

## **Colonel Bob Trail Could Reopen Soon**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Volunteers from the Washington Trails Association (WTA) and the Grays Harbor Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen will partner with Olympic National Forest this summer in an effort to reopen the Colonel Bob Trail. This scenic route, located on the Pacific Ranger District of Olympic National Forest, was severely damaged during a wind storm in 2007 which left nearly two miles of the trail inaccessible.

Strong public interest in reopening the trail has spurred a significant amount of volunteer support, for which Ranger Dean Millett is grateful. "Each year, volunteers contribute greatly to the management of the National Forest System. Specifically, volunteers at Olympic National Forest provide much needed help with a variety of projects that might not otherwise be accomplished without their support."

All required NEPA and Minimum Tool Analysis have been completed and both motorized and primitive tools will be used to clear the trail. Mechanized equipment is typically prohibited within Wilderness areas, but due to the complexity of this project, chainsaws will be allowed where primitive tools - such as cross-cut saws - cannot be used safely. Only skilled, certified sawyers will work on the more complex portions of this project. Trail work is expected to continue throughout the summer and will likely extend into next year.

Recently approved funding, obtained through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, will pay for the mechanized equipment. Additional funding will be needed to complete associated work such as repairing the damaged tread and restoring the trail to its original condition.

The WTA currently has three week-long volunteer work parties scheduled to help clear the trail. One of the work parties is a "volunteer vacation" and will provide an opportunity for citizens to learn more about primitive tool skills. Those interested in volunteering may contact the WTA at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org) or Pete Erben, Recreation Planner, at the Pacific Ranger District, 360-288-0202.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to State and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. For general

information on the Olympic National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic>