

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

We have had a busy trail-work month at Miller Peninsula State Park. These have been our accomplishments since the last report:

3/10/26

Jim and Donna walked about a mile, carrying the chainsaw and fuel, from west Fireweed Road, down Manzanita, to a blocking wind-fall at the beginning of the Bluff Trail. A large hemlock, with a double top had uprooted about 50 feet back from the trail and left a mess of impassable logs and branches just west of the intersection. It only took about 30 minutes to clear the spot and it was a beautiful day for the dog to have a hike, too! Jim removed a dead alder on the way out, so it won't have the chance to block the trail.

3/20/26

A work party of 6 (Jim & Donna, Rick King, Teresa Crossley, Theresa Percy, and Joan Wildman) used a chainsaw, power mulchers, and electric pole saw to finish clearing the sides of Alder Hollow Trail (which we had not quite finished on 3/3/26) and then headed south on W. Diamond Point to do the same thing. We only had about an hour of work left on Alder Hollow. It now looks like a highway! We managed about 1/4 mile on W. Diamond Point that day. A lot of small, dead trees had to be cut and removed from the trail edges, then the salal was whacked back and picked up. The swambers moved a lot of vegetation!

3/23/26

Only 4 workers (Joan Wildman, Tom Mix, Jim and Donna) were able to help out, but we were able to finish W. Diamond Point Trail as far south as the wellhead, which is the section that needed significant brushing.

Four more work parties are scheduled at Miller in April. We will schedule some in May if we cannot finish our planned work. We have been fortunate to have some help from Diamond Point residents and some Thursday crew members, too.

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

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

Here's what happened in March by the Thursday trail crew.

During the whole month, the crew dealt with trail reconstruction through logging clearcut areas. During the logging process, an existing OAT trail through the area is essentially destroyed. The logging company agrees to rebuild the trail at the end of its session but is usually given about a year or more to do it. Most often however, the logging company does use power equipment to put in place a replacement trail at the end of its cutting and the trail is reopened sooner than required. However, the replacement trail may not be where the original trail was located and will usually not be built to the same standards as the original

trail. The Thursday crew then steps in to upgrade the replacement and to get the trail ready for use as soon as possible after the logging company leaves. The trail is then used and revisited as needed after the land reverts to forest. So this year, the month of March was spent in such revisits.

March 5

OAT MP 17; build turnpike through a wet section and upgrade the approaches at each end of this clearcut piece. 16 workers; 96 work hours.

March 12

OAT MP 13; widen the tread to spec, improve drainage along this section. 12 workers; 72 work hours

March 19

OAT MP 11; this more recent clearcut produced a very wet mucky area through which the trail was reconstructed. Drainage was a real problem. A solution involving new turnpike through this muddy part and addition of three culverts to direct the water more efficiently was undertaken. To accomplish, part of the crew went about searching for downed cedar logs to cut and form into turnpike edges. Another part moved gravel uphill to the site of the turnpike. Yet another did ground prep for the turnpike. This work extended into the next week. 15 workers; 90 work hours.

March 26

OAT MP 11; Only 9 workers signed the work sheet but the crew was about 15 workers. The work involved finishing the turnpike and addressed widening and smoothing the easterly approach to the turnpike area. So again, 15 workers; 90 work hours. Addition to this report are two photos of the finished work.



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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

3/21

Slab Camp / Upper Graywolf, ONF

This was a crosscut saw logout. **See attached report.**

3/22

Duckabush Trail

Three of us (Martin, Rebecca, and Rodney Lemay) went back to continue with the mitigation of stock access issues.

3/28

Lower and Upper S. Fork Skokomish

This was a scout to prepare for the upcoming LeBar Horse Camp / Skokomish Trails Buckhorn / Peninsula annual event. We discovered that winter was very light on trails in this year in the Skok valley. We did a clean up of the Upper S. Fork Skok for 3 miles to the second crossing / camp. Cut out handsaw size items, tossed branches and cleaned up snag deadfall.

3/30

Martin, Rebecca and Eric Nagle did the last trip to the Duckabush. **Please see attached report of the work done on the Duckabush this winter / spring.**

3/31

Scout Mt. Muller in preparation for clearing the trail before the Littleton Horse Camp maintenance crew. We cleared about 20-ish handsized small items and tossed hundreds of branches. Took notes on the bigger trees requiring a real saw.

