

# Purpose of the Ambassador Program And The Western Maryland Wheelman County Trail Ambassador (TA) Manual

1/14/08

The WCTA is a joint effort between the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, Allegany County Tourism, Western Maryland Wheelman and the Allegany County Homeland Security's office to PROMOTE and MONITOR biking trails in Allegany County, Maryland.

## Contacts

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The purpose of the Trail Ambassador is two-fold. The first is to actively *promote* the Trail. The second is to *monitor* the Trail you are helping to promote. Both of these functions are equally important and should be the focus of your efforts as an Ambassador.

Your role as a "**Promoter**" of the Trail involves many different aspects. Knowing the Trail is an essential part of your duties. Being able to advise Trail users on distances between Trail heads, where the restrooms are, where water is available, what/where services are available and other key information is part of what makes you a value to the Trail. Other skills and knowledge, e.g., bike repair skills and basic first aid, are complementary to being an information resource.

Your role as a "**monitor**" on the Trail is multi-faceted as well. You are expected to convey (not enforce) the rules in a friendly and positive manner. Be sure to approach offenders cautiously but in a friendly manner. Many times Trail users just are not aware that what they are doing is against the rules. Always avoid conflict at all cost. If you sense that a situation is becoming confrontational, walk away. Then notify law enforcement of the problem.

The monitoring phase of your time also involves being the eyes and ears of the Trail management system. Surveying the condition of the Trail is important to ensure that maintenance problems are remedied quickly, regular maintenance is being conducted and what is going on adjacent to the Trail, on neighboring properties, is not encroaching or having a negative impact on the Trail.

Keep a close eye on the physical condition of the Trail. Report any conditions you see as problems or potential problems, such as hanging limbs, clogged drainage, surface erosion, vandalism or other related problems. Be sure to report these problems to the County Department of Public Work (301-777-5933 X361) office as quickly as possible, noting the specific location. Other things to keep an eye out for include illegal use, such as ATV s, unwanted signage or "rogue" advertising, or horse use on sections where it is not permitted.

### **Specific Tasks of the Trail Ambassador**

1. Provide maps, rules, and other service information to trail users
2. Relay Trail user comments and concerns to the County Department of Public Works or Tourism Rep
3. Pick up occasional (and manageable) litter along the Trail
4. Help maintain safe trails by being alert and reporting problem areas, hazards, obstacles and remedies
5. Administer First Aid and CPR, if qualified, to injured or ill persons. Provide first aid kit to assist Trail users, assist in transporting injured people.
6. Provide assistance (tools and advice) to riders with mechanical problems.
7. Call emergency services for a Trail user in need of assistance
8. Complete appropriate incident and monitoring log, **post it to the WMW Trail Ambassador's the Group Web site.**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WMWGAPTARPT/?yguid=177749811>
  - a. **This site will be monitored County Trail Coordinator and the WMW Monitors.**
9. Provide current information, as available on trail condition, safety issues and impending weather conditions.

### **Trail Ambassador Requirements**

1. Complete the Trail Ambassador Training Program developed with Tourism and the Homeland Security's office.
2. Meet the Age Requirement (18 and over) unless partnered with an adult who has also completed the training.
3. Wear your Ambassador T-shirt/arm band when you are "on-duty". If you just want to go for a ride for enjoyment and don't want to serve the "Ambassador" role that day, simply don't wear the shirt/arm band.
4. Interact effectively and courteously with people as ambassadors for the trail. This includes trail users, emergency service personnel, land management groups and adjacent landowners.
5. Serve as a role model for responsible Trail use. Follow the rules and act accordingly
6. **Always wear your bike helmet**, and tactful encourage others to wear theirs.

### **Scheduling**

Trail Ambassadors do not have a set schedule and are not required to report in before hitting the Trail in the role as an Ambassador. Simply record the number of hours and miles on the Trail Ambassador Log Sheet. Post it on line at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WMWGAPTARPT/>. Although not necessary, it makes good sense to partner with another Monitor when possible, for safety's sake.

