



What to Expect on a “Trail Tending” Day

Volunteers are the heart of the MARIPOSA TRAILS organization, shaping its vision, enlivening its mission, and achieving its goal to maintain and promote recreational trail access for hikers, runners, cyclists, equestrians and others. If you share our belief that health, prosperity and fun are grounded in our access to the earth, and our care of it, then join us. You can make a difference by being an active and valued member of the MARIPOSA TRAILS community.

We crafted this handout to ease your transition into our community; it gives you a better idea of what it’s like being on a trail crew. Want to learn more? Check out our digital library under “SAFETY” at the footer of www.mariposatrails.org.

If you have any questions about our Trail Tending Days, contact Bill at mariposa.trails@yahoo.com

What do I need to bring?

For all projects, MARIPOSA TRAILS provides tools and safety gear (including a hard hat, safety glasses, and gloves). Of course, you’re welcome to bring your own gear and tools too. For everything else, however, volunteers are responsible to bring the recommended gear for single-day and multi-day trips, which are listed in the “pack lists” in the FAQ section of our website.

Do I need to have prior trail work experience?

No. We work hard to teach our volunteers the joy of trail maintenance. We hope by investing our time in teaching you trail maintenance you’ll come back and join us again. If you have previous trail maintenance experience, please let us know in advance.

What are volunteer trail crew tasks?

Tasks are dependent on the needs of the trail, and vary in their degree of intensity, and may include:

- clearing vegetation that has started growing in or over the trail
- maintaining and improving the trail tread (tread is the area where people and stock walk on the trail)

- cutting and removing fallen trees to clear the trail corridor
- cleaning and repair of water diversion structures
- maintaining and constructing structures such as rock walls

** Much instruction on proper methods and safety reminders will occur at the work site as work progresses.

While it can be demanding work, volunteers are encouraged throughout the day to pace themselves, drink lots of fluids and take time to eat something. Volunteers are encouraged to take a break when they feel the need.

Is working on a trail crew hard work?

While we aim to make the experience safe, fun and rewarding, there is no doubt that volunteers need to be prepared to hike to and from a project site while carrying tools and their personal gear, and to work on the trail. Some projects may take place near a trailhead, but most projects may require volunteers to hike up to 8 miles or more each day, or to embark on a multi-day backpack trip with tools. Volunteers need to be in good physical condition and prepared to be outside all day. If you are unsure or concerned about the fitness level required, please contact us and we can help direct you to an appropriate project that fits your needs and abilities.

What does a typical Tending the Trail outing look like?

First, take care to gather your gear and secure your car and keys. Then, sign your name on the sign-up sheet and feel free to greet and talk with the trail crew leader, or others, likely to be a mix of new and seasoned volunteers. Soon, a meeting will be called, and the following topics will be discussed:

- Introductions
- Description of the project
- tips on personal safety and tool use
- food and water
- hazards
- first-aid, including allergies

Then, personal protective equipment and trail tools will be distributed, and the crew will hike out to the work site, taking breaks as needed. Trail work along the trail and at the worksite will occur. A lunch break is welcome around mid-day. Additional work will occur after lunch. The crew leader will figure when the crew needs to head back to the morning meeting area; the goal is to return to the trailhead by 4:00 PM, usually. Once there:

- tools and other equipment sent out on the project will be collected, pictures taken and everyone is thanked for their service.

- end of day refreshments will be served and enjoyed.
- Volunteers head home after having a safe day of fun and stewardship.