

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc.
**Guidance Document for Obtaining and Implementing Trail Blazes and
Signage**

November 10, 2024

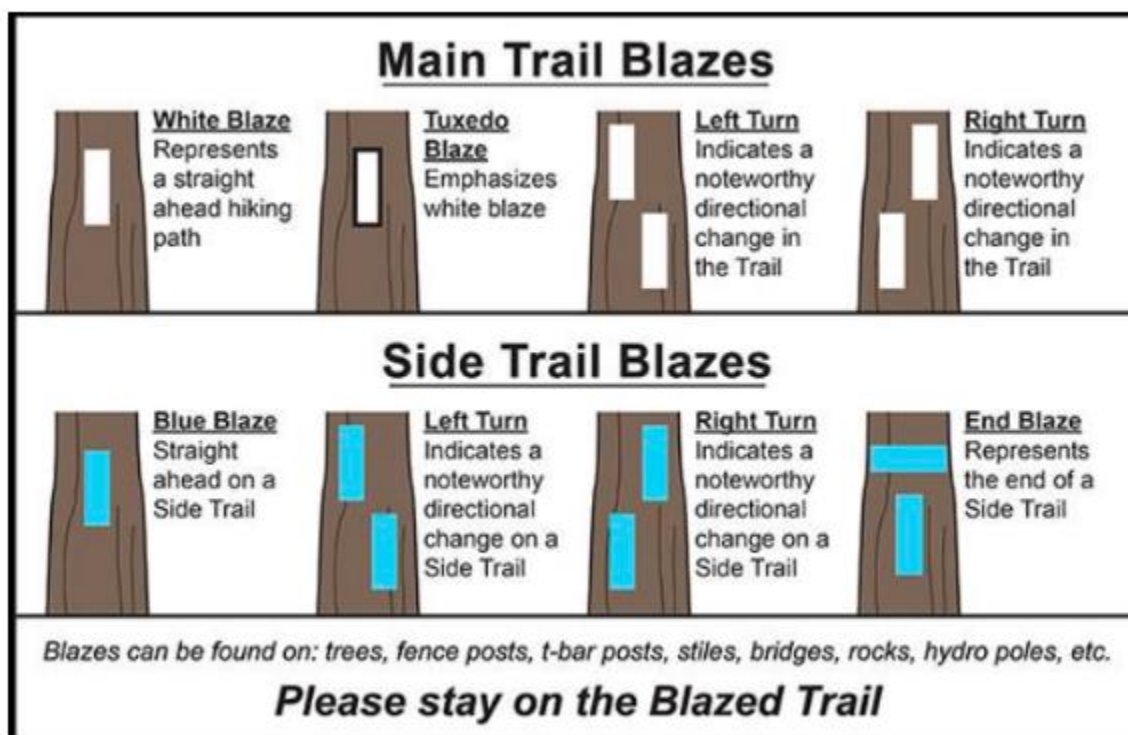


**Good blazing and signage make navigation and wayfinding
worry-free for hikers.**

1.0 Trail Blazes

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail is marked with white (main trail) or blue (side trail) blazes indicating the direction of travel or change in direction. Below is the example from the GHTA website.

The blazes are a white (main trail) or blue (side trail) strip, approximately 5 cm wide and 15 cm high



(2" x 6"), placed on trees, posts and rocks. Two blazes, one slightly above the other and to the side, indicate a turn, with the upper blaze telling the direction of the turn. Turns may also be indicated by the Ganaraska Hiking Trail logo, in which case you follow the direction of the arrow. Blazes can be in the form of paint, vinyl strips, metal or wood. In the Wilderness Section, trail markers may also be in the form of rock cairns, flagging tape or painted markers on rocks; and a change in direction may be indicated by a painted 'dog leg' on a flat rock or by a double blaze. A branch side trail from a blue blazed trail (for instance, a trail leading to a camp site) will be blazed yellow.

1.1 Placement of Blazes

The preference is to blaze trees on posts/fences/back of road signs if permitted by land/property owners. A metal or wooden post can also be used and either painted, or a vinyl or a metal blaze can be affixed. In areas where the grass/vegetation is high a piece of wood, approximately 20 cm (8") long can be added to the top of a post to provide better visibility for the blaze. To add visibility anywhere, a Tuxedo Blaze can be created by placing the blaze on a black background.

