

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

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

Trail Report for April 13 - May 11, 2026 at Miller Peninsula State Park:

Two large work parties led by Jim (one with 7, the other with 9) put in ambitious days clearing encroaching brush on two trails. Other sawyer work was done by Jim and Donna with the horses this month.

- April 17 -- The ODT Connector, which we built from the end of Cat Lake Road to Pearce Road in 2019, had not had brush clearing done since the original construction. A crew of 7 worked about 1/2 mile of trail from the end of Cat Lake Road to the first intersection. Many small trees, mostly dead, were removed by the sawyers, then the salal and other brush was cut with the power mulchers, and the swamper cleaned it all up. We will need a couple of more work parties to do other sections of the trail, but this is a good start!
- April, 21 -- Our work crew of 9 started at Belly Deep and worked east on Yarrow Trail. The electric pole saw was used to clear overhead branches, a chainsaw was used to cut down a couple of large dead trees near the trail, and many small trees were removed from the edge of the corridor. The power mulchers cut the salal from the trail corridor after the larger stuff was removed. This trail was last cleaned in 2021 with the help of a WCC crew, so we can expect our efforts to last for about 5 years before needing more work.
- April 24 -- Jim and Donna took the horses and chainsaw to remove some trees reported down across the E-W Diamond Point Connector Trail. A dead madrona, leaning over the ADA, was removed; the logs were removed from the Connector; then we scouted along Manzanita, where Jim removed a couple of standing, but dead, snags along Manzanita.
- April 28 -- Two, blocking 20" trees were reported across the east end of Bluff Trail, so Jim and Donna drove to the Bluff Kiosk, then walked about 1/4 mile to the downed trees, cut them out, and removed the chunks of logs. Jim also cut down 11 standing dead alders that were trail hazards in the near vicinity. On the way back, along Fireweed road, 5 more dead and hazardous standing alders were cut and removed near the Beach Trail.
- May 2 -- The chapter had received a report from a handicapped hiker that trees were blocking a trail at Miller. (Of course, they didn't know which trail!) Jim and Donna took the horses and saw on a wild goose chase to find the offending logs. A hazardous half-fallen willow was removed near Aerospace Center, but the "blocking" logs were not found. Some hikers reported that there are blocking trees on the Discovery Bay Loop east of Diamond Point Road, so another day we will walk into that area and clear that trail. It is not normally used by equestrians and we do not typically maintain it, but now we know it needs some work.

It has been a busy spring for trail work at Miller.

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

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

The Thursday crew has been quite busy around MP5 of the OAT. Typical tread maintenance like drainage repair and trail widening back to spec is on-going. New work in a clearcut section around MP5 was and is a focus. Work there included placement of three new culverts in a muddy area, construction of a short turnpike, and the usual brushing and tree trimming outside the clear cut. Always plenty to do.

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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

4/15-4/17

Quinault Nature Trails, annual multi-day effort. ***See attached report.***

4/22

Lower Big Quilcene logout. ***See attached report.***

4/25

Lower Dungeness and Gold Creek logout and tread repair. ***See attached report.***

5/1-5/2

South Fork Skok annual work crew with Buckhorn Chapter. ***See attached report.***

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

5/8-5/9

West Elwha realignment and puncheon decommissioning. We started putting in a new trail to route around the rotten puncheon that is a hazard to hikers and basically impassable to stock. Another crew will finish this on Saturday, May 16. You can look forward to a summary report after that.

5/10

Dosewallips River Trail tree removal. ***See attached report.***

SAFETY

No updates this month.

SAW PROGRAM

No updates this month.

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



Gray Wolf Trail Crew in partnership with BCHW, Peninsula Chapter

Lake Quinault Recreation Trails (#854/855/860/888)
Olympic National Forest
15-17 April 2026



Crew members

Bernt Ericson	Ian Davis
Bill Mueller	Joanne Graves
David Graves	Julie Metzger
Eric Nagle	LaVonne Mueller
Fred Inman	Martin Knowles

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 173
Hours including travel time: 227
Miles worked: 0.75 miles
Total miles hiked: 3.4 miles
Trail standards: Hiker

Objectives:

