

TRAIL CREW NOTES

5/19 – 5/20/23

Location: Lower and Upper S. Fork Skokomish, ONF

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Bob Hoyle
Martin Knowles
Paul Kamps
Bernt Ericson
Jim Hollatz
Donna Hollatz
Rick King
Suzanne King

Packers:

Harold and Pat Wiese (Magic, Archie, Sugar, Belle)

Hours: 116

This was the annual regional work party for sprucing up the LeBar Horse Campground as well as the surrounding trails. WTA had done a significant amount of excellent work on the Lower Skok, but there were still some stock blocking logs to clear and bridge railings to fix. There was also clearing necessary on the upper part of the Lower Skok, as well as the first mile of the Upper S. Fork Skok. And brushing ... there is always brushing to do!

Like last year, the last logs we needed to remove on the lower part of the Lower Skok were all the way to the Church Creek ford (or nearly there). That's a long way from the highest access point, the 100 road. Thus, why we were exceedingly glad that Harold had brought the saw packing decks, even though I had told him we wouldn't be needing stock support. How wrong I was. We have carried saws and equipment for that stretch before, and do not desire to do it again. Archie took the tools, Magic had Pat and Harold rode Sugar. Belle was along for training and desensitizing. She can be a bit skittish still, but boy oh boy is she pretty.

There was a lot of work done in the campground too, but I can only speak to the trails. Except for one thing. Last year's storm brought down a big mess on that very short connector trail that goes essentially between the gazebo and the road. Martin and I had time to kill before the 8:00 Sunday breakfast so we got out there to get rid of that mess. Sandy came out to help and we discovered she's a great saw assistant!

So many thanks to the cooks led by Kim for dinner, and Bob's yummy eggs for breakfast! Those meals are for sure something to look forward to. It's amazing to come back after a long, hard day of trail work to such an incredible meal.

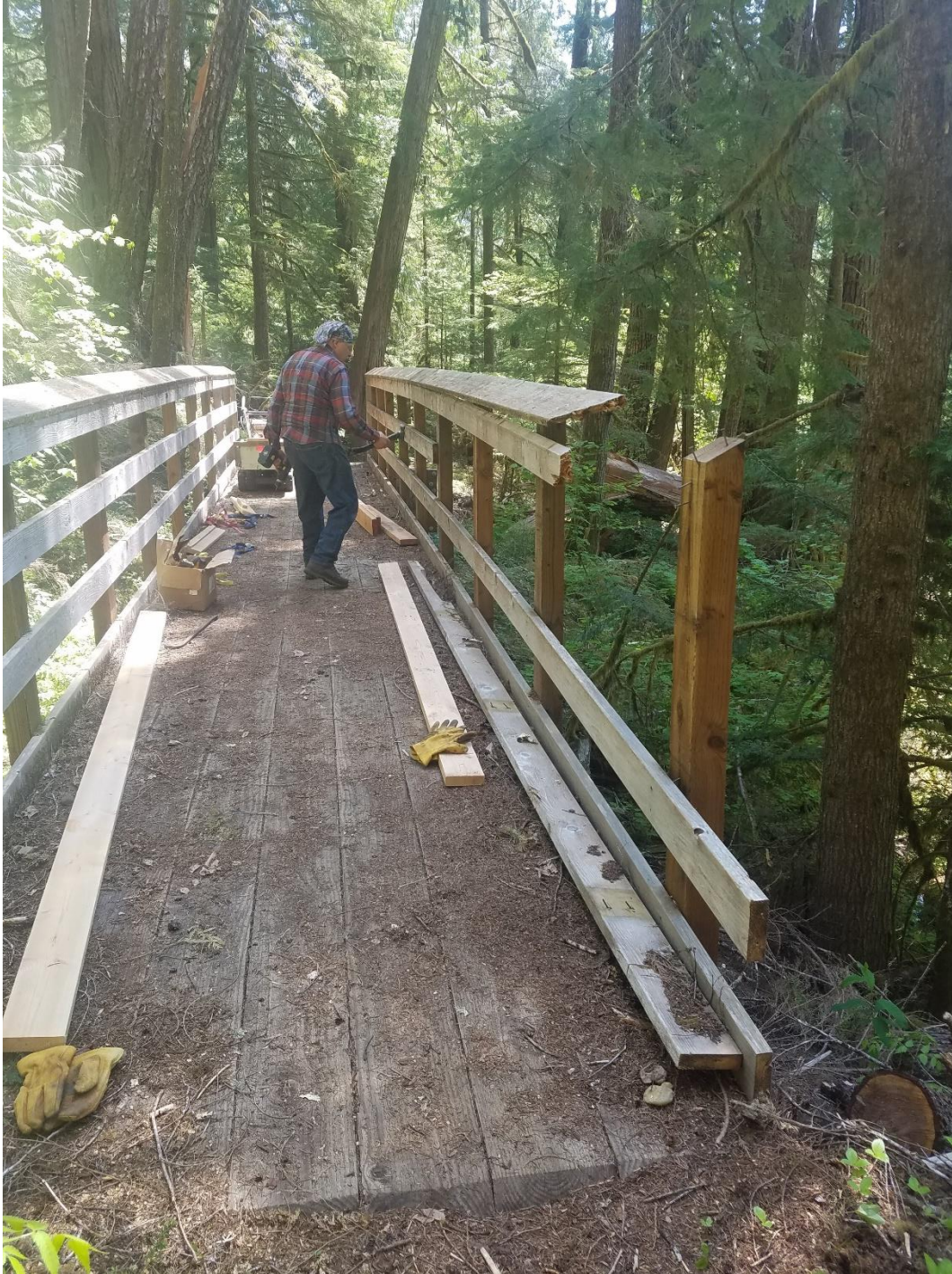
Many thanks to Bob Hoyle for the mind-blowing amount of work he put in to make this weekend happen. Including bringing his bike so he could scout the full trail on Friday – that's how we found out there were still some stock blocking trees up there.



