

## Monthly Trail Report for the Board and Membership August 2024

### Jim and Donna Hollatz, DNR and State

July was very busy with front country trail projects for Jim and Donna Hollatz and their crews.

During June, Jim and Donna had flagged about a one-mile section of new trail at Robin Hill County Park to make a new loop for equestrians to ride. July 9th, 11th, and 12th were spent going through the flagged line with a chainsaw. Jim and Donna removed dead and downed trees and logs to clear a path for a dozer to make the trail. Tom Mix used a pole saw to trim overhead limbs. On July 29th and 30th, Dan Dosey brought his small dozer and was able to push the trail path into a 7-foot wide corridor, building in a switch back in the one area that was a bit steep. While Dan and Jim worked on the trail excavation, Tom Mix and Bill Johnson did overhead trimming and Judy Sarles and Donna Hollatz peeled the bark from several cedar logs that will become the side rails for an area of turnpike across a wet section of the new trail. Clallam County Parks Department is covering the cost of the equipment rental, needed culvert, and whatever gravel will be needed to build the turnpike area. An excavator will be rented to finish the tread and remove some roots, the gravel totes will be used to haul gravel to build turnpike, and a large work party will be organized soon to use hand tools for the finishing touches required to complete the treadwork. Fortunately, the native soil that exists under most of the trail is well drained, so there will not be a need for gravel to be added to those areas. Clallam County is anxious for us to finish this trail and open it to public use.

July 13th a trail work party of 15 people (Theresa Percy, Anna Neal, Nancy Scott, Mike Bonomo, Larry Sammons, Tom Mix, Wendy & Craig Brundle, Mikael Hatch, Susan Robinson, Cindy Torpey, Suzanne & Rick King, Leif Hoglund, Jim & Donna Hollatz) worked for about 5 hours to convert a bicycle trail near Sage Camp into a horse-friendly path that we are calling "Del's Trail". Large roots (tripping hazard for horses) were removed, bypasses were constructed around steep spots and bicycle jumps, overhead limbs were removed, and brush cut back. Our goal was to make it safer for horse use without spoiling the obstacles that the bicycle riders want on their run. The trail creates a short-cut to get riders off of the vehicle-traveled, and graveled Howard Heights Road and back on the trails that lead to Sage Camp. This will make the Prize Ride (Sept. 7th) trail route safer and more pleasant for equestrians!

July 15th, a group of seven chapter members (Sandra Ihly, Nancy Scott, Rick & Suzanne King, Leif Hoglund, Jim & Donna) joined forces with the Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Officer, Christina St. John, to spray invasive Tansy Ragwort at Miller Peninsula State Park and Tribal Trails on Miller Peninsula. The County provided weed spray and backpack sprayers for volunteers to use. Jim and Donna had surveyed the trails and knew the areas that needed treatment, so pairs of volunteers were able to cover about 8 miles of trail during a 4-hour period, with no one having to walk more than about 3 miles. Our consistent annual effort to eliminate Tansy in the park has been very effective. There were mostly small patches of the weed, but they are not accessible by vehicle, so hiking the trails worked well.

July 16th, Jim and Donna assisted Powell Jones (Director & Park Manager of Dungeness River Nature Center) with the building of a new trail at Dungeness River Nature Center. He needed a certified sawyer to cut a few small trees that were in the proposed trail. Our collaborative working relationship with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe is of great benefit to BCHW as they have allowed us to build trails across their Tribal lands and are willing to work with us in maintaining those trails.

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

The Thursday trail crew has been active in several ways. Primary focus has been on replacing the bridge over Whiskey creek. Crews have spent time preparing the sills to accept the new bridge. Gabion baskets, large ones, were put together and transported to the site where they were placed, leveled, and filled with rock. On top of the baskets wooden sill plate were put in position and fastened down. They are ready for the bridge. A select crew will do the final construction and placement of the bridge.

In addition to the bridge work, the crew was working around MP 19 of the OAT rehabbing the tread width and the drainage features. So another section was restored to original trail specs. This work will continue as long as the trail needs reworking.

As for participation, crew sizes have been about 20 volunteers each week. Summer seems to bring out lots of help. This is expected to continue as weather holds out.

*Rebecca's note: as of the writing of this update, there is more of an update that I heard from two Thursday Trail Crew members. Apparently, an engineer was not satisfied with the soil underneath the gabion baskets. So the baskets mentioned above had to be taken completely apart, shot rock put underneath, and re-assembled from scratch again. Those of you who have worked with gabion baskets can imagine how much work that must have been to redo the entire thing, especially with the fine tuning of the measurements to accept the pre-fabricated bridge.*

## **Rebecca Wanagel, ONF and ONP**

### **OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST**

We have a LOT of collaboration happening on the Lower Dungeness Trail!

