

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

OVERSEER HANDBOOK

A Guide to Responsibilities and Resources



September 1998
Edition 2

This Overseer Handbook has been put together to orient you to your new position and responsibilities. In addition to the Handbook, you should also have a PATC embroidered patch and a Trail Overseer rocker bar included in this package. The patches show that you are a PATC volunteer who is giving the public an opportunity to see the beauty of the wooded wilderness while at the same time preserving it. Our trail efforts are paralleled by other trail organizations up and down the East Coast, from the Maine Appalachian Trail Club to the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is proud of the quality of our work and the club hopes you will do your best to promote our reputation for providing outstanding trails.

Your responsibilities as an overseer are covered in Section 2. Safe operating procedures are a primary objective of PATC and are presented in Section 3. Section 6 describes the basic trail maintenance standards expected from you as an overseer. Your package should also include an Overseer Identification Card valid for the calendar year. You can use your overseer I.D. card to acquire discounts at various outdoor shops. The specific businesses participating in this program are included in Section 17.

If you should have any questions after reviewing this information, please feel free to call your District Manager (who's number you should know), or the Trails Coordinator at PATC Headquarters at (703) 242-0693, Ext. 12, normally weekdays from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Thanks for being a volunteer.

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1. WHY ARE THERE OVERSEERS?

Depending on where your trail is located, you may be performing work on federal, state, regional, or local government land, or maybe even on property owned by the PATC or private landowners. Funding cuts over the past years have limited our government partners capabilities. PATC and other volunteer organizations allow our government partners to focus on essential areas such as park management and law enforcement.

Your trail should be a source of pride to both you and the PATC. The best way to keep the public and government partners happy is to visit your trail regularly and perform the necessary maintenance to keep it in top condition. In some cases, this may require some unexpected visits on short notice to respond to high winds, ice storms, or flood damage. Please keep in mind - if you don't get out and meet your responsibilities, the hard-earned reputation of PATC quality will suffer.

For your information, the responsibilities of the PATC Trails Organization (including Overseer) are listed below.

2. PATC TRAILS OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trails Management Objectives

There are two primary objectives of the PATC Trails Organization. The **first management objective** of the PATC Trails Organization is to maintain approximately 975 miles of designated trails under cooperative agreements with our government partners. This includes 240 miles of the Appalachian Trail (AT) from Rockfish Gap in central Virginia to Pine Grove Furnace in southern Pennsylvania as well as 735 additional miles of wooded trails in Shenandoah National Park, the Massanutten Mountains, Great North Mountain, suburban Virginia, suburban Maryland, and Washington D.C. The **second objective** is to ensure the safety of PATC Trails Volunteers by providing adequate training and proper safety equipment.

Trails Management Responsibilities

Trails Coordinator (PATC Headquarters staff)

1. Support the Supervisor of Trails as appropriate to meet the PATC Trails Management Objectives.
2. Maintain trail work records and files.
3. Oversee the Tool Room volunteers.
4. Coordinate trail sign preparation and distribution.
5. Represent the Supervisor of Trails in non-policy matters.
6. Coordinate Shenandoah and Massarock work crews.

Supervisor of Trails

1. Represent PATC in trail related matters with government partners, the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), and other government agencies as may be required. In general, interaction with government partners normally will occur when matters involve more than one PATC district.
2. Provide guidance and direction to the Trails Coordinator.
3. Support and communicate with PATC District Managers.
4. Support and communicate with PATC Work Crew Leaders.
5. Recruit PATC District Managers when vacancies occur.
6. Replace District Managers when necessary.
7. Prepare the annual PATC Trails budget and monitor expenses during the fiscal year.

District Managers

1. Represent PATC in trail related matters with government partners in the District Manager's assigned district. District Managers are the primary points of contact with their respective government partners.
2. Support, communicate with, and supervise PATC Overseers in that district.
3. Replace overseers when necessary.
4. Recruit PATC Overseers when vacancies occur.
5. Prepare district inputs to the annual PATC Trails budget and maintain expenses within budget during the fiscal year.
6. Provide support to overseers when a trail condition exists that is beyond the overseer's ability to correct or improve. This could include large blowdowns, erosion control, or bridge construction.
7. Coordinate and approve the proposed work of all ad hoc work crews (i.e. Mid-Atlantic, Cadillac, Blue & White, Stonewall Brigade, Hoodlums) in that district. If appropriate, inform the government partner of work crew activity.
8. Inform Supervisor of Trails of potential problems and policy matters of interest involving government partners, work crews, or overseers in that district.

Trail Crew Leaders

1. Perform trail work projects that are beyond the capabilities of responsible overseers.
2. Communicate with the District Manager of the district in which work is planned.
3. Ensure that the District Manager approves of the proposed work project. Any materials required should be supported by the District Manager's budget.

Overseers

1. Inspect assigned trail segment at least once per month during the summer months. November through March, trails should be inspected at least once every 60 days.
2. Perform routine trail maintenance to maintain the trail to appropriate standards. This includes clipping, trash removal, reblazing, removal of small or medium blowdowns, maintaining treadway, and building or cleaning waterbars.
3. Inform District Manager of any condition that is beyond overseer's ability to correct. These may include large blowdowns, bridge washouts, or major erosion of treadway.
4. Submit work reports for work performed on the trail segment at least quarterly. Multiple work trips may be on one report. All Fiscal Year reports must be submitted by October 1st, when the Club must submit PATC work hour reports to Government Partners.

3. GENERAL SAFETY

Trail overseers and volunteers must understand that some aspects of trail maintenance work can be dangerous. Without precaution, injury can occur, whether with cutting tools or digging tools or lifting heavy loads such as rocks. Safety is a primary concern of PATC and you as a volunteer must be aware of the inherent dangers. Each volunteer must wear proper clothing for the season and the activity, and each must take whatever individual precautions are necessary. Work trip leaders must take reasonable precautions to promote safety, and insure a First Aid kit is available. Everyone on a work crew must have appropriate clothing and sufficient water for the conditions.

Operators must know how to operate tools safely. When using power tools, (i.e. chain saws and weeders), proper protective equipment must be worn. Ensure all power tools are adequately maintained.

Chainsaws

Chainsaw workshop training is required for all chainsaw users. Chainsaws must never be operated alone, having a partner along is an essential safety precaution. Chainsaw operators must wear a hard hat that provides eye protection and noise suppression. Chaps must be worn when operating chainsaws. The Club will make both hard hats and chaps available for your work trips.

Gasoline Powered Weeders

You must wear eye protection (safety glasses and/or visor shields) and hearing protection (earplugs or earmuffs) when using gasoline-powered weeders.

4. TYPES OF TRAILS

To clearly define standards, three types of trails are distinguished: the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; blue-blazed trails in non-wilderness areas; and blue-blazed trails in wilderness areas.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT): The AT must be well maintained at all times. It is extremely popular, and it has high public visibility. The tread (walking path) requires particular attention because of heavy use. People ranging from through-hikers and experienced backpackers to inexperienced day hikers and family strollers use the AT. Overseers should recognize the experience level diversity when performing maintenance by assisting inexperienced or confused hikers. Clearly marked white blazes and proper erosion control are extremely important maintenance aspects of the AT.

Blue-blazed trails and George Washington & Jefferson National Forest (non-wilderness): Many of these trails are side trails that provide access to or circuit hikes in the vicinity of the AT. They are very popular and require a high level of maintenance. Clipping, blowdowns, treadway erosion problems and clear blazes are continuing concerns. The tread must be maintained at nearly the same quality level as the AT. Because many of these trails are situated on slopes, particular attention must be paid to erosion control. Informal paths also may spring up along these trails as hikers search for campsites. Obstruct these paths as much as possible, disperse

all fire rings, and carry out litter.

