



TRAILWORKER

News, information & resources for our trail volunteers

June 2013

The Art of Blazing

by
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Supervisor, Yorktown Community Trails

At first glance, blazing or marking a trail is a simple task that anyone can do, after all isn't it just putting paint or nailing a tag onto a tree? As the author of *Walkable Westchester* and having walked over 600 miles of trails, I was amazed at the variety of methods used for marking trails. Every time I thought I had seen the last "new" way to blaze, I discovered yet another on my travels. For the purposes of this article, "blazing" is used to describe both tags and paint blazes.

Blazing becomes even more complex when a new trail is added to an existing trail network or a trail system is designed. Both situations require a top-down approach that looks at how the trails are configured on the ground and where they are relative to each other. Simply put, placing a blaze must be made with the user in mind and relative to other blazes.

What makes a well blazed trail?

- The trailhead is clearly marked with a triple blaze.
- Blazes are on the same side of the trail whenever possible and are visible, head-on as you walk on the trail, not put on the side of the tree.
- The next blaze is visible especially at intersections or when co-aligned trails split.
- The same tree is not blazed in both directions.
- No blazes on dead trees.
- Local conventions are followed, such as offset blazes in the direction of the turn.
- For co-aligned trails, the blazes are always in the same order. For example, if a red trail and white trail are co-aligned, red is always on top (or bottom) and white is always on the bottom (or top).
- Don't mix tag and paint blazes or change the shape of the blaze.
- Refresh paint blazes every 2-4 years, as they stretch out of shape and fade.
- Tags last about 5-7 years if properly nailed such that you can put your fingers behind the blaze. Remove before the tree grows into them.

When blazing your trail, remember to follow your supervisor's instructions, using the type of blaze and the color the landowner has specified. It helps to have a second person along. If they stand at a blaze, they can tell you if you are standing where the next blaze should be placed. This way you are keeping the user in mind. 🌿

Check out AT trail maintainer Fred Schneider's awesome blaze painting rig in this issue's expanded Tool Talk!

Special Tool Offer for Trail Conference Maintainers

If you read our Spring 2013 issue of *Trail Walker*, you know about the **Trail Boss**, an exciting new tool for savvy trail maintainers. What's new since then is that the Trail Conference has signed up Trail Insight, maker of the Trail Boss, as a partner to bring you big savings. If you're a trail maintainer looking for a lightweight, compact alternative to your tool set, the Trail Boss offers a segmented 12- or 16-inch fiberglass handle and several interchangeable heads.

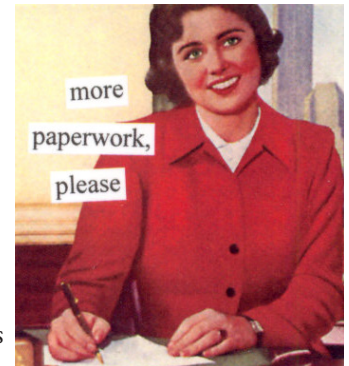


Trail Conference members are now eligible for special pricing on the exclusive **Trail Maintainer's Package**, which ranges in cost from \$195-\$290, plus a \$10 discount on eleven add-ons. To learn more about this offer, call the Trail Conference at **201-512-9348** and ask for someone in the membership department.

Read about the Trail Boss online at trail-insight.com. ↗

Trail Reports Coming Due!

It's that time again. One of our duties here at the TRAILWORKER is to remind everyone to submit their biannual maintenance reports. Maintainer reports are due **June 30th**. Supervisor and Crew Chiefs reports are due to their Chairs by **July 15th**. The Chair reports are due by **August 1st**.



Be sure to use the correct form. Reporting forms have minor and sometimes major changes. All forms, including the two-page **trail maintenance report** form, are on the web site at: www.nynjtc.org/pform/trail-maintainer-report-form, or by contacting your supervisor or chair.

To find out who your Supervisor is, contact your regional representative (find them at www.nynjtc.org/content/staff). Trail crew chiefs and supervisors send their reports to their regional Chair; the Chairs send reports to their Regional Program Coordinators. The information contained in these reports is crucial to operations, planning and analysis. Please don't neglect this very important responsibility. ↗

It's only what YOU make it!

