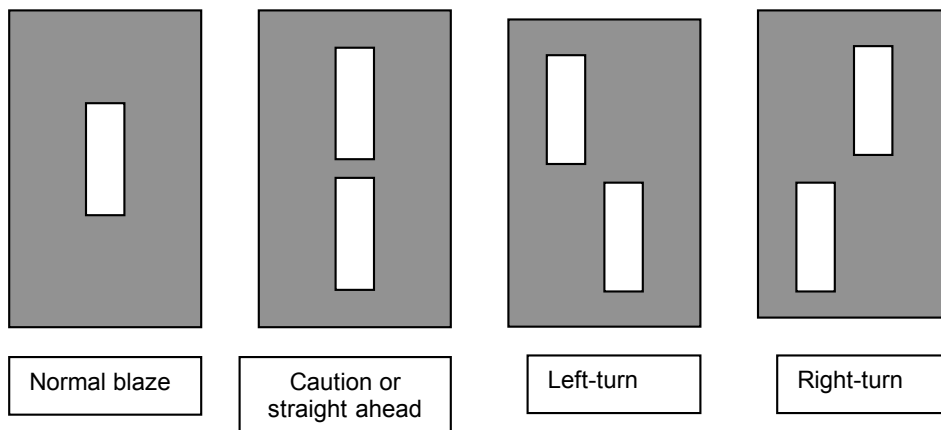


Temporary Indicators to mark the East Coast Greenway

1. Painted blazes for temporary use to indicate the ECG Route

The Alliance recommends that all designated sections of the ECG be signed with approved ECG trail markers. However, along the interim, on-road portions of our route, where trail markers have not yet been funded; for temporary detours or when markers are missing, white, painted blazes (2" X 6") can be used. This system of marking the trail is voluntary and is suggested for use when trail markers can not be utilized. No other temporary painted, stenciled or manufactured marks, symbols or signs are authorized, except as specified in this Signage policy.

The white 2" x 6" blaze is used to mark the Appalachian Trail and therefore is best known by trail users along the East Coast. This similarity will also reinforce the ECG as the "urban Appalachian Trail". The same blazing convention will be utilized. A single blaze will provide the user confirmation or reassurance of being on the proper route. A double blaze, one above the other, will indicate caution or continue straight ahead. Offset double blazes will indicate a change of direction (the upper blaze being in the direction of the turn).



2. Background

Painted blazes have been used on long distance recreational trails for many years. Painted blazes come in different colors and shapes (so that a given trail can be distinguished in areas that are dense with crossing trails). Blazes do not incorporate words; they are simple geometric shapes that can be easily replicated or for use when detours or other temporary relocations are required. The first long distance trail in the US, Vermont's Long Trail, as well as the Appalachian Trail use the now familiar 2" by 6" white paint mark. The Appalachian Trail blaze shape and blazing convention has been adopted by many hiking and equestrian trails (e.g. the Highlands horse trail in Virginia).

Trail blazes will be convenient for temporary trail sections and road sections. The majority of blazes are found on telephone poles but a significant number are also found on trees,

guardrails, bridge abutments and even on the pavement. When the trail route is changed the white blazes are simply painted over with brown or neutral colored paint. Trail blazes will conflict less with highway signage regulations than trail markers on interim road sections of the ECG (although signs are preferred). Mounting a marker or sign on a telephone pole or a bridge usually requires the approval of an organization other than the trail manager. The small white blaze is understated and hardly noticed. Once your eyes are trained to pick up white blazes they are easy to spot amidst the cacophony of signs in the typical suburban or city landscape.

3. Before starting to blaze the route

Trail blazes are easy to produce and install. After a little practice, anyone can paint blazes. That is not to say that anyone can determine the trail route. Before going out to blaze the route, establish with your state ECG committee or with the National staff that the route is officially sanctioned by the ECGA and by the appropriate public agencies. Also, be sure that it has been field-checked. Cue sheets should have been officially issued, a sure indication that the route has been checked. Once the route has been determined, it is relatively easy to apply and maintain the blazing.

4. What should be blazed and how frequently should the route be blazed?

On what objects should the blazes be placed? Public objects that provide a clear line of sight to the users and sufficient height to be seen at an approaching distance are good candidates for blazing. Do not mar the front of any sign. Avoid any private object or tree, which clearly belongs in someone's yard. If unsure or uncomfortable, do not blaze the object.

What other trails use blazes for on-road sections? When first established in 1937, the Appalachian Trail was almost 50% on-road. Painted blazes were used to mark the route. Today, approximately 20 miles of the AT are still on-road and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. Painted blazes on telephone poles, bridge abutments, sign posts, guardrails and the back of signs are all used to guide users along the route.

How often should blazes be placed? There should be a warning double blaze prior to the intersection or turn. A double blaze should be placed at the turn followed by a single confirmation within sight of the corner. The frequency of blazes should be much less than what is typical on hiking paths which wander in the woods (typically 6/mile or more). The ECG may only require blazes at turns or intersections, if the path is somewhat isolated. If marking on-road, interim route (where most temporary signage is expected), a minimum frequency of 1 blaze/mile is recommended.

5. Blazing Instructions

Blazes should be placed at a height that will "strike the eye" of walkers or bicyclists. Check the line of sight to ensure that there are no obstructions or overhanging tree branches. No need to blaze both sides of a road or path unless obscured line of sight or very wide road.

There are several blazing techniques. Some people prefer using a stencil. The paint is applied with a brush or spray can (we recommend not using spray cans so as not to be mistaken as a

graffiti artist). The 2" X 6" stencil can be cut from cardboard or a plastic milk jug. Sometimes people outline the blaze with a felt-tip marker and then fill-in the rectangle with paint. Others use a 2" x 3" or 2" x 6" stamp made from a sponge or use a straightedge. Most people blaze freehand using the stencil as a gauge or with marks on the paint brush. The object is to have neat & uniform blazes.

Use a high quality, high-gloss exterior paint (oil or latex). To hold the paint, use a plastic squeeze bottle (old catsup or mayo containers) to apply directly to the brush or plastic 18 oz peanut butter jars for dipping. You want a relatively small container and one that can be sealed easily. Use sealable plastic bags or small cans with plastic tops (coffee cans) to place the brush after each use to keep it moist.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Why use white color? Why not green or some other bright color? White is very visible and easy to match anywhere on the ECG. Colors of different shades will emerge in different locales and even in the same section as color match is not accurate.

Why not use the letters "ECG" or a stencil? A simple rectangle is easy to duplicate so that all will be identical. Even if stencils were widely duplicated, such detail has a more likely chance of being deemed graffiti.

Why not use arrows like those used on many bike rides and organized walks/runs? Arrows are more obtrusive on the visual landscape. A simple white rectangle is just not noticed unless one is focused on seeing these objects. Also, arrows might be confused with those markings placed for local events.

Can we blaze the pavement? Yes, blazes can be placed on pavement but realize that they will have limited visibility and short useful life. Blazes placed on vertical surfaces are better protected from the weather and not subject to tire wear. A confirmation blaze within sight of the intersection should be installed on both sides of a road due to limited visibility. A reassurance blaze should be placed about every mile if no marked intersections or turns.

Should blazes be maintained once trail markers are in place? No. Do not refresh blazes once adequate signage is in place. Blazes are a temporary solution.