Blue-blazed trails (wilderness): These side trails are wholly or partly situated in designated wilderness areas of the Shenandoah National Park. These designated areas are depicted on PATC maps. Many are in remote areas where access is difficult and hiking distances are longer. They are less used, and users tend to be more experienced backpackers or weekend hikers. Wilderness trails are blazed at less frequent intervals. They are narrower, and they may contain some blowdowns that can be stepped over easily or passed under without great difficulty. The tread, however, must be maintained in good condition to prevent erosion, using grade dips, waterbars and checkdams. The use of power tools is prohibited in wilderness areas except when a waiver is issued by the park superintendent.

5. ADDITIONAL TRAIL MAINTENANCE REFERENCES

The Trail Maintenance Handbook is a great reference for trail standards (trail width, trail height, blaze size, waterbar construction, etc.). These handbooks can be provided to overseers free of charge. If you prefer a more thorough guide, the ATC & SCA also publish the following:

Trail Building and Maintenance, 2nd edition
Trail Design Construction and Maintenance,
Lightly on the Land, the SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual

The PATC holds periodic Trail Maintenance workshops to provide training on trail maintenance. The benefits of attending a workshop are many. If you have never operated a chainsaw or built a waterbar, the workshop will provide you with hands on experience. Did you know there's a right way, and a wrong way to paint a blaze? The workshop will show you how to maintain your trail. Since everyone is working together as a group, there is ample opportunity to ask questions and get straight answers directly from the experts. You may also find that other attendees may ask questions you hadn't thought of.

Worktrips in the various PATC districts are a good opportunity to learn first hand about trail maintenance techniques. They are listed in the monthly forecast section of the "Potomac Appalachian." Worktrips are typically a one or two day outing scheduled on a weekend. Bring work gloves, lunch, plenty of water, and other personal items such as sunscreen and insect repellent. The Club provides the tools and a trail expert to supervise the work. Work trips occur throughout the year, and are always announced in the Potomac Appalachian (PA) newsletter. Please be sure to review the PA Forecast section for upcoming events. You may also call the Activity Line (703-242-0695) for weekly updates and short notice trips.

6. GENERAL MAINTENANCE TASKS DESCRIBED

Blazing

Objective: To mark the route often enough to guide hikers without becoming a visual intrusion.

General standards:

- Use 2-inch by 6-inch vertical rectangles.
- Place blazes at eye level at prominent locations.
- *Outside SNP on the AT only* - use double blazes (one above the other, top one offset in the proper direction) to indicate sharp turns and at other places where a hiker should be alert to an abrupt change. Do not, however, use double blazes to mark normal switchbacks. *For trails in SNP and all side trails* – use the in-line double blaze when necessary.
- Blazes must be visible across intersections with streams, roads or other trails.
- Where two blazes of different colors must mark the same trail, place the blazes side-by-side.
- Avoid over blazing. However, you must realize that inexperienced hikers may need continued assurance that they are on the trail.
- Blaze more frequently where the trail tread is indistinct or where informal trails may confuse hikers.
- If at all possible, do not blaze rocks.
- Unless warranted by special conditions, no more than one blaze should be visible at any point. The idea is not to mark the trail to hike it from blaze to blaze, but to use blazes as reasonably spaced guides that offer periodic visual reassurance. Stand at a blaze, pick a prominent spot ahead or note where the trail disappears from view. Walk to that point and pick the NEXT good spot; place the blaze there. Space them at a constant frequency.

Appalachian Trail standards:

- Use white enamel paint. (Provided by PATC.)
- Re-blaze every other year--more often to keep blazes visible or to replace missing or enlarged blazes. Remove excess or unnecessary blazes.
- Metal, diamond-shaped AT markers may be used only on the AT at trailheads where a National Park Service sign is not present, *but should not be used in SNP.*

Blue-blazed trails standards:

- Use medium sky-blue enamel paint. (Only use paint provided by PATC.)
- Re-blaze at least every three years; more often to keep blazes visible or to replace missing or enlarged blazes. Remove excess or unnecessary blazes.

GW&JNF trail standards:

- Use Forest Service approved enamel paint colors [yellow, orange, blue, white, purple & pink]. (Provided by PATC or the Forest Service.)
- Re-blaze at least every three years, more often to keep blazes visible or to replace missing or enlarged blazes. Remove excess or unnecessary blazes.

Techniques:

- Pick prominent, large, living trees. Dark colored bark provides a better contrast.
- Choose trees that will remain prominent during periods of full foliage. Clip away protruding branches or foliage when necessary.
- On rough, thickly barked trees, carefully scrape an area larger than the blaze (approximately 3-inches by 8-inches vertically) on the bark. Smooth the bark; do not remove all bark or break through the bark. Do not scrape smooth, thinly barked trees; rub away dirt or lichen.
- When reblazing, scrape sides of blazes that may have widened with tree growth. Scrape away old paint flakes and dirt and repaint.
- Paint a neat 2-inch by 6-inch vertical rectangle. Avoid runs; do not apply too much paint. After the paint dries, a scraper can be used to straighten the rectangles' edges.
- Blaze walking in one direction at a time. Hike and blaze from one end of your section and walk back, blazing in the other direction. (The perspective will be completely different.)
- Obliterate blazes by painting over them with brown, green, or gray paint that closely matches the bark if the blaze cannot be completely scraped away without damage to the tree. Use a sponge blotting method to simulate lichen. Blot beyond the blaze edge to blend in to the bark. Brown and grey can be blended, both are latex to wear off as they weather. The olive green is enamel for hard to cover areas. The PATC Tool Room provides these paints.

Equipment:

- Small bucket with bail (You can mix paint in it or use it to carry other small pieces of equipment.)
- 1-inch paint brush
- Proper blaze paint provided by PATC
- 1-inch or 1 1/2-inch paint scraper (or other edged implement, such as an ax)
- Small can or paper cup (Styrofoam deteriorates) to hold the brush when not in use
- Rags or paper towels (Plastic wrap or aluminum foil is useful to wrap the brush if it must be cleaned later.)
- Pain thinner for brush and hand cleaning

Clipping and weeding

Objective: Remove branches, weeds, briars, and other undergrowth that interfere with passage.

General standards:

- Clearance width varies with terrain and vegetation. In general, the AT and Blue blazed (non-wilderness) trails should be maintained at a width of 4 to 6 feet. Blue blazed (wilderness) trails should be maintained at a 4-foot width. Briars may need to be clipped 6 feet from the trail.
- Steep slopes with thin or unstable soil should have somewhat narrower trail treads because the roots of trailside vegetation help stabilize the slope.
- The cleared height should be sufficient to allow a tall hiker carrying a backpack to freely pass. (About 8 feet is considered sufficient.)

- Cut branches flush with the main stem to promote tree healing and avoid leaving sharp stubs that could snag hikers as they pass. Trees shrubs and bushes should be cut flush with the ground to avoid leaving hazardous stubs that could trip hikers.
- Remove and scatter large amounts of debris.
- Do not indiscriminately remove trailside plants. They help stabilize the soil.

Appalachian Trail standards:

- The width should be enough to allow hikers wearing shorts to pass easily without contacting any vegetation. (Approximately 4-6 feet across the trail is considered sufficient.)
- Clip vegetation sufficiently to keep all blazes clear and visible.

Blue-blazed trails (non-wilderness) standards:

- Same as the Appalachian Trail.