TRAILWORKER is your newsletter. We are looking for content that interests you. Articles, pictures, comments, opinions, suggestions, rants and raves are welcomed and appreciated. You are our primary source for information and ideas. We just can't do it without you!

Please e-mail your ideas, submissions and photos to the TRAILWORKER at trailworkernews@nynjtc.org.



Tips on using, buying & maintaining our favorite trail toys!

Carrying your baby:

a terrific way to transport your precious saw and sawyer gear

by Joel Pinsker, *Certified Sawyer*



I am using a **Kelty** baby carrier for my saw. The baby carrier is built to carry weight well, and has a proper suspension with a waist strap and a good frame. The carrier has a fold out back leg that lets it stand up for easy loading and unloading of your 'baby.' The back leg is attached to the pack straps, so it folds in as soon as you pick up the pack. The saw fits inside nicely and the straps that are meant to go over the baby's shoulders go over the handle and keep the power head nice and secure. I have attached a spare scabbard to the side for an extra bar and chain. I drilled a hole in the bottom of the spare scabbard to allow rain to drain out of it. Where I put holes in the scabbard to tie it to the pack I tried to make sure the string will not come into contact with the chain on the spare bar, so it won't cut the string. Hanging below the body of the carrier I have a first aid kit, and rain gear. The small yellow stuff sack carries a quart bottle of fuel mix, and a quart of bar oil. The yellow sack is velcroed to the back of the pack in the small of my back. The velcro was already on the baby carrier, so all I had to do was add velcro to the stuff sack. The fuel and oil bag sits right on top of the bottom piece of the frame, and it hooks to an existing hook on the baby carrier. There are additional pint, and 10-oz. fuel containers tucked in the bottle holders on the back of the carrier. I always say my baby's preferred formula is 50:1.

Pictured is my Stihl 026 with an 18" bar. The spare bar is a 20." The red bag in the top in the bottom photo holds the chaps. It gets tucked in next to the handle, and then the side webbing snugged is down on it. Occasionally, when I am hasty in putting the saw back in the pack, the chaps bag falls out if I jostle the bag too much. However, I also tie the cord for the red bag to the top of the carrier, and typically ignore the bag hanging off of it since it is not enough weight to throw off the load. I still need to work out a way to hold the helmet better. I was tucking it in the bag with the chaps, but when I went to take the pictures I found the piece that holds the screen on one side broke. Luckily I noticed it before the local Stihl dealer closed so I could run out and grab a new visor holder before tomorrow's trail work. When I am working, if there is a bunch to cut close together I will often leave the chaps and helmet on while I am hiking, but this only works in cooler weather. There are snaps at the edge of the baby carrier for a hood to cover the top. I may try to find some nylon mesh, and attach snaps to it to go over the helmet quickly and hold it in place as shown in the photos.

As pictured, and fully fueled, the set up comes in at about 40 pounds. Kind of heavy for a day of walking, but it gets the gear out there. This carrier keeps the weight on my hips, and close to my back so that I can hike even rough almost vertical trails with the saw secure. This does not include extra chains, scrench, wedges, lunch, and water, but that is what my swamper is for. When I get done with the hurricane Sandy blowdowns and can go back to normal trail clearing I will switch to a lighter saw.

One of the nice things about baby carriers as saw carriers is that used baby carriers are cheap. I picked up three of them at three different garage sales for \$5 each. I really don't care if there is some dried drool on the carrier or if they aren't spotless, because for my use they sure won't stay spotless. The one I settled on is a deluxe one with thicker padding on the straps, and a chest strap that I find essential for rougher trail use.

If anyone has ideas to improve my rig I would love to hear them. 🐿

Got a tool tip you'd like to share?

Send it to:

trailworkernews@nynjtc.org

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Tool Talk expands in this issue to bring you more of what you need to know!



