

Trail Tender

HANDBOOK





Trail Tender

The State Trail Tender program involves a group of dedicated volunteers giving their time to patrol our state trails. Tenders are not law enforcement officers however most are affiliated with Friends groups and have direct connections with state park and trail law enforcement officers.

Some Trail Tender tasks include:

- Educate trail users on the rules and regulations as well as trail etiquette.
- Patrol the trails while watching for riders in distress and monitoring for trail etiquette.
- Trail clean up.
- Sign posting.
- Sell state trail passes.
- Have fun!

**Thank you for becoming a Trail Tender with the
Wisconsin State Park System!**

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Training, Uniforms and ID Cards

What training and uniforms do I need?

Orientation and training are completed upon initiation into the program. After the initial half-day training, Tenders are issued a trail tender shirt that should be used when acting as a tender on state trails. CPR and other first-aid trainings are also encouraged and volunteers can take classes with DNR employees. Costs for trainings can be paid for by the volunteer, using property budgets, or by the sponsoring Friends group. All trail tenders should be current members of a DNR-recognized Friends group (per WI Administrative Code NR 1.71). Each Tender should additionally complete and sign a Volunteer Agreement form (DOA-3009).

Trail Tender ID Card

All Trail Tenders will receive a Department Identification Card. Photos for Trail Tender ID cards can be e-mailed to Linda Pederson in Community and Education Services (Linda.Pederson@wi.gov), along with the person's full legal name. (If the person has a nickname they prefer to use, include that in the e-mail as well and it will appear on the front of the ID.) Photos should have a plain background (no outdoors, no hats). The ID cards (will look similar that of DNR employees), but will have a red border and will not have a building access pass embedded into them.

Your Safety

Trail tenders should keep in mind that there are recreational immunity and volunteer immunity laws that can protect them in the event of emergencies or accidents, but that this is not all-inclusive and that they should each conduct themselves as upstanding representatives of the Wisconsin DNR. Trail tenders are not obligated to carry cell phones, but may wish to do so for safety reasons. Your manager or ranger should be contacted at his/her direction only or when major emergencies occur. **For emergencies, call "911" then call your property ranger/manager.** If your ranger/manager is able to offer you a walkie-talkie or cell phone for your use, they are allowed to do so.

Trail Tender FAQs

Who is a Trail Tender?

A trail tender is a volunteer trail patroller and member of a DNR-approved Friends group. Trail tenders are trained to act as role models for other riders on a specific trail, distribute regulations and information, assist other riders, and serve as liaisons between trail users and land managers. They provide feedback to land managers about trail conditions, trail maintenance needs, and unauthorized activities.

The Trail Tender program is a police-yourself tool that is widely used by communities for different activities. All trail tenders should be current members of a DNR-recognized Friends group (per WI Administrative Code NR 1.71).

Are Trail Tenders law enforcement officers?

No. Volunteers have no law enforcement authority or other authority to enforce compliance. Although trail tenders will wear identification that makes them highly visible, the identifying shirts are used as a visible deterrence and for recognition only. Trail tenders primary responsibility should be customer service. If any misrepresentation of authority or actions unbecoming to the Department are reported and verified, the volunteer will be relieved of service.

What if I see an incident on the trail?

Tenders may request that trail riders stop, but do not have the authority to require them to do so for any reason. Trail tenders should phone "911" or seek assistance when emergency incidents occur on the trail. Trail Tenders act as the "eyes and ears" of the Department and as such should not force trail users to purchase trail passes. If the volunteer is updated on CPR or first-aid training he/she may wish to assist in emergency situations but these actions are **voluntary**. Trail tenders should document incidents in a Wisconsin Trail Condition & Incident Visitor Self-Report (Form 2500-119) for state records.

What do Trail Tenders do?

