

GRAYWOLF / BCHW-PENINSULA TRAIL CREW NOTES

July 5-10, 2025

Location: Long Ridge (Dodger Point) Trail and Elwha-Dodger spur trail, ONP – STOCK TRAIL

Report written by Rebecca.

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
David Graves
Paul Kamps
Barbara Maxwell
Ted Spoon
Tim Branham
Bernt Ericson

BCHW packers:

Rachael Taylor-Tuller
Matthew Tuller

Starring the incredible:

*Woody
*Blue
*Possi
*Biskit
*Maizey

Total hours spent working or packing on trail: 447 (as always, this does not include the countless hours organizing beforehand and reporting afterward)

1. BRUSHING:

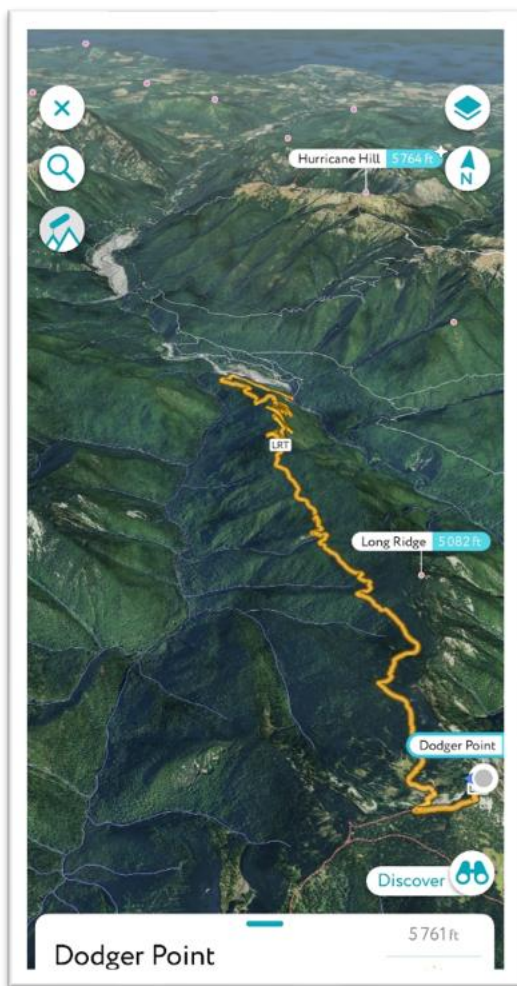
- a. We power brushed (two brusher teams) most of the bottom **6 miles** of Long Ridge trail. 6 miles was chosen on purpose because I saw upon scouting that's where the salal brush problems were. Above there was either no brush, light brush or small trees that we could pull or cut by hand. Where the trail was benched into the hillside, we brushed just the uphill side so that the lower brush will keep hikers up and cut down on tread creep. Where the trail was cut into a flatter terrain, we brushed both sides. The brush was almost 100% thick salal, so it will grow back relatively slowly compared to other types of vegetation. Everything that we cut got tossed way off the trail so the trail looks very nice and is pleasant to hike.
- b. Up high we hand brushed things that were infringing on the trail and pulled as many small tree saplings as we could that were going to grow big and block the trail. The sapling pulling continued whenever and wherever we could along the trail.

2. TREAD AND DRAINAGE

- a. We did a repair ½ mile up from the river on Long Ridge. The tread had a major hole in it from a rootball falling away. The problem area was about 20 ft long. A rock wall was built and the tread refilled from material found nearby.
- b. We addressed a drainage issue ¼ mile up from the river on Long Ridge. The water was completely missing the intended ditch because it had all filled up, and was eroding the trail. We re-ditched and guided the water into a good flow across the trail and down the hillside. If that is kept clean, water in that spot should not be an issue again. This spot was approximately 30 feet long.
- c. We did multiple minor tread re-benchings along the way on the entire trail. In general, the tread on this trail is surprisingly sound. Where it was really falling away or slumped, we re-benched but those areas were short and not very numerous.
- d. On the Elwha trail, Humes side, the 3/8 mile from the suspension bridge up was in rough shape and difficult to hike. We hand-brushed here because there were many trees growing into the trail. Then we re-benched about 4 major areas to make this not only more pleasant, but safe.
 - a. One area that got re-benched is the washout that is preventing stock from getting through. I still wouldn't run stock through there, but it is much wider and safer now and drainage was addressed so hopefully this spot will harden up. People were genuinely afraid of this area (rightfully so because it would be a high-consequence fall and it was extremely narrow and mucky) but since we fixed it, we've gotten comments of relief from hikers.

- b. The other re-benchings were places where the gravel and dry dirt had slumped from above and were making it so hikers were fearful of slipping sideways with, again, a high-consequence fall waiting below. Now it's a safe tread with good footing.
3. LOGOUT – cleared **169** downed trees from the trail (that is not a typo). These were, for the most part, small to medium. Not a lot of complexity nor size, but LOTS OF THEM.

