

Update July 10, 2018 from Rick Trujillo

Hello Everyone

In keeping with the very not so normal situation of the past few weeks there has been an eleventh hour complication regarding the planned Hardrock trail work described in my July 1 information email. There is an old saying: "Be careful of what you wish for because you might get it." Well, this pertains very much to the 2018 Hardrock trail work. After weeks with no trace of precipitation we finally began to get some rain here in Ouray last Thursday (July 5). The four days of July 5-8 brought brief but intense rain in the mid- afternoon. Two days ago (July 8) after nary a cloud in the sky all morning a storm moved in suddenly which after a pleasant shower start turned into a deluge from ~4:25-4:45 pm. The rain was so torrential that the streets of Ouray underwent minor flooding before the storm died as fast as it rose.

Most important to us, the Ouray Bear Creek trail was hit by this same storm. I made a reconnaissance of Bear Creek yesterday morning and found considerable damage from about 0.3 to 2.7 miles up from the trail head. The damage consists of deep scouring with deposited levee debris at four places on the switchbacks, minor scouring at several other places, and numerous short sectors with slope wash that variably covers the trail throughout the said length. The trail was hazardous in places but not impossible to travel, but needs to be repaired before the HRH scheduled for July 19. I feel that with enough people and tools the Hardrock trail work volunteers can make the necessary repairs in a single day. I have attached some photos I took on the trail that give an idea of the damage done and the work necessary.

Therefore, contrary to what I announced in my July 1 information email, there will in fact be Hardrock volunteer trail work on the Ouray Bear Creek trail this year, on Sunday July 15.

I have been in contact by phone with Megan Finnesy about trail work logistics for the scheduled trail work days of July 14 and 15. We agree on a scenario as follows: On Saturday, July 14, we will meet at the Silverton school gym early, at 6:00 am. On this day the main focus will be the Cataract Gulch trail above Sherman. Depending on the number of volunteers present, we will either organize a car pool for everyone to travel to Sherman for willow trimming on the Cataract gulch trail; or if enough volunteers are present we will break into two groups, one going to Sherman and the other going to Megan's Rico-Silverton trail. Trail bosses will be assigned for specific work groups for Cataract Gulch and possibly also for the Rico-Silverton trail. On this morning I will also ask for at least 25 volunteers to commit to working on the Ouray Bear Creek trail the next morning (July 15).

I ask those volunteers who have 4x4 vehicles suitable for traveling over Cinnamon pass (12,800 ft. elev.), and are willing to do so, to please be at the 6:00 am gathering so we can organize car pools. For those who find it more convenient to travel directly to Sherman on this morning (July 14), expect the Silverton car pools to arrive around 8:30 am.

I note here that we were informed a few days ago by the Forest Service that the eight trees mentioned in my July 1 information email have all been removed. Latest word (yesterday) is that there is a single downed tree some two miles up the trail, so we will probably carry at least two pocket saws to remove it and maybe others that might have fallen since this current field report. Willow trimming is the main focus for this day (July 14) and will be done from the beaver dams at trail mile 2.85 to about trail mile 4.0. Return to Silverton from Sherman will begin in mid-afternoon probably around 4:00 pm, meaning arrival back in Silverton at about 6:00 pm. This will be a long day.

On Sunday, July 15, the committed Ouray side workers will meet at the Bear Creek trail head at the tunnel above Ouray at 7:00 am, and organize into five groups of five workers. We will begin moving up the trail as a whole but individual groups will begin their work at specific places along the trail, from trail mile 0.3 to 2.7. Also, those workers who did not previously commit to working Bear Creek at Ouray will meet on this day Sunday (July 15) at the Silverton school gym at 7:00 am to work on Megan's Rico-Silverton trail. Trail work for both days will begin earlier than the traditional 8:00 am to allow as much work to be done as possible in case the afternoon rains arrive.

Here at Ouray the precipitation forecast for the four days of July 5-8 was 30% and we had rain, including the deluge of the 8th. Yesterday the forecast was 10% and we had no rain. The forecast for today through Friday is 30% - 60%, with showers and thunderstorms forecast for Saturday and Sunday but with no percentage probability given as of today. Although there are forest fires still burning in Colorado it is clear that the monsoon rains have arrived and will soon make short work of them (the 416 Fire was pronounced extinct as of yesterday).

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 clothing (long pants?), shoes (boots?), hat, work gloves; and rain gear. Most of all, bring enthusiasm!

Rick

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HRH Trail Work Volunteers Coordinator





