



Gray Wolf Trail Crew

-in partnership with-
BCHW, Peninsula Chapter
Upper Graywolf and Three Forks Trails, Olympic National Park
1-4 September, 2025



Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel
David Graves
Martin Knowles
Tim Goss

ONP Packers

Paul (Claire, Minnie, Jones)
Kirah and Dinah
(Cowgirl, Milo, Charlie, Daisy, Samuel))

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 145
Miles worked: 10.8
Logs cut: 53
Drainages cleaned: lots
Miles hiked: 30-35 each (many of them weighted with tools)
Hornet stings: 2

Objectives Achieved:

1. Clear all logs from Deer Park to Three Forks camp.
2. Clear all logs from Three Forks camp to Graywolf camp.
3. Clear all logs from Graywolf camp east to the ONP / ONF boundary.
4. Clear all logs from Graywolf camp south to at least Cedar Lake way trail junction, scout past that to see the need.
5. Drainage cleanouts as necessary.

Map legend

Red - Three Forks trail (4 miles) from Deer Park campground (5384 feet) to Three Forks camp (2116 feet).

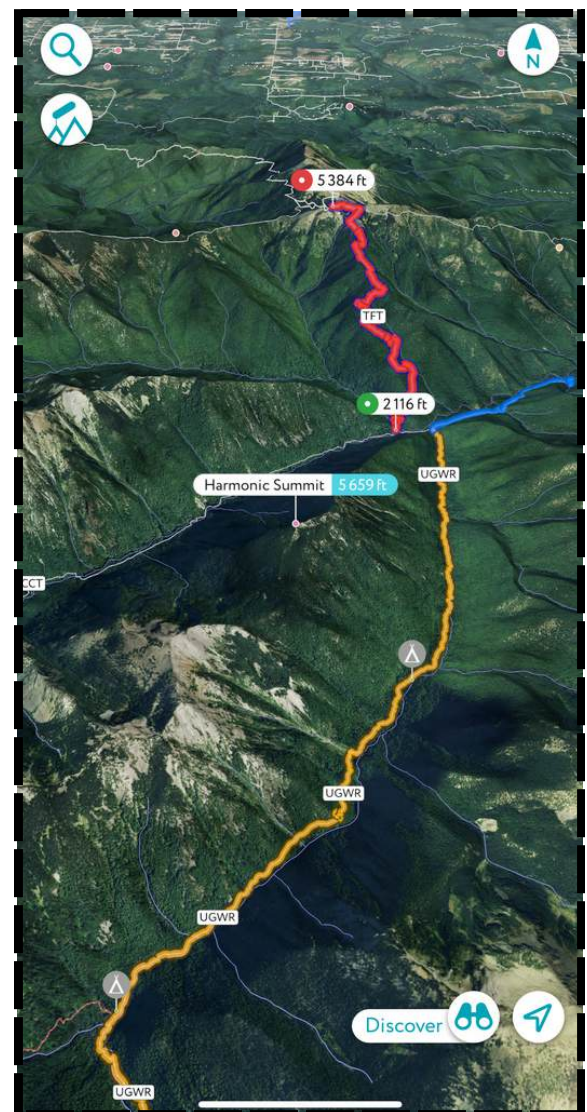
(faint gray line going east from red to blue is the connector between Three Forks and Graywolf camps. 0.3 miles).

Blue - Upper Graywolf River Trail from Graywolf camp to Forest Service boundary (1.7 miles).

Yellow - Upper Graywolf River Trail from Graywolf Camp to Cedar Lake way trail junction (faint dotted red line coming in from the left), 5.1 miles.

Why is it called Three Forks?

The first valley below Deer Park is Grand Creek, which flows down from the basin below Obstruction Point. It merges into Cameron Creek, which is the next valley south and flows out of Upper Cameron Basin. Together, they then merge into the Graywolf River. All this merging happens within ¼ mile. It's a powerful, glorious place and I always feel so lucky to spend time there.



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Our task this day was to get our supplies to camp, clear Three Forks trail before the mules headed down, clear the Upper Graywolf east to the Forest Service boundary, and start a little bit with clearing south on the Graywolf trail.



Our hero, Donovan Rafferty

Long-time Volunteer Ranger at Deerpark Campground and elsewhere in the backcountry.

Legendary for many amazing reasons, but his skill as a pilot vehicle for the truck / horse trailer is unparalleled and critical to the mission.

Deer Park road above the ONP gate is narrow, washerboardy, and twisty. Donovan goes ahead to make sure each successive mile is cleared of traffic or traffic blocked, and radios back to the packers that it's okay to proceed. He repeats this on the way back down. And then again in both directions on the packout day.

Donovan is a big supporter of trails.



