

Monthly Trail Report for the Board and Membership
Report written by Rebecca Wanagel
July 2025

Jim and Donna Hollatz, DNR and State

Miller Peninsula State Park

We finished up most of the planned work at Miller Peninsula State Park. There is one more project at the Trailhead Parking area that we will schedule at a later time as we just could not get everything done in our planned 9 days. There are other trails with encroaching salal and brush, but some may have to wait until next year.

June 10th: Once again, we were fortunate to have several people to operate equipment and swamper to clean up. We had a crew of 8 people, so we were able to work most of the Cable Trail from the W. Diamond Point intersection all the way west to Two Cedars. Powell Jones (who works for Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe) brought a battery-powered pole saw for us to use and evaluate, as it is something we would like to add to our tool trailer supplies. Jim Hollatz, Jack Bochsler, and Powell Jones used chainsaws, while Tom Mix used the electric pole saw. We were fortunate to have two new helpers work with us today. We met them on June 7th while doing trail work. They said they live nearby, use the trails often, and had wondered if there was a way they could help--we quickly signed them up! Gary Grilo worked as a swamper and Dave Hawkins used the power mulcher. It is so nice to get some new people involved. Julie Kustura and Donna Hollatz were very busy swamping for so many. Many small, dead trees were removed from the edges of the trail and salal brush was cut back about 3 feet on each side. It will take about 5 years for the salal to grow back and having the dead trees removed will mean far less clearing when the winter weather hits.

June 21st: Our trail crew used 4 power mulchers to clear salal from the sides of E. Diamond Point Trail. We worked south from Aerospace Road to the madrona forest area to finish what we had started on May 6th. Rick King, Tom Mix, Gary Grilo, and Jim Hollatz operated the power mulchers and Ann Slinn and Donna Hollatz cleaned up the debris.

June 24th: A crew of 6 people worked on two sections of trail. Tom Mix and Donna Hollatz finished the brushing of Cable Trail from the short Aerospace connector trail west to the Tribal sign, while Rick King, Jim Hollatz, Julie Kustura, and Anne Slinn worked on Belly Deep (south of Cable Trail). This was our last "scheduled" trail work day and we were pleased with the amount we accomplished and greatly appreciate the help from everyone who came out to help with the work.

July 9th: One of the new volunteers from the Miller neighborhood informed us of a dangerous situation along Manzanita Trail. The log edges of a section of turnpike that was built 10 to 15 years ago were rotting away. This normally does not cause any hazard, but the logs had been held in place with pieces of pipe and rebar (we usually use wood pegs for this purpose). As the logs rotted away, the metal posts were left sticking up 2" or so above the ground on each edge of the trail--a real danger to hikers, bicyclists, and the feet of horses! Jim Hollatz pulled 45 pieces of metal from the trail (and used a sledge hammer to pound 3 others down a couple of inches below ground level). Donna was the "scout" to find the offending spikes. This area of trail is now much safer.

Clallam County Dungeness Trails

June 28 & 29: When the DNR land known as "Dungeness Trails" was purchased by Clallam County last year, an agreement was made to maintain the trail system. Peninsula Chapter agreed to maintain the section of trails east of River Road and south of Happy Valley Road. We built those trails in the spring of 2021 and added gravel and turnpike in 2022. The trails were beginning to become overgrown with salal and brush on the sides. Rick King and Jim Hollatz spent two days using power mulchers to clear about 3 feet on each side of the trails. Suzanne King and Donna Hollatz cleaned up the debris. A local bicycle group has agreed to maintain the trails west of River Road (where the reservoir will eventually be built).

Robin Hill County Park

During July, we will have trail work parties adding a new turnpike to mitigate a wet spot along the new equestrian trail we built at Robin Hill County Park last summer. Additional gravel will be added to some other areas that also need it. Soft spots often develop once a trail is being used. Clallam County is supplying the gravel and our chapter is doing the work with assistance from Bill and LaVonne Mueller's Thursday Crew.

