Gray Wolf Trail Crew
-in partnership with-
BCHW, Peninsula Chapter

Heather Park Trail, Olympic National Park
14 and 16 November, 2025
Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members
Martin Knowles (11/14 and 11/16)
Rebecca Wanagel (11/14 and 11/16)
Bill Mueller (11/14)
LaVonne Mueller (11/14)
Brian Berg (11/14)

Quick Stats
On-trail volunteer hours: 31
Hours including travel time: 40
Miles worked: 3-1/4
Trail is rated for
hikers and stock
Very Steep Trail

Objectives:

1. Clear a downed tree we knew about at 3.25 miles. This was down in such a way that the tread was getting destroyed and it was difficult to climb over to get past it.
2. Clear one other log we knew to be down, as well as cut back several logs that were sticking out too far in the trail.
3. Clear existing drainage features and create new ones for the first 3.25 mile. At that point, we knew the switchbacks cease and the tread past there wasn't getting damaged by running water.

Achieved: All objectives were achieved.

Heather Park trail is beautiful! If you haven't hiked it, think about adding it to your list. Beware, it is relentlessly steep. At the backcountry camp located at about 5,300 feet (the trailhead is at 1,800), there is an old cabin site that is a really interesting relic. The rock wall bases are still there for the entire perimeter. The fireplace is absolutely huge and was built to vent like a chimney. Amazing rock work!

Besides the human interest factor, nature has even more to throw into your field of view. Once you enter the sub-alpine zone, which isn't a lot of miles due to the steepness, the views become jaw-dropping. If you can make it to the saddle at nearly 5,700 feet, suddenly you can now see the snow capped peaks to the south and west and the view gets immense.

However, that steepness, besides taking your breath away, has another downside: erosion due to water running down the trail. There are many drainage features put in earlier by trail workers, but they all needed to be cleared out because they currently were not working and the erosion was obvious. In addition, there were long stretches where the water was flowing unchecked, so we needed to add more drainages along the side of the trail, hopefully catching those problematic areas at the top of the flow.

Left: this switchback was getting damaged by water seeping off the hillside. The water needed to be corralled and directed.

Right: You can see the erosion that is happening as a result of the water flowing unchecked down the trail. Heather Park has really nice tread - we are trying to preserve that!

This tree was difficult to get over from the downhill side. It had been down long enough that the tread was destroyed. Martin is quite tall and yet you can see that the tree is at about shoulder height for him as he worked from the downhill side. That was because of the erosion of the tread in that spot.

What is he doing, you might ask? This rootball was still rooted in position enough that it wasn't going to roll, however, nothing was to stop it from tipping right into the trail corridor. We decided to use another nearby downed tree as a prop to hold it up. We jammed several pieces in there to make it impossible for the rootball to tip.

Left: the rootball is sufficiently blocked up, ready for the tree to be cut.

Right: After we cut the tree, we used a log from it, and others as blocks, to create a curb wall so we could repair the tread. This is the finished product.