



Photo contributed

Oliver Jang's Eagle Scout project entailed rebuilding the Sphagnum Education Trail in Black Rock Forest after portions of it had been washed away by rain and runoff. The Scout also used a ratchet device to move two bridges - a wooden one back to its original location, and pieces of an aluminum bridge to use to repair the former.

Jang restores forest's education trail

By JASON KAPLAN

Black Rock bridge moved into place

Future generations of students, as well as other hikers, will reap the benefits of Oliver Jang's Eagle Scout project which entailed restoring a portion of the Sphagnum Swamp Education Trail in Black Rock Forest. Jang earned his Eagle during a ceremony on June 9.

"When I first got it, I didn't know how I felt," said Jang, who joined Cub Scouts as a wolf. "The weight of it is finally sinking in and I'm really grateful. Grateful to everyone who pushed me to stay in Scouting and finish the journey."

When figuring out ideas for his project, Jang met with forest manager Matt Brady who mentioned rebuilding the trail. About two-thirds had been heavily damaged from heavy rain and flooding. The last third of the nearly three-quarter mile trail needed to be recreated because the original portion wasn't in a good spot

and was constantly being washed out by rain.

Over the course of three work sessions in August, Jang and 10 other volunteers used hedge clippers to remove brush and redefined the trail. The final portion, a green tunnel was created.

The canopy was trimmed to allow hikers to walk underneath, but when they look up all they would see is the foliage.

The second half of the project required the Scouts to move two bridges. Due to intense rain, Jang said, the planks of one bridge were washed away from their original location. Using a ratchet device which was attached to a tree to act as a fulcrum, the planks were pulled back to the location of the bridge. Jang said the planks were too heavy to carry.

A secondary bridge, made of aluminum, had girders located

in the swamp. They weren't stuck in the ground, so the same ratchet device was used to pull them out of the water and then dragged to the location of the wooden bridge. Parts of the aluminum bridge were used to fix the first one.

Most of the materials and tools were provided by Brady, but Jang had to purchase orange paint to apply trail markers to the trees. This proved to be difficult because the paint needed had been discontinued. He ended up buying spray paint, making sure to be careful when applying the markers using a stencil. Brady also provided additional signs for the trail.

Other challenges Jang faced was his father stepping into a wasp nest and ending up with 10 to 20 stings. Conducting manual labor for six to seven hours was hard, as was having to endure the summer heat

wearing long sleeves to protect against ticks.

As far as taking on a leadership role, that was an easy task for Jang, who was thrust into the senior patrol position as a sophomore with out any previous leadership experience.

"It took one or two weeks to get used to it, but I had help from friends, previous patrol leaders, and Scout masters. I was a little nervous the first couple of meetings, but I got used to it."

When it came time to complete his Eagle Scout project, being a leader was second nature. It also helped that his volunteers had worked on other projects and had an idea of what to do already.

Jang heads off to college in the fall and will be focused mainly on his studies, but in the future he hopes to give back to Scouting as either an assistant or Scout master.