

ERNST TRAIL

ADOPT-THE-TRAIL PROGRAM POLICY

Maintaining the Ernst Trail in the best condition for recreational use takes many hours of maintenance work by a group of dedicated volunteers. Many of those using the trail ask “how can I help?” You can join others by adopting a small portion of the trail to help keep it looking good, make it easier to mow and report on trail conditions.

General conditions for participation in the Adopt-the-Trail Program as well as a list of safety guidelines to be observed while working on the Ernst Trail follows:

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Tasks to be performed on your adopted portion of the trail:

- Advise French Creek Recreational Trails (FCRT) of work dates.
- Submit Volunteer List of names and addresses of volunteers who worked on specific dates.
- Provide your own hand tools (rakes, shovels, pruners, etc) and trash bags.
- Pick up litter and debris two to three times a year. Once in the spring and another in mid to late summer. Additional cleaning is optional.
- Prune the overgrown brush and branches back from the trail edge far enough not to hit trail users.
- Prune back overhanging tree branches that are reachable on foot and able to cut with branch cutters.
- Clear the edge of the trail back 6-8 ft of debris, branches or anything that would damage a mower while trimming the edge allowing mower clearance.
- Trim around mileage markers, signs, decorative trees, benches, bridges, and pavilions.
- Report problems or obstacles that require larger tools to French Creek Recreational Trails, Inc. (Large logs at the edge of the trail, leaning tree limbs, rock slides, holes, bumps in the trail, etc.)

Additional work that can be done if you have the time and desire:

- Scrape off weeds and moss encroaching on the edge of the trail.
- Remove weeds growing in the pavement.
- Seal cracks in the pavement using materials supplied by FCRT.

GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR “ADOPT-THE-TRAIL” PROGRAM:

Individuals 18 years of age or older, families, local community groups, business and school groups are eligible to adopt sections of the Trail. Participants 17 years of age or younger may assist adopters, but they must be supervised by adults 18 years or older.

- No one under the age of 18 may operate gasoline or electric powered tools or equipment. This would include mowers, hedge trimmers, chain saws, or string trimmers for example.
- Any volunteer under the age of 18 must have a parental release giving permission to work on the Ernst Trail and release/discharge The French Creek Recreational Trails, Inc. from all claims for damages and actions whatsoever arising or growing out of the risks involved in this action.

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GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR “ADOPT-THE-TRAIL” PROGRAM - continued

French Creek Recreational Trails Incorporated reserves the right to deny adoption requests by any group, individual or business based on but not limited to the following criteria:

- Adopters must be able to perform their duties safely
- Adopters must be able to perform their duties effectively

SAFETY TIPS:

For your safety and the safety of trail visitors, please adhere to the following procedures while caring for your segment of the Trail:

- Always work clear of Trail user traffic.
- Watch for Trail users when crossing the Trail.
- Wear light-colored clothing to be more visible.
- Wear hard sole shoes, work gloves, hearing, eye, and head protection as needed.
- Work only in daylight and fair weather.
- Do not overexert yourself. Take breaks and drink ample fluids.
- Stay alert for and avoid all contact with snakes, other wildlife, and noxious weeds.
- Do not pick up materials that appear to be hazardous. Notify the local police.
- Do not participate in careless activities that may endanger or distract trail users.
- Do not allow small children to accompany you.
- Park personal vehicles in public parking areas only, DO NOT park on the Trail or on property belonging to private citizens.
- Avoid working in areas under repair or construction, especially during the operation of excavation, mowing, or other major equipment.
- Never participate in Trail work while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Report any problems or safety concerns immediately to the FCRT.
- If participants cannot dispose of filled litter/debris bags, make arrangements with FCRT for pickup. Filled litter/debris bags may be placed in a single location at one of the four trailheads.

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VOLUNTEERS AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Complete and return the Adopt-the-Trail Application.
- Adopt a One-Half Mile segment of the Ernst Trail for a period of two years.
- Complete and return the work day Volunteer List and Parental Release forms.
- Be courteous to trail users.
- Have a sense of responsibility for safety for self and others.
- Review the Safety Tips to be aware of the hazards of working on a trail right-of-way and take them seriously.
- Pick up litter and perform other trail maintenance on a designated segment of the trail.
- Work during daylight hours only.
- Provide adequate supervision to participants eighteen years of age or younger.
- Stay within the area between the right-of-way boundaries.
- Trespassing on private property is not allowed.
- Leave No Trace – Volunteers take personal responsibility to respect and care for the natural resources of the Ernst Trail. At the end of the work day, the designated portion will be clear of any trace of work performed. Vegetation debris, food packages, tools, etc. will be clear from the work area.

FCRT will:

- Supply Adopt-The-Trail Application, Parental Release and the Work Day Volunteer List forms. Forms are available on the Ernst Trail website at www.ernsttrail.org.
- Signage indicating group or individuals adopting the designated portion.
- Arrange to remove filled trash bags from one of the four trailheads.
- Arrange to remove large, heavy or hazardous materials as needed.

Contact French Creek Recreational Trails, Inc. caretakers of the Ernst Trail at P.O. Box 592, Meadville, PA 16335 or through the contact link on our website at www.ernsttrail.org.