Blazes should be 5 cm by 15 cm (2" x 6") in size, and mounted 1.5 to 1.8 metres (5-6 feet) above the ground. If a blaze is to be mounted on wood, the wood should be durable for outdoor conditions (eg, deck board).

- Choose spots that have good visibility from a distance, considering spring/summer foliage. When standing beside a blaze, you should be able to see the next one.

- Where the trail is obvious and continues without any side trails, it is not necessary to have the next blaze visible from the current one. To avoid signage clutter, blaze on an intermittent basis.
- At junctions, where multiple trails emanate, ensure it is clear where the trail continues. Place a Confirmation Blaze in clear sight near the start of the trail on the other side of the junction (eg 5 cm x 15 cm (2"x6") logo blaze).
- Include a blaze shortly after a turn blaze to assure hikers they are still on the trail.
- Avoid blazing dead or fallen trees. Look for good sized trees with smooth/dark bark.
- Depending on the situation you can blaze the same tree/post for each direction of travel; however ensure there is no potential for confusion. The picture to the right is a good example of a confusing turn blaze as multiple trails emanate from the post. It is unclear if the hiker should turn left or right when approaching from this angle.
- When a trail is discontinued or redirected, be sure to remove blazes – either paint over with black paint or take down posts.



1.2 Painted Blazes

Where possible blazes should be painted rather than use metal/vinyl signs.

- White latex semi-gloss exterior paint should be used (easy to clean up with soap/water, dries quickly and is more environmentally friendly than oil-based paints).
- Use a 1 ½ or 2" paint brush and a squeeze bottle (i.e. empty ketchup, salad dressing bottle) as you can squeeze a small amount of paint on your brush and it is less likely to spill paint than when using a paint pot.
- Side trail blazes are painted blue; try to match the colour sample below as much as possible (see larger sample at end of document with RGB values).

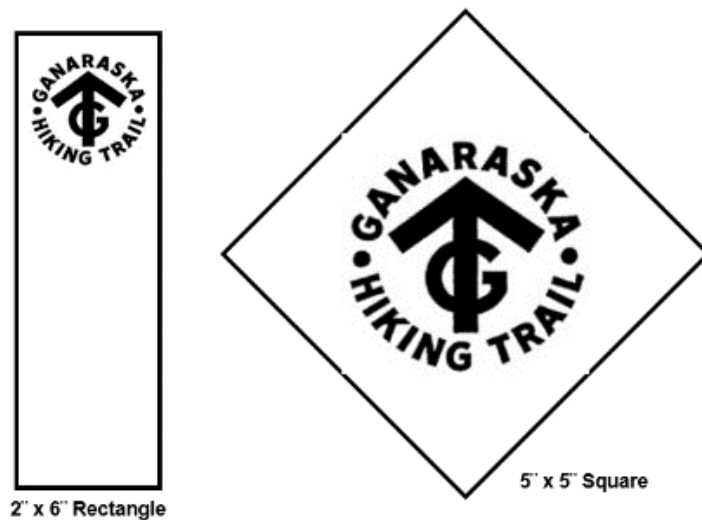


- Paint in an upward stroke direction so that any drips fall onto the blaze rather than run below.
- A scraper may be required to clean the surface before painting, especially on rough bark.
- Blazes should be inspected on a regular basis to see if they need to be repainted.

1.3 Metal Blazes

There are two types of metal blazes. These should be used in the situations noted below, rather than along the full length of the trail.

The blazes are constructed out of 3mm ACP (aluminium PVC composite panel), and the graphics are printed on vinyl film with a gloss clear overlamine. Drill holes are provided in the top/bottom centre.



The 5 cm x 15 cm (2"x6") logo blaze is used along the trail where there is a junction with multiple trails and we want to make it highly visible where the Ganaraska Hiking Trail continues.

The 12.7 cm x 12.7 cm (5"x5") logo blaze is used to help identify the trail head in large areas such as parking lots or where there is a large gap in the trail (eg railway crossings) and it is helpful to identify where the trail continues before hikers cross the tracks.

Placement should be 1.5 - 1.8 metres (5-6 feet) above the ground so that it can be seen as one approaches.

