

Dispatch from the Saw Shack – Under Bucking Tool

-Paul S Dickens, C-Sawyer Crosscut and Volunteer with SAWS

All experienced Wilderness crosscut sawyers know that often, too often, you must under buck the log down to clear the trail. Top bind can be so bad that you cannot set a wedge before the kerf closes on the saw. So you have to under buck, which is physically very hard unless you have an under bucking tool. The under bucking tool is driven into the log parallel to the planned saw cut using the pol of an ax or other driving tool. When securely set in the log, the position of the wheel on the under bucking tool is adjusted to hold the saw in the kerf with leverage so that the sawyer can single under buck the log almost as easily as a top cut. Examples are below.



Photo 1. Under bucking top bound hemlock down with under bucking tool in Ramsey's Draft Wilderness, Virginia.



Photo 2. Under bucking set in top bound leaning white oak down.

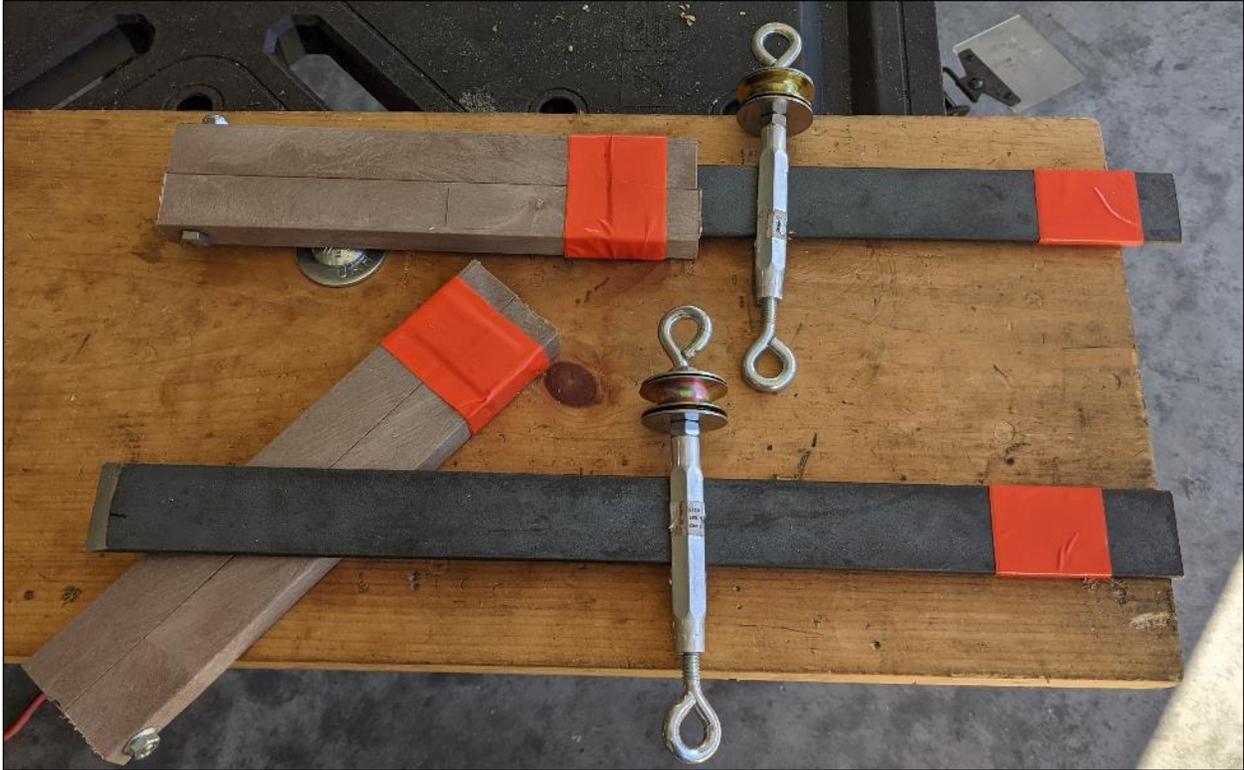


Photo 3. Under bucking tool and guard example, the orange tape is for visibility to find the tool and guard in the field.

All trail crews using crosscut saws should carry an under bucking tool. This important crosscut saw tool can be fabricated from readily available materials. Photo 3 features a design that works well and is of reasonable weight.

