

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

Hello Everyone,

I took January off from writing a trail report because I figured there wouldn't be much work going on in the winter months. Whew, was I ever wrong! Due to the extremely mild "winter" we've been having, as in no winter really at all, trail work never stopped! That means there is a lot to report.

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

The Trail Work Season began in December after getting reports of trees down after a windstorm. It took 3 rides before all of the trails were completely cleared after that because we could only work for 3 to 4 hours with the limited daylight and each trail loop had multiple trees across the trails. I'm sure some more may have fallen in the interim, but we kept learning about things on trails we hadn't yet had time to ride.

12/13/25 - Judy Dupree had reported a large alder across the Beach Trail. Jim and Donna Hollatz rode in from the Trailhead Parking with a pack horse and chainsaw, going north on W. Diamond Point, west on Fireweed, then down the Beach Trail where we removed a 20" alder (about chest level) that was blocking stock access. After that we continued west on Fireweed, removed some overhead hanging trees, then rode back on Cable Trail where we removed 2 downed trees. (We also found a hoof boot and managed to get it back to the riders, who were still at the trailhead when we got back to our trailer!)

12/20/25 - We got reports of some very large trees down across the west Manzanita Trail, not too far from the E. Sequim Bay bicycle parking area. Jim Hollatz and Rick King drove to the west end of Fireweed Road and carried the chainsaw in about 1/2 mile where they found a 36" cedar across the trail. Rick had to walk back for the bigger saw, then they were able to remove that cedar and a 24" alder and a few others. One had fallen the length of the trail, so had to be cut into many pieces! After that they drove to Diamond Point Road and went west on Fireweed to Alder Hollow where they removed two large trees that were across Fireweed. They drove down Fireweed as far as the picnic table and took out several small trees. (All told they worked 5 hours that day, with a lot of hiking.)

12/24/25 and 12/31/25 - Tom Mix, Jack Bochsler, and Jim Hollatz worked on an uprooted tree on the Verne Samuelson Trail, which is a Clallam County Trail on the west side of Port Angeles, and is popular with hikers in that neighborhood. A large fir tree had uprooted and fallen across the trail near the Hwy. 101 parking area. Tom met with the County Parks Coordinator on 12/24 to access the dangers and plan the equipment needed to remove the tree. Tom, Jack, and Jim returned on 12/31 with chainsaws and rigging equipment. The stump had to be secured for safety before the log could be cut. Then they cleared all of the debris from the trail.

1/05/26 - Jim and Donna took their horse trailer to the west side of Miller, off Burling Road, and parked inside the gate. They rode through Manzanita to Fireweed, where they removed 8 trees (4 blocking), then rode back west on Fireweed, removing 2 blocking trees on that section.

1/09/26 - Jim and Donna again parked at the west gate, rode Manzanita to the Bluff Trail, then rode across the eastern part of the Bluff Trail, plus the "connectors" to Manzanita. They cut out and removed 12 trees, repaired root wad damage and built a short bypass where the root wad had pulled up the middle of the trail. They rode down to the Beach Trail and cut up 3 trees from that trail on the way out. They did not do the east Bluff Loop and Bluff Cut-Off because they ran out of daylight.

1/15/26 - Jim and Donna parked along Fireweed Road east of the W. Diamond Point Trail. Rode to Bluff Kiosk, then east on Bluff Trail around to Bluff Cut-Off. Removed 2 logs from Bluff Trail and 1 fallen tree and 5 small dead trees from Bluff Cut-Off Trail.

1/20/26 - Rick and Suzanne King and Jim and Donna did brushing on the trail that leads from the ADA trail, west to W. Diamond Point Trail. The salal had been encroaching for several years. Rick and Jim used power mulchers while Suzanne and Donna swamped. About 1/4 mile of trail was done with 5 hours of steady work.

1/27/26 - The big "Work Crew" effort began. A crew of 6 members used brush mulchers, the battery pole saw, and chainsaw to open up the trail corridor along Two Cedars. They drove into the picnic table on Fireweed, then carried tools and fuel to Cable Trail and started back doing the clearing. With only two "swampers" it was difficult for them to get everything picked up. About 1/4 mile of trail was completed and workers will go back on Feb. 10th to continue the process.

UPCOMING WORK – ALL WELCOME TO JOIN – HELP IS NEEDED

Ten more "boots on the ground" work parties are scheduled in February, March, and April to continue opening the corridors of trails within the state park. The dates have been sent out to the membership, so we hope to get a good response. All of those efforts will involve cutting back the brush and "swamping" up the debris. We are not allowed to do tread work or any dirt moving, but offensive brush and logs can be removed from the trails.

