



Paint Blazing Protocol for Volunteers

LTC trails use rectangular blazes painted on trees and posts as reassurance markers to safely guide hikers along trails. Blazes help prevent hikers from getting lost, especially important in fall and winter when leaves and snow cover the trail tread. After a trail is built, the route is blazed following these guidelines, derived from the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST).

- **A blaze is 2.5 inches wide and 6 inches tall.** Paint over old blazes if faded or missing. Typically, they will need to be repainted every 2-3 years.
- Be sure that they are not obscured by vegetation. When cutting branches or “brushing trails”, consider the growth that will occur before your next maintenance visit. **(DO NOT CUT OAK LIMBS OR TREES IFROM MARCH 15 - DECEMBER 31).**
- If blazes need to be changed or erased for some reason, use camouflage spray paint. You can obtain camouflage paint from LTC or we can reimburse you.
- Do not paint if rain is in the 48 hour forecast or the temperature is below 50 degrees.
- Blazes are posted on trees or posts, generally about six feet high, so that hikers can see them easily when traveling in either direction.
- Blazes should be placed on carefully selected trees that “strike the eye”. A well-placed tree is one that comes into view quickly. Most often, these trees occur on the outside of a curve, are close to the trail, and are not blocked by other trees or shrubs. Carry a small saw to remove branches that interfere with a clear vision of the blaze **(DO NOT CUT OAK LIMBS OR TREES IN THE GROWING SEASON).**



TOOL KIT:

2.5” paint brush
gloves
rags/paper towels
purple paint

loppers or hand saw
camo paint
paint can opener
wire brush/lichen scraper
eye protection



- Avoid painting young aspen or paper birch. Don't blaze a dead or dying tree.

- When walking the trail, a hiker should only see one blaze at a time – within a few steps of passing the blaze, the next one should become visible. Striking a balance so as not to over-blaze or under-blaze is key.

- Blazes should be placed immediately beyond any trail junction. A second blaze, for safety, should be placed within 50 – 100 feet.

- Paint in only one direction at a time to find the best blaze-density. Do not turn around and paint the back of a tree. Blaze sightings will vary in each direction.

- Before painting the blaze, scrape off the bark of the tree with a wire brush to remove fungus, loose bark or lichen. Avoid breaking any tender inner bark but remove the outer woody layer. Beech trees and young maples only need a wire brush. Be gentle with young trees.

- Neatly paint with sharp corners and neat edges.

- When encountering a sharp angle turn, two blaze marks are to be used. The upper mark will always indicate the direction of the turn. Do not use this double blaze system for a slight curve in the trail (<90 degrees).

- We use oil-based forestry paint that takes a long time to dry (48 hours in dry weather) but lasts longer on the tree. You can obtain this from us upon request at any time.

Now, get out there and enjoy the trails!



STRAIGHT AHEAD



LEFT TURN
(90 DEGREE TURNS ONLY)



RIGHT TURN
(90 DEGREE TURNS ONLY)



TOP OF WAYFINDING
POSTS ARE PAINTED
ON ALL 4 SIDES