

# **Maintain-A-Mile**

## *Trail Maintenance Guidelines*

### **Old Chicago Boys Club Camp – Winona Lake Trail System**

The Winona Lake Trail System (WLTS) is located on private property. It is a privilege to have and maintain this natural park for our community's outdoor enjoyment and education. Basic trail maintenance is the most important part of trail work. The art of basic trail maintenance is conservation, both for the stability of the trail and the intangible "experience" of the wilderness of the woods. When you adopt a section of the WLTS to maintain, there are a few basic guidelines that we would like you to follow. We are all volunteers, so these guidelines are meant for the benefit of our trails and the enjoyment of your labor. We ask you to respect and follow them, but not everything is set in stone as hard and fast rules. Usually the deciding factor is common sense. Ask yourself – "Is what I'm doing helping or hurting the trail in the long run?" When in doubt, contact your Mile Leader or the Trail Committee contacts. Ultimately, we want you to help us keep the trail open and safe for all users, but we also want you to have a good time doing it and realize that you are an important part of the process! Keeping the trails maintained is one of the most important things that we do as an organization, and your efforts are greatly appreciated!

#### **Volunteer responsibilities:**

- Visit and maintain your section of trail twice per month – more in summer (weekly) or after stormy conditions.
- After bad weather, report trail conditions. This allows us to decide if sections of the trail should be closed.
- Report serious damage and erosion issues (i.e. trail deterioration caused by people or animals, gullies caused by water, vandalism, etc.)
- Be a good host – you represent the trails, the club and the community. Remind people politely of trail rules (directions, helmets, etc.), regardless of their behavior – whether they are just confused or being intentional.
- Report dates, hours and description of work on the website. This helps us show our efforts with the trails.
- Enjoy yourself while doing the above and keep your Mile Leader updated on progress!

#### **Basic trail maintenance includes the following:**

- Keeping the trail clear of uncomplicated debris, brush, annual vegetation, trash and sitting water.
- Evaluating trail conditions and obstacles/engineering (bridges, drainage, roots, drop-offs, embankments, etc.)
- Reporting trail/engineering problems that need attention.
- Reporting vandalism or signs that are missing, inaccurate or damaged.

#### **Trail Maintenance Days:**

Additionally, we will host seasonal and public Trail Maintenance Days in which specific construction or projects will be accomplished. These projects may be specific for events, to build additional or re-routed trails, or for trail upkeep and to address reported damage, erosion, removal of large trees, etc. These specific days are also great ways to get more people involved with the trails and the club.

#### **Basic Trail Maintenance Equipment:**

You should be able to accomplish your responsibilities with the following basic tools; a weed eater, hand trimmers, branch cutters (lopper), hand-saw, shovel, rake, bucket or wheel barrow. Limited equipment is available through the club if you do not have access to these items. Please contact us.



## **Safety:**

Safety is the most important consideration and reminder while working on the trail. There is always the potential for accidents while using trail maintenance tools in the woods. Constantly be aware of these dangers. The best way to work safely is simple: use common sense. Here are a few good common sense reminders:

- Let someone know where you are, hydrate and carry a small first aid kit.
- Wear a good pair of work gloves to protect your hands and sturdy boots when digging or cutting.
- Wear long pants (even in summer) when working in thick brush and brighter colors allow you to be seen.
- Be certain that all tool heads and handles are tight with no cracks.
- Carry tools on the trail safely – watch for trail users.

## **Maintenance Guidelines/Checklist:**

Preserving the quality of the user experience, while providing a minimal level of soil and vegetation disturbance should be the goal for all trail workers.

- When it's leaning into the trail, trim grass and weeds. Cut 3-4 inches high (not to the ground) and trim back no more than 6-12 inches on each side of the dirt trail.
- Trim back bushes, hanging vines and tree limbs. Same distances – not to the edge of the trail, but back 6-12 inches. Ensure that riders of taller height can pass safely – don't cut higher than 7'.
- Pick up sticks and remove fallen limbs from the trail.
- Pick up trash on and along the trail.
- Stomp down ruts, or rake when needed.
- Check wet/soft sections – are drainage channels clear or need to be fixed. Report flooding/standing water.
- Contact your Mile Crew Leader to report fallen trees that you can't remove and need chain saw attention.
- Check the bridges – report anything unsafe.
- Keep a watchful eye on erosion – report anything unsafe.
- Close any short cuts made on the trail, between sections. Use already down brush, branches, etc. Report if the short cut has become too wide.
- Please, help the Club to educate other trail users to abide by the rules.
  - Bikers wear helmets and follow the green and black arrows.
  - Runners and walkers move towards bike traffic, and follow the yellow arrows.
- Overall, keep a watchful eye on suspicious behavior, situations, etc.

## **Maintenance Don'ts:**

- Do not take large trail projects or building new trails upon yourself. We will decide this with club leaders.
- Do not widen the trail. Help keep the trails singletrack. Report if we need to reroute or rebuild.
- Do not remove any rocks or leaves from the trails. They do truly protect the trail.
- Do not cut any roots crossing the trails. But, report them if they are dangerous.
- Do not dig up any stumps.
- Do not kill any trees or plant life.

## **Communication/Questions:**

Utilize the Winona Lake Trails website, and the KCV page or group "Greg's People" on facebook, to help with communication. When in doubt, first contact your Mile Crew Leader or the Trail Committee contacts below:  
Karen Wood: 574.269.9644 (work), 574.269.3441 (home), 574.265.5743 (cell) | stockwood@embarqmail.com  
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