



# ADOPT-A-TRAIL MANUAL

*C. Bailey-May 2011*

## **ADOPT-A-TRAIL VOLUNTEER DUTIES**

Welcome to the White Mountain National Forest's Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) program and thank you for volunteering with us! This volunteer program is designed for basic maintenance trail work. ***This manual is a resource and is NOT a substitute for the required Skills Days for Trail Adopters every three years or the Job Hazard Analysis covered in Skills Days.*** Duties of the AAT Volunteer should be performed in the following order a minimum of twice annually:

**1<sup>ST</sup> Priority=DRAINAGE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Priority=CORRIDOR** (brushing & blowdown removal)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Priority=BLAZING** (only after all corridor work is done)

If at any time this work is beyond the reach of the AAT Volunteer, assistance from the ranger station that manages your trail should be requested.

## **WORK REPORTS**

Work reports in WMNF format are due at the end of **June** and end of **September** annually. Individuals need to submit full name and hours. Sponsored Groups need to submit the full names and hours of all individuals who volunteer with them. Work Reports can be dropped off at your ranger station, faxed, mailed, emailed or submitted on-line at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white\\_mountain/volunteering/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/volunteering/) (look for the Adopt-A-Trail Work Report form link on this page).

### **ANDROSCOGGIN RANGER DISTRICT**

**300 Glen Road Gorham, NH 03581**

**(603) 466-2713**

**Fax (603) 466-2856**

### **PEMIGEWASSET RANGER DISTRICT**

**71 White Mountain Hwy. Campton, NH 03223**

**(603) 536-6100**

**Fax (603) 536-3685**

### **SACO RANGER DISTRICT**

**33 Kancamagus Hwy. Conway, NH 03818**

**(603) 447-5448**

**Fax (603) 447-8405**

## **SAFETY!**



***Safety comes first, last and always; on the trail and off. Please pay close attention to this section concerning required trainings, documentation and your support system as a White Mountain National Forest Volunteer.***

**Skills Days:** All Adopt-A-Trail Volunteers under a Volunteer Agreement with the White Mountain National Forest are required to attend a USFS approved “Skills Day” every three years. At these sessions Trail Adopters of all skill levels come together for a fun day of work, review Job Hazard Analysis documents and discuss Forest updates. This day is an opportunity to share knowledge and gain skills.

**S-212 Chainsaw, Ax & Crosscut Saw Trainings:** Volunteers are required to successfully complete these trainings if they wish to use these tools while volunteering on the White Mountain National Forest. These skills are not necessary to be a successful volunteer. If you are interested in these trainings, call your district and discuss options with the Trails Manager. There is no guarantee that we can provide these trainings annually however we welcome your inquiries as to their availability. *Please note that the White Mountain National Forest may not be able to provide 1<sup>st</sup> Aid & CPR training which are also required to validate current chainsaw certification.*

### **Paperwork:**

- ✓ Volunteer Agreements are required by all USFS Volunteers.
- ✓ Job Hazard Analysis (JHA's) of relevance are discussed and signed by volunteers in White Mountain National Forest trainings. JHA's are part of any USFS training as well.
- ✓ The combination of this documentation, training and Volunteer Agreement will cover complying volunteers by Worker's Compensation in the event of injury while performing volunteer duties.
- ✓ Any questions concerning this topic should be addressed prior to training and/or volunteer work.

**Support:** Your safety is the White Mountain National Forest's top priority. Please take note that your volunteer supervisor, as noted in your Volunteer Agreement, is your first line of support. You may also contact the Forest-wide Volunteer Coordinator at the White Mountain National Forest Supervisor's office at (603) 536-6100 for further support beyond the district/s you work with.

