

What is a Pulaski?

A Pulaski tool combines an axe and an adze in one head, similar to that of the cutter mattock, with a rigid handle of wood, plastic, or fiberglass. The Pulaski is a versatile tool for constructing firebreaks, as it can be used to both dig soil and chop wood. It is also well adapted for trail construction, gardening, and other outdoor work. As a gardening or excavation tool, it is effective for digging holes in root-bound or hard soil.



The invention of the Pulaski is credited to Ed Pulaski, an assistant ranger with the United States Forest Service, in 1911 although a similar tool was first introduced in 1876 by the Collins Tool Company. Ed Pulaski was famous for taking action to save the lives of a crew of 45 firefighters during the disastrous August 1910 wildfires in Idaho. His invention (or reinvention) of the tool that bears his name may have been a direct result of the disaster, as he saw the need for better firefighting tools. Ed Pulaski further refined the tool by 1913, and it came into use in the Rocky Mountain region.

In 1920, the Forest Service began contracting for the tool to be commercially manufactured, but use remained regional for some years. The tool became a national standard in the 1930s. Raising the tool above the user's head while swinging is discouraged, as this wastes energy and creates a safety hazard.
– [from wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulaski_tool)

The Spooky Beavers utilize Pulaski's for various aspects of trail maintenance. The most common use is for digging the soil to create water diversion devices such as water bars and check dams. This tool allows one to break up compacted soil as well as scrape soil so that logs that divert water off of the trail can be inserted into the trail bed.

Check back here often as we will be describing various tools that the Spooky Beavers utilize when doing trailwork in Prince William Forest Park, VA.