

**Monthly Trail Report for the Board and Membership
Peninsula Chapter and Gray Wolf Trail Crew
Report written by Rebecca Wanagel
March 2026**

As always, Donna and Bill's reports include the description of the work. Rebecca's reports are via attached narrative summaries with pictures.

Jim and Donna Hollatz, DNR and State

Miller Peninsula and Clallam County Trails

Here is the trail report for Miller Peninsula State Park for February 10 through March 3, 2026.

Trail work parties continued with the goal of widening the trail corridors. Encroaching salal and overhanging branches have begun to overtake even the most heavily used trails. To address this, our crews used:

- Chainsaws: To remove small trees along the trail edges and dead trees that posed falling hazards.
- Electric pole saws: To remove drooping branches and ocean spray.
- Weed-eaters with rotary-mulching blades: To clear encroaching salal.

Additional workers ("swampers") cleared logs, branches, and other debris from the trail corridors. Following this thorough process, these trails should not require significant attention for another 4–5 years.

These are the sections of trail that have been done:

2/10/2026 - We had a great turnout of 8 workers, so 4 ran the power equipment while the other 4 did the swamping. We were able to clear another 1/4 mile of Two Cedars Trail, which finished up that whole trail (that we started on January 27th). Everyone went home with a few sore muscles, but it looks beautiful!

2/27/2026 - Our crew was only 4 people, but the brush was not quite so heavy, so we cleared the 1/4 mile of Yarrow Cut-Off Trail.

3/32026 - Six workers attacked the overgrowth at the east end of Alder Hollow Trail. This trail required a lot of removal of small trees and branches before the salal mulching could be done. Two swampers worked behind the chainsaw and pole saw operators to remove that debris, then after the power mulcher chopped the salal, another swamper raked and did the final cleanup of the trail. We completed almost 1/2 mile of trail.

A huge "thank you" to those who have turned out to help. We have been fortunate to have extra help from the Thursday crew and some Diamond Point residents as well as BCHW members. Seven more work parties are scheduled for March and April, so there are plenty of opportunities for anyone else who is willing to volunteer. I am attaching a BEFORE and AFTER picture of Alder Hollow Trail.



Call or text Donna Hollatz (360-808-3965) if you want to help us.

Bill Mueller, OAT Trail (Thursday Trail Crew) and NOLT

Thursday trail crew report for February 2026.

The month of February was dedicated to re-establishing the OAT through an existing clear-cut section near MP 17. Last year the crew set up a repair for this section. The terrain included a serious mucky wet area. Many drainage channels were dug with the hope that this section could dry somewhat. After about a year of trail operation through this section, a revisit was set up. The new plan was to dig fewer but more efficient drain channels and build a sturdy graveled turnpike pathway through this clear-cut. So, the work commenced. The particulars involved carrying out the following activities.

- ~ Dig new drainage channels through the muck
- ~ Find and prepare cedar logs for edging along the new turnpike
- ~ Place the logs and wire and stake into place
- ~ Move tons of gravel uphill to the site using wheeled toters at about 300 pounds at a time
- ~ Spread the gravel within the log edges

Additional associated work involved the approaches to this section from both east and west. The existing trail outside of the clear-cut was addressed. Tread was widened to spec, drainage was re-opened where blockages interfered with water runoff, brush was trimmed back, and overhanging tree limbs and encroaching bushes were cut. Lots of work carried out. Still more to do to get the OAT back to its outstanding reputation as an internationally recognized hiking/biking/stock trail through this section.

As for the trail crew, usually about 15 +/- 2 individuals were there each Thursday. Lotsa hours of labor provided. Sometimes the crew leader provided a bit of "extra credit" to the crew with a fire in a firepit during lunch break. The crew really appreciates our outstanding leader.

Rebecca Wanagel, Gray Wolf Trail Crew, ONF, ONP, Saw Program and Safety

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

1/31 (Martin Knowles, Rebecca Wanagel, Rick King)

2/12 (Martin)

2/13 (Martin, Rebecca and Rick)

2/15 (Martin and Rebecca)

Duckabush Trail

These were the first four of many trips on the Duckabush to remedy pack stock passage issues that are longstanding. Please see attached notes.

2/22

Duckabush Trail

Three of us (Martin, Rebecca, and Randy Kraxberger) went to the Duckabush to continue work on the stock clearance issues. We hiked 2.5 miles towards our goal but the rain was coming out of the sky like a waterfall and the temps were hovering in the mid-30s. The job site we were headed to is at mile 5.5, and up and over Big Hump, right by the already-cold river. We were already soaked through our clothing and decided that the margin of safety was too slim. We made a team decision to put safety first, turned around, hiked back out and drove back home to get dry and warm.

