



**BAY CIRCUIT ALLIANCE, INC**  
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**“working to create & sustain a permanent, public recreation trail & greenway linking parks and open spaces in fifty Boston Area communities from Ipswich Bay & Plum Island to the Duxbury/Kingston shore”**

## The Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway

The Bay Circuit was first proposed in 1929 as an "outer emerald necklace," linking parks, open spaces and waterways from Plum Island to Kingston Bay.

The Bay Circuit idea - a precursor of today's greenway movement - continues to take shape. Focused on a 200 mile corridor of over fifty cities and towns with hundreds of open spaces, the Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway and help make eastern Massachusetts an attractive place to live.

The Bay Circuit Alliance (BCA) was founded in 1990 as a partnership of many land trusts, trail clubs, town and state organizations and individuals to make the Bay Circuit dream come true. In 2012 the Appalachian Mountain Club and The Trustees of Reservations formed a collaboration to lead the Bay Circuit Alliance in the completion, enhancement, and long-term care of the 230-mile Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway.

The Alliance helps local communities establish their portion of the trail through planning and technical assistance. The BCA also maintains contacts with state and federal government representatives and agencies to promote the Bay Circuit concept and consult on corridor-wide trail related issues. For a current list of member organizations, contact the Alliance.

The 230 mile long Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) was proposed by the Alliance as the string to tie the

"jewels" of open space together. It has galvanized much of the effort by volunteers not only to build the trail but to expand the protection of new and existing jewels for all of the people of the region.

Today much of BCT is in place. In one sense it is nearing completion as a continuous path from the north shore to the south shore around Boston; but in another sense, opportunities for protection of more open space, improved routing of the trail, and creation of connector and loop trails in the towns along the Bay Circuit corridor will go on for many years.

Come enjoy the Bay Circuit Trail and our jewels of open space, and get involved in making them even better.

### Using the Bay Circuit Guide and Maps

The Index Map shows the overall BCT and locates the detailed maps that apply to the area you may wish to walk, ski, or ride. On the Index Map, red indicates dedicated sections of the trail that are completed, and, in most cases, are blazed. Yellow indicates temporary trail used to bridge gaps or avoid problem areas, and may be blazed. Dashed green indicates proposed trail sections still being developed by local groups and are not open for trail use. Contact your local trails group or visit the Bay Circuit website to learn the latest on these sections at [www.baycircuit.org](http://www.baycircuit.org).

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**Disclaimer and Cautions:** The Bay Circuit Alliance, as the advocate and promoter of the Bay Circuit Trail, expressly disclaims responsibility for injuries or damages that may arise from using the trail. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of maps or completeness of warnings about hazards that may exist. Portions of the trail are along roads or train tracks and involve crossing them. Users should pay attention to traffic and walk on the shoulder of roads facing traffic, not on the pavement, cross only at designated locations and use extreme care. Children and pets need to be closely monitored and under control.

Each detailed map shows overlapping sections of the Bay Circuit Trail. Solid red trail is dedicated trail, dashed red is temporary trail, and open red circles indicate proposed trail. The route of the BCT is described in corresponding text for each map, in the north-to-south direction. We encourage you to take copies of both the maps and descriptions with you, and these plus the trail markings should be adequate to follow the BCT. However, if you are interested in exploring the other trails shown, or in more detailed trail guides to the BCT, we strongly urge you to obtain local trail maps and guides. Those we know of are listed on the *For More Information* page that accompanies each map, along with information on where to obtain them. Trail users who are familiar with topographic maps may find the U.S.G.S. maps helpful. The relevant area maps are listed on each *For More Information* page. Topo maps are sold at REI and EMS stores, and other camping equipment and map stores.

Protected open spaces, the "jewels" of the greenway, are shown in green tint on the maps. Most of the information is from MassGIS but may not be completely up-to-date, as new areas are added from time to time. These open space areas are generally open to the public; but there are exceptions, for example, when areas are closed to protect nesting birds. Please respect posted closings.

Detailed maps are available for many of the larger jewels, especially the State Forests and Parks and properties of The Trustees of Reservations and Massachusetts Audubon. Information on where to obtain these maps is listed under the particular "jewel" and organization. Parking places for three or more cars near trailheads are shown with a "P" in a black box.

