

On two Thursdays, July 27 and August 3, FOSM volunteers returned to wrap up construction on the Challenge Trail extension. **July 27th** was spent mainly on finish-work along the entire new(est) segment, from below the “red gate” down to Bill Spring Trail. Tasks included widening tread and adjusting the angle of the backslope, pulling out or breaking up several boulders and large rocks from the uphill side of the trail, and cutting out hazardous “staubs” sticking up from the tread. Later in the day volunteers began benching-in the final section of trail towards the Bill Spring connection. Temps were ridiculously hot.

On **August 3rd** the crew completed the finish-work and focused on the new construction, as well as closing off a well-used social trail which extended north and west from the Bill Spring junction. In addition, Dan Benton removed a couple trees and stumps from the uphill side of the trail and bagged up small and large trash that the crew had collected over the previous three months along the entire new segment (which runs just below the Crest Highway). By 11:00 the lower extension was complete! After posing for “golden spike” photos, several of the volunteers drove to the Tree Spring trailhead to build the final connection at that end too. (Very focused workers = no photos were taken.) Temps were cooler at the higher elevation, and much of the work took place in the shade. Whew. At the end of the extended workday the entire Challenge Trail extension was complete!

The twelve July 27th volunteers were Dan Benton, Claudia Bergsohn, Jenny Blackmore, John Braly, Sim Cook, Bruce Hansche, Jim Houle, Laura Leon, Mike Madden, Bill Perkins, Eric Russell and Mark Werkmeister.

The fourteen August 3rd volunteers were Dan Benton, Claudia Bergsohn, Jenny Blackmore, Sim Cook, Byron Garner, Jim Houle, Larry Larrichio, Laura Leon, Mike Madden, Rav Nicholson, Bill Perkins, Eric Russell, Cleve Sharp and Ralph Wrons.

Photos by Jenny Blackmore unless otherwise noted.

July 27



Photo by Jim Houle



Photo by Jim Houle

On Jul 20 the crew discovered a rusted steel cable, presumably left from road construction, which encroached into the trail. On Jul 27 Bruce brought his battery powered cut off tool, dug deep to cut, and made short work of its removal.



Photo by Jim Houle
Bill at the beach



Mike and Claudia work on the backslope



Jim removes some roots



Team stau removal! Dan and John cover the entire mile-long segment, with sharp eyes and sharp tools.



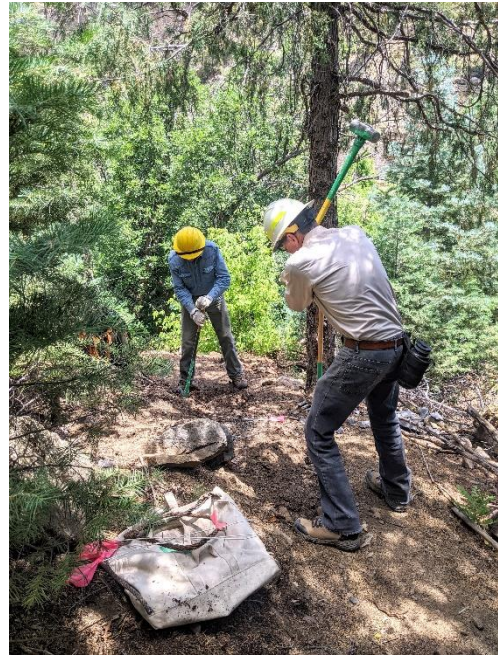
Photo from July 20, when the crew began the process of breaking up encroaching boulders. John knows what to do.

Boulder and rock removal continues on July 27

Team rock removal! Hard work, and these guys stick with it the entire day.



Photo by Bruce Hansche
Mark takes a swing



Sim takes a swing

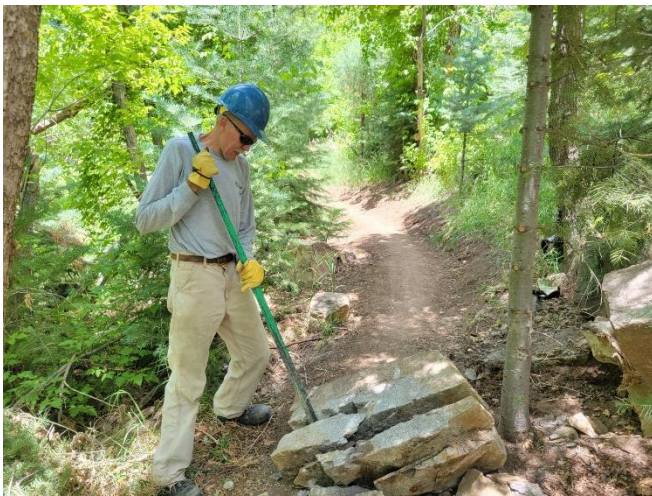


Photo by Bruce Hansche

Hmm, after pulling it down or breaking it up, it still needs to move off the trail.



Eric and Mark

The big one...



Photo by Bruce Hansche



Photo by Jim Houle

Best start digging...

Mark and Bruce get to work



Only two rock bars today?
They make do.



Making progress...