2/24

Duckabush Trail

Martin, Randy and Paul Kamps went to the Duck to continue work on the stock passage issues. This time it was cold but no rain so the 11-mile round trip hike was worth it. They made great progress.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

2/4 and 2/20

Martin and Rebecca went to the south end of West Elwha to scout a potential realignment around about 100 feet of very old, extremely rotten puncheon. Potential route found to present to Nathan Forrest. On the 20th we went back to the site to look at it with Nathan. After some discussion, we finalized on a route. Nathan will work on getting compliance approval.

2/21 and 3/4

West Elwha turnpike

See attached report.

3/3

Heart of the Forest and Heather Park trails

Martin and Rebecca went one-mile up Heather Park to clear one tree. We then went ¼ mile on HOF trail to also clear one tree.

3/6 and 3/7

Smokey Bottom Trail (Old West Lake Mills)

See attached report.

SAFETY

The Wilderness First Aid class I mentioned in my last report did take place. The class participants raved about Holly and the class in general. Everyone came away more skilled and knowledgeable about how to deal with injuries / illnesses in the backcountry. Grant money well-spent on safety!

SAW PROGRAM

Rebecca Wanagel and Martin Knowles went to North Bend on 2/27 for a training session with Aaron Pederson and Tony Karniss. We and the other instructor / evaluators there learned about the new system for completing evaluations. This system is new to us, but not to the fire program in general. They have already been doing this for a long time.

They are switching to a “passbook” system. The prospective sawyer will have to take most of the class online (which is better as it can be done on their own time and at their own pace). They will then need to attend an instructor-led training day where they will work on some of the skills learned in the online portion. The second day of instructor-led training will be field practice with NO EVALS during that time. It is strictly for practice and training. Then the participants passbook will be activated. They will be responsible for arranging to work with an instructor / evaluator out on trail work crews, maintaining their passbook, and gradually getting all their skills signed off over time.

This will eliminate the problem we've had in the past of trying to fit way too much into one training session and then doing evals on top of that when the participant just learned the skills. This makes it so the process takes longer and the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the person wanting the certificate. We strongly agree with this system and feel it will work far better in the long run.

Recertifications can still be done using the evaluation form we are already using.

Please remember the Gray Wolf Trail Crew is a program within BCHW-Peninsula. Anyone can sign up for a work crew.

Gray Wolf Trail Crew website: www.graywolftailcrew.org

CREW LEADER NOTES FOR WORK DONE ON THE DUCKBUSH TRAIL

1/31/26

2/12/26

2/13,26

2/15/26

Objective: Make the ONF portion of the Duckabush possible and safe for pack animals to get through for work on the ONP portion of the same trail further up.

Back story: The ONP crews have not worked on the upper reaches of the Duckabush in many years. We, as volunteers, have many times. But every time we work on the ONP Duckabush, we could only get our tools packed as far as 5-Mile camp (the ONP boundary is at 6.5 miles), and it was really unsafe and difficult for packers to even go that far. We had to make double trips with heavy loads to get our camp and tools moved uptrail from 5-Mile camp.

We have plans to work on the upper Duckabush again this June, and the ONP will also be putting crews up there in August / September. All crews will need stock support. I worked with ONF to get blasting approved and scheduled for safety issues #2, #3, and #5 (listed below). It took a long time and a lot of advocacy, but that blasting finally got approved and scheduled. Unfortunately for all, it was scheduled for October of 2025 - the government shutdown happened and everyone was furloughed, so the blasting never happened. When I received word from Nathan, ONP, that he does have crews going up there this summer – along with the fact that the GWTC will work up there – I decided we had to try to address these problems ourselves. This has taken 4 trips so far and will take many more before June.

The specific problems affecting stock on this trail have been known to many of us for years. I will describe the main ones here:

Safety issue #1, approximately 3 miles from trailhead:

Maple trees / snags on the uphill side of the trail on 4 of the tight switchbacks going up to Big Hump. They are pack bumpers and a fall there would be of high consequence because it's steep and unstable.

Safety issue #2, approximately 3 miles from trailhead:

Outsloped bedrock just above the 19th of the tight switchbacks. Packers in the past have mentioned this area nearly every time. A slip there is a little less likely than a slip in safety issue #3 (below), but the fall would be high consequence if not fatal.