4/10

Cleared the entire Mt. Muller loop (13 miles) with the support of Jim and Donna Hollatz, Rush, Millie and Tucker. **See attached report.**

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

4/11

Little River, logout. **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.graywolftrailcrew.org



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



Duckabush Trail, ONF

Stock access mitigation

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

1/31/26 – 18 hours
Martin Knowles
Rick King
Rebecca Wanagel

2/12/26 – 9 hours
Martin

2/13/26 – 27 hours
Martin
Rick
Rebecca

2/15/26 – 16 hours
Martin
Rebecca

2/24/26 – 24 hours
Martin
Paul Kamps
Randy Kraxberger

3/22/26 – 27 hours
Martin
Rebecca
Rodney Lemay

3/30/26 – 21 hours
Martin
Rebecca
Eric Nagle

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 142
Hours including travel time: 204
Miles worked: 6
Trail rating: hiker / stock

Backstory

This was a big push to, once and for all, mitigate some serious stock access issues on the Olympic National Forest portion of the Duckabush (it becomes Olympic National Park at 6.5 miles). This section was the victim of a human-caused fire, called Big Hump Fire, in 2011. It was a ground, rather than a crown fire, so the soil was burned away leaving a very rocky trail with little to no soil in the burn zone. Dozens of trees continue to fall every year.

Stock access past Five-Mile camp (specifically past "Claire's Rock" which is at 5.5 miles) has been non-existent for many years - maybe since the fire? Stock safety even getting that far has been sketchy. We have had our tools packed in many times by BCHW volunteers, but all tools and supplies were dropped at Five-Mile camp. Everything then had to be schlepped nearly two miles to the start of the work and first camp. Worse, at the end of the trip, everything had to be hefted back to the pickup location, but by that point the tools are well beyond Ten-Mile Camp. Olympic National Park crews have not worked up the Duckabush for many years due to stock access problems. Packers who have transported our gear mentioned many times the multiple safety issues.

I showed these problem areas to Brent Freeman, Olympic National Forest Recreation Shed Manager, and he was able to get permission to have the rock blasted on a couple of the worst trouble spots. That was scheduled for October 2025, but then the government shutdown happened. Meanwhile, in the fall of 2024 the ONP packers took a hike to give it a pro's eye as to what the stock access issues were. Heidi Brill, lead packer, wrote up a detailed report with pictures. I shared that report with Al Mashburn, volunteer WTA crew leader who leads at least two multi-day crews on the ONF Duckabush every year. His crews fixed many of the issues - done excellently! There were several left. Some of them were slippery rock problems, others were encroaching trees.

ONP is planning on sending up several crews this year to do some backlog maintenance on this trail - even more critical now that the N. Fork Skokomish trail is burned and the access to the East Fork Quinault / Graves Creek trailhead is closed. The GWTC is also going to work a week clearing logs from the ONP boundary west. It had become past time to fix the stock access issues.

Here is what we did (again, this was in addition to the expert work done by WTA in earlier seasons):

1. Removed maples from the upside of the tight switchbacks that were pack bumpers (they were growing curved into the trail). These were bumping packs hard enough that mules were in danger of slipping off the soft shoulder of the steep and unstable switchbacks.
2. Made a short slick rock section right below Snack Rock safer. A fall in this spot would likely be catastrophic. Packers mentioned this area many times.
3. Did major improvement to the slippery bedrock just above Snack Rock. This was an area that had smooth, outsloped, perpetually wet and slippery bedrock. There was no way to gain any purchase; hooves were scrabbling all over. At least one horse fell with its rider here in the past. It was nerve wracking watching a pack string go over this.
4. Shortly before Five-Mile camp there was a large rotten fir that ran parallel to the trail at about shoulder height. Packs had bumped it so many times the bark was worn off. We removed that.
5. Made it possible and safe for pack stock to get around the corner at Claire's Rock without the animals getting bumped off into the river below (**NOTE: THIS SPOT IS THE REASON NO PACKERS WOULD GO BEYOND - A FALL HERE WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC AND THE LIKELIHOOD WAS EXTREMELY HIGH**). The rock on a sharp corner, which was on a cliff above the river, was jutting way into the too-narrow trail. It was impossible for the pack boxes to not hit the rock and the river is about 30 feet below at this point.
6. Just past that corner, improved footing for the animals on a short but slippery rock hill that didn't have good hoof placement.
7. On the traverse above Claire's Rock, for 30 feet we knocked the rock wall back to make more room for packs so the animals don't get bumped off.



