



Adopt a Trail Blue Ridge Parkway



THANK YOU

Thank You for volunteering to maintain a trail with the Adopt-A-Trail program! You are helping to keep these trails open for public use and enjoyment. We couldn't do it without you! By partnering the FRIENDS and the National Park Service, you play an important role in maintaining the Blue Ridge Parkway. By maintaining your trail, you will become its most important advocate and protector.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSES

The National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway, manages and maintains over 300 mile of Trails. These trails range in length from short leg stretches of less than one-quarter mile to over fifteen miles. They are located throughout the 469 mile of the Parkway.

The Adopt-a-Trail program solicits assistance from individuals, families, clubs and organizations who are willing to spend time on the trail maintaining it for visitor use.

The purposes of the AaT program include (1) decreasing the backlog of trail maintenance needs, (2) improving the function and appearance of the trails for visitor enjoyment, (3) releasing Park Service maintenance employees to accomplish other tasks requiring higher skills, (4) developing community partnerships which instill a sense of pride in public ownership of the Parkway, (5) and expanding the National Park Service presence on the Parkway.

HOW THE AaT PROGRAM WORKS

Adoption by Individuals or Groups. A trail may be adopted by a single individual, family or other group. Each AaT-adoption by a group or family needs to have a group leader who coordinates efforts and ensures that all forms are completed and procedures are followed. Volunteer hours are recorded by our office, please log hours online or with the Trail Maintenance Report Form.

Length of Commitment. An adopting individual, family, club, organization or group must be willing to commit to their trail for a period of at least one year. Unless FRIENDS/BRP receives notice otherwise, it is assumed that the commitment will continue from year to year. You will receive reminders from our office occasionally to remind you to check on your trail.

Limited Authorization. While FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway (FRIENDS/BRP) actively helps to recruit and manage volunteers in the AaT program, the Blue Ridge Parkway is a federal agency and the Trails belong to National Park Service. Remember that when you are on your trail, you represent the National Park Service, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway. **Be helpful, be courteous, be careful, and be proud!** At the same time, volunteer individuals, clubs and organizations are not considered to be Federal employees for any purposes other than tort claims and injury compensation.

REQUIRED FORMS

AaT Adoption Application. This application form is to be completed and sent to FRIENDS as the first step in the process of adopting a trail.

Volunteer Services Agreement (VSA) Form. Each volunteer who works on the Parkway must complete and sign a Volunteer Services Agreement (VSA) form. Because volunteer contact information and emergency contact information often changes you will be asked to verify your information once a year. Additionally, the VSA of any child or youth (18 or younger) must be signed by a parent or guardian. All original VSAs should be mailed for further processing to FRIENDS/BRP, PO Box 20986, Roanoke VA 24018.

Trail Maintenance Activity (TMA) Report Form* A TMA form should be completed and mailed to FRIENDS immediately following each service event. These reports show the time invested in service as well as round-trip travel time. TMAs also indicate the kinds of work you performed and alert the maintenance supervisor of any matters that may need special attention. The TMA information is also used by the Parkway to assess volunteer activity and assist in long-range planning. The mailing address for each completed TMA is FRIENDS/BRP, PO Box 20986, Roanoke VA 24018.

***Volunteers registered in the Better Impact system may log information directly into the system, see directions below.**

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Visit your trail as often as possible. Submit a TMA report following each visit, even if no other work was performed; record your travel time and briefly describe the condition of your overlook.

Plan to care for your adopted trail at least once a month from April through October.

Spring Tasks

1. Clean out drainage channels
2. Clear blown down trees if they can be dragged off the trail.

Spring walk-throughs are best done at the end of winter before the spring rainy season and before the trail receives much hiker use. This work should be completed by the end of April at the latest.

Trail drainage problems are usually at their worst during the spring rains. Identify areas of concerns and alert NPS staff or the FRIENDS office. Assessment of additional trail work requirements is an important function of the spring walk-through.

