



Adopt a Trailhead Montana

How To Adopt a Trailhead
(Information for interested groups)

Adopt a Trailhead Montana

Noxious weeds grow best in areas that suffer continual disturbance; parking lots and trailheads are prime locations for invasion of noxious weeds. To help limit the spread and reduce further introductions of these invaders, in 2015, the cooperative volunteer program, Adopt a Trailhead Montana or AATM was developed. AATM is a cooperative grassroots program driven by volunteers that is designed to help protect Montana from further spread of noxious weeds into pristine wilderness and back country areas. The goal of AATM is to encourage volunteer groups to take an active role in managing noxious weed infestations at trailheads while engaging the public to do their part to reduce spread by cleaning their gear before and after recreating on trails. Adoption of trailheads is open to any group willing to perform annual maintenance at the adopted trailhead. Once a trailhead has been adopted, an educational boot brush kiosk is placed at the trailhead alerting recreationists of the noxious weed species that occur on or around the trailhead; the goal of the sign and boot brush are to encourage trail users to clean their shoes before and/or after hiking, raise awareness about noxious weeds, and to showcase simple steps to reduce the spread while people brush shoes clean.

Volunteer Expectations

The Adopt-A-Trailhead program relies heavily on the dedication and involvement of volunteer groups from across the state. Groups interested in participating need to be organized and have good support from their membership for an AATM project to be successful! Membership of the adopting group must be willing to perform removal of noxious weeds at least once per calendar year at the site selected. The group must also be willing to provide details and information about annual maintenance to the Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign (MNWEC) so that information such as pounds of weeds removed, volunteer numbers, etc. can be tracked. As a “thank you” and recognition for the hard work and dedication to the program, all adopting groups get a sign with their group name on it placed on the kiosk of the trailhead they have adopted.

Steps to becoming an AATM volunteer group:

- 1.) Select a trailhead of interest.
- 2.) Get group approval and support for participating in the project. The more people on board, the better the project will be.

- 3.) Work with land management officials or the local entity where the trailhead is located to identify a place for the kiosk, select species to be put on signage, to set up the annual weed pull day, discuss various management options (is the entity “okay” with volunteers spraying, hand pulling, or releasing biological control agents? Each land management agency is different and different management strategies may apply depending on the species identified and the location).
- 4.) Select a day that works best for group members to meet and perform removal of noxious weeds at the selected trailhead maintenance.
- 5.) The initial “kickoff” event typically runs 2-2.5 hours. Volunteers arrive, a weed identification is given, the group divides in two groups—half helps install the kiosk while the other half performs weed control (hand pulling, herbicide application, etc.) Once the kiosk is installed, the group then poses for a group photo with bagged weeds, weeds can be weighed for an overall total of pounds removed, and then the day is concluded by the county weed district disposing of the weeds that were bagged and removed. Annual maintenance is performed yearly and the adopting group reports information about their event back to the MNWEC for programmatic tracking.

Partner roles & responsibilities:

- Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA)
 - Will provide boot brush, kiosk base and recognition signage.
 - Will complete sign design, provide all parties involved with a draft for approval.
 - Will provide gloves and bags for initial kiosk installation day/weed pull.
- Adopting group
 - Provide 4x4x12’ treaded post for the kiosk
 - Provide educational signage (in cooperation with MDA)
 - Provide bags and gloves for yearly maintenance.
 - Provide tools for initial kiosk installation.
- County Weed District (If applicable)
 - Provide programmatic support to the adopting group; including weed education presentation at initial kiosk installation/weed pull day, plant identification, spray.
 - Help dispose of bagged weeds from annual maintenance activities.
- Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management/Other agencies (If applicable)
 - Help select (4) species to feature on sign.
 - Provide programmatic support to both the MNWEC and the adopting group.

Kiosk Installation Guide

AATM Kiosk Materials:

- MDA
 - Black powder coated exhibit base and boot brush
 - This comes with the hardware for installation so no other screws, nails, etc. are necessary for installation of the kiosk.
 - 1-6"x8" DiBond vinyl recognition sign
 - 2-2" all-purpose wood screws (only necessary for the recognition sign)

- Adopting group
 - 18x24" DiBond vinyl educational sign
 - 1-12' 4x4 treated wood post
 - This will need to be cut in half, so you have 2-6' 4x4 posts. The end of each 6' post will need to be cut at a 45-degree angle so that the black powder coated exhibit base will slide onto it.

Other tools you'll need:

- Gloves
- Shovels
- Post hole digger of some sort
- Allen wrench set
- Various tools including:
 - Drill & multiple drill bits (holes need to be drilled in posts for bolts to attach sign to),
 - A hammer (just in case...)
 - Level
 - Ratchet & multiple sized ratchet bit set
 - Concrete (not necessary, but some groups have installed with concrete. Pre-approval from landowners is required.)

For project installation you will need all the above-mentioned items. Kiosk installation is relatively easy. However, **IMPORTANT NOTE:** keep vinyl signs always face up before they are installed into the kiosk base. The vinyl *can* get scratched if signs are laid face down.