As I reported before, we are starting on a years-long process to tend to the hundreds of lineal feet of rotting puncheon. I (Rebecca) have done quite a bit of collaboration with the Forest Service and other agencies to make this happen. In July through early August, this is what has been happening:

July 13: Met with Charlie Romine and Al Mashburn, crew leaders for WTA, on the trail. We looked at puncheon #3 and talked about ways to collaborate to get that replaced with a new puncheon (recall, we are trying to convert as much as possible to turnpike, but some of it has to remain puncheon, as determined by the water situation at that spot). Charlie has 3 days scheduled to rebuild that one and possibly 2 other short ones to replace parts of puncheon #5. It was agreed that because we run chainsaws and an Alaskan saw mill (they do not), that we would prep all the parts and supply rebar and spikes – they will do the demolition of the old and assembly of the new.

Meanwhile, ONF hired a crew from NW Youth Corps to work on this trail for 3 weeks. They deferred to us to organize and head the project. In fact, they deferred to us to determine even what trail they would work on and what they would do. We assigned them the task of replacing puncheon #4 (102 feet long) with turnpike for its entirety. Rebecca wrote up a description of the expectations and exactly how to build the turnpike (the crew had not done this before). ONF Mark Lagioia printed it out on Rite in the Rain paper and gave a number of copies to the youth crew members and its leader.

July 24: We had a crew on site to make the stringers, sills and decking for Charlie's puncheon, and we made curb logs for the youth crew. This involved felling trees, bucking them to the correct sizes and making decking with the Alaskan saw mill. ***Please see the attached summary report from this day for a detailed description of our work with pictures.***

We also are giving Charlie spikes from our BCH tool trailer and rebar so her crews can connect decking to stringers and stringers to sills.

July 29: The Youth Corps started. David Graves, Martin Knowles and Paul Hornberger met the crew and Mark Lagioia on site and spent the day with them. They walked the crew through the project, taught them all kinds of skills they did not have (examples, how to roll heavy logs down the trail, how to make stakes and pound them in safely, how to efficiently peel bark off the logs, etc.). Martin set them up with a highline so they could efficiently move many thousands of pounds of gravel, rock and fill from behind rootballs that were on the hill, and he taught them how to use it and how to move it when necessary. It was an extremely productive day and we learned that this crew is young and inexperienced, but curious and eager to learn. Great kids! We are immensely inspired by this crew and their willingness to learn and their work ethic. What a wonderful feeling to know there are youth like this moving up into adulthood. I connected in particular with one of them Aaron, because he is from New York City but he's going to school at SUNY Binghamton, which is a scant one-hour drive from where I grew up in Ithaca, NY (upstate). Cool connection!

August 5: David Graves went up to check on the youth crew while Martin and Rebecca were working on Happy Ridge trail. David cut more curb logs for them and also flagged some good potential trees for felling for the next puncheon and more curb logs.

August 8: Martin Knowles and Rebecca Wanagel went up to check on the crew, meeting Mark Lagioia there. We took in a chainsaw so we could cut just a couple more curb logs so they weren't stranded and would be able to finish. We also helped them out by making many cuts in an old rotten stringer so that they could more easily get the log out from around the rebar – it was really fighting them and they couldn't get it apart. That left them with enough material that they would be able to finish. We also discussed what they could do if they finish the turnpike before their last day (which is Thursday, August 15).

***Please enjoy the attached pdf with some photos the kids airdropped to me.***

August 14: we headed back in with a crew to make more decking, stringers and sills. The reason for this – puncheon #5 will need to be 2 short puncheons alternating with 2 long turnpikes. Charlie has offered to do the puncheons if, again, we have the materials ready ahead of time. Watch for a summary report for this one on the next board report.

August 17, 18, 20: Charlie's WTA crews will assemble the puncheons.

## **OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK**

July 17-18 Happy Lake Ridge Trail

Rebecca Wanagel and Martin Knowles did an overnight backpack to scout this entire area to plan for the upcoming crew.

Aug 1-6, Happy Lake Ridge Trail

This was an extremely physically taxing 6-day trip to get this badly-neglected trail back up to snuff. Logs had been down for eons and brush had completely obscured the trail. ***Please enjoy the summary report I attached for a thorough description of this work.***

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Please remember that we have a website and anyone can sign up for Gray Wolf Trail Crew work crews through the link on this site. All members of BCH and GWTC are welcome on these crews – and new folks are always encouraged so please spread the word. The backcountry crews are posted way in advance and the day crews are posted more sporadically, as necessary, throughout the year.

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