Each tool is 18 inches long. They are fabricated from 1.5-inch-wide by 3/16-inch-thick steel bar stock. This bar stock width and thickness are the best balance between stiffness and weight for the under bucking tool. A grinder is used to rough shape the points, which are then hand filed to an edge like sharpening an ax. The turnbuckles are 5/16-inch thread, and the wheels are pulley wheels with 5/16-inch shafts. The slot for the bar in the turnbuckles is drilled and filed to just clear the bar. The pulley wheel is held in place with 5/16-inch nuts to spin freely. The left-threaded eye bolt of the turnbuckle is used to tighten the wheel against the bar in the position desired. The guards for the bar point are fabricated from left over saw guard material. Some fabrication pictures follow to illustrate how to make the tool. In this example, a 36-inch x 1.5-inch x 3/16-inch-thick steel bar stock was used to make two 18-inch under bucking tools.

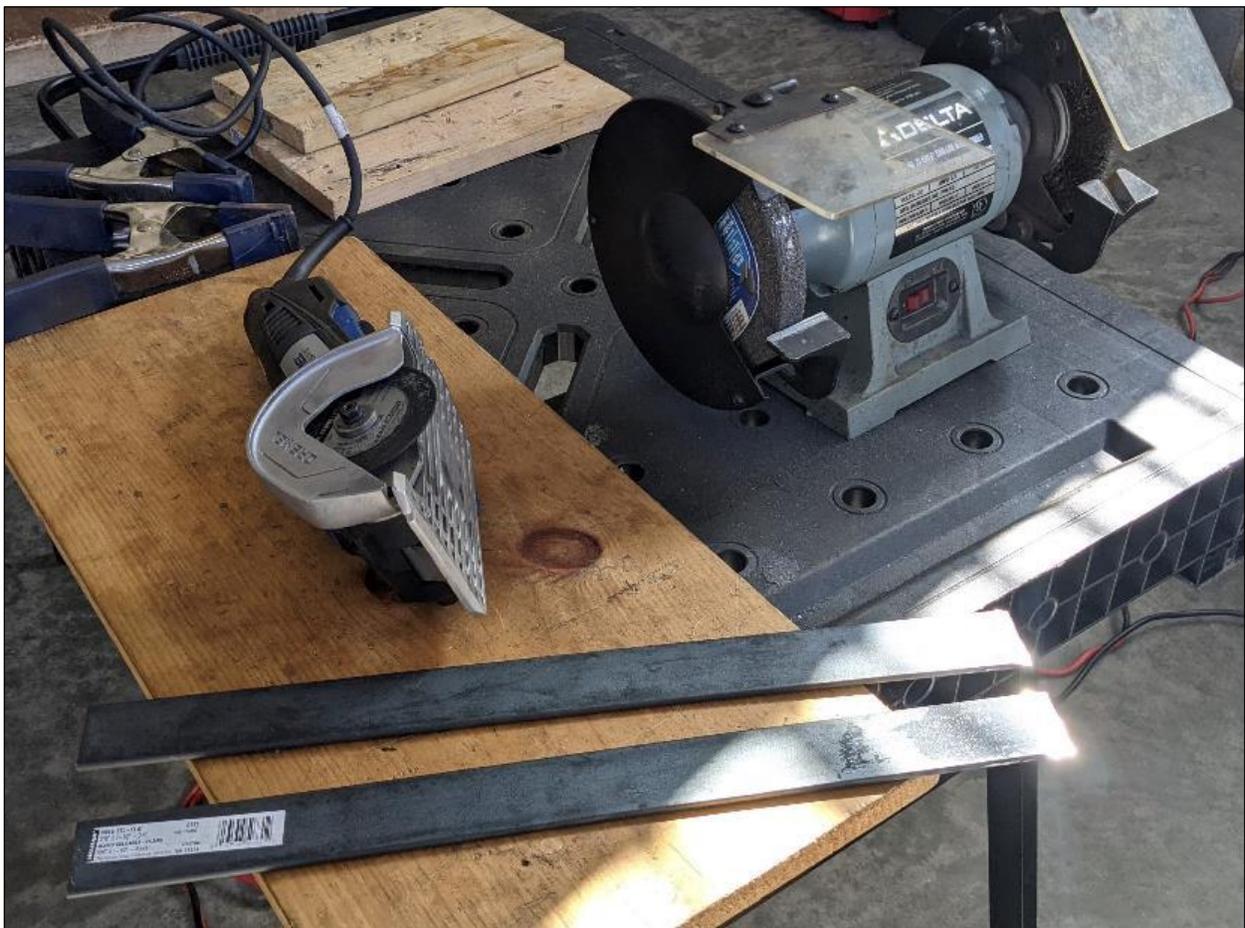


Photo 4. First Step, cut the 3/16-inch-thick x 1.5-inch-wide steel bar stock to 18-inch length and rough shape the point ends with a grinder.

