

Work begins on adopted Anderson Trail; SJBCH focus of Swedish student project

The chapter got its trail season off to a good start with a project day on Anderson Trail June 30. Rain had washed out plans to work on Anderson Trail for National Trails Day earlier in the month, but the rescheduled work date was warm and dry.

Members cut out 12 trees, lopped overgrowth and built two rock water bars to improve drainage on the trail. The group also installed the new SJBCH trail adoption sign. A big “thank-you” goes out to all the members who pitched in to get the work done—Donna Fait, Vern Jahnke, John and Lisa Nelson and their niece Kat (aka “Pickles”), Nancy Seay, Bob Volger and Bev Warburton. Leading the project were Tyler Albers, trails foreman, and Ros Wu, Wilderness program manager, of the Pagosa Ranger District.

Also joining SJBCH for the day were two university students from Sweden, Christina Souri and Gunilla Westlund, who are majoring in environmental science. They are taking a class on social entrepreneurship and were assigned to select an organization outside Sweden and research the efforts of the group that benefit society. Christina is American with family in Pagosa Springs but has lived in Sweden for the past 12 years. She did some online research and thought SJBCH would be a good selection for their class project. So, she and Gunilla, a native of Sweden, participated in the Anderson Trail project day to film and interview members and to get some first-hand trail clearing experience. They later met with chapter president Tara McElhinney, secretary Kristie Hefling and trail committee members John and Lisa Nelson for dinner and more interviews. They also had the opportunity to see SJBCH represented in the Fourth of July parade.

Christina and Gunilla learned a great deal about SJBCH’s commitment to ensuring access to and enjoyment of the Rocky Mountain backcountry and about our collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service in those efforts. The students will be producing a documentary for their class project in December and have promised SJBCH a copy of the final product.

More work remains on Anderson Trail, as hikers informed SJBCH trail workers of another 30-50 trees down on the trail beyond the Wilderness boundary. Hopefully, we’ll have more good weather to get the trail cleared.

Submitted by Lisa Nelson 7/6/15