

Trail Standards and Maintenance Procedures

Land Stewardship Subcommittee
Harvard Conservation Commission
Revised January, 2018

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. (If trail is an old woods road, maintain its width.) 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 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. Also keep rock piles, stonewalls and boulders clear.
2. Slash resulting from trail work should be cut to about 6 feet in length and stacked with stems aligned in the same direction. Lay down logs and brush with maximum contact with the ground to speed decay. 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 as much as possible.
3. Call for help (see below) if large trees have fallen over trails or if some "heavy lifting" needs to be done. Working with a partner is advised for safety reasons and required if working with chainsaw. Carry a cell phone.
4. People using chainsaws must be cleared for the season by the head trail keeper (Jim Burns). You'll need a signed waiver on file at the Concom office at Town Hall.
5. All bridges and boardwalks must be approved by the Harvard Conservation Commission before 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 use.
7. Trails are to be marked with glazed aluminum blazes, 4" high and 2" wide. 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. At least ½" of nail should be left protruding to allow for tree growth. Yellow marks the major trails and blue is used on secondary trails as described in the "**Harvard Trails**" guidebook. One blaze should be visible in either direction. Equipment and signage supplies are kept in Jim Burns's barn. 2" 6d smooth box (not common) galvanized nails work for all signage.
8. Contacts for trail workers:
Jim Burns - Head trail keeper/chainsaw crew leader - 978-501-9205
Carl Sciple – Trail keeper coordinator – 978-296-7153
Wendy Sisson – Land Stewardship Subcommittee chair - 978-660-8181
Liz Allard - Conservation Agent for Harvard Conservation Commission - 978-456-4106