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

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

This crew was off for most of December but they've been back at it in January. I don't have the specifics for you on their work but I know they've been out there working hard on both the OAT and ODT.

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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

12/27/25 and 1/4/26

Lower Graywolf Trail and Cat Creek Trails – report attached.

1/16/26

Lower Graywolf Trail tree removal – report attached.

2/6/26

ONF Volunteer Crew Leaders meeting with ONF staff, annual event at Quilcene Ranger Station. Representatives were there from Grays Harbor Chapter (Pete Erben), Buckhorn Range Chapter (Bob Hoyle), Peninsula Chapter and Gray Wolf Trail Crew (Rebecca Wanagel, David Graves and Martin Knowles) and Evergreen Mountain Bikes, Olympia Mountaineers, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Quinault Trail Stewards and Washington Trails Association. We discussed the accomplishments from 2025, updates from the Forest Service, and collaboration on 2026 work. Great meeting – it's something I look forward to every year. So much passion and expertise for trails!

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

12/17 and 12/24

West Elwha Trail – report attached.

1/3/26

West Elwha Trail - report attached.

1/24/26

West Elwha Trail – report attached.

1/25/26

Little River Trail – report attached.

SAFETY

A continued focus on arming trail workers with necessary safety skills continues again this year. Wilderness First Aid is being offered on February 28 / March 1. We use the grant funds to cover the cost for people who are out there doing trail work. Priority is given to those who work frequently in the backcountry with no access to cell service, especially sawyers, but we were able to open it up to many who are very active in trail work even if not usually in the backcountry. These are great skills to have wherever one is doing trail work! The course is given by Holly Chambers, business name Wilderness EdVentures. Those who have taken Holly's class can attest to the fact that this is a jam-packed weekend with tons of information and hands-on practice. The certificates are good for two years, so the class lined up for this year is a lot of the folks who took it from Holly two years ago.

SAW PROGRAM

Rebecca Wanagel and Martin Knowles will be making a long trip over to North Bend on February 27 to receive training from the Forest Service on the new procedures for training and evaluating sawyers. I will report on this next 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.graywolftrailcrew.org



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



West Elwha Trail, ONP

January 3, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel	Jack Bochsler	Greg King
Martin Knowles	Tim Branham	Lisa Turnberg
Bill Mueller	Julie Metzger	Neil Turnberg
LaVonne Mueller	Eric Nagle	Marti Campbell
Bernt Ericson	Ian Davis	Nisha Sharma
Brian Berg	Jonathan Hamlin	Rodney Lemay

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 126
Hours including travel time: 170
Miles worked: 2.75
Trail is rated for:
stock and hikers
Pans of sweet rolls:
Two! Huge!

Thank you, Bobbie Stoneman, for the special treat and the parking!

Objectives:

1. Continue brushing both sides of the trail with power brushers, picking up from where we left off last time.
2. Start a brushing team back at the $\frac{3}{8}$ mile point to do a second pass.
3. Clean up brushing debris, rake thick layer of deciduous leaves and toss all away from the trail.
4. Trim overhead encroaching branches with pole saw, starting from the trailhead.
5. Rebench 100 yards of badly slipped, wet trail at mile 2.75 from trailhead.
6. Address drainage issues on the hill going down towards (formerly known as) Altaire Campground.
7. Mitigate a troublesome wet, mucky, slippery clay corner at about $\frac{3}{8}$ mile from trailhead.
8. Clear out drainage features as necessary.

Achieved:

1. The brushing team doing the second pass nearly made it to the stopping point from last time.
2. The front brushing team got both sides of the trail brushed for another mile.
3. The clean up crews raked and tossed and raked and tossed!
4. Pole saw team did a thorough job and made it about a mile from the trailhead.
5. Rebenching goal was met, the trail is much more walkable and pleasant through there now.
6. Slippery clay corner problem was mitigated with a short bypass.
7. Drainages in first $\frac{3}{8}$ mile were cleaned out.

Future work (next crew on Saturday, Jan 24):

1. Complete brushing on both sides all the way to Altaire (about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile left) and clear all debris.
2. Catch up the raking / tossing left over from the last crew.
3. Continue trimming back overhead branches with the pole saw.
4. Mitigate drainage issues on the hill heading down to Altaire (we couldn't get to that in this crew).

Special projects (at a later crew):

1. Do a repair on a broken puncheon on the hill heading down to Altaire.
2. Mitigate a super wet, slippery, mucky section at mile 2.75.