### **Limiting Conditions**

The Trail Ambassador Program allows for modification in scope, termination, or alteration in any manner at the discretion of WCTA. Trail Ambassadors are not to represent the WCTA, Allegany Tourism and Homeland Security's office by expressing their opinions about issues that might be politically charged while on duty. Volunteer privileges can be revoked if they fail to properly represent the organizations.

### **Guidelines for Duties**

1. Report any damages, fallen trees, vandalism, landslides, etc, to the Homeland Security's Trail Coordinator
2. Assist with information. Be comfortable with reading the Trail map and directing Trail users to sections of the Trail they may not have discovered yet. Know where there is parking. Be familiar with locations of restaurants or where Trail users can rent bikes or buy supplies. For more information on lodging and attractions, refer the Trail users to [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org) or [www.mdmountainside.com](http://www.mdmountainside.com). Be familiar with the mile marker system.
3. Help with bike repairs and offer help/supplies to those in need of first aid. Because of liability concerns, it is highly recommended that you offer someone the use of your first aid kit or tool kit rather than perform any services yourself. The Good Samaritan Law will protect you for any services you provide that you are trained or certified in.
4. Pass on suggestions, complaints or compliments from Trail users to the Tourism Trail Coordinator by noting them on your Monitoring log. Also note on the Monitoring log possible maintenance needs such as mowing, tree trimming, culvert cleaning or areas needing a trash clean-up.
5. Each WCTA **must** attend the Tourism training course.

### **You have the right to:**

- Diplomatically approach people who have violated the rules of the Trail and let them know by giving them a rule card. **You are here to inform, not to police!** Be courteous.
- If warranted, contact the appropriate authorities and fill out an incident report. Call 911 or (301) 777-5959 and stay until police arrive. You will need to be able to direct them to where you are on the Trail. Let police handle conflict and law-breaking situations.
- Take photos of issues where appropriate.
- Call 911 in cases of medical emergencies and fill out an incident report.

### **Handling Emergencies**

Dealing with emergencies is best left to trained personnel. Heart attacks and seizures should only be attended to by trained professionals and first aid certified volunteers. Call 911 as soon as possible.

### **Draft log attached.**

Turn in completed logs to Tourism for record keeping. Tourism will provide an annual Ambassador program participation and recognition report.

### **Trail Ambassador Log**

Be sure to document your time and experiences. The WMW lead trail monitor will monitor the log, with support from Tourism and Homeland Security's office. The log sheets will tell us:

1. What days the Trail was being monitored and how many hours.

2. Noteworthy information about the Trail, both positive and negative occurrences, concerns and maintenance needs. Anecdotal information is always welcome.

#### **Procedure for gathering this information**

1. Be sure to have our monitoring logs. These can be obtained by making copies of the originals you were given with the training manual, requesting more be sent by the Trail Coordinator, Blank logs are posted on the monitor posting site <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WMWGAPTARPT/> When on the Trail take notes -- date/time/mile/information.
2. When you get off the Trail, transfer the information to the Ambassador's Log
3. Each monitor is to post their logs on the WMW Monitor 2007 Yahoo site. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WMWGAPTARPT/>
4. This site will be monitored by the Homeland Security's, WMSRR, WMW and Tourism departments. Sending a direct E-mail or calling the key representative would be helpful on significant issues

#### **Proper Dress**

1. Trail Monitor T-Shirt (or other appropriate items as developed). Wear Monitor T-shirt or Arm Band
2. Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.

