

TRAIL CREW NOTES

3-6 April 2025

Location: Quinault National Recreation Trail System, ONF

Lodge Trail #850

Quinault Loop Trail #854

Wright's Canyon Trail #854.3

Resort Trail #854.4

Rain Forest Interpretive Trail #855

Gatton Creek Loop #854.2 & 888

Willaby Creek Trail #860

Crew members:

David Graves

Matt Houghton

Sonya Langford

James Miller

Eric Nagle

Theodore Spoon

Bernt Ericson

Fred Inman

CA "Mel" Melmed

Bill Mueller

Christine Petersen

Roan Ford

Martin Knowles

Julie Metzger

LaVonne Mueller

Chris Sabo

Hours on job: 286

- Objective(s) for the crew:

- Address the significant amount of brush and drainage issues that couldn't be dealt with in 2024 due to the focused effort spent opening the previously blocked Willaby trail. Leave trails such that local residents can continue maintenance efforts.
- Clear trails of 16 downed trees (16).
- Restore treadwidth to 0.3 mile ADA accessible trail.
- Clear Falls Creek campground road of previously-felled hazard trees.
- Provide local residents with instruction and experience on trail maintenance methods and standards.

- Work done:

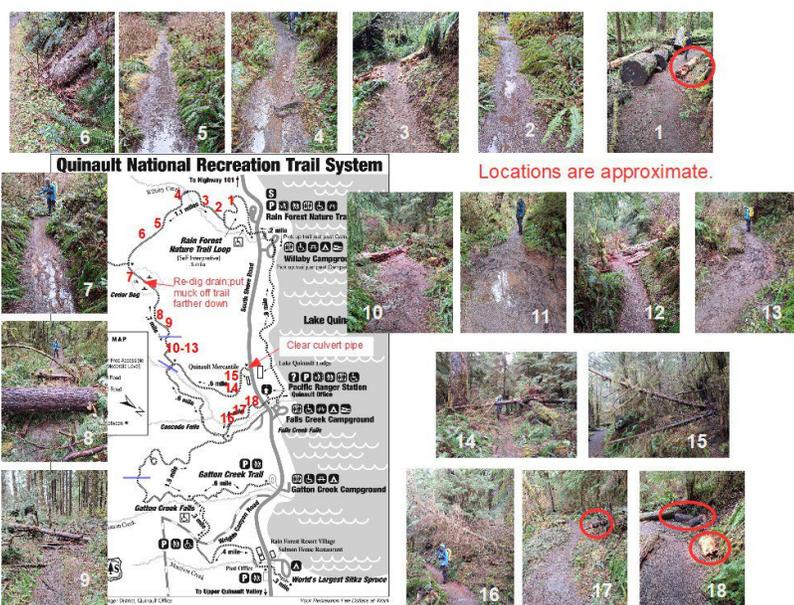
- **Thursday** (half-day). Breaking into three teams, we hand-cleared intruding brush and blocked drainage on the three trails closest to the lodge and on either side of Falls Creek. The crews cleared much, but not all of the roughly 0.5 mile-long trails, including pulling heavy log billets that had been left in the drains by an earlier crew that had cut the tree out.
- **Friday** (full-day). One team started brushing the trails worked on Thursday. Another team spent the morning clearing debris from the Falls Creek campground roads and sites. This team then got training on using crosscut saw to remove most of the fallen trees on the Gatton Creek trail plus clearing several other blockages on the trail. A third team continued fixing serious drainage issues and brushing along the Quinault loop from where they left Thursday to the Willaby Creek trail junction.
- **Saturday** (full-day). The saw team removed the final trees from the Gatton trail and then switched to power brushing. With three power brushing crews, we cleared brush from three quarters of the 2.1-mile-long Gatton Creek trail and most of the Willaby Creek trail. Special projects included diverting a twenty-foot seep on Willaby to make for a more pleasant hike and working the 0.3 ADA-accessible trail by fixing drainage, restoring tread width, brushing, and cleaning 120 feet of bridge of debris clogging the plank and railing gaps. A fourth team replaced a plastic culvert that erosion and hikers had uncovered and broken through. This previous trip and injury hazard was replaced it with rock-bordered drain that should eliminate the need for any future culvert there.

○ Task(s) remaining:

- Even with 32 hours of power brushing, there are still sections of the trails where the salmonberry is rather thick. Also, several trails (e.g., Gatton Creek) have significant sections with tree seedlings growing in the trail corridor. These seedlings need to be pulled out before they develop a root structure that makes pulling difficult.
- Remove or tamp down support piping and rebar left over from a destroyed overlook on trail connecting Willaby campground and the Rain Forest loop trail. If these items are held by underground concrete, they may need to be dug around and cut so the ends will be under the soil level rather than above it.
- Clear logs from the lake trail between Quinault lodge and the Willaby campground.

○ Notes

- Scouting the trails two weeks in advance of the crew allowed us to get immediately to work on Thursday; saving the crew the usual ½ day it's taken to scout the trails at the beginning of the crew.
- This was an inaugural year with three local residents joining the crew. Not only was their assistance invaluable in getting work done, they are willing and able to continue maintenance activities on these trails. It was a genuine pleasure to work with them and to help them learn various trail maintenance techniques and standards.
- The wonderful weather allowed many in the crew to camp outside at Falls Creek campground across from the ONF bunkhouse. It also allowed the crew to eat outside, alleviated the indoor crowding during meals, and minimized bringing wet and dirty clothes/footwear into the bunkhouse. The crew had a great time sharing meals at the ONF bunkhouse. A local resident also offered to house some crew members; this generous offer was not needed this year but should we encounter the more usual wet weather in the future, absent access to the second/larger bunkhouse, such assistance will indeed be a blessing.



Work others left for us

Part of the pre-scout planning



One mess found during scouting



All cleaned up



When water runs down the trail



Step 1: get water off the trail



Accident waiting to happen



Culvert replacement



Always drainage to do



Tackling trees the old-fashioned way



Always more brush to remove



Enjoying a sunny spring at Quinault