



buckeyetrail.org

The Buckeye Trail Association, Inc.



buckeyetrail.org

MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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VISION STATEMENT

The Buckeye Trail, Ohio's State Scenic Trail, is a sustainable hiking trail that provides a safe and unique experience throughout the state reflecting the diverse resources, people and stories of Ohio. The trail is a dedicated, recognized and protected route developed and maintained by the Buckeye Trail Association, an organization reflective of the diversity of the trail. The Buckeye Trail Association works in close partnership with communities, organizations and agencies around Ohio creating a legacy for present and future generations.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Buckeye Trail Association is the leader in building, maintaining, protecting, and promoting the use of Ohio's longest scenic hiking trail for our citizens, communities and partners. We provide outdoor recreation, opportunities to volunteer, education, access to the varied resources of Ohio and local economic benefits.

PREFACE

The Buckeye Trail (BT) is a hiking trail of approximately 1444 miles that circumnavigates the State of Ohio. In parts of the state the BT shares its tread with the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) and the American Discovery Trail. The BT is marked by single blue blazes augmented by double blue blazes as required. At some road crossings there are carsonite posts with stickers that indicate which trails are involved in that area. Where the trail is certified NCNST the carsonite posts may be placed every quarter mile along the trail.

Looking forward or backward from any point on the BT, a hiker should be able to see the next blaze and never have to worry about where the trail is located. On each off-road segment of the BT, the trail is intended to be a pathway at least 3' wide and 8" high with sound footing and to be reasonably free of weeds and windfalls. Heavy undergrowth is especially tough on hikers. Generally maintainers of off-road segments should inspect their "adopted" trail at least three times per year, particularly if it is a rainy, hot summer. Maintainers of on-road segments should check their segments at least once per year.

BLAZES AND BLAZING

The standard single blaze is 2" wide by 6" high with **SQUARE CORNERS**, painted about 6' above the ground. It is not 1" by 5" or 3" by 8", nor is it a circle or an oval. The blue blaze is the symbol of our trail and as such it should be uniform. Stencils may be used. Some maintainers have used cardboard but the best seems to be thin sheet metal: it is flexible, permanent and easily cleaned. The paint which must be used is Sherwin-Williams #2408 Sweeping Blue, exterior satin latex. Why must it be used? For uniformity. Other folks use blue paint in the woods for timber marking, border marking etc. and it is reassuring to a hiker to follow the same color all the time. If you can't find a Sherwin-Williams store any reputable paint store can custom mix that paint as long as they have the correct name and number. If side trails require blazing, white exterior paint must be used. When it is necessary to paint out old blazes when a part of the trail is relocated, Sherwin-Williams #2090 Yuma Green is to be used. The BTA receives a 25% discount from any S-W store in the state on paint, brushes and scrapers. Just mention the BTA Account # (9321-7886-6) and that we are Tax Exempt. You will be expected to pay for the paint, etc. and the BTA will then reimburse you. Send a copy of the invoice with a completed Expense Voucher (a copy is attached to the end of this document) to the BTA Treasurer, Connie Pond, 66 Wilshire, Hebron, OH 43025. Your Section Supervisor may have a supply of materials on hand so be sure to check with him/her prior to making a purchase.

A double blaze is used whenever there is a *significant* change in the trail's direction. This entails painting a second 2" by 6" blue blaze above the first blaze and offset towards the new direction, left or right. The actual new direction is then confirmed by a single standard blaze which should be placed as nearby as possible in the new direction, ideally within 50' of the turn. *This first single blaze*

BUCKEYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION EXPENSE VOUCHER												
NAME: _____												
ADDRESS: _____												
Can use Mailing label												
	ADMINISTRATION	MEMBERSHIP BILLING	TRAIL MAINTENANCE	PUBLICITY	EXPO	BARN	SALES	1-800 NUMBER REPLIES	TRAIL BLAZER	WORK SHOPS	OTHER	TOTAL
POSTAGE												
PRINTING/COPIES												
TELEPHONE												
OFFICE SUPPLIES												
MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES (PAINT, ETC)												
MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT/TOOLS												
BARN REMODELING SUPPLIES												
STIPENDS												
OTHER:												
SIGNATURE												
DATE												
DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE												
APPROVED												AMOUNT PAID
SEND COMPLETE VOUCHER AND RECEIPTS EVIDENCING EXPENDITURES TO: C.POND, 66 WILSHIRE DR., HEBRON, OH 43025												

in the new direction is very important, as it assures the hiker that he/she is still on the trail. See examples following.