Summer Tasks

1. Clean drainage channels of leaves
2. Clear blowdowns: small tree limbs
3. Clear trail of woody brush and vegetation
4. Touch up Trail Blazes
5. Clear trail through open areas

The trail is most obscured during summer due to the full bloom of vegetation and the sagging of overhead branches.

A properly blazed stretch of trail needs repairing every three to five years.

Early summer is the best time to clear the trail through open areas, before plants such as grasses and briars reach peak growth. This can be accomplished with hand non-powered clippers. NO power equipment can be used on the Trails without proper NPS training. If the trail requires additional attention, please alert the FRIENDS office or NPS Staff.

Fall Tasks

1. Clear drainage channels
2. Clear Trail Corridor

One of the best times of the year to clear out drainage structures is after the leaves have dropped from the trees. This puts the trail in good condition during the winter months and is good preparation for heavy spring runoff.

MAINTENANCE TASKS

- Pick up and dispose of litter
- Clear and dispose of twigs, branches and other debris along the trail
- Clear leaves, twigs and branches and other debris from ditches and drainage channels
- Clean trail signs and any nearby mile markers with soapy water
- Keep sidewalks and parking area located near the trail clean from litter

Optional Tasks

- Level any surface material
- Pick up or sweep cigarette butts from parking area, grassy areas, surrounding trailheads and sidewalks
- Trim overhanging or overgrown weeds along the trail
- Make note of trees that have fallen on the trail and notify the FRIENDS office.

SAFETY FIRST

Safety is the most important consideration while maintaining your trail. You must obtain NPS training to operate power equipment on the Parkway. This includes: weed eaters, blowers, and power-saws. Contact the FRIENDS Office or local FRIENDS Chapter if interested in obtaining training.

There is always the potential for accidents while working on a trail. You need to be constantly aware of these dangers. The best way to work safely is simple -- use common sense. The following is a good common-sense checklist:

1. Let someone know when you plan on maintaining your trail.
2. Carry a small first aid kit.
3. Wear a good pair of work gloves.
4. Wear long pants when working in brush, even in the summer.
5. be sure to carry trash bags with you.
6. Wear sturdy shoes for walking on uneven terrain.
7. Carry any tools safely.
8. Wear blaze orange or bright green vest at all times when maintaining the trail.

*The National Park Service may supply trash bags and gloves. If these items are needed, please contact the FRIENDS office or local FRIENDS Chapter who can direct you to the local district office.

**FRIENDS OF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
PO BOX 20986
ROANOKE, VA 24018
(540)772-2992
1-800-228-7275**

**National Park Service – Blue Ridge Parkway
(828) 348-3400**

BETTER IMPACT HOW VOLUNTEERS LOG IN AND INPUT HOURS

- Better Impact is the on-line system that is used to track all volunteer hours
- Volunteers can log their own hours or they can continue to send their hours into the office and we will input their hours into Better Impact
- Travel time is considered part of your volunteer hours. Remember to include travel time in total hours
- A Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) must also be completed, signed and sent into the FRIENDS office.

Sign On Procedure

1. There are two ways to access the Volunteer Database in Better Impact
 - a. Use this link: <https://app.betterimpact.com/Login.com>
 - b. From the FRIENDS website at: www.FriendsBRP.org. Scroll down about ½ way and click on either:

For new users: Volunteers! Click here to sign up box.

For existing users: “Log your volunteer hours here” box.

*****Note: Please contact the FRIENDS office at 540-772-2992 to determine if there is an existing User Name and password.***

2. If you are a new volunteer and have never completed any volunteer hours, create a Username and password. Once the application form is completed, click on Submit Application button. When application has been approved, use the MyVolunteerPage.com. Login at <https://app.betterimpact.com/Login.com>
3. If you already have a Username and password set up, sign in as usual.

Logging Hours Procedure

1. Click on the Hours tab
2. Click on the drop down arrow for Activity. Click on the activity that best describes the volunteer hours.
3. Click on date volunteered field – a calendar pops up. Click on the appropriate date.
4. Click on the Hours field and type in the total number of hours worked
5. Click on the Minutes field and type in the total number of minutes if applicable