

MARC & COLTON GEIST

Lucerne Valley, California · I'mPossible Youth Adaptive Project



Without motorized access, individuals with disabilities would not be able or permitted to enjoy the peace and wonders of the outdoors. Inclusion would no longer be a reality.

OUR STORY

We are the Geist family, from Lucerne Valley, California. Marc and Carmen have been married 16 years, and our sons are Brody and Colton. We are a very outdoor family. We love rock crawling in our off road buggies, camping, fishing and exploring.

In February 2012, Colton was born with bilateral upper limb amelia, born without arms. Two months later, Carmen was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and began losing her ability to walk. Life dealt us a challenging hand, with two options: sit and dwell, or keep moving forward. We choose to keep moving forward.

When Colton was born without arms, the world suggested that certain experiences, like the freedom of the off-road trail, were out of reach. We re-engineered the driving experience instead, and today Colton drives his own buggy. **Technical ingenuity should never be the barrier between a person and the outdoors.**

WHAT WE BUILT

A buggy Colton drives with his feet

A bespoke off-road vehicle controlled entirely by Colton's feet. Born without arms, he takes the wheel himself.

A trail car for Carmen

A Mercedes Smart Car rebuilt with custom suspension, fitted to every detail Carmen needs to stay on the trails with us.

I'mPossible Youth Adaptive Project

The 501(c)(3) we founded to provide community-wide access to specialized, custom-engineered outdoor solutions.

"For many people, experiencing the outdoors is deeply personal, serving as a powerful space for health, reflection, and life perspective."

MARC GEIST · OPERATION:ACCESSIBLE ADVOCATE

THE POLICY BEHIND THE STORY

Outdoor Americans with Disabilities Act

Introduced in the House June 12, 2026 by Rep. Mike Kennedy (UT), after Sens. John Curtis and Mike Lee introduced it in the Senate in fall 2025.

What the bill does

Directs federal land agencies to weigh disability access when updating travel plans and motor vehicle use maps, and to identify routes that deliver meaningful recreational access.

Operation:Accessible

BlueRibbon Coalition's initiative to keep public lands reachable for people with physical limitations, through legislation, litigation and grassroots advocacy.

THE ASK

Support the Outdoor Americans with Disabilities Act, and keep motorized routes open where they are **the only way in**.



MELISSA LONES

Washington · Timber Tamber Jeep Group



Twenty-one years in nursing, and I had never heard of CIDP until I was the one diagnosed with it.

MY STORY

My name is Melissa Lones. I live in Washington with my husband and our three kids. Before my diagnosis I was energetic, active, happy, and full of goals and adventures I wanted to accomplish. We spent most weekends hiking as a family. I competed in body competitions, ran Tough Mudders, and danced for 14 years.

About six years ago I noticed numbness and tingling in my right foot. Five years later the neuropathy had reached both knees and my hands. Many basic tasks are now quite complicated, including walking.

It was time to find a new hobby we could enjoy as a family, one that accommodated my limited mobility. We found the Timber Tamber jeep group and joined. **I can still get on the mountain and experience the outdoor recreation we fell in love with here.**

WHAT ACCESS MEANS

CIDP

Chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, an autoimmune disorder that damages the nerves. Mine began in one foot and progressed to both legs and both hands.

The trail I can still reach

Five years in, the Jeep is how our family gets outdoors together, and how I reach country I can no longer hike on foot.

We maintain these trails

Groups like ours volunteer to maintain these trails in an effort to keep them open.

"Keeping trails open allows people like me to still experience the hobby I loved so much."

MELISSA LONES · OPERATION:ACCESSIBLE ADVOCATE

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BRENT OLIVER

Oregon · Founder, Brent Oliver 541 Foundation



On May 19, 1991, at 20 years old, a motorcycle wreck in the mountains of northeastern Oregon broke my neck. That should have defined the limits of the rest of my life. It didn't.

MY STORY

My neck was broken at C3–C5, both lungs were punctured, and my trachea and esophagus were severed. It took roughly two hours of CPR to get me to definitive care. I live with an incomplete high cervical spinal cord injury and a permanent airway.

