



Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation

Trail Stewardship Program

Crew Leader Volunteer Training Manual





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 a training guide for the Foundation's volunteers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation

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

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 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. The MT+PF may not be held accountable for actions by volunteers. For more information about the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation, to donate, to volunteer or to become a member, go to MCTPF.org.

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Crew Leader Training Manual, Trail Stewardship Program

INTRODUCTION

This manual has been prepared as a guide to those persons who have agreed to accept the position as a Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation (MT+PF) Crew Leader and to be part of the Foundation's Trail Steward Program. It provides the Crew Leaders with the knowledge needed to assess trails in their segment and to conduct a trail maintenance event that gives trail work volunteers a safe, enjoyable and productive experience as they maintain quality trails. It draws on the work of Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona and other trail building organizations noted at the end of this Manual.

The Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation 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 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 will be 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 the individual segment's trail maintenance events and volunteers.

The Foundation's work is possible only because of the work of dozens of dedicated volunteers. The MT+PF 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 will 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 will make a significant difference to the Trail Stewardship Program. No experience is necessary.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION 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.

CREW LEADER ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Outdoor stewardship organizations that engage volunteers to achieve their mission have a vested interest in providing their volunteers with the best possible experience. The Foundation seeks to build and maintain a constituency that is committed to the organization and provides a reliable corps of dedicated skilled trail workers. Crew Leaders are critical to achieving the MT+PF's mission.

The Crew Leader has the most contact with volunteers during work events and will, by and large, determine the success of the experience from the volunteer's perspective. A volunteer's first experience is apt to weigh heavily on whether that individual volunteers again. A good experience, where time and effort are valued and a personal impact felt, usually enhances the likelihood the volunteer will return. A bad experience, on the other hand, may discourage some from participating again with this or any organization.

A crew leader must have a strong commitment both to maintaining quality trails and to helping others have a good time while safely doing good work. Leading trail work volunteers entails motivating, teaching and supervising the technical tasks of a particular project with a small team of people who typically bring a wide range of skills, experience and physical stamina to the crew. The Crew Leader must ensure that volunteers are excited about the work, aware of their progress and focused on the task at hand. Volunteers will look to the Crew Leader for guidance, so this person needs to be prepared to give it. Crew leading is not for anyone who simply enjoys trail work.

- In order to become a certified Crew Leader, each Crew Leader must attend the free training courses provided by the MTPF, participate satisfactorily in at least two work events as a Trail Crew volunteer and demonstrate the knowledge of the technical, leadership and management skills set forth in the Crew Leader Manual and satisfactorily complete the background check by the Maricopa County Sheriffs Office.

CREW LEADING SKILLS

Crew leading may be defined in terms of three general skill areas: Technical, Leadership and Management Skills. All these areas interact and overlap.

Technical Skills. Crew Leaders must have a core set of technical skills for trail work. This includes general areas of safety, tool technique and trail maintenance.

Safety. Safety is the first priority at all events. Though serious event-related injuries and illnesses are rare, their consequences for the injured and the sponsoring organizations can be severe. Crew Leaders must convey safety importance to all Trail Crew volunteers. They must be vigilant at all times to spot and correct all safety concerns. Crew Leaders will be trained in the Safety Net Protocol.

Arizona's statutory language (ARS 32-1471) on aiding injured individuals note,

***"Health care provider and any other person; emergency aid; non-liability:** Any health care provider licensed or certified to practice as such in this state or elsewhere, or a licensed ambulance attendant, driver or pilot as defined in section 41-1831, or any other person who renders emergency care at a public gathering or at the scene of an emergency occurrence gratuitously and in good faith shall not be liable for any civil or other damages as the result of any act or omission by such*

person rendering the emergency care, or as the result of any act or failure to act to provide or arrange for further medical treatment or care for the injured persons, unless such person, while rendering such emergency care, is guilty of gross negligence."