HONESTLY, HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU KNOW WHO CAN PULL THIS OFF? WITH VERY SHORT NOTICE, JIM LOOKED AT PICTURES OF THE RAILINGS THAT WERE BROKEN IN LAST YEAR'S STORMS, FIGURED OUT THE MATERIAL AND TOOLS HE NEEDED, OBTAINED THE MATERIALS, LOADED THE TOOLS AND SUPPLIES AND THE TOTE ... MANUEVERED THAT FULLY LOADED TOTE OVER ROCKS AND ROOTS AND UP AND DOWN HILLS AND ACROSS SMALL STREAMS. OH ... AND THEN FIXED THE RAILINGS. RICK WAS HIS AMAZING ASSISTANT IN ALL THIS – EVEN PUTTING TOGETHER TEMPORARY “BRIDGES” SO THE TOTE COULD GO ACROSS STREAMS, AND THE TWO OF THEM TOGETHER WERE ABLE TO RIGHT THE LOADED TOTE AFTER IT TIPPED. MORE THAN ONCE, SO I HEAR. THE TWO OF THEM DID A FABULOUS JOB ON THE RAILINGS. SEE BELOW.



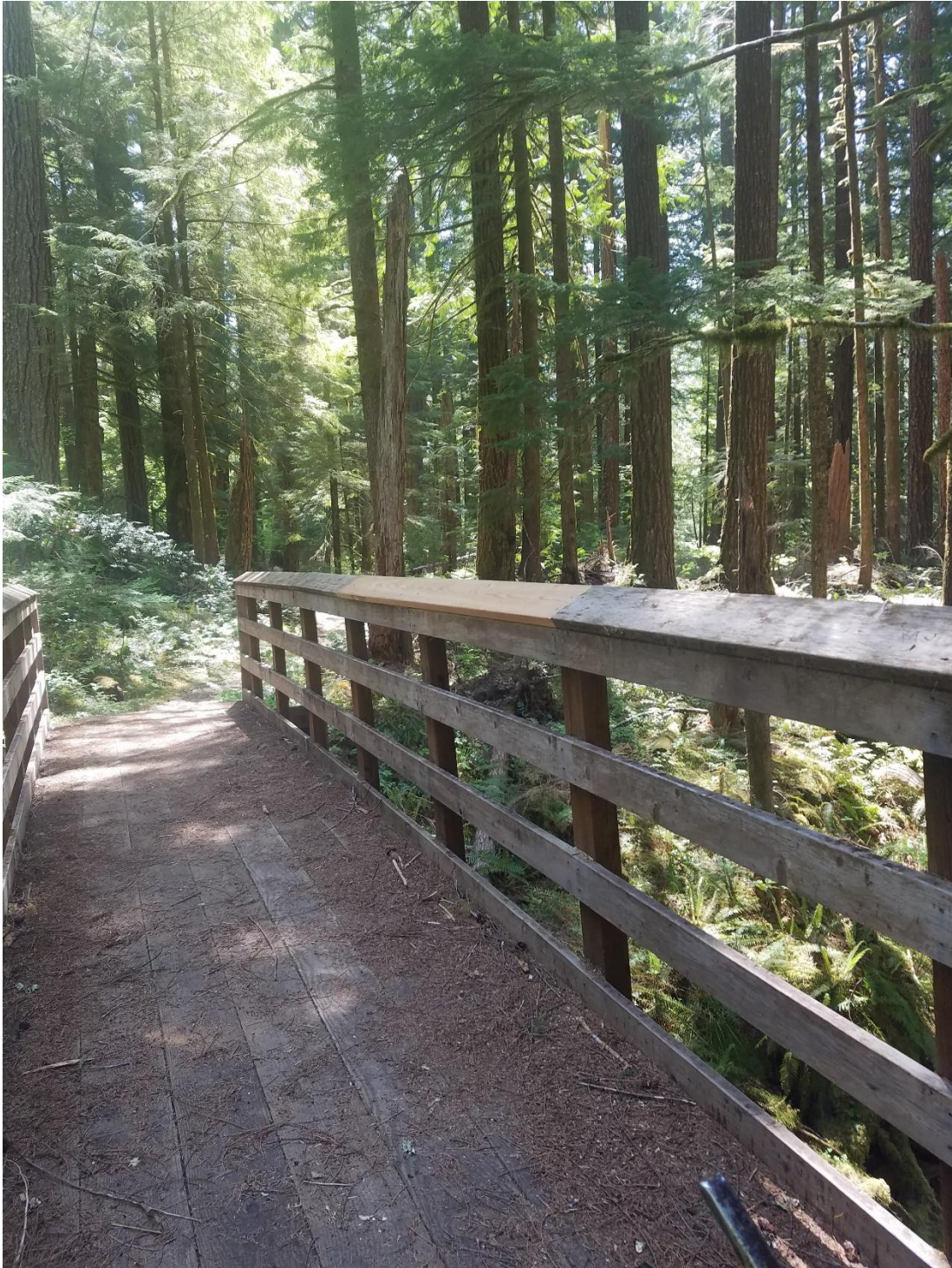
SORRY, NO PICTURES OF RICK. HE OBVIOUSLY WAS THE ONE BEHIND THE CAMERA BUT I KNOW THIS INCREDIBLE WORK IS HIS DOING TOO.



FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, LAST SEASON IN DECEMBER OF 2021, A MASSIVE SNOW AND WIND STORM HIT THE SHELTON AREA. IT BLEW DOWN AN AWE-INSPIRING NUMBER OF TREES THAT WERE IN SEVERE STRESS FROM THE JUNE '21 HEAT DOME. WE HAD MANY SAW CREWS WORKING THERE TO FREE THE SKOK TRAIL FROM THE GRASP OF MANY HUNDREDS OF DOWNED TREES. THESE BRIDGE RAILINGS WERE PART OF THE CASUALTY BUT WE COULD BARELY GET THROUGH ALL THE TREES AND MOST CERTAINLY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO FIX THE RAILINGS TOO. THAT'S WHY THEY GOT DONE THIS YEAR.



AN EXAMPLE OF SOME OF THE DAMAGE.



ALL BETTER!



BRUSHING IS A CONSTANT, NEVER-ENDING NEED ON THIS TRAIL BUT RARELY GETS TENDED. DONNA AND SUZANNE WORKED AS A BRUSHING CREW AND GOT THE FIRST ¾ MILE OF THE 140 ROAD FREE FROM ENCROACHING ALDERS AND MAPLES. REALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE LONGEVITY OF THE TRAIL.



MEET BELLE. SHE IS SUPER CUTE. SHE IS WORKING ON LEARNING TO BE CALMER AROUND PEOPLE AND ACTIVITY.



I REALLY ENJOYED FINALLY BEING OUT ON THE TRAIL WITH PAT TOO! MAGIC IS REALLY HER BABY, BUT I'VE ALWAYS ONLY SEEN HAROLD ON MAGIC. MAGIC IS SUCH A STRONG LEADER. CALM, STRONG, SMART AND EXPERIENCED. I FOUND OUT MAGIC IS 24 AND THEY'VE HAD HIM SINCE HE WAS ONLY SIX MONTHS OLD.



THIS WAS ONE SIDE OF A STOCK BLOCKING TREE WE HAD TO CLEAR.



THE OTHER END. BOUND BETWEEN TWO TREES AND SUSPENDED.



DUE TO THE HEIGHT OF THE TREES (TOO LOW FOR STOCK BUT TOO HIGH TO CUT), WE HAD TO CLEAR OUT A BUNCH OF STUFF AND CUT FROM UP ON THE HILLSIDE TO RELEASE IT. SORRY, I DON'T HAVE AN AFTER PICTURE, BUT IT IS CLEARED TO STOCK STANDARDS NOW.



BERNT AND PAUL WERE THEIR OWN TEAM, WORKING ON THE UPPER PART OF THE LOWER SKOK AND THE LOWER PART OF THE UPPER SKOK. THAT IS REALLY FUN TO SAY. THE UPPER SKOK IS THE ONE THAT HEADS UP INTO THE ONP AND TO SUNDOWN PASS, SUNDOWN LAKE AND SIX RIDGE TRAIL (WHICH CONNECTS TO THE NORTH FORK SKOK). GORGEOUS COUNTRY UP THERE.



PAUL GETTING READY TO WORK ON CLEARING THE STOCK FORD AT RULE CREEK (UPPER SKOK). THEY CLEARED THE FIRST MILE OF THE UPPER SKOK, TO WHERE THE BIG "NATURAL" FOOTLOG IS. RULE CREEK IS RIGHT BEFORE THAT AND HAS HAD ITS STOCK FORD BLOCKED FOR A LONG TIME.