

# **City of Waupaca Parks and Recreation**

## **Adopt-A-Trail Program**

The purpose of this program is to engage organizations and community members interested in assisting the Waupaca Park and Recreation department in maintaining safe and well-groomed trails on the River Ridge Trail system. This is a great opportunity for businesses, Boy and Girl Scout troops, classrooms, clubs, groups of friends or families to give back to their community by helping us protect this great local resource.

### **Schedule**

Adopters will schedule and perform sweeps at least once a month from May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Organizations should let Park and Rec staff know when sweeps are scheduled. Tasks included in these regular sweeps are listed below:

### **Task List**

- Trimming overgrown limbs and bushes
- Removing trash, rocks and sticks on and around the trails
- Rake trails as needed to keep flat
- Repair wash outs after heavy rains
- Replace woodchips or limestone as needed
- Help with infrastructure such as board walk upkeep
- Report any issues with signs and wayside exhibits
- Report any other issues to the Parks and Recreation Director or Parks Superintendent

***Please do not create any new trails, paths or run any power tools while working on the trails!***

### **Trail Safety**

Safety is the most important part of a trail sweep. Crew need to be safety conscious at all times. For your safety and the safety of our many park visitors, please adhere to the following procedures while caring for your segment of the Trail:

- Always be aware of your surroundings and considerate of other Trail users.
- Always wear appropriate attire, including boots or hard-soled shoes (no sandals), comfortable clothes, gloves, safety glasses and hats.
- Work only in daylight and fair weather.
- Do not over exert yourself. Take breaks and drink ample fluids.
- Stay alert for and avoid all contact with wildlife and noxious weeds.

- Do not pick up hazardous materials such as car batteries, animal carcasses, discarded chemical containers, or any object that appears questionable. Report these materials to the Parks Superintendent.
- When lifting objects, use correct lifting techniques, keeping your back as straight as possible. Keep the object that you are trying to lift close to your body and let your legs do the work. Do not attempt to lift heavy objects that two of you cannot reasonably lift.
- Report any problems or safety concerns immediately to the park and rec office (715)-258-4435.

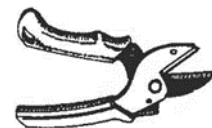
#### WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF INJURY

- Minor Injury (scrapes; blisters; etc.): Proceed with first aid (located in the tool shed at Swan Park). Report all injuries to the park and rec office as soon as possible after your trail sweep. Complete an incident report.
- Major Injury (Lacerations, punctures, broken bones, etc.): Call 911. Notify the office and report all injuries to the park and rec office as soon as possible.
- In ALL cases, take the name, address, and phone number of the person involved whenever possible.

### Introduction to Tools

Choosing the right mix of tools for a trail sweep depends on how many volunteers are expected, what tasks are to be accomplished, and the season of the year. Tools can be found in the small shed by the community garden at Swan Park. Any additional supplies or equipment can be requested, as needed. Organizational leaders will be given a code to get into the shed. All tools will be checked out and in each time used. The following tools are commonly used in trail maintenance and available in the shed:

- Garden Rake - Use to move leaves, dirt, and debris.
- Hand pruner - Use for trimming small branches. Wear safety glasses.
- Leaf rake - Use to remove leaves from ditches and debris from tread way.
- Lopper- Long-handled pruner. Use for trimming larger branches. Wear safety glasses.



- Pole saw-Long-handled saw. Use for trimming overhead branches. Safety goggles and hardhat are recommended.



- Pruning saw - Small handsaw. Use for cutting branches.



- Shovel - Digging tool with multiple uses.



- Wheelbarrow – Used to haul trail materials.



Keep track of tools while out on the trail. If it is necessary to put tools aside when not in use, stand them up at the edge of the trail. This makes them easy to find and they will not block passage of hikers. Make sure all tools are returned at the end of the sweep. Report any issue with tools to the parks superintendent.

## How to do a Trail Sweep

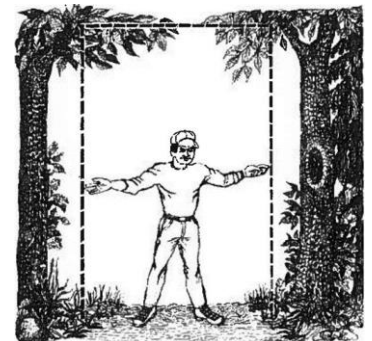
Sweeping a trail consists of observing, maintaining, and reporting trail conditions in seven general categories.

### Corridor Clearance

#### **Travel Corridor**

Keep the travel corridor clear of unwanted vegetation and obstructions.

'Brushing' is the term used for removing unwanted branches, bushes, vines, uprooted trees, windfall, and other vegetation that is encroaching on the travel corridor. The width of the travel corridor is typically two feet wider than the width of the tread way.



The goal of brushing is to make the trail look as natural as possible. It is not necessary to remove all the vegetation from the travel corridor.

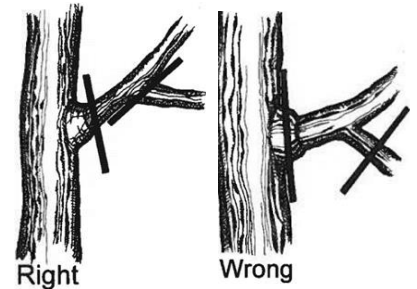
- Allow low-growing plants to grow right up to the edge of the footpath. They help stabilize the soil and make the trail more attractive.
- Pull down any cuttings left hanging in trees or bushes.

