

# 2023 Haney Meadows Regional Work Party

By Barb Thomas, Back Country Horsemen of Washington



The Table Mountain Fire in 2012 swept through 65 square miles of forest in the area we know as Haney Meadows or the Ken Wilcox Horse Camp. While the fire spared most of the campground, the trees around the camp were compromised and acres of dead trees lining most of the trails have resulted in years of downed timber and damage.

In 2022, Ed Letcher, at the suggestion of Ken Evans, started plans for a regional work party for 2023. A regional work party for BCHW calls on volunteers across the state to join together for a multi-day camping and work party. The call went out for sawyers, swampers, packers, loppers, cooks and anyone else who would assist in the clearing of trails and the repair of the campgrounds. Approximately 50 volunteers from around the state answered this call and in five days did an amazing amount of work.

Ed's goal for this work party was to log out the most popular loop trails out of camp, clean up the campsites, and repair the fencing around the meadows. The work started a day or two before the official work party, as those volunteers arriving on Wednesday or Thursday found campsites clogged with downed trees and debris. So, out came the chainsaws and the excavator to start the camp

cleanup just so volunteers could find a place to park their rigs.

The official start of the work party was Friday, June 30th. Ed broke the trail crew into teams, each taking a part of the trail system to clear. That first day most volunteers were on foot because the downed trees were right out of camp. In all there were 16 certified sawyers working on the trails at any given time. About six members were certified or re-certified at this work party, thanks to Tony Karniss. Behind the sawyers were the swampers and loppers who cleaned up the trails so that the sawyers could go on to the next tree across the trail. In all, around 15 miles of trails were logged out and cleared.

After feeding the volunteers breakfast and packing their lunches, the kitchen crew, led by Ranae Stevens, planned and prepped the dinner that would be fed to the hungry volunteers. Other camp volunteers replaced or repaired about 400 feet of the fencing around the meadow, repaired or replaced three hitch rails in campsites, kept stock water tanks around camp full, cleaned out manure bins, repaired the solar powered stock water trough, and improved all of the campsites.

With all of the work done by so many volunteers, there are still trails

in this system that were not logged out. There is still work to do and efforts that need to be made to keep the trails and the camp preserved for future users.

Some say it takes a village; we say it takes volunteers of all skill sets who have the heart and give their time to join together for the good of others. On that note we would like to thank the BCH of Washington Tahoma Chapter for the funds to feed volunteers for five days, the USFS for their cooperation and help including all hardware, front load tractor, dump trailer, and the excavator that made our job so much easier. We also thank the cooks who got the coffee started at 6 a.m. and fed the volunteers breakfast, lunch and dinner.

In summary, this project took 2,245 hours that equaled \$94,490.59 in labor value.

This work could not have been done without BCHW chapters supporting our mission statement of keeping our trails open for all users. We would like to recognize the following chapters whose members joined us:

EVC 8 Vol, MSH 5 Vol, TAH 6 Vol, TDC 8 Vol, LCC 2 Vol, WEN 4 Vol, OLY 2 Vol, CCR 3 Vol, GHC 2 Vol, OKA 1 Vol, WVC 5 Vol, IND 2 Vol