

GRAY WOLF / BCHW-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

6/6/2025

Location: Mt. Muller and Divide trails, ONF

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel

Martin Knowles

Jack Bochsler

Eric Nagle

Total volunteer hours: 36

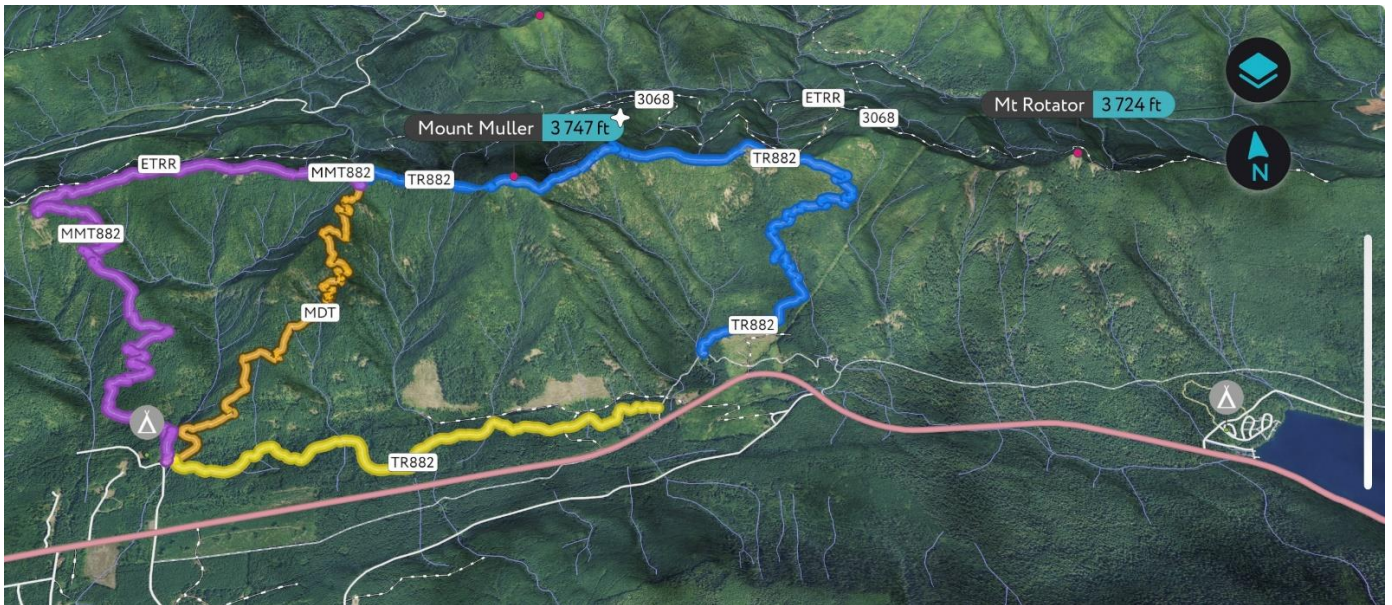
Report written by Rebecca.

Objectives achieved:

1. Cleared the trails of downed trees.
2. Did some "triage" hand brushing where it was difficult to get through or run the saw safely.

Future work needed:

1. The bottom 2/3 of the Divide trail is horrendously brushy. Unmaintained. I am hoping a youth crew working for ONF can address this in the future.



Overview map, west tip of Lake Crescent included for reference.

Divide trail, orange: 2.6 miles with 2800 feet of elevation gain (that is not a typo). Hiker / biker only.

The four of us, divided into two saw teams, worked our way up the Divide Trail. This is a trail that splits the Mt Muller loop into two loops. It shows evidence of being unmaintained for many years. Some of the logs we cut had mature and thick salal in the former tread underneath them, with extremely old foot notches hatched into the logs to help people get over them. In fact, one log had notches in it and, when we cut that out, found that the log underneath it also had notches cut out. They had been there a long, long time.

The 2800 feet elevation gain in 2.6 miles is a bit deceiving as there are actually stretches that are either almost flat or a gentle grade. That means when it does get steep it gets REALLY steep ... and we were carrying saws and equipment. Caveat: I did bill this to the crew as more of a physical fitness training day than a pure desire to get the trees off this trail. 😊

We cleared approximately 30 trees from this trail (some were just trees that we widened from previous cuts).

Mt. Muller trail, purple: 4.3 miles with another 1,000 ft elevation gain and 3300 feet loss. Stock trail.

At the top of the Divide trail you meet up with the Mt. Muller trail, and there the teams split. Jack and Eric took the purple route. There were only a few trees on the Mt. Muller loop in either direction because this trail has been much more recently and regularly maintained. Eric and Jack had a handful of trees to clear to get back to the trailhead. When they arrived back at the cars, they headed out the yellow flat section to take out a tree that Jack knew was about 3/8 mile east. But when they got there, that log had already been removed.

You might be wondering why there is another 1,000 feet gain when at that point you're up on the ridge. That's because most ridge trails, this one is no exception, tend to crisscross up and over the ridge multiple times. They rarely run along the very top edge. Mt. Muller crosses up and over from the north to the south side of the ridge many times! At least the south side offers views of the Olympics and Lake Crescent.

Approximately 5 trees were cleared, plus any necessary widening of old cuts.

Mt. Muller trail, blue: 4.6 miles with another 1,500 ft elevation gain and 3700 feet loss. Stock trail.

This is the route that Martin and Rebecca took, as we had parked a car at the east end of the loop. We cleared out 8 blocking logs plus multiple cut backs to widen for stock. Like Eric and Jack, we had numerous times of crossing over the ridge. The north side had some lovely avalanche lilies announcing to us that the lingering patches of snow had melted only in the past week or so.



You can see the evidence of how long these logs have been down. The salal is thick and mature underneath the logs in the tread.

We were all quite tired at the end of this day – but our fitness level has been upped a notch, getting us more ready for those backcountry trips! 😊