

Monthly Trail Report for the Board and Membership
Peninsula Chapter and Gray Wolf Trail Crew
Report written by Rebecca Wanagel
June 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 May 11-June 8, 2026 at Miller Peninsula State Park:

5/11/26

Our website received a message from a person who described themselves as a "disabled hiker" who found obstacles on the trail, but they did not give the name of the trail, just that it was at Miller Peninsula State Park. They reported that State Parks said there was no one available to do maintenance, so they reached out to us. Jim and Donna had cleared all of the usual trails, but talked to some hikers who reported trees blocking the Discovery Bay Loop and a trail to the view point overlooking the bay. This trail is very seldom used by equestrians as it is east of Diamond Point Road and we do very little work there. The local Diamond Point Community members do some maintenance on that section. We hiked around the loop (2 miles) with a chainsaw and fuel. Jim cut out one leaning, dead tree on the south trail section, and cut out and removed 3 blocking trees on the View Point Trail in the NE corner of the park. No other obstacles were found.

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 was busy all the month of May around MP 5 of the OAT. The description of the work is much the same for each week: widen the tread back to the original 36" width, address drainage and repair drain dips to function adequately, restore out slope where needed, clear brush, and remove overhead limbs from the forested section to allow stock clearance. A few specific other projects carried out were finding downed cedar and cutting/milling slab sections for an upcoming repair of the "burrito bridge"**. That bridge is between MP 8 and MP 9. An Alaska mill was used for this process. Another specific project involved reconstruction of a "dangerous for bicycles" curve. The curve was widened, somewhat stretched to cut down on the sharpness, and appropriately out sloped for cyclists. A dangerous downhill culvert approach on the same curve was also addressed to make it visually very apparent. In all, that curve should no longer be a problem. So for June, the "burrito bridge" is on the horizon.

*** Additional note from Rebecca: the history behind the term "burrito bridge" is that a couple of decades ago a turnpike was constructed through what used to be a very swampy area. So swampy, in fact, that the crew was concerned all rock for the turnpike would disappear into the muck. So landscape cloth was used. The rocks were dumped onto the cloth and then wrapped up like burritos. Many of those were done side by side within the confines of side rail (curb) logs. Gravel was laid over the top of that to complete the turnpike.*

So why did "bridge" become part of the name? Turnpikes are side rail logs with the center part filled with rock, gravel and mineral soil. Bridges have wood planks. Well, many years after the original burrito turnpike, the burritos must have been sinking. I don't know this for a fact but have made that assumption because at some point wooden planks were put over the burritos to make a puncheon (low bridge without railings). Thus the term "burrito bridge."

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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST

5/23

Martin Knowles and Rebecca Wanagel hiked the Duckabush to mile 6 with packers Harold Wiese, Rachael Taylor-Tuller and Matthew Tuller. This was our big test day to see if all the fixes for the stock access problems were successful. It was a great day watching them ride over places that had been scary and dangerous before, or completely inaccessible, with nothing but smiles and thumbs up. Martin and Rebecca then continued for a backpacking scout of the rest of the Duckabush since we have a backcountry crew coming up on that trail starting June 20. ***See attached report.***

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

5/16

West Elwha realignment. We finished putting in a new trail to route around the rotten puncheon that is a hazard to hikers and basically impassable to stock. We will let this trail get used and dry out / harden up over the summer and revisit it in the fall. ***See attached report.***

6/4

Martin, Rebecca and Jim Fasciano went 3 miles back up Little River to clear a cedar that one of our earlier crews had left until later. We suspected that it was going to slide with every cut, so we wanted to have ample time to deal with it. It did slide on the first cut but then the lay of the tree shifted and it did not slide any more after that. We were able to chunk it up and get the trail open again.

SAFETY

As we head into summer, please remember that dehydration is one of those lurking dangers that we don't realize we've caused until symptoms show up. Please remember to hydrate yourselves adequately if you're out doing any type of exertion.

SAW PROGRAM

Martin Knowles and Rebecca Wanagel took a day to train and re-certify our very own Rick Hamilton, the new Peninsula Chapter steward for Littleton Horse Camp. It's important to have an updated certification so that he can cut logs in and around the campground as well as the short Forest Service road leading to the camp.

