

GRAY WOLF / BCHW-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

5/17/2025

Location: Smokey Bottom, ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
Randy Kraxberger
Greg King
Jack Bochsler
Barbara Maxwell
Eric Nagle
Ted Spoon
James Miller

Total volunteer hours: 65

Report written by Rebecca.

Objectives achieved on this 2-mile trail plus some achieved unexpectedly on the 1.6 mile lower trail.

1. Cleared the trail of the rest of the downed trees – these were all overhead. One was a vertical broken tree that needed to be pulled down with a come-a-long.
2. Power brushed the southernmost ½ mile of trail.
3. Improved tread on the southernmost ½ mile of trail.
4. Delineated and made safer the connection between the upper and lower trails. This had grown over and people were walking perilously close to the edge of the cliff that drops down to Boulder Creek. The cliff had given away so we had no choice but to get rid of some downed trees and a lot of brush to get people from the lower trail to the upper.
5. Cleared dozens of unexpected alder saplings that had broken and laid over on the lower (lakebed) trail sometime in the week since we were last there.

Future work:

1. The middle ¾ mile of this trail could use brushing and some minor treadwork here and there. Nothing critical, so nothing scheduled at this time. Next year we'll try to make sure we focus on this section.

You might have surmised from my last report of this trail that it's not the easiest to get to in terms of logistics due to the closure of the Olympic Hotsprings Road. We've got it down though. This time we didn't have the honor of an ONP staff to drive us, but we could still use the truck which is parked at the ranger station ½ mile past the south end of the bypass. It takes a lot of extra time and hiking mileage on my part to go get the truck, come back across the bypass, etc, but eventually we get all the tools over the bypass and into the truck. Reverse on the way back.

We didn't manage to get pictures of the crew working this week. Instead, I'll drop a map here so you can try to make sense of where we worked over the past two Saturdays. This map labels the lower trail (blue) as Smokey Bottom but that's what I've been calling the "lakebed" trail – it goes along the bottom of what used to be Lake Mills. That's where all the revegetation happened and where the thousands of lupines are currently blooming. What I'm calling Smokey Bottom is being called Old West Lake Mills trail by this map (the upper one, red). That was our main focus. The star on the map is the site of the removed Glines Canyon dam.

Last week we worked from the north to the south. Came out the junction at the south end and walked along the old lake to get back. When we did that, we skirted the brush at the edge of a cliff above Boulder Creek. This week that cliff had given away. It was gone. We cut brush and some old logs to get the trail back to where it was before. The brush had simply overgrown it. We went in from the south this week and worked the southernmost ½ mile and then walked back out along the upper trail. I chose to do that because it was this stretch that had the worst problem with overgrown brush pushing people down, and the trail was deteriorating as a result. Some of the tread was actually damaged due to trees that came down (we cleared those last week).



Route options:

SBT Smokey Bottom Trail

↗ 251 ft ↖ 1.9 mi

OWLM Old West
Lake Mills Trail

↗ 826 ft ↖ 1.9 mi