



Ozark Greenways Adopt-A-Trail Handbook

Welcome to the Ozark Greenways Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) program! You are joining a group of dedicated volunteers who value the outdoor experience, not only for themselves but for other trail users.

Ozark Greenways has partnered with City Utilities of Springfield to maintain ~29 miles of soft surface multi-use trail that circumnavigates Fellows Lake. We have divided this trail network into 24 manageable segments for adoption so that there is something out there for all types of groups and enthusiasts. Without your help, this gift to our community will quickly become overgrown due to the temperate climate and long growing season in Missouri.

We thank you for being a participant in this program and want to give you all the support needed to make it an enjoyable experience. This AAT handbook is intended as a general guide, outlining trail maintenance basics, adopter responsibilities, and related resources.

Thank you for all you do and for your volunteer service!

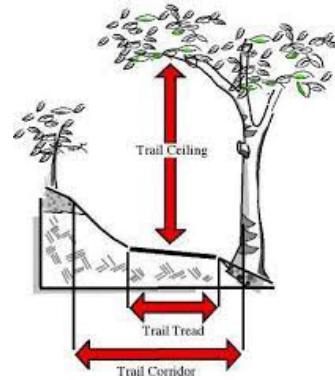
Sincerely,

The Ozark Greenways Staff Team

Trail Care Basics

Trail Standards

The Fellows Lake Trails are a professionally built trail network on City Utilities property where hikers, runners, and mountain bikers alike can enjoy the natural beauty of the Ozarks. As land stewards, our goal is to maintain a trail corridor that enhances the recreational experience for all, while preserving this gift of nature. We need to keep this balance in mind each time we start a weed eater or pick up a pair of limb loppers.



Trail Corridor

Trail adopters are primarily responsible for clearing vegetation and trail obstructions from the designated trail corridor. There are three variables to consider for trail maintenance. It may help to think of the trail corridor as a rectangle set on the end through which you will pass. Height: The ceiling of the corridor should be about 10 feet for the multi-use trail to accommodate bicyclists.

Width: Generally, the width of the corridor should be about 6 feet, which is approximately the width of both arms extended straight out from both sides of your body.

Tread: Within the width of the corridor and centered as much as possible is the tread area of the trail or the trail surface. The tread should be about 24 inches to accommodate both walkers and cyclists, except where slope, rock, or other fixed conditions are not permitted.

There may be occasional stretches of trail where these dimensions cannot be accommodated. If not, consider the above measurements as suggested guidelines to ensure as uniform a trail as possible. In general, the trail corridor (height x width) should be kept clear of encroaching vegetation, while the trail tread is additionally kept clear of most trail obstructions/debris.

Notes on Tread Repair

As mentioned above, trail adopters are primarily responsible for keeping the trail corridor clear and not for the repair of major tread issues. However, the following information provides some background should you need to report any work needed beyond your scope. The tread surface should have a slight downhill slope to allow for the drainage of water. On bermed or pocketed areas there should be a relief channel where water will drain out. Trail use in wet conditions can cause rutting of the tread. If the trail is not properly sloped, water running down the trail can also cause tread erosion.

Other tread issues can occur on steep sections of the bench-cut trail where the hillside has eroded and has caused the tread to narrow. If you determine your trail segment needs tread work, report the location, approximate length, and conditions of the needed repair.

Note: Volunteers are not permitted to construct trail reroutes without official approval from the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator.

Trail Safety

You are a valuable team member of the AAT program and your safety out on the trail is our number one priority. This section outlines a few safety recommendations to consider.