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

West Elwha, ONP

May 8, 9 and 16, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

5/8

Martin Knowles
Rebecca Wanagel

5/9

Brian Berg
Kellie Creamer
Tim Goss
Greg King
Martin Knowles
Randy Kraxberger
Eric Nagle
Cricket Pomeroy
Miguel Reabold
Rebecca Wanagel
Paul Wotipka

5/16

Jon Behar
Brian Berg
Jack Bochsler
Paul Kamps
Greg King
Martin Knowles
Randy Kraxberger
Eric Nagle
Rebecca Wanagel
Paul Wotipka

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours: 153
Hours including travel time: 198
Miles worked: 230 feet
Trail rating: hiker / stock
Job site is about 3 miles from
Madison Falls trailhead

Objective:

Build a new 230-foot trail to realign away from rotten, treacherous puncheon. This puncheon was sketchy for hikers when wet, and not appropriate for stock due to its condition.

Achieved: Objective achieved.

Future work:

Let the new trail rest, dry out and get used for the summer. In the early fall, go back to do the following:

- Fill and mound the new turnpike more.
- Address any places on the clay tread that need more mineral soil / gravelly soil topping.
- Fix any tread that hasn't worn in properly.
- Dismantle the old puncheon.



Picturesque but no longer practical.

It's easy to see why puncheon was used through here many years ago. The horsetail and other plants here give a clue as to how swampy it is.

We decided to make a route that benches into the hillside up above this wet area.



Martin and Rebecca flagged the route the day before our first crew, following the line that we had scouted previously with Nathan Forrest, Trails Supervisor. We were going for 30" tread and a corridor to stock standards. This allows stock passage but stays narrow enough that it still feels like a backcountry trail.



The first order of business was to brush out the corridor. Our main plant here is ferns and we needed to be able to see what we were doing. Many of them got dug out and replanted down below out of reach of the new trail. Tread started getting roughed in. Downed logs had to be bucked out.



The tread started taking shape remarkably quickly. The team was spread out throughout the 230-foot flagged route. We purposely built this to flow around trees and objects and to be curvy and enticing, rather than a straight shot. It gives it a more natural feel, like the trail is resting on the terrain.





Rebecca had put together a “manual” for the crew to read and absorb before the first day of work. Therefore, this crew was armed with knowledge and had a vision.



All smiles despite the hard work.



A treat hiked in by Bobbie! Her famous sweet rolls and hot coffee fueled our bodies and our joy level for the rest of the day.



Roots need to go. You can also see here the beginning of our efforts to dump better soil on top of the clay that is this hillside.



Scavenging for downed small logs that could be used as curb edges for the turnpike(s). I had planned on a turnpike at each end, but ended up finding out that only one is necessary for now. We will monitor the trail and put another one in up top if it proves to be needed.



Some roots were more tenacious than others but none were as stubborn as Brian! One large hole had to be filled with rock carried in from elsewhere before dirt could be spread over the top.



The turnpike down below taking good shape, including peeling the logs. The logs are fir, not cedar, but you have to work with what is in the area. Peeling them will make them last plenty long.



Today Bobbie's sister, Carol, also hiked in our treats. Bobbie's cherry pie, made from cherries grown and pitted in her yard, would likely win a blue ribbon in any pie contest. And it came with ice cream and coffee! Keep in mind, this was a 3 mile each way hike for them, but they love to hike. We were incredibly appreciative.



Eventually though, it's back to work for us. We carried bag after bag after bag of material that we were scrounging from nearby or not-so-nearby to fill the turnpike and give roughage to the slippery-when-wet clay trail. We spread that on the hill and around the climbing turn (left picture: Greg is standing on the climbing turn which curves to the left). We are hopeful that will pack in, dry and harden to give more traction to hikers.



We also had to decommission the original trail at the two entry points to the new trail. Behind Paul is the puncheon that you can no longer see.



Here are some shots of the finished-for-now product. We have future plans, which I listed at the start of this report. Mostly we want the tread to settle so that we can see if our layer over the clay is hardening in. We'll watch for any low spots that will need to be filled or drained (we already put in one drainage outlet where needed). We will fill and mound the turnpike more. We will dismantle the old puncheon (save the cedar planks, toss the sills into the woods and pack out the fasteners).



Here is the upper entrance with the puncheon no longer visible in the background to the right.



Part way down the trail. It's hard to tell here, but dozens of ferns were replanted and organic material tossed on the downhill edge, to give the trail a less recently-built look.



Heading down to the climbing turn.