What is happening here?



This wet, slippery corner, $\frac{3}{8}$ mile from trailhead, has been a problem for a while. It's been dealt with before but never completely fixed. It is pure clay and the water collects here.

The team - Bill, LaVonne, Jonathan, Lisa, Neil and Marti - assessed the problem and decided the best scenario would be a short bypass. Bill and LaVonne have looked at this problem with their highly-experienced eyes many times before, so they knew what had been tried and where to go from here.

They found a source of gravel about 100 feet up trail (that's GOOD - it means you carry empty bags uphill and heavy full bags downhill). They put in a short bypass and made steps out of the clay. Crucially, they lined each step with gravel for traction.

Left picture: before, looking south

Bottom left: after, from the same viewpoint

Bottom center: after, looking north. Note the bypass. What doesn't show in the picture is the steps cut into the clay and the strategic placement of gravel on each step.



Fun Fact!

We have 4 new bags and, appropriately, they are named "dirt bags." (really fun to say).

They are incredible! They are not cheap! Stiff, lightweight, perfectly placed handles - even a dumping handle. Stays open for filling. Durable!!

They received an A++ grade from this team, who were the first to try them out.

We were able to buy these with generous donations made to the Graywolf Crew / BCHW. That just shows you how much donations go into keeping trails in great condition.



West Elwha has lots of precious views like this.





BRUSHING

One of the things that makes West Elwha such a sweet trail is that the surrounding terrain is mostly an ocean of swordferns. Quintessential Olympics and just speaks to the volume of moisture that reigns here (pun absolutely intended).

Those very same ferns do not seem to respect trail edge boundaries. We fully know that cutting back ferns is temporary, they grow back of course. But there is other brush in there as well and the combination of all makes it so this tends to be a very wet trail to hike. Once every few years we try to take it all back to give hikers and the trail some breathing space.

On the last crew we had 4 brushers doing both sides of the trail, and they got about 1.75 miles done. This time we had one team go ahead to pick up where we left off, and another team in back doing a second pass through. The last crew did a GREAT job it's just that the brush was SO THICK that sometimes you just have to brush, clean up, and hit it again.

In this picture, Martin - who was on the second-pass-through team, takes a pause for Eric to snap a picture. What I don't have a picture of is the before and after of how thickly lined the trail was and how clean it is afterward. Sorry - it's just that we were working in pouring rain so folks were having a hard time pulling their phones out in that persistent wet to snap pictures.

Trust me - it was THICK and once it's brushed and cleaned up it is such a pleasure to hike. Cleaning up behind the brushers is, as we find out every crew, a massively hard job. It's nearly impossible to keep up. We usually end up going back in to finish the raking, not from lack of effort on the team's part. No! It's just simply **That Hard** to keep up. Especially because we are also raking up the thick layer of deciduous leaves to let the trail breathe and dry out.

Brushing teams

South: Tim, Rodney, Nisha, Ian

North: Martin, Eric, Julie

Right picture: You can barely see but there is a thick layer of ferns behind me as I walk up the trail towards Bernt, who was taking a hard-earned lunch break. You can also see Tim's brusher on the side of the trail. Note the mud coating on Bernt's pants and boots and the sorry, wet, muddy state of my condition as I walk towards him. That is the segue to my next topic, rebenching.





Rebenching Tread

This is a before and after taken from the same vantage point with my pack for reference. The trail had moved downhill so badly that we had to move it back up 2 or more feet. It was slippery, off-balance, and hard to keep your footing. This is also a very wet location.



The rebenching team: Bernt, Brian and Rebecca.

It was hard work for two reasons:

1. A lot of it was very rocky.
2. Wet, wet, wet made worse by the fact that it was raining all day. Our boots, raingear and gloves were coated with mud. I actually felt like my feet were encased in concrete they were so heavy from mud.

Behind Brian you can barely see a location that is super wet and has an old makeshift turnpike that we are going to address later in the season.



A couple more after shots. Bernt doing some final raking. You can see here that this whole section is now moved up, wider, smooth and back to regular trail specs.



Pole Saw Work

Team: Jack and Greg

Tool: battery-operated pole saw (lighter than the gas ones) - shown in the picture.