This law does not protect anyone whose actions might be found to be grossly negligent. In plain language, be prudent, use good sense and do not attempt action for which you are not qualified. Seek qualified medical assistance as soon as possible.

Tool Technique. A list of tools commonly used in trail work and a discussion of how to use them correctly and safely is in the Trail Crew Training Manual.

Trail Maintenance. In summary, trail maintenance involves clearing the trail corridor (pruning and brushing); repairing and clearing the tread (removing slough, rocks, etc.); polishing the corridor and closing social trails or cross cutting paths; cleaning and repairing existing structures, as needed. Trail maintenance must be consistent with your skills and approval of the Land Manager, Chief Trail Steward and Regional Steward. How to perform trail maintenance is discussed in depth in the Trail Crew Training Manual.

Leadership Skills. Crew Leaders must be able to motivate volunteers to engage in the shared goal of maintaining sustainable trails. Effective leadership draws on a wide range of skills and attention to these skills will enhance both the volunteer and the crew leadership experience. These skills include communication, expectations and goals, consistency, role modeling, teaching, problem solving, constructive criticism, praising, supporting other Crew Leaders and handling serious rule violations.

Communication. The opening safety talk, often given by the Crew Leader, can create an inviting climate for communication by a friendly greeting and self-introductions. Establish eye contact and maintain an open body posture. Stand with arms in an open position, not folded across the chest. When talking to volunteers, remove your sunglasses and position the sun behind your crew.

Listen to what crew members say. Use "active-listening." Paraphrase or repeat what someone says to assure you understood what has been said to you. Active listening means that one consciously focuses on what the other person is saying. It requires the listener to be receptive, even if personal experience with the subject may incline you to quickly dismiss what seems to be bad idea. If you try to fake this, others will perceive it. Additional active listening rules include maintaining eye contact, keeping an open mind, not interrupting, asking clarifying questions, paying attention to body language (i.e., Is the other person open to what you are saying?).

Expectations and Goals.

- *Set clear goals with enthusiasm.* Clearly state the amount of work to be performed for the day, the work standards and the trail specifications to be followed. Whatever the goal, give it some heft and enthusiasm. Volunteers want to know that what they are doing is important. Try to accommodate the personal goals of crew members whenever possible. These may come out during the opening talk, especially if you inquire. Many volunteers will not have specific expectations, other than wanting to have a good day and to feel like what they are doing will making a difference.
- *Convey knowledge.* Volunteers are reassured if the leader knows what he or she is

doing. If you are in doubt about anything, it is best to get a matter clarified before you start. It is okay to acknowledge your own uncertainty, to seek advice from the Segment Steward or other crew members.

- *Be interactive and inclusive.* A very important duty of a Crew Leader is to ask, observe and experiment with the volunteers to discover each person's strength, weakness and desires. The Crew Leader should use the knowledge of these skills and interests to the best advantage of the individual to accomplish the crew's assigned work. When a Crew Leader is successful with this effort, volunteers will return and participate again and again.

Consistency. Crews will lose their commitment if the rules change or the instructions are contradictory. This applies across events, whether single or multiple. While there may be more than one way to accomplish a task, the volunteer experience will be enhanced if all Crew Leaders within the MT+PF abide by one standard norm. Consistency is hard to sustain if a task is not performed frequently. Most volunteer Crew Leaders do not have the benefit of regular retraining and may inevitably drift from standards. Remember, consistency among Crew Leaders and between the Crew Leaders and the various Trail Crews on any given event is vital to the Trail Stewardship Program success.

Teaching. Crew members need to understand the principles of trail maintenance, safe and effective use of tools, sustainable trails and "leave-no-trace." For each phase of trail work on a particular section, follow these guidelines.

- Define the task.
- Demonstrate the skills required to complete the task.
- Monitor and coach as crew members perform the work.

