

TRAIL CREW NOTES

11-14 April 2024

Location: Quinault National Recreation Trail System, ONF
Lodge Trail #850 Rain Forest Interpretive Trail #855
Quinault Loop Trail #854 Gatton Creek Loop (#854.2 & 888)
Wright's Canyon Trail #854.3 Willaby Creek Trail #860
Resort Trail #854.4

Crew members:

David Graves	Joanne Graves
Bernt Ericson	Josie Dean
Bill Mueller	LaVonne Mueller
C Mel Melmed	Martin Knowles
Chris Sabo	Rebecca Wanagel
Eric Nagle	Teresa Sabo

Hours on job: 240

- Objective(s) for the crew:
 - Clear trails of logs, repair severe drainage and brush issues
 - Re-open Willaby Creek trail from trailhead to creek crossing (1.3mi). This was a specific request by the land manager and how far we would progress was unknown as only the first half-mile of the trail had been explored prior to the crew.
- Work done:
 - **Thursday** was a half-day. We cleared most of the pressing issues on the nature trails near the lodge and ranger station. This included removing several large rotten logs, clearing gravel encrusted bridges, remedying failed drainage, and removing the worst brush encroachment. Fortunately, the rain held off until the end of the day.
 - **Friday**, our first full day, was dry and clear. It was the only day with a full crew and was consumed by working to open the Willaby Creek trail. The two saw crews cleared 14 logs with one large 60" log taking up most of one crew's day. That crew not only had to cut rounds out of the log, but (due to a lack of disposal space) also had to split each round into small chunks to be thrown away from the work area. A power brushing crew went ahead of the sawyers to remove salmonberry thickets while a second brushing crew pulled/dug the salmonberry roots. Other than a large jackstraw at the 0.3 mile point, the trail was cleared to about the 0.75 mile point.
 - For **Saturday**, we split the crew between a perennial drainage issue on the Quinault Loop Trail and continuing to open up the Willaby Creek trail. The loop trail crew redug the drains that annually fill with clay and gravel plus cutting out intruding branches and brush from the trail. On the Willaby trail, one saw team finished removing one large large log before heading back to tackle the large jackstraw. After careful analysis, the saw team took apart the

jackstraw in incredibly short amount of time. The other saw team continued its arduous trek, cutting through another eight logs until reaching Willaby Creek which is the current end of the maintained trail. By the end of the day, the trail was clear of all blocking logs with some rudimentary brushing done to the creek.