Sorry, no working pictures - they were too busy cutting branches and tossing them. And it was raining - which I believe I have mentioned before. 😊

They removed all overhanging branches for one mile. We will continue this next time. They were super careful, though, not to cut out those high arching, moss-covered vine maples that make this trail feel like it belongs where it is - in the Olympics. Example shown to the left. ***When we do trail work, we work to preserve the natural feeling while still making the trail more hiker and stock friendly.***

The fence in this picture is because West Elwha trail starts out as easement across and next to private properties. It shortly reaches the ONP boundary and from there it is all forested with occasional amazing river views.



The team including Bobbie (center, wearing red), who kindly hosted our post-work party in her heated shop with warm, homemade sweet rolls, hot drinks and lots of comradery. This would not have happened had we met back at the cars in the cold and damp.

This space allowed us to connect and celebrate ourselves as a crew, with lots of laughs.

Note one of Don Stoneman's old saws hanging on the wall in the back left.

Missing from the picture are crew members Julie and Marti.

**NEXT CREW IS SATURDAY, JANUARY 24.
I NEED A LARGE CREW, PLEASE JOIN US IF YOU CAN!
Signup at www.graywolftrailcrew.org**





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



West Elwha - ONP

12/17 and 12/24/25

1/5 and 1/9/26

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel (12/17 and 24)

Martin Knowles (12/17 and 24)

Tim Branham (1/5 and 9)

Mickey Branham (1/5 and 9)

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 38

Hours including travel time: 46

Miles worked: approximately 2

Trail rating: stock and hiker

Objectives:

1. Rake the thick layer of brushed vegetation and deciduous leaves left on the trail after the 12/6/25 and 1/3/26 crews.
2. Remove all downed trees from the entire trail.

Achieved:

- Both objectives.

Future work:

- More general maintenance. Next crew is 1/24/26.

Martin and Rebecca had two spontaneous trips to the West Elwha over Rebecca's winter break from tutoring. The first was to finish getting the clearing / cleanup done from the 12/6/25 brushing crew.

The second day was to clear the entire trail of downed trees so those would not be in the way of the 1/3/26 crew.

Tim and Mickey went in after the Jan 3 crew to catch up on the raking. It's really hard for the clean up crew to keep up with the efficiency of our GWTC brushers!

We are now in a good position and ready for the Jan 24 crew to pick up where we left off.



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



Graywolf, Lower - ONF

12/27/25 and 1/4/26

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 22

Hours including travel time: 30

Miles worked: 3.2

Trail rating: variable

The main (newer) Graywolf is rated for stock and hikers. The lower (original) Graywolf and Cat Creek are rated for hiker only.

Objectives for Cat Creek and the non-wilderness part of Lower Graywolf:

1. Clear all downed trees.
2. Maintain all drainage.
3. Remove the thick layer of deciduous leaves from the entire trail.

Achieved:

- All three objectives.

Future work:

- Clear a very large tree that came down after we had already gone through with the chainsaw. We wouldn't have been able to do that one anyway, even if it was down on our first trip, because we'll need our larger saw for this project.

Martin and Rebecca had two spontaneous trips to the Graywolf Trail and Cat Creek over Rebecca's winter break from tutoring. The first was to walk the entire section with a chainsaw, clearing whatever we came across. It wasn't much but maybe about 10 small and simple things to clear. We also (arguably more importantly) cleared all drainage features. There were a lot of them and many were non-functional. Water was eroding the trail in many places.

The following week we went back with a leaf blower (this was non-wilderness trail) to remove the incredibly thick layer of deciduous leaves from this entire section. This allows the trail to dry out and breathe, making it less mucky and slippery.

While blowing the leaves we did discover a real mess of a tree that came down sometime after the first time we were there. This is ½ mile up from the lower trailhead. We will be going back to clear that and do a slight re-alignment of the trail on Friday, January 16.



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



Lower Graywolf (original section), ONF

January 16, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
David Graves

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 9
Hours including travel time: 16
Miles worked: Just one location
Trail rating: Hiker-only

Objectives:

1. Clear a path through a recent large tree that fell with its rootball hovering over the trail. Clear another old previously-cut tree that would now be in the way of the realigned path.
2. Re-align the trail slightly to go through the new opening.

