



Adopt-A-Trail

Your Help is Welcome!

There are hundreds of miles of trail on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico, spanning from the northern reaches of the Capitan and White Mountains on the Smokey Bear Ranger District, to the trail systems in the Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft, and extending down to the southernmost areas of the Guadalupe Mountain Range near Carlsbad. Trails provide opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, motorcycle, and OHV riding. Individuals and groups can help maintain these trails and restore or protect resources in our area by “adopting” a trail or a section of trail. You or your group return on a continuing basis to ensure the trail you adopt remains in good condition.

The Work

The type of maintenance needed on each trail always varies, even weather can determine what work is necessary, but generally, you help remove rock and debris from the trail, trim brush, restore drainages, remove litter, and fix the tread. See the duties checklist for specifics. Adoptees usually schedule work activities at least 3x/year and after major weather events.

How You Can Adopt a Trail

First, you or your group decides which trail to work on and how much you are willing and able to take on. Then, an agreement is made between you or your group and the Forest Service. The Land Management Agency will provide technical direction, information about trail maintenance standards, basic training, and some tools. You provide the time, muscle, and energy to keep the trail in good repair, and track your hours and report information to the Forest Service.

What's In This For You?

We will put an “Adopt-a-Trail” name sign at the trailhead if appropriate, recognizing your contribution to maintaining these trails. Typically, a volunteer signs the Trail Adoption agreement and a year later, can request to have the sign installed on their behalf. Your efforts will support the Forest Service in managing very important trails on your public lands.

Thank you!

Trail adopters are some of the most valuable volunteers – we count on adopters to be our “boots-on-the-ground” and the eyes and ears of the forest. We appreciate your investment in public lands and maintaining sustainable trail systems for recreation users. Thank you for consistently dedicating time to care for a specific trail and our public lands.

INTERESTED?

Sacramento, Smokey Bear, and Guadalupe have identified top priorities trails to be maintained through the Trail Adoption Program. Contact us for more information:



Lincoln National Forest Adopt-A-Trail Guidance



Jeremy Pritchett
Recreation Management
Specialist
Forest Service
Lincoln National Forest
jeremy.pritchett@usda.gov
901 Mechem Dr
Ruidoso, NM 88345

District Offices:

Sacramento Ranger District
4 Lost Lodge Rd.
Cloudcroft, NM 88317
(575) 682-2551

Smokey Bear Ranger District
901 Mechem Dr.
Ruidoso, NM 88345
(575) 434-7200

Guadalupe Ranger District
5203 Buena Vista Dr.
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(575) 885-4181



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Please check boxes of those you are willing and able to address as a trail adopter:

- ☐ Tread Work: Ensure the tread - the surface that receives the traffic - meets FS specifications. A "Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook" is available to adoptee(s), along with trail specifications and notes for their trail section. Assess for tread damage including braiding and narrowing of trail tread, erosion, sloughing, developed berms and condition of trail structures.
- ☐ Clearing Downfall: Keep trail corridors passable through the process of clearing downed material and other obstructions. Report any downed trees or obstructions preventing safe travel on the trail.
- ☐ Brushing: Remove small diameter trees, brush, and shrubs within a specified limit. Note any vegetative encroachment onto trail, type, severity, and potential tools needed to remove.
- ☐ Drainage Maintenance: Upkeep water and erosion control structures such as waterbars, checksteps, and grade dips. Note functionality of water diversion structures and creek crossings, and if a re-route of a trail section could be needed. Note seasonal trail conditions.
- ☐ Signage: Report missing and damaged signs and repair the sign to FS standards if applicable while in the field. Do signs, gates, barriers, or cairns need to be replaced, added, repaired, or removed? Note evidence of illegal or unauthorized use of trail.
- ☐ Projects: Volunteer projects, including large public efforts, may be organized along an Adoptee's Trail segment with FS Approval.

Program Guidelines:

Safety: Volunteers are no different than employees regarding safety; it is always the priority. Adoptees will begin each work day with a safety assessment based on two FS documents: the Partner Expectations and the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) or Risk Management Analysis (RMA). Volunteers are required to wear the appropriate level of personal protective equipment; this could include long pants, long sleeve shirts, gloves, eye protection, and hard hats.

Policy Compliance: Adoptee(s) are expected to develop a basic understanding of FS regulations regarding trail use and management objectives, thereby understanding what uses are allowed and not allowed on a specific trail.

