

Winter Use:

- Winter on the Rubicon can be challenging, go with someone experienced if you can. Let someone know where you are going and when to expect a check in. NEVER go alone.
- What to take?
- Clothes and food: Always carry spare boots, spare clothes, gloves and enough food for at least one extra day. Dry bags are great for anything you do not want to get wet, like clothes and food.
- Fire: the ability to light a fire immediately is absolutely imperative. Chainsaw, fuel, oil, lighters and if possible fire starters, they work great and are easy to pack. Be aware not all wood burns as well as others. Lodge Pole or Cedar both are very good options along with pitch wood (Sappy, waxy looking)
- Vehicle Items: Your winch will drain your battery quickly when used for extended periods. A dual battery setup and high amp alternator to keep up with the demands are strongly advised. On board air is almost a must have when running very low tire pressures. Bead lock wheels are also advised. Very often your tire pressure could be down below 2 PSI and without a bead lock wheel the chances of losing a bead are significantly increased. Fuel, you will use more fuel in the snow scratching and clawing your way for every little bit of forward progress you can in certain snow conditions. Spare serpentine belt or v belts, spare tire, plug kit, tools, welder, hoses, parts, fluids, etc. Basically be as ready for anything that could or even things that there is no way possible for that to happen to happen. After all it's the winter is in the high Sierras.
- Make sure the rig is in good condition and ready to go. There is nothing worse than wrenching in the snow on a tarp.
- Straps, when you think you have enough pack some more. There are areas on the Rubicon that winch points can be very few and far between. Spare winch rope. Shackles, I carry four steel and have four soft shackles on all corners.
- Shovel and axe, axe can work great to break up ice.
- Snow shoes and one of the best things is boot snow chains. Walking on ice can be deadly and the boot chains work great.
- Conditions can change by the minute in the winter. It is not only storms but the ability to travel on the snow. Cold temps can give you the ability to stay on top of the snow but a change in temp by just a few degrees can see you sinking in. Night time travel can be advantageous but comes with its own set of difficulties. Look for the "sparkles" on the "crispy" snow.
- Shelter: if you need to hunker down you need to be able to make shelter and sometimes fast. Heater buddies work great but don't depend on them for your only source of heat. Tarps, carry lots of tarps along with twine, bungee cords, etc. Getting wet can equal death so stay dry. Don't cheap out. Winter is no time to have inferior gear. A summer bag isn't going to cut it in freezing temps. Spend the money on good gear.

A fun day trip can turn into a near death experience in a hurry.