

Land Stewardship Subcommittee
Harvard Conservation Commission

Trail Standards and Maintenance Procedures

Revised April, 2011

Policy Statement: Our objective is to keep the trails as natural as possible while allowing for pedestrian, equestrian, and other non-motorized uses during all seasons. These guidelines cover the proper cutting, maintenance, and blazing of trails on Harvard conservation land.

1. Trim plants, bushes, and trees to a trail width of 4 feet. Clear trail to a height of 8 feet; on trails used by horses trim height to 10 feet. Cut stumps of removed trees as close to the ground as safely possible. Cut all vegetation to be removed; do not pull up. Cut all limbs and branches growing into the trail at the trunk of the tree. This reduces frequency of trail maintenance. Avoid cutting, trampling, or laying brush on unusual flowers, ferns, or shrubs that are along the sides of the trails.
2. Slash resulting from trail work should be pruned to 6 feet in length and stacked with stems aligned in the same direction and butts facing away from the trail. Try to limit the height of stacks to 4 feet, and locate the stacks in areas that are relatively clear to begin with, and set back away from the trail whenever possible. Space the stacks as far apart as is reasonable.
3. Call the Conservation Commission if large trees have fallen over trails or if some "heavy lifting" needs to be done. Working with a buddy is advised for safety reasons. Carry a cell phone if you are working alone.
4. People using chainsaws must be cleared for the season by the head trail keeper (Phil). You'll need a signed waiver on file at the Concom office at Town Hall and to sign a waiver for each work outing; you also must go out with at least one other person.
5. All bridges and boardwalks must be approved by the Harvard Conservation Commission before any construction is started. All new trails and major rerouting of old trails **MUST** be approved by the Conservation Commission before making any changes. On bridges and walkways, keep gaps between boards to one inch or less for safety reasons.
6. Report any unauthorized cutting on the trails to the Conservation Commission. Also, report any damage to the trails caused by erosion or horses and any invasive spp of plants you notice.
7. Trails are to be marked with a painted, vertical blaze, 6" high and 2" wide using stencil. Blazes are placed on live trees that are easily visible in the distance, on the right side of the trail, 6 feet above the ground. Oil-based paint is used as it lasts longer than latex paint. Yellow paint marks the major trails and blue paint is used on secondary trails as described in the "**Harvard Trails**" guidebook. Only one blaze should be visible at one time in either direction. The tree bark may be smoothed with a scraper before painting if needed. Paint

will be supplied by the Conservation Commission to assure that uniform colors are used.

8. Contacts for trail workers:

Phil Knoettner - Stewardship Subcommittee member, head trail keeper - 978-456-8477

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