- Follow Leave No Trace guidelines. These include planning ahead and preparing, staying on the trail corridor, disposing of waste properly, leaving what you find, staying off the trail during muddy conditions, respecting wildlife, and being considerate of other visitors.
- Plan ahead and prepare with a trip itinerary (i.e., planned route of travel, destination, estimated time of departure/arrival), check weather conditions, and locate emergency phone numbers. Consider leaving the itinerary with a contact and checking out/in with that person.
- Be familiar with the potential hazards of performing trail work in nature and how to deal with any emergencies. These hazards include weather conditions, biting insects, contact with poison ivy or other irritating plants, and potential encounters with venomous snakes and spiders.
- Keep a few essentials in your backpack. Stay hydrated, take breaks as needed, and pace yourself. A recommended list of 6 essentials from the National Park Service includes:
 1. NAVIGATION – Map, compass, and GPS system
 2. SUN PROTECTION – Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat
 3. INSULATION – Jacket, hat, gloves, rain shell, and thermal underwear
 4. FIRST-AID SUPPLIES – First Aid Kit
 5. NUTRITION – Food
 6. HYDRATION – Water and water treatment supplies
- It is recommended that you wear long pants, long sleeves, sturdy work boots, and leather gloves. Eye protection and ear protection are additional safety gear recommended when using power tools such as weed eaters. Treat clothes/gear with permethrin or use other insect repellent according to the manufacturer's instructions to reduce the risk of contracting a mosquito- or tick-borne disease.

Tools and Equipment

A good pair of loppers and a hand/folding saw constitute a starter tool kit for basic trail maintenance. Other tools that can be helpful include hand pruners, a pruning or bow saw for clearing small-diameter trees and branches, a gas-operated weed eater for heavy vegetation growth, and a metal rake or McLeod tool for clearing trail debris and light tread repair. We possess all the above tools and are available to you with prior coordination.

Note: Adopters are not permitted to use chainsaws unless they have prior approval from the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator. Report any trail obstructions requiring a chainsaw to the coordinator. Also, no motorized vehicles are permitted on the trail. Class 1 pedal assist E-bikes up to 750w are permitted on the Fellows Lake Trails.

Trail Adopter Responsibilities

Trail adopters are expected to make regular trip outings to trim back vegetation growing into the trail corridor, clear trail obstructions and debris from the trail surface, record time spent, and communicate trail conditions to the coordinator. The following information provides more guidance on each of these tasks.

Number of Trail Visits

The frequency of trail visits will vary depending on weather and individual segment needs. However, we recommend monthly visits during the growing season (March through October) and as needed during the winter months. Most of the time spent will be to trimming back vegetation when new growth is most prolific. Additionally, it may be necessary to check out your segment after a strong storm or other weather event has passed through the area.

Clearing Vegetation and Trail Obstructions

The following table lists common trail obstructions that you may encounter on the trail, along with tips on how to properly clear these obstructions. You are not being asked to correct all these conditions, because some may require special equipment and expertise. However, you are asked to report those impediments you are not equipped to handle in your adopter report.

Type of Trail Obstruction	Tips for Clearing Obstruction
-Growth of vegetation alongside the trail (e.g., briars and canes), especially those extending into the trail corridor.	-Canes, briars, and small vegetation should be lopped at ground level when possible.
-Vines hanging over or onto the trail from above.	-Hanging vines should be cut off from above as high as possible.
-Open areas where weeds/grasses have grown into the trail tread.	-Weeds and grasses should be trimmed with weed eaters or mowers where applicable.
-Live branches from trees and shrubs growing into the trail corridor.	-For tree health, leave the branch collar intact when pruning limbs.
-Deadfall/blowdown of limbs and branches.	-Relocate deadfall off the trail and downhill to an inconspicuous location.
-Loose rocks larger than softballs and other debris on the trail that could pose a hazard to trail users.	-Rocks and other debris should be rolled off the trail to the downhill side to a location that will not create an unintentional debris dam.

Thank you for your dedication to our Adopt-A-Trail program. This handbook will serve as a basic information source during your trail adoption. Our goal is to be an available resource to you at any time throughout the process. The coordinator will make every attempt to be present on your workdays for guidance and support. We want this to be a fun and rewarding experience for all.