



TART Trails, Inc.

Trail Ambassador Program

April 2009

**TART Trails, Inc.
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Trail Ambassador Program**

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I. TART TRAILS MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the TART Trails is “to enrich the Grand Traverse area by providing an interconnected network of trails, bikeways and pedestrian ways; and encouraging their use.”

To fulfill this mission, TART Trails has established the following goals:

- Provide safe and accessible trails for walking, biking, running, cross-country skiing, inline skating and nature study for all ages and abilities.
- Work to expand the network of trails and interconnected bikeways and pedestrian ways.
- Promote the health, environmental, and transportation benefits of walking and biking to work, school and other destinations.
- Provide trails to enhance the local economy by serving as a destination for outdoor recreational activities by residents and tourists alike.
- Preserve public corridors to maintain ecological “greenways” and retain a part of our rich transportation history.
- Coordinate maintenance and management activities with various user groups and governmental organizations.
- Collaborate with local, state and national partners.

The TART organization works to maintain and enhance the TART Trail system which includes the Boardman Lake Trail, Leelanau Trail, TART Trail, Three Mile Trail, and the Vasa Pathway and encourage stewardship through volunteer programs, educational outreach, and community partnerships. We strive to promote healthy, environmentally responsible transportation and recreation and provide access to the beauty of the Grand Traverse region, now and for future generations.

II. TRAIL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Within this overall mission of the TART organization, the goals and objectives of the Trail Ambassador Program shall be to promote the safe, responsible and enjoyable use of the TART Trail system with an emphasis on:

- Representing TART Trails, Inc.
- Informing, assisting, and educating
- Practicing and exemplifying trail etiquette
- Minor trail maintenance and hazard reporting
- Minor mechanical assistance
- Surveying trail users
- Having fun on the trails

The Trail Ambassador Program is a volunteer driven program of trail enthusiasts who wish to contribute to the community, TART Trails, and collaborating agencies/organizations. The Trail Ambassadors will focus on working with the biking, hiking, running, walking, in-line skating and skiing communities, as these groups comprise most of the TART Trail uses.

A. What is a Trail Ambassador?

There are several opportunities for Trail Ambassadors to choose from including:

1. Roaming Ambassador- Someone who uses the trail frequently, is willing to be identified as a Trail Ambassador and is trained to answer questions from other trail users, report maintenance issues, present a “watchful eye” along the trail, etc.
2. Stationary Ambassador- Someone who volunteers to assist with a trail open house or trailhead day. Duties could include: giving directions, answering questions about the trails and TART’s master plan, taking names for our newsletter mailing list, providing snacks or beverages to trail users, surveying users, etc.
3. Trail Maintenance Ambassador- A trained volunteer who checks a specific section for maintenance issues/concerns and performs minor maintenance activities such as trash removal, limb trimming and sweeping.
4. Program/Educational Ambassador- Anyone who can offer a useful service to TART users and members. There are many possibilities limited only by the imagination. Several examples could include:
 - A water resources expert who can lead a walk to discuss the transformation of Boardman Lake
 - A birder who can identify bird calls on the Vasa Pathway
 - A botanist who can lead a hike on the Leelanau Trail to view wildflowers
 - A trained professional who could offer a trail etiquette seminar or bike safety & repair clinic
 - A trail user who wants to start a running club, ski club, walking club or cycling program (etc.) on the trails.

B. Required Training

1. Volunteer Information Sheet and Training: Prospective Trail Ambassador volunteers must complete the Volunteer Information Sheet plus the designated TART Trail Ambassador training. This will include but is not limited to:
 - Information, issues, and concerns regarding the TART Trail system
 - Regular updates about TART’s programs, news and events
 - Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
 - TART Trail map and master plan
 - Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics

- Proper trail etiquette
- TART Guidelines
- Incident reporting

Trail Ambassador training will be made available and dates will be announced at various times throughout the year as demand dictates. Rights, privileges and performance expectations of volunteers are documented later in this manual. Thanks for your interest in the TART Trails Ambassador Program!

C. Additional Training (but not required)

1. CPR/First Aid training offered at:

- a.) American Red Cross - "First Aid/CPR/AED for Schools and the Community - This course combines lectures, demonstrations and video with hands-on training and practice. Participants in this course learn to recognize and respond to emergencies including shock, cardiac and breathing emergencies for adults, children and infants, heat and cold emergencies, sudden illnesses and poisonings. Additionally, participants will learn first aid for everything from cuts and scrapes to muscle, bone and joint injuries."

Northwest Michigan Red Cross
735 S. Garfield Ave. Suite B100
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone (231) 947-7286

- b.) American Heart Association - "The Heartsaver First Aid Course teaches how to manage illness and injuries in the first few minutes until professional help arrives. Course content includes General Principles, Medical Emergencies, and Injury Emergencies. Optional topics include CPR and AED, and Environmental Emergencies."

