

Monthly Work Trips

What to Expect / What to Bring / What to Wear



Introduction

Trip Duration:

BMTA Monthly Work Trips generally take up most of the day, usually meeting for breakfast about 8:00 AM, or at the trailhead about 9:00 AM, and depart from the woods between 3:30 -- 4:00 PM.

Part of the pleasure of a work trip is that you get to spend an entire day in the woods!

Plan on being physically tired at the end of the day. It's a good feeling, but also means that a quiet evening at home is widely considered the perfect way to end a good BMTA work trip day!

After the trip, some members of the group will go to a local restaurant for an early dinner and enjoy a beer, pizza and some good music. Whether you want to join us for the post-trip fun is up to you.

Daypack:

Most members bring a daypack so they can carry the food, water and other articles listed below while also keeping their hands free to carry tools.

Food and Water:

Neither food nor water will be provided. Bring your own. Bring a simple, but substantial lunch. A sandwich, an apple, a bag of chips or a granola bar is a typical lunch. Chocolate is a great afternoon energy booster. Bring plenty of water, especially in the hot months, at least two quarts.

Shoes, Clothing, etc.

To be sure of having a dry place to sit for lunch, many people bring a spare rainproof parka or a ground cloth.

Wear sturdy shoes that will give you protection from sharp rocks and / or protect your foot during slips or twists to the ankle. Sturdy work gloves are a must to prevent blisters.

Long pants are strongly recommended, even in hot weather for the protection they offer -- especially from poison ivy and briars. Some wear long-sleeve shirts even in the summer for the same reason. Rain may be unlikely, but a windbreaker/ rain jacket is a good idea. When you break for lunch, the jacket will keep you from getting chilled. In cold weather, instead of a single heavy coat, think multiple thin, layers that can be shed one at a time.

Hiking in carrying tools and then working with them will warm you up even on the coldest of days. A heavy coat is tough to stuff into a daypack! The USFS and the NPS require long pants, sturdy boots, a helmet, eye protection and gloves be worn on work trips in the National Forest or the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We have helmets and eye protection available for those who do not have their own. It is also a great idea to wear snake gators when using swing blades and gas-powered brushcutters. Snake gators not only protect you from snake bites, they also provide protection from the blade of the swing blade or brushcutter when you bounce your tool off a rock or a stubborn trunk of heavy brush.

First Aid, Insect repellent, etc.:

A compact First Aid kit (available at any outdoors store) is a good idea. If you don't have one, some large band-aids, adhesive tape, gauze pads and duct tape (for blisters) can be useful. Insect repellent, suntan lotion and Ivy Block can be carried in or applied at the trailhead and left in the car.

Tools:

The trip leader will bring tools appropriate for the work to be done. If you prefer tried-and true personal hand tools, feel free to bring them. Most people have their own loppers and small fold-up handsaw but there always will be some available to borrow. We often use swing blades as well, especially in wilderness areas.

We often use gas-powered brushcutters outside of the wilderness areas, but they need to be equipped with a steel brush-cutting blade, instead of string. The typical home weed eater with a string cutter does not work well in the woods where the brush is too heavy for such tools.

Chainsaws and crosscut saws can be used only by those who have taken the appropriate USFS training, usually a one or two day class for each. Also required is up-to-date First Aid and CPR training from the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association. Chainsaw chaps are required when using a chainsaw.

Paperwork:

Yes, even when you volunteer, there is paperwork involved. Happily, with just a little help from you, your trip leader will do nearly all of it.

When you arrive for a work trip, you will be asked to provide your name, your signature and your address as well as a phone number where your spouse, a relative or a friend can be reached in case of an emergency. In addition, we will need to know your driving time -- the total time you spent round trip to get from home to the meeting place and then back home again.

Please be sure to bring your medical insurance card ... needed in the event you are injured.

On your first trip with us, you may be asked to sign a USFS Volunteer Agreement Form (This depends on where the work trip is being held.) Prior to each work trip, your trip leader will go over the potential hazards you may face on the trip and may ask you to sign or fill in your name on this form as well. We will keep track of your volunteer hours and will report your volunteer hours to the USFS or NPS. As a way of thanking you for your time and effort, the BMTA, USFS or NPS may award you incentives (such as hats or T-shirts) to thank you for your time and effort.

If you have additional questions, contact the [GA Maintenance Director](#) or the [TN/NC Maintenance Director](#).



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