



# MUD, SWEAT AND GEARS

By Gwen Thurmond



The motors growl and the racers tense. Ahead lie nearly three hours of grueling, bone rattling, mud-slinging, dirt-eating tension. It's one of the most physically demanding sports in the world. It's the Big Buck Grand National Cross Country (GNCC) race. The off-road, Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) race is part of a 13-round championship series. And the Big Buck track, in Union County, SC, is tough.

As the green flag drops, riders start their challenge on what's considered some of the best bike, All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and UTV off-road racing trails in the world. There are hills, old-growth forests, drive-by-instinct-alone young pine forests, gullies, rocks, stumps, single-file trails, vines and the signature creek jump. And, of course, if it rains, there will be mud—lots of it. This course will, as they say, "get your attention."

Since its inception more than 12,000 riders from the world over have participated. Course specifics and calendar of events are at [bigbuckracing.com](http://bigbuckracing.com).

The Big Buck course is a family labor of love (or thrills). In 1981, 10-year-old Hank asked his father, Henry Turner, for a racing go-kart. "Before I knew it, we were at his first Saturday night kart race," Turner said.

Off-road sports were exploding and in 1996, while attending his first bike and ATV off-road race, Turner left a promoter a note offering to host a national race if opportunity presented itself.



The rest is history. Turner turned his family hunting property into world-class trails that last year drew more than 1,300 entries from 32 states and 10 countries.

"Riders, writers and Kawasaki officials left Union County satisfied they had challenged some of the best trails in the world—the GNCC trails of the Big Buck," Turner said. "We never shot the big buck, and I'll bet no rider ever claims to have tamed the Big Buck GNCC." †