Blue-blazed trails (wilderness) standards:

- The width should be enough to allow hikers--not necessarily wearing shorts--to pass single file without frequent contact with vegetation. (A width of approximately 4 feet is sufficient.)
- Clip vegetation sufficiently to keep all blazes clear and visible.

Techniques:

- Clip fast growing weeds such as thorns, nettles, and poison ivy well back from the trail. You may have to return two or three times before the summer is over if there is no canopy to inhibit growth.
- Branches growing toward the trail should be cut back to the next limb growing away from the trail. This encourages growth away from the trail.
- It is better to remove the whole tree or all lateral branches than to remove the treetop. Removal of the terminal bud (top of plant) encourages lateral growth across the trail.

Equipment:

- Loppers
- Weeders (swing blades)
- Power weeders (outside wilderness areas)
- Small saws
- Mattocks, or Pulaskis
- Fire rakes

Clearing blowdowns

Objective: To safely remove hazardous or obstructive trees to allow hikers to pass.

General standards:

- Do not exceed the capacity of your equipment or your skills. Report problem trees, such as large or "hung-up" trees, that are beyond your skill level to park officials and your PATC district manager. Do not hesitate to ask your district manager for help with blowdowns.
- Clearing blowdowns or winter damage should be done early in the spring and may be required after storms.
- Clear blowdowns to the same passage width as clipping and weeding.

Appalachian Trail standards:

- Remove all fallen trees and other obstructions. Leave blowdowns less than 12 inches in diameter that are acting as waterbars and those that obstruct vehicle traffic at trailheads.
- Obstructions must be removed as soon as possible-particularly from spring through autumn--for safety and to discourage hikers from walking off the trail.

Blue-blazed trail (non-wilderness) standards:

- Same as the Appalachian Trail.

Blue-blazed trail (wilderness) standards:

- Remove only those trees and other obstructions that do not lie flat on the ground and that cannot easily be stepped over or walked under by a person carrying a backpack.
- The cleared width should allow persons to walk single file and prevent vegetation during the growth season from obscuring the tread.

Techniques:

- Remove material far enough from the sides of the trail to avoid snagging hikers.
- Closely note tension on fallen trees to prevent injury.
- Use a pry bar or other lever to relieve tension when necessary.
- Make one cut in small trees and drag ends to the side. For large trees that cannot be moved, use two cuts to create a path slightly wider than the treadway and remove that section.

Equipment:

- Bow saws (30-36 inches or larger)
- Crosscut saws, one or two person
- Loppers
- Chainsaws (Chainsaw users must be qualified and wear proper safety equipment. A partner is required.) Chainsaws are not authorized in designated wilderness areas of the Shenandoah National Park unless the park superintendent has issued a waiver.

Maintaining tread (erosion control)

Objective: Maintain or restore trail tread to a standard that prevents erosion and is safe for users.

General standards:

- Waterbars are constructed to get water off the trail to prevent erosion. Install waterbars or grade dips on all slopes at a frequency that is sufficient to prevent major erosion. Waterbars are installed at a 45-degree angle downhill to the trail.
- Keep all waterbars, channels, culverts, and other water control devices clear of silt and debris.
- Waterbars must be cleared at least twice a year or they become useless.
- Checkdams are built to collect sediment on eroded trails in order to restore the tread. Checkdams are installed perpendicular to the treadway where both sides of the trail are higher than the treadway. If done correctly, steps along the treadway will result.
- Clear debris from the downstream side of streams crossing trails to reduce the potential of flooding.
- Dig channels for small streams or springs so the water can cross trails, not flow down them.
- Remove loose stones and other debris from the trail tread that could trip or provide loose footing

for hikers.

- Discourage shortcutting (especially on switchbacks) by blocking with logs, branches, or other such debris.
- Build waterbars wide and deep enough to be effective without posing a hazard to hikers. (The most common problems concerning waterbars are that they are too shallow or too few.) Remember that the function of a waterbar is to get large amounts of water off trails during storms. It is a large volume of water running down a trail in a short period that destroys it. Ensure waterbars are big enough to do the job, that there are enough of them, and that they are placed to be most effective.
- The trail standard is a maximum of 15 degrees rise for new trail construction. (Of course, for short distances, it can be more, but the goal is for trails to average about a 15-degree climb by using sidehill construction and switchbacks, which also provide better erosion control.) Many existing trails have more than a 15-degree rise (some much more) and we as overseers must contend with that and strive to reduce damage as much as possible by building numerous waterbars and checkdams. A key ingredient of success is to clean the waterbars.

Appalachian Trail standards:

- Waterbars must be inspected and cleaned in early spring, and must be checked periodically throughout the summer and autumn. Restore them as necessary.

Blue-blazed trails (non-wilderness) standards:

- Same as Appalachian Trail.

Blue-blazed trails (wilderness) standards:

- Same as Appalachian Trail.

Waterbars

Maintenance Techniques:

- Remove leaves, twigs, loose dirt and rocks, and other material from the trench.
- Reset and resecure rocks or logs as required. Replace logs or stakes if they show signs of deterioration.
- Ensure that the trench extends sufficiently off the trail such that the full length of the trench will effectively drain water off the treadway.
- Re-rake dirt to grade the downhill and uphill sides of the trail.
- Do not waste dirt by raking off the trail.
- Compact dirt into damaged tread areas.
- Rake loose rocks from the tread above and/or between waterbars.
- Survey the need for additional waterbars or checkdams and construct them as required.

Construction Techniques:

- Choose locations for waterbars along the trail that naturally tend to channel water off the trail. Turns should be used when possible.
- Place waterbars near the top of slopes to prevent water from accumulating and gaining momentum. Space waterbars along the slope as required.
- Construct the "bar" by digging a trench approximately 12-14 inches deep at a 45-degree angle from the perpendicular of the trail. Slope the trench to drain. The downhill end of the trench should extend at least 3 feet from the trail depending on the slope.

Rock waterbars:

- Collect relatively large rocks, 2-6 inches thick with large, flat sides. Place them from largest to smallest, starting at the beginning of the trench (extending a foot or so past the trail on the up-slope end) and down the length of the trench until the rock line reaches two or three feet off the trail on the drainage side. It is most effective to overlap rocks to create a solid line. Overlap the larger stone over the next smaller, descending toward the drain side.
- The top of the rock line should be at a consistent height (approximately 3-6 inches) above the downhill tread level-dig into the trench as necessary to custom fit each rock and achieve a consistent height. Shim or chock the rocks with smaller stones so they do not shift when the top of the line is walked on. The larger the rocks, the better stability they will provide.
- Grade the trail to form a gentle slope into the waterbar from a point 3-5 feet above the waterbar, and use loose dirt to build up and grade the trail's downhill side (starting 3-5 feet behind) to form a slope that reaches the top of the rock line. Compact the grades. Ensure the drain flows into an open, down-slope area wide enough to disperse the water, and shape the drain's terminus several feet past the trail's edge so water fans out and does not cut a channel.

Log waterbars:

- Dig a trench the same as for a rock waterbar and find a suitable log 6-12 inches in diameter and long enough to extend past the up-slope side of the trail about a foot, and two or three feet past the trail edge on the drain side. (Locust logs are preferred because of the tree's rot resistance, but sometimes it's a matter of what kind of blowdown is available.) Strip off all bark and the stringy second layer to slow rotting. Place the log in the trench so its top protrudes approximately 2-4 inches above the downhill edge of the trench.
- Pin the log in place with stakes at both ends (away from the hikers feet) and on both sides, driving them at an outward angle from the log to provide better support. Large rocks may be used in lieu of stakes. Ensure the log is stable enough to step on without shifting, and score the top of the log to provide a better footing. Grade the trail to slope into the waterbar from a point 3-5 feet above, and use loose dirt to build up and grade the downhill side of the trail (3-5 feet) to the top of the log. Compact the grades. Ensure the drain flows into an open, down-slope area wide enough to disperse the water, and shape the drain's terminus several feet past the trail's edge so water fans out and does not cut a channel.

