

Town of Reading

Adopt-A-Trail Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Adopt-A-Trail Program?

The Town of Reading's Adopt-A-Trail Program is a volunteer program providing opportunities for members of the community to assist conservation area staff by monitoring, maintaining and enhancing trails and trailhead facilities.

Who can adopt a trail?

School and youth groups, scout troops, church, community and service organizations, businesses, families, individuals or groups of individuals can adopt a trail. Anyone with an interest in trails and the outdoors is welcome to help preserve our land and provide safe, enjoyable access to the outdoors.

What can volunteers do?

Adopt-A-Trail volunteers assist Conservation Area staff in managing and maintaining trail systems. Activities include keeping the trail surface free of sticks, rocks and other debris, pruning small limbs from the trail corridor, cleaning waterbars and drainage ditches, and clearing debris from bridges, stairs, and viewing decks. Other responsibilities include litter clean-up, maintaining the trailhead area including parking lot, bulletin board and trail signs, and reporting vandalism, trail hazards or safety issues.

Why should you participate?

Adopting a trail provides an opportunity for you to be actively involved in conservation. Helping to maintain and enhance existing trails improves the resource for all to enjoy. The effort brings trail and nature enthusiasts closer to the environment and their community. Enjoy the time outdoors and personal satisfaction gained through volunteering on a conservation trail.

How to get started:

If you have a specific Conservation Area or trail in mind, let us know. If the trail you choose is available for adoption, we'll get you set up right away. If you want to know which trails are available in a particular area or region, we can help you find the right one. Once you've chosen a trail you will be contacted by the area manager who will set a date that is convenient for you to meet and discuss the requirements and benefits of trail adoption.

Guidelines For Volunteers

Adoption Period

A trail or trail section must be adopted for a period of one year, renewable annually thereafter upon approval by the area manager. This agreement may be terminated at any time by the volunteer or the area manager.

Trail Inspections

Trail inspections may include the following: observing the condition of trailhead parking lot, bulletin board and trail signs, monitoring trail conditions and performing routine maintenance, picking up litter, and notifying the area manager of any problems or additional maintenance needs.

Volunteers are asked to visit the adopted trail or trail section at least 4 times per year (approximately once every 3 months). At your convenience choose the days and times you would like to visit the trail. You may wish to check with the area manager prior to your trip to inquire about hunting seasons or other activities that may be scheduled on the area. Please send a written report to the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator after each visit, so that we may keep track of your efforts.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance involves keeping the trail surface free of loose rocks, limbs and other debris, pruning small limbs from the trail corridor, cleaning waterbars and drainage ditches, and clearing debris from benches, bridges, stairs and viewing structures. The area manager will provide volunteers with information and instruction on maintaining specific trails to meet area management guidelines. Volunteers are asked to provide their own trail maintenance tools, but with prior notice we may have loaner tools available.

Volunteers should notify the area manager if there is an erosion problem, trees down on the trail, missing or damaged signs, vandalism, or other issues that cannot be handled on the day of a trail visit. Report any suspicious or illegal activity. If litter will be picked up but not removed from the area during your visit, please make arrangements in advance with the area manager for litter pickup.

Volunteers should dress appropriately for trail work and use gloves, safety glasses and other protective gear when necessary. All work shall take place during daylight hours and be performed with safety in mind. Do not attempt any tasks you are not comfortable with. Volunteers are not permitted to use chainsaws or have motorized equipment on the trail. No work shall be done that has not been previously agreed upon with the area manager.

Do you have questions or need more information on volunteering?

Contact us at: ReadingTrails@ci.reading.ma.us or call Fran Fink at 781-942-6616.

Watch for more information at: www.readingma.gov/Pages/ReadingMA_BComm/trails.