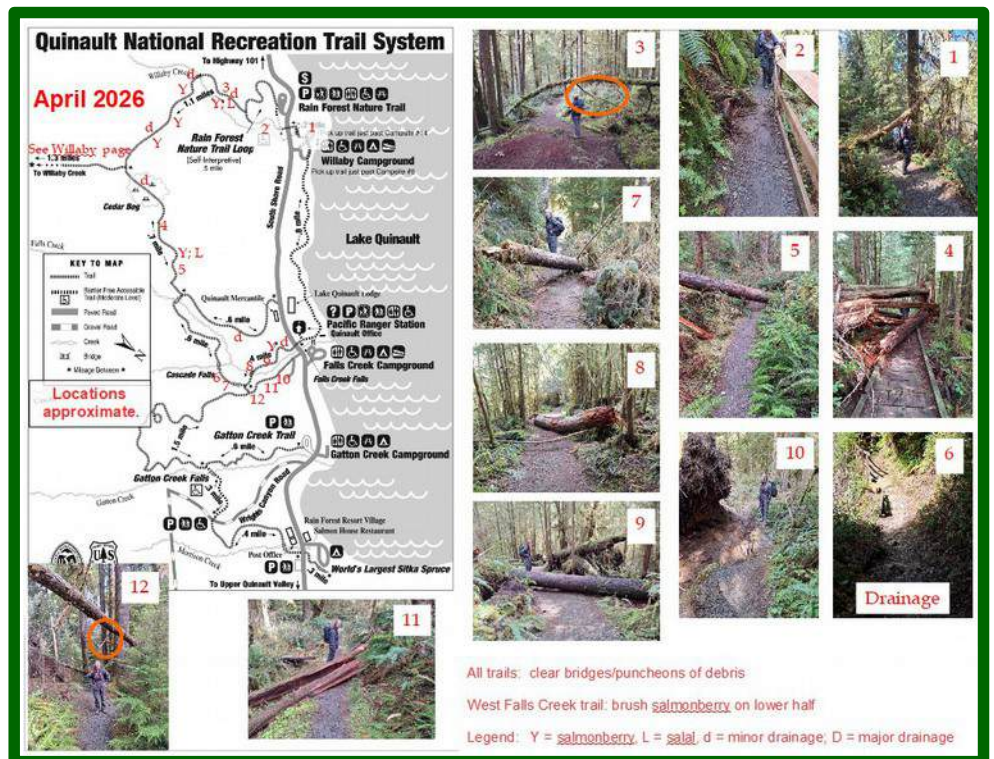
- Do annual maintenance on the south-shore recreation trails near the Quinault lodge and ONF/ONP visitor center.
 - Remove fallen trees blocking the trails.
 - Restore drainage features / repair damage.
 - Brush the 7.5 miles of trail where (mostly) salmonberry is regrowing into corridor.

Achieved:

After scouting the trail, we determined that the winter's damage was not as severe as in other years. That meant our crew could handle it in the two full and two half days allocated. By end-of-day Friday, all the listed tasks were completed.

The map to the right, created after our scouting trip, shows the trees and some of the work scouted just on the western side of the nature trails.

As seems typical, the upper Gattion Creek loop on the eastern end has the majority of the fallen trees.



Getting to work:

We split into three teams each day for tree removal, drainage/tread, and brush removal.

Tree removal this year was fairly straight-forward with neither any immensely large trees nor complicated situations to address. Still, covering the entire trail system while hauling saws, fuel, and other gear was not a walk in the park.



Drainage and tread repair:

- The Quinault area gets a lot of rain so there's always work to restore drainage features and to repair washout areas. This year also saw one tree tipped over so that its root ball tore out a portion of the trail. (The tree trunk also made a very enticing though risky creek crossing.)

Steep washout area worsened by hikers cutting downhill to reach a off-trail view of a nearby waterfall.



Root ball pullout that left a crater in the trail. Solved by a much dirt filling and slight re-alignment of the tread.



ADA trail and bridge where clogged drainage led to gravel covering bridge. Drainage restored and bridge cleaned.



Brushing:

Salmonberry, salal, and other verdure thrive in the Quinault climate. The open, sunnier area of the trail provide a natural space for the plants to grow into. Some of the brush merely gets the local visitors wet, but there are sections where it really entangles the hikers and obscures the trail.

Each year there is the repeated task of re-opening the corridor. Spring pruning is not the best time for discouraging plant growth, but it's the only time we're out there. Forest staff and local volunteers continue brushing through the season.