Western Michigan American Heart Association
3940 Peninsular Dr SE Suite 180
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone (616) 285-1888

2. Basic bike repair training offered at:

- a.) Brick Wheels- training offered every Saturday at 10:00 am in June and July
736 E. 8th Street
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone (231) 947-4274 -- Ask for Marty

- b.) City Bike Shop- training dates to be determined
322 S. Union Street
Traverse City, MI 49684
Phone (231) 947-1313

c.) McLain Cycle- training dates listed on web site www.mclaincycle.com
2786 Garfield Rd. N
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone (231) 941-8855

3. Leave No Trace ethics—www.lnt.org

III. THE TART TRAIL AMBASSADOR

The TART Trail Ambassador is a volunteer position. TART Trails Inc.'s objective is to create a community of members to volunteer and become an active voice in representing the TART Trails Inc., educating others, and assisting trail users for a more enjoyable experience on the TART Trails system. The goal is to create and maintain sustainable, open, safe and fun trails for all users.

The Trail Ambassador Program will be managed by a TART staff member or volunteer. Duties shall include communication with Trail Ambassador volunteers, management of information reporting forms, coordination of training dates and open houses.

A. Trail Ambassador Program

1. Trail Ambassadors Duties

- Represent TART Trails Inc. positively
- Maintain logs and report in a timely fashion, when required
- Inform, assist, and educate trail users if necessary
- Provide mechanical assistance (to the limit of your own knowledge and ability)
- Provide information to trail users (regulations, directions, mileage to destination)
- Assist in minor trail maintenance and hazard reporting
- When necessary, assist in emergency situations to the limit of your ability
- Enjoy Yourself

2. Trail Ambassador Qualifications/Abilities

- Attend ambassador training
- Possess positive, effective, non-confrontational interpersonal skills
- Enjoy being on the trail

3. Communications

a.) Cell phones-

While working as a volunteer on the TART Trails system, it is advisable to have a working cell phone for communications, but it is not required. There are some remote areas on the Leelanau Trail and Vasa Pathway where a cell phone may prove to be valuable in an emergency situation.

b.) Law Enforcement-

In the unlikely event that you run into someone who is causing problems, please remove yourself from the situation and contact the Grand Traverse County Sheriff, Leelanau County Sheriff, State Police, Traverse City Police or Department of Natural Resources depending on where you are located. Write down a description of the person or vehicle with any defining characteristics. Do not try to handle the problem yourself!

c.) Emergency Medical Services-

It is not required of a Trail Ambassador to take basic first aid and/or CPR training for your duties on the TART Trail system. Optional training is offered locally. See page 3.

Should you encounter an emergency situation and have access to a phone, contact 911. Try to stay with the victim(s) and get as much information as possible and relay that information to the dispatch. Please remember to fill out the appropriate paperwork to document the incident and return it to the TART Trails office.

4. TART Trails, Inc. Responsibilities

- Provide training
- Reporting forms, TART literature and updates

B. Types of Trail Ambassadors

1. Roaming Ambassador

A roaming ambassador is someone who uses the trails frequently and is willing to represent TART Trails Inc. by assisting trail users when necessary. He/she is willing to answer questions from other trail users, report maintenance issues, present a “watchful eye” along the trail, etc.

a.) Duties

- Wear the Trail Ambassador approved identification clothing/memorabilia
- Provide courteous and knowledgeable contact with TART visitors
- Observe TART’s ‘Trail Guidelines’
- Practice and encourage ‘Leave No Trace’ ethics
- Inspect resource/facilities- Notify the TART office if there are trees down or maintenance issues that need to be addressed

b.) Recommended equipment

- Camera, cell phone, brochures, bike repair kit, mileage chart

c.) Follow-up

- Please let TART know the number of on-trail hours you accumulated on a quarterly basis. We can use the total number of volunteer hours for grant applications.

2. Stationary Ambassador

A stationary ambassador represents TART Trails Inc. at open houses to greet, inform, assist, and educate users on the TART Trails. He/she encourages trail users to support TART Trails through volunteering, membership, and/or financial support. A stationary ambassador may also obtain feedback through TART surveys and sign-up sheets.

a.) Duties

- Stop by the office to pick up appropriate survey forms/hand-outs/brochures for the open house
- Set up/take down display/chairs/table (also a “mobile” open house display concept will be created for those who would like to bike or walk to the open house site)
- Wear the Trail Ambassador approved identification clothing/memorabilia
- Bring Frequently Asked Questions document for reference
- Offer information and obtain feedback
- Encourage users to support the TART Trails
- Restock trailheads with maps and brochures as needed

b.) Recommended equipment

- Camera, cell phone, brochures, bike repair kit

c.) Follow-up

- Please let TART know the number of on-trail hours you accumulated on a quarterly basis. We can use the total number of volunteer hours for grant applications.