How people first do a job largely determines how they will do it in the future. Take the time to train at the beginning of the day. Show enthusiasm for quality trail work. However, be careful not to "over-teach." Some volunteers may not share the typical Crew Leader's enthusiasm for learning and for quality work. If, for example, someone persists in using a tool in an inefficient though safe way, it is probably best not to persist in attempting to correct him or her. Some will arrive at a project with well established but poor trail work habits. Sometimes it is better to review a completed task, suggest how "you might have done it" rather than asking people to redo work.

Role Modeling. Crew members learn more from what their Crew Leader does rather than what he or she says. This extends to all aspects of crew behavior, not just work habits. If the Crew Leader does not take water breaks, crew members are likely not to take them. Although it is not easy to model best behavior hour after hour, try to remain cognizant of your impact as a model for behavior. *Also, remember to smile. Some people do this naturally while others need to consciously remind themselves to smile or be perceived as scowling.*

Problem Solving. There are two types of work execution problems encountered during an event.

1. Completing the assigned work section. This is addressed at the beginning of each day or on a new work section of trail. Crew leaders should walk their crews through the work section and discuss the work to be done. Though Crew Leaders may have trail maintenance

notes, staking and flagging to guide their work, this does not obviate the need for crew members to understand the reasons for the plan and how it will be implemented. If this leads to serious questions about the original specifications, contact the Segment Steward.

2. Finding solutions to localized problems. Involve the crew in finding a solution. A few general principles of problem solving include the following.

- Define the problem. Distinguish facts from assumptions.
- Generate alternatives. Identify but don't evaluate.
- Evaluate and select. Balance the pluses and minuses of each plausible alternative.
- Implement. Devise and put into play an action plan of manageable steps.

This logical procedure should not be taken to mean that intuition plays no role in good problem solving. Brain research has shown the best problem solving is dependent on intuition to help us identify and evaluate potential solutions. With more experience, our intuition about trail work gets better, as does our problem solving.

Praising. Never forget that people are giving their free time to do manual labor. They often travel substantial distances early in the day to get to the event. Being mindful of this fact will give the tone of authenticity needed to make expressed gratitude effective. Do not overlook good efforts to catch or correct errors. *Always praise specific actions or work features of every crew member and as often as it is reasonably justifiable.* "You did a great job at properly pruning that bush, cleanly cutting the branch at the collar and properly disposing of the branch." Avoid generalities, "You are a great trail builder," that may come across as patronizing.

At the final completion of a section or the day's work, walk the area with your crew and note the areas of good work. Also note situations that may need to be monitored or that may require additional work. Don't forget to brag and praise the crew for the fine work they have accomplished. *All volunteers want to go home feeling proud of the work they did and the difference it made.*

Supporting Other Crew Leaders. This might also be called "supporting all quality volunteer trail work." Within an organization, the skill levels of Crew Leaders can vary substantially and, unless an organization consciously fosters quality work, there may be little consistency. Work events are not the time to thrash out differences with respect to work standards or performance within an organization. Attitudes of superiority never leave a good impression. The simple observation that not all trail work is performed to the same standard is factual and appropriate. If you have not done so already, explain how deficiencies will be corrected.

Handling Serious Rule Violations. The two main types of serious problems Crew Leaders must manage are serious violations of safety standards and disruptive behavior. The latter is not simply obnoxious and annoying, but behavior that is clearly undermining the quality of the experience for other crew members. Such problems rarely occur, but when they do, take the involved individual or individuals aside and explain your concerns. If this does not resolve the matter, repeat the discussion. You may need to make it clear that, as Crew Leader, you have the authority to ask a volunteer to leave your crew. Consider calling in the Segment Steward if you cannot resolve the problem.

If a volunteer decides to leave under these circumstances, their choice or yours, ask them to

Speak with the Segment Steward or the Land Manager before leaving the project area. It may be possible to assign them to another crew or task.

Physically or verbally aggressive behavior and sexual harassment must be dealt with swiftly and firmly. There is no tolerance of such behavior. Engage the Segment Steward and Land Manager in such situations. Any serious crew incidents or anytime someone is dismissed from or walks off a crew should be documented in writing to the Segment Steward. It may be appropriate to identify a witness, with his or her permission.

