What does a trail liaison do?

A trail liaison:

- acts as the contact person for the club and the land manager for the park;

- arranges trail work days in the spring and fall: evaluates trail work needs, sets dates and coordinates volunteers;

- maintains the trail plan (Appendix A) for the park; and

- meets with other trail liaisons one to two times per year.

Why Two Trail Work Days?

The primary reason behind MORE’s goal of a spring and fall work day is to promote, and build, a community, around the MORE trail. In most cases, land managers see this as a benefit to them, but it’s also benefits MORE members. When we can plan workdays far enough ahead, it allows us to get more folks to show up and we can even entice sponsors to contribute or support.

The 7 Steps to Work Day Sponsorship

1. Sponsorship for a trail work day (or series of work days) on that trail you dearly love is limited only by the Trail Liaison’s imagination. If MORE can convince a pharmaceutical company in Iowa to sponsor you with poison ivy cure, local businesses have an even more vested interest to invest in their community.

2. Sponsors for trail work days not only pull the community into your trail system, but queue up businesses for sponsor cultivation and larger asks down the road. You are building a sponsor relationship for MORE as well as your trail. That said, we ask that trail liaisons not negotiate with, or commit MORE to, potential sponsors beyond the immediate trail work day (or series) requirements. If a local business is interested in expanding its sponsorship beyond your trail work day, the MORE Board of Directors is here to support you. Please arrange for an introduction of this business with Jennifer Boynton at vicepresident@more-mtb.org.

3. Don’t just approach bike shops, try Starbucks, donut or bagel shops, gas stations, convenience stores, local grocery stores, pubs, restaurants, etc. Be as varied as your volunteers pool in
your sponsorship canvassing. Also, don’t forget to wear your Trail Liaison hat each and every time you enter a local business and ask their support as you don’t need to devote a day to canvass sponsors (although you can if you have the time). Who knows, you might strike up wonderful friendships.

   a. Don’t expect local businesses to donate money in support of your work day or you will be disappointed.

   b. Do your homework by figuring out ways to integrate the local business’ product/services (in-kind donation) into your work day. For example, ask a store to give you a $5 coupon good for any purchase above $20 in their store. This helps you in your volunteer recruiting efforts, drives volunteers into their store that he/she probably wouldn’t visit and costs the local business nothing if the volunteer never shows.

   c. As your sponsor comes on-line, reach out to the Trail Boss for a handful of t-shirts and MORE swag that you can hand off to the sponsor.

4. Emphasize that working on trails builds community spirit.

   a. Who is MORE? MORE is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization of over 1,300 members from the Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond areas (don’t forget Richmond shares our TIN and thus we share in their membership numbers) and like WTOP, MORE’s trails stretch from the Chesapeake to the Shenandoah’s and from Baltimore to Richmond. MORE is committed to supporting responsible enjoyment of these trails and the outdoors. MORE has over 300 miles of trails in over 40 county, state and national parks under its auspices that it helps maintain along with the local land manager. MORE also builds new trails in these parks.

   b. At the high level, in 2011, over half of MORE members gave back to their communities volunteering over 3,400 hours on scheduled trail work and countless hours on ad hoc emergency trail work. Each scheduled work day attracts between 5-50 passionate volunteers who will hear first-hand about a sponsor’s business from a skilled, and highly dedicated, Trail Liaison. Each Trail Liaison embraces “MORE’s Circle of Sponsorship” where volunteers hear about supporting businesses while working on trails that lead right back to that business.

   c. Supporting your trail work day (or series) helps the local business in two ways.

      i. All donations are tax deductible (ask the Trail Boss for MORE’s TIN and IRS determination when required); and
ii. Sponsors attract volunteers (who by definition are interested in supporting their local community) to the local business.