Long Ridge trail starts as you get off the suspension bridge over the Elwha at 900 feet elevation. It starts climbing, not steeply, but relentlessly, and ends up at the iconic old fire lookout cabin up at 5731 feet 10.5 or 11 miles later. To get to the start of this trail, one must first travel 10-11 miles to get from the Madison Falls trailhead, along the closed Olympic Hot Springs Road, up the closed Whiskey Bend road and then along the Elwha trail. We were fortunate that the Tullers were happy to pack us in to this point, getting our supplies nearly to the bridge but stopped before then by a problematic-for-stock washout area.



In this map you can see the Long Ridge Trail (yellow) with the Elwha flowing north in the background and Dodger Point down in the SE corner. We started our day miles below the big gray boomerang-shaped part of the river, which is the old Lake Mills Reservoir from the days that the river was dammed. Dodger Point, 5761 ft, is renowned for its 360 views.

This is the kind of crew that really demonstrates what the Graywolf crew is made of. The amount of badly-needed work we got done over the number of miles we had to travel leaves one rather astounded and disbelieving ... even us when we look back on it! However, to look at many of the pictures, one would be led to believe that we really just spent a lot of time lounging around. Maybe we did? Let's find out ...

First we had to get to our camp, which is at the start of the work. On the way we get to see the old dam site. Many in the crew rode their bikes to the Elwha trailhead up the Whiskey Bend Road. Beautiful day, lovely hike or bike – it didn't feel like work.



Once we set up camp, we went back to meet the packers, help unload and schlep the tools and equipment to the start of the trail.

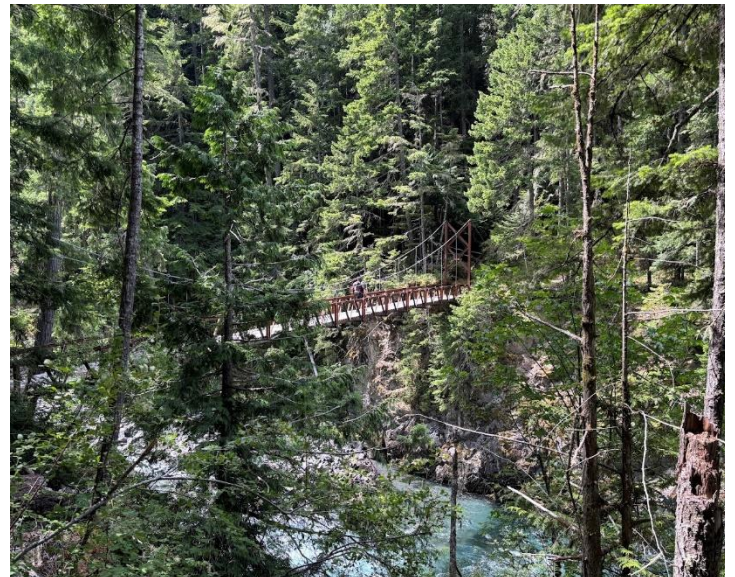


Quite a few signs because there are a lot of junctions in this area. It's very much an old homestead place, there is even an old apple tree at Humes Cabin.



Left: We had dinner, relaxed and got ready for our **21 or 22 mile** hike the next day (again, not a typo). The plan was to take one saw and one brusher with their related equipment and fuels up trail. We would drop the brusher at 6 miles and the saw at the top. We figured one team walking up and working down would work well with one team working up from the bottom (for each type of tool).

Right: Dodger Point Bridge over the Grand Canyon of the Elwha.





Day 2: our job today was to hike those tools up the trail. And to enjoy the views along the way and the cabin at the top. Then start with the actual trail work on the way down.



Avalanche lilies are story tellers. They are the first flowers to pop up as the snow melts. If the lilies are fresh, the snow just melted. If they're a little wilted, the snow melted maybe a couple of weeks ago.



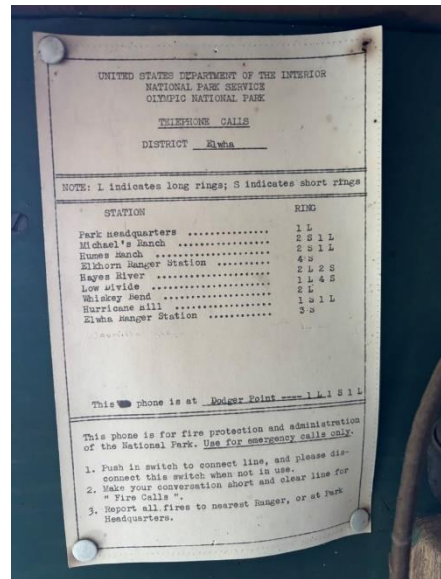
Bear grass was blooming, which I felt fortunate to see because it seems that they don't bloom every year. Finally, we got to the fire lookout cabin, elevation 5761 or 5731 depending on which source you believe.



Dodger Point has unparalleled 360 views.



And an iconic, interesting fire-lookout cabin. No longer in use.



It was rather hard to remove ourselves from this to start back down, working along the way.