Management Skills. Crew Leaders must integrate a series of activities that go into a successful work event. This involves both pre-event management and event day management.

Pre-event Planning and Management. It is believed that Crew Leaders who have an understanding of the steps it takes to prepare for an event will be better Crew Leaders and spokesperson for the Foundation. Occasionally, a Crew Leader may be called upon to perform some of the pre-event tasks. However, in most instances, many Crew Leaders will not be responsible for anything beyond leading a crew of volunteers. Pre-event planning and management include the following.

- Selecting the project;
- Reviewing and assessing the site;
- Executing a "Memoranda of Understanding."
- Promoting the Event.
- Recruiting and staffing.
- Preparing a "Safety Plan."
- Detailing the work site plans.
- Arranging for tools.
- Setting-up on event day.

For a complete guide to pre-event management, see the Segment Steward Manual.

Event Day Management. The event day Crew Leader management can be broken into distinct phases. The sequence is not to be used as a rigid template but as a general guide for successfully managing a crew. As the number of items to be covered is substantial, Crew Leaders should carry a checklist ("Crew Leader Safety and Tool Checklist," provided at training). Using such aid also communicates the importance of the content and is not a sign a Crew Leader is ill prepared. A summary of each phase follows.

Prepare. Get and review the work notes from the Segment Steward for the assigned area. Unless the work is a continuation of work already begun, a site visit before the event is highly recommended. The level of preparation required is a function of the complexity of the work, the logistics involved in getting volunteers to and from the work area and the extent to which the work will be guided by work notes prepared by technical staff. Check the area where the tool manager laid out on the ground the tools required for the work. Review notes to be sure the needed tools are present.

Welcome at the Trailhead. When the volunteers assigned to your crew by the Segment Steward are assembled and their readiness for the day is assessed (clothing, water, etc.), introductions are made. Ask volunteers if they have any relevant prior experience. Explain your role and identify and the role of any on-site technical staff. The day's goals are discussed.

The "Crew Leader Safety & Tool Check List" should be used from this point forward to make certain all critical items listed below are covered. Volunteers are eager to get to work at the start of the day. Balance informing volunteers of safety items with getting people to work. The initial talk includes the following.

- Check for proper footwear, gloves, snacks, hat, water and sun protection.
- Volunteer self-monitoring. Remind volunteers to be aware of thirst, a need to rest, and safe work habits when working closely around other volunteers.
- Tool handling. Carry only one tool in each hand. Tools should be carried at their side, not on the shoulder, with the most dangerous part face down and the tool head facing forward. Tools are stored on the uphill side of the trail with the handle closest to the trail.
- Ten-foot tool rule. Volunteers should be at least 10 feet apart when walking with tools in hand. When moving along a trail that is under construction, always announce your presence ("coming through"), especially to workers with tools in their hands, and make eye contact before passing them.
- Working distances. Volunteers should be far enough from each other when working so any tool use would not harm anyone.
- Communication among workers. There is a No Tolerance Harassment Policy.
- Leaving the area. Advise the Crew Leader when leaving the area. Crew Leaders need to know where their Trail Crew volunteers are located at all times.
- Medical conditions. The Crew Leader should inquire of any individual medical conditions that may affect personal safety while working on the trail (heart condition, epilepsy, etc.). The Crew Leaders also should ask volunteers identify any persisting situations such as allergies (bee stings, etc.), previous heat injuries, back problems, high blood pressure, etc. This should be done in private between the Crew Leader and the volunteer.
- Sweep. Appoint a sweep leader who remains the last person walking in and out of the trail to ensure no one or any tools or equipment are left behind.
- Leave No Trace. This encompasses not only trash, but also tools and clothing. It also means not disturbing or minimizing the disturbance of the area next to and around the trail tread.