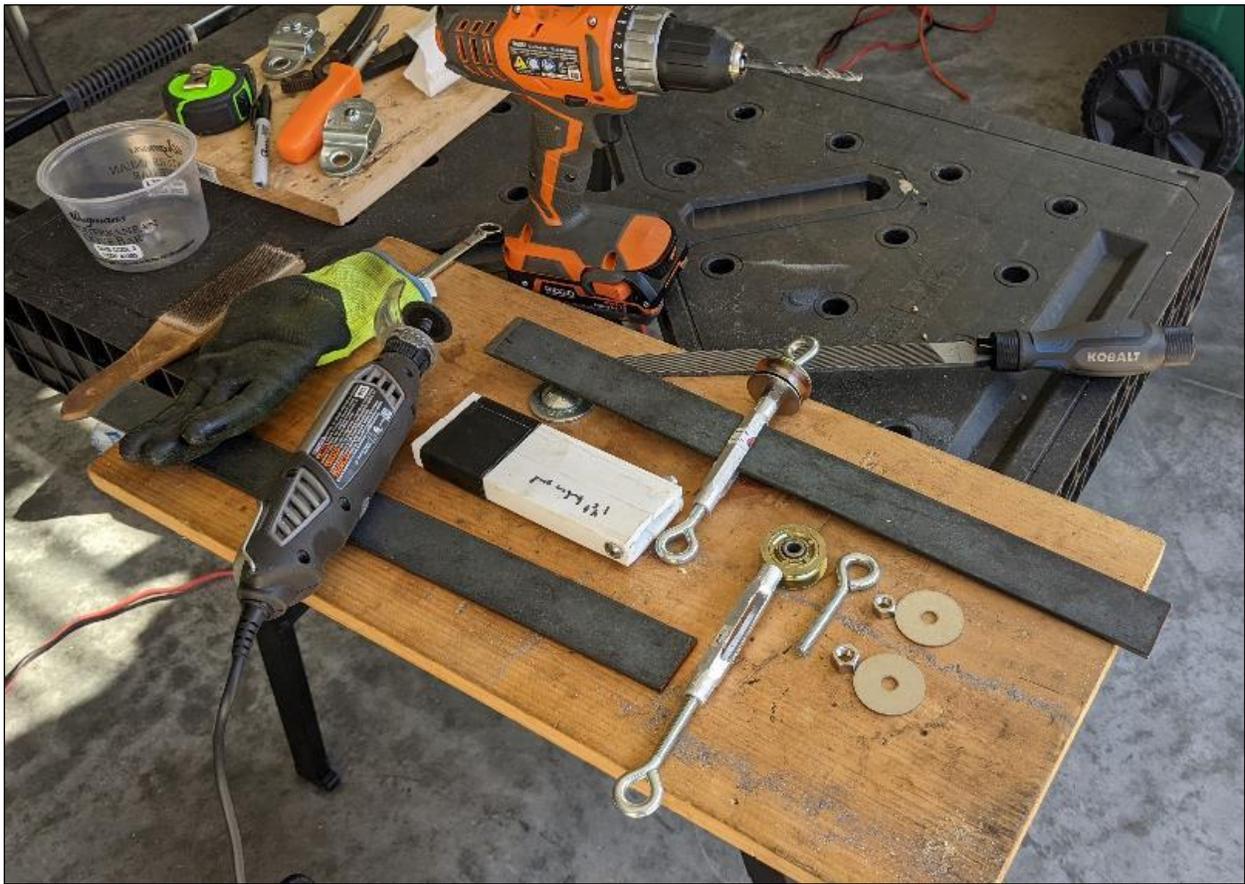


Photo 7. Step three, drill, cut and file slots in the turnbuckles for the steel bar stock and assemble the pulley wheels using nuts to lock the right-threaded turnbuckle bolt in place so that the wheel spins freely. The left-threaded turnbuckle bolt is loosened to move the wheel along the steel bar and then tightened to hold the wheel in the desired position. The plastic guard for the bar stock point is fabricated from saw guard plastic channel material.