Adopt-a-Trail Program

Chainsaw Team’s Guide
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Thank You!

Thank you for volunteering to be part of a chainsaw crew for the Little Miami State Park and helping to maintain our trail system, protecting an important natural, historic and community resource in southwest Ohio. In the last trail use survey, over a two-day period, over 10,000 trail users were counted. Annually, this means that some 200,000 or more users per year will be positively impacted by the work you do to keep the trail clean, friendly and safe.

The Little Miami State Park (LMSP) is part of the Little Miami Scenic Trail, 75 miles of former railroad right-of-way converted to a recreation trail which stretches from the east side of Cincinnati north all the way to Springfield. The State of Ohio purchased the abandoned rail line in the 1970s and 80s. It was paved in increments thereafter, and completed in the early 90s. The Clark County Park District leases and maintains the Clark County segment in the north. Greene County Parks & Trails does likewise for the Greene County segment. ODNR retained control of the segment stretching from Hedges Road (mile 3.3) to Newtown (mile 53.5), and this is Little Miami State Park. The southernmost 1.5 miles of trail is leased and maintained by Hamilton County Parks.

The right-of-way is 66-feet wide along most of its length, and the boundaries are easily discernible along much of the trail, especially in winter when the leaves are off and boundary fence remnants are visible in the vegetation along the margins. At 50 miles long, this is certainly Ohio’s skinniest state park!

The LMSP is part of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Parks & Recreation (DPR). DPR’s mission is to enhance the quality of life through exceptional outdoor recreational experiences and sound resource management. Our job is to help DPR do this.

The Friends of the Little Miami State Park (FLMSP) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to ensure and enhance a safe and well-maintained multi-use trail as an integral part of the Little Miami River recreational corridor while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and conserving resources. We assist park management with development planning, routine maintenance, capital improvements, safety concerns, parking issues and promotions.

FLMSP was founded in 2008, after three serious accidents occurred due to poor surface conditions on wooden bridges. FLMSP raised $11,000.00 to assist the DPR in paving 15 overpasses. Since then no similar accidents have been reported.
At the founding meeting, the Adopt-a-Trail program was also started, to assist DPR staff with regular maintenance. We’ve fixed many fences, bagged lots of litter and debris and cleared miles of encroaching brush. FLMSP’s goal is improve the trail’s maintenance from end to end.

LMSP is a wonderful park, and the FLMSP is dedicated to keeping it safe and enjoyable for everyone who visits. You are a greatly appreciated Adopter and Friend of the LMSP. The Board and members of the FLMSP thank you.

The Little Miami State Park

The creation of the LMSP introduced a new concept to the Ohio state park system – a trail corridor. This new concept focuses on offering numerous recreational pursuits – bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, rollerblading, backpacking and horseback riding. The LMSP corridor provides access for canoeing the Little Miami River. Established as a state park in 1979, the LMSP, runs through four counties and is approximately 50 miles in length.

The majority of the Little Miami Scenic Trail (LMST) is built on an old railroad bed---a rails-to-trails conversion project. The Little Miami Railroad was built in 1845 and ran from Xenia to Cincinnati. The history of the Little Miami Railroad can be found on the FLMSP website at http://littlemiamistatepark.org/history/the-little-miami-scenic-trail.

While each segment is unique, the LMSP is typically 66’ in width, representing the railroad’s original right-of-way. A cross section of the right-of-way is shown below in figure A-1. Within the right-of-way is a 9’ wide blacktop surface, a grass berm on each side of the pavement, drainage on each side of the rail bed, culverts of various sizes to move water under the rail bed, and usually some boundary fencing on each side of the property (See Fig. A-1). In some sections of the trail, the “poles” that carried the original railroad signal wires are visible and are slowly rotting away.
Wood fences separate the blacktop trail from the deeper culverts and ravines to protect the trail users from falls. Bridges across larger streams were created from the original railroad bridges by adding wood planks as bridge decking. The decks proved to be dangerously slick in wet conditions and the wood planks were covered with a layer of blacktop by the FLMSP in 2009.
Chainsaw Team’s Guide

As part of the FLMSP Adopt-a-Trail program and in addition to the segment adopters, FLMSP has implemented specialty teams to be responsible for any chain saw work that may need to be performed on the trail. Specifically, these teams specialize in removal of any treefalls that block the use of the trail and any treefalls that hinder maintenance of the berm of the trail. These chainsaw specialists have been qualified to perform chainsaw work while maintaining the safety of trail users and their own safety.

There are two Chainsaw Teams. The North Team performs work on the north section of the trail from the north park boundary at Hedges Rd (MM 3.0) to Wilmington Road (MM 20.5 at Mathers Mill). The South Team performs work on the south section of the trail from Wilmington Road (MM 20.5) to the south park boundary at Avoca Park (MM 51.0).