I asked Harold Wiese, one of our amazing volunteer packers, to walk over to look at Claire's rock for his opinion. He agreed that this was not a spot safe to pack through. This is looking downriver. Two "before" pictures, one has a hiking pole for reference.



It's hard to capture tread and rock problems in pictures. You just don't get the depth and perspective. Suffice to say, this was the corner that was a no-go for anyone who packed us in for work crews. The fall to the river below is a good 30 feet and the rock jutted out so far it would be impossible for pack boxes not to hit and push the animal to the edge. The drop after the corner was just as bad, leaving no way to get down to the river level safely.

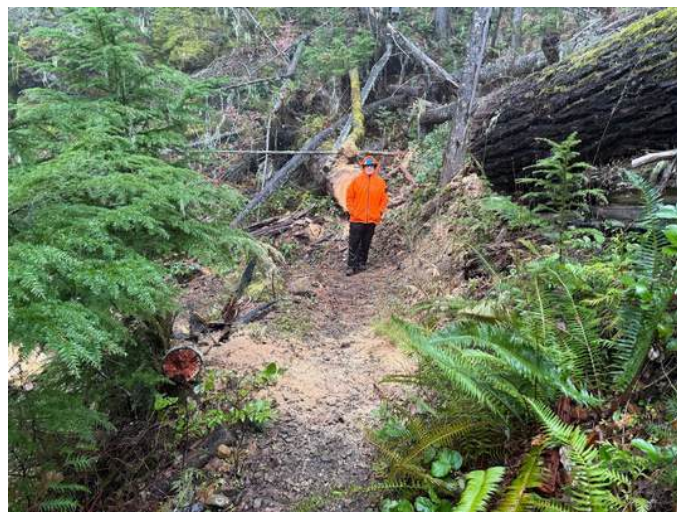


We are holding our arms out with a tool extending our reach to show how much clearance there is now. We feel like there is enough clearance for the stock to pass through safely.

This section, known as "Claire's Rock" (sadly named after a horse who took a fall here) is 5.5 miles from the trailhead. Working on this required an 11 mile round trip hike. Up and over Big Hump each way. We put more time into hiking to the jobsites than actually working!



There were several maples on the uphill side of the trail on the tight switchbacks heading up to "Snack Rock." They were growing tilted outwards, which bumps pack boxes. The switchbacks are on unstable soil with soft shoulders. An easy place for an animal to take a fall.



This was the large doug fir that was parallel to the trail at about shoulder / head height. The trail does a switchback right behind Martin in the orange coat. You can see where the bark has been knocked off by pack bags / boxes as packers came around the corner. The logs you see laid perpendicular were ones we placed there as skid logs. The target log was going to roll right into the trail, which is troughed. We decided to help the log help itself get off the trail down below the switchback.



It's hard to see what's going on here but this is a section just above "Snack Rock" that is about 40-ish feet long. It is smooth bedrock that is always wet (it seeps off the hill) and is outsloped. This spot was difficult for me to watch the pack string going over, sure that someone could fall. A fall in this section was less consequential than the other areas, but highly likely. After a pack string goes over, I can see dozens of scrapes on the rocks where the animals were trying to gain purchase with their hooves. We flattened it out, made it wider and easier to ramp on or off, depending on the direction of travel.





Section just below Snack Rock. Before and after, looking downriver. A fall here would be extremely high consequence. Some packers / riders have refused to come back to the Duckabush based on this spot alone.



Before and after, looking upriver. On the rock projects, we finish by delineating the downhill edge of the trail with piles of rocks. This is to encourage the horses / mules to stay to the uphill side. It makes the direction of desired travel more obvious.



This is the traverse up above Claire's Rock. A long ways above the river, with an extremely steep hillside. This is the after picture. For 30 feet we knocked the rock back anywhere from a few inches to a foot or more. I walked this section afterwards with an outstretched arm and a tool and did not hit the rock anywhere. Before, it was much tighter and more conducive to pack bumping with a high consequence fall waiting below.

So what's next?

On May 23, Martin and Rebecca will go back up the Duckabush. This time with Harold Wiese, Rachael Taylor-Tuller and Matthew Tuller. Harold and the Tullers, our masterful volunteer BCHW packers, will bring their animals and ride the trail, checking each and every area that we worked to see if it's up to safety specs or if it needs a little more work. If more work is deemed necessary, we will do it right then until it meets the standards of the people who know best ... the packers.

