

Bell Canyon Upper Section Trail Re-Worked

Bell Canyon is a challenging hike, but the section above the meadow approaching the upper reservoir has been particularly problematic for many years. As large trees have fallen and vegetation closed in, the historic trail deteriorated and a lot of "alternate" trails and cairns were placed, sending hikers in all different directions.

The WMC met with the Forest Service to discuss the poor trail conditions and explore possible remedies. The area is deep in wilderness territory, and this was going to require a huge hand-powered undertaking. This August, the Forest Service, with support from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation took on the challenge, pulled together a multi-team/multi-day trail building project, and the results are simply incredible.

The first obvious sign of Forest Service work is a new and sturdy foot bridge that crosses the stream near the campsite in the upper meadow. This is our clue that the Forest Service prefers the trail that runs south of the stream, completely by-passing the older and more rickety footbridge at the base of the upper waterfall.



Cut trees found shortly above the meadow

Equally impressive are the 19 Forest Service cairns (all built to a spec of 3' tall and 2-1/2' wide) that now clearly mark the route . . .

. . . and re-establishing pieces of the old CCC trail.



New bridge near the upper meadow campsite



Old bridge below upper falls

After the meadow is where things really got tricky trying to figure out the route to the upper reservoir, and this is where the Forest Service teams focused most of their efforts. As clubbers walk through this area, take a moment to appreciate that every one of the large trees crossing the trail (and there were a LOT) were cut by hand with two-person crosscut saws!!



*The 19 new cairns are hard to miss!!
Avoid smaller "false" cairns that have already been set up that send hikers through boulder fields and other wrong paths*

We all owe a huge thanks to the Forest Service, the work teams, and Matt Zumstein (the Forest Service Natural Resource Recreation Manager) in particular for spearheading this project. Clubbers can help the long-term support of these improvements by utilizing this main trail, and not adding cairns that send hikers in the wrong direction.