

Know Before You Go

Here are some of the most important things to remember when preparing for and participating in trail work events with the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council.

Before You Go

- Call the listed leader to receive specific information about the trail and meeting place and to answer your questions. PLEASE let the leader know in advance of your intention to participate so that enough tools will be available; also it is good to confirm because there have been occasions we had to cancel or change location on account of rain or fire danger.

What to Bring & Wear

- Enthusiasm – lots of it!
- Work boots, preferably those with hard toes. In practice, many volunteers wear ordinary hiking shoes or good running shoes. **Sandals and street shoes are unacceptable.**
- Work gloves – we have a few spares in case you forget or do not have them.
- Sun screen, hat, long sleeves and long pants. Long is to protect from the sun and the many thorn-laden plants and trees you will encounter.
- Clothing appropriate to weather conditions (rain, cold, layers for changing temperatures).
- Plenty of water and some lunch. When it is hot you may need to drink one quart of water per hour..

Children or Dogs?

- Leave pets at home.
- A parent or legal guardian must accompany any volunteer under the age of 18. If you are part of an organized group such as Boy Scouts, the organizations adult leader must accompany them. Their organization assumes the liability and therefore is the adult supervisor to sign for the group. These are State Parks requirements.

Be Mindful of Your Surroundings and Your Self

- We will stop working if it gets too hot. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are very serious threats when doing manual labor in warm weather.
- Pace yourself. If you do not regularly engage in manual labor, trail work can tire you out fast.
- When lifting, bend your knees and lift using the power of your legs.
- Be wary of thorn-laden plants — they are prepared to strike when you least expect it (as when you become very focused on your work).
- Poison Oak is often found on our trails. We will do our best to alert you to the presence of Poison Oak.
- Steep slopes sometimes do not offer secure footing and rocks can be easily dislodged. Avoid working below others on a steep slope.
- Watch out for snakes. Be cautious around undercut rocks, fallen trees and deep shady bushes.
- Interesting creatures that live below the surface are often uncovered while digging and moving rocks. Be sure to wear gloves, then tip the rock and look underneath before lifting.
- Rattlesnakes are normally not a problem because they prefer to avoid you even more than you want to avoid them.

Handling Tools

- Carry only one tool in each hand at your side — never over your shoulder. Sharp and heavier tools should be carried on your downhill side.
- Keep about six feet distance between you and others when carrying tools to a work site.
- Store tools not in use on the uphill side, off of the trail. Make sure that tools and packs are placed in a stable, horizontal location.

Working Around Others

- Keep a generous distance between yourself and your co-workers.
- Call out “coming through” as you approach others who are engaged in work so they may stop and allow you to safely pass.

Tools You Might Use

- **Pulaski:** used for grubbing and chopping, especially in building or fixing tread.
- **Shovel:** scraping and digging, often for tread work.
- **Grub hoe:** grubbing and pounding; useful for creating tread or drainage.
- **McLeod:** raking, scraping, grubbing or tamping new trail.
- **Corona saw:** for cutting small branches and trees.
- **Loppers:** for cutting out stems, roots and very small branches.
- **Rock bar:** for prying heavy rocks out of the ground.
- **Pick-Mattock:** for picking, prying or digging tread, rocks and roots.