After that, work can get done on the Duckabush by the GWTC and ONP crews ... getting supplies packed far beyond the traditional stopping point of Five-Mile Camp.



For your viewing pleasure. This is a delightful place to camp or just take a break, about 14 miles up the Duckabush Trail. It's where Crazy Creek dumps into the Duckabush from the south side of the river. The eddying of the water over eons carved out the rocks and caused this enchanting scene.



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



ONF: Slab Camp and Graywolf trails

March 21, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members
 David Graves Randy Kraxberger
 Paul Kamps Rebecca Wanagel
 Martin Knowles

Quick Stats
 On-trail volunteer hours: 40
 Hours including travel time: 55
 Miles worked: 5
 Miles hiked down, up, down and back up: 10
 Trail rating: hiker / stock
 crosscut saw logout
 trees cut: approx 25

Objective:

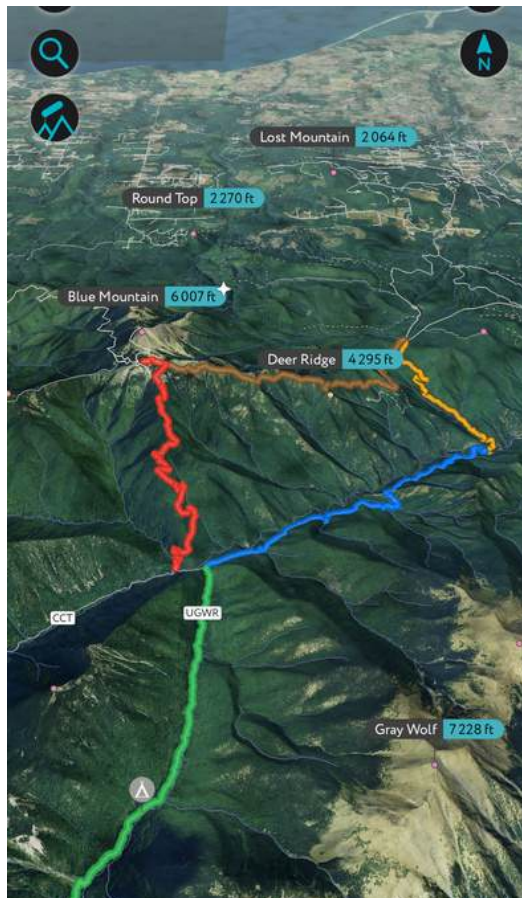
1. Clear downed trees from Slab Camp trailhead down to and along the Graywolf trail to the ONP boundary.

Achieved:

1. Cleared trees from Slab Camp trailhead to about Slide Camp on the Graywolf (that's the jog in the blue trail in the map below). There is approximately another ¾ mile to the boundary that we did not get to on this trip.

Future work:

1. Clear the rest of the Graywolf to the ONP boundary. Possibly include this with the Deer Ridge work, making it into a long loop.
2. Clear a couple more trees on Slab Camp trail that we didn't have time to get to but that are not blocking (one is way overhead but has dozens of branches sticking down to horse rider head height).
3. Fix the tread about 2 miles down on Slab Camp where a fallen tree's rootball tore a hole in the tread.
4. Address drainage all along Slab Camp trail.
5. Tread / drainage as needed on Upper Graywolf.



Worked March 21
will be continued later this season

Yellow: Slab Camp

Blue: Upper Graywolf (part ONF, part ONP)

Worked last September

Green: Continuation of ONP Upper Graywolf that goes over GW Pass and down to the Dosewallips (also worked 1.7 miles east on the blue trail to the ONP boundary).

Red: Three Forks (Deer Park down to Grand Creek, Cameron Creek and Graywolf River)

Will be worked later this season

Brown: Deer Ridge

Yellow, Blue, Red and Brown make a wonderful loop hike!

