

Covering 50 Miles of trail, from Cincinnati to Greene County



Adopt-a-Trail

Trail Adopter's Guide

Table of Contents

Thank You!	1
Your Trail Segment	2
The Adopt-A-Trail Program	3
<i>Volunteer Agreements</i>	3
<i>Safety</i>	3
Adopter Tasks and Activities	4
<i>Safety Related</i>	4
<i>Trail Functionality Related</i>	5
<i>Administrative / Public Relations Related</i>	6
<i>Other Trail Issues</i>	7
Resources	8
<i>Equipment</i>	8
<i>Each Trail Segment and its Adopters</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Documents on the FLMSP Web Site</i>	8
<i>County Maps and Property Records</i>	9
<i>Phone Numbers of Local Government Entities</i>	9
<i>Document Authors and Version Control</i>	9

Thank You!

Thank you for adopting a trail segment of the Little Miami State Park and helping to maintain our trail system, protecting an important natural, historic and community resource in southwest Ohio. Our pioneering trail counting program estimated 760,000 trail uses in 2014, and the trail only becomes more popular. Each of the thousands of users this figure represents will be positively impacted by the work you do to keep the trail clean, friendly and safe.

The Little Miami State Park (LMSP), 50 miles long and 66 feet wide, stretches from Hedges Road (mile 3.3) to Newtown (mile 53.5). It is part of the Little Miami Scenic Trail, a converted railroad right-of-way running from Cincinnati north to Springfield, and a major segment in the Ohio to Erie Trail which runs all the way to Cleveland. Learn more of the history of the Little Miami Scenic Trail and Railroad on the FLMSP website, <http://www.littlemiamistatepark.org/park-and-trail/history-park-trail> .

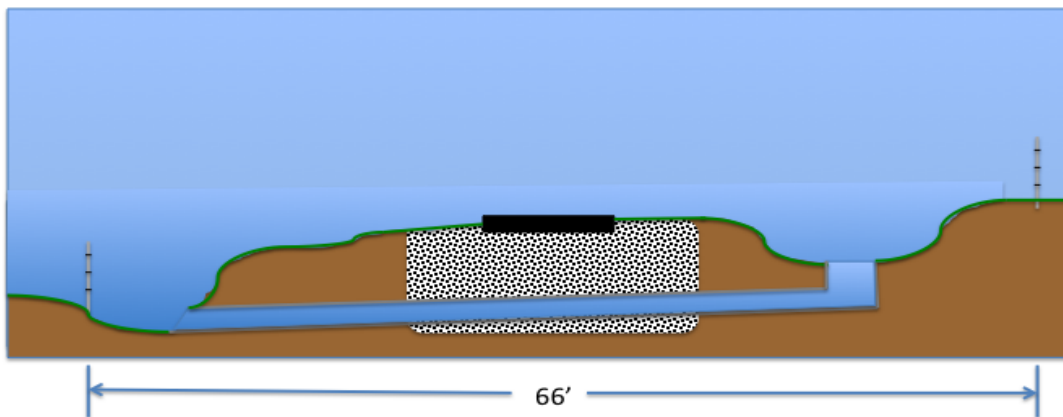
The LMSP is part of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Parks & Recreation (DPR). DPR's mission is to enhance the quality of life through exceptional outdoor recreational experiences and sound resource management. *Our job is to help DPR do this.*

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.

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.

Your Trail Segment

The majority of the Little Miami Scenic Trail (LMST) is built on an old railroad bed—a rails-to-trails conversion project. While each adopter's 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).



Typical cross section of the LMSP right-of-way
Figure A-1

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 FLMSF in 2009.

The Adopt-A-Trail Program

Friends of the Little Miami State Park have divided The Little Miami State Park into 24 road-to-road segments. The Adopters are asked to regularly give a few hours of to help maintain their specific segment of trail. The Adopter performs routine maintenance so that DPR staff can focus their time, energy and resources on performing the heavier maintenance tasks necessary to keep the trail open.

Volunteer Agreements

The **Ohio State Park Individual Volunteer form** is the agreement between the DPR and the adopter, as well as any supporting volunteers. This agreement includes legal access to workers comp. in case of accident, and must be signed by both the volunteer and the DPR representative before that adopter can work on the trail.

Other volunteers, such as those on a community workday or those who pitch in to help adopters during trail maintenance must sign an **Ohio State Park One-Day Volunteer form**. This form is available in a version for adults and one for minors (age 17 or younger, must be signed by a parent or guardian).

All Volunteer Agreement forms may be accessed on the FLMSPP website under Friends > Documents & Forms. Follow instructions on the form for submission.

Safety

Many of the trail maintenance tasks listed below have some level of danger involved. ODNR park regulations and common sense dictate that we must always work in a manner that minimizes the chance of injury for trail adopters, their crew, and park users. Consider safety first before beginning any trail maintenance activities. The following additional rules apply:

- Only volunteers certified by the State of Ohio or by FLMSPP may operate chainsaws.
- Dress appropriately for trail work: long pants, heavy shoes or boots, gloves, hearing and eye protection, and possibly more depending on the maintenance activity.
- Mark work areas with cones and/or signs, and post flaggers when work may pose a danger to trail users. Warning items are available in the tool caches.
- Immediately remove all work-related debris from the trail to maintain safety of trail users.

Adopter Tasks and Activities

Safety Related

1. ***Clear lines of sight at road intersections.*** Monitor road crossings and cut back vegetation to maintain as much visibility as possible for trail users and drivers. Be extra cautious when working at these intersections.
2. ***Monitor and mark pavement hazards:***
 - Sinkholes
 - Drainage problems such as erosion, standing water or mud on the trail surface
 - Bumps in the asphalt over a quarter-inch high
 - Damage or decay on bridges

Please inventory and report any of these conditions and continue to track their progress. Mark the hazard with orange spray paint, available in the tool sheds.

3. ***Remove branches hanging lower than 12 feet from trail and berm surface.*** This clearance is necessary for emergency vehicles and horseback riders.
4. ***Clear the paved trail of leaves, nuts and fruit in the fall.*** This natural debris can be a safety hazard to trail users. FLMSF periodically runs a pull-behind blower on the trail in the fall. If you notice a buildup of leaves on the trail, rake or sweep them toward the park boundary, or contact the trail adopter coordinator to arrange a pass with the blower.
5. ***Fix and/or report other safety issues.*** Monitor and report any other safety issue you identify. Let FLMSF know how it can improve the trail.

Trail Functionality Related

1. ***Clear the mowing right-of-way.*** Removing debris from the berms maximizes the mowing crew's time on their mowers and minimizes situations where they have to stop to manually clear the grass areas of obstacles. Adopters should check the mowing area, removing man-made litter from the park and pushing natural debris off the berm.
2. ***Clear vegetation around fences.*** Vegetation around safety fences is not only unsightly, but also damages the fences if allowed to get out of control. Clear vegetation away from fences to a shoulders' width (about 3') behind the fence (assuming the topography allows this to be done safely) so future maintenance can be as simple as making a quick pass with a string-trimmer. Be careful of steep drop-offs behind fences. Use the pole saw to cut brush at a distance, or stand in the creek bed to work, if possible. Remove any branches that are leaning on the fence.
3. ***Note and Report Trees Down.*** If the tree can be removed from the trail and the mowing area safely, do so. If the deadfall is large or extensive, report the treefall and any related damage to the Adopt-a-trail Coordinator and/or the head of Chainsaw Team assigned to your section of trail to arrange removal and repair activities. A photo is helpful.
4. ***Monitor Condition of Fences.*** Report damage or other problems to the Adopt-a-trail Coordinator who will arrange repair by the Fence Repair Crew or ODNR.
5. ***Reclaim previous berm width.*** One of the primary goals of the Adopt-a-Trail program is to restore the full usable width of the original trail corridor by eliminating encroaching vegetation. Bush honeysuckle, an invasive shrub, causes the most problems. FLMSP has contracted with a professional to spray honeysuckle each fall. The role of the adopter is to augment the spraying program by clearing encroaching vegetation to and through the drainage ditches. Where there's an embankment, adopters should clear to the edge.

NOTE: It is unlawful to take firewood and timber from the park without prior permission from ODNR. Generally, trimmings should be pushed off to the side of the berm where they will decompose naturally.

Administrative / Public Relations Related

1. ***Pick up trash.*** Litter removal not only keeps the trail clean and inviting, it also minimizes manual labor of the state cutting crews. Please remove man-made litter from your trail segment at every opportunity, and dispose of it through appropriate trash removal or recycling programs. Your home trash removal/recycling is probably the most convenient. Let us know if this is a hardship. Trash-picking utensils are available in the tool caches.
2. ***Record all Volunteer Service Hours.*** Usually the primary adopter of a segment does this on behalf of all the volunteers who spend time on that segment. The total of our volunteer hours is an important measure for planning and for securing grants and large donations. Access "Record Hours" on the FLMSP website under the "Friends" dropdown menu.
3. ***Promote FLMSP and good public relations.*** Your presence on the trail is the best advertisement for the work of the FLMSP organization. You can enhance this visibility through the following means:
 - Posting FLMSP work signs both for safety and to let trail users know who's doing the work.
 - Wear FLMSP tee shirts.
 - Keep FLMSP business cards with you to hand out to anyone who is interested.
 - Accept donations and pass on to the Adopt-a-Trail coordinator or FLMSP board member. Also note the total amount collected in the comments when you record your hours.
 - Thank all volunteers.
 - If you can, take action pictures of the work crews for our website and grant applications.
 - Accept new volunteers from the community that offer to help. (Have them fill out an **Ohio State Park Individual Volunteer** form.)
4. ***Author the Adopt-a-Trail "Trail Segment Owner's Manual."*** You will become the expert on your segment of trail as you monitor and maintain it. After the first year of working on your trail segment, we ask that you compose a short "Trail Segment Owner's Manual" describing special features of your segment, listing typical maintenance activities and schedule required, and any other lessons learned. These short, simple notes will provide valuable information for future volunteers.

Other Trail Issues

For the following and all other situations on your segment, please contact the Adopt-a-Trail section leader and/or an FLMSP board member:

- *Extensive Vegetation Infiltration*
- *Trail Washout and Sagging*
- *Bridge Repair*
- *Vandalism or other illegal activity.* Volunteers are not to enforce rules or approach visitors who are violating rules, but should report such infractions to any park staff, officers or management who are on duty, or to FLMSP. Volunteers can take photos to enhance enforcement efforts.
- *Conflicts with Abutting Property Owners.* Stand down. Contact the Adopt-a-Trail Coordinator and Board who will pass the concern on to the DPR Manager.

Resources

Equipment

A variety of gas-powered and hand tools are stored for your use in our tool caches. Safety vests, gloves, glasses, and earplugs are provided as well.

Tool caches (north to south): Hisey Park, Morrow, Fosters, Terrace Park

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

FLMSP Documents

All of the following documents may be accessed and downloaded from the FLMSP website at littlemiamistatepark.org. From the main menu, mouse over the "Friends" tab; a dropdown menu appears. Click on "Documents & Forms." Each gold-colored entry is a clickable link to the indicated document.

- Master List of all trail features and maintenance needs
- Right-of-Entry Agreement
- FLMSP Strategic Plan
- FLMSP By-Laws
- FLMSP Financial Forms and Audits
- FLMSP policies
- Expense Reimbursement Form & Instructions
- Volunteer Agreement Forms
- "Your Trail Needs You" printable brochure
- Equipment Inventories (FLMSP tool caches & Cincinnati Community Toolbank)
- Manuals & Guides
- Native Plant Lists
- Invasive Plant Control instructions
- Original Trail Plan Maps by section

Each Trail Segment and its Adopters

This spreadsheet is not available on our FLMSP website because it contains personal contact information for our adopters and volunteers. Obtain the current version from your Adopt-a-Trail Section Leader or the FLMSP Volunteer Coordinator, and share it with your team of volunteers as you see fit.

County Maps and Property Records

- Green County
 - <http://gis.co.greene.oh.us/gismap/>
 - <http://gis.co.greene.oh.us/gismap/map.asp?K28000100220003300>
- Warren County
 - http://www.co.warren.oh.us/auditor/property_search/index.htm
 - <http://webmap.co.warren.oh.us/AuditorGIS/default.aspx>
- Clermont County
 - <http://www.clermontauditorrealestate.org/Forms/MapAdvanced.aspx>
- Hamilton County
 - <http://cagisonline.hamilton-co.org/cagisonline/index.html>

Phone Numbers of Local Government Entities

- **Little Miami State Park**
Trail Hotline: 513-212-5968
- **Ohio State Parks, Cowan Lake Region**
937-382-1096
- Emergency
911
- Warren County Sheriff
513-695-1280
- Clermont County Sheriff
513-732-2231
- Hamilton County Sheriff
513-825-2280
- Green County Sheriff
937-376-5111
- Hamilton Township Police
513-683-0583

Document Authors and Version Control

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1.00	2015.11.21	Abridgement of TAG v.2.2	Janet Slater