Gray Wolf Trail Crew

in partnership with

BCHW, Peninsula Chapter



Lower Big Quilcene Trail (#833), Olympic National Forest

22 April 2026

Crew members

David Graves

Martin Knowles

Brendan Curran

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 16.5

Hours including travel time: 25.5

Miles worked: 1.5 miles

Total miles hiked: 3.4 miles

Trail standards: Multi-use

Objectives:

- Clear two fallen trees from a short distance below Jolley creek (blue dots).

It seems that once we clear some trees reported down on this trail, another report comes in of more trees down often quite near the previous fallen trees. This work party was spurred by a hiking report from some equestrian users.



Achieved:

This was our third crew on the upper half of this trail due to fallen trees since last November. With these last trees blocking equestrian users, we chose to send in a crew as soon as we could. Because of the small number of downed trees reported, we opted for this to be a crosscut crew.

We went in expecting only two trees but almost immediately encountered an additional fallen tree. We removed that 18" tree and continued downstream. Within a quarter mile we encountered another unreported fallen tree. Three cuts later and this tree was also no longer an impediment.



After rock & log hopping across Jolley Creek, we reached the reported trees. They were fairly straightforward removals, but much dirt had to be removed from the bark where it had fallen from the rootballs and from the boots of crossing hikers.



Task(s) remaining:

1. Clear fallen trees from Camp Jolley.
2. Upon ONF approval, install a re-alignment for the steep reroute section just above the LBQ trail's intersection with the Notch Pass trail.
3. Upon ONF approval, replace the failed Jolley Creek bridge.

David Graves

22 April 2026



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

Lower Dungeness and Gold Creek, ONF

April 25, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

David Graves
Hannah Graves
Martin Knowles
Rebecca Wanagel

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 24
Hours including travel time: 38
Miles worked: 7.0
Trail rating: hike / bike / stock
Condition of the road:
Even worse than last year ...
hard as that is to believe.

Objectives:

1. Complete annual maintenance on the perpetual slide area at about mile 1.5. This needs to be retreaded every year.
2. Clear all logs on the entire Lower Dungeness trail and also target a group of logs that were reported on the lower part of Gold Creek trail.

Achieved: Both objectives were achieved.

Future work:

1. There is a ripped-out part of the tread on the lowest $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the Dungeness trail, the section that goes from the hairpin parking area to the large parking lot below. That will need to be addressed. Not urgent but it's annoying to get through and blocks stock / bikes (I say not urgent because people can always access Lower Dungeness trail on the hairpin turn rather than the lowest parking lot).
2. Puncheon over Bungalow Creek on the Lower Dungeness trail (about $\frac{3}{8}$ mile south of 3:00 Ridge trail junction) is rotten to the point where it's a safety hazard. That needs replacement.

This day was prompted by the dual events of the landslide area needing its annual tending, and some downed logs were reported. The logs on Lower Dungeness were sparse and simple to cut. The only way to clear the entire trail is to hike the whole thing from one end to the other. Therefore, David and Hannah met Martin and Rebecca at the Gold Creek trailhead and all rode together to the top of the trail, leaving Martin's car at the bottom.

Martin and Rebecca hiked with the saw and equipment for the entire Lower Dungeness trail, taking out the couple of handfuls of logs along the way. Once back at the car, a short break and then on to the logs that were reported on the lower part of Gold Creek trail.

David and Hannah went to the slide area to retread it and back to their car at the top.

The road from Palo Alto down to Dungeness Forks is better because the Forest Service cleaned up the rock slide to reopen the road. However, from there to the Upper Dungeness trailhead has potholes even deeper and more numerous than existed last year. It dampens the enthusiasm to go back to this trailhead until that is graded.



David and Hannah addressed the landslide area – an annual event.

This section has been problematic for eons. The plan is actually to bridge across the river and then another bridge back over to route the trail away from this. The Forest Service is looking into that and getting the appropriate -ologists to do their analysis in preparation for this plan. It is impossible to route up above this slide, so going over the river and back is the only solution. It's been done before. There is a place at 2 miles on Little River trail (ONP) where exactly that happened.



These were the trees reported on Gold Creek, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the trailhead, before the footlog. They were difficult to get over, really blocking the trail.



Honestly these were not challenging to cut, big and imposing as they look. But they did take some time.

