

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

July 11 and 19, 2026: Theresa Percy organized two trail work parties at Sage Camp to do brushing along the DNR trails that will be used for the Olympic Spirit Prize Ride on September 12th. Workers on July 11 were Anna Neal, Theresa Percy and Martin Knowles. July 19 workers were Anna Neal, Rick King, Suzanne James-King, Stephanie Burns, Theresa Percy, Jim Hollatz and Donna Hollatz. Rick and Jim used power mulchers to chop away salmon berry and salal from the edges of the trails while Stephanie, Anna, Suzanne, Theresa, and Donna did the swamping and some work with loppers. Those mulchers are amazing machines for clearing brush!

July 24, 2026: Jim and Donna rode their horses and took a pack horse with the chainsaw to remove a blocking tree that had been reported across the Bluff Trail near the Look Out. They parked inside the park along Fireweed Road and rode in about 2 miles to the thigh-high 10" fallen log. After removing that obstacle, they brushed about 100 yards of heavily overgrown salal and Jim removed a danger tree from the trail edge before it had a chance to fall and create another blockage. A few Tansy plants were also pulled on Yarrow Cut Off and Fireweed Road on the way back to the trailer.

August 2, 2026: Jim and Donna rode almost 9 miles of trail at Miller, scouting for Tansy plants, which they pulled. The blossoms were cut off and put in a plastic bag to bring back to the garbage as they will continue to mature and go to seed if left on the ground at this stage in their development. Probably a total of 25 plants were removed along Cable, Manzanita, and Yarrow Trails. (Not enough to warrant a "spray day" work party at Miller.) Jim cut and removed 3 small fallen trees with a hand saw.

August 9, 2026: Jim and Donna rode W. Diamond Point Trail, Alder Hollow Trail, Fireweed Road to Cable Trail, and back to the trailhead along Cable Trail (about 7 miles). A number of Tansy (30) plants were removed, and the blossoms bagged, along Fireweed Road. No Tansy was found along W. Diamond Point or Alder Hollow Trails.

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

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

Thursday Trail Crew

The crew finished the "burrito bridge" mentioned in earlier reports. They also were busy working around mp 10 and 11. Tread was rehabbed and drainage was addressed to keep tread dry and hicable. Lotsa worker hours put in!

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

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

7/18-7/24 backcountry crew

Wynoochee Pass / Graves Creek / Sundown Lake trails. ***See attached report.***

8/5-8/9 backcountry crew

Hoh Lake trail. ***See attached report.***

SAFETY

August brings not only the ground-nesting yellowjackets as well as hornets, mentioned in my last report, but also wildfire smoke, heat and humidity. Our crews dealt with all of the above on our last backcountry work trip.

SAW PROGRAM

While working on the Wynoochee Pass / Graves Creek crew, we took the time to train and certify or recertify one person who works with the Graywolf Crew.

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



Wynoochee Pass Trail
Graves Creek Trail (Success Creek to Sundown Lake)

July 18-24, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel

Crew members

Bernt Ericson
Matt Houghton
Paul Kamps
Martin Knowles
Sonya Langford
Barbara Maxwell
Julie Metzger
Ted Spoon
Rebecca Wanagel

Pack-out crew

David Graves
Kristie Kocurek
James Miller
Eric Nagle

Quick Stats

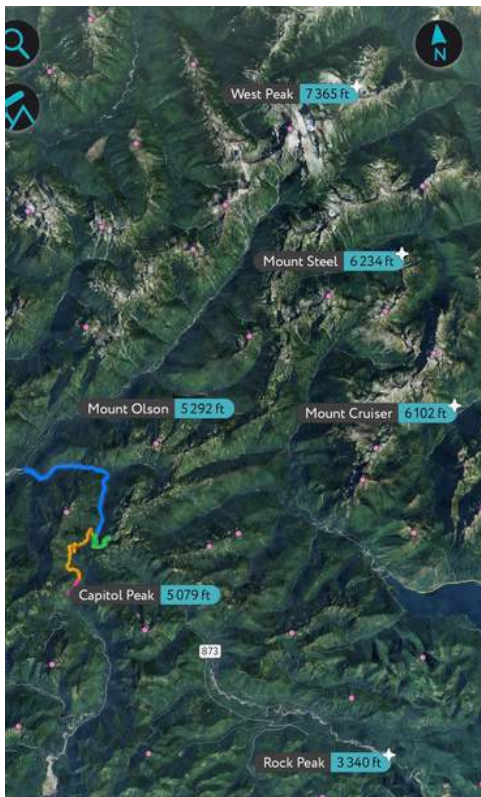
On-trail volunteer hours: 513
Hours including travel time: 569
Miles worked: 8.7
Miles hiked to achieve the work: 40
Trail rating: Hiker
Logs cleared: about 120
Brushed miles: about 6.6

Objectives:

1. Clear 8.7 miles of downed trees – some have been down longer than memory serves.
2. Brush – either with a power brusher or by hand – 6.6 miles.
3. Tread and drainage work as necessary.