Safety issue #3, approximately 3.25 miles from trailhead:

Badly outsloped and smooth, and always wet bedrock that forms a hump that animals and hikers have to go up and over. Stock slip here every time they use this trail. A fall has happened here before (Bob Hoyle, Buckhorn Chapter). Chances of stock slipping here are high, but consequences less catastrophic than safety issue #1.

Safety issue #4, approximately 4.5 miles from trailhead:

A hanging 30" dbh doug fir making it tight for loads to pass through and it's also on a switchback.

Safety issue and stock blocker, #5, approximately 5.5 miles from trailhead:

Narrow steep rocky chute on the bank above the river, also on a corner. The rock juts out far enough here that the packs will bump and the animals getting pushed towards the river could cause a catastrophic, likely fatal fall. This area alone has made it so pack strings haven't gone past this point in long enough that this trail worker doesn't know when they last did. This area even has an unfortunate name, "Claire's Rock," which harks back to a time when a horse or mule did in fact have a terrible fall here. That cannot happen again.

There are or were many other issues causing problems for stock clearance, but these are the top ones and the ones we are focusing on at the moment. I have attached a report done by Heidi Brill, Lead ONP Packer, 2 years ago. Many of those mentioned issues have been dealt with by us or WTA since then, but I marked the 5 we are focusing on right now.

DUCKABUSH TRAIL

Scouting project 10/2023; TH to NPS Boundary; 6.5 miles of trail.

Kirah Soloman, Hans Flockoi, Heidi Brill

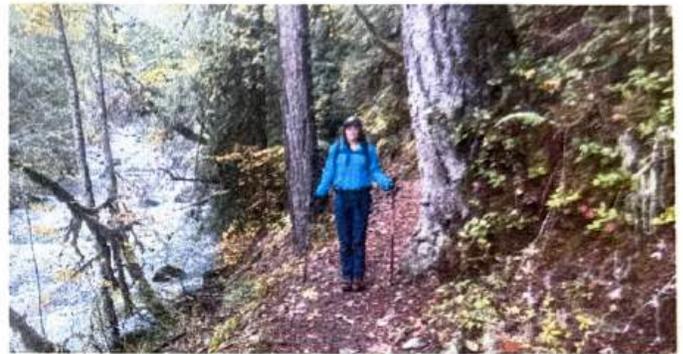
2/17/24 many of these have already been mitigated by either GWTC or WTA since this report. Now we're focusing on the ones numbered 1-5.

Projects listed in order from TH to NPS boundary. Landmark references are shown in bold capitals. Red text indicates high priority blasting/rock removal projects. Italics indicate suggestions for improvement.

(NO PHOTO)

At TH: carsonite marker is too close to TH kiosk to allow loaded mules through. *Move carsonite marker.*

Large fir tree pack bumper along river. *Crib outside of trail to widen tread.* Easy access to rock and cedar cribbing material >>>



<<< Large rootwad pack bumper on switchbacks up to Big Hump; easy to cut. *Cut root portions that interfere with packs.*

Slider tree close to becoming a pack bumper; *recut & stabilize* from further sliding >>>



<<< Maple cluster at top of switchbacks is a pack bumper, pushing mules out onto unstable steep slope. Individual stems are 8" dbh or less and could be *cut and rock removed* to eliminate pack interference.

Safety issue #1

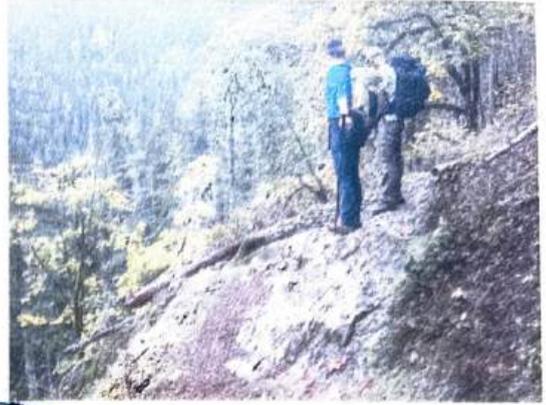


safety issue #2

Outsloped bedrock on high consequence slope. Outer tread material is not stable and will not hold the weight of a mule, yet appears to be the most appealing path. Appx 16 linear feet.

Either *blast tread into rock or drill holes in rock to support rebar for cribbing and filling*. Plentiful cedar for cribbing material and plentiful rock for fill material.

Crib in a step at the bottom of this rock. >>>



<<< Steep, outsloped bedrock with few footholds; rock is wet and slippery year round due to a seep in the rocky slope. 25' in length and 4' wide. Good supply of sizeable cedar near project site for cribbing if needed. This is the area that had been flagged by Rebecca and Brent.

