

GRAY WOLF / BCH-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

7/24/24

Location: Lower Dungeness, ONF, a multi-use trail for stock, bike and hike.

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
David Graves
Mike Bonomo
Paul Hornberger
Jack Bochsler
Fred Inman
Jim Johannes
Vern Bessey

Estimated On-Trail Volunteer Hours: 63

Report written by Rebecca.

Objectives met:

1. Prep for an upcoming puncheon replacement by cutting 3 stringers, 2 sills, 2 bull rails and make decking with the Alaskan saw mill.
2. Prep for an upcoming puncheon to turnpike conversion by cutting enough curb logs for each side of a 102' puncheon that will be dismantled.

Backstory:

We have a detailed inventory of the condition of every single puncheon and bridge on the Lower Dungeness trail. Now we are starting to tackle some of the worst of them. We are doing this with teamwork. The Gray Wolf crew is overseeing the big scope of the project. But WTA, under Charlie Romine, will be replacing at least one of the puncheons. A youth crew, NW Youth Crew out of Omak and hired by the Forest Service, will be converting at least one very long (and very rotten) puncheon into turnpike. Today's objectives were to prep for both of those crews.

We transported the Alaskan saw mill onto the job site, along with another chainsaw and lots of accessories. When David, Martin and I scouted this job site a couple of weeks ago, we found a downed doug fir log suitable for decking (raised slightly off the ground so it was dry and solid instead of rotten). We found lots of fir and cedar to cut for stringers, sills, bull rails for the puncheon and curb logs for the turnpike.



Left: the first puncheon that will be replaced by WTA. We cut 3 stringers, 2 bull rails and 2 sills for this. In addition – the big job – we made decking for it using the Alaskan saw mill.

Right: the view from the downtrail side of the first puncheon that will be converted to turnpike. The doug fir poking out from the left side is the one we're using for decking. Ignore the number. That was my marking to keep track of the 17 different bridges and puncheons in the photo album (because one completely rotted-out puncheon looks a lot like the next one 😊).

Special note: many of the puncheons on this trail, even though this is rated as a stock trail, do not have the required 3rd stringer that they should have. Those that do have 3 stringers also have the decking nailed to the middle stringer, another problem. Puncheons rated for stock need to have 3 stringers and the decking only gets nailed to the outside stringers, not the middle. We and WTA will be making sure all new puncheons will be done to the correct standards.



Lots of hunting around in the forest, cutting, and moving of logs to use for stringers, sills, bull rails and curb logs. Every one that we cut we also put a flag around it and marked on the end of it identifying what it is.

Meanwhile, some of the crew was clearing out the massive amounts of devils club and other brush that was around the log we were to use for decking. And the log had to have the bark removed. Then ...



Left: The first time you run the mill down the log, it has to be on the rails you see in the picture. We take off a thin layer first that is discarded. That gives us a flat surface. We are lucky that Paul Hornberger and Mike Bonomo had used this device a lot to make decking for the Slab Camp bridge replacement in 2018. They taught the rest of us how to set it up and use it. We are also lucky that Tom Mix has collected and tended useful but uncommon tools like this for BCH over the years.

Right: Once you have the flat surface, you no longer need the longitudinal rails because you can slide the apparatus along the now-flat log. After you finish the thin piece, you have to reset the device holding the saw to the depth you actually want for decking. In our case, we set it to 4-1/2" to meet the minimum specs of 4" for a trail that is rated for stock.



We cut along the log to where we left off with the debarking, with some following behind to tap in wedges. That keeps the long heavy cut plank from sagging and bogging down the saw. Then we cut off the plank at 5 feet, the width we need for the decking. Running the mill is a multi-person job.



Left: a close up of the device holding the saw. The saw itself is an 066 with a 42" bar. Extremely loud. Many wore double hearing protection. And even though the saw is trapped with bars around it, we still wore either chaps or chainsaw pants just in case. Right: Our pile of decking. We haven't trimmed the edges off yet to make them rectangular. We will do that on a future work crew before they are needed for the puncheon.

There is more we can take off this tree, though some of it was split and we had to longitudinally cut the decking to keep only the solid part. On the other side of the puncheon is the rest of this tree and we'll be able to buck that down and use some of it for more decking for the other upcoming puncheon replacements.

We will be doing this again on Wednesday, August 14. Please feel free to sign up to join us! www.graywolftrailcrew.org has the signup link.