

ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM POLICIES

Goals

The Adopt-a-Trail program is intended to provide opportunities for citizens and groups to help maintain Bellingham trails and natural areas. By delegating some duties to capable volunteers, the City can make better use of Park staff for jobs that require more expertise or use of equipment.

The program offers volunteers a sense of ownership in “their” trail or natural site, and is an outgrowth of the Greenway Volunteer Program’s goal of involving the community in enhancing and maintaining trail corridors.

Adopter Criteria

Any individual or group may sign on for maintenance of a trail section or natural area with a commitment of at least 6 months. Agreements are renewable each year in January.

Youth groups are welcome to adopt trails during the school year, with work coordinated with the teacher or other adult leader.

Duties

Volunteers are assigned appropriate trail maintenance jobs suitable for their skills and interests. Duties can be as simple as routine litter pickup on a stretch of trail, or as complex as planning for restoration of a trailside natural area or construction of a trail. Generally, these jobs do not need power tools. If power machinery (such as weed whackers) is required, the volunteer can be granted permission to use his own equipment if qualified. The Adopt-a-Trail promotional flier lists other possible duties.

Adopt-a-Trail Agreement

Adopters will be issued permission to work (in compliance with the Park Code) in an Adopt-a-Trail Agreement, signed by both the adopter and the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. The agreement lists the site, all permitted duties, allowable equipment or techniques, and any limitations on work. The adopter signs a liability waiver assuming responsibility for their safety and releasing the City from claims.

Maintenance Standards

Standards for maintenance of the assigned area or trail section will be detailed in the agreement. If agreed-upon standards are not being met, the coordinator will discuss the site with the adopter. If assistance is needed, it can be given in the form of supplementary volunteer work parties, staff support or advice. If the adopter wishes exclusive responsibility for the site but fails after discussion to maintain it to the agreed-upon standards, the coordinator will terminate the agreement in writing and remove from the site any signage recognizing the adopter.

Training

Individuals and groups taking on work they are unfamiliar with are trained in safe and proper ways to accomplish their job. The Volunteer Coordinator works with the group until both parties are comfortable about the job, and continues to coordinate projects after the adopters are working on their own.

Tools

For routine maintenance, volunteer adopters are asked to provide their own tools. For special projects or large groups, the Volunteer Coordinator can loan program tools and gloves.

Support

Support will be provided in the form of trash bags and bag pickup, site preparation work (if heavy equipment is required), mulch and gravel deliveries, nursery plants or purchased trees and shrubs. The Coordinator will order and pickup plants for groups wishing to donate trees to the program.

Recognition

Adopt-a-Trail participants are generous people, and deserve more recognition than they get. Dedicated adopters receive awards at our annual Volunteer Reception, with associated publicity. They will be recognized on the trail with small program signs listing their name(s).