5. Local businesses can help you attract volunteers in building community spirit in two ways.
   a. The first is by allowing you to post your trail work info on their premises which gets the word out about the work day to the business’ existing customers. This directly shows the business’ customers that the business supports their community. Do not hesitate to ask if you can post your flyer and/or put the business’ logo on your flyer recognizing their support.
   b. Second, asking the local business to sponsor your work day allows them to get their word out to potential new customers on how their local business supports their community.

  i. Talk to various locally owned businesses near the trail and let them know how many volunteers you usually get for a work day and that your average volunteer has probably never heard of their business.
  ii. Ask the business to provide soft drinks, pizza, sandwiches, or dogs or burgers, to providing a giveaway or two for the volunteers that show up.

iii. For the pubs and restaurants, find out when their dead times are and ask if they will provide a discount (or free) food/beverage if you deliver the volunteers there after your work day. Then schedule your work day to end in time for the sponsor’s dead time for socializing after the work day.

6. Ensure the local business knows that by investing in your work day, they’re also investing in a larger customer pool.
   a. You can let the local business know that if they do support your work day, that business will get a shout out on MORE’s Facebook page and on the forums, but will NOT be listed as a MORE sponsor.
   b. Ensure you coordinate this recognition with the Trail Boss, shoot an email to Trailboss@more-mtb.org with the business’ name/logo and which trail work day they’re sponsoring) in sufficient time to pull off as nothing is worse than over promising and under-delivering.
   c. If the Trail Boss is unavailable (you’ll get an out of office Auto Response), let the Vice President, or the entire MORE board, know.

7. Be sure to publicly identify and thank your sponsoring business(es) to your volunteers at the work day and ask them to thank the business for choosing...
to support your trail work day when they find themselves shopping there. When your sponsor hears this, they generally want to sponsor you again. We call this MORE’s Circle of Sponsorship.

Finally (bonus step), don’t hesitate to reach out to the Board for help. MORE Board of Directors are committed to supporting you and your efforts to make your trail system top-notch.

**MORE Forums**

Each liaison has access to the For Liaisons section of the Forum. Please check this frequently, as important information, notices, and documents will be posted here.

Liaisons also have access to post in the Help Wanted Forum.

**Scheduling**

MORE starts planning the Spring trail work series in January and the Fall series in July.

Start talking to your land manager about the next season early! You need to have a trail-work outline and possible dates by February/August.

The Spring trail liaison meeting is held in late February/early March. At the meeting, which is also a dinner, we plan the schedule, give brief updates on each trail, and go over new issues and information.

There may be a meeting/picnic for Liaisons in late June/early July to plan for the Fall schedule.

**Expenses**

A not to exceed amount is annually set by the MORE Board exclusively to reimburse Trail Liaisons for MORE schedules work day incidental expenses (e.g., food, signs, SWAG, oil and gas, etc.). The allowance is administered by the Trail Boss who provides guidance for its use. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted, along with a brief description of what the funds were used for and/or receipts, to the Trail Boss for approval. Approved requests will be forwarded to the Treasurer for payment.
Planning for the Workday.

Start by having a discussion with your land Manager to find out if there are any issues or concerns that they want to get resolved during your day. If not make a list of what you want to do before the workday.

Survey your park 1-2 weeks before the work day for new issues.

One way to plan is to use a trail assessment form (Trail Solutions pp192) for each job. Rank each form in order of importance. Jobs not done can be filed for future work days.

Go out to your park shortly after a heavy rain, and see where your worst water problems are.

Plan ahead on what tools you’re going to require. Make sure you know how you are going to get everything you need to the trailhead at the right time.

Also when you ride at your park and are chatting with others, ask them what they would like to see fixed or improved on the trails. You’d be amazed how often the best ideas for work come from others.

If you are planning to do multiple projects in multiple locations, then make up maps and instructions of what you want done at the sites you are not going to manage in person.

Think about engaging local businesses to help sponsor your day. This could be as little as having the business post your info on the premises to the shop sending employees out, to providing pizza, sandwiches or dogs or burgers, to providing a giveaway or two for the volunteers that show up. Don't just approach bike shops, try Starbucks, donut or bagel shops, local grocery stores (Giant and Whole Foods), etc.

Gather one or two pieces of Swag to raffle off to volunteers. Ask the trail boss where to find it if MORE has not secured an overall Trail Series Sponsor.