Prior to the project installation, cut at 45-degree angles at one end of each of the posts (2 – 6'). If this does not occur, additional items such as a saw will be necessary at the kiosk site the day of the installation. Another installation tip: pre-drill the holes for the exhibit base on the 45-degree end of the posts. It is recommended to wait to drill the holes for installation of the boot brush until the day of installation to accommodate sign height (see Step 4).

STEP 1: Determine where the kiosk will be placed.

Work with the representative of the land management agency that oversees the lands where the kiosk is to be placed to determine where they would like the sign placed. Most kiosks have been installed next to existing signs on federal, state, and city lands. Ideally, the kiosk would be put somewhere visible and where it is going to be used, and next to existing informational signage/kiosks is a prime location for AATM signage.

STEP 2: Dig a hole for the 4x4 posts.

The depth of the hole will largely depend upon the type of ground in which the kiosk is to be installed. Hole depth can range from 24-36” deep for kiosks. Ideally the depth from the bottom of the hole to level ground would be 36” deep; however, in rocky or extremely hard soils, the hole can be 24” deep. The deeper the hole, the sturdier the kiosk will be. The kiosk posts need to be deep enough in the ground so that the boot brush station holds up to repetitive usage and constant trail user contact. Hole width needs to accommodate the width of the kiosk and the 4x4 treated posts, usually about 24”.

STEP 3: Test the height of the kiosk.

Clear dirt and rocks from the bottom of the hole and make sure it is semi-level so that the flat end of the posts rests level on the ground in the hole. Now, test the height of the kiosk by sliding the exhibit base onto the 45-degree angled posts while they are in the hole. By doing this, you are ensuring that the finished product will not be too tall for users.

If after the kiosk has been inserted onto the posts, it is still too tall for practical usage, dig the hole deeper or trim the posts if ground is difficult to dig. Repeat this process until the hole is deep enough to make the kiosk a usable height.

STEP 4: Boot Brush Installation

Next, measure where the boot brush assembly should be installed before starting to backfill the hole and packing in dirt. To do this you will:

- Slide boot brush assembly onto the posts. Hold about 2” above where the ground will be leveled after the hole is filled and mark where the boot brush will go.
- Remove the posts one last time and drill the holes where you have marked.
- Place the posts back in the hole in the ground after the boot brush assembly holes have been drilled.
- With the exhibit base on the top of both 45-degree angled posts, have someone hold exhibit base and posts steady while another begins backfilling the hole with dirt making sure to set any large rocks that came out of the hole off to the side. Do not put large rocks back into the hole as they will cause air pockets and not allow the dirt to be packed tightly around the posts, causing the kiosk to not be securely installed into the ground. (Only use concrete if pre-approved by the land management agency).

- Once the posts are secured into the ground, remove the exhibit base and install the boot brush. Tighten bolts to ensure that the boot brush assembly will stay securely attached to the posts.

STEP 5: Secure exhibit base

Now, secure the exhibit base onto the 45-degree angled ends of the posts. Make sure holes are pre-drilled for hardware installation! Slide the base onto the angled end of the posts, line up the bolt holes, tighten bolts. Note: All bolt heads (for both the boot brush assembly and the exhibit base) should be on the outsides of the posts and all nuts should be on the inside of the posts for safety.

STEP 6: Install sign in exhibit base.

Use an Allen wrench to remove two bolts on the backside of the top of the exhibit base (these bolts may be hard to loosen due to the powder coat). Remove the top piece of angle iron and gently slide the vinyl sign down into the exhibit base with the vinyl side facing out. Replace the top piece of angle iron, insert bolts and tighten the nuts.

STEP 7: Install recognition sign (6" x 8").

Place this sign on the front left post, under the exhibit base (make sure it is visible when you step back 2-3' from the sign). Level and install this sign using the two 2" wood screws.

STEP 8: Complete Installation

Use large flat rocks in the area or rocks dug from the hole around the base of the kiosk and posts. If no rocks, leave the kiosk as is making sure that the ground has been well compacted around the posts. Installation is complete! Take photos and record kiosk location with GPS coordinates.