Blast, or drill and crib outside of slope and back fill to create tread..

safety issue #3

Suspended overhanging cedar, 42" dbh, 7.5' overhead, would prevent long-handled tool loads from passing. Partially fire-hardened. *Cut & Remove >>>*



<<< Non-passable, fractured, fire-hardened cedar suspended 4' above trail. Appx 30" dbh. *Cut & Remove*



Tread sloughing into creek at small ford.

3' Junkwall Crib needed at ford on lower side of tread >>>



GAP AT BIG HUMP

Hanging 30" dbh fir at switchback. Tight for loads to pass through. >>>

Safety issue #4



<<< Narrow gap between rootwad and rocky sidehill. 5' bottleneck. *Cut problematic roots from lower side of tread and remove rocks from upslope.*

JUST ABOVE 5 MILE CAMP

48" dbh fir sliding into tread from steep slope above. *Re-cut & stabilize.* >>>



<<< 24" dbh fir skidded into tread. *Remove entirely.*

Narrow, steep rocky chute on bank above river. Appx 20' linear. Rock could be fractured with a double jack and rock bar to widen tread, push back sidehill, and make safer steps in rock. >>vv



Safety issue and
pack stop blocker
#5
"Claire's Rock"

Rocky, steep scramble with few footholds and soft, consequential edge on bedrock. Build/continue rock wall from trail below to tie into sloped bedrock; backfill with rocky material to create safe trail edge. Rock can be fractured with double jack and rockbar to create footholds and even out tread in the currently outsloped bedrock, where finger in photo is pointing. Make it appealing to walk toward the inside of the tread. >>vv



Jagged, slippery, narrow rocky step beneath "weeping rock".
Crib and backfill with crush to provide safer footing. Plentiful
material near project site. >>>



(NO PHOTO)

2 puncheon bridges; one bullrail is detached but on site. *Re-attach.*



<<< 24" dbh fir across trail with notched step. *Remove entirely.*

24" dbh fir, fractured, hanging 2' above tread. *Cut & remove >>>*



NPS BOUNDARY

END OF REPORT



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



West Elwha, ONP

Feb 21 and March 4, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel (2/21 + 3/4)	Eric Nagle (2/21)
Martin Knowles (2/21 + 3/4)	Bernt Ericson (2/21)
Tim Branham (2/21 + 3/4)	Paul Kamps (2/21)
Randy Kraxberger (2/21)	Barbara Maxwell (2/21)

Quick Stats

Working volunteer hours: 57
Hours including travel time: 76
Miles worked: one 40-foot area
Trail rating: hiker / stock
Bobbie's cinnamon rolls
consumed: One Large Pan

Objective:

Dismantle materials currently in place and replace with a rock-filled turnpike with curb logs. Location: approximately 2.5 from Herrick Rd trailhead.

Achieved:

Turnpike installed.

Future work at this location:

Turnpike needs more fill (see story below).

Saturday, February 21

The 8-person crew hiked 2.5 miles to get to the work zone. The tasks then were:

1. Dismantle what was there.
2. Make a plan as a team for the new structure.
3. Bring in as many rocks as possible from above and below the site.
4. Dig a major drainage channel alongside the rootball that is trapping all the water.
5. Dig a ditch alongside the hill on the uphill side of the turnpike.
6. Cut, peel, transport, place and support curb logs to hold turnpike in place.
7. Fill with larger rocks at the bottom, working up to smaller rocks.
8. Fill with better dirt from nearby - all the dirt at the site is clay.



Very Muddy! The entire work zone started muddy and slippery and got worse as hundreds of footsteps made the saturated clay soil more and more slick.





Done for today, time to get back to the trailhead and cinnamon rolls before the incoming heavy rains.

The plan we made was slightly different than what I originally envisioned. Originally I was thinking of running two rock-lined culverts straight through the turnpike - which would have allowed us to use the back hillside as the uphill block for the turnpike. We changed to making one culvert and then a ditch alongside the turnpike (allowing the rest of the water to drain off below rather than through the turnpike). That meant we would need a curb log on that side as well.

We didn't have time on the first day to install the curb log on this side. Three of us went back on March 4 to finish.

Wednesday, March 4

Tim, Martin and Rebecca manage to pick an EXTREMELY RAINY DAY to go back for the finish work.



We entered from Madison Falls this time, using bikes to get to Altaire. So we tried the new Trailboss packable tools that we bought with donation money. Those break down and easily pack in your backpack to the job site. We found them to be ... AMAZING.