Trail Notices regarding trail problems and closures are posted on the website at [www.baycircuit.org](http://www.baycircuit.org) under the Explore tab. Please review them for updates to the trail guide and maps.

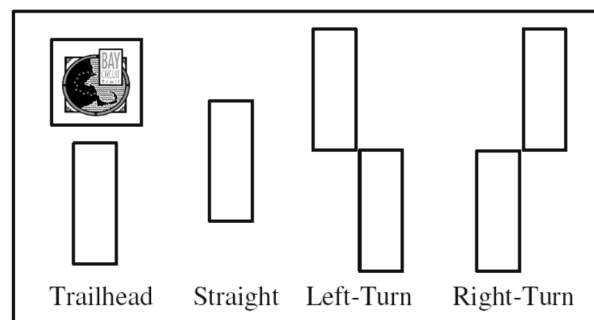
For trail users with GPS receivers, latitude-longitude coordinates are provided in the guide for trail map points in degrees and decimal minutes

( $hddd^{\circ}mm.mmm'$ ). The map datum for the coordinates is WGS 84.

Corrections, additions, and suggestions for improving the maps and associated text are very welcome. Please send your suggested changes to [trails@baycircuit.org](mailto:trails@baycircuit.org).

### Trail Markings

The BCT markings are of two types. At trail heads and road crossings, there is generally a 4"x4" plastic BCT logo like that shown on the top of the previous page. Along the trails white rectangular dollar-bill-sized blazes are painted or nailed to trees or posts, or occasionally painted on the pavement. At turns, two blazes are used, with the upper one offset in the direction of the turn.



Sections along roads may not be marked. Blazing is the responsibility of local trails groups. If blazing is inadequate, notify the local trail group listed with the map.

The BCT often follows pre-existing local trails; BCT-specific blazing is a work in progress and may be sparse in segments. We encourage you to review and carry corresponding local maps on your BCT walk.

### Permitted Trail Uses

Permitted trail uses along various sections of the BCT include walking, running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, dog-walking and horse riding; however, not all trails allow all these uses. The landowners and managers determine permitted trail uses. All of the BCT is open for at least walking, and most suitable

sections are also open for cross-country skiing in the winter. Ask the local trails organization or the land owner about equestrian, bicycle use or dog-walking, if in doubt. Appropriate contacts are listed with each map. All of the BCT is closed to motorized vehicle use.

### **Motorcycles, Dirt Bikes and ORVs**

Nearly all trails in the Bay Circuit corridor are closed to motorized vehicles because they cause extensive trail damage and because the noise and smell disturb wildlife, other trail users and neighbors. Illegal use by motorized vehicles can cause trails to be closed to all users and is often used as an argument against new trails.

### **Trail Etiquette**

The joy of using trails, the continued right of public access over private lands, and the future expansion of the trail system are all dependent on how users respect the land, other users, and the rights of the landowners. All non-motorized users need to work together to promote our trails. Here are some suggestions:

- Park your car in a safe and legal place. Some good parking spots are shown on the trail maps.
- Guard against all risk of fire. Don't smoke in the woods, especially when conditions are dry.
- Be polite and friendly to fellow trail users, landowners and trail neighbors. Mountain bikers should use caution near hikers, and both hikers and bikers should yield to horses for the safety of all.
- Protect wildlife, plants, and trees.
- Keep children and pets supervised and under control. Don't let pets harm wildlife or annoy neighbors. Most wildlife refuges and farming areas on the BCT are closed to pets.
- Take your litter home with you. Carry a plastic grocery bag and pick up litter you see. One hiker can compensate for several thoughtless people with little effort. Clean trails and woods encourage others to be neat and landowners to welcome trail users.
- Keep to marked trails, especially on private land. Leave all livestock, crops, and machinery alone. Walk around the edge of farmed fields. Leave gates as you found them.

