

GRAY WOLF TRAIL CREW NOTES

2/17/24

Location: West Elwha, ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
Eric Nagle
Bill Mueller
LaVonne Mueller
Paul Kamps
Jonathan Hamlin
Gwynne Carlson

Estimated On-Trail Volunteer Hours: 32

Report written by Rebecca.

Objective: Clear a rockslide with one fallen tree that happened during the freeze we had in January. Secondary objective was discovered when we got to the job site – we found that 2 more trees had fallen nearby.

Metrics achieved:

1. The rock clearing crew (Paul, Eric, Martin and Jonathan) used rigging, rock bars and muscle to move many rocks off the trail.
 - a. (3) large ones (estimated at 3000+ lbs each, moved with a come-a-long near its max 1500-pound pull, PLUS 2 people pushing with rock bars)
 - b. (6) medium but still heavy - moved with legs and rock bars.
 - c. (20) one-person sized
2. Tree clearing and cleanup crew of LaVonne, Bill, Rebecca and Gwynne took care of the (3) downed trees and cleaned up the tread. One of the trees was in the rock zone and the others were 200 yards before the rock slide.



This tree was in the middle of the rock slide project, so it had to go first. It had torn from the rocky hillside above, thus, the rootball was 100% detached and in a pile of recently-fallen boulders. Movement of the tree had the potential to bring down more rocks (this is what we were analyzing in these pictures). The decision was made to cut from the other side, down by the trail. Cutting there would most likely cause more movement than had I cut up above, but it kept me in a safe zone and the rocks likely to move would be on the side away from me. Notice the 2 live cedars that are blocking the tree from rolling or sliding towards my eventual sawing site, plus down below I had a good escape route. I did cut the tree and, predictably, there was movement. It slid downhill and pivoted a little bit – none of which was a surprise and I was in a good position to handle it. About 4 cuts on this tree and then the saw team moved out of this project.



Yikes! A whole lot of rock moving going on! A come-a-long, tire chains (on loan from Don Stoneman), straps, rock bars, muscle, grit and determination ... The problem wasn't just that the rocks were heavy. Where they came down was in a trenched area of the tread, so getting them out of there was extra difficult. Great job, team!



Look at that! And Don came to give us some supervision, along with Bobbie and her sister Carole.



Meanwhile, back at the other two recently-fallen trees. While Gwynne (new to our crew and the one who reported this rock slide to us) and I were clearing the first tree, Bill and LaVonne were kindly clearing the bark off the second, larger tree. It had a lot of debris in it and would require a lot of cuts (heavy wood!) so it was better to avoid dulling the chain. I had brought my smaller saw (20" bar) thinking I'd only be cutting just that tree at the rock slide. Silly me. I should have known the West Elwha ALWAYS has more gifts to give and they aren't usually small. No worries – I just cut each round from both sides (the tree was 32" diameter).



Afterward, we hung out around the fire at Don and Bobbie's, enjoying hot coffee and yummy cookie treats made for us by Carole. Thank you! Special note: compare that cat to the kitten in my earlier West Elwha report. Same one! Now he's 7 months old, he went from about an ounce to 8 pounds in the blink of an eye. Must be some really nutritious mice around that property.