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

May work accomplished (I didn't get this onto the June report):

The Thursday trail crew was again up to its usual tasks of maintaining the OAT. During May, the crew was busy either re-establishing the trail through a clear cut or rehabbing the trail back to original specs. In May, the crew met its new leader, Jeffrey Fitzwater. Some of you probably know Jeffrey's father, Wayne Fitzwater, the former DNR area recreation manager who was instrumental in getting the agreement signed with the county to construct the OAT. The crew adopted Jeffrey seamlessly on the retirement of Jeff Ralston. So... some of the work effort in May delineated by trail mileposts:

May 1: Build a multi-use trail connector in Robin Hill Park for the county to stock standards in conjunction with BCHW-PC.
13 volunteers, 78 hours donated labor.

May 8: Trail rehab including tread widening and drainage repair around MP5.
14 volunteers, 84 hours donated labor.

May 15: Trail rehab again around MP5.
13 volunteers, 78 hours donated labor.

May 22: More trail rehab this time around MP8.
12 volunteers, 72 hours donated labor.

May 29: Again, more rehab, this time including reconstruction of a switch back that was dangerous for down-hill cyclists around MP17.
13 volunteers, 78 hours donated labor.

So, again the crew was productive in providing a more friendly and safe multi-use trail for anyone wishing to get outdoors and hike, bike or horse ride through a beautiful part of Clallam County.

Work in June and then so far in July has been very much the same, just different OAT sections. More to come in the following weeks. Crews average about 15 each day.

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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

6/13-6/14, 6/20:

Lower Dungeness

We spent 3 days working more on the project of converting some puncheon to turnpike, or replacing puncheon with puncheon. The report for this project is attached.

6/23:

David Graves represented the Graywolf Trail Crew by going back to the Lower Dungeness to train this year's Northwest Youth Corps group. At my suggestion, they had spent the two previous weeks working on the west end trails of Kloshe Nanitch and Snider Ridge. They were to spend their third and final week working on the Lower Dungeness like their counterparts did last year. We had gotten the puncheon / turnpike project to where they could take over to finish it off. After they finished and we received pictures of the work they did, David did decide to go back in for one more day to do some touch up to get things more up to our standards. That will happen on July 19.

6/27-28:

Work on the Upper S. Fork Skokomish. See attached report.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

6/7:

Olympic National Park had a volunteer event that some of us attended. The morning was a presentation on various aspects of working in the Park as a volunteer in terms of safety, uniforms, reporting requirements, etc. Friends of Olympic National Park provided a nice lunch. The afternoon was some hands-on trail problem analysis training for those who wanted to attend.

6/18:

Martin Knowles and Rebecca Wanagel had a loooooong day to scout the work on the trails of Wynoochee Pass, Graves Creek and Sundown Lake; this is the site of our August backcountry work crew starting on August 9. This day was about 8 hours of driving and 9 hours of being out on the trail in wet brush on a rugged trail with off and on rain – a very exhausting but necessary day, so we're prepared to plan accordingly for that crew.

6/11 and 6/24:

Martin and Rebecca took out one tree on each of two different trails, Cascade Rock and Heart of the Forest, at the request of the volunteer Frontcountry Crew that takes care of those trails. Occasionally they call on us to remove trees for them that are beyond what they feel comfortable sawing, and we are happy to do it. We enjoy it and it keeps everyone safe.

July 5-10:

Backcountry trail crew to clear Long Ridge trail (the one that goes to Dodger Point), a stock trail. Please see attached report.

SAW PROGRAM

Re-certifications for three people have been requested. On July 2, Martin and Rebecca met with Rick and Suzanne King to look at a potential site for this purpose. The site is on DNR land off of Howard Heights Road. The site looks acceptable for the re-certifications, and we will hold those on July 25.

July 8:

Rebecca and Martin conducted a re-certification for a C sawyer on the Graywolf Crew in the context of the logout we were doing anyway on the Long Ridge trail. That was our first time using the new evaluation form and we like it much better. It's more thorough and gives a chance to really give more feedback and specifics about the evaluation logs, cut plan and the sawyer's skills. We very much prefer to do evaluations on a real logout / real trail. It's more realistic, but unfortunately, not always possible.

SAFETY

Please remember to take care of yourself in this hot weather, most especially if you're out there doing trail work! Know the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion so we never have that progress to heat stroke! I keep those signs and symptoms on my phone for quick reference.

Please remember the Gray Wolf Trail Crew and BCHW-Peninsula have a solid partnership. Anyone can sign up for a work crew.

Gray Wolf Trail Crew website:
www.graywolftrailcrew.org