## EROSION CONTROL-1<sup>st</sup> Priority

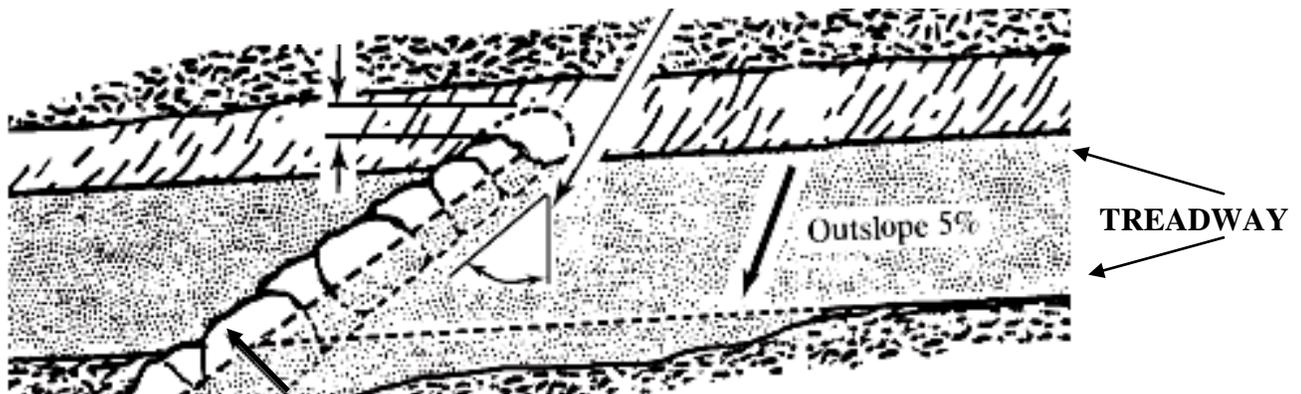


### DRAINAGE

- Clean one drainage at a time. Start by dropping your pack because it could take a while to clean one drainage. Keeping weight on your back while working increases your risk of injuring your back.
- Size up your drainage and look at its functionality. You may want to brush out the outflow first, so it is easier to clean from the uphill side of the structure and right on through the structure itself.
- Get rid of leafy duff that cannot be used in your berm/backslope.
- Once the duff is gone, use the good dirt to shape your drainage and create a good berm in the trail directly behind the ditch where the water will flow. Tamp it down to prevent loose dirt from being kicked back into the ditch by hikers.
- Remove all roots and small plants that can sag into the drainage and create traps for debris that will inevitably clog your drainage.

### Rock Waterbar

Base of clean drainage should be 18 inches wide at least



*A "BERM" is an earthen barrier or reinforcement placed over the drainage structure. The berm should cover the structure whenever possible & be tamped down so soil isn't kicked out by hikers. A berm should be recreated each time you clean a waterbar or dip.*

