

Update July 1, 2018 from Rick Trujillo

Hello Everyone

It has been a very not so normal past several weeks since I sent out my most recent trail work information email on June 5. Five days after this "normal" message I sent out two more information emails on the same day (June 10), the first informing on the serious 416 Fire with resultant uncertainty of the 2018 HRH and advising those who needed confirmation of trail work in order to cement expensive travel arrangements, that they cancel for 2018. The second of these same-day emails announced the seeming cancellation of the scheduled 2018 trail work. As events have transpired, it turned out that I "jumped the gun" regarding the cancellation of trail work in that the 2018 Hardrock Hundred received the GO approval this past Monday evening (June 25).

This means that we will in fact be conducting trail work after all, as scheduled on Saturday July 14 and Sunday, July 15. The drought is still very much in effect, however, which means that there will be restrictions on just what kind of work we can do. The word is that there will be no tread work (digging) or chain saws allowed. This means that our work will be restricted to trimming back willows in some very necessary areas, and removing downed trees via pocket saws (and/or axes?).

Now to the trail work. First of all, there will be no work by us this year on the Bear Creek Ouray trail. The reason being is that the work we normally do has already been done by Ouray Trail Works-associated workers. This trail has become very popular and is now traversed by numerous hikers beginning in late May. Because the "Washout" at trail mile 2.8 was in its normal dilapidated and hazardous state, and given the many daily hikers, it could not wait for Hardrock-associated work. Therefore, I and three others dug it out, as well as some other short sectors, on June 14th.

On Saturday, July 14, all work will focus on the Cataract trail from Sherman to somewhere above tree line short of Cataract Lake. The work performed will be the cutting out of dead fall trees with pocket saws and axes at eight locations on the trail (mostly single trees but as many as three at each site) from near the trail head to near the beaver ponds at trail mile 2.85; and, the trimming back of willows beginning at the said beaver ponds. Because we have been asked not to use chain saws we will employ so-called "pocket saws", a type of which I am not familiar with but which I understand are best worked by two people and which can cut at least small diameter trees in short order. At least one volunteer has offered to bring an axe and I encourage him to do so. Active beaver dams have flooded the normal

stream crossing at ~11,600 ft. elevation and a new pathway will have to be cut through a very thick willow thicket to allow crossing directly over the upper dam. Above this there is no shortage of willows in short clumps that could be trimmed back along the trail for the next 1.5 miles. Megan Finnesy has arranged for tools (pocket saws, two-arm pruners/loppers) to be supplied by Trail Works 2000 out of Durango. If you have pruners/loppers please bring them.

For us a major logistical challenge will be simply getting to the trail head. The distance from Silverton to Sherman via Cinnamon Pass is only 26 miles, but because of the rough nature of the road it will take about two hours to drive. For this July 14 trail work, we will meet at the Silverton school gym at 6:00 am (earlier than normal, but it is a long drive) to organize and hopefully be on the road by 6:30 am or earlier. How many of we volunteers will actually show up is impossible to say until that morning, but I ask those with 4x4 vehicles to please be there with full fuel tanks and we will organize car pools accordingly for transport. It might be easier for some of you to go directly to Sherman via Lake City (if, say, you are coming from the Front Range or similar areas NE of Silverton). If you take this option, you can expect the rest of us to arrive from Silverton sometime around 8:30 am. We will then regroup and break into dead fall- and willow trimming-groups. Because of the long traverse times, we will work until about 4:00 pm before beginning the return. Please pack extra food for this day as we will not be back to Silverton until around 6:30 pm. This will be a long day.

Of course it is expected that all volunteers will come ready for the work to be done, meaning that in addition to bringing adequate food and water, they wear suitable cloths (long pants?), shoes (boots?), hat, work gloves, maybe a map of the area (Redcloud Peak and Pole Creek 7.5 USGS topo quads); and depending, maybe sunscreen and/or rain gear (?, this mention can be considered the Hardrock version of a rain dance). Most of all, bring enthusiasm!

Trail work on Sunday, July 15, is presently still undetermined, waiting for word as to whether work will be allowed on the Rico-Silverton Trail, (Silverton Ultra Marathon Course). Hardrock trail system work will be either on the upper Pole Creek (accessed via Maggie Gulch aid station) and/or upper Bear Creek Silverton trails. At both of these areas the work will consist of willow trimming. Bear Creek Silverton has downed trees at three locations (easily stepped over). If work is allowed on the Rico-Silverton Trail we will break into two separate groups for the day. I will provide more information about this day's work in a future email, probably on July 9.

As mentioned above, the severe drought is still very much in effect and the [416 Fire](#) continues to burn. It produced thick irritating smoke here in Ouray on June 28, and depending on vagaries of the wind, can be expected to do so anytime, anywhere, on the Hardrock course until it either burns out or is finally extinguished.

Below are pdf files which show the meeting locations in Silverton and at Sherman (~15 miles SW of Lake City), as well as some photos of the willows at the Cataract Creek beaver dams.

Rick
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Trujillo