The Trail Tender program is not intended to replace the work of DNR employees. The first thing a trail tender should do is identify him/herself as a volunteer when approaching an individual or parties on the trail. Additionally, tenders may:

- Request that riders stop. Do not force them.
- Sell trail passes if trail riders do not have them already. Tenders selling trail passes should remit sales through the Friends group and its sales account only.
- Answer questions. If issues are expressed or questions are asked that you do not know the answer to, take notes and report back to the trail manager for follow-up.
- Provide support. All trail tenders will be provided with emergency, trail maintenance, and law enforcement contacts should any incidents arise. These phone numbers can also be provided to visitors should they have questions or concerns and wish to follow up themselves.
- Avoid being drawn into an argument or debate. Remind the visitor(s) that you are a volunteer. At all times, remain neutral. When needed, give DNR contact information for follow-up on issues.
- Take notes. Tenders are asked to keep track of trail passes sold as well as the number of contacts with individuals during a shift along the trail.
- Announce yourself as a Friends member or DNR volunteer (only) for a specific trail.
- Stay positive and have fun!

How do you become a Trail Tender?

Trail Tenders are asked to commit to a minimum of six hours per month, May–September. Although it is not required, tenders are encouraged to patrol in the “off-season.” You can inquire through the Friends group associated with your preferred trail by consulting www.fwsp.org or by contacting your DNR trail manager listed by property at the DNR web site: www.wiparks.net.

Customer Service

DNR Customer Service Vision Statement

We treat all our customers as we want to be treated, setting a tone for constructive action and mutual respect. All Department employees share the common mission of protecting and enhancing Wisconsin's natural resources. We help each other so that each of us can better serve our customers. Our customers are people who are affected by, or whose activities affect, management of Wisconsin's natural resources. They include people inside and outside the Department who are directly and indirectly affected by our work.

Through active outreach efforts, we strive to maintain a productive dialogue with our customers. We make it easy for customers to use our services. Any time we have to say no, we try to do so in a positive manner and explain why.

We help our customers to anticipate and prevent problems. We respect their needs and work with them to get at the root of problems, not just treat the symptoms, helping our customers to meet their obligations. We strive for consistent and fair treatment of customers.



Military Ridge State Trail in Verona.

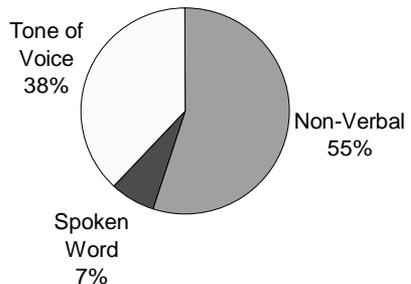
Some Common Sense Approaches to Customer Service

- Listen attentively
- Be polite and professional
- Be patient
- Communicate to be understood, not just heard
- Empathize and offer your help
- Ask questions until you're sure what the problem is, then restate the problem to confirm your understanding
- Work with the visitor to find solutions
- Be creative, flexible, and cooperative
- Give accurate answers and referrals
- If you don't know the answer, don't make it up. Use referrals.
- Give and get contact information so both of you can follow up
- Don't point fingers

Non-Verbal Communication

Visitors will pick up on more than just the words you are using. Effective communications occur when your tone and body language communicate in concert with your words.

Remember, customers will frequently forget what you told them but they will never forget how you made them feel.



State Trail Pass Facts and History

- ⇒ A state trail pass is required for all people age 16 or older biking, in-line skating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, or off-highway motorcycling on certain trails.
- ⇒ A state trail pass is not required for walking or hiking, or for any physically disabled person in a wheelchair.
- ⇒ A trail pass is issued to the person, not the bike, horse, motorcycle, etc.
- ⇒ Trail passes are non-transferable, meaning the pass cannot be passed from person to person or shared with others. The trail pass must be filled out to be valid.
- ⇒ A vehicle admission sticker is required if you park or take your motor vehicle within the boundaries of a state park, forest or recreation area.
- ⇒ State trail pass fees are the same for residents and non-residents.
- ⇒ The annual state trail pass is good for the calendar year (January 1 to December 31) and the daily state trail pass is good for the day of purchase on any state trail.
- ⇒ Trail pass fees are \$20 for an annual pass, \$4 for a daily pass.
- ⇒ DNR charges a trail pass fee on certain trails because of the quality of experience they offer, their popularity, their maintenance costs, and the DNR 's ability to enforce the requirement in these locations.
- ⇒ Trail users must purchase their state trail pass before using the trail.
- ⇒ A ranger coming upon a trail user without a pass will issue a courtesy notice, which is a reminder to the user that they need to purchase a pass. There is a \$5 surcharge (in addition to the cost of the state trail pass) for anyone who fails to pay for a pass before using the trail. If a trail user refuses to buy a pass, a citation may be issued by a credentialed officer.
- ⇒ Since January 1994 the state trail pass has been required for certain off-road (mountain) bike, horse, and cross-country ski trails, as well as trails used by in-line skaters and off-highway motorcyclists. Cyclists on railroad grade trails have been charged a fee since 1978.

