



Birmingham Homeschoolers Community Beta Club
Reed Harvey Park & Community Wetland



Morrow Railroad Builders
Bessemer Rail Trail

Adopt-a-Trail Handbook

2026-2027



Vestavia Hills Sunrise Rotary Club
Little Shades Creek Greenway North



Birmingham Hardcourt Bike Polo
Hugh Kaul Trail

Adopt-a-Trail Handbook 2026

Forms*:

- [Service Report Form](#)
- [Adopt-a-Trail Service Agreement](#)
- [Advanced Task Request Form](#)

*Please note that as of February 2026, FLT has moved to the usage of Tally for all our Adopt-a-Trail forms. Please submit your service agreement and reports through the links above, NOT through Jotform. If you have any issues with Tally, or any other comments or suggestions, please let us know!

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About Adopt-a-Trail Program

Who We Are

FLT is a nonprofit with two distinct but complementary objectives: to conserve and care for environmentally significant land in Central Alabama, and to connect the Red Rock Trail System® throughout Jefferson County. In the simplest terms, we conserve land and build trails to create happier and healthier communities!

The Adopt-a-Trail Mission

FLT's Adopt-a-Trail program provides an opportunity for volunteers to actively participate in the continued improvement of the Red Rock Trail System® (RRTS) by maintaining and enhancing established trails and serving as ambassadors of the RRTS.

Red Rock Trail System ®

The RRTS is a network of trails, parks, bike lanes, and sidewalks in Jefferson County, Alabama. Through this trail system, we aim to improve transportation, health and community by connecting every resident in Jefferson County to a green space within one mile of their home.

Since 2010, we have connected over 160 miles of trails throughout Jefferson County! View the recently released [Red Rock Action Plan](#) to see the next phase of the RRTS, a 36-mile loop connecting three landmark greenspaces: Ruffner Mountain, Railroad Park, and Red Mountain Park.

Responsibilities of Volunteer Groups

Time Commitment

We ask each volunteer group to commit to one full year of service to their adopted trail. By agreeing to be Adopt-a-Trail participants, groups pledge to perform **three hours of service** on their adopted section **every quarter** (every three months), or **12 hours of service per year**.

Upon completion of 6 service hours within the first 6 months of your service agreement, your group will be considered for a sign along your trail segment with your group's name. The installation of the sign may be dependent on the city in which the trail segment is located.

Initial Steps

- Read this handbook and share it with your group.
- Complete the [Adopt-a-Trail Service Agreement](#). Please note that a parent or guardian is required to sign on behalf of volunteers ages 18 and under, and an adult must be present during service hours when minors are performing work. *Please confer with FLT staff before completing the form to ensure your preferred trail is open for adoption.*
- FLT will provide a starter pack of nitrile gloves and trash bags for your group upon request.

Group Participation

Group leaders are responsible for making sure all members of their group are informed of the details and guidelines outlined in this handbook, as well as the tasks and responsibilities expected. Groups may add or remove members as they wish, as long as FLT is updated on any change in primary contact/group leader. Minors **MUST** be accompanied by an adult at every service event.

Volunteer Activities and Tasks:

Basic tasks vs. advanced tasks

Basic tasks are tasks that can be done on your trail on a regular basis that do not require special tools. These tasks do not need approval from FLT staff members:

- Removing litter
- Raking/leaf blowing
- Invasive species removal (no spraying)
- Pruning and weeding
- Documenting and reporting trail hazards, dumping sites, storm damage, large spills, and other trail concerns

Invasive species in our region include:

- Nandina (heavenly bamboo)
- Kudzu
- Mimosa
- Chinese privet

You can read more about invasive plants [here](#)!

Advanced tasks require approval from Freshwater Land Trust and usually need special equipment or additional tools*. Groups must submit the [Advanced Task Request Form](#) and wait for approval before performing advanced tasks. These tasks include:

- Planting projects, landscape amendments, or large-scale removals of invasive plants/planting of native plants
- Large debris removal
- Scout projects

- Beautification projects
- Art installations
- Equipment additions such as benches or educational signage
- Any other ideas you have for projects- contact us!

*To request additional tools, please inform FLT staff at least 3 weeks in advance of the proposed project date. You may call our office at (205) 417-2777 or email Savannah at savannah.thompson@freshwaterlandtrust.org. Additional tool requests may be made via the [Advanced Task Request Form](#). Requests are subject to FLT's supply availability, and/or that of our partners at the Magic City Toolbank.