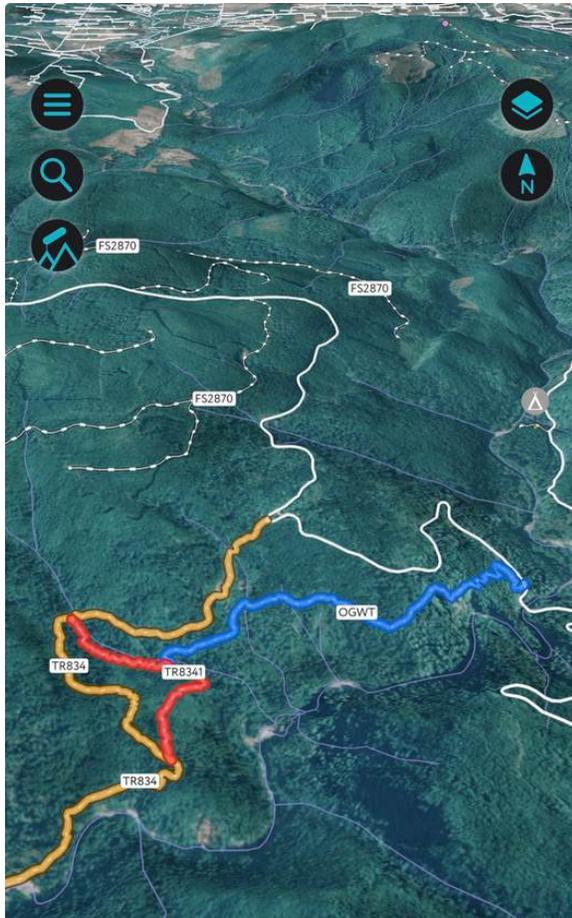
Achieved:

1. Both objectives.

Future work:

1. There is always future work, but until the next problem arises, we get a break from that awful road for a while.

A map to give you perspective of the Graywolf Trail, "new" and "old."



Graywolf Trail is usually considered to be the yellow trail. The blue is the original trail, many years ago replaced by the yellow trail which is old road for quite a ways at the start. We still keep the blue trail open, it's just hiker-only status.

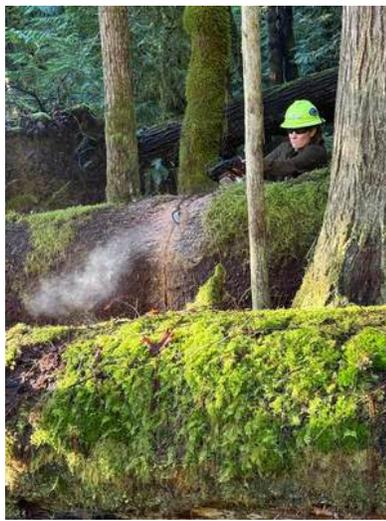
The red is Cat Creek trail, the northern half of which was built by Don Stoneman to make a delightful loop.

The yellow trail allows stock, but it is a dead end at a little past 4 miles where the bridge washed out many years ago and never replaced. That splits the Graywolf into Lower and Upper.



A couple of weeks ago when we were blowing the leaves off the trail, we happened upon this. This is 1/2 mile up from the lower "original" parking lot of the Lower Graywolf Trail.





To be honest, this was a very simple and quick project. However, we did use a compound angle cut (angled in two planes) to allow the rootball part of the tree to drop down (as it obviously wanted to) and also to be able to get the billets out. It was close to 3-feet in diameter so it was heavy wood to move. Therefore we cut many smaller-sized pieces.



We couldn't put the trail back in its original line because the rootball was hovering directly over the trail. We opted to move it over as far as we did because the terrain there was better for realigned tread than closer to the rootball.

Because this trail is for hikers only, we didn't have to worry about getting it to stock standards. However as it turns out, the opening we made would have worked for either one.

The tread could be improved more. Our plan is to watch it and see if it collects water and becomes problematic. If that happens, we'll take in a whole crew to collect rock and material and work to make the tread down to mineral soil as is proper.





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



West Elwha Trail, ONP

January 24, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew Members:

Rebecca Wanagel	Cricket Pomeroy	Julie Metzger
Martin Knowles	Kellie Creamer	James Miller
Bernt Ericson	Michelle Winey	Bill Mueller
Eric Nagle	Rick King	LaVonne Mueller
Tim Goss	Jack Bochsler	Lisa Turnberg
Rodney Lemay	Ian Davis	Neil Turnberg
Miguel Reabold		

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 128
Hours including travel time: 172
Miles worked: 3.5
Trail rating: Hiker and stock

Objectives:

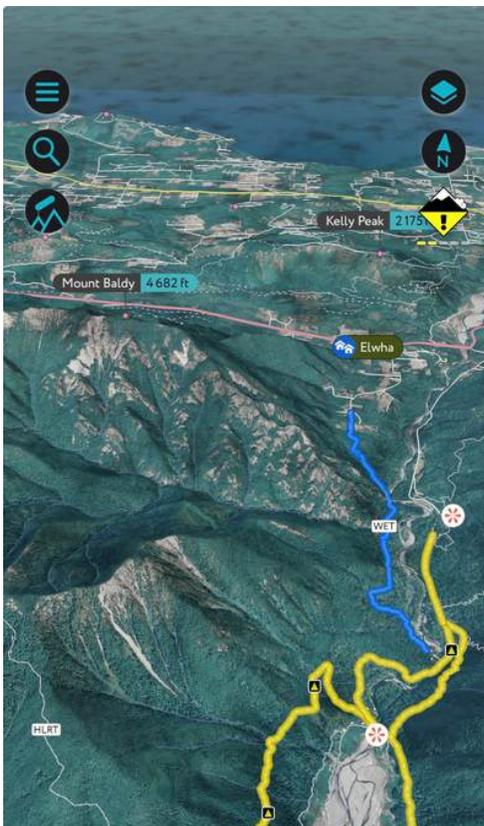
1. Finish brushing both sides of the trail.
2. Clean up brushing debris and finish raking deciduous leaves.
3. Finish trimming back overhead and encroaching branches and vine maples.
4. Final touch up on muddy corner $\frac{3}{8}$ mile from trailhead.
5. Tread repair / rebenching as necessary.
6. Mitigate drainage issues as necessary, especially focusing on hill going down to Altair.

Achieved:

1. All objectives achieved, including most of the crew needing to hike nearly 7 miles to accomplish it!

Future work:

1. Build a short turnpike in a wet area about 2.5 miles from trailhead.
2. Communicate and plan with Nathan from ONP to address the deteriorating and broken puncheon on the hill going down to Altair.



This map helps give you an overview of the West Elwha Trail with its appropriate acronym, WET, highlighted blue.

It basically runs at the base of Mount Baldy on the west side of the Elwha River. Hughes Creek dumps a large volume of water into the Elwha from the south side of Baldy. The trail runs from Herrick Road south to the former Altaire Campground and hooks up with the Olympic Hot Springs road.

Since it starts on private property before entering the ONP boundary, one might think this is an odd place for a trail. However, it is the old stock route up to the Olympic Hot Springs, from back when both people and supplies were transported up there via mule and horse power. The yellow is showing the Olympic Hot Springs Road with its start at Madison Falls parking lot (star). You can see where the OHS road splits off to Whiskey Bend road, the former way to drive up to the main Elwha trailhead (no longer in use as a road because the OHS road has been closed for so long).

We have run several crews on WET this winter, with the goal of giving it a good, thorough tending from trailhead to Altaire. This was the final large crew we will be putting on this trail for the year. There will be smaller crews to tend two specific project areas. But for now, the trail is so much nicer to hike! Thank you to all the crew members and Bobbie Stoneman who, again, provided us with parking and a warm place to gather after the crew with hot drinks and yummy rolls. Not to mention brownies before the work began for the day.



This day our brushers were Bernt, Eric, Rodney and Tim. The progress they made was remarkable, zooming their way through the last $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of trail full of ferns, salmonberry and other vegetation on both sides of the trail.

But, wow, did they ever leave a mess behind them! ;-)

The tools we are using are called Kombi tools. They are a Stihl powerhead that can be used with different attachments. We use the attachment that can take a circular blade, which has carbide-tipped teeth. The blade is SO GOOD that we have to consciously remind ourselves to cut only smaller stuff because the power of the blade will outdo the strength of the plastic attachment on the shaft.



Next came the swampers, Cricket, Kellie, Michelle and either Bernt or Eric when they swapped out the brusher. However, being that it's nearly impossible to keep up with that brushing crew, Rick and Rebecca stepped in to help near the end to get it all cleaned up.



Michelle, left, tossing ferns as far off the trail as they would reasonably go. This is partly for aesthetics and partly so we don't create a berm of debris that blocks water from getting off the trail.