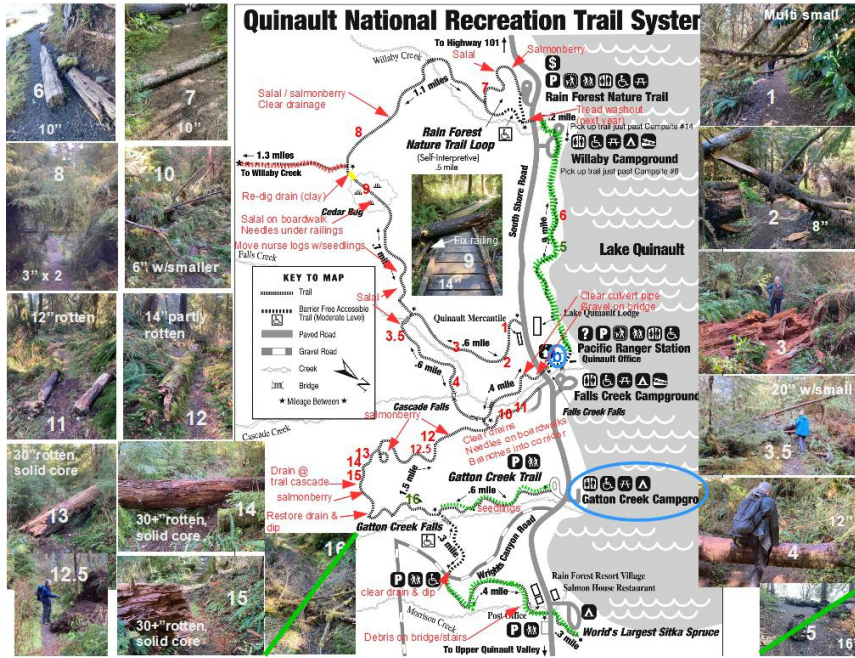
- **Sunday** was a half-day with the remaining crew removing the last three logs on the nature trails, some final brushing, and power-brushing the first 100 yards of the Willaby trail. This last task had deliberately been left undone on the earlier days to discourage hikers from walking in on the chainsaw and power-brushing activities. An informal ribbon-cutting was done at the Willaby Creek trailhead to conclude the work party.
- Task(s) accomplished:
 - Nature trails. All blocking logs (16) were removed plus the most severe drainage issues were addressed.
 - Willaby Creek trail.
- Task(s) remaining:
 - Many of the area trails are covered in small gravel. The area's heavy rain often wash this gravel into drains on the sides of the trails and into drain dips taking the water off the trails. Less work was done this year on clearing the drains and drain dips due to the effort needed on the Willaby Creek trail. Ideally, clearing this drainage should be done before next year's wet season.
 - There is a severely eroded section on the shore trail (climbing up along Willaby Creek) just before it joins the Rain Forest nature loop. This has existed for several years and needs to be fixed.
 - Additional brushing is needed on the last third of the Willaby trail. Also, with our limited resources, we were mostly able only to power-brush the heavy salmonberry in the tread corridor and not dig/pull it out. Hopefully, an additional crew (WCC, WTA) can be brought in to further this brush removal.

Notes:

- Breakfasts and dinners were group meals with one or more crew members preparing each meal. In this way, crew members only had to prepare one breakfast or dinner during the duration of the stay, allowing the rest of the crew much more relaxing mornings and evenings. The final breakfast on Sunday was a potluck of leftovers, of which there was much quantity and variety.
- This year the crew had access only to the small bunk house for accommodations plus the fitness building's restroom/shower. Most of the crew had to sleep elsewhere (e.g., in vehicles, at Gatton Creek campground*, and at a nearby hotel). At breakfast and dinner, the cooking/dining space was maxed out. The crew was extremely flexible and, due to the relatively dry weather, it worked out pretty well. It would have been much more awkward had there been more than the one-evening of rain we experienced.

*We appreciate the local ONF effort at getting us space at Gatton Creek campground; that certainly helped for this relatively dry trip.

Pre-trip work plan (nature trails)



Nature trail tree removal



Nature trail drainage work



Pre-trip work plan (Willaby Creek)

Log descriptions (entry to 0.6mi)

- 12" intruding into trail
- 16" bank to bank 24" over trail
- 48-54" on puncheon log
- jackstraw (~6 logs: 12-36")
- 20" 36" over trail
- 16" in trail
- 30" rotten, possible hard core
- 12"
- 30" cedar half trunk
- 20"
- 40" 14" off ground at trail
- 20"
- 18" rotten, polaski work
- 36" 30" off ground
- 22" 30" off ground
- 36" on ground
- 30" on ground

1.3 miles (+?)

~0.6 miles

Yet to be scouted. Trail may end at Willaby Creek (1.3mi) but other reports say it extends past creek to a large cedar tree.

There are a few clear areas on the trail.

~30" (line 9)

~30" (line 7)

0.25mi. First big log. 48-54"

Willaby Creek

Heavy entry salal. 16" log.

Nail

Jackstraw

36" (line 14)

~40" (line 11)

puncheon log. ~50' long?

~36" (line 16)

22" (line 15)

Starting on Willaby Creek trail



A little log work



Logs are not the only things to clear from the trail



Brushing can make a big difference



We reached the end of the line!



Success! A trail once again passable



Not shown: Rebecca, Mel, Josie, Eric (photographer)

And don't forget the fun and beauty!