- If mounting on a tree:
 - o Ensure the area is not subject to logging; in which case mounting should be done on a wood or metal post (eg, we cannot use nails/screws on trees in Simcoe County Forests). Note however, some county forests may have composite nails that can be used in areas where logging takes place.
 - o Ensure there is some slack left for the tree to grow. Signs should be checked yearly to ensure the slack is maintained. The advantage of screws (vs nails) is that they can be loosened as the tree grows and it makes it harder for the sign to be removed by vandals.
 - o You may need to drill a pilot hole in the tree to facilitate mounting the signs.
- If no tree is available then use a wood or metal post (a piece of wood can be added to the metal post as an extension if necessary). The blaze should be 1.5 to 1.8 metres (5-6 feet) above the ground so that it can be seen as one approaches. Ensure the post is driven into the ground far enough to prevent being removed or turned.

1.4 Ordering Metal Blazes

Club Presidents/Trail Directors will receive a request to assess their needs in September and submit orders by October 1st so that budgets can be determined. Blazes will be produced centrally and distributed at the AGM. Left overs will be held in inventory and arrangements can be made for clubs to obtain more during the year if necessary. An order form can be found at the end of this document.

2.0 Trail Section Junction Signs

To help promote the Ganaraska Hiking Trail and identify its various Sections, it would be helpful to have Section Junction signs placed along the trail.

Club Presidents and Trail Directors will have the opportunity to order Section Junction signs for their portion of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail. Order and installation instructions are below.

The signs will include the Name of the Section and direction of travel. Below are rough mockups of how the signs would look.



Sign specifications:

- Blue background (RGB 0,83,168. Hex #0053A8)
- 1/2" white border, white text, upper case. Include GHTA logo.
- Rounded edges and 49cm X 16cm (19.25" X 6.25")
- Holes predrilled at top/bottom in the centre
- URL added to link to main GHTA webpage where hikers can access maps, join or donate.

2.1 Ordering Signs for your Section

Signs will be ordered and produced centrally to ensure consistency and possibly save on costs. Club Presidents/Trail Directors should order for their section only; however, placement of the signs should be co-ordinated with the adjoining Section Trail Directors at all junction points. Club Presidents/Trail Directors will receive a request to assess their needs in September and submit orders by October 1st so that budgets can be determined, and signs can be produced in time for distribution at the AGM which is usually in April. An order form can be found at the end of this document. When ordering signs be sure to indicate which way the Direction of Travel arrow should point. See Order form at the end of this document for details.

2.2 Installing Section Junction Signs

A set of signs should be placed at the junction of each trail section so that they can be read regardless of which direction you come from. Ensure co-ordination with adjoining section Trail Directors for placement.

Placement should be 1.5 to 1.8 metres (5-6 feet) above the ground so that it can be seen as one approaches.

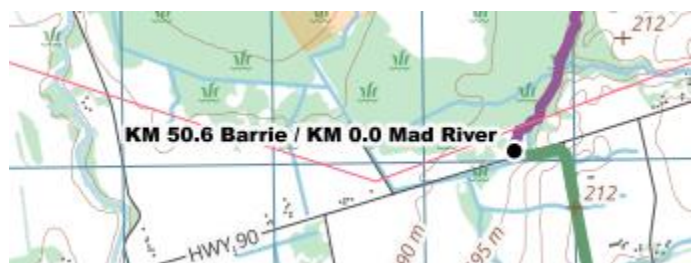
- If mounting on a tree:
 - o Ensure the area is not subject to logging; in which case mounting should be done on a metal or wooden post (eg, cannot use nails/screws on trees in Simcoe County Forests). Note however, some county forests may have composite nails that can be used in areas where logging takes place.
 - o Ensure there is some slack left for the tree to grow. Signs should be checked yearly to ensure the slack is maintained. The advantage of screws (vs nails) is that they can be loosened as the tree grows and it makes it harder for the sign to be removed by vandals.
 - o You may need to drill a pilot hole in the tree to facilitate mounting the signs.
- If no tree is available, then use a wood or metal post (with a piece of wood as an extension if necessary) to ensure the sign is 1.5 to 1.8 metres (5-6 feet) above the ground so that it can be seen as one approaches. Ensure the post is driven into the ground far enough to prevent being removed or turned.