> 18ish miles and a lot of elevation gain / loss

> Stunning, panoramic high-altitude views up on Deer Ridge and the upper reaches of Three Forks

> Majestic joining of three major creeks / rivers (Grand, Cameron and Graywolf)

> Lush, moss-covered river trail

Elevations:

Slab Camp / Deer Ridge trailhead - 2537

Slab Camp / Graywolf bridge - 1413

Our turnaround point for the day - 2253

Three Forks junction with GW - 2119

Three Forks junction with Deer Ridge - 5374

Why are we using crosscut saws?
Because we wanted a good workout! (kidding, though that is a side benefit)

Each land manager has a different interpretation of "minimal tool use" as outlined in the Wilderness Act of 1964.
Here are the guidelines we follow:

- Olympic National Forest, non-wilderness - chainsaw allowed
- Olympic National Forest, wilderness - crosscut only
- Olympic National Park - chainsaw allowed



Before picture of our main project on Graywolf trail.



Getting started by single bucking with the smaller of the saws that we brought. (the guys with the bigger saw were finishing up an earlier project)



Working on two cuts at once, something you can do with crosscut saws because the cuts take a while on a tree of this size.



Starting on the second log.



A team working on each tree.



We really didn't have any unexpected difficulties to this project, other than the hillside (and the trail) in this area is wet clay. Extremely slippery. This made safe footing a challenge.



This one was completely rotten and waterlogged. We had to do a combination of sawing and breaking it apart.



Finished! Ideally, and with chainsaws, we would have taken off a few more chunks on the foreground tree. The reason we left it like that is it is passable, and if we took off another chunk, the whole thing would have rolled into the trail. Sometime we will get rid of the rest of it, but today it was hugely better and we had miles to cover.



This tree had severe bottom bind due to the weight of that suspended rootball. It was also suspended down below to the right after it went off the trail.



This one wasn't large, but it was fully suspended down below to the left off the trail. It started cracking and popping almost right away because of the weight of the tree down below. Once released, the piece to the left sprang up and AWAY from the sawyer (predicted, that's why I'm cutting from where I am and angling it to let the piece go in that direction) and then slid way down off the trail in a split second.

Hey, final fun note! Here is a quote from a WTA trip report posted by a hiker that went through while we were working on the big tree project:

"The trail up the Gray Wolf was much more challenging, but thank god for the Gray Wolf trail crew bucking 2.5 foot diameter blowdowns with hand saws! Impressive teamwork."





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



Mt. Muller, ONF

April 10, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Packers

Jim Hollatz

Donna Hollatz

Horses

Millie

Rush

Tucker

Sawyers

Martin Knowles

Rebecca Wanagel

Quick Stats

Human on-trail volunteer hours: 36

Horse on-trail volunteer hours: 27

Human hours including travel time: 47

Miles worked: 13

Trail rating: hike / bike / stock

Objective achieved:

Clear about 35 logs off entire 13 mile loop of Mt. Muller trail. The entire trail is rideable for stock.

Future work:

The trail is in pretty good condition though does need some tree trimming and brushing on the ridge. No work planned in the near future but will monitor. Later this season we will tend to Kloshe Nanitch and Snider Ridge.

The Graywolf Crew has agreed to take on maintenance of the Mt. Muller trail system now that Mt. Olympus Chapter has disbanded. We wanted to get the trail clear in time for the Littleton Horse Camp maintenance weekend in case some folks wanted to take a break and go for a ride. The entire Mt. Muller trail (13 miles) is now rideable. We hope you enjoy it. Though it has a lot of ups and downs - not an easy day - the views are fabulous from the ridge.



Tucker agreed to carry our saw and equipment, while Millie and Rush were responsible for carrying Donna and Jim.

Martin and Rebecca were extremely appreciative. Last summer we and some other GWTC members carried our saw equipment up the Divide and then around Mt. Muller. We are happy to clear the trail but we do NOT want to carry the saw equipment again on that trail if it can be avoided. It's a major grunt!



When scouting the project a week prior, we cut out all the handsaw-sized items and tossed a lot of branches. It's a good thing we did or this day would have been even longer than it was. The trees we cut on this day were not interesting enough to be picture worthy, but the horses are photogenic!

It was beautiful weather, a fun day. We were all very appreciative for Rick Hamilton because he had tacos waiting for us back at Littleton when we came trudging back to camp hungry and tired. Thank you!





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



Little River Trail, ONP

April 11, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Ian Davis

Bernt Ericson

Paul Kamps

Rebecca Wanagel

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 36

Hours including travel time: 44

Miles worked: 1

Miles hiked with equipment: 8

Trail rating: hiker / stock*

*see note at the end of
this report.

Objective:

Clear Little River trail of recently-downed logs from about mile three to four.

Achieved:

Cleared all downed logs in this area except one which we will return to later. About 11 trees - several had complexity and / or size. That combined with the hiking was a full day. And it was raining ... all day.

