

GRAY WOLF TRAIL CREW NOTES

11/03/23

Location: Lower Dungeness, ONF

Crew members:

Rebecca Wanagel
Martin Knowles
Jim Johannes
Mike Bonomo
David Graves
Bill Mueller
LaVonne Mueller
Mike Forsyth
Eric Nagle
Randy Kraxberger
Vern Bessey
Weston Scott
Jonathan "Texas" Hamlin
Bernt Ericson
Patrick Sullivan

Estimated Volunteer Hours: 101

Report written by Rebecca.

Objective – repair a puncheon that had failed due to 3 sills losing their supporting dirt.

1. Jack up and put in supports for the 3 sills.
2. Address drainage to control the water that caused the problem in the first place.
3. Build a rock wall to buttress one end of the puncheon.

Despite concerns that recent rains would cause snow going across the exposed 3:00 Ridge, there was none. Despite my warnings about the horrible condition of the road, riddled with deep potholes and extremely slow-going, it had been recently graded. Despite the forecast, the weather was perfect.

There is a puncheon, about 50 feet long and one mile from the upper trailhead, that was installed by WTA approximately 7 or 8 years ago. It spans an area that is pure swampy muck. The puncheon itself is still in fine condition, the wood solid with no rot in sight. What happened was the perpetually wet hillside above had seeped and run so badly that it slumped away the dirt that was supporting 3 of the 5 sills.

This large crew descended upon this site like a busy army of ants, bent on a mission. While still back up at the parking lot, we had formed teams: drainage, rock wall and puncheon repair crews. It bears mentioning that in this one crew we had folks who are active with the Gray Wolf Crew, Mountaineers, WTA, PNTA, EMBA and BCH all working together on one project. Teamwork is how we get it done.

Here is our day.



You can see here that 3 of the sills were on dirt on their uphill side, but floating in the air on the downhill (river) side. Martin, Jim and Rebecca went in a few weeks ago to do a survey of it and come up with a plan for a repair. Mike had analyzed it even before that. So a lot of thought went into this project.





Shoveling in the muck; sawing old planks; clearing out the uphill ditch; using jacks to push up the puncheon and hold it in place – there were a lot of different jobs happening all at once.



Rocks had to be collected. Off-site drainage work needed to be done.



The job came with a view.



Meanwhile, a team of us were dealing with the drainage on the hillside above the puncheon. So that makes three focuses on drainage: the ditch alongside the puncheon, the drain from the rootball above the puncheon to and underneath the structure, and our job which was to catch the mother lode of the problem and get it to drip into the hillside to the side of the site. We had to explore around for a while in the beginning, trying to find the source of the problem (besides the obvious fact that we live in the Pacific Northwest). Then we had to dig a long ditch, under large roots, through the muck, channeling the water to where it will get absorbed by the hillside and won't damage the puncheon or the trail. At several points we each had our feet buried in mud so deep it took strength to extract ourselves.



After the puncheon repair was done, then the rock wall could be built on the downstream end to buttress up the northernmost sill. Meanwhile, we were also scraping the puncheon clean. If we get the organic material off, it increases the lifespan of the wood as well as reducing the slick footing problems.

- Drainage on the hillside, check!
- Drainage next to the puncheon, check!
- Puncheon shored up and resupported, check!
- Rock support wall built, check!
- Puncheon scraped and cleaned, check!
- Fun had by all in a gorgeous place with amazing weather, check!
- (muddy tools, boots and clothes cleaned off afterward with washing machines and hoses, check!)

Another job amazingly well-done.