**OUTFLOW**=extension of drainage off the treadway

## **CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT-2<sup>nd</sup> Priority**



### **BRUSHING**

#### ***HIKING TRAIL STANDARDS***

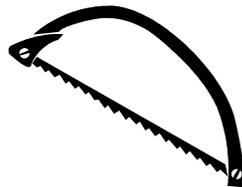
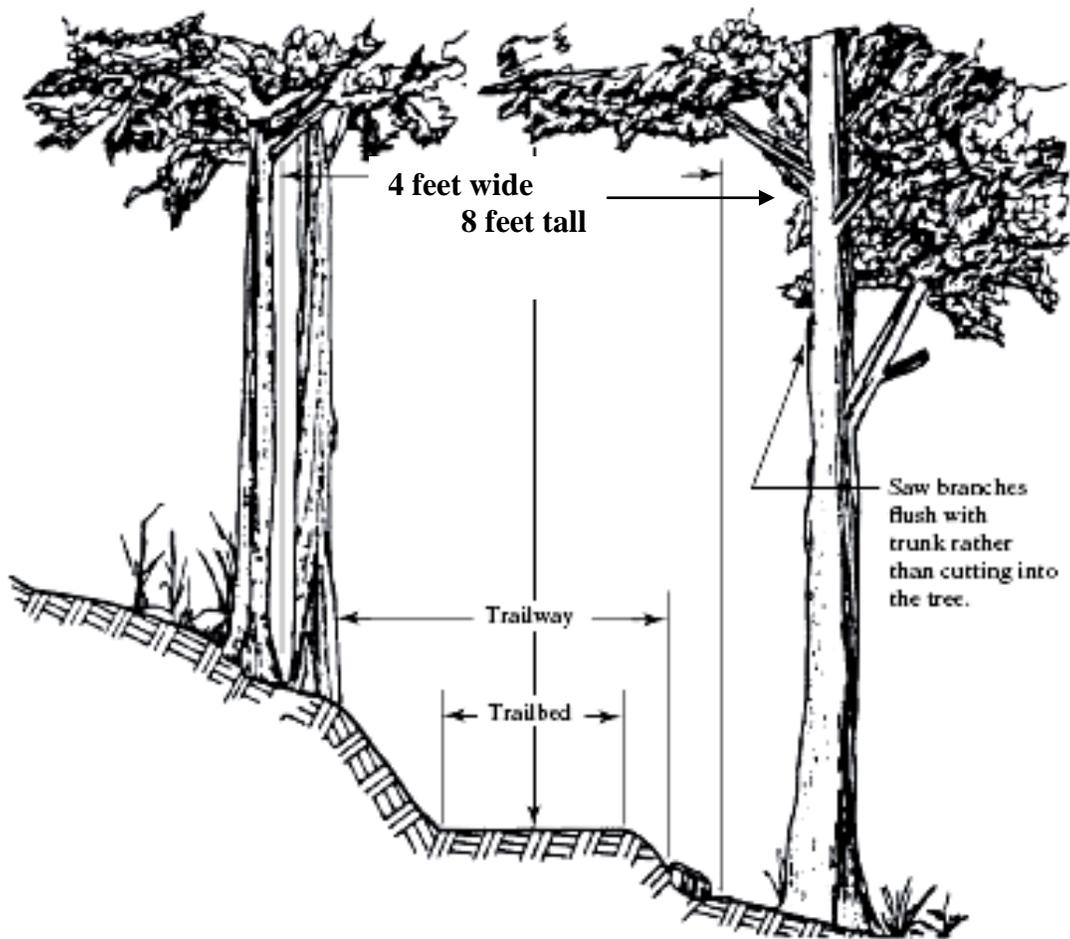
- Standardize the trail to 4'x 8', clip/saw/cut out all branches within this corridor.
- Clip branches at the “quick” of the limb or as close to a main stem as possible, but not too close damaging the protective layer of the tree.
- Try to only cut the limbs that are interfering with the standard corridor, sometimes this may mean taking out a whole small tree.
- Brush for the future, pay attention to the faster growing, deciduous plants that could grow to be a problem in the near future and clip them out.
- Use the rule of “Thumb”! Clippers should not be used to cut anything bigger than the size of your thumb, if needed, use a saw.
- Put clippings butt-end into the woods and NOT in drainages.
- Take you time and be aware of over-brushing.
- Place clippings entirely off the trail and out of drainage ditches. Do not place clippings in wet areas as they only make it tougher for that spot to dry out.

#### ***SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN WILDERNESS***

- 3'x 6' corridor in Wilderness instead of 4' x 8'
- Leave corridor less structured and more natural

#### ***ADDITIONAL SKI TRAIL& MULTI-USE BRUSHING STANDARDS***

- Standardize ski trails to 8' x 12'
- Use the standards listed above & visit your trail in winter to get a sense of snow lines
- Pole saws are key for this type of maintenance (available upon request)



## **BLOWDOWN REMOVAL**

- Clearing trees that obstruct the corridor (blowdowns) can be dangerous work and should ONLY be performed with bow saws or hand saws unless you have successfully completed USFS Ax Training for ax use and/or USFS S-212 Chainsaw Training (which also requires current 1<sup>st</sup> Aid & CPR certifications to be valid)
- Maintain a 4'x 8' corridor as with brushing on hiking trails, 3'x6' on Wilderness trails, and 8'x12' on ski trails.
- Go beyond the corridor when possible to naturalize the appearance of the trail and to mitigate hazards for all allowed recreation

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### ...BLOWDOWN REMOVAL CONTINUED:

- Use bow saws and hand saws whenever possible. Anyone working with axes or chainsaws on USFS lands is required to have certification from USFS. The S-212 Chainsaw certification for chainsaws is a 3 day course with a one day refresher. The full 3-day course must be taken every 3 years. Felling is also covered in S-212 and is required for any felling with any tool. Anyone using an ax must have ax training provided by USFS.
- Ask for assistance before performing any work you are not trained for or feel uncomfortable performing.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN WILDERNESS**

- In Wilderness follow the “Easy Over, Easy Under” rule so as to maintain a more natural corridor...if you can easily get over it or under it with a backpack, leave it
- In Wilderness, take extra effort to go beyond the corridor when possible to naturalize the appearance of the trail so hikers can't see your cuts.