Dirt waterbar:

- If you are working in an area with relatively loose soil, an effective waterbar can be constructed by digging and compacting. Dig a 45-degree diagonal, deep ditch (12-14 inches) starting a foot or more past the edge of the trail on the up-slope side and ending 3-4 feet past the down-slope edge of the trail. Pile loose dirt (no stones) on the downhill side of the trail and grade to the top of the trench. Pack dirt tightly with a McLeod or other tool, dance on it if necessary.

- On the uphill side of the trail, grade from the back of the trench to form a sloping, shallow dip about 5-6 feet wide at the top of the trench diagonal and 2-3 feet wide at the drain end of the diagonal. (This should form an area, more or less shaped like a pork chop with the bone as the trench and the small end forming the drain.) It is important to have a wide basin because it gives wind a chance to blow away leaves and light debris and help keep the waterbar somewhat clear. Remove loose stones and tightly compact the collection slope.
- Like other waterbars, ensure the drain flows into an open, down-slope area wide enough to disperse the water, and shape the drain's terminus several feet past the trail's edge so water fans out and does not cut a channel.

Natural waterbar:

- Sometimes an opportunity presents itself when a tree falls at (or can be slightly adjusted to) the appropriate angle across the trail-as long as it can easily be stepped over.
- Occasionally, a large root protrudes across the trail at the correct angle and will serve as a waterbar.
- Generally, all one needs do in these cases is to perform some fine-tuning, grading and forming an up-slope drainage channel and fanning the drain beyond the edge of the trail.

Checkdams

Construction Techniques:

- Building a checkdam employs most of the same techniques as the rock or log waterbar. The trench, however, runs perpendicular to the trail. No drain is formed, but slope the downhill and uphill portions of the trail the same as a waterbar, forming a collection pocket on the uphill side of the trail. Be certain to pin logs, score log tops and stabilize rocks.
- While the main concern for a waterbar is to keep it clear of matter, the purpose of a checkdam is to fill up with silt and reform tread. When a checkdam is full, build another 4-6 feet farther downhill & uphill, and ditto when those are full. Over time, this process will help repair a water-damaged trail section. Install waterbars above checkdams to minimize further damage.

Equipment:

- McLeods
- Pick or cutter mattocks
- Fire rakes
- Engineer hammer or small sledge hammer (for driving log pins) Ax or Pulaski (to score tops of logs)
- Saws (chain or hand)
- Drawknife or hatchet (to remove bark)
- Surveying stakes (for pinning logs) (Coordinate with the park ranger in your area or the Trails Coordinator at PATC headquarters to obtain stakes.)
- Shovels (optional)

7. SAMPLE WORK SCHEDULE

Every trail is different, but most can be maintained using the following sample schedule. The sample schedule will give you an idea of the type of work that needs to be done, and the general time of year when it needs to be completed, or could be completed.

February through March - Clear deadfalls and clean out waterbars. Most dead trees will be brought down during the winter months due to windy conditions, snow, and ice storms. March is a good time to clean out the waterbars, as the spring rains are beginning. By early spring, the forest leaves are compacted, making it less likely for your waterbar to fill again with leaves blown from other areas of the forest. It is also the time when much of the dirt that might have been carried down your trail from frost heaves have filled the waterbar.

April through May - This is a good time to check the quality of your paint blazes and freshen them up. April is the most appropriate time since the trees have not leafed out, ground cover is at a minimum, and poison ivy and nettles have not yet become a problem. Additionally, temperatures and personal attitudes are conducive to work. This is the best time of year to perform clipping. Trim back any vegetation that might obscure blazes during the coming season. Shrubs and branches growing toward the trail should be cut back before they leaf out. This is also a good time to build waterbars and checkdams, since the soil is soft and easy to work, and rocks or other waterbar construction material are easy to locate in the forest.

June through July- This is a good time of year to check whether any of your blazes will be blocked by leaf cover, making them hard to see by hikers attempting to follow the trail route. If your trail experiences excessive weedy growth, this is the time when you **MUST** get out and cut them down. By the second half of July, weeds are large and much more challenging to cut. In many cases, they are an impediment to hiking by this time, which can lead to vocal complaints from hikers. Optimum dates for weeding vary from year to year, and by trail section, but if the spring has been wet and warm, you can expect the weeds to be further along early in the time period. *Every overseer who has weeds along the trail should mark the calendar now to set aside a day to perform this work.* Weeds are cut easily when they are just over one-foot in height. Without cutting, some weeds can grow over six feet tall! Some open trail sections may need to be weeded 3 or 4 times during the growing season.

August - If the heat does not bother you, waterbar construction can continue during the summer months. This is also a good time to deepen the stream channels that cross your trail, including those channels that only fill with water during heavy storms. Many trail tread problems are caused by streams that hit the trailway, then turn and flow down the trail for extended distances. As you hike your trail, also look for dry washes that fill during heavy downpours, or "folds" in the hills. You can always locate these spots by simply following the trail wear up your trail. When the wear stops, you've located a probable entry point for rainwater. Construct a waterbar just below this point to drain off the excess water before it damages your trail.

September through October – This is the second "prime" waterbar construction period due to more pleasant temperatures. However, it's not as preferred as the spring, because by this time there is significant cover on the forest floor from annual growth, and the ground has "solidified."

November through January - If you're really a stickler about keeping your trail in tip-top shape, you can hike it during this period to remove deadfalls and branches that might have been brought down by winter storms. It is also an opportunity to keep your waterbars clear. Otherwise, enjoy your free time.

Trail maintenance techniques are outlined in the PATC Trail Maintenance Guide for Shenandoah National Park, or the excellent trail maintenance guide from the Appalachian Trail Conference. Both are available from the PATC Headquarters sales desk. New overseers should attend at least one Trail Maintenance Workshop during their first year as an overseer. These "hands-on" training sessions are a valuable means of sharpening your skills as an overseer.

8. WHERE CAN I GET TOOLS?

PATC Headquarters

The PATC Tool Room in the rear of PATC headquarters in Vienna has a large quantity of hand-tools available for Overseers. Tools are PATC property, and must be signed out and returned to the Tool Room following each work trip. Each year, hundreds of dollars of the PATC trails budget is spent purchasing more tools to replace those that overseers have failed to return. Some are never returned to the PATC. If you keep tools at home, you deny other overseers the use of these tools at a time when they may be critically needed. The funds expended to replace tools must be diverted from other projects that have high priority in our trails organization.

If you decide to use tools from the PATC, they must be returned to their original location (PATC Tool Room or Tool Cache) at the end of the trip. Please clean all tools before you return them.

If you live in the Washington, D.C. area, you can access the main tool cache at PATC Headquarters located behind the Southern States store in Vienna, Virginia. Tools may be checked out of HQ on two conditions: First, you **MUST** sign out your tools in the checkout book located on the Tool Room bench. Second, you **MUST** return the tools to HQ at the end of your trip.

