

On Thursday July 20, eleven volunteers returned to the Challenge Trail extension to build a reroute not far from the “red gate,” plus finish-work nearby which included widening the tread and doing some rock cribwork. Volunteers also brushed back the corridor along the extension, and cleared corridor near the Bill Spring junction in preparation for building the final stretch of new trail at that end. The crew was enlightened by the presence of a volunteer (Mugzy) who has worked professionally and extensively leading trail construction on the Carson NF.

Early in the day there was an unfortunate mishap which resulted in a chauffeured trip to the hospital for Luis. (He’s fine now! See photo below.) After some discussion, the remainder of the crew opted to continue working, finishing the reroute and cribwork, and making good progress on other finish-work heading east from there. Temps, naturally, were quite summery. No cloud cover this time.

The volunteers were Dan Benton, Claudia Bergsohn, Jenny Blackmore, John Braly, Luis Cuadros, Bruce Hansche, Jim Houle, Jeff “Mugzy” Muggleston, Mike Madden, Eric Russell and Tom Swiler.

Photos by Jenny Blackmore unless otherwise noted.



Dan, Tom, Jim and Claudia get started on the reroute. (John and Eric too, in the background/shade.) On the right side of the photo, the original line has been mostly closed off. Volunteers later finish closing it.

The new line starts taking shape.



Tom and Dan



Claudia



Meanwhile, far away at the bottom end of the extension, Mike does some final brush work to prep for when the trail opens.



Crib work. Mugzy prepares the base below the outer edge of the tread.
Needed: large rocks.



Luis, John and Bruce find a good one. Hmm, no rock sling on site today. They opt to roll it uphill.



Made it. Mugzy has prepped the landing and has a plan. They ease it down and move it into place. One rock down...



So here's what happened...

The cribbing crew found some good, solid-sized rocks above the trail. After confirming that the area below was clear of fellow workers, they began to carefully move them down, one roll at a time, letting gravity do the work. However, gravity is double-edged, as Luis learned when his foot slipped. He went down, and the rock he was supporting did too. It happened to land on his arm and, being a doctor, he could tell right away it was broken. The arm that is – ulna and radius. Volunteers rolled the rock off, made sure Luis was stabilized, and assisted him up to the Crest Highway above. Bruce fetched Luis's truck, and John drove him to an orthopedic clinic in ABQ. The next day Luis went back for surgery, where they inserted a 10" long plate, for better healing. Full recovery expected!



Photo courtesy of Luis Cuadros

Here he is at home post-surgery, with flowers sent by the SRD. Aww...

The fateful rock was incorporated into the cribwork, which turned out great.



These photos *really* don't do it justice, but here's a during-and-after, looking east (downhill)



During and after, looking west (uphill). This is built to last!
Mugzy takes himself a break.

Finish-work: widening the tread and taking a sledge to several rocks which encroached on the trail on the uphill side. Tom was the main sledgemeister of the day. Others took their swings as well.



Bruce



Tom

Dan hiked to the Bill Springs end to clear corridor, then returned.



Eric's turn with the sledge



Photo by Dan Benton

Jenny makes dust at the gravel pit



Mugzy takes out a dead tree