Photo by Jim Houle

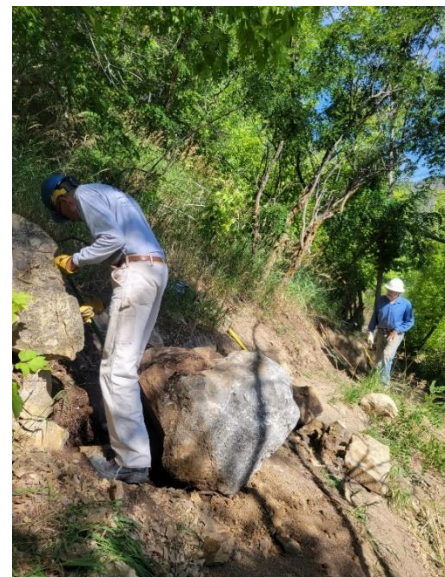


Photo by Bruce Hansche

(Not pictured) Once it's out, Dan and Jim assist with pushing it off the trail. Leg presses!

Meanwhile, other crew members move down to build new tread through steep rocky terrain at the lower end, close to Bill Spring.



Mike and Claudia round the second-to last turn



No 'after' shot available, but here's a 'before' of what lies ahead for the crew.
Laura, Claudia, Mike



Claudia digs and tests, digs and tests her high stump



What do we have here? Right behind Dan, the new Bill Spring junction.
We'll wait and connect next week...

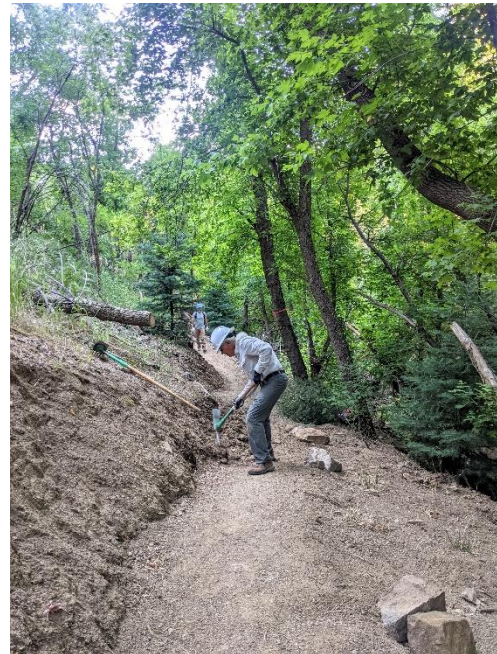
August 3



Mike removes loose debris from the backslope. Later Dan removes the stump.



Dan is sad. No tread work for him today. Poor Br'er Rabbit.



Jim and Bill. The never-ending tread widening is coming to an end! Ralph (not pictured), Byron (not pictured) and Mike also focus on final finish-work, down to the drainage. Across the drainage, construction continues...



Sim's still swinging



Déjà vu for Laura
(Eric farther back)

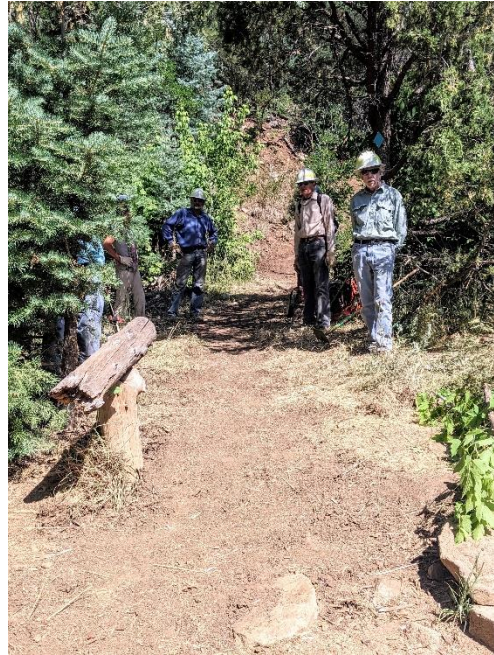
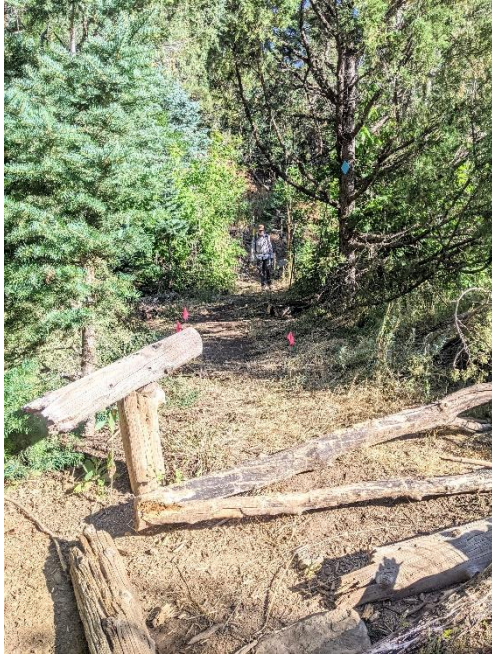


Cleve takes a turn on
the final tricky turn



The OBLITERATORS
Rav and Larry close off a long user-created
social trail and other tempting flat spots

The golden spike!



Before and after of the new Challenge-Bill Spring junction, taken from Bill Spring Trail



Photo taken by Ralph Wrons
Jenny and the final-day crew.
We miss the ones missing today!



L-R: Eric, Claudia, Ralph, Rav,
Dan, Bill (kneeling), Sim,
Laura, Byron, Mike, Jim

It might look like a bone, but don't be fooled. Claudia holds the gold.