Achieved: All above objectives achieved.

Welcome to Wynoochee Pass and Graves Creek Trails: where every mile counts for two.



Left: Pulled out view showing our work location compared to the upper corner of Lake Cushman (which is lower right).



Right: Closer view showing the different parts of our work zone.

Wynoochee Pass Trail,
Forest Service
Wynoochee Pass Trail,
Olympic National Park
Graves Creek Trail, ONP
Sundown Lake Trail, ONP



Rugged. Quintessential Olympics. Sublime. Neglected.

The Gray Wolf Trail Crew specializes in giving TLC to trails in the Olympic National Park that are long overdue for maintenance . These trails passed that qualifier in spades.

- > Trees that have been down so long that no-one can remember when they weren't.
- > Brush so thick and intrusive that placing your feet became an effort in hope:
 - >> hope you don't slip on the wet rocks that you can't see.
 - >> hope the trail doesn't take a steep dropoff that you can't see.
 - >> hope you don't roll your ankle on a badly outsloped trail with slippery roots that you can't see.
- > Tread pushed downhill by years of hikers avoiding the brush.
- > Drainage in some areas untended for so long that long stretches of trail became marsh.

Our view for much of the trip was a salmonberry or huckleberry bush or two or million. We couldn't see over the brush. This was us. Staying upright required a shuffling of the feet to find your next footstep.



And that was when we weren't crawling over, under or around downed trees. Admittedly, much of the time was pushing through mountain blueberry bushes. Those were yummy to graze upon as you shove your body through. The red salmonberries were good too but this author thinks nothing beats a large, ripe mountain blueberry or huckleberry.



The only place where the brush relents is in the meadow basin just before Sundown Lake or the pretty frog ponds at Wynoochee Pass.

So what to do with this mess??

Give it the Gray Wolf touch ... as always ...



This very old, down-forever yellow cedar was completely twisted. We carefully pieced it apart and kept pulling off curly slabs to toss off the trail until we got it to a low step-over. We didn't cut all the way through because the upper part would have slid down.



These trails are rated hiker only, and they are more primitive in nature than some others. So we were able to leave a few things as step-overs, and not nearly as wide as we cut corridors for stock clearance.



Handbrushing
makes a surprisingly
big difference!

Our crew
handbrushed about
1.7 miles of trail.



Power brushing gets
the job done more
thoroughly and faster,
but there are some
things that just have
to be done by hand
(thicker stems, high
off the trail, etc).

Our crew power
brushed about 4.9
miles of trail. This
requires a full time
person cleaning up
behind the brusher.



Meanwhile, the saw teams sometimes had to stop to cool off from the heat and mugginess.
Look what we found!



Carrying the heavy weight of the saw equipment is no walk in the park. Sometimes even scrambling down into or up out of rocky creeks, never mind fighting our way through the aforementioned heavy brush. We have the saw, extra bar, fuel and bar oil, axe, a saw kit with filing equipment, extra chains, etc., plus a large first aid kit, radio and extra radio batteries. That's per saw team. And we're wearing chaps or saw pants.



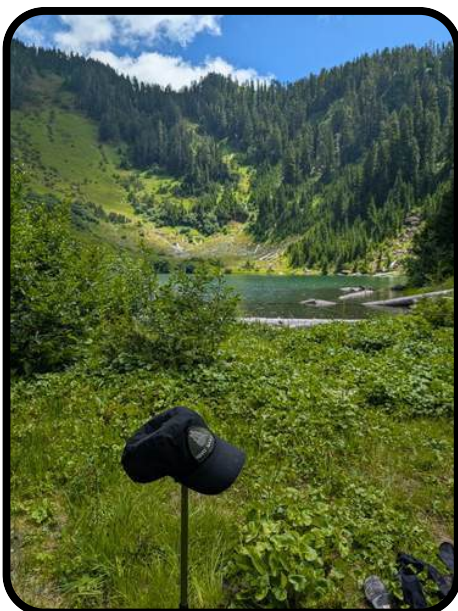
Martin keeps our chains sharp in the field, though we use all kinds of techniques and finesse to not dull them in the first place. Sometimes you just get unlucky, but Martin can usually field sharpen them unless someone hit a rock with the chain. He uses a stump vise to hold the bar in place.



Eventually we worked the tools in such a pattern that we finished by setting them down back at Wynoochee Pass. This is still 3 hard miles from the trailhead, and getting stock support on this trail is NOT an option. Yay for the pack out crew! We appreciate you!