The following section describes the rules, regulations and standard operating procedures for the Chainsaw Team. This section is intended for the Chainsaw Team lead, members, and helpers as well as trail adopters who have been certified for chainsaw use by the State Parks and wish to perform maintenance with a chain saw on their segment of trail.

Authority

The Chainsaw Teams are part of the FLMSP Adopt-a-Trail program and as such received their authority through the same agreements as the Trail Adopters, specifically the Ohio State Park Individual Volunteer agreement and the FLMSP / ODNR Right-of-Entry agreement. The Right-of-Entry agreement is of special importance for the Chainsaw Team. This agreement includes permission for FLMSP volunteers to take vehicles onto the trail and dictates the rules that must be followed when working on the trail. The primary focus is the continued safety of the trail users while the trail maintenance activity is being carried out.

Qualification of Chainsaw Operators

The fundamental purpose of developing separate Chain Saw Teams is to ensure a level of training required to ensure safe operations when working with chain saws on the trail. This includes safety of the volunteer and safety of the public while they are using the trail. The FLMSP has developed detailed safety rules for chain saw use and a Chainsaw Operators Qualification Program.
Individuals are to be “qualified” before they can operate chainsaws in the Little Miami State Park. This is because the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Friends of the Little Miami State Park (FLMSP) are highly concerned with personnel safety. Ensuring the safety of the saw operator, the other Adopt-a-Trail (AAT) volunteers, and the park users is—by far—the biggest priority associated with any AAT activity. This qualification process assures that the volunteer meets a certain standard for knowledge and operating skills. It also decreases the risk of volunteers hurting themselves, coworkers, or trail users, as well as the risk of property damage. The following details the qualification procedure.

**Qualification Criteria.** The person seeking qualification must:

1) Show basic knowledge of chainsaw operating procedures and FLMSP – AAT Chainsaw Safety Rules via a passing grade on a brief, written quiz.

2) Demonstrate the basic skills of starting, stopping and cutting techniques by actual cutting work on the trail.

3) Sign the volunteer agreements required by Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR)

**Qualification Procedures.** Only the Chainsaw Team leaders will perform the qualifications in order to ensure consistency of expectations. Team Leaders will keep records of who is qualified. The qualification is a one-time event as opposed to a periodic test. Any FLMSP member may seek qualification. This is not limited to segment adopters.

**Training.** If a person views / reads the training sources below he/ she should be able to pass the quiz part of the qualification.

1) Our FLMSP Chainsaws are made by Stihl which offers an excellent training video that can be found on YouTube:  
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUW7JNk7zVw

2) The Stihl Chainsaw Safety Manual can be downloaded from:  
   http://www.stihlusa.com/manuals/index.html

3) The FLMSP – AAT Chainsaw Safety Rules for chainsaw operators can be viewed on the FLMSP website

If the person seeking qualification desires field demonstrations of cutting techniques, he she may arrange a demonstration from a previously qualified FLMSP- AAT Volunteer. This should be done before the new person’s qualification.
Chainsaw Team Activities and Responsibilities

The following lists the primary activities and responsibilities of the Chainsaw Teams.

*Keep the trail clear / usable.* Remove new treefalls blocking the trail within two days – IF: the team has (A) the skills to remove safely and (B) the time to address the treefall quickly. If (A) or (B) can’t be met, inform the State Park and Adopt-a-Trail coordinator regarding the situation.

*Keep the existing berms clear.* Remove old treefalls, trunks, branches and other wood debris that require chainsaw cuts in order to remove. This work is important but not urgent. The timeline will be managed by the trail adopters and the chain saw teams (and their crews).

Removal includes relocating the wood to the side of the trail, but within the Park boundary, minimizing visual impact to park users.

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**Note concerning vegetation removal.** It is unlawful to take firewood and timber from an Ohio State Park. For most Adopt-a-Trail activities, push natural debris and vegetation off the berm or to an out-of-the-way location on site to decompose naturally. In situations such as after a storm where there is an excessive amount of material and removal from the area is recommended, we can document the need and apply for a wood collection permit from the Chief of Parks. It is only through this documentation and waiver that individuals can legally remove timber or firewood from the park.

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*Limitation on live tree removal.* Chainsaw Teams will remove trees that are already down. If the need arises to remove an upright, live tree, the permissions described in the ODNR Right of Entry paragraph 4 will be obtained ahead of time.

*Maintain the chainsaws.* Periodically perform basic maintenance on the chainsaws. Sharpen and adjust the saw chain. Check the safety features.