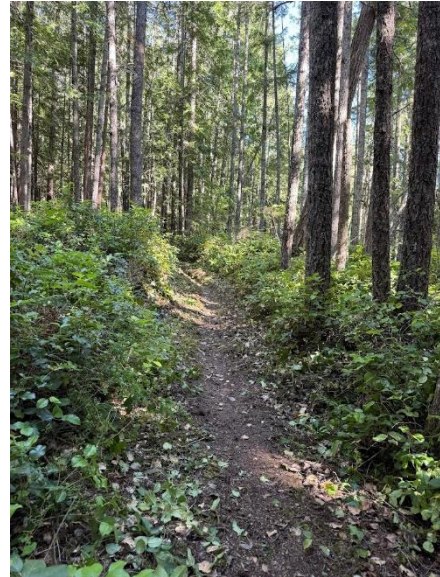
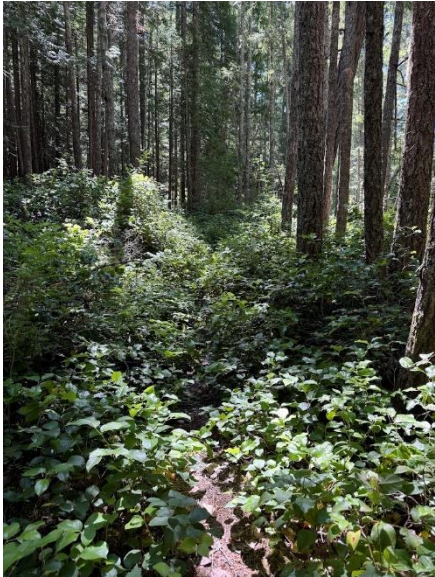
But we managed to get motivated. One saw team of Paul and Tim started cutting. The first log was literally just below the cabin. The goal was to get the saw back down a couple of miles to make tomorrow's hike a little shorter. Meanwhile, the rest of us started doing some hand brushing and sapling pulling (we pull sapling trees from the edges of the trail so they don't grow and take over the trail). You have to peer closely into the picture on the right to see Bernt hunched over working on something.



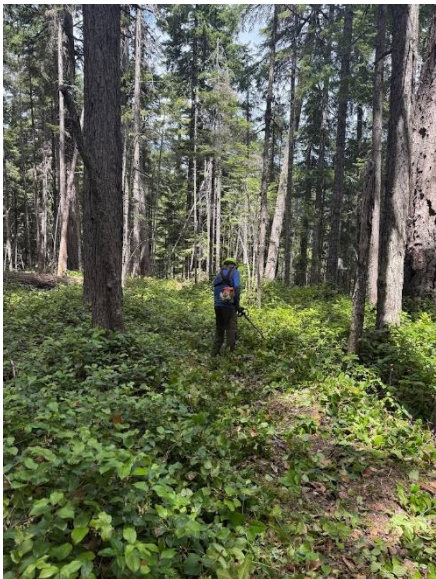
Talk about sawing with a view.



Day 3: Saw team of Paul and Tim, brushing team of Rebecca and Martin hike back up the long trail to where our tools were and started working down. Saw team of Bernt and David, brushing team of Barbara and Ted started working from the bottom. The salal was extremely thick! It's been a long time since it was brushed.



Brushing on this trip was hard work.



Left: the reason this team cut that log so long and pushed it off like that, is because there are so many switchbacks on this trail. They knew there was another section of the trail just below them. By leaving the billet long, it ensured it would get trapped on those two trees.

Right: This was a tree that had some rootball complexity to it, but Paul was able to analyze and deduce they were not going to be able to move. He was right and the cut was uneventful.



David and Bernt, working from the bottom, had a higher density of trees in less distance. But they still had to go up nearly 4 miles. Lots to cut in that distance.





Day 4: while the top saw team was doing some touch up on old logs that were sticking into the trail, Bernt went back across the bridge to address some major tread issues.

Left: this dry, dusty and gravelly part of the trail was very slumped and outsloped. It felt like you could slide right off. But now it feels perfectly safe.

Right: This area is a perpetual problematic washout area. Before it was worked on, it was about 6 inches wide and extremely mucky and below is a high-consequence drop off where you really can't fall. Some people were actually turning around at this point rather than chancing it. Our team widened it on the first day, then Bernt widened it some more and worked on the drainage to allow it to dry out and harden.



Meanwhile five of us were still laboring over the brushing, making sure we got all of the thickest bunch of salal. We were really cranking!

Day 5: We exited because we had literally finished all of our work goals – which was remarkable! The next day Rachael and Matthew came back up to collect and pack out our gear. Paul and Rebecca went back to the trailhead to wait for them, collect the gear and disperse to the appropriate team members.

So to answer my question from earlier in this report, I guess we really DIDN'T just lounge around and look at the views.



Left: The Tullers arriving back at the mule corral.

Right: Oh My! These new kids in town are INTERESTING!! The ONP mules were pretty intrigued and they all came over to meet the new crew.



This was seriously funny. The Tuller's animals are all relaxed, posing for the picture (Woody), rubbing their heads on the post (Biskit) or simply not interested (Blue – ears barely visible). The ONP mules, however, are lining up for the show! I laughed pretty hard!