You can see the angle I am using is pretty sharp. That is because we analyzed that the log to the picture left was going to drop, so we were giving it clearance space.



We cut everything to stock standards since it is a multi-use trail. Martin is taking out the last piece in this picture so the clearance is good and wide. This cedar was aromatic when we cut it! It was fresh, not rotten, fallen clearly due to wind, not rot.



See that spire in the background? That is the piece left standing when this cedar was blown over by the wind.



Another cedar. This one blew over intact, so its rootball uprooted. When a tree is blown over in the place where it was standing, we are always quite confident that the rootball will settle more, but it will not tip or roll because it has so many roots still in the ground. Martin is doing the release cut down below the trail to remove a whole bunch of weight, making it easier to cut up close to the rootball for the second cut.



One thing I don't love about cuts near the rootball is there is always a lot of dirt on the bark. This has to be thoroughly cleaned or, sometimes more efficiently, the bark needs to be chopped off. Martin is working on that while I was clearing a few other tree chunks that came down in whatever wind event hit here. Lots of branches to clean up too.

Notice the rock? Isn't that strange? That rock is clearly water smoothed and carved. The roundness and the hole were caused by eddying water - I've seen that a lot in rivers. What was it doing above the trail so that it could fall down onto the trail?



I did the final cut up near the rootball. It had already settled a lot so it didn't have much farther to go before it was sitting hard on the ground. No problems with the cut or rootball movement.



All cleared! It does need some treadwork near the rootball because it's tipping and crowding the trail a bit. However, I discovered that PNTA will be working on Gold Creek trail in July, so I'll go ahead and let them take care of the necessary tread work. We were not prepared with tools nor time to deal with treadwork at that moment.



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

Lower South Fork Skokomish, ONF

May 1-2, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

Bernt Ericson

Martin Knowles

Rebecca Wanagel

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 45

Hours including travel time: 60

Miles worked: 8

Trail rating:

hiker / biker / stock

Logs cleared or widened:

About 30

Objectives:

1. Clear logs from 100 spur trail and the main Lower S. Fork Skok trail from Camp Comfort upriver to Church Creek ford.
2. Clear one log from Upper S. Fork Skok (we did some work while scouting in late March, so this was all that was left).
3. Clear the Lower Skok on the south side of the river of logs and branches.
4. Grind bright red, large graffiti off of the old horse loading box at the upper trailhead.

Achieved: All objectives were achieved.

Future work:

There is nothing specific on the back burner for now. The Lower and Upper South Fork Skok trails are in good condition and cleared from LeBar all the way to the second river crossing on Upper S. Fork trail (that's a total of about 10 miles). Going forward, I am not sure what role we will play on the Lower Skok because there is a bike rider who has taken it upon himself to clear the trees as they come down. There may not be much for us to clear in the future. I am trying to find out who it is so I can ask him to cut logs to stock standards.

This was our annual get-together with the Buckhorn Range Chapter. They spruce up the campground while we tend to the trails. Upon scouting ahead of time, though, we discovered there was very little in terms of winter damage this year, in addition to the bike rider who is clearing the trees. Therefore, I didn't have a whole crew because there wasn't enough work to assign. That's too bad because the highlight of the trip is the delectable food provided by the BCHW chefs Kim, Pat and Judith with special guest star, Bob, cooking his famous Chimacum Eggs.

Friday, May 1



Our first job of the day was to do something about this eyesore graffiti that was at the Upper S. Fork trailhead. We discovered it when we scouted, so knew to bring a grinder. Hopefully the grinded portion will weather in over time. I fail to understand why people do things like that, leaving behind invasive annoyances for others. The graffiti doesn't even make any sense.



Next up was a couple hours to clear the Lower Skok that's on the south side of the river (a couple miles).

I don't know how much horse riders use this trail, but they certainly could! From LeBar you would ride the main trail to Church Creek ford, go across the river (not a problem for horses when the water is low which it already is this year) and continue on up to the upper trailhead.



After that we took a 1-1/4 mile walk up the Upper S. Fork to clear the one 12" tree that we left from our scouting work. Then we went back to camp to be ready for the next day.



Saturday, May 2



This one was definitely a blocker! Impossible for stock, difficult for bikers, annoying for hikers.



