



September 26, 2012

Bells Canyon Summary

Bells Canyon, located on the Salt Lake Ranger District (SLRD) of Uintah Wasatch Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, is a popular route for hikers and climbers alike. Several years ago a wind event blew down several trees confusing hikers on the trail between the upper falls and upper reservoir. Due to the location of the trees in designated wilderness and the complexity of the bucking, the upper section of the trail has been unmaintained for years. Users have been making rock cairns to indicate a path to the upper reservoir. Many did not follow the main trail and would often dead end, resulting in lost hikers. In response to solicitation from the Wasatch Mountain Club and other interested parties and in the interest of public safety, resource managers determined that the time was right to correct the situation. The main goal of the project was to clear the trail of down trees and establish a main route to the upper reservoir.

Since the project area was in designated wilderness, we needed to pool resources across the SLRD in order to have enough cross-cut sawyers. A Bells Canyon crew was assembled from members of our Wilderness, Trails, and Millcreek programs. The crew hiked in on Wednesday 08/15/12, set up camp and got to work. We cleared some of the larger trees and did some route finding the first day. A significant amount of the flagging was torn down between scouting the project and when the crew arrived making the task more difficult.

The second day we received the help of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. They helped hike in additional supplies and thinned the trail out below the major stream crossing. At this time, we found some evidence of old trail and historic trail arrows that were attached to some trees. There were some reinforced switch-backs from the CCC that we rerouted the trail to. After establishing where we wanted the trail, we built a total of 19 rock cairns, clearly distinguishing a main route to the Upper Reservoir. The rock cairns were built to USFS standard (3' tall x 2.5" wide).

On the third day we cut out a 50 foot re-route that was overgrown. This was done to avoid routing the trail through a boulder field. We also knocked down over 100 rock cairns that did not lead to or along the main trail.

The fourth day we started to build a wilderness bridge. Two trees were dropped, debarked and the wood prepared for the construction of a 16 foot bridge. On the fifth day we finished the bridge. At that point, the Millcreek portion of the Bells Canyon crew hiked out as they had duties that they had to get back to in Millcreek Canyon. After the bridge was finished the remaining crew cleared the trail below the bridge. On the morning of day six, the rest of the crew hiked out.

In total, we cut out 14 large trees and approximately 20 smaller ones that crossed the trail. Most of the trail was "brushed". We built 19 rock cairns to define the main trail. The trail was realigned to utilize some of the original CCC infrastructure and a 50' section was rerouted to keep users off a boulder field. A 16 foot wilderness bridge that crosses the major part of the



stream was constructed. Lastly, we knocked down over 100 user created rock cairns to keep people from wandering off the main trail.

This project resulted in a complete success. All objectives were met and nobody was injured in the process. A special thanks must be given to Curt McEwen, Mike Gunn, and Brett Jeppsen. Curt McEwen was the C qualified crosscut sawyer on the project and is the lead of the Millcreek crew. Mike Gunn is the lead of the Trails crew. Brett Jeppsen is the lead of the Wilderness Crew. Their leadership, expertise and hard work were crucial to the success of this project.

Sincerely,



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