

Landowner Questions About
The Georges Highland Path

Q. What is my liability if I let the hiking path cross my land?

A. Virtually none. (See enclosed brochure for additional information.)

Q. Who will take care of the path?

A. The trail over your land will be cared for by one of our "adopters." An adopter, or steward, is a person who has agreed to hike a section of the path on a regular basis to see that the trail is kept clean, that minor blowdowns are removed, and that agreements with the landowner are being observed. Adopters have no authority but will report problems, human or natural, to the Trail Manager.

Q. Will I have any say as to where the path will actually go?

A. Yes, we will select a proposed route based on connections with Highland Path locations on your neighbors' land, with consideration for your privacy, esthetics, and with regard for proper trail design as it relates to erosion, fragile areas, etc. Before any trail clearing begins, we will go over the proposed route with you and make any adjustments that you wish. As the uses of your land change in the future, the location of the path can be changed to accommodate your needs.

Q. How much cutting of trees will be involved?

A. Very little. The Highland Path is meant for walking, so the trail will be relatively narrow and go around trees rather than require their removal. Cutting will be confined mainly to brush and deadfalls. Large blowdowns will be bypassed. No chainsaws will be used in construction or maintenance unless authorized by the landowner. Trail blazes will be painted on trees rather than cut into them.

Q. Will camping be allowed?

A. Camping will be allowed only if okayed by the landowner and then only on approved sites. If landowners want to open their land to overnight use, we will recommend that camping be permitted only in remote areas that require a long access hike. This will discourage evening partying at campsites by non-trail users.

Q. Can the path across my land be limited to hikers only?

A. Yes. The path will be designed specifically for hiking and, where suitable terrain exists, in a way that discourages use by any sort of a vehicle. Signs at trailheads will advise that the path is for foot traffic only.

Q. Can I still forbid hunting on my land?

A. Yes. Your permission is limited to persons hiking the Georges Highland Path. You can forbid other uses, such as hunting, snowmobiling, fishing, or swimming. We will note your preferences in our guidebook and place signs at the entrance of your land, if you so wish.

Q. How binding is my agreement with the Georges River Land Trust?

A. While we welcome long-term agreements for reasons of stability, we are perfectly willing to settle for a handshake and a simple letter of understanding. This gives you, the landowner, full freedom to control the use your land. We do ask that if you choose to cancel the agreement, you will make an effort to help us find an alternative route nearby so as to assure continuity of the path.

Q. If I have already granted permission for snowmobilers to use a trail across my property, can you use the same trail instead of making one of your own?

A. Yes. We welcome the chance to work with organized snowmobilers, horseback riders, mountain bicyclists and others who seek permission to use private land for recreational activities. There might be reasons for incompatibility with other users, however, in which event we might want to discuss alternatives with you.

Q. Will the path be used year round?

A. We hope so. Other than hikers, winter users might include snowshoers and cross country skiers. Our goal is to provide a path devoted to human power.

Q. Will users be wandering across my property to gain access to the trail?

A. We will make every effort possible to prevent this from happening by asking hikers to enter the trail at designated access points, which will be specifically chosen and be indicated by signs. In addition, strong emphasis will be placed on the necessity for users to accept an ethical responsibility to the land and landowners and to care for the trail. Our publications and signs will stress this need for personal stewardship if the Georges Highland Path is to be a success. This appeal directly to the individual has worked successfully on other trails.

Q. Why should I open a portion of my land to public use?

A. A major goal of the Georges River Land Trust is to help maintain the beauty and natural health of the lands within the watershed. The Georges Highland Path is designed to take people at a walking pace into some of the prettiest places in the watershed in order to build their appreciation for this magnificent asset so close to home. In sharing a small part of your land with others, you will help strengthen each person's resolve to care for this region we all love and admire.

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