- Don't make unnecessary noise. Quiet enhances your own experience and that of others and increases your chances of seeing wildlife.
- Avoid walking on very wet trails. Horses and mountain bikes especially should stay off wet trails to prevent damage. Mountain bikers should carry their bikes past wet areas.
- Some trails are closed to bicycles. Inquire about local rules and obey posted signs.

### **Trail Maintenance**

Most trails are maintained by volunteers. This is certainly true of the Bay Circuit Trail. Many hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians help with trail maintenance through local trails organizations. Contact your local organizations, most of which are listed on our website, or email [volunteer@baycircuit.org](mailto:volunteer@baycircuit.org) for how to become involved. Trail stewardship can be a fun and rewarding!

### **Safety and Health**

You are 100% responsible for your own safety on the trails, as well as for any children with you. The Massachusetts Recreational Use Statute states clearly that "An owner of land who permits the public to use such land for recreational purposes without imposing a charge or fee... shall not be liable ... for injuries to person or property sustained by him while on such land ..." In other words, you have no grounds to sue if you get hurt. Landowners are NOT responsible for maintaining safe trails; TRAIL USERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSING TRAIL SAFETY FOR THEMSELVES. If you don't think a bridge is safe, don't cross it! The Bay Circuit Alliance strongly supports this law as essential if we are to retain public access to trails.

Potential natural hazards along the Bay Circuit of which you need to be aware and against which you should be on guard:

- Poison ivy is common. "Leaflets three, let it be." In the autumn leaves can be a very pretty red. Sometimes the plants look like shaggy vines wrapped around trees.
- Lyme disease, while less common than in more southern coastal areas, does occur here. Know

how to avoid deer tick bites and how to recognize the disease symptoms. Prompt treatment is essential and effective.

- Raccoons and other wild animals in this area can be rabid. Don't approach one, especially if it appears friendly.
- West Nile Virus has been found in a few Massachusetts communities. It is carried by mosquitoes. To avoid this rare disease, dress appropriately and use bug repellent.
- Be prepared for nature's adversities. Carry water, adhesive bandages, sun-block, and bug repellent.

## **Hunting**

Hunting is not allowed in Massachusetts on Sundays (not true in other states). On other days there is nearly always some hunting season open. It's a good idea to wear blaze orange in the woods unless you are sure the area where you are walking is closed to hunting. Orange is an especially good idea during grouse season (mid-October to late November) and is required in state Wildlife Management Areas during this season. Orange is absolutely essential during shotgun deer season (late November to mid-December). For exact dates, contact the Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA 01581, Tel: (508) 389-6300

## **Acknowledgements**

In 2010 The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) took on the formidable task of transitioning our trail maps to GIS. This has provided us with updated maps that are more user friendly, have higher accuracy and resolution, and are easier to maintain. It will also help us to better manage the trail and let us share trail data with users, other organizations and government agencies. The first step has been completed by TTOR - converting

our existing maps to GIS. The maps were produced using MassGIS layers as building block for landmass, terrain, water, green space, infrastructure, boundaries and other mapping details.

These maps are the result of the efforts of many people and organizations, both private and governmental. Most of the road and water data came from U.S.G.S. topographic maps digitized by MassGIS. Most of the open space data came from MassGIS, who in turn received it from various state, city and town agencies and organizations. GPS trail data was collected and used to map the dedicated and temporary BCT sections. Other off-trail data comes from MassGIS, MAPC, city and town GIS departments, land trusts, and GPS data collected by volunteers.

Initial funding for the project came from the Fields Pond Foundation and a Massachusetts Greenways grant, for which we are very grateful.

We would also like to thank the Appalachian Mountain Club's Larry Garland, cartographer, who made significant suggestions to the maps/guides through his 2013 Trail Assessment of the BCT. And last but not least Denny Nackoney, who single handedly GPS'd the entire trail in 2010.

A special thanks to all town trails committees, trail stewards, and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to develop, promote, monitor and maintain this trail, and have provided updates for the trail guide descriptions and maps.

The Bay Circuit Alliance also wishes to thank all of you who have helped directly or indirectly. We encourage everyone to help complete the Bay Circuit Trail, enhance our open spaces, improve these maps and trail guide, and above all, enjoy our open space jewels and trails.