Future work:

Clear the rest of the trail in a top-down mode later in the season when Hurricane Hill is accessible to cars.

You may remember we and WCC recently cleared this trail as far as the 5th footlog, which is about 4.2 miles. However, a major and very localized wind event happened recently between mile 3 and 4. I was relieved the trail wasn't impacted more than it was. That being said, the trail was obliterated in two separate (short) areas and about 12 trees were down across the trail. Some of these trees were under extreme tension. As always, we thought through our cut plans carefully and always checked our plan with the other sawyers before proceeding.



This was a set of two logs, both had fallen to the uphill side. The larger of the two had its rootball halfway down to the river. We knew this one was going to stand up after cutting and the bottom bind was severe. Paul got to do the release cut and it started snapping and pulling apart about when he put the saw to the wood. However, he handled it expertly and the log was released cleanly. Up it went!



Ian Davis is relatively new to our crew. We think he is an amazing addition to the GWTC and hope he continues! He was a crucial part of our team today and always has high spirits and a curious, eager-to-learn demeanor.



Some of the logs were non-complex like this one. However, logs at this height and size tend to be difficult for hikers to get over without getting soaking wet.



An overturned tree took out the trail for a short section. We quickly cut out one small rotten blocking log, but otherwise, this area needs a tread crew on a different day. Hikers are getting around this easily and have already beat in a path, so this project is not urgent.



This is the cedar we decided as a team to leave for another day, which will be soon. The picture does not convey it well. The cedar is larger than it looks, very long, and completely detached from its rootball way up that very steep hillside. The chances of this thing sliding are 100%. That is not a problem for us, but does mean that we will have to cut it multiple times as it continues to slide down the hill (my joking term for that is a conveyor belt tree). It could take several hours and we had other big projects waiting up ahead. We decided to save this one for a better weather day when it can be the sole focus.



For as dramatic as this fir looks with its rootball way up there, and clearly snapped from the force of the fall, it was not difficult to cut. Bernt handled it with ease. And then we took lunch sheltered as best we could from the rain.



The second area where the trail was taken by a downed tree. You can see the trail goes right underneath the rootball. Hikers had clambered up around the back side, which you can see in the right picture. There being no way to retrieve the original trail line, we decided to cut out the top tree above the large rootball, and realign the trail to meet up with the original on the other side of this mess.



We chose the route to be above the standing tree because on the lower side the ground drops off sharply. The tree we're cutting is larger than the picture says it is - it was about 36" and the bark was full of dirt that had splashed onto it from its rootball. The dirt we had to clear away from underneath was full of rocks.



We cut away roots, smoothed out a tread and opened up a path. This is just fine for hikers. Is it to stock standards? No. You can see that the opening is not to typical stock standards although a horse there for recreation rather than tool packing could get through. For more on this see my note at the end of this report.

Just beyond this, for another 100 yards there were about 4 more trees and tons of branches. We cleared the trees away easily enough and Ian worked diligently to remove all the branches and clean up the really messy trail.

With that, except for the hillside cedar that we will do sometime soon, the trail is clear once again to the 5th footlog.

A note on accessibility for stock on Little River trail:

This trail is rated as a stock trail. However, at the moment, there is no way for horses or mules to go past about mile 2, which is where the first footlog is (there are two bridges before that but they are fine for stock). In fact, there is even one tree across the trail in the DNR section, shortly before the ONP boundary, that maybe a horse could squeeze past, maybe not? In any case, that would be a tricky tree to remove safely.

At mile two, the trail proceeds to cross the river five times before it then takes a sharp turn upward and becomes almost unbearably steep. I do not believe any rider would take their horse past the 5th crossing due to the steepness. But even getting to that footlog is another story.

As we were crossing the river multiple times, Ian and I looked closely for signs of old horse fords. We discovered that each crossing does (or did), in fact, have a ford. All of the fords are old and overgrown. They would need a lot of work to resurrect, but they were there and usable at one point.

If / when the fords were to be re-opened, this would only be realistic to use when the river is very low (August and September). Even with the rushing water, I can tell there are a lot of boulders that animals would need to be able to see to negotiate safely.

If ever equestrians would want to use this trail again, there are many places on the trail that would need a great deal of work to get it back to stock standards.

In summary, this trail is "rated for stock" but in actuality that is not realistic at this point.