To access the Tool Room at PATC HQ, you will need a Tool Room key. You may pick up the key from the Sales Desk during open hours. (Monday through Thursday 7PM to 9PM, and Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 2 PM). You will be expected to return the key to the Sales Desk after you have signed out at the Tool Bench and picked up your tools. The PATC HQ Tool Room can be accessed from the back of the PATC HQ building. There are only two entrances at the back of the building -- the Tool Room door is the solid metal door located in the corner. To unlock the door, *remember that you will need to rotate the key a number of revolutions in the lock before the deadbolt will disengage, then, maintaining pressure on the key to keep the second lock in the door knob disengaged, open the door. This is usually a two-hand operation.*

If you intend to use the HQ Tool Cache on a regular basis, please call the Trails Management Coordinator at HQ (703) 242-0693 (Ext. 12) and arrange for a key. The key will be issued to you at no cost, but you must come in to sign out the key.

Tool Caches

Many overseers prefer to access the tool caches that are farther afield. Tool caches are available at the following locations:

Shenandoah National Park

- Rockfish Gap Entrance Station
- Swift Run Gap Entrance Station
- Thornton Gap Entrance Station
- Front Royal Entrance Station
- Big Meadow Maintenance Area
- Piney River Ranger Station
- Ivy Creek Maintenance Hut

Maryland

- Gambrill State Park, Frederick
- Washington Monument Road, Boonsboro

Great North Mountain

- *Wolf Gap Recreation Area*

Massanutten Mountain, North - Elizabeth Furnace, George Washington National Forest, VA,

Massanutten Mountain, South

- U.S. Forest Service Massanutten Visitors Center, Highway 211, between Luray and New Market.

Pennsylvania

- Michaux State Forest Headquarters

Washington, D.C.

- Rock Creek Park

Contact your District Manager about using these caches. He or she can update you concerning access, cache contents, and check-in/ check-out details. Directions to these caches are as follows:

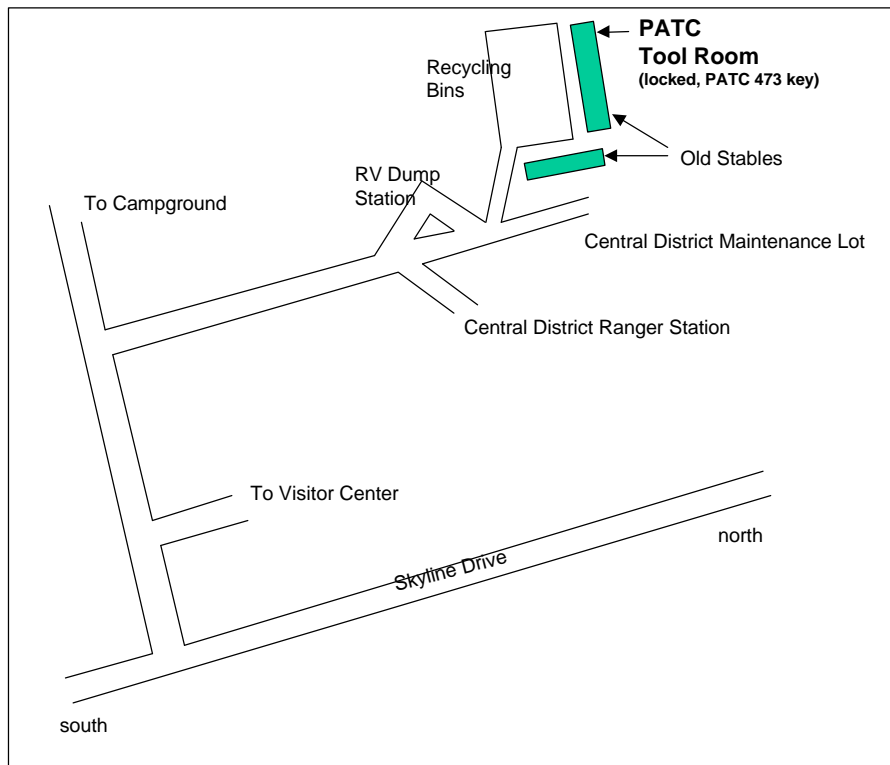
Shenandoah National Park

Toolboxes are located next to, behind, or below the Entrance Stations, and are locked. If you would like to access the tools in these locations, please request a key from the Trails Management Coordinator at Headquarters. Otherwise, a key may be requested from a Ranger at the Entrance Station (if they can find it). Any tools removed from the toolboxes MUST be returned to the same toolbox before you leave the Park.

A small cache of tools is also located in the South District at the Ivy Creek Maintenance Hut just south of Skyline Drive Milepost 79. Heading south on Skyline Drive, look for the first wooded road to your left after Milepost 79, and hike in to the Ivy Creek Maintenance Hut. (If you pass the turnoff to Loft Mountain Campground on your left, you've missed the wooded road.) Ample parking is available at the Loft Mountain Wayside. To access the tools at the maintenance hut, you must request a key from the Trails Management Coordinator at PATC Headquarters.

An additional tool cache is located on the back porch of the Piney River Ranger Station. Contact your District Manager for access.

Map to Central District Tool Room,
Big Meadows Maintenance Area:



Maryland

If you work on hiking trails in the Maryland area, two tool caches are available for your use.

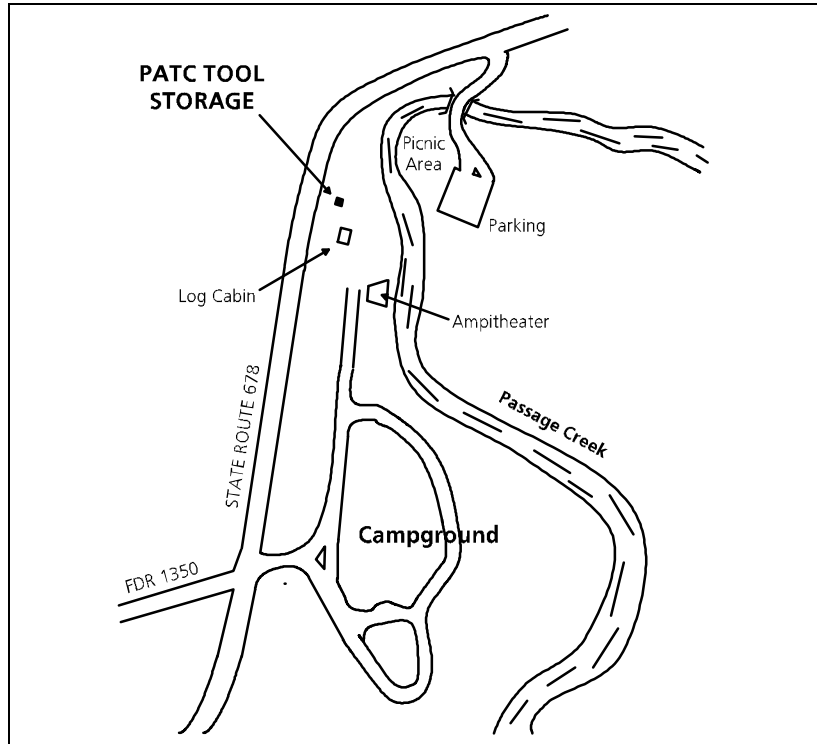
Gambrill Park Cache: Get the combination from your District Manager. From US highway 40 in Frederick, go west and leave town, toward Gambrill Park. At top of hill, make right onto Gambrill Park Road at the Park sign. Go 1-½ miles to a T intersection. Bear right. Make next right, into Ranger's driveway, in front of "Smokey" sign. Go past Ranger's house on left side with shed on right. Cache is a 10'x 12' wood building about 50 feet past the Ranger's garage on the left in the evergreens. Only hand tools are PATC property.

