



# **Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation**

## **Trail Stewardship Program**

### **Introduction to the Trail Stewardship Program**





## **MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION**

### **ABOUT**

The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization, is dedicated to protecting, preserving, promoting, developing and maintaining the County's regional trails, open space, and parks for current and future generations. The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation advocates to protect the natural heritage of the region; provides information and education; partners to provide important recreation facilities and amenities; and provides stewardship assistance through the management and training of the organization's volunteer programs.

The Foundation is aligned with the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department's Strategic Plan for future development and improvements in the Maricopa Trails and the County Parks System.

The Maricopa Trail winds through the County connecting 10 Maricopa County Regional Parks on a 315-mile scenic and diverse route. A network of volunteers actively help monitor, maintain and protect the 315 miles of trails.

This manual serves as an introduction to the training manuals for the MT+PF volunteers.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Maricopa Trail and Parks Foundation

This manual was researched and authored by Rick Kesselman, Trail Director.

It is a compilation of information and techniques based on the training materials of Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona and other trail organizations.

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The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation's Trail Stewardship Program and training manuals are made possible with support from the Foundation's donors, grants, and environmental leadership provided by REI Co-Op, Arizona State Parks and the Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails Program, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, and Maricopa County.

*The material in this manual is intended to provide training assistance and general guidance to volunteers. It is not a legal document. Volunteers for the MT+PF accept full responsibility for their actions. Volunteers may not hold the MT+PF accountable for actions. For more information about the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation, to donate and/or volunteer, go to [MCTPF.org](http://MCTPF.org).*

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# **MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE MARICOPA TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

### **HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE MARICOPA TRAIL**

In February 2000, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors formed the Maricopa County Trail Commission and unveiled their plans to develop a Regional Trail System. The overall goal is to establish a continuous trail system connecting the County's regional parks. After much public input, "Maricopa Trail" was chosen as the name for the primary trail loop connecting the regional parks. It winds through the county connecting the ten Maricopa County Regional parks on a 315-mile scenic and diverse route. Many sections of the trail in the plan are under the jurisdiction of Federal, State, and Local agencies other than Maricopa County. The project will capitalize on existing right-of-ways, such as canals, parks, utility corridors and flood control projects. The project will be completed in 2017. Additional sections to the Maricopa Trail will be added in the future.

### **RELATIONSHIP OF THE MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION (MT+PF) TO THE MARICOPA TRAIL**

The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation (MT+PF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to protecting, promoting, developing, and maintaining the Maricopa County Park Systems. Maricopa County has entered into an agreement with the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation to partner with the Maricopa Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD) to provide trail maintenance, to enhance and to promote the Maricopa Trail and to ensure the environmental sustainability of the Trail. This will be completed in compliance with the trail planning and design guidelines established by MCPRD.

### **REGIONAL TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

The Foundation has developed a Trail Stewardship Program to help accomplish its goals. Its structure is the following. The Maricopa Trail is divided into approximately 36 segments in four to six regions. Each region is assigned a Regional Steward. Each segment is assigned a Segment Steward. The four to six Regional Stewards each manage four to six Segment Stewards. Each Segment Steward manages his/her individual segment trail maintenance events and volunteers.

The Segment Steward, who also may be the Technical Advisor and/or a Crew Leader, will be present and manage each event. Each work event includes up to 20 trail workers. There will be one Technical Advisor and sufficient number of Crew Leaders so that each Crew Leader has no more than six Trail Crew volunteers to manage. If there is a problem that requires greater technical trail skills, like extensive trail water damage, that location is identified and reported to the Regional Steward. The Regional Steward will contact the appropriate personnel (Chief Trail Steward, MCPRD, Land Manager, etc.) Together, they will determine how and who best can correct the problem.

The Foundation provides volunteers who are trained through the trail maintenance training programs. Training will cover basic trail maintenance techniques, crew leadership for managing trail crews, general safety, proper and safe tool use, volunteer recruiting, planning and management of trail events and basic trail design principals. Additional training also is provided on plant, wildlife identification and wildlife corridors.

## THE ROLE OF EACH VOLUNTEER LEVEL

**Chief Trail Steward:** This person is the Executive Director of the MT+PF. This individual is in charge of the Regional Trail Stewardship Program.

**Regional Steward:** This person recruits and helps with the training of Segment Stewards and other volunteers. This individual monitors, gives support, provides guidance and oversees all work and activities of his/her Segment Stewards. The Regional Steward also attends meetings of other Regional Stewards.

