

G-Spot H3

Guide to Laying a Great Trail

The art of laying a great trail is a skill that takes practice. But knowing more than just the basics beforehand will make your haring experience go more smoothly and will probably earn a more positive reaction from the pack during circle. Here are some tried and true guidelines that will benefit novice and veteran hares alike. Remember, we're all doing this for the beer and the camaraderie, so have fun and On-On!

The Hare's Responsibilities – Strictly speaking, beer stops are an optional part of trail, although any trail without at least one beer stop is likely to piss off the pack. The hare is responsible for purchasing any beer, water, ice, and any extras that will be used on trail. There is no reimbursement for these expenses because the hare does not pay the \$5 hash cash. The Hash will always provide the beer and other supplies for circle. The hare is responsible for scouting trail, buying flour for trail, laying the trail, and selecting a start location for trail. The hare is also responsible for letting the webmaster know the important details about the trail (start location & time, On-After location if applicable, special instructions, etc.) no later than one week prior to the trail date. The hare is responsible for sweeping trail when hashers are overdue, and bringing them on-in. But first, and foremost, the hare is responsible for laying a challenging, entertaining trail; the heart of every hash!

Trail-Laying Tips & Tricks

How many marks is enough? If you think you're putting down enough plops, you're probably not. In general, you (and the pack) should be able to see the next plopp or hash mark from the preceding one. If you keep this rule in mind, you'll be much more successful at getting the pack from start to circle (and beer). However this isn't an absolute rule. Wooded areas, swamps, grassy fields, and night time trails generally need about double the number of hash marks that would be needed in an urban or suburban area. In wooded areas, try to place you marks about waist- to shoulder- high on tree trunks. In grassy fields, thickets, and swamps, try gently sprinkling the flour over leafy plants or patches of bare dirt to improve visibility.

Will placing lots of hash marks make it easy for the pack to catch the hare? In difficult terrain, the important thing is to get the pack through! On the other hand, if your trail is going through a residential neighborhood, or downtown Greensboro, hash marks are generally much more visible. In these situations, it's safe to place marks on the backside of fire hydrants, behind parked cars, in the shadow of a building, or just around the bend in a street. This will make the trail more challenging and will keep the pack guessing. Another strategy is to avoid long straight sections; you'll stand a better chance of eluding the pack, and create a more interesting trail by meandering and turning frequently. As you gain trail-laying experience, you'll develop a better sense of how to confuse and mislead the pack, while leaving them ample clues to solve the puzzle and follow true trail back to circle!

What happens if the hare is caught by the pack? If you are unfortunate enough to fall victim to a "Hare Snare" and are apprehended by an FRB, just relax. It's not the end of the world, you'll just have an extra down-down at circle (and remember beer is not punishment)! If the trail is a short straw trail, hand the flour over to the hound that caught you and he/she will have a head start one minute shorter than you had. If this was a trail you volunteered in advance for, just suck it up; it happens. You and the hound who caught you can negotiate the terms for laying the remainder of trail (most likely he/she will just turn you loose to finish it yourself).

How long should a trail be? This is a decision for the hare, but on average, G-Spot trails are between 3 and 5 miles. If your trail is much longer than 5 miles, you should let folks know this at chalk-talk, and/or provide a Turkey/Eagle Split (see trail marking descriptions further on). To quote Scaf, "there's no trail that couldn't be improved by cutting it in half and adding another beer stop!"

What's the best marking technique? You'll have to try out a few techniques to find the one that works best for you. You'll probably find that different trail conditions call for different techniques. The most common method is simply a cloth or plastic bag (ideally with a handle or strap) full of ordinary flour. Some hares like to

use a plastic squeeze bottle (think maple syrup) – with this technique it's easy to make quick legible lettering, but usually even a large container won't hold enough flour for a whole trail. A method that works well on pavement is to put a tennis ball (not a racquet ball) into the flour bag and bounce the ball on the ground to create plops -- if you're not good at bouncing and catching the ball, this may not work for you.

Worried about causing a HazMat scare? Try coloring your flour with colored powdered carpenter's chalk (available at home improvement stores) or KoolAid drink mixes, or flavored Jello mixes, so that paranoid onlookers don't confuse it with Anthrax or some other bio-chem terrorism hazard.

Laying trail in rainy or snowy conditions? If it's snowy, try coloring your flour (see above). If it's rainy, try using "Self-Rising" flour. This variety has yeast mixed in, so it will clump in the rain, instead of washing away.

