**OBJECTIVE:** Create an open, standard-size trail corridor by clearing obstacles and overgrown vegetation—the reason this is also called *standardizing* and *brushing*. Imagine a large trail user coming along... will they brush into branches or brush? Do they have clear footing?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Blowdown trees can be hazardous and complex. Exercise extreme care; assess the situation before acting. Report anything beyond your ability or the capability of your tools for the land manager to remove.
- Cut branches almost flush with the tree trunk or node (where a branch splits) – avoid “coat hanger” stubs
- Cut shrubs or small trees flush with ground—avoid pointed stumps
- “When in doubt, take it out.” Plants will keep growing if not cut back. If a small tree needs excessive pruning, remove it entirely. Conversely, use your judgement in leaving some attractive trees or shrubs.
- Remove cut vegetation from the trail. Disperse 10-15 feet off trail.

**SUGGESTED TOOLS**

- Loppers
- Hand pruners
- Saw – folding hand saw, bow saw and/or pole saw
- Swizzle stick (for green vegetation, especially in late summer)

**Maintenance tasks on a typical woods hiking trail**

**Clearing Guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Ski/Horse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corridor</td>
<td>4-6’ wide x 8’ tall</td>
<td>6-8’ wide x 12’ tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Tread</td>
<td>2’ wide</td>
<td>3-4’ wide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blowdown cut and removed from trail**

**Cut overhanging branches**

**Cut branches flush with trunk**

**Remove annual growth**

**Remove brush and small trees**

**Leaf canopy 8 feet high**

**Remove brush on opposite side to avoid tunnel effect**

**Leave annual growth**

**Cut flush to ground**

**Scatter brush from trail**