

GRAY WOLF / BCH-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

4/26 – 4/27/24

Location: Lower S. Fork Skokomish Trail, ONF (stock trail)

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
David Graves
Bernt Ericson
Josie Dean
Julie Metzger
Mike Forsyth
Patrick Sullivan
Harold Wiese with Magic, Katy and Archie

Estimated On-Trail Volunteer Hours: 118

Report written by Rebecca.

Objectives:

1. Clear main trail of logs from trailhead to Church Creek ford or as far as we could get (approx. 8 miles).
2. Clear some or all of the main trail above Church Creek ford of logs (approx. 2.5 miles).
3. Clear side trails 120, 140 and 100 of logs.
4. Power brush as much of the main trail as we reasonably could.

Metrics achieved: Total logs cut approximately 35 over about 7.5 miles. Total mileage of trail power brushed approximately 1.75.

1. Main trail cleared to just before the Church Creek ford. Crew stopped short of the ford at a 40" punky log that they weren't expecting (fell since the last scout) and not only did they have the smaller of the two saws, but it was getting late and had been pouring rain constantly all day with chilly temperatures.
2. Two of us attempted to drive around and go through the wildlife gate with a key on loan from ONF to clear the trail above Church Creek ford. Unfortunately, the padlock had been installed improperly and was impossible to rotate downwards to insert the key. So that was wasted time and we didn't get to drive in to clear or even scout the trail.
3. Side trails 120, 140 and 100 cleared.
4. Power brushing done on needy parts of the 140, and about a ½ mile downriver on the main trail from the 140 junction, and about a mile upriver on the main trail from the 140 junction. The brushing was done to standards whereby brush shouldn't be a problem there again for several or many years to come.

Should be done in the near future:

1. Clear the main trail above the Church Creek ford.
2. Continue to brush as crews are able.
3. Clear the 16 heavy rounds from one tree that we cut – Patrick's WTA crew will do that with a peavey.
4. Continue with various tread, drainage and realignment issues along the trail – Patrick's upcoming WTA crew will be tending to many of those.
5. Repair two contractor bridge railings damaged by falling trees. One near the 100 junction and the other on the 140. Bob Hoyle will coordinate with Jim Hollatz to get that done.

This work crew was done as part of the annual LeBar regional work crew led by Bob Hoyle. The purpose is to get LeBar Horse Camp and the Lower Skokomish Trail spruced up for the season. It's fun to join these two objectives together – one team working the campground and one team on the trail. Plus, we get fed the most amazing food imaginable by the world-famous chef Kim Merrick and her assistant(s). We work extra hard on the trails knowing that meal is in our near future! It's especially appreciated when we work all day in the pouring rain, which was the case on Saturday. Friday was better, only occasional light showers.



Left: David notching a tree that's over a creek for better hiker access. Stock goes to the right of that, through the creek itself. That was already clear.

Right: Rebecca getting near the end of this tree that took 16 rounds to clear. However, that 16 would have been 48 or more had Patrick not had the brilliant idea to cut them big and leave them for his upcoming WTA crew to clear with a peavey. The wood was heavy and we would have had to cut much smaller slices had he not thought of that, because the tree was running almost dead parallel with the trail. Patrick and I moved the rounds just enough for Harold and company to get through, but no more than that. Each one of those rounds is likely about 650 pounds or so.



This project was about ¼ mile downriver of the 100 junction (Camp Comfort). Someone had cut this log before, but it only had an 18" gap for hikers to slide through. Stock would be completely unable to get through. Mike widened this to stock standards.



Yes, there are usually abundant pictures of Archie whenever I, Rebecca, write a summary report. What can I say? I think Archie is adorable and charismatic. I had to make sure I got a picture of both sides, left and right. 😊



Harold on Magic, leading the way. Katy and Archie working hard carrying the supplies.



Harold and Pat Wiese with the Over-20 crowd, waiting to get saddled up.



Josie, Martin and Julie were the brushing team. They got it down to a science, walking along the trail with their backpacks on, brusher going, whacking back whatever was encroaching the trail. One of them following behind to clean up the mess.

Josie saw some of Martin's work and commented that there were big mounds of cut brush with a handful of lovely trilliums untouched in the middle of it all. 😊 Blooming trilliums abounded everywhere this weekend!



Pacific Dogwoods were really making a show all throughout the Skok valley! I noticed them dappled everywhere, they lift the spirit. And the valley and river itself is a sight to behold from up high – humbling us all with its power. Fortunately, we have crew members on our team who capture these scenes so I can add them to this report. 😊