We moved a few rocks up out of the way and widened the ditch to allow for another curb log. Found a log, peeled, placed and staked it.



Finished!

Except

It was absolutely pouring this day. We had brought bags with the intention of bringing in more fill dirt from above the site since our other fill had a chance to settle. We wanted to mound it more.

However ...

The clay soil in the nearby tread was so wet and slippery that we couldn't bring in more fill without taking a fall and making more of a mess of the trail.



Therefore, we left it like this for now - needing more fill on top. Tim says he runs this trail a lot and is happy to bring a bag and shovel on a few of his runs to add more fill ... when it has had a chance to dry out! What is currently there will dry and, remember, underneath that dirt is all rock - which is allowing the water to drain. It just looks like this now because of the deluge currently underway and the fact that we walked all over it.



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

Smokey Bottom (Old West Lake Mills)

3/6 - 3/7/26

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel (3/6 + 3/7) Kellie Creamer (3/7)
Martin Knowles (3/6 + 3/7) Cricket Pomeroy (3/7)
Randy Kraxberger (3/7) Deni Lojko (3/7)
Jon Behar (3/7)

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 61
Hours including travel time: 79
Miles worked: 2.0
Trail rating: hiker / stock
Newts saved from trail tools: 2

Objectives:

1. Clear entire 2-mile trail of logs with logout team of two on 3/6 (approximately 10 projects).
2. Work northern 1.25 miles with the whole crew on 3/7: tread rebenching, drainage and brushing. I hoped to tie back in to where we stopped working from the south end last year - and that is exactly what happened.

Achieved:

1. 2 miles completely cleared of logs.
2. 1.25 miles of tread checked and addressed where necessary (about 900 feet of rebenched tread in all).
3. All drainage checked and cleaned / addressed as necessary (about 20 drainages cleared or improved).
4. Brushing, about a ½ mile brushed, both sides of the trail.

Future work:

1. Thanks to us, this trail is in lovely shape right now. No future crews planned for 2026.



Smokey Bottom is the former West Lake Mills trail. It makes a wonderful loop with the trail that now runs along the bottom of the former lakebed. If you catch it in late May / early June, you will be treated to an amazing show of thousands of lupines blooming along the river.

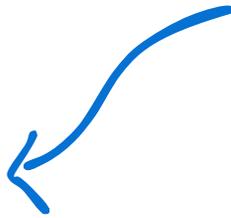
This map has it labeled as "Old West Lake Mills" and the lakebed trail listed as Smokey Bottom. I thought the whole thing was Smokey Bottom. I dunno. It's all pretty.

The trailhead is **3.5 miles** from Madison Falls, which is where we have to park. This is quite an undertaking to get to and from the trail and still do enough hours of work to make a huge difference.

This crew exceeded expectations!

Friday, March 6

Martin and Rebecca logged out the entire trail the day before. We did this so that we could keep the crew together as a group on Saturday, enabling us to teach and mentor folks who are new to GWTC.



Last year we removed a short, rotten puncheon and cleared out the area so that the water could drain. This year, while we were there with a saw, we cut out a blocking tree and opened up drainage even more so the water flows freely and quickly.



This tree rose up quite a bit as it was being cut! That shows that the rootball, which we couldn't see, was cantilevered - likely in a hole. No problem, we just adjust the cut as necessary but it was up pretty high so Martin had to take that one.



Saturday, March 7



Jon and Randy were the formidable brushing crew. Amazing job brushing both sides of the trail for a 1/2 mile!



Martin mentoring Deni, Cricket and Kellie on how to recognize where the trail needs attention and how to get it rebenched properly. All three of them picked it up fast and proceeded to do remarkable work!!



Deni working a section of the tread, getting it comfortable to walk again and back in its original line. She really picked up the concept quickly and never walked past a problem area!



This drop to a creek crossing got a lot of attention from us last year. So this year it just needed a touch up. That's one of the advantages to repeatedly returning to tend to a trail year after year.



By the end of the day, Cricket had become a perfectionist. Spotting the problems and fixing them in a way that I would have done myself. He even thought to make the "soft shoulder" more obvious so that people won't step there by accident and take a bad fall.



Kellie was the one who first encouraged Cricket to come join her on a trail crew. This is their second time with us and we hope they become regulars. Kellie leaves behind a beautiful trail wherever she goes.



This is wet area overgrown with brush that had forced the trail way off line and off balance as a result. Since I forgot the "before" picture, I drew in the brush and where the trail was for you. ;-)