Plan tasks a wide range of volunteer turnout can accomplish. Some days you get 5 volunteers, others 25, God-forbid 55! Try to have a series of jobs lined up to keep your turnout happy & productive regardless of their number. This can be done by have a number of jobs lined up that can be accomplished by small teams. The greater your turnout, the more teams you send out.
Trail Work Days

Or you can plan for 2 or 3 jobs that need a range of bodies – 4 or 5 to work on knicking, a reroute that could use a dozen re-blazing a segment for a pair of painters. The most important thing is to try to keep folks busy & happy. We are asking folks to give up precious spare time to come help on trails. If they just lean on a tool or walk around doing nothing, good chance our volunteers will leave thinking MORE and/or the trails don't need their help and we won't see them again. Worse yet, it will be that much harder to convince them to give up their free time for a future event.

Attracting Volunteers.

I've included a PDF of two posters, one to post at the trailhead, one to leave at bike shops. (Appendix B)

Distribute flyers to the local bike shops close to your park. Encourage these shop(s) to donate coffee and doughnuts and maybe a small give away to “sponsor” the trail work day...then advertise this to the club in advance of the day through the Forum. Maybe that's $100, but it is $100 really well spent for all involved. Also, notify the Trail Boss via email to trailboss@more-mtb.com (don't assume the Trail Boss is reading the Forum) of any special items you have secured for your work day in order to update the Trail Work Forum webpage and your Trail's Where to Ride Page in the Spring/Fall 201_ Trail Work Day Section of the MORE website.

Contact the previous liaison, if available, to find out what other trail groups they may be aware of.

Talk to your land manager about other volunteer groups who support the trails. If there are any, contact someone and try to make the workday a joint session or at least get the other group to inform its members.

About 2 weeks or so before the workday start papering cars at the trailhead and post a large sign at the trail head announcing your workday.

Develop a list of local riders and others who care about your trail. Hopefully you inherited one from your predecessor. Contact them via email to inform them of the work day.

Post up an announcement of the workday in the Pit on the MORE forums. If you just rely on MORE to advertise through the website and email you will probably be disappointed in the turnout.
The Work Day.

Bring:

- TW sign-in sheet (Appendix C)
- Extra water
- Tools
- Donut and coffee or other treats
- Raffle item/give-away Swag
- First Aid Kit
- Get to the work site at least 5 minutes before the start time

Give an introductory talk:

- Introduce yourself
- Have everyone sign the Trail Work sheet (and the waiver on the back)
- Do a safety briefing. Ask other liaisons what they say and what they consider essential.
- Check to make sure your volunteers are bringing enough to drink while out for several hours.
- Let everyone know what the TW will be that day
- Do a raffle
- Thank the Sponsor(s) and mention the MORE Circle of Sponsorship

Depending on the work to be done, you may be able to break your group up with another person who knows what needs to be done.

Don’t necessarily hold everyone up for people who call to say they are coming. You should be doing the “talk” by 15 minutes after the start time. If you have plans to send people to different sites, get one group going and on their way while others are still straggling in.

While out working, remember to keep an eye out for safety issues. Even if you gave safety tips earlier, for some trail work is new and we need to reinforce safe work practices.

Make sure you have your cell phone!

Generally volunteers often do not work beyond 4 + hours. You can certainly go beyond that as you wish.

Consider including a scheduled ride now and then on the same day as your scheduled TW. Before is often better, as folks are tired after TW.

If you’re making a significant change, consider putting up a temporary sign at the site explaining why you did it. For most, change is bad - especially when it involves their favorite trail segment. A short explanation can go a long way toward making a controversial re-route or closing stay re-routed or closed.
Food.

While food is great, you might want to ask folks what they want while out. Otherwise you will be hauling extra food that would keep better if left in a cooler until the work is done. About two hours in, folks want a food break, and most either brought something or are munching on the Cliff Bars we provided. You will likely be far from the trailhead, and it wastes time to go back and then return.

Chainsaws.

Don’t use chainsaws in your park without prior permission from your park manager. In most cases they are not even permitted by volunteers for liability and safety reasons. If you would like to have a better opportunity to help cut fallen trees with a chain-saw, get a State Forest chainsaw certification. These classes are held every spring. Another option is to find out if those who already have certification are able to help, pending park approval. Check with the Trail Boss for current information.