Over the next 35 years I rebuilt function and adapted around what could not be repaired. Then in 2018 I was told my spinal cord was actively deteriorating, with about 30 percent of its function left. I decided I was not going to spend whatever time I had protecting myself from life.

In 2026, at 55, I completed a solo, unassisted winter ascent and descent in my 1978 Land Cruiser. **The record was never the destination. It was the evidence.**

WHAT ACCESS MEANS

What ends the road for me

A closure, a gate, a fallen tree, or rough terrain that is a minor obstacle for someone else can be the end of the road for me.

Why the mountains

They are where I find peace, freedom, and perspective. I can go in carrying everything that is worrying me and leave most of it behind. Few places let me shut off the noise of life.

Brent Oliver 541 Foundation

Helping someone is not a burden, it is an honor. At Jubilee Lake we brought partners together to rebuild access that broke down.

"When access is denied, it does not stop at one gate. It trickles down. Every layer of access denied compounds the last, until the person who needs it most is the one left out entirely."

BRENT OLIVER · OPERATION:ACCESSIBLE ADVOCATE

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RICK DRANEY

South Central Utah · Paralympic Gold Medalist



Some methods of accessing the outdoors are now limited or no longer viable for me. My interest and my desire to keep enjoying them remain intact.

MY STORY

In 1981, I sustained a spinal cord injury (at C-6/7) in an automobile accident. It left me with permanent paralysis and using a wheelchair.

I was raised in Southern California and now live full-time in South Central Utah. City life and rural life together have given me understanding, respect, and appreciation for the surroundings, beauty, diversity, and wide-ranging offerings of public lands across the Western United States.

I still get outdoors in the ways that I can, from traveling and outdoor recreation to wheelchair and adaptive sports. My career has spanned elite competition, working with youth, teaching the public about injuries and disabilities, and **advocating for opportunities through accessibility.**

TRACK RECORD

Wheelchair tennis

Former world No. 1 in quad singles and doubles. Gold with Team USA at the 1998 and 2003 World Team Cup. International Tennis Hall of Fame, 2023.

Wheelchair rugby

Gold with Team USA at the 2000 Sydney Paralympics and the 1994 World Championships. U.S. Wheelchair Rugby Association Hall of Fame, 2015.

Public lands service

Two terms on Utah's Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Council.

"Accessibility is a fundamental and essential component of recreational opportunities for everyone."

RICK DRANEY · OPERATION:ACCESSIBLE ADVOCATE

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ALYSSA SALEMI

Scottsdale, Arizona · Bilateral Below-Knee Amputee



A leg injury led to sepsis. That was when my old life ended and a new life as an amputee began.

MY STORY

I grew up playing sports and spending time outdoors around Phoenix. In 2013 I went to Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff to study elementary and special education, while hiking, snowboarding, and exploring the mountains.

It happened at the end of my senior year, and I spent four months hospitalized in the burn center. My left leg was amputated below the knee and my right was salvaged. Recovery was slow, with months of appointments, prosthetics, relearning to walk, and phantom pain. All I wanted was to be outside, away from the appointments.

Hiking was still nearly impossible with my prosthetics, so I saved enough to buy a Toyota Tacoma and started exploring trails around Arizona. I quickly realized that **my truck wasn't just giving me back independence around the city—it was giving me a way to be independent outdoors again.**

WHAT ACCESS MEANS

Recovery, the second time

In 2019 I elected to amputate my right leg. I relearned to walk again, camped, took short trails on crutches, and relearned to drive on a dirt trail near my house.

Where the truck has taken me

Utah's landscapes first, then Colorado and California, along with trail cleanups and women's outdoor groups.

What it gave back

My mobility, my independence, and most importantly my ability to explore.

"For me, getting outdoors isn't just about adventure. It's about freedom, independence, and continuing to build a life that feels like my own."

ALYSSA SALEMI · OPERATION:ACCESSIBLE ADVOCATE

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