



SMR Trailkeeper Responsibilities and Report Form January 2018

Responsibilities

Trail Monitoring: Reports on the condition of the trail four times a year (roughly on the first of March, June, September and December). (See form below.) Treadway, (erosion, surface stability), trail corridor (free of encroaching vegetation and fallen trees), blazes, and other conditions needing attention (e.g., trash accumulations and potentially unsafe conditions like leaning trees or dead trees close to the trail) should be noted. Trail report will be accessible online starting in the fall of 2014.

Trail Maintenance: Making sure the treadway is clean and clear by “brushing” the trail, trimming branches and pruning bushes and removing whatever will get in the way of a hiker. This usually requires for a narrow hiking trail a rectangular passage or corridor free of vegetation 2 to 3 feet right and left of the trail center line and to a height of 8 feet. (Trails that might be used for horses would require a 10 foot high clearance and would be wider.) Trash pickup is also included among the tasks.

Trail Blazing: Blazing should help a hiker see the course of the trail at any point on the path in both directions. The next blaze should be visible, generally, by facing away from the last blaze. Sometimes the next blaze can emerge if one continues some 10 to 15 feet beyond the last one. Blazing should be sufficient, but not excessive; it should not seem as if we’ve painted the forest. Good blazing requires that you assess visibility from both directions and being attentive to bends in the trail and obstacles to one’s line of sight; this sometimes requires trimming an errant branch. Line of sight in both directions can generally be achieved by blazing both sides of the same tree, but not always; at other times, two nearby trees, on the same or opposite sides of the trail, work best.

Blazes should be around five feet above the path level, that is, at or just above an adult’s eye level. They should be positioned on the tree, left and right, so they are centered as seen from the path some 50 feet away, not up close. This mistake is frequently made.

Turns are indicated when it helps provide a

On most trails we use painted rectangles with oil-based, long-lasting epoxy paint. The sizes of a vertical rectangle, 2 ½” (the width of a dollar bill) by 5”, or 3 x 6” are recommended. A template of flexible plastic can be made, but a 2” brush usually works well if the paint is applied attentively. Loop trails have a white circle of about 5 inches in diameter with a colored, centered dot of about 1 ½” (a good model is a CD disk). The Hemlock Falls, Zoo, and Mayapple Loops have these markings with centers of red, green, and blue, respectively.

Some trails have aluminum rectangles supplementing the painted blazing. The Lenape Trail (yellow blaze) has yellow tags placed 8 to 10 per mile and at major trail intersections. The Zoo Loop Trail (green dot) also has aluminum tags. Aluminum nails should be used with these tags



South Mountain Conservancy

South Mountain Reservation Stewardship, Advocacy & Public Engagement

and should not be nailed all the way; a 1/2" to 3/4" gap should be left so the tree can grow and not engulf the tag.

In several places, we are also using colored aluminum disks with arrows to indicate an access trail to a particular trail. For example, from the Turtle Back picnic area, silver arrows with an orange background lead to the orange-blazed Turtle Back Trail. These medallions should be also attached at eye level with aluminum nails and a 3/4 inch gap between them and the trees.

Information on preparing the tree surface to better accept the paint by scraping (from Appalachian Mountain Club guidelines) is available. Paint and supplies can be obtained from the Trailkeeper coordinator, if needed. These include paint, brushes, scrapers, small pails and paint thinner. Most of these supplies are donated by Ricciardi Bros. paint store, 1915 Springfield Ave., Maplewood. (If you patronize them, thank them for their support.) The Trailkeeper coordinator can pick up the paints from that store, as needed.

Over the last couple of years, the SMC has moved to oil-based paints over water-based, latex paints, though clean up is more challenging. These are generally the epoxy paints by Benjamin Moore. Water-based paints do not last as long on the trees and, when kept in our unheated shed, are not usable after a couple of winters. We are trying to standardize on brighter, lighter colors which are more visible in dim light: A lighter blue for the Elmdale, a lighter red for the Oakdale, and bright yellow for the Lenape. The vibrant yellow-green (no. 420 Benjamin Moore color) is being used for the several trails: the Turtle Back Connector, the Zoo Loop (a green dot on white), West Connector (with white), and the Reservoir Connector (with orange).



South Mountain Conservancy

South Mountain Reservation Stewardship, Advocacy & Public Engagement

South Mountain Reservation Trail Report

Trail:		Section:		Inspection Date(s):	
Report for:	Winter/Spring <i>Due March 1</i>	Spring <i>Due June 1</i>	Summer <i>Due Sept. 1</i>	Fall <i>Due Dec. 1</i>	
Trailkeeper:		E-mail:	Phone:		
Description of Maintenance Work Done:					
General Assessment					
Category/Rating			General Comments (<i>Provide details below</i>)		
Treadway	Good				
	Fair				
	Poor				
	Very Poor				
Trail Corridor	Clear in height & width				
	Some obstruction				
	Significant obstruction (trees across path)				
Blazes	<i>Frequency & Placement</i>		<i>Visibility/Condition</i>	<i>Painting Quality</i>	
	Too many		Good	Good	
	Fine both ways		Fair	Fair	
	Too few		Poor	Poor	
Specific Issues or Problems					
Severity (H,M,L)	Urgent? (Y/N)	Location/ Map Coordinates*	Nature of Problem/ Recommendation <small>(Address: treadway stability, bogginess, or erosion; trail corridor vegetation encroachment or tree blowdowns; blazing deficiencies; trash accumulation; and safety or other issues, for example, dead or leaning trees within 70 feet of trail. Make recommendations, if appropriate.)</small>		
Status of Nearby Forest Regeneration Sites					
Site No.	Status (G,F,P)	Nature of Problem/ Recommendation			

* Provide coordinates, such as B-5, that reference grid cells on the new Reservation map. At times, decimals (.0 to .9) should be used to indicate the relative positions *within* each cell (top to bottom and left to right) for greater clarity. For example, B(.2)-5(.8) would be the coordinate for the middle of the parking area at Dogwood Hillside; (.2) indicating the relative distance from the top edge of row B and (.8) indicating the relative distance from the left edge of column 5.