

GRAY WOLF / BCHW-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

4/18-19, 2025

Location: Elwha / Humes Ranch area trails, ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel (Fri / Sat)

Paul Kamps (Fri / Sat)

Bernt Ericson (Fri / Sat)

Barbara Maxwell (Fri)

Report written by Rebecca.

Objectives met:

1. Find a viable stock route across the Elwha river from the Humes Ranch area to Long Ridge Trail (otherwise known as the Dodger Point trail. This is to bypass the suspension bridge, which stock can't get to now due to a washout on the main trail.
2. Clear the Elwha trail from the trailhead to Humes Ranch and also on the upper route from Michael's cabin to the suspension bridge across the river.

Back story:

I have a backcountry crew schedule for July to clear the Long Ridge (Dodger Point) trail. This is a long trail. It's nearly 10 miles from the suspension bridge at the Elwha River to the camp just below Dodger Point. During our backcountry trip, we expect to work up and then move camp up. But once we've cleared to the top and have our camp with us up there, we really need stock to get the tools and supplies back down. There is no way we can work this trail entirely from the bottom because the miles get to be too high without moving camp up. Thus the need to find a way for stock to get across the river without going to the bridge.

To get to the trailhead we were able to use the old ONP truck that is parked at the ranger station on the other side of the bypass. To say that truck smells like mouse pee would be the understatement of the year. But it runs and it got us there. Barbara was able to join us on Friday, which helped hugely with getting the gear in. Bernt, Rebecca and Paul were outfitted to stay the night – getting our backcountry gear routines back up and running.

Friday was getting there, doing a little trail clearing on the way to Humes Ranch, setting up camp on the old river bed, and then getting to the scouting to find the route. Saturday we split up in the morning. Bernt and Paul went to start on making the route stock passable while I did some saw training on the Humes Ranch area trails with Rachael and Matthew Tuller, BCHW packers who had also come in later on Friday. After the Tullers left mid-morning, I went to join the guys to help with the route.



Most of what we cleared on the way in was small stuff or things we could push off. This was the only project of interest.



Left: It's hard to convey the stock route that we found in pictures. It's an old way trail that drops from Long Ridge trail down to the bluff above the river. It's short, but we need stock to be able to get to the flats along the river to a spot about 1000 feet downriver where we think they'll be able to ford safely.

Right: This picture helps to see the perspective that we're trying to get stock down to that flat ground below.



Logs had to be cleared off the old way trail.



Meanwhile I was doing some saw training with Rachael and Matthew, demonstrating skills and supervising their practice. They had a great time and appreciated the time on the saw.



Then I went to the other side of the river to help Bernt and Paul, who had already made a huge amount of progress!

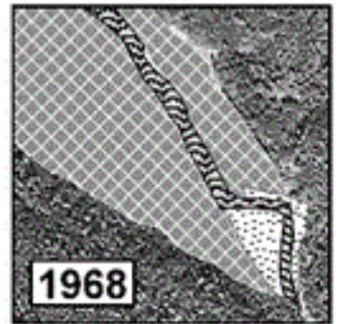
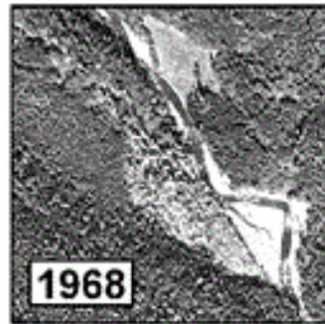
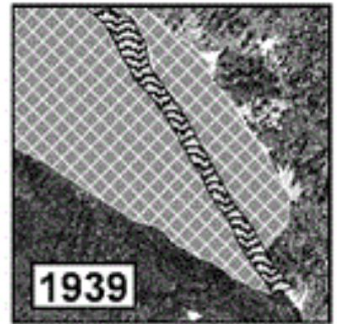
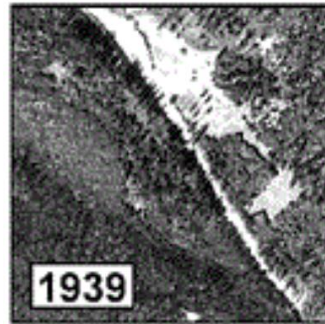


Left: Looking up the route ...

Right: Looking down the route ... this spot was where just hours before it was a hiker scramble down a small gully. Rocks, a quick wall build and a lot of dirt moving made a huge difference in a short amount of time.



It's hard to overstate how majestic and powerful the Elwha River is.



Left: This view off the suspension bridge is looking at the site of an incredible landslide that in 1967 blocked and diverted the river.
Right: Check this out. Look at that amazing diversion in the river!