

Project Description- Desolation Trail Major Maintenance

Project Location: Desolation Trail between Circle Awl ridge and Millcreek Dog Lake

Present Situation:

The Desolation Trail from Circle Awl ridge to Millcreek Dog Lake needs major maintenance. The trail is overgrown with brush and many areas have slid down the hillside. Other areas have filled in with debris that has slid down from above.

This trail is difficult and expensive to maintain because of its remote location relative to trailheads. Trail maintenance involves having a trail crew camp overnight on site due to the time required to hike into the work site. Consequently the USFS and CCF can not allocate trail crew time for this section of Desolation Trail.

Several years ago the Utah Conservation Corps was hired by Trails Utah to complete major trail maintenance on the Desolation Trail between Circle Awl ridge west to Thaynes Canyon with great success.

Project Proposal:

Complete major maintenance on the 3 mile long section of the Desolation Trail between Circle Awl ridge and Millcreek Dog Lake. The work needed includes trail footbed restoration and significant cutting back brush. Logistics of the project include providing potable water to the crew at their campsite.

Project Benefits:

Restoring this trail will greatly improve the user experience on this iconic east west running section of wilderness trail. This section of trail is integral to several loop trail hikes in this area in the center of the Central Wasatch. These loops include the 7 mile loop up Butler Fork Trail, the 8 mile loop with lower Butler Fork and Mill D North Trails via shuttle, and the 12 mile loop up Mill D North Trail.

Project Budget:

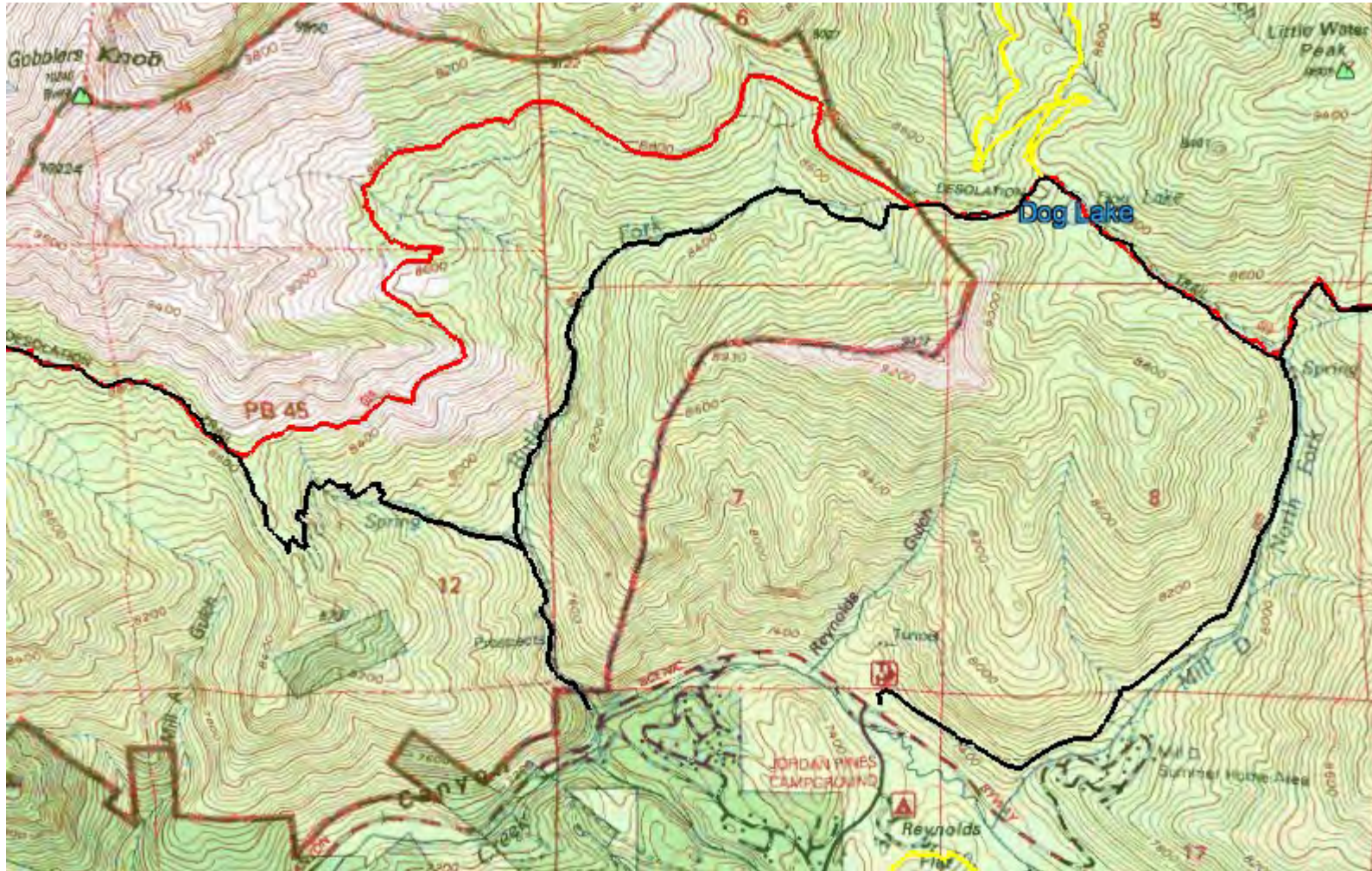
At the Utah Conservation Corps trail crew cost \$3,900 a week and an estimated 4 weeks of work required to renovate this 3 miles of trail plus minor overhead costs, the project will cost \$16,000.

This is a view of the project area looking north from Big Cottonwood Canyon.

You can see that the distance into the work area is so far that normal maintenance by the USFS or CCF trail crews is not feasible.



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Desolation Trail Major Maintenance Project

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File Code: 2300
Date: April 22, 2020

Central Wasatch Commission
41 N Rio Grande Street, Suite 102
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for John Knoblock and Trails Utah's proposal to the Central Wasatch Commission to fund maintenance on the Desolation Trail. Their proposed area of work is on the popular section of trail from Dog Lake to Circle Awl ridge. This section has several different access points and provides users with good trail connections and a variety of loop options.

Heavy maintenance on this trail is essential to address problems associated with trail erosion and plant overgrowth. Cutting brush, stabilizing tread, and reworking areas of trail that are falling down the hillside will improve user safety and trail sustainability. If these issues aren't addressed now, they will continue to worsen and result in further damage to both the trail and the surrounding environment.

Trails Utah, in partnership with the Utah Conservation Corps, is well equipped to perform this maintenance. Last year, a Utah Conservation Corps crew was crucial to the success of several trail reroutes on the Red Pine Lake trail. The crew worked hard, camped in a remote location, and delivered high quality work. I have no doubt that they would have similar success on the Desolation trail.

Please consider funding this project. It will result in a capable crew performing valuable work on a beautiful trail in the Wasatch.

Sincerely,

Original signed by R. Hotze

Rebecca Hotze
District Ranger