Maintenance of a blaze mainly consists of repainting the blaze when it fades and cutting back vegetation that has grown enough to conceal the blaze. All blazes should be placed on permanent objects, such as utility poles, live trees, fence posts, the rear of traffic signs (never on the face), guard rails or bridge abutments. Never paint on historical objects such as a covered bridge, canal lock or commemorative sign. At times, utility companies replace their poles or trees blow down, in which case new blazes should be painted as soon as possible. Blazes should not be placed on trees or fence posts in the vicinity of a residence. On a rough barked tree, first smooth an area by scraping the bark away (not quite down to the cambium). Use Yuma Green to cover blazing mistakes and all blazes no longer needed when the trail is rerouted. Please erase all old blazes, not just a few near each end of an abandoned segment.


Blazing in private property, metro parks, state parks, and state and national forests etc. should never be done without the permission of the owner/ manager. Consult with your section supervisor if there is any question.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS


In addition to the Paint carrier and paint furnished to all maintainers other hand tools are needed to keep the BT in good shape. This list can consist of a pair of pruning shears, a pair of stout pruning loppers, a pruning saw (bow type or folding saws are the most convenient) and perhaps a machete or hatchet, all depending on whether your segment is on-road or off-road and whether it runs through heavily forested areas or grassy meadows. Most maintainers keep an itemized list of their tool purchases and submit it as a charitable contribution on their personal income tax return, as well as telephone, postage and transportation costs.

Heavier equipment needs are posed by off-road open areas in which there is great potential for massive annual brush growth. Some useful tools are a weed whip with a blade serrated on both edges, a brush hook, and/or a gasoline powered weed whacker. The BTA owns several of these heavy duty weed whackers which can be supported on the user's shoulders by a harness and several very, heavy duty, wheeled DR Mowers which can cut down 1" to 2" saplings. We have several of each of these and try to keep them distributed around the state. Your Section Supervisor can arrange for their loan to you if necessary.

Other off-road matters include cutting walkways into hillsides (benching or side hilling) erosion prevention (installing water bars) and establishing self-maintaining paths through open areas. These jobs are usually done by the BT Work Crew on work weekends or work weeks. Everyone is welcome to join the Work Crew at anytime, if even for one day, and this is an excellent way to learn how to build and maintain trail, and to meet some nice folks who share your love of the outdoors. Check the Trailblazer under work parties for the next one or go to the BTA website www.buckeyetrail.org.



Volunteer Log for Crews and Groups



Location of Project: *Burr Oak State Park, Private Land, etc.:* _____

Name of Leader: _____

Date: ____/____/____ **Distance Worked:** _____

Total Time Worked: _____

Type of Work (MA, AD, IN, or RM - descriptions below): _____

MA-Maintenance or construction; AD-Administration, editing, writing, fundraising, accounting, etc.;
IN-Lead hikes, education, promoting; RM-Resource mgmt./ habitat improvement, etc.)

Name (please PRINT)	Address, City, State, Zip	Male or Female	Age	Time In	Time Out	Travel Time (round trip)	Total Hours (including travel)
	Please add Email Address if you would like to be notified of future volunteer events. Use another address line if needed.	M/F	C: Under 18 A: 18 to 64 S: 65 and over				

To the Leader, make a copy if desired. Submit records to Trail Maintenance Supervisor within a week of the event. Please send your form to: BUCKEYETR@BTA.ORG

Trail Association, PO Box 254, Worthington, OH 43085. Scan and email to maint_supe@buckeyetrail.org.

Volunteer hours are critical for demonstrating public support to justify State and Federal funding. Good records of hours also improve our chances of receiving other types of grants.

Page Full? Use Other Side!

Last Revision on 6/3/12

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

State Trail Coordinator Pat Hayes, 330-952-1024
pat.hayes@buckeyetrail.org
Maintenance Supervisor Jim Sprague, 440-884-4757
jimsprague@msn.com
Trail Building Coordinator Jim Runk, 937-289-2481
jimsrunk@wmconnect.com
Volunteer Coordinator Barry Unger, 740-541-3571
americorps@buckeyetrail.org

SPECIAL FEATURES OF ON-ROAD MAINTENANCE

Where the BT follows a road, the blazes should be painted on objects as close to the road as possible, ideally no more than 10' off the road. If painting utility poles every second pole is the right spacing in hilly country, or every third or fourth pole on long hills or in flat country. On winding roads a blaze at every curve is best. Remember to blaze both sides as hikers may be following the trail in either direction.