To report downed trees in Montgomery County parks, call the Service Center at 301-670-8080. Leave a message, giving detailed location information, including the nearest mapped access point.

[Insert MORE Chainsaw Policy once approved]

Weather.

Less than fantastic weather may benefit your workday: you actually may get better turnout because they are not out riding. You also can get a better feel for what needs to be done because you can see where the water is going. Also, right after a rain or during a light rain the ground is easier to work.

Note from an experienced liaison: I have always maintained and posted a “rain or shine” work day. I usually try and determine the intensity and time the rain will occur. If it’s pouring at the outset, I’ll consider canceling it. If I know it will rain after I start, I’ll keep it and stay until the rain is too much for everyone; If it’s light rain I’ll keep it; If the rain will end soon after starting, I’ll move the start time later; If the rain will stop soon, as like a passing hurricane did a couple years back, I will keep it. Rainy work days will likely mean fewer people may come out, but maybe those who were going to come out already planned or can only come on the day you scheduled. If you have any doubts or plan to change the date or time, you could post a request for people to contact you to let you definitely if they were planning on working. Consider having either yourself or someone else at least wait at the meeting location at the scheduled time in case someone shows up before you bail that day.
On the other hand, although rain days or partial rain days can have low turnouts, work immediately following rain that day or the day before can still have a good turnout, as many folks won’t be riding anyway. You also can get a better feel for what needs to be done because you can see where the water is going. Also right after a rain or during a light rain the ground is easier to work.

If you do cancel the workday, be sure to send out emails to anyone who RSVP’d to you, and also post on the MORE forums.

First Aid

The Good Samaritan principle prevents someone who has voluntarily helped another in need from being sued for “wrongdoing”. Trail Liaisons are generally protected from liability provided:

- You are reasonably careful;
- You act in “good faith” (not for a reward); and
- You do not provide care beyond your skill level.

If a Trail Liaison decides to help an ill or injured volunteer, you must not leave them until someone with equal or more emergency training takes over – unless the situation threatens your personal safety.

A responsive adult volunteer must agree to receive first aid care. “Expressed Consent” means the volunteer gives his/her permission to receive care. If the volunteer is a minor, ensure that you receive permission from his parent(s) or guardian(s) in advance if they are not present and/or at the scene if they are present. To receive Express Consent, tell the volunteer your level of training and ask if it’s OK to help. “Implied Consent” means that permission to perform first aid care on an unresponsive victim is assumed.

If you do not have training in first aid, or your training certification has lapsed, ask during your initial briefing if any volunteers are certified in first aid or are medical professionals. It’s also a good idea to know the park’s first responder policies and ensure you have cell phone coverage and cell phones at your work day site.

MORE encourages its Trail Liaisons to receive first aid, CPR, and become Wilderness First Responder certified by defraying the costs of and/or scheduling
Trail Work Days

group training when able. If you wish to become certified or re-certified in these areas, contact the Trail Boss to see if funds are available.

Volunteer Hours.

Volunteers are eligible for entry into the 20/25/30 award program (20 hours of trail work, $25 MORE membership and $30 IMBA membership. In addition to feeling good about making the region a better place to mountain bike, their reward also includes their pick of goods from the heavily laden swag table at the MORE annual party,

Volunteers who work more than 3 days also qualify for additional swag.

Submit copies of your trail work sheets (Appendix D) to TrailBoss@more-mtb.org. Remember, the job isn’t finished until the paperwork is complete!

Extra Work Days.

Not all the work a trail may needs can be completed on your designated work day. Also, maybe a storm rolls through your park and suddenly needs some immediate work. Consider posting ad hoc work throughout the year as needed, even if only for only an hour. In order for hours to qualify for 20/25/30, you need to have the Trail Boss post it on the Calendar. Some people are available after work to help, not only weekends. As always, keep track of volunteer hours.

Fellow Trail Liaisons.

The MORE website contains the 2012 Trail Liaison Roster. Your brother and sister Liaisons are an excellent source of information/knowledge.
12 Tips for Successful Trail Work Days
By Pete Webber
Managing Mountain Biking. IMBA, 2007

1. **Be Prepared**

If you’re running a ramshackle show, you won’t get much done. Worse yet, you’ll run the risk of losing volunteers. People will only volunteer their valuable time if they feel their effort is making an impact.

