

# Blackstone River Bikeway



The Blackstone River Bikeway is a forty-eight mile multiple-use recreational facility extending from Providence, Rhode Island through the historic Blackstone River Valley to Worcester, Massachusetts.



## About the Blackstone Heritage Corridor

The American Industrial Revolution began in the Blackstone River Valley with the construction of Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI. Samuel Slater changed the landscape of the Valley and transformed life in America. The United States Congress, recognizing the well-preserved and unique landscape of mill villages, early industrial artifacts and natural features, established the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in 1986 as a part of the National Park system. A Commission, created at the same time, works in partnership with the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and 24 cities and towns to preserve and highlight the region's national significance. For more information on the National Heritage Corridor, please visit [www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm).



The Bikeway wanders through the Blackstone River Valley, connecting numerous historic mill villages.



Worker housing is a key component of the mill village experience.

## Basic Rules of the Road

### BIKE PATH:

- Bicyclists and in-line skaters stay to the right
- Walkers and joggers stay to the left (facing bicyclists)
- Walkers and joggers should yield to bicyclists

### ON-ROAD BIKE LANES

- Cycle single file, and on the right side of road (with traffic)
- Signal in advance of a turn, using correct hand signals
- Always check behind you before changing lanes or turning

### SAFETY

- Wear a helmet. Helmets required on all riders/passengers age 15 and younger (RI) or 12 and younger (MA)
- The use of headphones is not recommended.
- Use reflective gear and clothing at dusk or nighttime.

## East Coast Greenway



The East Coast Greenway is a 2,600 mile long shared-use trail network being developed to link cities and towns from Maine to Florida. It will incorporate scores of local trails and traverse a remarkable range of urban and rural landscapes. It will connect people, communities and many of the historic and cultural sites related to our nation's heritage, restoring a leisurely mode of travel to the coastal region. For more information, please visit [www.greenway.org](http://www.greenway.org).

**For more information on the Bikeway**

**Call RI DEM at 401-222-6800 or**

**MA DEM at 617-626-1250 or**

**National Heritage Corridor at 401-762-0250**

## About the Bikeway

Currently, six miles of the ultimately forty-eight mile route is open to the public. When completed, this ambitious project will result in a mostly off-road recreational facility passing through the historic Blackstone River Valley, connecting Worcester, Massachusetts and Providence, Rhode Island.



**Slater Mill, the Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution, is located along the Bikeway in Pawtucket, RI across from the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center.**

The bikeway will serve as an alternate mode of transportation for commuters and as the recreational centerpiece of a two-state linear park along the Blackstone River. The bikeway will link many of the Valley's significant natural and historic features. In addition, the Bikeway is an official section of the East Coast Greenway, a 2,600 mile recreational facility linking the major cities along the East Coast from Maine to Florida.

The bikeway is being developed thanks largely to federal transportation funding. The cooperative efforts of the Departments of Environmental Management in both states, the Massachusetts Highway Department and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, with support from Valley communities, are making the bikeway a reality. Enjoy the ride!

## The Northern Stretch: Massachusetts

Work has just begun on the Massachusetts segments of the Bikeway. A mile long stretch has been constructed in Millbury, though it is not yet open to the public. When completed, the Bikeway will extend from Worcester's Union Station to the Massachusetts / Rhode Island state line in Blackstone, MA. As the Bikeway winds south often along the Providence and Worcester Railroad corridor, it will connect several historic mill villages and traverse the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park where remnants of the Blackstone Canal are evident. The Massachusetts section of the bikeway will ultimately be under the management of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management.

During construction, the interim on-road bikeway generally follows the Blackstone River for 28 miles as it meanders through six towns on its way to the Town of Blackstone at the Rhode Island border. It uses primary roads and smaller streets, and involves some fairly hilly rural terrain in Northbridge, MA.



**River Bend Farm, once a large dairy farm pre-dating the Revolutionary War, now serves as a Visitor Center and access point for the Bikeway.**

## The Southern Stretch: Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has made great progress with a six-mile off road segment already opened. The completed segment begins in Manville, RI and heads south through the towns of Cumberland and Lincoln to Lonsdale. At Ashton, the bikeway follows the route of the Blackstone Canal for three miles, mostly on top of the historic towpath. While at



**The new exhibits at the Captain Wilbur Kelly House illustrate the transportation transformation of the Blackstone River Valley.**

Ashton, visit the Captain Wilbur Kelly House, a newly opened museum and visitor center adjacent to the Bikeway. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management manages the Rhode Island segments which have already become a popular recreation destination.

Interim on-road routes stretch north to Woonsocket, RI home of the Museum of Work and Culture, and south to Pawtucket, RI home of the Slater Mill, the Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution and the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center. From here, one can follow city streets into Providence to make a connection with the popular East Bay Bikepath that travels 14.5 miles along Narragansett Bay to the historic waterfront community of Bristol, RI.