**Segment Steward:** The Segment Stewards serve as liaisons to the Regional Stewards. They are the project managers for each work event who monitor the trail and trailhead condition. This involves regularly traversing the trail, preferably quarterly, but no less than semi-annually and notifying the Regional Steward of any improvements needed. When trail damage is discovered or maintenance is needed, it is reported to the Regional Steward. If agreed, a plan and work event is scheduled to correct the problem. The Segment Stewards organize and coordinate volunteer's activities and trail maintenance events. They recruit volunteers and oversee the crew leaders and volunteers at all trail events. All trail work must be coordinated and confirmed with the Regional Steward prior to the event. Some trail work may only take three people three hours while others may take 20 people six hours. The Segment Stewards ensure that his/her section of the trail is in top shape for all trail users.

**Technical Advisor:** This Technical Advisor is an expert in trail design, construction and maintenance. He/she provides detailed information and advice to people working at a trail event. Segment Stewards and Crew Leaders consult with the Technical Advisor when there are issues concerning the trail work.

**Crew Leader:** A Crew Leader is in charge of between four and eight Trail Crew volunteers. Leading the volunteers entails motivating, teaching and supervising the technical tasks of a particular project with a small team of trail volunteers who typically bring a wide range of skills, experience and physical stamina to the team. This person needs to have the technical skills to perform the required event maintenance tasks and to teach those skills to the trail volunteers. Crew leading is not for someone who simply enjoys trail work. Crew Leaders must have a strong commitment to maintaining quality trails and to helping others have a good time while safely doing good work. He/she must have technical, leadership and management skills. It is a critical and very rewarding position.

**Trail Crew:** The Trail Crew volunteers perform the basic trail maintenance. The MT+PF work is possible only because of the work of these dedicated volunteers. The Trail Crew volunteers are responsible for moving rocks off of the trail, checking the condition and effectiveness of directional signage, picking-up trash, pruning, brushing and light basic trail maintenance (i.e. slough removal, clearing existing drain dip areas), if approved by the Regional Steward or appropriate Land Manager. Trail Crew volunteers are the heart and soul of these maintenance efforts. Volunteers can sign-up for trail work events as their time permits.

**Other Positions:** There are important jobs that do not involve trail work. These jobs include pre-event management, such as volunteer coordinator, marketing, promotion, tool procurement,

Website assistance and recruiting. On event day, additional volunteers are needed to set-up and assist in volunteer check-in, food/snack duties, photography and tool management.

## **BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE MARICOPA TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

- Gain valuable new skills through free training programs and supervised work events.
- Gain valuable experiences for personal & professional enrichment.
- Improve and protect YOUR Maricopa Public Lands.
- Fulfill community service/school credit hours.
- Perform healthy activities with your organization, family and friends. Get in shape.
- Meet new people and make new friends while having fun.
- Set a good example for our children and our community.
- Share your time, skills and expertise.
- Build self-esteem.
- Enjoy the outdoors.

## **LITTLE TIME COMMITMENT. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY**

The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation seeks a network of volunteers who can actively help to monitor and to maintain the areas of land that need to be protected and preserved. With a limited number of Park Rangers and land management agency personnel on hand to manage the Maricopa Trail, volunteers are a focal point for land stewardship. Maricopa Trail Volunteers learn how to “give back” to these beautiful trails and Regional Park areas that so many enjoy. Committing to as little as one or two days a year makes a significant difference to the Trail Stewardship Program. No experience is necessary.

## **MAKE A DIFFERENCE! HOW TO VOLUNTEER**

*Please contact us to volunteer.* Let us know the best way to reach you (telephone or email) and what kind of work you are interested (if known). Contact us by telephone, email or through our website. We do not share our volunteer contact information with others.

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## **HOW TO DONATE**

The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation is incorporated and recognized as a public charity or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization by the IRS. Donations help make it possible for the Foundation to continue the work on the Maricopa Trail. Donations may be made online or by check mailed to the MT+PF address above.

# **MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM VOLUNTEER TRAINING MANUAL REFERENCES**

## **REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona Training Materials

“Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds 2007”

“United States Forest Service Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook”

“Lightly on the Land, The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual, Second Edition 2005”

“IMBA Trail Solutions 2004”

Arizona Trail Association Training Materials

Maricopa County Trail Design and Construction Manual

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado

Okanogan Trail Construction Co.