Going down around the climbing turn towards the bottom entrance. You can see material that was poured on top of the clay. Also, the climbing turn itself was constructed by tossing a huge pile of logs and small trees to give the turn a backdrop and soil supporter. Otherwise what we had was a huge, deep hole. (you can see it better in the lower left picture of the previous page).

This shows the bottom entrance with the puncheon to the left no longer visible. We'll have to scrounge for additional material to fill and mound the turnpike more later, but definitely good enough for now. Our dry summer will help this all harden up and settle in. Many of the ferns I replanted will not make themselves obvious until next year when they put out new growth, but we made a concerted effort to make the tread look only 30" wide with ferns and organic debris along the downhill edge.





So were any of you wondering how we managed to do ALL THIS WORK in essentially two days and a 6-mile round trip travel from the trailhead? Well the answer is these crews were incredible. But in addition to that, nearly everyone used bikes to get to Altaire and then we had to hike only about $\frac{3}{8}$ mile from there. We do have to push our bikes over the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile bypass, but otherwise, this really speeds up our time in getting to and from the job site!

Carrying all the tools on the bikes was an effort in and of itself, but this crew always manages no matter the task.

A final note to equestrians:

This trail has not been appropriate for stock for many years due to that puncheon. This realigned trail will make it once again okay for stock.

That being said, I beg of you to resist the temptation to try it out until at least autumn. Give it a summer to dry out and harden up so that we can make sure this trail is and will remain sustainable for all users. To ride it right now would be to create huge holes in the still soft tread.

Thank you!



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

Duckabush, ONF

May 23, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Packers

Harold Wiese

Rachael Taylor-Tuller

Matthew Tuller

Animals

Sugar

Archie

Biskit

Maizey

Dolly

Possi

GWTC Crew

Martin Knowles

Rebecca Wanagel

Objectives:

1. Test ride all the stock access fixes that have been done on the ONF section of the Duckabush.
2. Make more improvements where necessary.

Achieved: Both objectives were achieved.

On Saturday, May 23, 2026, volunteer BCHW packers Harold, Rachael and Matthew rode the ONF portion of the Duckabush to see if stock access is not only possible, but safe. Martin and Rebecca hiked along with them. If you've been following this story, you know this has been a long-standing issue and all the fixes took a lot of effort from GWTC and WTA crews.

The result? The packers rode all the way to about mile 6 with no difficulties whatsoever. Mission accomplished.



Top left: Harold riding Sugar with ease over a short spot just below "Snack Rock" that used to scare some riders.

Top right: Harold riding up onto what used to be the wet, slippery, smooth bedrock just above Snack Rock that was outsloped. Falls have happened here in the past. All I heard as Harold zoomed past was, "Oh Yeah ...".

Left: Rachael on Biskit going across the former slippery bedrock giving a big thumbs up.



Going up around the second set of switchbacks between Snack Rock and Lunch Rock. The trail throughout here is very rocky. Nothing to be done about that - this is the site of a fire that burned away all the soil. The animals handle the rocks but Harold did say he might change their shoes for future trips on the Duckabush.



Sugar (left) and Archie, framed by the Rhodies. We had stopped at Lunch Rock to widen a log for better passage.



Clockwise from above: Harold on Sugar with Archie following, going around and down the most problematic corner of the trail. This was the spot that was making packers drop all our tools and gear at 5-Mile Camp rather than going on to 7-Mile Camp or beyond.

On this day all 6 animals and 3 packers had no trouble with this corner. Packs did not bump and footing was fine.

Recall from my earlier reports that packers would not go by here because it was so narrow and had such a big drop to the river. A bumped pack and toppled off horse / mule was way too high of a probability.

No longer.





Almost directly after that curve and drop was another short rock hill that we had improved the footing on. No problems were reported here either. Matthew is on Dolly and the cutie with the long flowy bangs is Possi.



Here the crew is going around some tight S-curves and then along a rock-edged traverse up top. We had knocked the rock back for about 30 lineal feet on this traverse and it was reported that their packs did not bump the wall. You can see what a drop it would be to get bumped off here.



Millions of thanks to the GWTC and WTA volunteers who worked on all the fixes along this trail. From large logs to crib walls to chiseling out rock ... stock access has been restored to the Duckabush.

Millions more thanks to the volunteer packers who have put up with these hazards in the past and who have helped us understand what it means for a trail to be stock accessible. Without stock and their skilled human packers, it is nearly impossible to maintain the deep reaches of this and many other trails.