2.3 Continuous junction sign placement

This is a situation where one trail section ends and another starts. Usually this occurs at an intersection, parking lot etc, rather than in the middle of a trail. In this case signage should indicate the section name, direction of travel and should be visible from both directions.

The signs can be placed back-to-back on one side of the junction, and repeated on the other side, for example:

- If on the Mad River section and entering Barrie, the Barrie Section sign would be facing you and the Mad River sign would be on the reverse
- If on the Barrie section and entering Mad River, the Mad River sign would be facing you and the Barrie sign would be on the reverse.



2.4 T- junction signage placement

The Barrie/Oro-Medonte signs below are a good example where one Section joins along the length of another section (vs one Section stops and the next section starts). In this case arrows should indicate both directions of travel for the trail that runs along the top of the “T” (eg Barrie in this example). The trail that joins at this intersection should have an arrow indicating the direction of travel (eg, Oro-Medonte in this example). As a suggestion, these signs can be placed together on the same tree where you are approaching the Oro-Medonte section as is the case in Copeland Forest. Actual placement can vary depending on the surrounding area. Key consideration is visibility for hikers.



On the opposite side of this intersection, the Barrie Section sign should be repeated as is. However, the Oro-Medonte sign may need to be modified so that the arrow points in the direction of travel. Placement of the signs will depend on what is available in the area and visibility.



3.0 Specialty Signs

In some sections of the trail, signs can be used to identify Private Property Boundaries or Land Acknowledgement.

3.1 Private property

Below is an example of a sign indicating Private Property. A supply of generic signs (ie, without the club address) will be created and held in inventory for club use. If the Land Owner requires unique content, please submit request to signage@gha.ca for approval. There is no need to replace existing signs if they are in good condition.

Signs will be constructed on durable material that will withstand weather conditions. Vendors will have different options available such as the following:

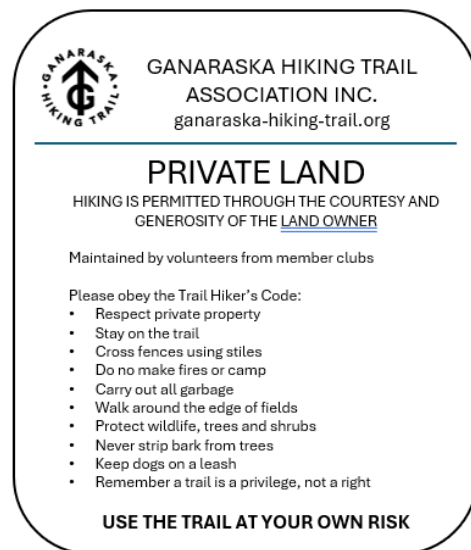
- 1/16th inch (1.6mm) aluminum
- Trustock - used for some of the existing trail start/end signs
- 3mm ACP (aluminium PVC composite panel) – used for the metal blazes
- graphics are printed generally printed on vinyl film with a gloss clear overlamine.
- Size should be 30 cm (12”) square with rounded corners and drill holes placed either at each corner or top/bottom in the middle depending on how it will be mounted
- Include the Ganaraska Hiking Trail logo and URL

Placement of the sign should be discussed and approved with the Land Owner.

Club Presidents/Trail Directors will receive a request to assess their needs in September and submit orders by October 1st so that budgets can be determined. Signs will be produced centrally and distributed at the AGM. Leftovers will be held in inventory and arrangements can be made for clubs to obtain more during the year if necessary. An order form can be found at the end of this document.



Sample of existing sign which includes club address



Sample of generic sign

3.2 Land acknowledgement

The Land Acknowledgement sign is posted to mark a spot on the trail where hikers may reflect on First Nations People. Examples of current placement include parking lots, junctions and significant vistas (see below).

Sign locations must be approved by all stakeholders. The number and location of the sign(s) should be a collaborative choice among the local club members with the local club president making the decision. Clubs are encouraged to seek assistance from the Indigenous Engagement Committee by contacting the signage co-ordinator (see contact info below).

The Land Acknowledgement sign is based on the 12" x12" private land sign standards and the content is approved by the GHTA Executive. The official text is archived by the association secretary and may be obtained via the Indigenous Engagement Committee.

