



Trail Survey: Upper Ballard Trail

25 April, 2021

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Background—Elisabeth Hammer, a new Norwich Trails volunteer, suggested that the upper Ballard Trail receive a survey, focusing on water crossings and wet areas during spring run-off conditions. She noted that there were some areas that could use improved crossing structures. On 22 April, I walked from the Brown Schoolhouse Road to the Grand Canyon to record any such problems. Here is what I found, presented in order of priority:

- Perennially flooded area where trail relocation is indicated.
- Grand Canyon stream crossing needs improved height and stability of stepping stones.
- Boggy areas for puncheons
- Boggy areas for maintenance of drainage
- Area discussed for steps leading away from stream

Refer to the appendix for locations. Also click on [links to photographs](#).

Perennially flooded area—The area at [43.744831, -72.350486](#), downstream of the Grand Canyon crossing where one steps across a fallen apple tree, is subject to overland flow, which has eroded the treadway and is impassable at high water. A relocation is indicated.



[Frequently flooded area](#) (l.) and [proposed trail relocation](#) (r.)—to the left when facing upstream

Grand Canyon crossing—I found the water to be flowing over a stone that would be used for stepping on. The next stone on the upstream side (towards Converse Loop) is loose.

Puncheon candidate areas—I distinguish “puncheons” from “bog bridges” by the following: Puncheons are made from a log sliced length-wise and mounted on log supports, whereas bog bridges are made from dimensioned lumber. Puncheons are an alternative for areas, where carrying lumber is more laborious than harvesting a nearby tree. I recommend new puncheons at three locations:

- [Wet Area #1](#): Located at [43.738956, -72.345756](#).



- [Wet Area #2](#): Located at [43.741039, -72.347481](#).



- [Wet Area #3](#): Located at [43.743189, -72.347619](#), this is an area previously identified for puncheons as [BTSC21](#).



Boggy area for maintenance—I found two muddy areas where autumn leaves had obstructed runoff and created muddy areas. These, I drained using my boot to make a channel downhill through the mud. Upon my return, one had started to drain, the other appeared to need puncheons (Wet Area #1).



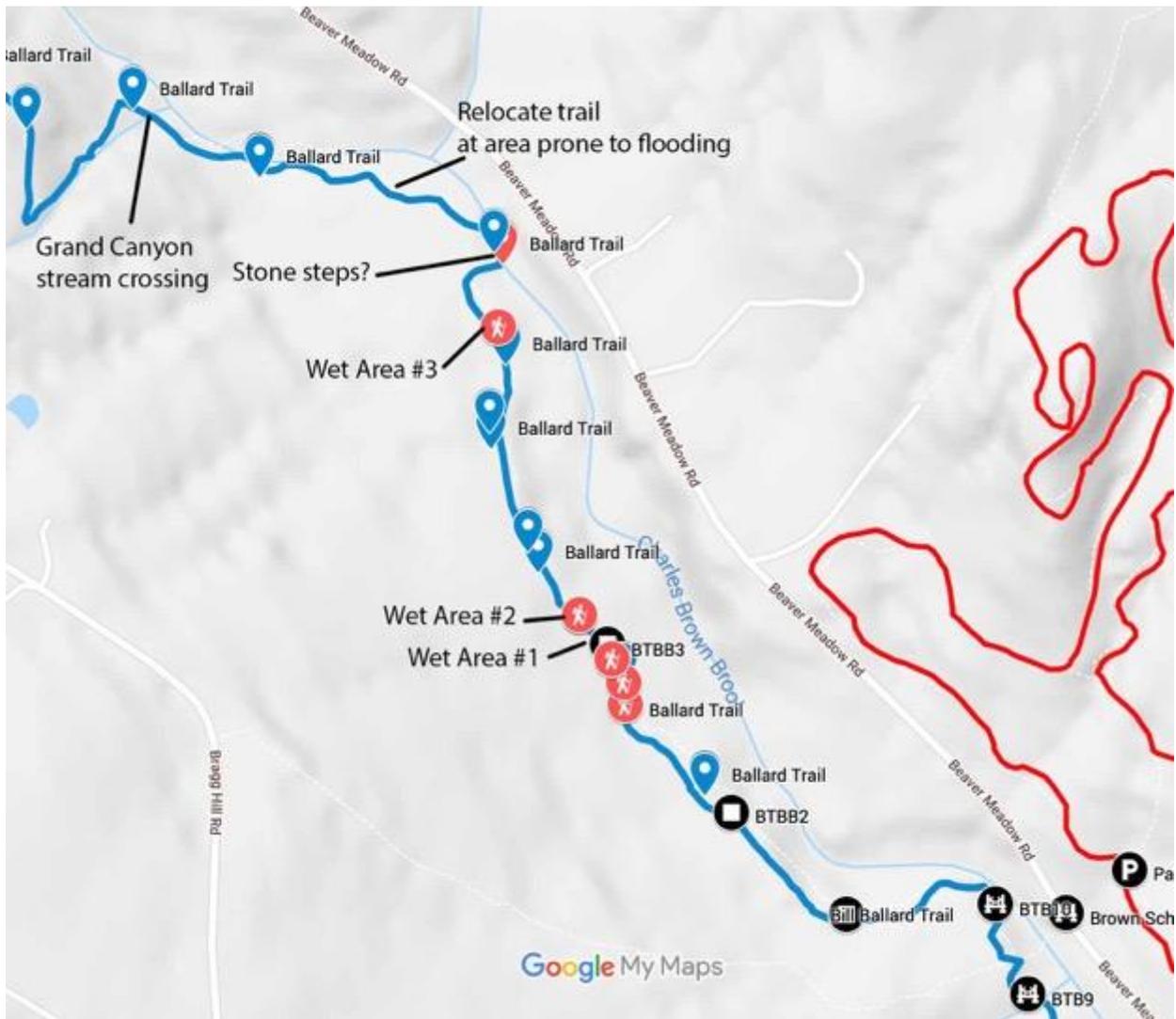
Wet spot at [43.738361, -72.344856](#), designated [BTSC38](#), before and after draining.

Candidate step area—I had no difficulty with traction under foot, surmounting the slope leading away from the stream at [43.744772, -72.350044](#). This has been identified as a candidate area for stone steps.



[Candidate area for steps.](#)

Appendix



Problem area locations