#### **What to Carry With You --Suggested Supplies**

1. Trail maps and rules cards (See Trail Etiquette below) and information about becoming a member of WCTA.
2. Bike repair kit  
Basic first aid kit
3. Small notebook or monitoring log and a pen/pencil. This will be helpful for transferring information to an Incident Report or Ambassador's Log recommendations
4. Cell phone (where service is available)
5. Tire pump and tubes
6. Bag for litter
7. Camera
8. CPR and First Aid Certification (if applicable)

#### **Bike Repair Training**

Bike repair training may be available through a local bike shop, the Western Maryland Wheelmen, or from an experienced rider. There a number of publications available for bicycle repair. It is a good idea for Trail Ambassadors to be familiar with the mechanical operation of a bicycle, be able to perform common bike field repairs and be familiar with basic bike repair tools. Although it is unlikely that a Trail Ambassador would be sued for performing bike repair that might result in failure or injury; it's a good idea to provide the user with the tools and parts and give instructions/advice for the repair. This way you are in no way liable for any repair of the user's bike. In addition, it helps the user learn how to perform the repair.

## Fact Sheet Great Allegheny Passage of Maryland (GAPM)

- The GAPM is 20.47 miles long from Cumberland MD to the Mason-Dixon Line.
- The elevation rises from 625 feet in Cumberland to 2250 feet at the Mason-Dixon Line.
- The average grade is 1.75%.
- Cumberland is mile 0.
- Frostburg (New Hope Rd. Parking Lot) is at mile 15.4
- The Mason-Dixon Line is at mile 20.47
- The trail parallels the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad for 14.2 miles from Cumberland.
- The trail goes through two tunnels. Brush tunnel is 914 feet long and Borden Tunnel is 945 feet long.
- The Connellsville extension of the Western Maryland Railway, from Cumberland to Connellsville, was completed in 1912.
- Passenger service was discontinued in 1957.
- The last train (a special passenger train) ran on May 21, 1975 from Connellsville to Cumberland.

## Trail Etiquette General Rules

Some basic rules to follow when traveling along rail-trails a

1. No motorized vehicles except wheelchairs and Segways
2. Know where you are and who has the right of way
  - a. Equestrians are only permitted on the grassy section beside the trail between Frostburg and the Mason Dixon Line.
    - i. Cyclist and walkers yield to Equestrians
    - ii. Please keep horses off the improved hiker/biker surface. Stay on the grass.
    - iii. Walker yield to Cyclist
  - b. Always travel on the right side and pass on the left side.
  - c. Give warning when approaching, sound your bell or horn and announce audibly "passing on your left."
3. Watch your speed
  - a. The speed limit is **15 MPH**
4. Bicyclists and horse riders should wear helmets. Maryland State law mandates that children under 12 years old wear safety-approved helmets.
5. When you stop, leave the Trail to allow traffic to pass
6. Keep pets on a short leash, under control, and pet waste off the Trail
7. All Maryland State Gun and Hunting Laws apply. Do not discharge or carry loaded firearms on or near the Trail.
8. Please respect private property and stay on the Trail.
9. Pack it in, Pack it out, and leave the Trail cleaner than you found it. Pick up small litter if possible
10. Stay on Trail
11. Ride single file through tunnels
12. No fires
13. The Trail is open daily, dawn to dusk. No overnight use, except in authorized areas

### Enforcement

The only official enforcement authority the Trail has in a patrolling capacity is the Allegany County Homeland Security's Department. From the Narrows to the beginning of the trail at the Western Maryland Station the authority is the City of Cumberland Police Department.

### Restrooms

Restrooms are located at Canal Place and the WMRR Station in Cumberland. Portable restroom facilities are located at

- |                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>5.3 Mile</b>  | Cash Valley Rd                        |
| <b>9.5 Mile</b>  | Woodcock Hollow Trailhead             |
| <b>15.5 Mile</b> | New Hope Road Trailhead in Frostburg. |

Water fountains are located at Canal Place and in front of the Cumberland train station.

# Ambassador Trail Log

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	TA #	NAME	STARTING TIME	ENDING TIME	MILAGE	START MILE MARKER	ENDING MILE MARKER	# PEOPLE CONTACTED	ASSISTANCE RENDERED-COMMENTS