Get Ready at the Work Site. The Crew Leader first gives a brief reminder of the safety talk once the crew has arrived at the work area. Then, provide an initial walk-through of the work area with the crew to give them a clear idea of the work to be completed and ensure their understanding of the work plan. Clearly state the end goals and how much time is allotted. The amount of work to be accomplished needs to be reasonable. Volunteers should not feel pressured. *While the primary focus is work-related, having an enjoyable event also is a desired goal.* Listen to your crew members and answer questions. Ask crew members to come to you if they have any questions as they work. Tell them you will intervene if you spot ways which can enhance safety and improve their skills.

Let the Work Begin. Thoughtfully assign each volunteer a task to do and the tools needed to do it. Make sure each volunteer understands what is asked to do and how to do it. *Volunteers are never required to perform work they do not feel comfortable doing. Check on each volunteer frequently in the beginning of each new task assignment to confirm they are doing everything correctly and safely.*

Crew Leaders should spend the first hour or so managing versus doing, except for minor assists and demonstrations. The amount required for teaching, coaching and monitoring of tool use

and work quality will depend on the skills crew volunteers bring to the event, how quickly they learn and how willing they are to take direction. Crew Leaders should promptly correct tool-handling errors during the first part of each work phase. Praise specific instances of good work. *Correctly reading each crew member's skills and needs is one of the most important responsibilities of a Crew Leader.* Those with good skills should be identifiable early in this phase and their abilities tapped to help guide the work of less experienced volunteers. These individuals may be prospective Crew Leaders.

Remember, always monitor crew exertion and water consumption. Call for drinks every 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the temperature. Require short breaks every hour. *Be aware of signs for heat exhaustion (heavy sweating, cool pale, moist skin, nausea, weakness or dizziness) and hypothermia (confusion, violent shivering, unstable).*

As a section of work is completed, the Crew Leader may need to contact the Segment Steward or technical staff for sign-off. *As this section is reviewed, gather the crew for a walk-through and review of what has been accomplished. It is very rewarding for the crews to see the valuable work they have completed.* Boasting is appropriate as is an honest discussion of disagreements about the process and product. Gather the tools and move to the next work section.

Between 30 and 60 minutes before the scheduled end of the work day, examine the remaining work in the current work section and devise a finishing plan. Depending on the amount of work completed on this final section, contact the Segment Steward for a sign-off. *Lapses in quality and risks of injury may increase later in the day. To minimize these problems, avoid rushing the work.* If necessary, schedule another work date to finish the work.

Exit. When the work day is over, gather, account for and clean all tools. Make note of damaged tools. Account for all crew members. Appoint a sweep and hike back to the staging area. Return all tools to the main tool cache. Be sure to thank crew members again before they depart.

Report and Reflect. After the Crew Leader sends his or her happy volunteers on their merry ways, time should be taken to review the day. Point out damaged tools to the Tool Manager. Prepare incident reports (injuries, crew member dismissals or early departures) or make enough notes to be able to accurately summarize for other leaders. Do your own self-evaluation and talk to any supervisory staff involved with the event. What could have been done better? What was done well? You may want to or discuss with senior Crew Leaders or experienced technical staff any technical issues that arose during the work. You also may want to practice your safety talk before the next event.

COMMON ERRORS OF CREW LEADERS

Errors are common and most volunteers are pretty forgiving. Here are some of the most commonly observed Crew Leader errors.

- Not taking the time at the beginning of the day to orient, involve and train. Conversely, be wary of taking longer than necessary. Volunteers are anxious to get to work. Strike a balance or run the risk of losing the initial energy of volunteers.
- Working more than leading (failing to work at all is equally bad).
- Inattention to hydration and regular breaks for the crew and themselves.
- Losing track of crew members who are ill-prepared to work unsupervised.

- Over-managing and not involving people in problem solving.
- Failing to praise good work and thank volunteers.

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 in (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 MT+PF to continue the work on the Maricopa Trail. Donations may be made online or by check mailed to the MT+PF address.

MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION TRAIL 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.