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FROM: C. Mansfield, CJ 59-69

SUBJECT: Trail Maintenance of Siskiyou Trail #1124 Final Report

Overview:

A team of Smoke Jumpers from Siskiyou Smokejumper Base worked on FS Trail 1124 (Mt. Billingslea / Lucky Cr. Trail) on June 24, 2002 to June 30, 2002. The prime objective of this effort was restoring the trail to the point where it could be used by packstock and hikers. Secondary objectives included 1) Defining an new water source, 2) removal of brush along the trail and 3) if time permitted, restoration of the tread. The prime objective was met in that over 120 deadfall ranging from 4" diameter to over 2 ½" diameter were removed making the trail open for packstock from the trail head to Lucky Cr. Flat. In addition, two sections of trail were sidestepped to avoid heavily eroded and deadfall areas, a new trail was opened to a series of water holes from the first saddle west of the trailhead and some brush and material that impeded both packstock and hikers was removed. In addition many obstacles were removed along the trail from the "Frog Pond" to the Granite Spring side trail. This effort was completed with a great deal of camaraderie and no accidents (other than a few blisters).

Background:

Trail 1124 probably originated as a mining access trail in the late 1800's. This trail gave access to Hayward Butte and the mid section of Tin Cup Creek. The trail also formed part of the fireline during the Silver Complex fire of 1985. Since the Silver fire there had been some brush removal but no removal of the deadfall that had accumulated primarily as the result of the fire. A water source and reasonably good camping area is located near the trail head. This water source is marked by a carved sign nailed to a tree with cut nails. This water source consists of a few pools inside the fire line. Deadfall within the fire area prevents access by packstock and makes it difficult for hikers to get to the sources. Water is also available about ¾ mile west of the trailhead with two sources near the first saddle. The source on the east side of the trail is small and is difficult for packstock use. It is adequate for hikers but somewhat difficult to reach. The source on the west side of the trail has remnants of an old trail leading to it. This source is flowing at around 20 - 30 gal per minute and forms pools that are adequate for packstock.

Lucky Cr. Flat is a good camping spot and it has two branches of the creek on the north and south sides. For many years the trail has not been maintained beyond the flat which continues over Mt. Billingslea to Hayward peak and beyond.

Trail Action:

The team met at the Illinois Valley R.S. on June 24 shortly before lunch to confirm that no changes had taken place in the plan agreed to by R. Casteran and C. Mansfield. After lunch the team loaded three vehicles and proceeded to the "Frog Pond" on the east side of Pearsoll Pk. Only two of the three vehicles were able to make the climb from the Illinois river to Chetco Pass. A light pickup truck did not have enough traction to make the climb and was parked at a wide spot. Camp was setup and the team awaited the return of the packers from a work site on Heather Mt. Some discussion of the trail conditions was carried out with the packers on the evening of the 24th. A map showing the areas of the trail worked by the team on each day of the effort is included with this memo.

25 June

After a second discussion with the packers concerning the trail conditions in which it was pointed out that there were some obstructions in the trail between the "Frog Pond" and the beginning of the Lucky Creek trail. The team decided to carry some tools and work on the main trail on our way to the initial campsite. The team met the packers on their outbound trip midway up the trail to the saddle on the north side of Pearsoll Pk. The packers felt that we were making significant improvements in the trail so we continued. We again met the packers on their return trip about halfway between Pearsoll and Granite Spring. From this point on to the trail head there were few obstructions. We picked up our pace and arrived at our campsite at around 1:30 p.m. After setting up camp and eating lunch the team proceeded down the trail to get a grasp of the work that lay ahead and to scout out the water source about 3/4 mile west of the trail head. The consensus of the team was that this water source should be improved for the use of packstock. The team then returned to camp for dinner.

26 June

The team began at the campsite at around 0730 with the prime concern being removal of deadfall from the trail and materials that would hang up on packers and hikers. Some brush along the trail was removed to improve trail definition but in general brush clearance was left as a low priority. By late afternoon all of the logs had been cut and rolled out of the way and smaller deadfall thrown aside to a point within a couple of hundred yards from the Granite Mt. saddle. As we had done the day before, we removed small debris and rock from the tread surface (with the exception of areas where that would have lowered the trail below sea level.) The team returned to camp at around 1830 leaving the tools at the work site.

27 June

The team returned to Granite Mt. and continued the clearance of the trail. The section from the Granite Mt. saddle to Lucky Cr. Flat had the highest percentage of large deadfall of the entire trail. Between 10 and 20 more snags had fallen since I counted them two years ago. At a point about 1/4 mi below the saddle there was an area that had been eroding heavily and was covered with a jackstraw of deadfall. The team concurred with my assessment that it was necessary to build a bypass around this area on the east side of the old trail. As before, the bypass was brushed and cleared but definition of the tread location was left to the discretion of the packers. The days effort left the trail within about 300 yards of the crossing at Lucky Cr. Flat at 1700 hrs. We left the crosscut saw and Pulaski at that location for a return on the second day following. We arrived at camp between 2030 and 2100 hrs. Our clearing efforts paid off in being able to walk the trail in near darkness.

28 June

At 0730 the team left camp for the new trail area 1/2 mile west of the trail head. At this point erosion had cut a narrow channel into large rocks, brush had heavily covered the trail and deadfall had covered both erosion and brush. We cleared around 200 yards of new trail on the east side of the old trail and marked the path in a 10 ft wide swath bounded by debris and marked with blazes at several points that define the new section of trail. We felt that within our boundaries the packers could further define the tread location with the packstock.