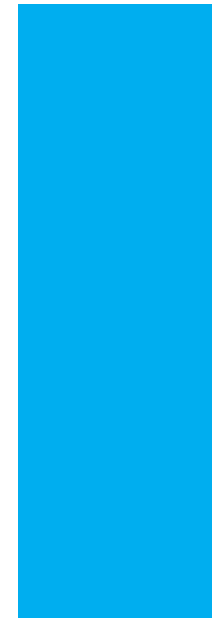
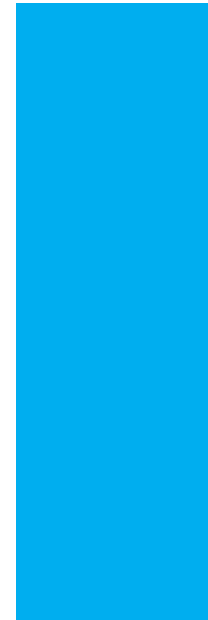
Restoring blaze visibility is the major on-road task. Besides refreshing blazes, one job is to cut back vines, leaves, or weeds that have grown over the blazes or are positioned to obscure the blazes. Another job is to restore lines-of-sight between successive blazes by pruning intervening foliage growth. "Running the road" by a team of two or three people is one method. A person drives slowly from blaze to blaze with the others sitting on the lowered tailgate with paint kit and tools in hand. The third pair of hands is often very useful when a blazed object is on a steep bank or when a lot of tool work is necessary.

Respect others property. Don't blaze trees, poles etc. in front of a house without the owner's permission. By talking to an owner and handing out a BT brochure "good will" is usually the result. Good publicity will never hurt the Buckeye Trail.

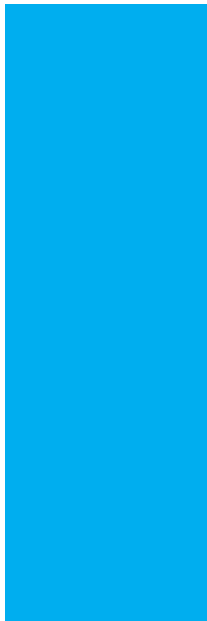
SPECIAL FEATURES OF OFF-ROAD MAINTENANCE

Coping with annual vegetative growth is a major job. The goal is to maintain a 3' minimum width and 8' minimum height. Backpackers do not like stooping to get under low foliage. The other major goal is to maintain "next blaze" visibility in both directions. Blazes are most useful when they are visible along the direction traveled by the trail; i.e.-blazes that lie perpendicular to the trail direction tend to divert the hikers attention away from where he should be looking to follow the route. The easiest segments to maintain are those running through mature forest where shade minimizes annual growth of greenbriar, Virginia creeper, poison ivy, bindweed etc. On these segments the main jobs are blaze refreshment, cutting away fast growing foliage and removing deadfall debris from the path. Remove all fallen trees. If the tree is large ask **your Section Supervisor for help. Never use a chain saw alone.** Some government entities do not allow chain saw work or may

STANDARD: DOUBLE BLAZE (LEFT TURN)



STANDARD: DOUBLE BLAZE (RIGHT TURN)



require chain saw “certification”. If removal of small stumps in the tread is necessary dig out the roots if possible or cut off below ground level. Do not leave hazardous stumps (trippers) in the trail.

For a BT segment that crosses a large open area with no good objects to blaze, several options are available. One is to make poles from small trees or tomato stakes, drive them in the ground in good locations and paint the top 6” blue. You can also contact one of the state Trail Coordinators to install carsonite posts with decals. You can also take the trail around the area’s perimeter or you can install larger than standard blazes on objects on opposite sides if the area if you can see across it.



Indicates a left turn

HINTS TO FOLLOW WHEN BLAZING THE BUCKEYE TRAIL

FACT: When blazing with a 2” brush it spreads to 3” with just a bit of pressure on the tree. Furthermore since trees are curved, the brush hits the middle of the tree first and the edges further down the tree making an oval edge.

SOLUTION: Use a 1” brush in order to paint Square corners on each blaze.

FACT: A tree that is conspicuous when going one way is often screened by another tree, brush or a bend in the trail when the hiker is going in the other direction.