- Adoptee(s) will follow "Partner Expectations" document, which must be reviewed before signing the Volunteer Agreement and Adopt-a-Trail agreement.
- Adoptee(s) will annually sign a Volunteer Agreement with the District or Forest.
- The Adopt-a-Trail agreement will be valid indefinitely, provided a Volunteer Agreement is re-signed annually and not terminated for any reason.
- Lack of communication, updates, trail maintenance, or public concerns are possible reasons for termination - up to the discretion of the Public Land Management agency.

Groups: If Adopters are a group, a designated volunteer (signatory) agrees to coordinate and supervise the group and is responsible for leading training of proper techniques, safe work procedures, and quality of work to meet FS standards. *All* volunteers must complete required FS training and be signed on the Volunteer Agreement/listed on the Group form.



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Training: Trainings and certification are provided by the FS or other approved partner groups when possible. Trail building and rock skills trainings are highly encouraged. Specific training is required if operating saws or government vehicles.

Walk-Through: The adoptee(s) will do a walk-through of the trail with a FS trails employee or get approval before using tools, maintaining correspondence and agreement with FS regarding planned work.

Maps: Adoptee(s) will provide map of the identified trail or section they are adopting.

Timesheets: Adoptee(s) will document their volunteer hours and submit them to the FS Volunteer Coordinator at the end of the fiscal year – either as a group or individually.

Reporting: The trail adoptee(s) will report maintenance needs and trail condition to their Forest Service point of contact, at a minimum of once at the end of each fiscal year. If sending an email identify whether you are informing of an issue, asking for permission, reporting work completed, or requesting additional support/project proposal. Please provide a photo and GSP location when available.

Non-Acceptable Activities and Special Project Authorization:

Adoptee(s) will not use chainsaws, motorized brush saws, motorized pole saws or any other mechanized equipment without appropriate FS sanctioned trainings coordinated through and approved by their immediate supervisor. Adoptee(s) will not engage in tree falling operations without the appropriate level sawyer card. Once adoptees obtain the trainings, all operations and use of specialized and mechanized equipment must be pre-approved.

Adoptee(s) will not operate outside the scope of this agreement. No trail re-routes can be constructed without separate approval. If an adoptee believes the trail needs work that is outside of their authorization, they will contact their immediate supervisor as soon as reasonable to discuss viable options.

Provided by Forest Service to Adoptee:

- Volunteer and Partner Resources: including Volunteer Guide & Partner Expectations, Job Hazard Analysis, Trail Specs/Guidelines, and Reporting forms.
- Trail work specifications/construction standards: including explanation of terms, diagrams, trail class matrix, trail specific design parameters, and signage expectations. "USDA Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook. The adoptee is responsible for ensuring that the trail meets these standards or is in the process of meeting these standards.
- Trainings, technical advice, guidance, and inspection provided as needed.
- As budgets and other priorities allow, the agency provides signage that the trail is being maintained by the designated volunteer/group under the Adopt-a-Trail program. Typically, a volunteer signs the agreement and a year later can request to have the sign installed.
- Agency will furnish hard hats and other special work tools and protective equipment when needed.



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ADOPT-A-TRAIL AGREEMENT with

____ Sacramento Ranger District
____ Smokey Bear Ranger District, or
____ Guadalupe Ranger District

Trail Adoptee Volunteer/Group Name: _____

Individual Signatory's name: _____

Volunteer Agreement number (*must have volunteer agreement in place, with emergency contact info*):

Trail (name and #): _____

Location description: _____

Responsible for section of trail from _____ to _____

Approximate trail length in miles: _____

Date agreement becomes effective: _____

Map Attached: yes no

Work will be completed according to the attached Adopt-A-Trail Standards and Checklist.

It is understood by both parties that:

- a) The group does not expect reimbursement for incidental expenses, unless specifically authorized on the volunteer agreement.
- b) Improvements on National Forest System land at the direction of either of the parties, shall thereupon become the property of the United States, and subject to the same regulations and administration of the FS as other National Forest improvements of a similar nature.
- c) Decisions about maintenance will remain the responsibility of the Forest Service.
- d) This agreement is supplemental to the 301(A) Volunteer Agreement form that needs to be completed prior to adopting the trail.

District Ranger, Ranger District

Date

Adoptee's Signature

Date