The team then concentrated on the trail from the saddle to the water source. As with the bypass trail there was not enough time or enough people to construct a new tread but a wide swath was marked with debris and blazes to the edge of a pool that can be accessed by at least one horse at a time. Other pools upstream from the stock watering pool are available for human use. I estimate that between 20 and 30 gal per minute were flowing at the surface and that a much greater flow of water may be available below the surface. The forest above this draw was not significantly affected by the Silver fire. There is a better water flow than at Granite spring and it is possible to keep livestock downstream from the human water source. The area in the first saddle has the potential of being developed into a permanent camping area. A photo showing one of the pools is included with this memo.

The team returned to camp and worked on the trail between the camping area and the trailhead. The day of comparatively light work allowed the team to rest up for the next day.

29 June

Over night there was a rainfall that continued for most of the next day. By our estimate there was around 1/4 in of rain total. The original plan had been to return early to the work site at Lucky Cr. Flat, complete the deadfall removal at around noon and then take a day hike to the top of Mt. Billingslea. It took until around 0900 to slosh around camp and get started. In the last 100 yards of the creek crossing there was a mess of overlapping logs stacked 3 deep in places. We were able to open the trail to a clear area that will serve as a tie up point for animals. Packers may have to carry water from the creek to the animals. We did not feel that there was a good point to lead animals to the creek. It was late afternoon when we returned to camp and built a campfire suitable for drying boots and clothing. Since our major objective had been met - opening the trail for packstock to Lucky Creek and since a couple of members of the team were running out of food, we decided to break camp and return to the trucks a day earlier than was planned.

Operation Details:

As is to be expected in developing any operational plan and carrying out that plan there are both strengths and weakness. From the standpoint of the Smoke Jumper team this operation went very smoothly.

Packers

Both of the packers arrived at the Frog Pond at the expected time. They both operated in a competent manner and were able to give good advice on how they would like to see the job done. David Atwood came as a surprise as he was a Smoke Jumper from the Redding Base. David is known to the NSA trail organization.

Tools

The tools that we ordered were in good condition and the cross - cut saw was well set and sharpened for the wood we had to cut. We had enough tools for the various jobs that we had to do. The axe blades on the Pulaski's was not sharpened; however, one member of the team brought his own axe and the problem was solved. We could have sharpened the Pulaski's with the files that were provided if it had been necessary.

Communications

The radio functioned well when we could get into a position where we could be received. The one position where we were fairly sure of communication was at the east end of the ridge leading from Granite Mt. One of the weak points was that we were not certain of what identification to use so we relied on the old call sign "Jumper Portable". A short training session on the operation of the radio would have been helpful

First Aid

The 10 man first aid was more than adequate with the exception of having a small bottle of Boric acid eyewash. This acts as a mild antiseptic in the case small debris gets in an eye. We did not have to use any of the kit but from my experience it would have served well had we had a major wound from an axe.

Personal Equipment

All of the team members provided their own food, shelter and sleeping bags. However, a couple of the team members ignored my advice on rain gear. They improvised with garbage bags and now believe my recommendations.

Work to be Done:

Future work on the Mt. Billingslea trail (#1124) depends on the overall plan for the Kalmiopsis Wilderness area. Trail #1124 has several attractive features. First, water and potential camping sites are available along the trail. Second, rare plant species are the namesake of the Kalmiopsis. Third, the transition of geologic features from Peridotite (Pearsoll Pk.) to granitic intrusive (Gold Basin - Granite Mt.) to sandstone and siltstone (Mt. Billingslea) is apparent from the shift in soils and in the case of Mt. Billingslea, granitic intrusions into sandstones and siltstones.

The trail work accomplished by the Smoke Jumper team was not completed due to the lack of time and/or manpower. The trail from Lucky Cr. Flat to Mt. Billingslea has not been maintained since the fire with the exception of enough brush removal to be able to get through by Dave Mansfield and myself the previous summer. There is not much deadfall on this segment of the trail with the exception of portions of the slopes of Mt. Billingslea. While the brush and debris along the entire trail has been cleared so that packstrings and hikers can get through, the brush continues to encroach and hide the trail in many places. The tread is well defined in most places although it is only 6 to 8 inches wide in many places. In other areas, erosion has nearly removed the tread. The new sections of trail build by the Smokejumper team have been defined; however, no tread was constructed in those areas. I would estimate that 5 to 6 man weeks of work remains to be done.

Times, Distances and other Observations:

For future reference, the following travel times can generally be followed for persons in good condition with medium packs.

Trailhead to First Saddle	1 hr
Trailhead to Lucky Creek Flat	2 ½ hr
Lucky Creek Flat to Trailhead	3 hr

Water sources

Granite Spring	Good water but easily contaminated and low flow
Trailhead	Way trail heavily overgrown with brush and debris Good water but difficult to reach may have to travel some distance in dry conditions and major deadfall to negotiate.
First Saddle	
West Spring/Creek	Good water with 20 - 30 gal. per min. this year. Runs on surface in some places and underground in others. Several large pools in area. Was inside fire lines but no fire burned above area in drainage during Silver fire.
East Spring	Seep and moist ground for 100 feet and then running spring on steep hillside. Was used during Silver Fire.
Lucky Creek Flat	Two creeks at north and south side of flat. North Creek has been found to flow at a few gal per min in September of dry years. South creek generally has higher flow and upper drainage not too accessible as a result the south creek has the least chance of contamination.

Critters

Grey Squirrels	First time in area in past 5 years
Chipmunks/GM Sqr	Good population for first time
Bears	None seen
Cougar	Tracks in vicinity of Frog pond, first time noted
Lungless Salamander	In rotted material near Lucky Cr. Flat

Insects
Birds

Normal Siskiyou distribution for first time.
Hawks, Grouse, Robin, Nuthatch, Sparrow etc.

Team Members:

The team members were:

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