3. Trail Maintenance ambassador

A trail maintenance ambassador is trained to check specific assigned sections of the trails for maintenance issues/concerns. Each trail section will have a site specific maintenance checklist that is to be completed on either a semi-annual or quarterly basis (depending on trail section.)

a.) Duties

- Wear the Trail Ambassador approved identification clothing/memorabilia
- Observe TART’s ‘Trail Guidelines’
- Resource/facilities inspection
 - Inspect the trail and signing for safety and functionality.
 - Check for trail hazards/damaged-missing signs/benches/pavement markings/bridge conditions
 - Make sure that “clear vision areas” exist at all driveway and road crossings
 - Trailheads should be checked for cleanliness
 - Report vandalism to the TART office

- Some small problems may be fixed on site - i.e. downed limbs, debris on trail, litter, etc.

b.) Recommended equipment

- Camera, cell phone, small trash bag, pruning shears, folding saw, loppers

c.) Follow-up

- Please let TART know the number of on-trail hours you accumulated on a quarterly basis. We can use the total number of volunteer hours for grant applications.

4. Program/Educational ambassador

A program/educational ambassador is an individual who can offer a useful service to TART users and members. There are many possibilities limited only by our imaginations. Several examples could include:

- A water resources expert who can lead a walk to discuss the transformation of Boardman Lake
- A birder who can identify bird calls on the Vasa Trail
- A botanist who can lead a hike on the Leelanau Trail to view wildflowers
- A trained professional could offer a trail etiquette seminar or bike safety & repair clinic
- A trail user who wants to start a running club, ski club, walking club or cycling program (etc.) on the trails.

a.) Duties

- Complete the Event/Activity Planning Form
- All TART Trails program/educational outings must be approved and coordinated through the Trail Ambassador program coordinator. Contact the TART office to schedule a trail outing. TART will promote each activity appropriately.
- Wear the Trail Ambassador approved identification clothing/memorabilia
- Provide courteous and knowledgeable contact with TART visitors
- Observe TART's 'Trail Guidelines'
- Practice and educate 'Leave No Trace' ethics
- Resource/facilities inspection- Notify the TART office if there are trees down or maintenance issues that need to be addressed

b.) Recommended equipment

- Camera, cell phone

c.) Follow-up

- Please let TART know the number of on-trail hours you accumulated on a quarterly basis. We can use the total number of volunteer hours for grant applications.

IV. VOLUNTEER RULES, RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

Since the Trail Ambassadors are representing the TART Trails, it is of the utmost importance that Trail Ambassadors treat all trail users with courtesy and respect and attempt to use their knowledge and skills to assist trail users in the following ways: providing information about proper use of the TART Trails, regulations and layout, local services and attractions, and trail conditions.

A. Volunteer Rules of Conduct

- Trail Ambassadors shall not accept any form of compensation from the public including donations. Visitors wishing to make a donation should be offered a membership brochure and/or directed to the TART Trails office or fee pipes.
- Trail Ambassadors shall not use obscene language.
- Trail Ambassadors shall not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Trail Ambassadors shall observe all required safety precautions, instructions and trail guidelines by TART Trails Inc.
- Trail Ambassadors shall at all times speak respectfully to visitors and TART Trail users.

B. Volunteer Rights and Privileges

- TART Trails maintains an insurance policy that indemnifies volunteers for providing services to our organization.
- TART will send updated information about events, programs, projects and will maintain a Frequently Asked Questions document so that you may do your job effectively.

C. TART Guidelines

Trail Ambassadors need to have a reasonable working knowledge of the Trail Guidelines as posted along the trails. If a Trail Ambassador is witness to a violation of the Trail Guidelines and has the opportunity, they should identify themselves, courteously explain the trail guidelines, and ask for compliance now and in the future.

TART hopes that our trail users will use the trail in a respectful and responsible manner. As a Trail Ambassador, please exemplify proper trail etiquette at all times. Please remember to yield to slower trail traffic and stop at all stop signs.

Our current Trail Guidelines are printed on the following page.

Trail Guidelines



1. Be considerate of all trail users.
2. Cyclists yield to slower traffic, especially children.
3. Keep to the right, except when passing.
Cyclists - single file when other users present.
4. Alert others when passing.
5. Keep pets on a 6-foot leash. Clean up after your pet.
6. Respect private property. Stay on the trail.
7. Stop at all STOP signs
8. For all emergencies, DIAL 911

D. Thank you! We appreciate your interest in our Trail Ambassador Program!

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