

Draft Spring 2020 Trail Projects Schedule – 1/6/2020

Gila Chapter-Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico

Important Note: *project prep* added to the itinerary to increase safety for the packers who are bring in the gear for our projects. By “project prep” I mean clearing the trails that the hikers and packers will be using to access our trail project. If BCH does not do the prep, HOTG has a few volunteers (1-3) that may be available all spring so I would work with them on the prep clearing.

March 20-22 Mimbres River

This would be a joint project with NM Wild, NM Volunteers for the Outdoors, and HOTG (Heart of the Gila). We would camp at the Mimbres River Trailhead off of the North Star Mesa Road. We camped there last year when we worked on this trail. The best place for us to camp with trailers is the wide area at the junction of the North Star Mesa Road (FR 150) and the road into the trailhead. Folks hiking will probably camp near the river. We would be removing large trees from the Mimbres River trail (77) to the river and up the river for about 3 miles. We would also help with packing in small kitchen, food, and tools. Depending on how many people we have, we could also work on clearing the trail up to Signboard Saddle (74).

March 26-28 Sheridan Corral Trail 181

This would be a BCH project, to clear the first section of Trail 181. We would camp at the parking area at Imler's house. Since parking is limited at the trail head, we would try to carpool to the work site. We would be going in and out every day and get as much of the trail cleared as we can. Imler's have cleared this trail in the past but because it is a burn area there will likely be a large number of trees to cut and remove.

April 1-3 Mogollon Creek Prep

Small group of folks camp at the Mogollon Creek Trailhead or at the saddle above Mogollon Creek and clear down to Mogollon Creek. This would be to make that trail safe to pack in camp and tools on April 6th.

April 6 – 10th Mogollon Creek

Camping in Mogollon Creek is limited so we would put together a small group of folks to pack into Mogollon Creek and work on up the 153 trail as far as we can. This is a joint project with HOTG. The pack in is approximately 7 miles. We would be camping at Mogollon Creek 4 nights and pack out on the 10th. This trail has not been cleared for a long time so there will be lots of cutting and brushing.

April 13 – 15th Prep trails to Miller Springs Cabin

This is a joint project with HOTG. This is shortly before the NAN Ride so we would have to see if we have folks available. The objective would be to clear to trail (160) from Woody's Corral to Miller Springs Cabin so that tools, food, and gear can be packed in for the next project. The plan is to camp at Little Turkey Park, which is about 7 miles in from Woody's Corral, but it is possible that a group of folks could camp at Woody's Corral and clear the section to Little Turkey Park while another group packs into Little Turkey Park, camps there and clears the 5.5 miles from there to Miller Springs Cabin. I was on this trail recently and there are quite a few logs that need to be removed although there is nothing that pack animals cannot get around. That is why I think we might be able to split into two groups.

April 18 - 23 Miller Springs and Turkey Creek

This is primarily a HOTG project but we would help as we can. The object will be to brush the trail down to Turkey Creek (159) and then work up the Turkey Creek Trail (155) toward Little Spring This is the same time as the NAN ride so our assistance might be minimal but if anyone is not involved in the NAN ride and wants to help out that would be good. Becky Campbell will pack in tools, food, and kitchen stuff. We will have to see if she has room for any of our horse feed. Becky will most likely also pack out. If we have anyone available to help pack that would be great. It is approximately 12 miles to Miller Spring Cabin from Woody's Corral.

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April 27-28 Prep Trail to Meadows

This is a joint project with HOTG. We would camp at Woody's and remove large logs that HOTG cannot get. We might need to go up on the 26th so that we could start work on the 27th. The route we would be up trail 129 to 164 and finally down trail 28 to the Meadows. The part that we need to make sure is clear for the safety of packers is the last piece of trail 28 that switchbacks down to the river. This part of the trail is steep and narrow so we want to make sure there are no logs across it. Total round trip distance of the trail that needs to be clear is about 20 miles so horses will need to be in good shape. HOTG volunteers may be able to check some of this out before we get there. If there are no logs on the steep section going down to the river it would shorten the trip. This was cleared a couple of years ago so it might be OK.

May 2 – 8 Middle Fork Trail from the Meadows

This is a joint project between HOTG, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition and NM Volunteers for the Outdoors. The object will be to clear the short end of trail from where we stopped last year to the Meadows and from the Meadows up stream as far as we can go. HOTG has cooks for this project so we will not have to do that this year. We would be primarily removing large logs. The other volunteer groups will be doing tread work and brushing. We will be doing the packing with help from others if we can find someone. It will be about a 11 mile pack into where we will be camping with the last part of the pack in going down a steep trail to the Middle Fork of the Gila River. On the way out, we could pack down the river if we decide that is better. The route in is the same as described in the April 27-28 Prep project above. There is more space for horses at the Meadows and it not so sensitive an area as where we camped for last year's project, so we will probably not have to limit participation.

May 16 – 21 Little Springs (clear in all directions)

This is a joint project with HOTG. We would pack into Little Spring (approximately 11 miles) on May 16 and camp there for 5 nights. Our objective would be to clear as much of the Turkey Creek Trail as possible and to re-clear some of the trails we cleared last year toward McKenna Spring. We would pack out on the 21st. We might have to find a few folks to ride into Little Spring before this project to make sure the trail is passable. It was cleared last year but in some places there is a fair amount of blow-down because of the wet fall. There are a few places on the upper end of Trail 161 that could be difficult to get through with pack animals if there are new down trees. Packers will be BCH and Becky Campbell.

May 28th – June 2nd Hillsboro Bypass trail

This is a joint project with HOTG, NM Volunteers for the Outdoors, and the Southern NM Trails Alliance. The object is to clear the Hillsboro Bypass Trail 412 which is a short 1-mile or so trail around Hillsboro Peak. My understanding is that there are a lot of logs on this trail and a fair amount of tread work that would be done by other volunteers. We would mostly pack tools and do some chainsaw cutting. Not sure where we would camp but probably Upper Gallinas Campground. If time permits we might also work on the Railroad Canyon Trail (128 & 129). More on logistics later.

June 6 – 11 Clayton Mesa

This project is a joint project with HOTG. It is on the north end of the Gila Wilderness. We would drive up on the 6th and camp near the Airplane Mesa Trail Head off Forest Road 142. From there the next day we would pack into the Middle Fork on trail 143 and camp near the Middle Fork of the Gila River. We would work on the Clayton Mesa Trail (175) from that camp. We would pack out on the 11th and drive home. This is a long drive since you have to go through Reserve NM on the way in and out. More on logistics later.

If we have an opportunity I would like to work on some of the more local one-day project trails like the Snow Creek trail, the Tadpole Ridge trail etc. as time allows, but the above is a pretty ambitious schedule so those might have to wait until summer or fall.