The Ultimate Blazing Machine

by Les Ferguson, Editor, TrailWorker

Well, O.K., it's not really a machine, but it can sure let you paint beautiful, neat trail blazes as if it were!

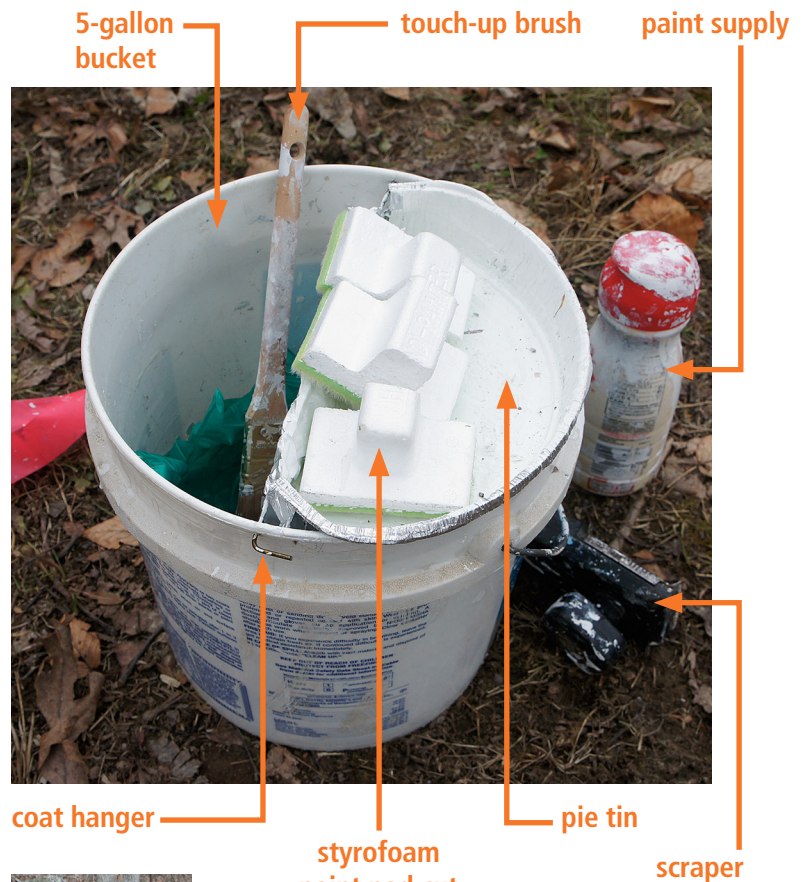
I recently had the pleasure of working with Fred Schneider, AT Trail Maintainer for the section north of Rt.17A/Bellvale Mountain. Fred, a certified sawyer, was helping us clear some Hurricane Sandy blowdowns. We also needed to blaze a newly re-routed section heading southbound toward New Jersey.

As we got ready to do the blazing, Fred went to his truck and pulled out his amazing, blazing bucket. A marvel of homemade German engineering, this simple set-up sent me scurrying for my camera so that I could share this with our loyal readers.

The rig consists of a standard 5-gallon paint or spackle bucket (make sure it has a handle) that holds your tools and supplies and also supports the paint tray. The ingenious paint tray is just a large round pie or serving tin. It is bent in half, crimped around the edge of the bucket and supported by a coat hanger that runs across the center of the bucket through two drilled holes. Fred cuts a Shurline styrofoam painting pad (#01500) into three equal 2" x 3" pieces to use as an applicator. The pads are very inexpensive so they are great for one-time use. Paint is carried in any type of lidded, plastic container and added to the tray as needed. The bucket also contains rags, a touch-up brush and a single-bladed paint scraper for preparing the bark for the blazing paint.

The pads make it super-easy to make a perfect vertical blaze on the smoothed bark. Fred just loads up the pad, presses it onto the tree to apply the top section of the blaze, then lifts and presses the bottom of the blaze and finally smooths it with the edge of the pad. He did a perfect blaze every time! Check out his technique below. I know I will be putting a rig like his together for my next blazing foray. Thank you Fred! 🐿

The Rig



Fred

The Technique

