

Tip Sheet

Here are some of the most important things to remember when preparing for and participating in trail work and other outdoor stewardship work events in arid regions.

What to Wear and Bring

- Enthusiasm
- Work boots, preferably those with hard toes. In practice, many volunteers wear ordinary hiking shoes or good running shoes. Sandals and street shoes are unacceptable.
- Work gloves
- Sun screen, hat, long sleeves and long pants. Long is to protect from the sun and the many thorn-laden plants and trees of arid regions.
- Clothing appropriate to weather conditions (rain, cold, layers for changing temperatures).
- Plenty of water and salty snacks. When it is hot you may need to drink one quart of water per hour.
- Hard hats are required by some land managers, are generally recommended, and are essential — along with eye protection — when cutting limbs above shoulder height.
- Appropriate means for disposing of or bagging and removing personal waste.
- Your *Leave No Trace* trash bag to carry out any trash you find.

What to Leave at Home

- Leave pets and very small children at home or under supervision at a good distance from the work area.

Be Mindful of your Environment and your Self

- Start work as early in the day as possible and stop when it gets hot. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are very serious threats when doing manual labor in warm weather.
- Pace yourself. If you do not regularly engage in manual labor, trail work can tire you out fast.
- When lifting, bend your knees and lift using the power of your legs.
- If you travel to a site that is several thousand feet higher than where you live, allow for the slowing effects this will have and drink extra water.
- Strong monsoon storms can come up quickly and are associated with lightning and flash floods. Never cross a flooded wash on foot or in a vehicle. Wait until the surge passes.
- Be wary of thorn-laden plants — they are prepared to strike when you least expect it (as when you become very focused on your work).
- Dead trees may fall at any time. There are large numbers of beetle infested, unstable pine trees in the West.
- Watch out for poisonous desert creatures. Be cautious around undercut rocks, fallen timber and deep shady bushes.
 - Scorpions are often uncovered while digging and moving rock or

dead fall. Be sure to wear gloves, then tip the rock and look underneath before lifting.

- Tarantulas might be scary looking, but are generally not dangerous.
- Rattlesnakes are normally not a problem because they prefer to avoid you even more than you want to avoid them.
- Steep slopes sometimes do not offer secure footing and rocks can be easily dislodged. Avoid working below others on a steep slope.

When Handling Tools

- Carry only one tool in each hand at your side — never over your shoulder. Sharp and heavier tools should be carried on your downhill side.
- Keep about six feet distance between you and others when carrying tools to a work site.
- Store tools not in use on the uphill side, off of the trail. Make sure that rock bars and buckets are placed in a stable, horizontal location.

Working Around Others

- Keep a generous distance between yourself and your co-workers.
- Call out “coming through” as you approach others who are engaged in work so they may stop and allow you to safely pass.