We knew from an earlier scout that Three Forks trail, the path of our packer, had a handful of trees down. David and Tim went ahead before Paul arrived to get this cleared to Three Forks shelter.

This was an example of the types of trees they were dealing with. Light work for David, the sawyer in the team, but critical to get out of the way of the mules.





Martin and Rebecca went down with Paul, unloaded the gear and schlepped it all to Graywolf Camp (multiple 3/10 mile trips).

Then we started with the first project after Three Forks, directly on the other side of the Grand Creek footlog. Not challenging cutting, but messy and lots of billets to move.

Then we started heading south on Graywolf River Trail with what time we had left. We cut out a handful of easy-peasy small stuff in the first $\frac{3}{8}$ mile and then we came across this ...



I am standing on the trail, kid you not. What a mess. We got started with this but only got part way into it when it was time to go back to camp for the evening.



Graywolf camp is a lovely place. Lots of room, right on the river, very pretty.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Our first project was to get that mess from the previous evening finished. That took all four of us. Fortunately, we were able to safely run two saws simultaneously to get this cleaned up.

A couple more "before" pictures



Looking north (down trail)



Looking south (up trail)

Time to get to work



We are careful about running two saws on the same project. But in this case, the two trees David and I were cutting were not interacting with each other. No movement of one tree was going to affect the other.



This is Tim Goss, new to our crew and are we ever glad he joined us! Great trail worker and team member. Here he noticed that all the branches were clogging the stream, so he was clearing them all out so the water doesn't overflow and erode the trail.

Teamwork prevailed and we got it done.



Looking south - picture taken from same place as the first "before" picture



Looking south



Looking north

Then it was time to continue uptrail as two saw teams, leapfrogging and taking projects as we came to them. The weight of the saws and equipment / fuels was heavy. The going was slow. Plenty of time to notice the gorgeous river and valley views we were walking through.



At 4.6 miles from camp, we came upon this. (left is looking north (downtrail), right is looking south). The four of us decided this one was another time-consuming project, so we decided to finish clearing to the Cedar Lake way trail and leave this to come back to in the morning.



Once we got to the site of the old Falls Shelter, Cedar Lake trail junction, two of us scouted ahead nearly another mile. The trail is in terrible condition from that point until when it exits the forest to climb to the pass, but in that nearly one mile we saw only two small trees. That made the decision for us not to continue with the weight of the saws any further. We still had 5.1 miles to hike back to camp from the junction. We left one saw and kit with the project and took the other one back to camp.

Side note: a saw team must have two or more people. Sawing alone is not allowed nor safe. Tim was David's team partner, and David needed Tim at each log in order to start the saw. Somehow Tim, with the pulaski he was carrying, managed to clean out drainages all along the way and still catch back up to David by the time he got to the next tree. Amazing! I have no picture of Tim cleaning drainages, but I couldn't believe on the walk back how many of them had been tended! This is critical for the longevity of the trail to keep the water flowing off in a way that doesn't erode the trail.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

David headed for home. Martin, Tim and Rebecca hiked 4.6 miles back to the project.



These came down together and were both broken off of their rootballs and up hard against a live tree at the bottom.



Martin and Rebecca took turns with the saw. Martin sawed out the offside and Rebecca finished the cuts from the safe side. We were working on a steep hillside and had to take precautions not to slip. You can see that I have my foot resting safely in a notch I had cut into the tree I'm sitting on.



Martin took the time to go back down and clear out an old cut tree that was blocking the multiple large billets we were sending down. Tim was clearing the billets and also serving as a trail guard.



Once we got the large tree cut down to a set point, we turned our attention to the smaller one. We weren't sure if this one would slide. We were prepared if it did, but hoped it wouldn't.



It took some leg power to get that piece away from the tree it was hard up against.



Then we cut the smaller tree multiple times to get it cleared out of the way of the bigger tree which, at this point, was going to have to come this way.



We took a snack to rest before tackling this last part of the project. From this angle you can now see why it wanted to tip off that old log in the other direction.



We made a cut plan, executed it and it all went well.



More leg power – lots of it!



Tread clean up and repair ...



Finished! Left: looking south. Right: Looking north.

Now we had to hike 4.6 miles back to camp with the weight of the tools. We had one more large project to tend about 200 yards east of camp.



This was a 30" cedar that had some complexity to it due to the detached rootball and the height of the tree. This was entirely Martin's project – handled perfectly!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Schlep everything back to Three Forks shelter and wait for the amazing team of Kirah, Dinah and company.



It was hot and a hard climb out so the mules, people and Cowgirl, the only horse in the whole ONP herd (who apparently is quite revered by all the mules), took lots of breaks. Back up on top Donovan had buckets of water for the mules (and horse!) and a cooler of cold drinks for the humans – we were all extremely grateful!