

Ethan Butterworth

Senior Project

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Over the past three weeks I have done a lot of work, spent a lot of time in the woods, and had a great time. The ability to be able to spend a good amount of time on a project, and work on it far more than I would otherwise be able to is very rewarding. There have been times where I have been stumped, but all it takes is the ability to step back and either accept feedback, or look at a problem from another angle. In terms of goals, I feel that I accomplished some of my goals, and while I originally wanted to build a trail to balance rock, as I got started I realized that was a bit of a stretch, and not too practical. I changed to working a lot on the re-route of the lower section of the SRK Greenway, and a proposed layout on Wilsons Wonder trail, and then more of the SRK Greenway. This project has given me a lot of time to think and reflect on my time at Proctor, as well as the opportunity to help one of my friends with his project, and with all of that I feel that I have bettered both the community and myself.

When I began to start thinking about what I wanted to do for my Senior Project, I first thought of going somewhere and learning a skill, but after some thought, I wanted to do something for Proctor and the mountain biking team, because between the two of them, I have gained so much at this stage in my life.

In mountain biking, I have always been a fan of the trail building days. It is very rewarding to be able to visualize a line, and build it, then ride it. While in my project, I may not have gotten to the final stage of building and smoothing it out, but this was in the interest of time, and Josh Norris had said that it would be easier to let the kids on the team in the fall move rocks and dirt, rather than spend my time doing that, when I could be working higher up.

In my proposal I set the loft goal of laying out and starting construction on a trail all the way up to balance rock. After starting on the trail down below, I realized that that would not be practical, and that there was an immense amount of land between campus and balance rock. The next stage was re-routing a dangerous section of trail on the SRK Greenway. The trail basically went down a little cliff, and it was un-bikable. I spend the first week, flagging and raking and doing work on that section. In that section there is still a lot of work to be done, from benching to bridge building and rockwork. I realize that this is not going to be an easy project in the coming years, but I think that I am leaving a good framework. I think that has always been the goal, to leave a good foundation, not necessarily to make an impeccable trail.

With the changing goals, I was at times unsure of what to do, or I would need more time than I had to do something. If I needed a whole morning to go and do something, but I only had two hours, I would go and help David Bamforth

with his pump track project. It was really cool to see the evolution of his project, from bulldozing to grating, and then building the rollers and berms. The two of us spend a lot of time shaping rollers, packing berms, and digging holes. I think that I definitely benefited from being able to help him with his project, as it gave me a different view on the whole projects, just that it gave me a break, and I did not get set into looking at my project one way, but I could look at it from multiple angles. Over the project I learned some skills, but mainly reinforced others, time management, benching, shaping rollers, etc. I did learn a fair amount about sustainable trail building though, proper angles for the slope of the trail, good practices for building switch backs, how to do proper rock work, the list goes on and on. It was rewarding to be able to look at an area and see a trail, curving through trees, banking left on the side of a hill, switch backing up, visualizing is really cool.

There definitely have been times over the past three weeks that I have regretted a decision I made. If I were to go about it again, I would have spent more time in the first week on trail placement, rather than raking it out, and then evaluating it. There were sections that were much too steep and rocky to be practical, and I spent a few days working on them, this would make things go much faster, because I would have spent less time trying to make it work, rather than accepting that I needed to change it completely. I also probably would have spent a little more time in the second week doing my project, rather than helping

David. It was fun to work with him, but I think my project might have suffered a bit. All that being said, David among others was very helpful to my project. He, Chris Rodgers, Josh Norris, Chris Farrell were all very helpful, providing insight and advice.

Over all I feel that it has been an incredible opportunity and I have learned a lot, and had a terrific experience. I feel that I have made and created a foundation of something for the school that will be great to have in the future. It has been tiring, warm, buggy, but most of all, it was fun.