BEST-EXHIBITS
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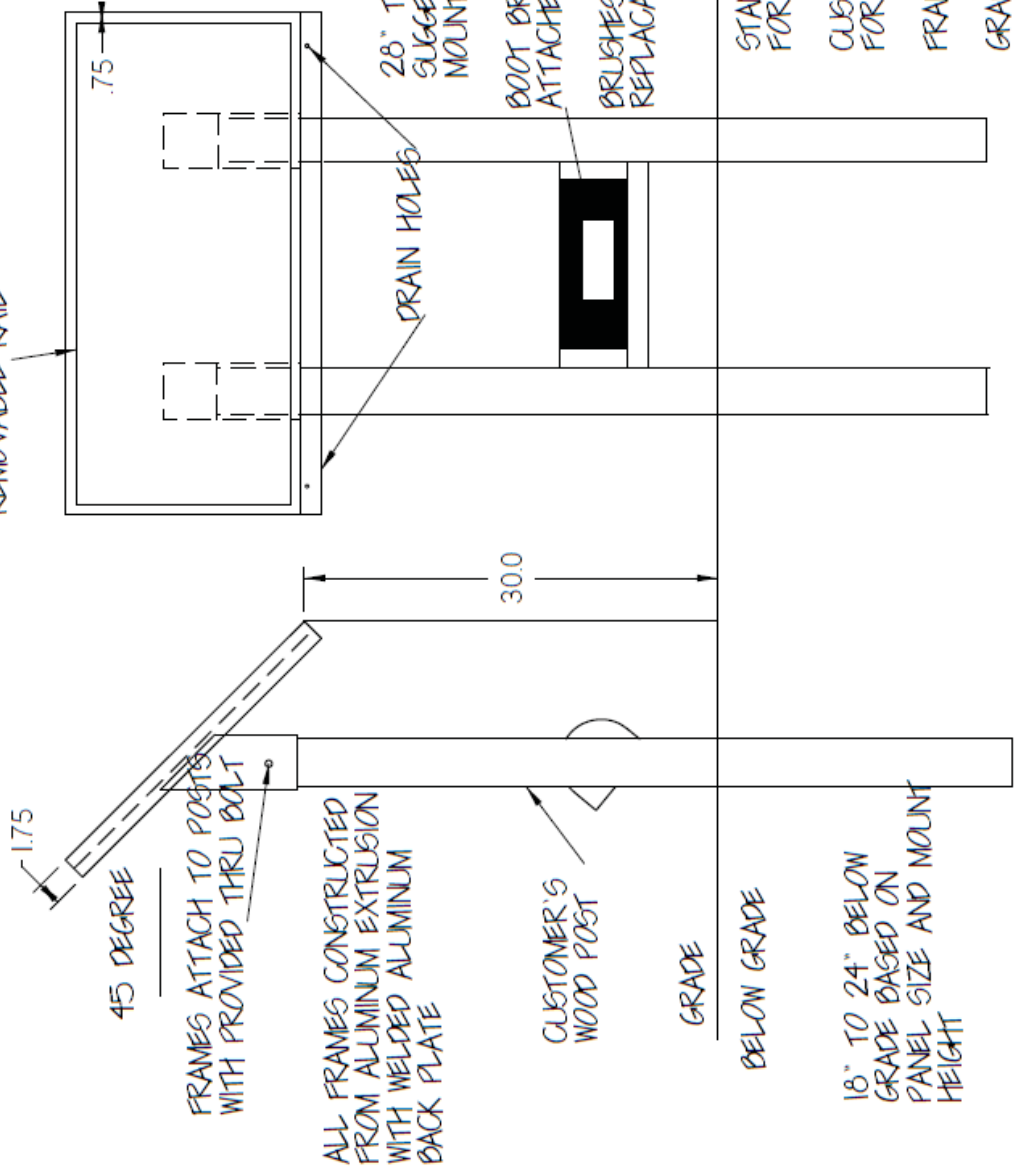
BEST-EX POST MOUNT SIGN FRAME WITH BOOT BRUSH ASSEMBLY

ATTACHES TO CUSTOMER SUPPLIED WOOD 4"X4" POST

FOR GRAPHIC PANEL 18" H X 24" W
 PROVIDED BY OTHERS

OFTEN USED FOR THE EDUCATION AND
 CONTROL OF GARLIC MUSTARD SEED

REMOVABLE RAIL



45 DEGREE

FRAMES ATTACH TO POSTS
 WITH PROVIDED THRU BOLT

ALL FRAMES CONSTRUCTED
 FROM ALUMINUM EXTRUSION
 WITH WELDED ALUMINUM
 BACK PLATE

CUSTOMER'S
 WOOD POST

GRADE

BELOW GRADE

18" TO 24" BELOW
 GRADE BASED ON
 PANEL SIZE AND MOUNT
 HEIGHT

28" TO 32"
 SUGGESTED
 MOUNT HEIGHT

DRAIN HOLES

BOOT BRUSH ASSEMBLY
 ATTACHES TO POSTS

BRUSHES ARE
 REPLACABLE WHEN WORN

STANDARD FRAME CONSTRUCTION
 FOR MAX 1/8" THICK PANEL

CUSTOM FRAME CONSTRUCTION
 FOR PANELS UP TO 1/4" THICK

FRAMES SIZED TO FIT GRAPHIC PANEL
 GRAPHIC PANEL PRODUCED BY OTHERS

FRAMES ATTACH TO WOOD POST
 WITH THRU BOLTS - PROVIDED

STANDARD POWDER COAT
 COLOR BLACK TEXTURE

FRAME EDGE WILL COVER
 5/8" MARGIN ALL EDGES OF
 PANEL