2. **Emphasize Fun**

Trail work is tough, but it should also be fun. Don't take it too seriously, use a little humor, and include a fun element afterward, such as a BBQ, a group ride, or a get-together at the local pub or cafe.

3. **Provide Trained Leaders**

Volunteers need inspiration, encouragement, and direction in order to complete the project efficiently. The leader’s job is to ensure that volunteers are excited about the work, aware of their progress, and focused on the task at hand. Give clear instructions and explain the goals so that volunteers and crew leaders are all on the same page.

4. **Share Knowledge**

Let volunteers know how their work improves the trail. Explain how it aids drainage, restores damage, or improves sustainability. Volunteers perform better work when they understand its purpose, and you may inspire future crew leaders.

5. **Be Safe**

Create an emergency plan prior to your trail work day. Start the morning with a volunteer briefing on tool safety and what to do in an emergency. Make sure leaders know their responsibilities if an accident occurs.

6. **Don’t Waste Time**

People volunteer because they want to do something. Strive to minimize standing-around time and maximize a sense of accomplishment. Your volunteers are sacrificing free time to pitch in, so be sure the project is dialed and the results are tangible. Every once in a while, step back and encourage your volunteers to take a look at what they’ve achieved.

7. **Feed the Troops**

Start with coffee and treats in the morning and keep the chow flowing all day. Recruit a local business to sponsor lunch and don’t forget a variety of cold drinks. Encourage plenty of pit stops to refuel and socialize.

8. **Keep the Workday Short**
12 Tips for Successful Trail Work Days

By Pete Webber
Managing Mountain Biking. IMBA, 2007

Remember, this is a volunteer workday, not a season of Survivor. If possible, avoid scheduling projects during the hottest months. Don’t work for more than four or five hours at a time and be sure to take breaks. You want to be sure you’ll see these folks again...in volunteer mode!

9. Avoid Leaving a Job Half-Finished

Tackle a reasonable project that can be fully completed with the volunteers and tools available. The quality of your finished work is more important than the quantity. The satisfaction of a job well done will bring volunteers back for the next project.

10. Thank and Reward Them

Volunteers need to know their hard work is valued. Thank them at arrival, thank them during the day, and thank them when they leave. List volunteers in newsletters or put photos of works on your website. Hand out t-shirts, prizes, or gag gifts. Consider a reward program with swag incentives for volunteering a certain number of days. Throw a party at the end of the season to recognize volunteers.

11. Record Your Success

Tally the number of volunteers, the total number of hours logged, and the time put into planning. Use a camera to capture “before and after” shots of the work. This information will help in planning future events and quantifies the volunteer service. Logging a few thousand hours worth of trail work speaks volumes about a volunteer group’s commitment to the environment and trails. Some clubs even present symbolic checks in annual ceremonies and invite the media.

12. Stay in Touch

Have volunteers register. Get their names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, so you can keep them involved. This is particularly important for first-timers. New volunteers are likely to return if they leave feeling welcomed and appreciated. Never shame people into coming back.
Resources

Trail Boss.
Kevin Adams Trailboss@more-mtb.com

Virginia Advocate.
Frank Raiti frank.raiti@gmail.com

Maryland Advocate.
Todd Bauer wrench177@gmail.com

District of Columbia Advocate.
Joel Gwadz gwadzilla8@yahoo.com

Volunteer Email.
A great way to keep in touch with volunteers and riders is to create an email list for your park. Ask volunteers if they would like to be added to it.

Tools.
Almost each park in MD we work has a small cache; there are a couple of tool caches in VA, please contact the Trail Boss if you need tools.

Area parks have a centralized numbers you can call to report downed trees

In Montgomery County parks, call the Service Center at 301-670-8080. Leave a message, giving detailed location information, including the nearest mapped access point.

We are working on a MORE tool inventory and will publish just as soon as it is completed.