SOLUTION: Use different trees in different directions. It is reassuring to a hiker to look back and see the blaze for the other direction at some intermediate point. This also applies to utility poles.

FACT: With too many blazes the trail looks like a picket fence.

SOLUTION: Limit blazes so you can see just one blaze ahead. When it is impossible to stray off a trail, blazes are needed less often. In areas of turns, side trails or other confusing places, it is reassuring to see two blazes.

FACT: In late spring or early summer, many blazes that were easily seen in the winter are completely hidden by leaves or weeds.

SOLUTION: Check your segment of trail in the late spring and replace hidden blazes with new blazes in better locations or just add more blazes. Trim the trees and brush as indicated.

PAINT CARRIERS

You will be supplied with a paint kit to make it easy to carry the quart cans of paint, brushes and scrapers when out on the trail. These carriers are made by other BTA volunteers and are not always available. If not, use a plastic one gallon pail with a handle which has plenty of room for a quart of paint, a 1” brush, a

small can with 2” of water in which to dip the brush to keep it pliable and a small scraper to scrape the bark of a tree. Use only the designated colors (see Page 2). If you find it necessary to retire as a maintainer please return your paint kit to your section supervisor. While the kits haven’t much monetary value we like to place them where they will benefit the BTA.

ADMINISTRIVIA

We know there are a lot of people out there helping the BTA, we hear about the good work and we can see the impact from year to year, but we need to have a record of the hours that are being dedicated by our volunteers. We are asking that as a group we have a shared goal of recording every hour into our online recording system. You can find the link at www.buckeyetrail.org at the bottom of the page in the brown box. The process is easy and simple and you can save the stamp in the process!

The Volunteer Log for Crews and Groups can still be used.

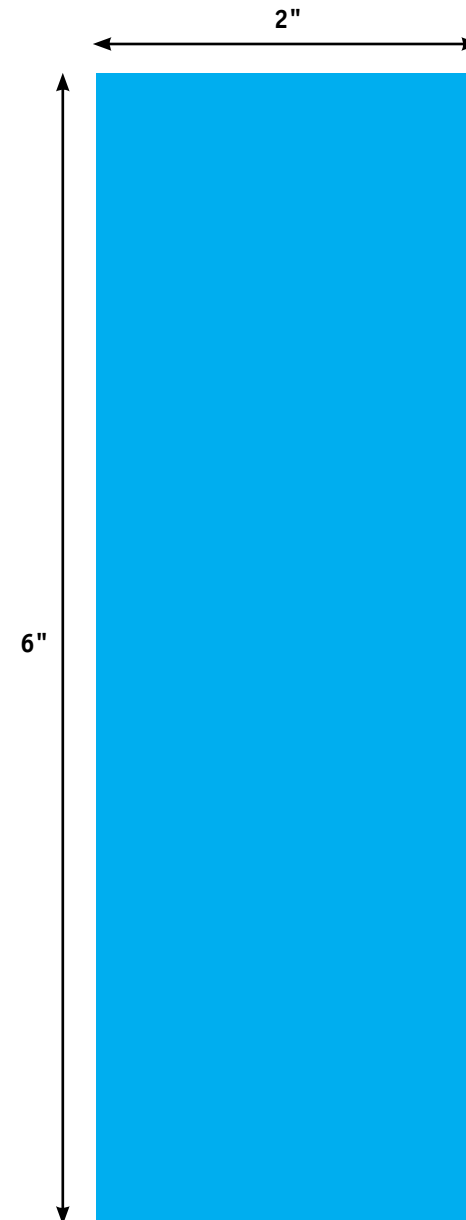
We know that many of you do not think this is worth the bother and do not care about the recognition but the BTA submits them to the NCTA and this improves our position with the National Park Service (they provide mowers and other expensive tools to the BTA). Think of it as getting some of your tax money back.

There is also a copy of a BTA Expense Voucher attached. If you purchase paint or other supplies submit one of these to the BTA Treasurer, treasurer@buckeyetrail.org, and you will be reimbursed.

Finally, thank you for agreeing to be a maintainer for a segment of the Buckeye Trail. We are sure that you will find it to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Remember if you have any questions or concerns call one of the individuals on page 6. If in doubt as to whom you should call, call the volunteer coordinator and they will direct you to the appropriate person. There is also a Maintainers Page on the BTA website, www.buckeyetrail.org, that you may

“TRAIL BLAZES”

STANDARD: SINGLE BLAZE



All blazes to be 2" x 6" with Square Corners