## **BLAZING-3<sup>rd</sup> Priority**

### **Blazing Standards:**

Our biggest concern with blazing is over-blazing; once that blaze is placed on the tree, it is there for the next 15 years. Our advice is to **err on the side of too few blazes** rather than too many. Plan ahead and scout out a good line of site to select blaze locations to ensure adequate, minimal blazing. It is okay if a hiker needs to occasionally peer around the bend and search for a moment for the next blaze if the alternative is to place a poorly placed or slightly redundant blaze.

There is **no blazing in Wilderness**. There should be a Wilderness entry sign to indicate when you enter Wilderness but a recent map is your best resource. This should be well researched before blazing. Wilderness was expanded & added to the White Mountain National Forest as recently as 2007. Ask someone at the Ranger Station if you are uncertain.

**All blazes are 2" X 6"** and are painted onto the tree vertically. Use the provided bottle to squeeze just enough paint on to the tip of the paint brush. **Make sure you are using the correct blaze color.** White is used on the Appalachian Trail, blue (Benjamin Moore Paddington Blue) for its connectors, and yellow (Benjamin Moore Viking Yellow) for all others. Other clubs use different coloring systems and this should be taken into strong consideration.

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## ...BLAZING CONTINUED:

**Paint blazes 6-7 feet up the tree**, as high as you can reach or a little over head height to ensure visibility during winter when there may be several feet of snow on the ground. **DO NOT BLAZE ON ROCKS.**

Blazing is done in both directions. We recommend you **blaze in one direction at a time** – blaze up the trail on your way up and blaze back down. Sometimes one tree will have a blaze on both sides for traffic going both directions but it may not always be the best placement.

To determine spacing between blazes and blazing placement, only one blaze should be visible while looking forward from the last blaze. It is helpful to have 2 people to do this job because one person can run ahead or behind to the next potential blaze site to verify whether or not it is a good place to put a blaze or to determine a more appropriate place.

At junctions or places where the trail curves **DO NOT place double blazes on trees** – single blazes are fine. There are almost always trail signs at junctions. Turns in the trail should be brushed out well enough to be obvious without blazes.

### Hiking Trail Blaze Kit:

- 1 squeeze bottle of Benjamin Moore latex paint
- 1 -2" x 6" blaze stencil (not everyone uses these)
- 1-2 green "scrubbies" for removing any loose bark or debris on the tree
- 1 paint scraper for more difficult bark debris
- 1 2" paint brush for latex paint
- 1 plastic bag for wet paint brush/paint bottle



### Ski Trail Blaze Kit:

- Blue plastic diamond blazed-USFS issue
- 2" nails-2 per blaze
- Hammer
- Safety Glasses
- Ziplocs, plastic container or canvas bag to collect old nails & broken blazes

***REMINDER: NO BLAZING IN WILDERNESS!***

## THANK YOU!

Your efforts never go unnoticed! The duties you are performing as a US Forest Service Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer are the most important annual tasks the trails see. Basic Maintenance is the “oil change of the trails” and without it work beyond our abilities would pile up exponentially. Please know you are in an important role.

We love to hear from you! Keeping us informed is a critical component of your work. If we don't hear from you, we don't know what you've done on your trail. If ever you are in need of our assistance, no matter the size of the task, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Let us know how we are doing. At any time we welcome your input on how we can better manage the White Mountain National Forest volunteer program. We care about your experience so please let us know what we are doing well and what needs improvement. Only you can describe why volunteering on the White Mountain National Forest is an experience you would recommend to others.

Please join us for our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day! Your Volunteer Supervisor can fill you in on the details of this event annually. This day is a gathering of our volunteers and is a celebration of your collective efforts. In the past we have had a potluck lunch on the Forest and have awarded our volunteers who have made extraordinary efforts over the years. We also try to provide some interpretive walks and other similarly fun activities. Please join us!

Enjoy your work!