Can trail be marked with anything other than flour? Yes, as long as this is mentioned during chalk-talk. Ordinary chalk is the most common non-flour trail marking item. Large packages of childrens' sidewalk chalk can be found at most discount stores for cheap -- chalk works great on pavement, but not so good elsewhere. Another common option is short strips of toilet paper, which works great in wooded areas, thickets, grassy fields and even swamps -- better buy the thin papery kind, since it doesn't really matter how thick & absorbent it is, and that way it will biodegrade faster. Surveyor's tape (thin plastic ribbon about 1" wide that comes in various bright colors) is a good option to use in situations where visibility is low, such as heavily wooded areas, snowy conditions, and night time trails.

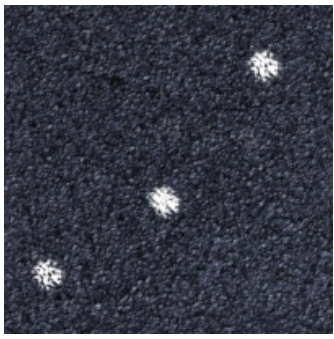
Some basic pointers for markings – Trail should never, **ever** double back on itself; this is a cardinal rule! Trail should also never be laid in different directions on opposite sides of the same street. Sometimes, as with a short straw trail, a hare will find him/herself with no other option, and this can be overlooked. But when laying a normal trail this is one of the few sacred rules! Trail should also never cross over itself directly; crossings that are physically separated (Such as a trail that crosses a river on a bridge, then goes along the river under the bridge) are okay, but this is advanced trail laying that should not be attempted by a less experienced hare.

Haring "Live" vs. "Dead" Trails:

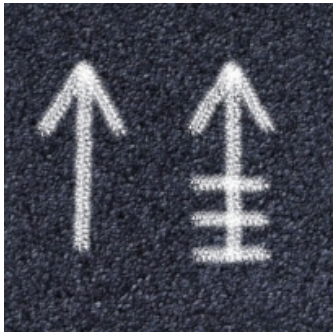
At first glance, dead haring appears easier than live haring, but that's not necessarily true. It is strongly recommended that novice hares work with an experienced co-hare for their first 3 to 5 trails. Quite often, novice hares lay overly complicated trails that are much too long, simply because they are too concerned about being snared. Your primary concern should be laying a trail that's puzzling, but solvable! If you keep this in mind, you shouldn't have to worry about getting snared.

Plan ahead! Whether your trail is Live or Dead, the basics are the same: you need to plan ahead. Put some thought into the start and finish locations as well as the route. Be sure to scout your basic route carefully to avoid getting stuck in spots with no way out, or running the pack through areas that are unnecessarily dangerous. You still want to lay a trail that will keep the pack together, slowing down the FRBs and allowing the slower runners an opportunity to catch up. Overall length should be the same for Live or Dead trails; it shouldn't take you much more than an hour to walk your basic trail from start to finish.

The only real difference between live and dead haring is that you have time to think through all the options for your trail, with no pressure to hurry. But don't get carried away! Your only real time constraint is how early you can pre-lay and still expect your trail to be there when the pack runs it. A rainstorm between your pre-lay and the start of the hash can undo all your hard work; so can an anal property owner with a broom or garden hose. What's the point? Don't pre-lay trail too early . . . one to two hours before the start is about the right time to set out with your bag of flour.



Plop, blob, or dollop, or simply “hash mark.” - Indicates that the Hare *probably* passed by this spot. May be placed on the ground, on tree trunks, street signs, lampposts, etc. Usually if you find at least 4 plops in a given direction, you are following a true trail (see “True Trail” “False Trail” and “Check”). Can be formed of ordinary flour, chalk, spray-paint, or bits of toilet paper or surveyor’s tape.



True Trail – A single pointed arrow either with, or without, 3 lines crossing its tail, indicates that you are definitely going in the right direction. While it might seem to make things too easy for the pack, liberal use of the True Trail Arrow can really make the difference between a great trail, and a shitty one. True Trail Arrows can help in situations where the pack would otherwise follow an easier or more obvious route. If you're crossing a street, turning a corner, or passing through an area that might be confusing, use a true trail arrow to lead the pack in the right direction. True Trail Arrows are also helpful to make sure that the pack goes down into the culvert full of knee deep stanky water to get to your beer stop, instead of short-cutting to the other end and missing it. The pack should be confused and lost enough from your checks, which-ways, etc!



Check – The trail can go in any of 359 directions from this mark (trail can't double-back on itself). It's the pack's job to discover which is the right direction.



Titty Check – This is a special type of Check. Upon arrival at this mark, all males must wait for the first female of the pack to arrive. She then has the **option** to A) flash her boobs (God Bless the Givers!), or B) find where true trail goes. It is considered bad form for a male to leave before the first female has arrived.



Dick Check - This is a special type of Check. Upon arrival at this mark, all females must wait for the first male of the pack to arrive. He then has the **option** to A) flash his frank & beans, or B) find where trail goes. It is considered bad form for a female to leave before the first male has arrived.