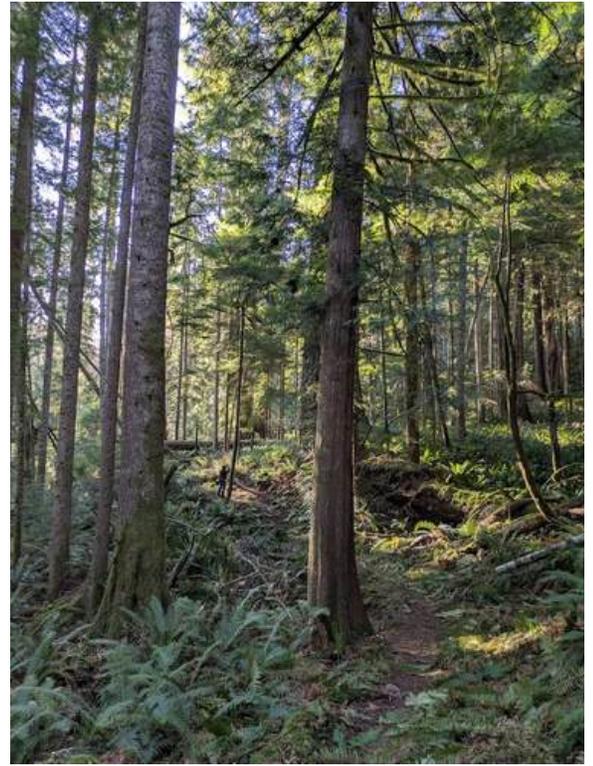
Rick, right, was primarily tasked with cutting back vine maples and encroaching branches all along the trail, but jumped in near the end to help with the massive clean up project.





Cricket, left, was part of the swamping crew and also our main photographer of the day.

Kellie, barely noticeable in this lovely picture as she rakes and rakes and rakes in the picturesque light of the forest, is Cricket's mom. It's wonderful to see families out there working on trails together.



In this same area was Martin, Rebecca and Miguel working on drainage and tread problems on the hill going down to Altaire. This hill notoriously has water running down it which is eroding the trail terribly. We addressed drainage as much as we thought appropriate, and we'll go inspect it sometime soon after we get more rains. We can always put more drainage features in but it's best to only put in what is necessary. Many times you can catch the water from escaping at the top of a run and not need drainages all the way down.



Miguel, left, was learning how to "think like a water drop" to give the water a place to flow off where it naturally would want to anyway.

Rebecca, right, was fixing tread where necessary (mostly where it needed widening or some flattening), working on drainage and teaching trail skills to the new folks on the team. Also helping with the brushing clean up.



Martin, in addition to doing some remarkable drainage which is hard to get a good picture of, also had to cut out a log with his Katanaboy saw. This came down since we were last on the trail, because we had already cleared the trail of logs about a month ago.

Martin also spent some time to clean off and cut back this rootball that nature recently added to our collection of trailside views. It was partially blocking the puncheon.



Some of the crew using the relatively new footlog across Hughes Creek. Thank you to the amazing ONP crew that put this in! So much safer.



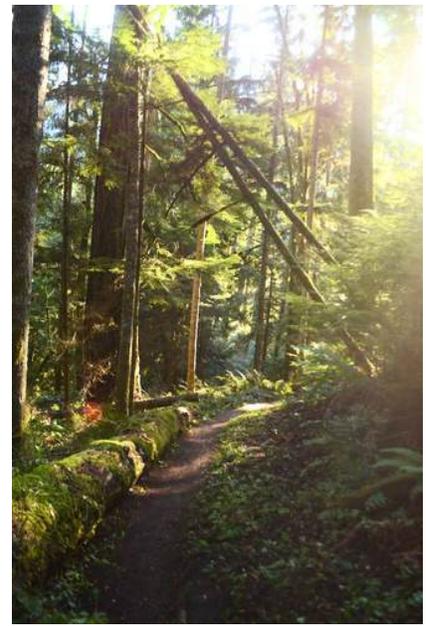
Some terrific before and after shots from tread master, Julie, all in a stream crossing area just south of Dead Horse Bridge (a little over a mile from the trailhead).

Left and middle bottom are looking north.

Middle top and right are looking south. This area had tread that was slowly getting more and more narrowed and off-balance. Julie spruced it all back up.



A before and after set, from the same viewpoint, showing the debris down on the trail and then it all nicely cleaned up.



Below: A before shot from the Jan 3 crew and the after picture from the Jan 24 crew. This is the muddy corner not too far from the trailhead that's been problematic for years. You will recall from the last summary that they made a nice hiker bypass with gravel-lined steps. Now they have improved the trail to the right where stock animals would need to go. More drainage was done along with bringing in plenty of gravel to help with the mushiness. This crew was Bill, LaVonne, Lisa, Neil and James.



Jack and Ian primarily ran the pole saw, while Rick went along the trail cutting back endless numbers of vine maples, small encroaching trees and branches along the entire trail.

This trail has, for as long as I can remember, always had a lot of vine maples leaning into the trail. While we don't want to cut the picturesque, moss-covered ones, many of them are simply face-slapping obstacles. It was great to get those cleared back along with all the high branches.