IMBA.
Read the IMBA book if attempting to work a reroute. MORE is establishing a New Trail Review Team. They will help or do the work of reviewing new trail proposals determining their sustainable design and flow techniques based on IMBA guidelines and philosophy. Sustainable trails will allow MORE's increasing grant awards to increase trail mileage while decreasing trail maintenance. Contact Dan Hudson (hudsond@comcast.net), and Austin Steo (A1s1p1@aol.com) for more information.

If you have ideas for significant trail improvements and reroutes, keep in touch with the MORE Advocates. They may know about larger scale projects already in the works or planned for the future.

IMBA Books.

*Trail Solutions ~IMBA’s Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack*


*Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA’s Guide to Providing Great Riding*

Managing Mountain Biking is IMBA's guide to overcoming user conflict, minimizing environmental impact,
managing risk, and providing technically challenging riding for all levels.


In 2007, two each of these books were purchased for each MORE trail. If you are a new Trail Liaison or a Trail Liaison on a newly designated MORE trail, contact the Trail Boss and we’ll get new books ordered. Note, when you resign as a Trail Liaison, expect the Trail Boss to request the books back.

IMBA DVDs.

Building Mountain Bike Trails Instructional Video

Produced in 2006 by IMBA, the US Forest Service and the Department of Transportation, this DVD is a great introduction to sustainable trail building techniques for volunteers, club leaders, and land managers. FREE (you pay for shipping only).

http://www.imba.com/catalog/dvd-trailbuilding

Also available in nine parts on YouTube.

IMBA Classes.

IMBA led classes offer the opportunity to apply morning book learning to afternoon trail work.

http://www.imba.com/tcc/host-toolkit/TBS

All liaisons should to try and attend IMBA trail workshops when available or set up by MORE whenever possible. If you can’t attend the workshop, check out the nine parts on YouTube.

Subaru/IMBA Trail Crew.

The Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew, on the road since 1997, is IMBA’s grassroots educational program and an authority on sustainable trail building practices. Two teams of professional trail experts travel year-round throughout the United States and beyond, leading trail work sessions, meeting with land managers and working with IMBA-affiliated clubs and the communities they serve to improve mountain biking opportunities.

IMBA Trail Care Crews often work on MORE trail systems. This is a great opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder with some real pros.

MORE Advocacy.

If you have ideas for significant trail improvements and reroutes, keep in touch with the MORE Advocates. They may know about larger scale projects already in the works or planned for the future.
Appendix A – Trail Plan

Every trail MUST have this on file prior to scheduling a work day! Contact the Trail Boss for the electronic version.

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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Trail Plan Template</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Basic Stats</td>
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<td>Liaison Name</td>
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<td>Other Trail User Groups active at park</td>
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<td>Other groups supporting MTB’s?</td>
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<td>Opportunity for expanding MTB trails? (yes, no)</td>
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<td>Access Issues</td>
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<td>Any serious threats to access in 2011?</td>
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<td>Things MORE needs to do to address the problem?</td>
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<td>Specific projects to improve long-term access?</td>
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<td>Funding needed to help guarantee access?</td>
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<td>Any illegal mtb trailbuilding?</td>
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<td>New Trail for 2012</td>
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<td>Miles of new trail approved for 2012</td>
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<td>Funding needed for new trail?</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Any opportunity for Freeriding trails?</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Maintenance and other projects for 2012</td>
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## Appendix A – Trail Plan

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<td>Long-Range Opportunities</td>
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<td>If money was no object, what could we do there</td>
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<td>trails?</td>
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Appendix B – Trail Posters

[Image: colorposterword.doc]
Appendix C – Trail Work Sign In Sheet

Please have each volunteer sign this form. Take a picture of the form (or send a .pdf of it) to TrailBoss@more-mtb.org. Keep the original forms in a safe place for three years.

new_more_waiverv2 new_more_waiverv2
with email.docx with email landscape
Appendix D – Trail Work Log

Volunteer Hours help MORE receive funding for various activities. Additionally, volunteers are eligible for various rewards offered periodically. Ensure your hours and your volunteer receive the credit they deserve by submitting the attached form to the Trail Boss (Trailboss@more-mtb.org) within three days after your Trail Work day.

Trail_Work_Log_LR_
072311.xls