Vehicles are driven in random sequence—each driver committed to driving each vehicle in all sets of conditions—while scored in categories. Many vehicles may be entered into multiple categories—by vehicle type, seat count, extreme purpose and so on. Value is also a category, although it's always interesting to contemplate how much that may have been considered in the other categories.

EVs were strongly represented in this year's results, even as the segment cools, possibly suggesting some cultural or market differences between that region and ours, or possibly revealing broader trends that will apply everywhere.

It's all part of the constantly unfolding land-

(cont'd)



PICKUP TRUCK
Ram 1500 Warlock Crew Cab 4x4



BEST VALUE
Toyota RAV4 Hybrid Woodland



LUXURY SUV
Lucid Gravity Grand Touring



scape we're following together, and why we attend these far and wide, ongoing. Stay tuned!

AWARD WINNERS

HPtorquetowingMPG (or MPGe*)

PICKUP TRUCK

Ram 1500 Warlock Crew Cab 4x4\$55,660
3954106,68016/20/18

BEST VALUE

Toyota RAV4 Hybrid Woodland\$41,350
2361633,50041/36/39

LUXURY SUV

Lucid Gravity Grand Touring\$94,900
8289096,000113/103/108*

EXTREME CAPABILITY

Jeep Wrangler Moab 392 4x4\$79,995
4704703,50013/16/14

THREE-ROW FAMILY SUV

Kia Telluride X-Pro\$53,000
2912625,50018/23/20

TWO-ROW FAMILY SUV

ELECTRIFIED ACTIVITY VEHICLE

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY VEHICLE OF THE YEAR

Subaru Trailseeker Limited\$42,400
3753963,500125/103/114*

OTHER VEHICLES ENTERED:

Genesis GV80 3.5T Prestige Black\$83,250
3753916,00016/22/19

Genesis GV80 Coupe 3.5T Prestige Blk\$89,400
4094056,00017/22/19

Honda Pilot Elite\$55,000
2852625,00019/25/21

Hyundai IONIQ 5 XRT\$46,725
3204462,700103/85/94*

Hyundai Palisade XRT Pro\$49,870
2872605,00018/24/20

Kia Sportage X-Pro\$39,690
1871783,50023/26/24

Mazda CX-5 S Premium Plus\$40,485
1871861,50024/30/26

Mitsubishi Outlander Trail Edition\$31,955
1742062,00026/31/28

Polestar 4 Dual Motor Pilot & Plus\$79,100
5445063,50086/80/83

Subaru Outback Wilderness\$46,445
2602773,50021/27/23

Subaru Uncharted GT AWD\$45,245
338323na123/101/112*

Volkswagen Tiguan SEL R-Line Turbo\$44,000
2682581,80022/29/25 ■



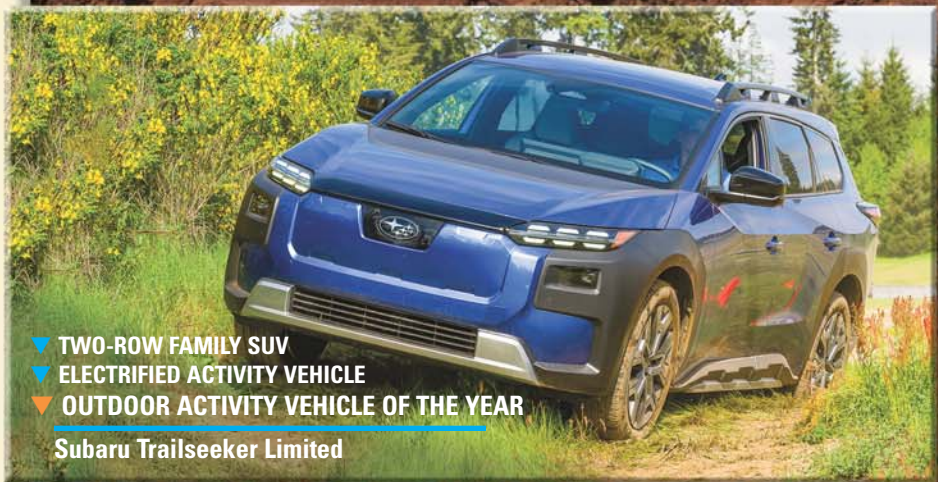
EXTREME CAPABILITY

Jeep Wrangler Moab 392



THREE-ROW FAMILY SUV

Kia Telluride X-Pro SX-Prestige AWD



TWO-ROW FAMILY SUV

ELECTRIFIED ACTIVITY VEHICLE

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