*Maintain a record of all volunteer service hours* (Timeslips). Please record all volunteer service hours provided to the Adopt-a-Trail Program in the Timeslips system.
Safety
The following apply to FLMSP Adopt-a-Trail Volunteers who are FLMSP chainsaw qualified. All other FLMSP-AAT volunteer personnel are NOT permitted to use chainsaws in the course of their volunteer work.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
The following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times during chainsaw operation:
1) High visibility hard-hat.
2) Safety glasses with safety shields or a face screen.
3) Hearing protection.
4) Sturdy clothes- no loose fit clothing that might become saw-entangled.
5) Non-slip work gloves or saw mittens
6) Sturdy footwear with non-slip soles
7) Chainsaw Safety Chaps

Safety Procedures
The procedures below are unlikely to cover every circumstance that a volunteer may encounter. There is no substitute for good judgment regarding what actions can be performed safely. DO NOT take on any job or even a single cut which you cannot perform safely. Remember this statistic: 95% of the injuries involving chainsaws are preventable!

General:
1) Based on the work to be done and potential hazards, the volunteer may temporarily close the affected trail section or let trail users proceed with caution. In either case, signs must be placed on the trail per the ODNR Right of Entry agreement advising trail users of the trail status and volunteer activity.
2) DO NOT work when you are fatigued.
3) NEVER WORK ALONE! A minimum of two people must be present. One is a safety watch for the chainsaw operator and for passing trail users (if applicable). The chainsaw operator must be within yelling distance of help and the safety watch must have a working cell phone for summoning emergency help.
Prior to starting the cutting work, the chainsaw operator and safety watch must discuss their injury response plan:
- Identify the vehicle to be driven to the hospital/ urgent care and where the keys are.
• Identify your location (i.e. mile marker and nearest cross roads) on the trail.
• Identify the nearest Urgent Care facility.
• Identify the person(s) with cell phone(s) who will place the emergency call.
• Identify the location of the first aid kit.

4) Have a first aid kit on site. Trauma first aid kits are stored with the chain saws. These kits should also be on site when any chain saw work is performed.

5) Tuck in drawstrings that are on hooded jackets or long hair that dangles down. Remove rings and jewelry. Remove objects from pockets that might fall out while cutting.

6) Inspect the saw before use. Ensure both the inertia and manual activation of the chain brake are in proper working condition. Inspect the chain catch for damage and have it repaired as necessary. Also, test the throttle lock-out feature for proper operation. Inspect the bar and chain and repair or replace as necessary. While wearing gloves, work the chain back and forth on the bar to test for proper tensioning and correct installation.

7) Safe Starting: Do not drop-start the chainsaw. A chain saw is safest to start on the ground with the chain brake engaged. Be sure nothing is obstructing the guide bar/chain. To make sure the saw sits securely on the ground, place your right foot in the rear handles.

8) Carefully “size up” each cut. Anticipate how the wood will move/react to your cut. If you’re unsure of the wood’s reaction, make shallow cuts pausing to watch the piece react and identify the direction it wants to go.

9) Don’t let anyone hold the log or limb being cut. Work at a safe distance from others.

10) ALWAYS maintain control by standing securely holding the saw firmly and taking your hand off the trigger between cuts.

11) NEVER straddle the log to make a cut.

12) Whenever you are cutting, be sure your body is clear of the natural path the saw will follow when the cut goes through.

13) ALWAYS shut off the engine before setting the chain saw down—even when you are retreating from a falling tree.

14) The chain saw must be shut down or the chain break activated whenever the saw is carried more than a few steps. Whenever possible use the bar cover. A saw should be carried by its front handle with the chain bar pointing to the rear. Do not carry the chain saw on your shoulder.
15) Cut with the lower part of the saw blade—not with the tip or nose.
16) Maintain a high saw speed when entering, cutting and leaving the wood cut.
17) To avoid pinching, rotate limb or log to be cut or insert a short log under the cut area. If the saw becomes pinched, shut it off and insert a log under it to eliminate the pinching.
18) Keep the chain sharp. The Adopt-a-Trail program has appropriate sharpening tools and training videos are readily available.
19) DO NOT cut above mid-chest height; the saw would be too close to your face.
20) DO NOT cut brush or shrubbery with a chainsaw.

**Refueling:**
1) NEVER fuel a saw while the engine is running.
2) NEVER fuel a hot saw.
3) NEVER smoke or have any type of flame while you are around a saw or during fueling.
4) NEVER start the saw where you fueled the engine. Move at least 10 feet away.
5) Keep leaves and dry materials away from the hot muffler.

**Limbing:**
1) Stand on the opposite side of the tree whenever possible, using it as a barrier between yourself and the limb you are cutting. Do not overstretch yourself to do this because it would make you less stable.
2) Do not face the limb you are cutting squarely—stand at a 45-degree angle to prevent the saw from striking your leg if it slips.
3) If you are on a hill, stand on the upside of the hill.
4) NEVER cut limbs above mid-chest height.
5) Do not cut limbs that are supporting the log.

