

TRAIL CREW NOTES

3/25/2023

Start time: 9:30 am

End time: 6:00 pm

(8.5 hours)

Location: Dosewallips Trail, ONF and ONP

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel

Martin Knowles

Harold Wiese

Mario Porras

Tawnya Caldwell

On Saturday Martin and Rebecca (sawyers) and, Harold, Tawnya, and Mario (packers) went up the Dosewallips. Martin and Rebecca were on foot. Harold, Tawnya and Mario were on carrot-fed 4-hoofed volunteers. The weather was lovely, chilly but clear and the river valley was beautifully lined with snow-capped peaks.

Our goal was to clear completely to the ranger station. That goal would absolutely have been met were it not for the snow mound over the rock pile in the ONP, right before the steep road climb by the waterfall. This was approximately 7/10 mile before the ranger station and is totally fine for hikers but absolutely unsafe for stock. There were several postholes that were knee deep on a person - stock could easily have broken a leg. Martin and I could have grabbed a saw and some gear and done the last 7/10 mile carrying the equipment, since we are used to that. However, we were unwilling to leave packers and animals behind waiting in the 30-40 degree temps. There was always the chance there would be nothing to clear, as well there was the chance there would be something huge and time consuming. The work until there, except for one tree, was light.

Most of the cleared items were in the Forest Service. In all we cleared about 10 items on the ONF and about 6 items in the ONP, most small, a few of them leaners over the trail making stock riders have to duck. The large one that was a complete stock blocker, pictured, was 30" and took a fair bit of work to do it safely. There was a risk of sliding with this tree as it was completely detached from its base on a steep hillside. It was on the bypass, crossing the trail twice at the east switchback. The piece that is left on the uphill side will not slide, as the base of the detached tree is heavy enough to make it pivot (rise) slightly when we cut it (the base is hovering over a hole and the tree is hard on the ground before that, thus the pivot). So that should not end up in the trail at a later date. There is plenty of room for loaded stock now, as Harold and Mario easily rode their animals through there with our equipment.

Tawnya played the critical role of trail guard, as we had no choice but to send some rounds down the hill. She made sure there was no way any animals or people would be below us. No rounds did land on the trail, but there is no way to guarantee that so we played it exceptionally safe.

Due to the earlier-than-expected turnaround, it was a 12-mile day.

Turnaround and parking, as always, is terrible at that "trailhead." The ONF really, really, really, really needs to do something about this issue once and for all. It's unacceptable. We rely on stock to clear this trail, and packers need to be able to turn around and park. We got there early so we didn't have an issue, but the norm at that trailhead is completely packed with cars in the small lot and along the roadsides. Please encourage the ONF to deal with this issue and make a proper trailhead parking area complete with parking and turnaround for trucks and stock trailers.

This is an example of collaboration at its best. The new packer collaboration group is bringing together remarkably talented and dedicated people – and forging new friendships! We had a really fun day.

Of course Tawnya isn't in a single picture because she was the only one taking pictures. 😞 Her hat was adorable, I regret not pulling out my camera.



Harold with Magic, Archie (with the saws) and Katy (I hope I spelled her name correctly).



Our problem tree.



Detached base, steep hillside.



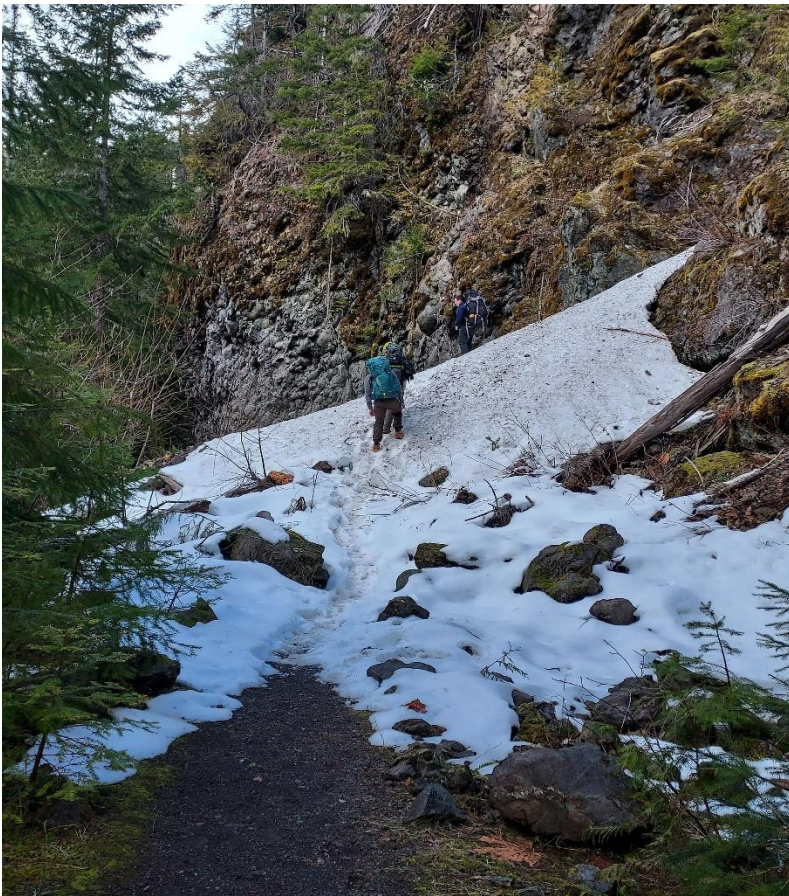
Martin and Rebecca took turns cutting. Before you become concerned ... those are chainsaw pants from Clogger which meet ANSI standards as well as chaps, but are far more comfortable for the long distance hiking we do with our saws.



We left it like this and went up trail. But it was bugging me (Rebecca) because I felt like this last piece was going to slide and block stock again. So we dealt with it on the way back. We used leg power of 4 people to push it off the hill and down to the trail where we cut it again.



Finished product. Completely passable for loaded stock.



The snow mound (shown with hikers going over it) was unsafe for animals. We had to turn around here, about 7/10 mile before the ranger station.



Mario, Reggie and Lucas. New friends! 😊