

On Thursday March 30, ten FOSM volunteers joined SRD Trails Foreman Joseph Jaffa-Martinez, SRD Trail Crew member Jeff Cervantes, and SW Region Trails(etc.) Manager Kerry Wood for some tread maintenance on the South Crest Trail north of Canyon Estates, not far below Travertine Falls. Tasks included removing old rock waterbars which were no longer working; removing rocks lining the outside edge, to allow water to move off the trail; building several check-steps (and repairing one); building 2 drain dips; removing debris from existing drain-dips; building a short reroute around a trenched-out section; and re-benching a section of tread which had become excessively outsloped. The main event was building the check-steps, which involved finding and moving large rocks (sometimes long distances), digging trenches to secure them in place, and back-filling with smaller rocks and soil. Unlike a waterbar, the purpose of a check-step is less about moving water off the trail than about slowing it down, allowing soil to collect behind the check-step rather than washing away down the trail, thus preventing erosion in the long run. A well-made check-step will also hold up to user traffic (including equine) over time. The crew discovered that building a “well-made check-step” often involves several attempts and iterations to get it right! We were lucky to have Kerry and Joseph there to provide expert guidance; everyone learned a lot over the course of the day. Conditions were excellent for working: nice temps, sheltered from the wind on a strong-wind day, no mud or snow.

The volunteers were David Bernstein, Jenny Blackmore, John Braly, Sim Cook, Luis Cuadros, Byron Garner, Bruce Hansche, Jim Houle, Bill Perkins and Roland Stumpf.

Photos by Jenny Blackmore.



David and Jeff start their steps. Kerry, Bruce and Jim look for rocks. The best ones are very large, with a flat surface for stepping.



Found one! Too bad it's downhill from the trail... Jim, Kerry and John get ready to haul it up with the rock sling.



Making trenches  
Luis and Sim on their first iterations



Roland digs deeper



David and Bill on their first iteration  
(No, that's not Mike)



Looks good Luis. Let's give  
it the kick test...



Roland finds the perfect rock for his  
step below. Will it move using the rock  
bar? Looks like help is on the way.



Joseph and Jeff help Roland roll.  
Roll, Roland! Roll!



John breaks up compacted soil to put the dip in the drain dip



Jim extracts a rock for repairing the check-step in the foreground. (Good, this time the rock is uphill from the work.)



Sim, Byron and Luis have moved rocks onto the old tread (left) to create the reroute (right). Joseph consults.



On the hike out the crew spends time rebenching an out-sloped section near the trailhead.