Washington Monument Road, Boonsboro: You need a key to access this cache. Call your District Manager to borrow the key. From Interstate 70 or US 40 in Frederick, take Alternate US 40 West. Go nine miles, over Braddock Heights and through Middletown. At a crest with Old South Mountain Inn on your left, turn right onto Washington Monument Road. Go one mile to a Stop sign. Go straight through intersection and enter the Park. Cache is the building 150 feet beyond the intersection and just left of the entrance road. It is 5 feet square, brick, and painted light yellow.

Massanutten Mountain, North

A tool cache for overseers who work in the Massanutten region is situated in the Elizabeth Furnace Campground complex.

Heading west on Rt. 55, turn left on State Road 678 at Waterlick. Follow 678 to the Elizabeth Furnace Campground, and turn left into the campground area. Follow the road left to the amphitheater, then walk past the log cabin to a converted outhouse that contains the tools. The tools are locked inside, and may be accessed by opening the lock with a combination provided by your district manager.



Massanutten Mountain, South

PATC maintains a tool cache at the U. S. Forest Service Visitor Center on U.S. Highway 211 at the top of Massanutten Mountain between Luray and New Market. The tools are maintained in a separate closet in the station utility room at the rear of the Ranger Station. A key to the utility room must be procured from the on duty ranger, normally between 9 AM and 4 PM, or from your District Manager.

Great North Mountain

A small tool cache is located in the janitor's closet at the Wolf Gap Recreation Area. For access, contact your District Manager.

Pennsylvania

PATC recently acquired a toolbox for the Pennsylvania trail district, and it is located at Michaux State Forest Headquarters on U.S. 30. At the headquarters complex, go past the office to the first building on the right. The toolbox is at the back of this building on the porch. The Pennsylvania tool cache is locked, and can only be accessed with a key provided by the Ranger, or by the District Trails Manager or one of his appointees. Call the District Trails Manager for more information.

Washington, D. C.

Tools are kept at the Park Service Maintenance Yard adjacent to Rock Creek Park Nature Center. Contact Ranger Ken Ferebee at 202-426-6834, Ext. 31 for tool access.

9. REPORTING TRAIL WORK

Some overseers feel that once they've finished the trail work for the day, their job is finished. Well, not really. There's one last step that must be completed, and that is the Trail Report form. Each time you visit your trail, whether it's to inspect, clean waterbars, or renew paint blazes, you should record and report your work to the Club. There are a number of reasons why this is important.

Most important is that your District Manager keeps close tabs on who is working on trails in the district. Each month, a report is issued to the District Manager from the Trails Database maintained at Club Headquarters. The report lists all the trails in the district, along with the name of the overseer and the work that's been performed on each section. Your name is included on this list. If you don't report your work hours, your District Manager may think you're not doing your job. In addition, the District Manager is made aware of problem areas on your trail section. It is much better for you to tell the District Manager than for the District Manager to hear it from the Supervisor of Trails. Last, PATC is required to report all work to the government partner at the end of the year. Your work reports are therefore essential.

A maintenance reporting form is included at the back of this Handbook. Mail it in to PATC Headquarters at least quarterly (preferably every month from April to September). If you need more forms, please ask for more copies on your report form, and the Trails Management Coordinator will forward them to you. Those with a computer may submit their reports via modem. You may also visit the PATC web site for the form: World Wide Web URL: <http://patc.simplenet.com>.

10. INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC AND YOUR GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Frequently, you may run into hikers as you are performing work on your trail. Take the time to stop your work, step out of the way, and chat if the opportunity arises. You may discover that they have valuable information on trail conditions.

If you are not wearing a PATC T-shirt or Volunteer hat, at least half will likely ask, "Do you work for the Park/Forest Service?" Many trail users are not aware of the fact that volunteer trail overseers, like you, maintain most of the hiking trails. Perhaps you can perform some impromptu recruiting for your next work trip if the hiker shows interest. If you would like to promote the PATC to hikers, obtain some PATC brochures from PATC headquarters.

If you are working on a trail that is on government property, it is highly desirable to stop by and visit your local Ranger or Forester on occasion. You might call before visiting to see if they are busy, but they are always interested to hear of the work you've been performing on your trail. The more overseers our government partners see, the more they know the PATC is working hard on the trails.

If you are working on private property, it is beneficial to occasionally drop in and introduce yourself to the landowner. In many cases, this can bring positive benefit to the Club in landowner relations. In a few cases, you might want to avoid the local landowner, because not all are happy to have a hiking trail in the vicinity. If the landowner is a friend of the trail, you are encouraged to let them know how much the Club appreciates the right to have a trail within the vicinity of their property. If the landowner cites "problems" with the trail, please report these to your District Manager.

11. GETTING HELP!!!

Occasionally, there may be times when there is work on your trail that you can't handle. Maybe a huge oak has fallen across the trail, and you can't tackle it yourself. Maybe your trail has been badly damaged by a winter ice storm and dozens of trees are down across the trail.

If unusual situations arise where you feel you'll compromise your personal safety by trying to tackle them, or the work demands are so extraordinary that it will take numerous trips to repair damage, it's time to call your District Manager and seek help. Your District Manager's name and number are contained in your acceptance letter.

12. GETTING OTHERS TO WORK FOR YOU (OR WITH YOU)!

You may think work as an overseer is a lonely occupation. Actually, it doesn't have to be. You can bring the full resources of the Club to bear on your trail section by simply planning a work trip to your trail. At first, you may not think this a necessary action, but when your District Manager calls one day to ask you how those waterbars are coming along, you may reconsider.

Leading a trip is easier than you think. All it requires is a little advance planning. You will soon find that you can accomplish in one trip what might have taken you five, six, or even ten to complete. If you shy away from the heavier work needed on your trail, there are always volunteers ready to help you out and perform the work for you.

The Potomac Appalachian (PA) newsletter "Forecast" section is your greatest resource for recruiting willing workers to help you on your trail. Submissions to the PA must be sent to Club Headquarters no later than the first of the month prior to the month of your trip. For example, if you want volunteers to help you on your trail on April 18th, you need to get your work trip announcement into HQ by the last day in February. It takes one month (in this case, March) for the "PA" to be typed, formatted, printed, and mailed to the Club membership to arrive at their home by April 1st. The deadline for the PA "Forecast" is always the last day of the month - no exceptions.

If you need to plan your trip on short notice, there is a second option available to you, though it is less preferred. Each week, the Club prepares a phone recording of upcoming activities for the week. You can contact PATC HQ at 703-242-0693 Ext. 17 up to two weeks prior to your trip date to have your trip announced on the tape. Obviously, not as many people call the tape as read the PA, but you can still expect a small number of people to call if the weather is good (and the phases of the moon are right). If you opt for getting your trip in the Club newsletter, your trip is *automatically* included on the tape, so you get a double benefit if you plan ahead.

Some overseers shy away from the idea of leading a group of strangers on a work trip. This is unfortunate, because the folks who generally show up are enthusiastic about helping out, and will work hard on your trail. Frequently, these same workers will be ready to help you again if another trip is scheduled the following month. Trail work has a strange way of bringing people together and bringing out the best in everyone. You'll be genuinely pleased at the results! If you don't consider yourself to be a leader, that's okay, because most of your volunteers are just glad to be outdoors getting some exercise. Enjoy yourself, and others will enjoy themselves too.

For a single person leading a trip, seven volunteers (with the expectation that two will be possible "no-shows") is a good number to help you out as a start. If more call, tell them that on this week, your trip is full, but they might call the PATC recording to locate other trips that need volunteers. A couple of days before your trip, pick up your tools from headquarters. You may want to use one of the tool caches if you live outside the D.C. area.

As your volunteer workers call, you'll discover that many are asking the same questions. "What do I need to bring?" Tell them to bring work gloves, a bag lunch, plenty of water, work boots, sunscreen, insect repellent, or any other personal items they may feel they need. Remind them to bring rainwear just in case. You will supply the tools and the work agenda, and have a First Aid Kit available for emergencies.

Pick a central location to meet. If you're operating out of the Washington, D.C. area, a very good meeting place in Oakton is the Bob Evans Restaurant at the first traffic light north of Rt. I-66 on Rt. 123. Another popular meeting place is the Oakton Center, located one mile north of I-66 on Rt. 123. The Oakton Center is just past Appalachian Outfitters on the left side of the road (heading north) and has a Giant Food Store and CVS Drug Store located in the shopping center. The Giant is open 24-hours and can provide volunteers with an opportunity to pick up some last-minute provisions. Folks usually park near the shopping center sign just off Rt. 123. Another good meeting place is the Cracker Barrel Restaurant at the first intersection north on Rt. 234 off

I-66 in Manassas. Both Cracker Barrel and Bob Evans offer the opportunity for a cup of coffee or breakfast before heading out to the west.

Carpooling is the preferred method of traveling to work sites. Notify riders that they will need to help the driver with gas money to offset expenses. Prepare to depart 1/2 hour after your meeting time. This will give those who are stuck in unexpected traffic jams a chance to join your trip. Remember, occasionally there are some no-shows, so don't feel guilty about leaving before "everyone" has shown up. No-shows are a reality of volunteer work, and you don't want to spend your morning standing around waiting for that last volunteer who will never show up.

Before you leave, make sure the drivers know where you're headed. It's sometimes a good idea to plan an intermediate stop so everyone can regroup half way through the ride. Then caravan to your site.

Once at your work site, a short training session on tool usage and safety is recommended. Use your common sense in showing volunteers how to safely carry, and use tools. Remind your party to ensure the area is clear of people before they start swinging their tools.

The first trip is always the most challenging. But after you've led one and seen how much work you can get done and how easy it is, you're bound to lead others. PATC work trips bring some of the nicest people together to work on a common goal.

13. SPECIAL RESTRICTION TRAILS -- WILDERNESS

A few select trails in the PATC trail network have special restrictions. All special restriction trails are located within the confines of National Parks.

Wilderness Areas -

Trails that cross through areas identified as Congressionally designated Wilderness Areas in Shenandoah National Park must be maintained without the use of power equipment. If trail damage occurs that is beyond the ability of the overseer to correct, they should refer to the section on "Help" in this Handbook. In special or extraordinary circumstances, the Superintendent of the park may allow the use of power equipment within certain established guidelines. You should check with your District Manager to determine what these guidelines are, when and if they are established.

Urban Parks -

Trails that pass through the Rock Creek and Glover Archibald Parks, and others within the city limits of Washington, D.C. must be maintained without the use of power equipment. Power equipment alarms local residents, who are apt to contact the city police to report damage to parklands. At the request of the Park Service, hand tools must be used in these locations.

Special Permanent Study Areas -

Specified areas within Shenandoah National Park have been designated as special permanent study areas. This includes park property along the following trail segments:

- Appalachian Trail from Byrds Nest 3 to Pinnacles Picnic Area
- Appalachian Trail from Little Stony Man Cliffs to Skyland Stables
- Appalachian Trail from Timber Hollow Overlook to Hawksbill Gap
- Appalachian Trail from Hawksbill Gap to Spittler Knoll Overlook

Trail work may not be performed on these trails during the months of May and October. During all other times, the movement of rocks and other ground cover should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

14. HUTS, TRAIL CENTERS, SHELTERS, AND CABINS

If your trail is remote or difficult to access you might consider using a PATC Maintenance Hut, Trail Center, Shelter, or Cabin to perform your work.

Huts

There are three locked maintenance huts available to PATC overseers, and all are within the boundaries of Shenandoah National Park (SNP).

In the South District, the **Ivy Creek Maintenance Hut** is located just north of the Loft Mountain Campground and just south of Skyline Drive Milepost 79. Heading **south** on Skyline Drive after Milepost 79, hike in on the first woods road to your left to the Ivy Creek Maintenance Hut. If you pass the turnoff to Loft Mountain Campground on your left, you've gone too far. Ample parking is available at the Loft Mountain Wayside. A small spring/stream is located just east of the hut on the access trail to the Appalachian Trail. The hut is about 1/3 mile from the Skyline Drive.

South River Maintenance Hut is located just south of the South River Picnic Area in the Central District. To access the hut, head **north** on the Skyline Drive from Rt. 33 and look for the woods road to your right just after Skyline Drive Milepost 63. Follow the woods road for 3/4 mile to the hut. A small spring is located in front of the hut to the left but it may dry up during July or August. This is a small, but wonderfully secluded hut.

Indian Run Maintenance Hut is located just northeast of Compton Gap in the North District. To access this hut, head **south** on the Skyline Drive from Front Royal. Between Skyline Drive Milepost 10 and 11 at Compton Gap is a parking area to your left. From this parking area, follow the woods road north to the intersection with the Dickey Ridge Trail. Turn right onto another woods road, hike downhill to the hut. Water for this hut is located back up the road from the shelter and on your right in the woods. This hut is a bit over 1/2 mile from the parking area.

All three of these huts are located a short distance off Skyline Drive and the Appalachian Trail, making them practical base-camps for extended work trips. They may be reserved anytime before your trip date, and can be used without fee. They are available ONLY to overseers. If no work trips require use of these huts, overseers can use them for overnight accommodation when they are visiting the Park for pleasure, however, if a work trip unexpectedly develops, the work trip reservation could displace your "pleasure" reservation. All overseers should be willing to share with other workers on the same weekend. Hut capacities vary from four to eight people.

Maintenance huts are converted three-sided shelters that have been turned into four-sided "huts" with the addition of locking "barn doors." Ivy Creek has a fireplace inside, the other two huts have outdoor fireplaces. All have 4 to 6 bunks for sleeping, some have mattresses, but no blankets. All have some cook pots and utensils available. Huts provide very basic accommodations, and are preferable to pitching a tent in the woods when the weather is unpleasant. Call the Trails Management Coordinator at HQ for a reservation and key if you do not have a key for the SNP tool caches.

Trail Centers

Two Trail Centers are available to overseers: the Blackburn Trail Center in Northern Virginia about 5-miles NNE of Round Hill, Va.; and the Schairer Trail Center located in the Southern District of Shenandoah National Park on a blue blazed trail leading west from the Eaton Hollow Overlook (Milepost 70.5). They are fully equipped structures, with beds/bunks, kitchens, and fireplaces (each still has an outhouse). The Blackburn Trail Center has running water. Reservations may be made in advance by contacting Pat (ext. 17) or Heidi (ext. 12) at PATC HQ. Road directions and a key will be mailed to you at that time. Trail centers are ideal locations for overnight group work trips. Cabin work trips have priority over trail work trips.

Shelters

Overseer may use all the three-sided shelters along the Appalachian Trail and Tuscarora Trail, excluding those within the boundaries of Shenandoah National Park, for overnight accommodations during the off season. From June to September, please refrain from using the AT shelters. These shelters are maintained for long distance hikers, some of which may not be carrying a tent. Any time a shelter becomes full, overseers not hiking should pull out their tent and make room for other hikers. Remember, shelters are filled on a first come, first served basis. You are required to share these facilities with others if they show up. Three sided shelters are open to the weather on one side, and may have bunks inside. A stone fireplace is located in front of the shelter.

Cabins

Overseers may also use PATC Cabins as a base of operation to perform trail work. However this is a less preferred method, since your reservation may keep other Club members or the public from enjoying and using the cabins. Overseers are not charged a fee for using PATC cabins. However, cabins should only be used as a last resort, or for large work trips, since many within the governing organization of PATC would prefer that you not use them at all. Please keep this fact in mind as you make your reservation. If the cabin privileges are abused, they will be taken away. Three-day weekends should always be avoided when making cabin reservations. Work trip reports must be submitted following your trip. It is preferred that any work trip using a cabin be advertised in the P.A.

Cabins have mattresses, bunks, wood stoves, fireplaces, cooking pots, utensils, cups, and plates. Overseers may purchase a guide describing the cabins in the PATC system for a small fee. Contact the HQ Sales Department at Ext. 19 for more information.

Reservations for cabins may be made up to one month prior to your trip date. If you make your reservation *within* one month of your visit, it is likely that the cabin may already be reserved. If Club members or the public have already reserved a cabin *within* the one-month period, the club will NOT displace an established rental for an overseer trail work trip. If you need the cabin, it's best to reserve it more than one month in advance by contacting Ext. 17 or 12. Work trip reservations should not be made during the cabin reservation time.

The Great Outdoors

If you're the more rugged type, the best alternative is to backpack in and camp out. This keeps you close to your work site and allows you to maximize your work efforts. If you're leading a work trip, you might be surprised to find many participants interested in camping out and staying for a second day of work. Camping out is always the most preferred method, since it maximizes your work time, and eliminates pressure on our Club cabin system. Any overseer camping out at a shelter or with a tent in SNP must first obtain a backcountry permit from the park.

15. REPORTING MAP AND GUIDEBOOK CHANGES

PATC maps and guidebooks are the most accurate source of information for hiking and backpacking in our trail region. They remain accurate because there are many people who are continually identifying required changes to these publications. As an overseer, you are probably more familiar with your trail section, and access to the section, than any other person in the Club. Please reference your map and guidebook when you travel to and hike on your trail. If you notice errors on the map or in the guidebook, please forward them to the Maps or Publications Chair, and they will be kept in a file for future updates to these publications. Examples of changes are:

- parking areas that are not shown in the exact location,
- trail routes that do not follow what is shown on the map,
- trail descriptions that are "not exactly" right,
- features that have changed since the last publication date,
- gates or barricades that have been added,
- waterfalls shown on the map that do not exist, or are out of place,
- route numbers for roads that are missing or improperly positioned on the map, and

- any other change that enhances clarity or increases accuracy.

16. REPORTING VANDALISM AND TRAIL MISUSE

It's possible in the course of your trail work that you may discover vandalism to PATC maintained shelters, trail centers, maintenance huts, cabins, or outhouses, or misuse of the trail by others. Any vandalized structures discovered should be reported to PATC HQ, your government partner, and your district manager immediately. Reports will then be forwarded to the Shelters, Huts, and Cabins Committee for action.

Trail misuse covers a broader range of problems. It can include:

- Hunting in areas where this activity is not allowed; (Hunting is allowed on the A.T. between Manassas Gap Shelter and Sky Meadows State Park, and the George Washington National Forest.)
- Logging or construction within the corridor of the Appalachian Trail, or within Park/trail boundaries;
- Vandalism to trailhead signs or other markers;
- Illegal dumping at trailheads or along trails;
- Mountain biking or horse travel on trails specifically prohibiting such activity;
- Huge organized overnight hiking groups;
- Partying and drunken behavior at camping locations;
- Driving motorized vehicles on trails that prohibit such activity.

If you feel the situation is urgent, you are encouraged to contact your government partner as soon as possible, and contact Club HQ on the next available business day. All incidents of trail misuse should be reported. Your information could help protect your park or trail land from future damage, and in some cases might provide a key link in building a case against the offender by our government partners.

17. BENEFITS!!

There are certain benefits to being an overseer, besides the good feeling you get out of making a contribution to the land, the Club, and our government partners. There are DISCOUNTS and special offers available!

Hudson Trail Outfitters will offer a *15% discount* on any non-sale item in their store to a PATC Trail Overseer. Only the overseer may purchase items with this discount, and the Overseer I.D. Card must be presented to the cashier before your purchase is made. This discount may be used over and over again throughout the year: there is no limit to your savings. The discount may be used at all HTO stores, which are located at Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax Circle, and Springfield Mall in Virginia; Tenley Square in Washington, D.C.; and Annapolis Mall, Hunt Valley Mall, Columbia Mall, Gaithersburg, Kensington, and Owings Mill Town Center in Maryland.

Blue Ridge Mountain Sports will offer a *20% discount* on any non-sale item in their store to a PATC Trail Overseer. Like the HTO offer above, only the overseer may purchase items with this discount, and the Overseer I.D. Card must be presented to the cashier before your purchase is made. This discount may be used over and over again throughout the year: there is no limit to your savings. The discount may be used only at the BRMS stores in Fredericksburg, Richmond, Virginia Beach, and Charlottesville.

Wilderness Voyagers located in Harrisonburg, Virginia, will provide a *10% to 15% discount* on any equipment item in the store. The discount depends on the specific equipment item being purchased. You can find Wilderness Voyagers by travelling 1-81 to the Elkton exit (247A), turning left at the first light on Rt. 33, then an immediate left onto the Sheraton access road. The shop is located just off 1-81 in a small, 4-store complex.

The Trailhouse in Frederick, Maryland, will also provide any overseer with a *15% discount* on any non-sale item in the store. To get to the Trailhouse from D.C., take the first Frederick exit off 1-270 (Market Street), cross a small bridge in 1.5 miles, and the store is 1/2-block on the left in Old Town Frederick. When you stop in to the Trailhouse, be sure to say hello to the owners, Clyde and Gerry Hicks -- they're PATC overseers too!

Outdoor Adventure will offer a 10% discount on all non-sale items to PATC Overseers. Only the Overseer may purchase items with the Overseer I.D. Card. Outdoor Adventure is located at 4721 Plank Road in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The phone number is 540/786-3334.

Campmor, the outdoor mail order people, also provide PATC overseers with a *10% discount* on any non-sale item carried in their huge catalog of outdoor products. *However Campmor orders must be processed through our Club headquarters.* Send your order form and check made out to PATC to the Trails Coordinator, and a PATC check will be cut and sent to Campmor for you. Campmor will then send the item to PATC headquarters.

Volunteer T-shirts are free. The Club also has **PATC Volunteer Caps** available for purchase. Contact the Sales Department at Ext. 19 for the cost. If you just can't wait for Uncle Sam to deliver one to your home, the caps may be purchased during the evening at PATC HQ in Vienna, Virginia, which will save you the shipping and handling charge.

18. LETTING GO

For some overseers, there may come a time when the responsibilities of maintaining a trail no longer fit in with the greater demands of family, career, or changing lifestyles. If you are no longer able to maintain your trail, **please contact your District Manager as soon as possible** so that we may assign a replacement. There is no dishonor in stepping down. The Club is indebted to you for the hard work you've contributed, and your efforts are certainly appreciated.

Remember, many are counting on PATC to keep the trails open for hiking year in and year out. Don't do our government partner, PATC, and yourself a disservice by holding on to a trail that requires maintenance that you can no longer perform.

19. THANK YOU

PATC appreciates your willingness to volunteer your free time as a Trail Overseer. *Thank you.*