- Spread branches and piles of brush over a wide area so they do not call attention to themselves.
- Scatter cuttings off the trail so they cannot be seen from the trail, particularly the cut ends. The larger the cuttings, the farther they should be dragged off the trail.

### Pruning

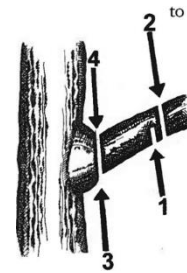
It is important to know how to properly prune trees in order to avoid damaging them.

Cut live branches flush with the tree trunk or at a fork in a branch. Make the cut close to the main stem. Look for the branch collar around the base of the branch. Avoid cutting the branch collar because the branch collar can grow over the wound and completely cover it in a few years. Avoid leaving stubs or "hat racks" that can catch on clothing and allow decay into the heartwood of the tree.



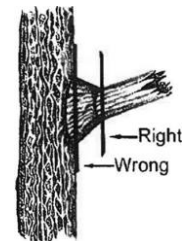
The size and weight of a branch determines how many cuts will be necessary to remove it. If not cut properly, the weight of even a small branch can cause live bark to tear from the tree as the limb falls away. To prevent tearing live bark from a tree, as many as 4 cuts may be needed to remove a large branch.

Make the first cut 6 to 12 inches out from the trunk. Undercut the branch by about 1/3 of its diameter. The second cut will be from the top, several inches out from the first undercut. As the second cut is made, the limb falls off without tearing live bark. Finish the job by removing the stub. The third cut, if necessary, is an undercut. The fourth cut is from the top to remove the stub.



To prevent a large limb from damaging people or vegetation, you may want to tie it off with heavy rope and lower it to the ground.

If it is necessary to remove a dead stub from a tree, look for the branch collar that has formed around the base of the stub and remove the stub only. Avoid cutting into the live wood of the branch collar.



### Blowdowns and Windfalls

Blowdowns are large, uprooted, or broken trees that fall down across the trail, generally during storms.

- Remove blowdowns from the travel corridor, if possible.
- Report blowdowns that are too large to move to the parks superintendent for removal.

Windfalls are smaller logs and branches that have fallen on the trail.

- Remove windfalls from the trail and disperse them into the woods.

- Leave the footpath free of debris that clutters the path and destabilizes footing.

### **Standing trees**

Removing standing trees is one of the most dangerous trail maintenance jobs. Volunteers are not permitted to remove standing trees.

Observe trees that pose a safety hazard to trail users. Report the following conditions to the parks superintendent:

- Dead trees or limbs that are next to or overhang the trail.
- Any live, dead, or diseased tree leaning toward or over the trail that could hit the trail if it falls.

### **Litter**

- Carry a trash bag and pick up litter at the trailhead and along the trail.
- Clear all sticks, rocks and other debris that pose a potential hazard to trail users.
- Report litter problems that are too big to handle, such as trash dumps.
- Garbage can be taken to the Rec Center garbage bin or placed next to the tool shed for pick up.

### **Tread Way, Washouts and Top Dressing**

The tread or tread way is the actual footpath. The tread way shall be maintained to a width of roughly 3 to 5 feet.

The goal of tread maintenance is to provide a solid, level and well-drained surface. Observe the condition of the tread way and fix or report any of the following problems:

- Erosion from heavy rains. Fill back in these areas if material is available.
- Wet areas
- Unleveled and/or unsafe areas in the trail.
- Remove roots, stumps, and rocks that may be tripping hazards. This task is known as grubbing.
- Fill in and compact any holes created by grubbing.
- Leave roots alone unless they are causing a problem. They help stabilize the tread and prevent erosion.

- Top dress the trail with new woodchips or limestone as needed. Parks staff can provide woodchips and limestone at the trailhead as needed as long as we have at least one-week of time to get it to the trailhead.

**NOTE:** In some areas, a mass of roots may appear on the surface of the tread way. It may be healthier for the trees if the roots are covered with a layer of trail mix (sand and small stones) instead of being grubbed out. Consult with the parks superintendent for instructions.

### **Structures**

Observe and report problems with structures along the trail.

Benches and fencing are structures that may be found along certain sections of the trail.

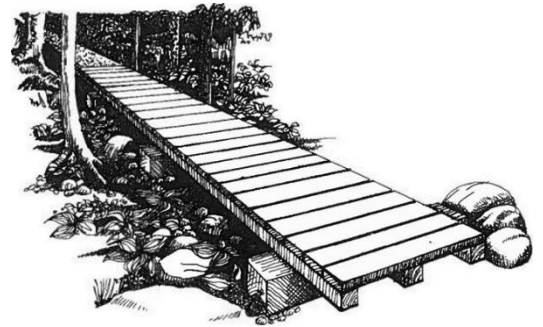
- Observe and report any problems with rotten, loose or broken benches
- Check to make sure fences are standing and secure

Bridges and boardwalks are structures that span and permit passage over rivers, streams, wetlands, roads, ravines, and other areas that are difficult to cross.

- Check for rotted, loose, or broken boards or railings.
- Clean dirt, debris, and organic material from all exposed wood surfaces and from spaces between decking.

Puncheons are simple wooden walkways spanning boggy areas, built on sills set in mud, topped with stringers, and decking.

- Check for rotted, loose, or broken boards.
- Clean dirt, debris, and organic material from all exposed wood surfaces and from spaces between decking.



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