Hours and Service Reporting

By agreeing to the terms outlined in the Adopt-a-Trail handbook, you agree to complete a service report form after each service day, preferably within a week if it includes any trail concerns.

These reports are a little thing that can help us with much bigger projects. The numbers we gather from these reports help us:

- Justify the need for tools and supplies when submitting grant requests to financial sponsors
- Account for the total time donated to the Red Rock Trail System® that will help encourage donations and city investments for further trail development
- Report on locations of recurring concerns to the city
- Assist students and individuals seeking to report community service hours

If you made it this far, email Savannah “salamander toes” and you will get praise and a small prize!

Procedures

Call or email us if you are planning a major cleanup that will result in large trash bag piles; bag collection will need to be arranged ahead of time.

Be respectful of pedestrians, cyclists, and other trail users. Make sure to keep trash bags and piles of vegetation on the side of the trail.

Recognition

Volunteers in this program are vital to maintaining the growing network of accessible trails in the Red Rock Trail System®. Adopt-a-Trail partners are actively contributing to FLT's mission. Thank you for your efforts.

Freshwater Land Trust will acknowledge Adopt-a-Trail partners by name on the website and on metal signage on the adopted portion of trail (upon completion of 6 service hours within 6 months). Signage typically takes a couple of weeks to be installed.

Photos taken on service days may be used in Adopt-a-Trail acknowledgements on our social media pages and in our newsletters. Groups willing to share photos with us can submit them via the [Service Report Form](#) or by emailing <mailto:savannah.thompson@freshwaterlandtrust.org>.

Ending Service

If your group no longer wishes to participate in the Adopt-a-Trail program or is no longer able to volunteer on your adopted trail, please notify FLT as soon as possible. Additionally, if it is determined that a volunteer group is neglecting their duties as outlined in this handbook, FLT may choose to void the Adopt-a-Trail Agreement with the group.

Safety Guidelines

All volunteers are expected to follow these guidelines while performing tasks on any trail. Participants in this program must read and abide by the following:

General safety

- Use the buddy system!
- Work only in safe weather conditions.
- Wear closed-toed shoes, work gloves, long sleeves and sun protection.
- Stay hydrated and take breaks when you need to.
- Lift bags, limbs, tires, etc. with your legs, not your back!
- Use caution near curbs and the street; watch for vehicles.
- Watch for poison ivy, stinging insects, ticks, and snakes.
- Bring a basic first aid kit.

*For emergency assistance, dial 911. When calling from a cell phone, remember to give your exact location to the dispatcher and state the type of emergency services required. There are EMS signs every quarter mile along the trail system with scannable QR codes to determine your exact location. For non-emergency police assistance in Birmingham City limits, please dial (205) 328-9311.

Reporting hazards

Once FLT has facilitated the building of a trail, the general maintenance of it becomes the responsibility of the city it is in, as the trail is on city property.

Trail property and infrastructure hazards such as:

- broken signage or railings
- downed trees
- cracked pavement
- illegal dumping and large spills (toxic substances, tires, furniture, etc.)
- other hazardous trail conditions related to infrastructure

must be documented in the Service Report Form and reported to the Call Center; dial 311 to reach this service or submit your report online here [see\[clickfix.com/report\]\(https://see.clickfix.com/report\)](https://see.clickfix.com/report).

If you are within City of Birmingham limits, there is also an app for that! It's called "My Bham 311."

Hazardous materials, such as medical and drug paraphernalia, weapons, or sharp objects, should be left untouched. Use your judgement; you may contact the Call Center at 311 or contact the city in which your trail is located.

Additional Safety Information

- Poison Ivy: Leaves of three, let it be. If you think you have come in contact with poison ivy, immediately wash the area with soap and water. Contaminated clothing should be washed thoroughly. Tecnu wipes come in handy when you don't have access to water. Remember, even if you're not allergic, you can spread the oils to someone who is!



- Remember, if you're in nature, you're exposing yourself to potential contact with ticks or mosquitoes! We recommend wearing pants, bug spray (and sunscreen!) and checking for ticks after time near wooded areas.

Please visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information on insect-borne diseases.

CHECKLIST

Share the expectations and safety guidelines outlined in this handbook with the other members of your group.

- Complete the [Adopt-a-Trail Service Agreement](#) if you have yet to do so.
- Arrange to collect trash bags and gloves from FLT, if needed.
- Schedule your first service day with your group on the trail, and please remember to complete your [Adopt-a-Trail Service Report](#) after every service day!

Thank you for adopting a trail!