**Reducing the risk of Kickback.** Kickback occurs when a force causes the bar to “kick” up and back towards the operator and may result in a loss of control and possible injury. There are several causes:
- an abrupt change in wood character—hitting a knot or a nail
- cutting with the upper tip of the bar
- striking a nearby limb with the tip of the moving chain while cutting
- running the chain too slowly
- twisting the saw in your cut so the chain grabs
- using a dull or loose chain
having a loose grip on the saw or cutting with only one hand
not paying attention

Reduce the kickback risk:
1) Never cut with the upper half of the tip of the bar
2) Always hold the saw firmly with both hands and keep the left arm as straight and stable as possible
3) Use a saw equipped with a chain brake, anti-kickback chain, or other anti-kickback devices.

Volunteer Limitations. FLMSP Adopt-a-Trail chainsaw-certified volunteers must obey the following prohibitions:
1) Do not work from a ladder or from within a tree.
2) Do not do boring cuts; these are very risky unless you are trained for the job.
3) Do not remove live trees without ODNR permission.
4) Do not remove standing dead trees without ODNR permission
5) Do not remove wood from the State Park.
Appendices/Resources

Available Equipment
FLMSP has a variety of tools, including gas-powered brush cutters, chainsaws, a leaf blower, and a brush mower. We also have hand tools such as loppers (long-handled pruners), rakes, shovels, a mattock, and a Honeysuckle Popper. Safety vests, gloves, glasses, and earplugs are available as well.

Tool caches:
- North: Hisey Park, south of Corwin.
- Middle: Fosters
- South: Bill Schwinn’s house in Terrace Park.

Note that some of the equipment, such as the chain saws, requires training before use.

Each Trail Segment and its Adopters
- Available on the FLMSP Web site under Adopt-A-Trail Downloads (see access instructions below)

State Documents and Forms
- Ohio State Parks Handbook for Volunteers:
- The following forms are available on the FLMSP Web site under Adopt-A-Trail Downloads (see access instructions below):
  - Individual Volunteer Agreement
  - Group Volunteer Agreement

Instructions for use of Timeslip
- Confirm that the Adopt-a-Trail Coordinator has entered your name in the system
- Download “Timeslips Instructions” from the FLMSP Web site under Adopt-A-Trail Downloads (see access instructions below)

Accessing Documents on the FLMSP Web Site
- Follow path: littlemiamistatepark.org > Adopt-a-Trail > Downloads
- You will be asked to sign in to access this area of the site
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- If you have been pre-registered by FLMSP, enter for user name your first and last name (format: firstlast) and password trailworker.
- If you have not been pre-registered, click on “Register” at the bottom of the page and provide your name, email, a user name and password.
- Once you have accessed the Download area, click the link for desired document.

**Web Sites of County Maps and Property Records**

- **Green County**
  - [http://gis.co.greene.oh.us/gismap/](http://gis.co.greene.oh.us/gismap/)

- **Warren County**
  - [http://www.co.warren.oh.us/auditor/property_search/index.htm](http://www.co.warren.oh.us/auditor/property_search/index.htm)
  - [http://webmap.co.warren.oh.us/AuditorGIS/default.aspx](http://webmap.co.warren.oh.us/AuditorGIS/default.aspx)

- **Clermont County**
  - [http://www.clermontauditorrealestate.org/Forms/MapAdvanced.aspx](http://www.clermontauditorrealestate.org/Forms/MapAdvanced.aspx)

- **Hamilton County**
  - [http://cagisonline.hamilton-co.org/cagisonline/index.html](http://cagisonline.hamilton-co.org/cagisonline/index.html)

**Phone Numbers of Local Government Entities**

- **Little Miami State Park**
  - Contact: Caesar Creek State Park
  - 8570 East State Route 73
  - Waynesville, Ohio 45068-9719
  - 513-897-3055

- **Ohio State Parks, Cowan Lake Region**
  - Alan Ferguson, Site Operations Manager
  - Cowan Lake Region, Ohio State Parks
  - 1750 Osborn Road
  - Wilmington, OH 45177
  - Office: 937-382-1096
  - Fax: 937-383-7790
  - e-mail: Alan.Ferguson@dnr.state.oh.us

- **Emergency**
  - 911

- **Warren County Sheriff**
  - 513-695-1280

- **Clermont County Sheriff**
  - 513-732-2231
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- Hamilton County Sheriff
  513-825-2280
- Green County Sheriff
  937-376-5111
- Hamilton Township Police
  513-683-0583

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