State Trail Pass FAQs

Where does the state trail pass money go?

Money from the sale of state trail passes is deposited into the parks segregated account of the state Conservation Fund. Along with state tax dollars, the trail fee revenues are used for maintaining and operating state trails, parks and recreation areas. For trails, these costs include such things as dealing with erosion, trash removal, maintaining safe surfaces, trimming brush, removing fallen trees and law enforcement. Additional funds, which come from ATV and snowmobile registration fees, are allotted to trails that allow ATVs and snowmobiles.

Why don't snowmobilers, ATVs, and hikers need trail passes?

Snowmobilers and all-terrain vehicle riders pay for their trails through registration fees and gasoline taxes. Every state trail that allows ATV or snowmobile use receives some of this money. Wisconsin law requires those who use Wisconsin ATV or snowmobile trails to display either Wisconsin registration or an ATV or snowmobile trail pass. ATV and snowmobile trail passes are different from the state trail pass and are available through the DNR's licensing system. In general, bike, ski and horse trails are more expensive to maintain than hiking trails. Also the exemption for pedestrians enables everyone access to Wisconsin trails.

Who created the state trail pass?

Wisconsin State Statute 27.01(8) authorizes the establishment of the state trail pass. With statutory authority, the current state trail pass was approved by the Natural Resources Board in 1993 with the support of many user groups. The pass was created to raise much needed trail maintenance funds. The state trail pass complies with the State Trails Strategic Plan, completed in 1992 after comments from user group leaders and many other people around the state. The Department of Natural Resources also conducted surveys and focus group discussions with trail users and consulted the State Trails Council before recommending the fees. Wisconsin Administrative Code 45.12(3) establishes the cost of the state trail pass.

Which Trails Require a Trail Pass?

A state trail pass is required on certain trails within the Wisconsin State Park System that allow biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, in-line skating and off-highway motorcycling. These trails are in state parks, forests and recreation areas and are also stand-alone state trails. Signs are posted at trailheads on the trails that require a state trail pass.

20 state trails require a state trail pass. They are:

"400"
Badger
Bearskin
Capital City
Chippewa River
Elroy-Sparta
Fox River
Gandy Dancer
Glacial Drumlin
Great River State Trail
Hillsboro
La Crosse River
Military Ridge
Mountain-Bay
Old Abe
Pecatonica
Red Cedar
Sugar River
Tomorrow River
White River

A state trail pass is needed for some trails at certain state parks, forests and recreation areas. They are:

Black River State Forest
Blue Mound State Park
Brule River State Forest
Flambeau River State Forest
Governor Dodge State Park
Governor Knowles State Forest
Hartman Creek State Park
Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area
Lake Wissota State Park
Lapham Peak Unit - Kettle Moraine State Forest
Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest
Northern Unit - Kettle Moraine State Forest
Peninsula State Park
Perrot State Park
Pike Lake Unit - Kettle Moraine State Forest
Richard Bong State Recreation Area
Southern Unit - Kettle Moraine State Forest
Wildcat Mountain State Park



Capital City State Trail

Referrals & Informational Contacts

For emergencies...

Call 911 then call your property ranger/manager.

DNR Call Center

1-888-WNDR INFO (staff available: 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 7 days per week)

Bilingual services for our Hmong and Spanish speaking customers.

Online chat at dnr.wi.gov

E-mail WDNRInfo@wi.gov

DNR Tip Line

(for minor issues for follow-up)

1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)

Trails with Trail Tender Programs as of July 2009:

Military Ridge State Trail

Cindy Delkamp

P.O. Box 98

Blue Mounds, WI 53517

Phone (608) 437-7393

Capital City State Trail

Kevin Swenson

3101 Lake Farm Road

Fitchburg, WI 53711

Phone (608) 224-3606

Volunteers make trails happen!

Trail Tender
VOLUNTEER

Thank you for becoming a Trail Tender
with the Wisconsin State Park System!