We say goodbye to the gorgeous Sundown Lake for this year, but I have a feeling we will be back. The trail is so incredibly much better to hike there, we'll want to keep it that way!



(this picture was taken last year, there was no snow when we were there for this trip)



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

Hoh Lake Trail, ONP

August 5-9, 2026

Report by Rebecca Wanagel



Crew members

Kellie Creamer
Tim Goss
Paul Kamps
Martin Knowles
Randy Kraxberger
Barbara Maxwell
Cricket Pomeroy
Ted Spoon
Rebecca Wanagel

Packers and Animals

Rachael Taylor-Tuller
Matthew Tuller
Isadora Tuller
>Blue
>Biskit
>Woody
>Maize
>Dolly
>Possi
Harold Wiese
>Sugar
>Archie
>Belle
>Katy

Quick Stats

On-trail volunteer hours (including packer time): 496
Hours including travel time: 609
Miles worked: 5
Elevation gain from bottom to top of work: 3500 feet
Trail rating: Hiker only (but the Hoh River trail itself is, of course, in great shape for stock!)

Objectives:

1. Construct a 440-foot reroute along a 250-foot section of trail that was washed away completely by Hoh Creek
2. Clear all logs from the Hoh River trail junction to Hoh Lake (about 70 logs)
3. Brush the trail completely from junction to the ridge and then about ¼ mile along the ridge.

Achieved: All above objectives achieved.

The **Hoh Lake trail** goes from the **Hoh River trail** to the High Divide.

We worked from the junction with the Hoh River trail to Hoh Lake. No work was needed on the last 1.2 miles up to the Divide.

You can tell from the sheer number of switchbacks that this is a very steep trail. It was very slow and laborious for us to get up this trail multiple times, the first time with very heavy packs. We also had to carry and cache water since there was no water to gather unless you were down low or up high on the trail.

Our incredible volunteer packers dropped and retrieved our tools from the junction of the Hoh Lake and Hoh River trails - a distance of about 9.5 miles from the Hoh River trailhead.



The story in pictures ...

This work would not have been possible without our beloved packers getting the tools and equipment to the junction.



Olympus Guard Station



Isadora was learning how to wrangle, riding Blue and leading Biskit. She liked it but says she prefers 4-H.



What is this?

It is that. Or was anyway. Part of the trail was washed into the Hoh Creek.

The thin red line is the reroute we put in to re-establish the trail.



Once we got that done, then we moved on to clearing logs and brush from the rest of the trail.



Before

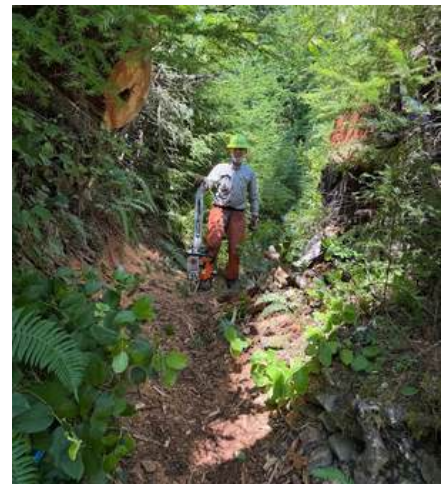
Some
brush
removed



Almost
done

This was a project we ALL wanted gone ASAP. Really hard to fight your way through, especially with a pack on.

After!





Above and below of the same tree. That rootball has been down so long it was growing its own forest. We left the rootball but made the path around it better and cleared an opening through it on the trail below the switchback.



Folks had to crawl through a creek to get past this one.



Not anymore!



Another random but typical project



We had a lovely place to camp by the Hoh River. Great company and lots of laughs despite having worked extremely hard all day.

Then our favorite project. This humongous log was towards the bottom, a half-mile up. It was notched many years ago but still awkward and difficult to get over. We decided to take it out. It was our last project (we had worked from top down) so we had fun putting both saw teams on one project.



This was a 6-foot diameter doug fir. But so old that some of it fell apart for us, making the dismantling of it very fun! The inside core was still solid though, amazingly so given how long it's been rotting.

My favorite picture!



Where are the pictures of the brushing crew's accomplishments? They are not here because they were working so unbelievably hard they had no time to stop for frivolous picture taking! They were running the power brushers and furiously going up and down the trail tossing the debris and cleaning up the trail. They were also cutting small trees from the uphill side of the trail and tackling branches that were encroaching and hitting people in the face. And sweating buckets, like we all were. It was hot and muggy.

The brushing crew also contended with ground-nesting yellowjackets. Ug.

I can tell you, though, their work made this trail a joy to hike once again. Being able to see your feet and look around you when you're hiking is priceless. And with the brush cut away on the uphill side, that will prevent the trail from moving downhill, which makes it really hard to keep your balance. Thank you, brushing crew!