Totally rotten on the outside but, typical for large trees like this, still solid and heavy on the inside. We sawed, knocked it apart and then split it to be able to more easily get the wood off to the side of the trail. There was no hillside to make disposal easy.



We knew about this project ahead of time, so we had a tool with us to clean up the tread. What a mound of rotten fir tree debris!



A handful more projects like this one (with a view of the river which is already running very low!).

It was hot on this day, so that was a struggle, but fortunately the Pacific Dogwood trees and trilliums were out in full bloom!

In all we cut about 17 items on this day, 6 of them were widening previous cuts to stock standards. To achieve this we had to hike about 8.5 miles carrying the saw equipment up and over many hills. I'm pretty sure this entire trail is uphill both ways. We missed Archie the Mule.





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

Dosewallips River Trail, ONP

May 10, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

Martin Knowles
Eric Nagle
Rebecca Wanagel

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 23
Hours including travel time: 31
Distance worked: 40 inches
(the width of the tree)
Miles traveled to get to the
tree: 15 round trip
Trail rating: hiker / stock

Objectives:

1. Clear a 40" tree that was a 100% stock blocker on the Dosewallips River Trail about ½ mile past the old ranger station (old road end).
2. Clear two trees on the way in to the ranger station (one was a simple cut and one we pushed off).

Achieved: Objectives achieved.

The Dosewallips trail was given a lot of attention last year from the ONP crews since they were renovating the Siberia Camp shelter and needed stock access up the west fork of the Dosewallips. This year, Harold Wiese and other BCHW Olympic Chapter members are planning a camp / ride trip up the Dosewallips and saw in a trip report that there was a large tree down about ½ mile up trail from the old ranger station. This part of the trail is necessary to travel whether your goal is west fork towards the Quinault or main fork towards the Elwha. Hikers could duck under, but stock would have to turn back as there was no way for them to go around. Since Harold has done so much packing for our trail work, and since BCHW members help each other, we decided to clear that tree for them (and for other equestrians who will use this trail).

The reason we were able to do this is because we have e-bikes. We could bike most of the 7 miles to the old ranger station and then hike the ½ mile from there. Without that option, we would have needed a packer to transport the gear to the project.



These are two "before" shots from the same side. The left is from our scout of the project a few weeks ago, the right is from when we arrived on site to cut it. What's different? If you zoom in, you'll see that snag on the downside of the trail pushing against the tree has a distinctive bulge in it. It was extremely weak and destabilized in that spot from our project tree hitting it. We came with the intention of cutting that down first for safety, but found that gravity had done some work in between our scout and work days.



The first project of the day was to get rid of the snags that were endangering the work zone. That was Martin's job since he has the felling certification, training from Tony Karniss, and extensive recent experience. Both of the snags had gotten destabilized by this 40" fir hitting them as it landed squarely between them.



He did his job expertly and flawlessly. In fact, this large snag that you see in these three pictures was cut so perfectly that it flew off its stump and landed on the downhill side of the trail without even touching the tread. You can see it in midair from both sides in these pictures. Eric and I were trail guarding both sides.



After that, even though gravity had brought down most of this snag, Martin got rid of the rest so our work zone was entirely safe.



We began our plan, which started out being that we would whittle this tree down from the top. Eric and Rebecca started getting rid of the splintered, heavy end that had torn from the rootball (which was still in the ground about 20 feet above us).



Once the messy stuff was trimmed off the top, we got it in our heads that we could shift the plan and now cut from the bottom, thinking that the log would nicely roll down the hill off the trail at this point. We were trying avoid more cuts standing on the steep hillside.

Eric did an expert offside cut, I finished from the other (safe) side and all that went perfectly. Except the log didn't roll. With levers, muscle and words we encouraged it to roll, but no. Now we had to go back and cut more from the top ...





One would think that would have been quick and easy, but even those smaller pieces seemed to really be attached to the hillside with great reluctance to leave it. No! No! I won't go! Similar to my kitty's claws grasping the blanket when I try to move her. 😂

So we cut it some more.



As one sometimes wins over the cat, with persistence we did also triumph over this log. Fist bumps, high fives and one more trim to get the trail to stock width and we were done.

Next time we have to cut this tree we'll stick to Plan A. ;-)



The trail is open to stock. We packed up and hiked the ½ mile back to the old campground to retrieve our bikes. The ride out was about 45 minutes, mostly in the rain, which was unexpected.