The Indigenous Engagement Committee produces and holds a supply of these signs. To obtain signs and additional Information, please reach out to signage@gha.ca and complete the order form found at the end of this document.



3.3 Miscellaneous custom signs

There may be instances where clubs will need a specialty sign which has not been covered in this document. In this case, please reach out to signage@gha.ca and provide as much detail as possible (eg, type of sign, size, quantity). We can then work together to find a solution to meet your needs. Note that budget approval will be required once costs are determined.

Metal Blaze Order Form

Name of Trail Section _____



2' x 6" Rectangle



5' x 5' Square

Size/format	# Required
2"x 6" Rectangle	
5"x 5" Square	

Trail Director

Name _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Address to send signs _____

Complete form and email to **signage@gha.ca**

Question? Please reach out to signage@gha.ca

Trail Junction Signs Order Form

Name of Trail Section _____

Check all that apply	Type of Sign
☐	
☐	
☐	
☐	
☐	
☐	

Trail Director

Name _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Address to send signs _____

Complete form and email to signage@gha.ca

Question? Please reach out to signage@gha.ca

Private Property Order Form

Name of Trail Section _____

Number of signs _____



GANARASKA HIKING TRAIL
ASSOCIATION INC.
ganaraska-hiking-trail.org

PRIVATE LAND

HIKING IS PERMITTED THROUGH THE COURTESY AND
GENEROSITY OF THE LAND OWNER

Maintained by volunteers from member clubs

Please obey the Trail Hiker's Code:

- Respect private property
- Stay on the trail
- Cross fences using stiles
- Do no make fires or camp
- Carry out all garbage
- Walk around the edge of fields
- Protect wildlife, trees and shrubs
- Never strip bark from trees
- Keep dogs on a leash
- Remember a trail is a privilege, not a right

USE THE TRAIL AT YOUR OWN RISK

Trail Director

Name _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Address to send signs _____

Complete form and email to signage@gha.ca

Question? Please reach out to signage@gha.ca

Land Acknowledgment Order Form

Name of Trail Section _____

Number of signs _____



Trail Director

Name _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Address to send signs _____

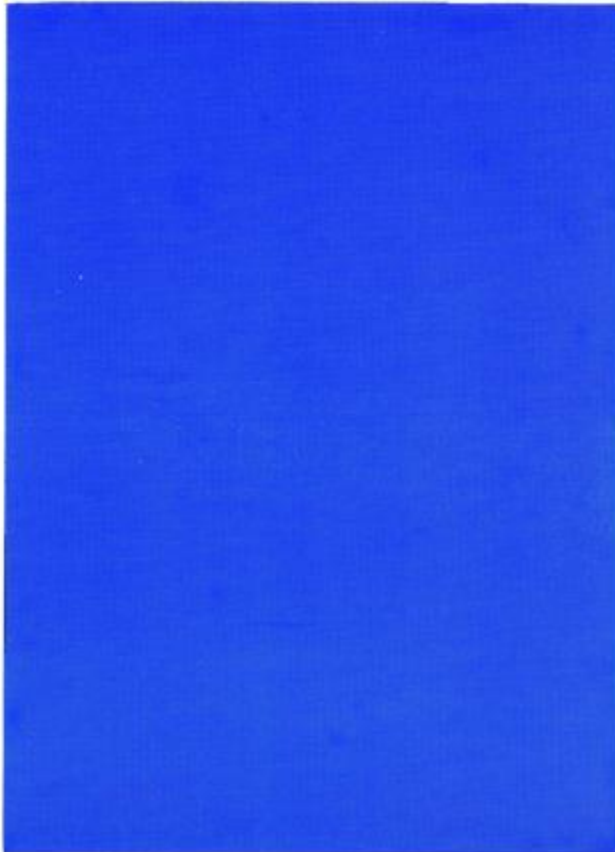
Complete form and email to signage@gha.ca

Question? Please reach out to signage@gha.ca

Blue Blaze Colour Swatch

Side Trail blue

Below is the colour used for side trail signage. Take this swatch with you when purchasing paint. Spread a sample of the paint on a piece of white card and let it dry to see if it matches. Keep trying until you match or come as close as possible. The type of paint you need is exterior latex, semi-gloss.



Red

38

Green

77

Blue

238

Hex

264dee