

# Aqueduct Trail Segment Adopters Guide 2024

## **Project Goal**

The goal of this program is to administer an adopt-a-trail segment maintenance program that will provide the capacity needed to maintain the Aqueduct trail system. Trail segments will be adopted by individuals or small groups so their planning and efforts can be focused on these smaller segments while allowing flexibility for these volunteers to preform work when it best fits into their schedule. The individuals or small groups assigned to trail segments will become more effective at identifying and addressing reoccurring trail maintenance needs within their adopted segment. This will also allow volunteers to plan around and attend larger group trail maintenance projects.

## **Adopters Responsibilities**

- 1) **Pre-Season** - Prior to performing any work as part of this program, ensure that you and anyone working with you has reviewed the Risk Management Assessment (RMA) document. This document identifies all the know hazards associated with performing trail maintenance and the mitigation measures to reduce the risks associated with the hazards. The RMA will be provided to you by the Bureau of Land Management, Tres Rios Field Office staff. You must also review the scope of work attached to the Volunteer Agreement., it outlines what types of maintenance activities you are authorized to perform.
- 2) **Before you start working** - If you plan on working alone, inform a partner, family member, friend, or group member of your plans (i.e. when you will be leaving, where you will be working, what you will be doing, and when you plan on being back). If you are working in a group conduct a pre-work safety talk for all volunteers that will be participating in trail maintenance. The safety talk should address the following points:
  - The work itinerary for the day – Discuss the day’s work plans and expected duration.
  - Discuss any hazards specific to the tasks you plan on doing, the tools that you are using and the area that you are planning to work on. Assure everyone has the appropriate PPE for the work activities (e.g. eye protection, gloves, boots, and sun protection).
  - Discuss communication’s - (e.g. cell phone service, SPOT device etc.) identify where cell service is located, the quality, and make a plan so volunteers know where to go and how to get there to access cell service in the case of an emergency.
  - Discuss any environmental factors that may affect your safety while working (e.g. weather) and associated protective clothing and gear for the environment (e.g. sun protection, long pants, sturdy boots, jackets). Make sure you have food and plenty of water to accommodate the amount of time you plan on conducting work knowing you will need more water when working in the elements.
- 3) **During Work – Safety is priority**
  - Ensure that tools are used properly.
  - Limit work to brushing, limbing and maintenance of existing trail tread and features.
  - Do not install new features unless you have coordinated directly with BLM TRFO staff.

## **Trail Maintenance Tasks**

As part of this adopt-a-trail program we are focusing on a subset of the annual maintenance tasks associated with maintaining a trail: brushing, limbing and maintaining existing trail features. These tasks can be completed without further input or approval from the BLM TRFO staff and are typical of the vast majority of the needed annual work on the Aqueduct Trail system.

Task's to be performed:

1) Trail Corridor Brushing

- Ensure that no branches or vegetation are protruding into the trail tread. Trim all brush flush with the ground and/or trim branches back flush with the trunk of the tree or bush it protrudes from.
- Trim brush back on the inside of turns to the extent necessary to establish good sight distances. *Note: Take some time with this. You may have to trim brush back several feet. Think like a trail user and ensure that it is possible to see through a turn.*
- *Don't Leave Punji Sticks!* - These are diagonal cuts near, but not flush to the ground. They can damage tires and have the potential to cause severe injury.

2) Trail Tread and Feature Maintenance

- Ensure that all existing water diversion structures are functioning properly and maintain them by removing the accumulated debris if needed. When cleaning diversion features don't make speed bumps! Drains should be min 18in wide and the swale should be no less than 3' long and generally no more than 8" high.
- Remove loose rock, sticks and debris from the trail tread.

## **Trail Monitoring**

Let the MTG trail coordinator know what you are seeing. What are the problems on your sections? What could be improved? What has changed? Use the Survey 123 reporting app if phone apps are your thing.

- Report any missing or damaged trail intersection signs, each trail intersection should have one. TRFO will provide replacement signs/stickers to be installed.
- Take note of and report any new social or unauthorized trail construction.
- Take note of any new infrastructure needs, preferably with photos and GPS coordinates, and report those to the MTG trail coordinator. This would include sections of trail that need new drainage features, culverts, retaining walls, switchback reconstruction etc.

## **Reporting**

This information could be used to apply for grants and also to demonstrate that we have active volunteers that have the ability to support trail maintenance and development projects.

- Record the number of participants, the hours worked and a brief description the work performed each outing or weekly to the MTG trail coordinator. They compile that information and report it the TRFO annually.

## **MTG Trail Coordinator**

While all adopters are welcome to contact TRFO, the MTG trail coordinator works closely with TRFO and is generally the first contact for questions about trail maintenance tasks. They may be able to give you an answer quickly and are also authorized to oversee some maintenance and construction projects that are not included in this adopt-a-trail segment program.

## **BLM TRFO Responsibilities**

TRFO is the land manager responsible for making sure the trails are maintained in a safe manner while following all applicable laws, rules and regulations. We are also available to provide guidance and training to support these volunteer efforts and have staff with trails specific expertise.

Thank you very much for your volunteer service. The work that you do is what makes it possible to offer some of these great recreation opportunities to the public. It is very much appreciated!

## **Contacts:**

### **BLM TRFO Contact:**

- Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner – Jason Byrd 970-882-1125, [jbyrd@blm.gov](mailto:jbyrd@blm.gov)
- Assistant Field Manager – Joe Manning – 970-749-8124, [jmanning@blm.gov](mailto:jmanning@blm.gov)

### **Mancos Trail Group Contact:**

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