

## TRAIL CREW NOTES

9/8/23

Location: Lower S. Fork Skokomish Trail, ONF

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel  
Martin Knowles  
David Graves  
Joanne Graves  
Mike Forsyth  
Bob Hoyle

Estimated Volunteer Hours: 40

(Hours do not include driving, admin, organization and prep time. Only active working time.)

Report written by Rebecca.

Objective:

1. Finish a realignment on the Lower S. Fork Skokomish that was roughed in by a WTA crew in June.

Back story: There are several places on the Lower S. Fork Skok trail that are in danger of collapsing into the river below. Some of them have been addressed, others are on the radar of the ONF staff and volunteers from various agencies. This particular spot, which is about a 10-minute walk downstream from the Church Creek ford, was a major concern for BCH. It was so undercut that it was obvious the trail's days were limited and the danger is high most especially for heavy stock animals. Bob Hoyle and Rebecca Wanagel talked (via email) to Al Mashburn, volunteer crew leader with WTA, about this location. Al ended up scheduling a multi-day crew there to rough in a realignment – known by all that this was to be temporary. It really needs to be pulled much farther back from the river. Al's group did a great job in June of cutting out brush and roughing in tread for the realignment. We promised that we would finish it because there were some things that they were not prepared to saw.

Our promise needed to be fulfilled right about now ... after backcountry season has come to a close, while the river crossing is low and before the wildlife gate is closed for the season on October 1. Thus, this was a small crew pulled together quickly and spontaneously.



The ford was low but we opted for going over this log jam in the morning – just to avoid the whole shoe changing thing.

Fun fact: this log jam is human-created for fish habitat reasons.



Part of the problem. You can see how close the trail is to the edge and it's dropping off into the river.



There was a snag over the realignment, threatening safety. That had to be felled.



Sawing the roots of the stump that were large and expansive enough to be a tripping hazard in the realignment.



We sawed out a 50" rotten snag that had fallen at the downriver end of the realignment. Easy to cut due to being so rotten, but we had to dig a lot underneath it to keep the saw chain out of the dirt. Thus all the sawdust covering the back of my vest.





Lots of smaller rounds. Even though it was rotten, it was still heavy wood.



This picture represents the ultimate in cooperation and collaboration. Yes, it's just a few volunteers working together to push a heavy piece of wood off the realignment. But that picture represents the cooperation and collaboration between volunteer agencies as well. David: Gray Wolf and WTA; Bob: BCH-Buckhorn; Mike (feet showing): Mountaineers; Martin: Gray Wolf and BCH-Peninsula, Rebecca (behind the camera): Gray Wolf and BCH-Peninsula. The more we work together, the more trails get sustained and maintained – especially the ones in the ONF where there is no paid trail crew.



Joanne and David Graves: stalward Gray Wolf crew members / leader (editor's note, I'm bummed we only have pictures of Joanne's back).



Bob Hoyle: the heart of BCH-Buckhorn's trail program.

Mike Forsyth in the background representing the Mountaineers – plus he brought donuts and coffee. 😊

Editor's note: we also had a visit the previous evening from an avid hiker, friend and Gray Wolf trail crew fan, Kay Pearson. She brought delicious homemade pumpkin bread which the crew munched on all morning. So we were well fed.



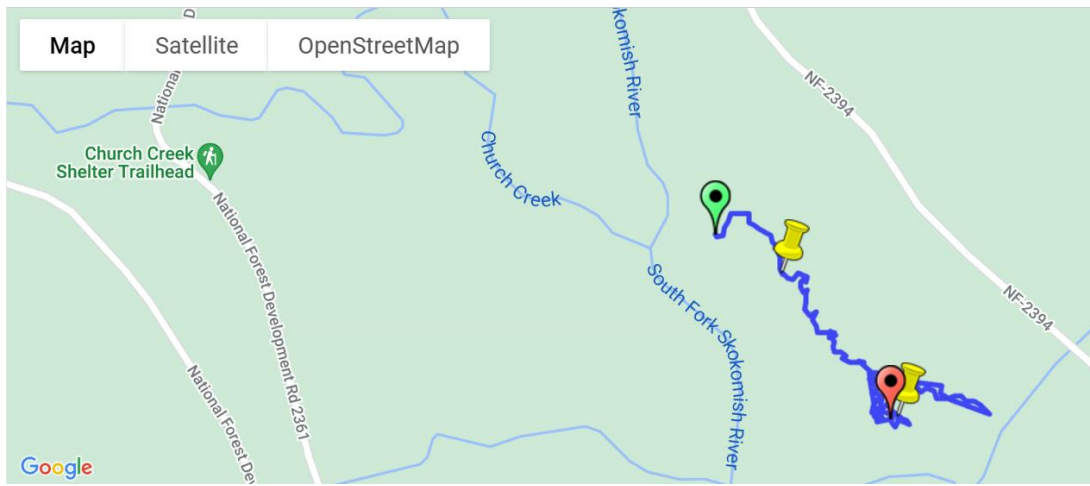
We opted for the normal ford on the way back – changing our shoes and just wearing the water shoes to the cars because it wasn't far from there (we parked above Laney Camp).



The trail used to go to the right and drop off to the river. Now the realignment bears to the left.



Nice path – perfectly safe and usable for all users for now.



Afterward, Bob stayed and did some flagging for a more permanent possible reroute. The current trail is right along the river bank's edge. The realignment is pulled back about 30ish feet for temporary safety. Bob's dark blue line (squiggly due to him looking about for the right route) is a proposed realignment pulled further back, and would be benched into the hillside. Needs approval from ONF – a scout with various volunteers and ONF staff is on the calendar.