

Labor Day

Want to make a group of young girl's day, pull into a trail head they are camping at with a couple of horse. That is exactly what happened to me on Sunday September 6, 2015. I wanted to get some trail time on my back up horse Tucker and I also wanted to finish up work I had started at Wilson Corral.



The rocks I had reported in the road to the Emmett Ranger District had been moved out of the road, so the trip in was uneventful. Just a nice drive that went quickly as I was listening to a good audio book on my kindle. When I pulled into the trail head, I noticed a camp consisting of trailers and a number of tents. There were a number of 4-wheelers parked by the tents.

As I started unloading the stock, three young girls, and woman and a baby came over to see what was going on. The girls wanted to know the horse's names and talked about what was the best horse color. They wanted to know if Mestena was a pony or very young as she is smaller than tucker. I told them she was a mustang from an Indian reservation in Nevada and was 17 years old, while Tucker is 10. They wanted to know if I would give them rides and I said when I got back, if it was all right with their parents I would.

I was all saddled and realized that I had not brought the saw box and only had one bag for tools so would have an unbalanced load. I did have a number of nose feed bags so I put the fuel in one and a rock and saw tools in the other to counter balance the bag. I just took the big chapter saw in the top case. It balanced pretty well and soon we were heading up the trail.



Within a few minutes I was at the new section of trail that by passes the stream section. Tucker had no problem making the turn up hill and climbing the switch back allowing him to join the original trail after it came out of the creek. It was only a few more minutes before we encountered the first of twelve logs blocking the trail that we remove.



The first set consisted of three logs blocking the trail. It didn't take to long to remove them, but I did go through a tank of gas. As the saw was pretty hot, I decided to not re-fuel until the next down fall to let the saw cool of a bit.



Wilson Corral trail can be divided into three sections, between the trail head and the upper meadow. The lower 1/3 follows the creek through heavy timber. In this section I removed a total of seven trees. The mid section from where the trail crosses and old logging road and go along a ridge was in pretty good shape, with four move trees to remove.

There were a number of cattle in this area, I think the colder nights and rainy days we had on Friday and Saturday had moved them down the mountain. I also believe I saw a wolf. I only saw it for a few seconds, and didn't get a picture, but it seemed too big to be a coyote. It was just above where I had seen the cattle.

It was in this section I first encountered some patches of snow from the storm that had pass through the area Saturday.





I removed a few more downed trees and continue riding up the mountain. The snow increased and the trail became wet and in places pretty slick.



The top third of the trail had quite a bit of snow on it and was at time a bit hard to follow. As this was like the 20th time I had ridden this trail, I knew the land marks and had no problem finding my way up to the meadow



The snow was melting and water was running down the trail bed eroding it into deep, slippery gullies.



After a brief rest, we turn back and started down to the trail head. Going down in places was a bit tricky as the ground was wet and slick so Tucker picked his way carefully.



Tucker is not yet an experienced trail horse, and doesn't have the confidence of Payette. But he is willing to learn and with each mile on the trail gaining experience and confidence. It is nice to have a second riding horse so I can give days off or take friends riding.



And the girls, they were waiting when I got back and they each got a ride on Tucker and pictures on their cell phones. Did you know that ten year old girls all have smart phones now? Mom and dad were interested in what I was doing and I handed out Squaw Butte Business cards.

One fellow who had been scouting the area for bow hunting season wanted to know if I was a guide and did I see any elk sign. I answered no to both questions. I did tell him I saw two mule deer bucks and a number of doe's on my way up from about second fork road to the trail head.