BN - Beer Near – This is the objective for all trails, and the most important mark for the pack! A Beer Stop is somewhere nearby, so slow down and try to find it. It is considered bad form to not stop at a beer stop and wait for the rest of the pack. The beer stop should be within visual distance of the BN, even if the beer itself is concealed. It's generally best to stash the beer stop beer yourself in advance – here in the G-Spot, 12 to 15 cans plus 5 or 6 bottles of water and some ice in a plastic trash bag or a cooler is usually enough. You should coordinate with the beermeister prior to trail if you need to have someone drive to a beer stop location for you.



√# or BC# - Back Check – Upon encountering this mark, count back the specified number of plops (do not count the BC mark itself). That N-th plop then functions like an ordinary Check.



SBC - Singapore Back Check – Works similar to the ordinary Back Check, except that true trail can be anywhere between the SBC and the last ordinary Check/Titty Check/Dick Check, or True Trail arrow.



Which-Way – An arrow with two or more points indicates that trail can go in one of several directions. It's the pack's job to discover which is the right direction.



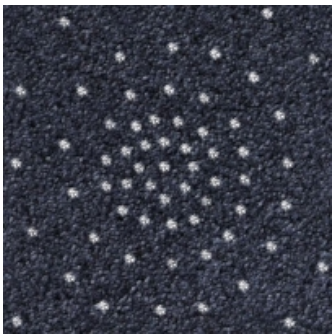
F - False Trail – A trail with fewer than four plops, or trail marked with an "F" indicates that you've probably gone the wrong way. Turn around and go back to the last point where you were definitely "on-on." If all the falses on your trail are marked with an F or a YBF, be sure to point out during chalk-talk that "all falses are marked." On the other hand if you have at least 1 false that just ends after 3 plops, no need to mention anything. However, you should never create a false trail that has more than 3 plops, without marking it as false with an F or a YBF.



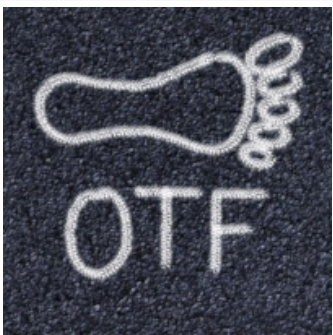
YBF – You've Been Fucked – This is essentially the same as a False Trail, but it usually means that the hare has decided to make the process much longer, or more painful for the pack!



OH - On Home – This mark indicates that you are very near to the end of the trail. You should probably recognize where you are and be able to find your way to the end without further marks.



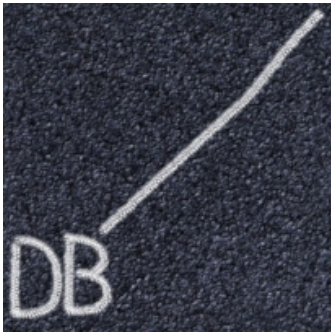
Super Nova – This is not just one single mark, but a large collection of plops that radiate in all directions from a single central plop. The pack will have to split up and go in multiple directions to find True Trail. Designed to create mass confusion and buy some time for the hare.



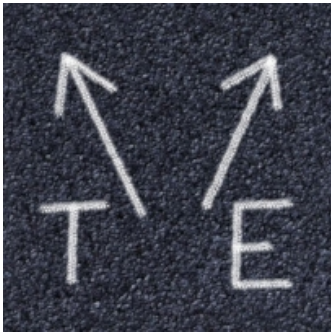
OTF - On-the-Foot – Similar to a Beer Stop, except that this mark indicates that a container of liquor has been stashed somewhere nearby. The hasher who finds it can approach another hasher, and place the bottle on that hasher's foot as a challenge to take a drink. The bottle is passed around until the rest of the pack has caught up and everyone has a chance to take a drink.



SC - Song Check – Each hasher stops here and has a chance to belt out a hash song.



DB - Dance Break – Each hasher has a chance to perform a dance move(s) of their choice from one end of the marked line to the other.



Turkey-Eagle Split – Trails that are especially long, or trails with unusually difficult or dangerous segments may include a Turkey-Eagle Split. Slower or less daring harriers and harriettes should follow the “T,” portion of trail while the rest of the pack should follow the “E” portion.



BVFC – Be Very Fucking Careful – Signifies an especially dangerous area such as a busy road to cross, or a railroad trestle.



LMU - Last Man Up – Upon arrival at this mark the entire pack waits for the last member of the pack to catch up.



NBZ – No-Blow Zone – Indicates that trail is about to pass through an area where use of whistles is discouraged, such as near a hospital, an active sports field, a cop directing traffic, or a livestock area.