

# BRIDGE

Continued from Page 1B

But that was almost two decades later.

In the years that followed the 2002 storm, hikers had two options, Hollenbeak said.

If they wanted to hike the complete Chief Joseph Mountain trail they had to ford BC Creek. In high water that was quite a dangerous undertaking, he said, as there is a waterfall downstream as well as upstream. And even when the creek had receded during late summers, the combination of slick rocks and the steep terrain were problematic.

"It was pretty tough," Hollenbeak said. "In my opinion it was fairly hazardous to cross."

The second option was to hike a connector trail that starts near the fish-cleaning station at Wallowa Lake State Park. This trail intersects the Chief Joseph Mountain trail roughly a mile north of BC Creek.

Although the Forest Service improved the connector trail, and Trail Association volunteers have helped to maintain it, the route is steeper than some hikers prefer, Hollenbeak said.

And although the connector gives hikers access to the view from Chief Joseph Mountain, it doesn't improve



Asch Humphrey/Contributed Photo

This photo from the fall of 2020 shows the log in place and its top sawed flat. The tree's stump is at the right side of the photo.

access to BC Creek and its waterfall.

### The tree

The initial plan, West said, was to use a helicopter to hoist parts of a bridge at the Boy Scout camp that had been damaged in the 2002 mudslide, then reassemble them at BC Creek.

That was the purpose of the \$40,000 grant from Travel Oregon that Bombaci secured.

But West said Forest Service engineers didn't approve the bridge-moving plan.

The problem, Hollenbeak said, is that installing the bridge from the Boy Scout camp would have required considerable drilling and pouring much concrete, which would have been difficult and expensive.

Hollenbeak said building another stock bridge, similar to the one destroyed in 2002, likely would have cost well in excess of \$100,000.

"So that left plan B, which was to use native materials," West said.

And there happened to be one big piece of native material that was conveniently located.

The Douglas-fir. Hollenbeak said he was a bit surprised the tree had survived the 2002 washout, which exposed much of its root structure.

A single-log bridge would not be accessible to horses, but Hollenbeak said the Chief Joseph Mountain trail isn't particularly popular for riders, in part because it doesn't lead to a lake as so many trails do in the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

In August 2020 Hollenbeak, accompanied by West and several other Trails Association members, hiked to BC Creek to bring the tree down.

West said Hollenbeak's situation was so precarious, as he ran the chain saw, that West, who's a mountain climber, used his climbing gear to secure Hollenbeak in case of a fall.

Hollenbeak said the fir fell just about where he hoped it would, with its top falling across the trail south of the creek.

After cutting off that section, the butt end had to be winched into place by means of human-powered chain hoists.

First, though, he and other workers had to trim the limbs and peel off the bark (barkless logs last much longer, as they're less susceptible to rotting).

The latter task was no small job, Hollenbeak said.

"The bark was over an inch thick," he said. "It was a real chore."

Over the course of multiple weekends last summer and fall, Hollenbeak and Trails Association volunteers continued the project. After moving the log into place they used steel spikes to pin it in place. The north side of the log is connected to solid rock, Hollenbeak said.

He used the log's natural bend to make the bridge stronger, by rolling it so that it curved up in a shallow arch over the stream.

Hollenbeak used a chain saw to cut a tread into the top of the log. The tread is at least 12 inches wide, and up to 13 1/2 inches in places, he said.

Heavy snow fell before workers could attach the upright 4-by-4 support posts and 2-by-4 horizontal railings, which were milled by JayZee Lumber in Joseph.

Work resumed on May 17, and the bridge was completed five days later.

Hollenbeak, who has built other single-log bridges, including a longer span across the West Fork of the Wallowa that accesses the popular Ice Lake trail, said the BC Creek project was "more of a challenge" than most due to the steep terrain.

"I was just ecstatic to finish it up without anyone getting hurt," he said.

# BABIES

Continued from Page 1B

"The best thing you can do is just to leave it alone and don't let your pets near it," Wolfer said.

The outcome of a life in the wild is so much better than in captivity that ODFW will try to foster calves and fawns removed from the wild with other herds — putting the young animal back in the wild with a herd that isn't its own in hopes another animal will raise it.

"Fostering is the next best option for a young calf or fawn removed from the wild that can't be returned to where it was taken from — and a better option than being in captivity," Wolfer said.

Pets should also be kept away from wildlife. Deer and elk see dogs as a threat to their young, so they might act aggressively in response.

"Give deer and elk some extra room this time of year if possible to prevent any conflict," Wolfer said.

Because of the damage it can do to both wildlife and people, removing an animal from the wild is illegal under Oregon wildlife laws. (ORS 497.308 — "No person shall remove from its natural habitat or acquire and hold in captivity any live wildlife in violation of the wildlife laws.")

A male deer fawn that weighs under 8 pounds at birth can grow to 280 pounds. Deer and elk are naturally wary of humans — but if removed from the wild and raised

by people they lose that fear and can go on to behave aggressively and threaten people.

The advice to leave animals in the wild applies to all wildlife — including adult and young marine mammals that are commonly seen alone resting on rocks or the beach in spring and summer. Beachgoers are asked to stay away from all resting seals and sea lions and keep dogs away from these animals as well. Marine mammal strandings should be reported to OSP's hotline at 1-800-452-7888.

If you are certain an animal is orphaned because you saw its parent die, please call ODFW, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or OSP for advice.



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

An elk calf about two days old in northwest Oregon. Spots help camouflage both elk calves and deer fawns.

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**MONDAYS**  
Survivor's Group  
12 - 1:00 pm  
Baker Presbyterian Church  
1995 4th St.  
(4th & Court, Side Door)

**TUESDAYS**  
K.I.S.S.  
(Keep it Simple Sister)  
12 - 1:00 pm  
1645 Eldon St. Eldon Court  
Apts Community Room

**WEDNESDAYS**  
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**SATURDAYS**  
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