

GRAY WOLF TRAIL CREW NOTES

12/18/23

Location: West Elwha, ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles

Estimated Volunteer Hours: 12

Report written by Rebecca.

Objective: Clear all downed logs.

The GWTC had just worked this trail a month prior, but I received a report that 5 large trees had fallen in the past week (turns out it was 8). Since I am on winter break from tutoring, I had more flexibility than usual in my schedule, so Martin and I decided to just pack up and go take care of it. Don and Bobbie Stoneman fed us a huge, yummy breakfast before we headed out on the trail. It was a fun morning of work in lovely weather. After we finished the trees, we explored an old trail that's in the process of being restored. This was the original mule route to the Olympic Hot Springs Resort; staying high rather than dropping down to Altair only to climb back up.



Top left: 3 of the 5 trees that were all in one close area. Top right: the first tree I cut stood back up. Those are always fun! Bottom left: Martin finishing off the doug fir that was next to my standing-up tree. Bottom right: starting the cut on a fir that had a rootball directly on the edge of the trail. There was a chance it could fall back slightly or fall right into the trail. Fortunately, it settled back into its hole. We always plan our cuts carefully on projects where the end result isn't entirely certain. A lot of it is feeling the saw. It will tell you if things are about to bind and whether or not you should change your cut at that point.

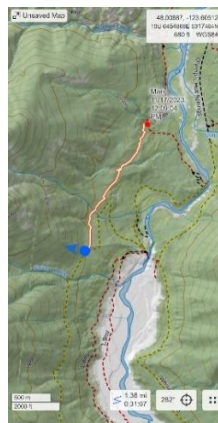


Top left: finishing off that tree that had the settling rootball. This took a lot of bark cleaning and scraping, because the rootball had dumped dirt onto the bark which would dull a chainsaw chain instantly.

Top right: this fir had some of the most severe bottom bind either one of us had ever seen. It looks relatively innocent, but the reality was that the ripped-off roots you're seeing here were not resting on the ground. The tree was resting on a pivot point just at the right edge of the picture, with the whole rest of the tree suspended from there. So, in other words, all of the weight of this heavy tree was resting on one midpoint. We planned the cut carefully to avoid the inevitable barber chair that could happen with this kind of bottom bind (that's where the heavy round falls away from the tree but the bark and some wood is still attached – which makes for an unpredictable fall for the round and could be dangerous). We also built into the plan the fact that there would be some rotation, as the root end had something under it that would make it tip and roll a bit.

Bottom left: Martin executed our planned cut perfectly.

Bottom right: I finished off the last two cuts on the bottom bind tree, Martin happened to catch one right in action. Great shot!



My track from exploring the restored trail. Still a work in progress, but someone has put a lot of time into it.