The crew on this beautiful winter day, enjoying hot drinks, yummy rolls and delightful company.

Roughly left to right:
Martin, Jack, James, Lisa, Neil, Michelle, Rebecca, Cricket,
Kellie, Julie, Tim, LaVonne, Ian, Rick, Bill, Miguel, Eric, Bernt
missing from picture: Rodney



As a special treat I leave you with this delightful photo (thank you, Cricket) of hair ice, found here and there on the trail that day. It was chilly and, from a google search, I found that this forms on moist rotting wood when temperatures are just below freezing and the air is humid. We see this from time to time on hikes but it never loses its charm.



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



Little River Trail, ONP

January 25, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew Members:
Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
Barbara Maxwell

Quick Stats

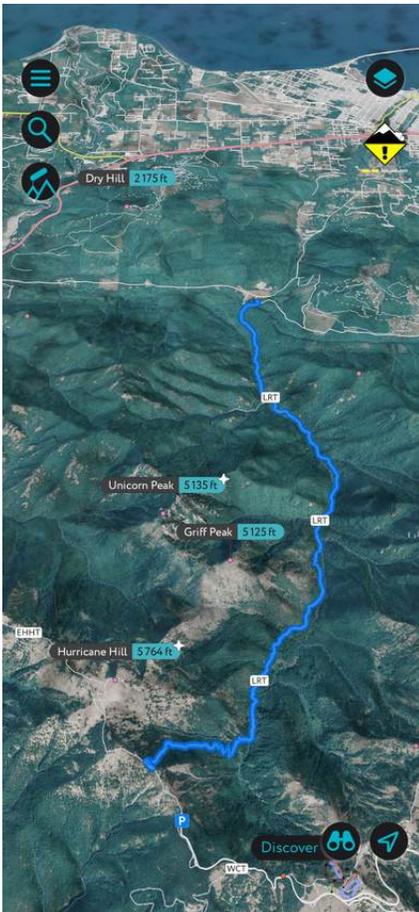
*On-trail volunteer hours: 21
Miles worked: 2, but this
required 9 miles of hiking.
Trail rating: Hiker and stock
for the first 2 miles, but this
trail is not stock friendly past
that.*

Objective achieved:

1. Clear trees off the trail from where WCC left off (mile 2.5) to the fifth footlog, which is mile 4.2. Scout a short ways past that for future reference.

Future work:

1. Clear the top of the trail from Hurricane Ridge down to the footlog where we left off. That crossing is the break between a gradually inclining trail to one that climbs (or drops, depending on your direction) about 1,000 feet per mile. Best to log out the rest of it from the top down.



Here is a map for reference. You can see Little River Trail takes off from the top of Black Diamond Road, just after you turn onto Little River Road. I point this out because, really, this trail isn't at all far from town. And yet, after about 2-ish miles, you feel like you're in the most rugged, wild heart of the Olympics. It rises up to Hurricane Hill, at 5200 feet.

In the first 4-1/4 miles you cross the river no fewer than 6 times (5 of them on footlogs), plus another creek crossing on a bridge built by BCHW. At the fifth footlog the trail changes to a seriously steep grade. Until then it is rising at a gentle average 230-ish feet per mile. (fun fact: BCHW also constructed the first footlog, at mile 2. It is a long crossing and a massive tree with a robust handrail - still in great shape).

The trail gets more and more wild, with awe-inspiring views of the river that you are nearly constantly alongside once you cross into the National Park. Towering boulders covered with dangling swordferns and glistening moss, deep canyons and a wild, boulder-strewn river make you forget you are only a few miles from town. This is a truly amazing trail - one well worth the hard work.



What a mess! However, bad as it looks, this project didn't take us long to get it cleaned up.



This was a huge pile of branches that took all three of us about 10 minutes to toss off the trail.





This one was a large doug fir, which is quite heavy, so I cut the rounds thin to keep them a manageable weight.



This was our topmost project, right before the 5th footlog and our stopping point for this day. It was a large shattered cedar. We've cut logs like this many times in the past. They always look deceptively simple ("oh look at that space where the log has split in half, this will be a piece of cake"). But I made a poor choice in where to start nibbling away at this mess. I should have started more in the middle of the log, but started towards the lower end which wasn't as completely split and also wedged up against the rest of the tree. Anyhow, I got the bar stuck (haven't done that in a while) and gave Barbara the satisfaction of making the weight of the carried spare bar well worth it! Swapped it out and off we went again. This project had a delicious cedar odor.