

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.



Allowed Uses:



Map 1A - Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley - BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL route

(as shown on map dated April 2015)
(text updated April 2022)

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

Trail marking

Standard BCT blazing (vertical rectangular white blazes painted or nailed to trees) and BCT logos on dedicated portions. Offset double blazes indicate turn in direction of upper blaze.

BCT route, Newburyport to Rowley (north to south): The BCT's official Northern Terminus is at the **Parker River National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center (Point B)** on Plum Island Turnpike. Ample Parking, wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, bike racks, and an informational kiosk are all located across from the front entrance to the Visitors Center. The trail to Plum Island's Newbury beach is an optional extension if you would like to see the historic endpoint of the BCT.

A N42 47.917 W70 48.494

0.0 Plum Island Extension: From the beginning of the shore at the Newbury Town Parking Lot, walk westerly directly away from the beach, through a small commercial district (food available), and straight along the Plum Island Turnpike, over the lift bridge, and past the Plum Island Airport. *Reverse these directions if hiking from Parker River Visitor Center.*

B N42 47.910 W70 50.801

2.1 Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center The BCT starts from the Terminus kiosk near the pollinator garden and continues to the end

of the entrance road, into the **Plum Island airport** (an historic site). Stop by the **Audubon's Joppa Flatts Refuge** across the street or proceed south on the **Eliza Little Trail**, skirting the end of the airport's grassy runway (*CAUTION: this is an active runway. Keep to the edge and keep dogs on leash*). Then go right on a cart road through high grass and through the fields of the **Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm** (bicycles not allowed)

- 2.5 Pass through a gate south (left) of the historic **Spencer-Peirce-Little Manor House**, open to the public in summer (Historic New England) (parking lot use by hikers is allowed). Follow tree-lined drive (Little's Lane) to High Rd.
- 2.8 Left onto High Rd (Rte 1A), use sidewalk on east (left) side. Historic houses and farms. **Tendercrop Farm** has farm animals on display; drinks and snacks sold.

C N42 47.175 W70 51.013

- 3.4 Right on Hay St just beyond Tendercrop Farm.
- 3.9 Right onto Green St for one short block, then left on Boston Rd past a dome house.
- 4.2 Left into **Old Town Hill Reservation** at a green gate. In 100 yards the BCT splits left from the cart road. Follow it over 4 boardwalks until it joins another cart road. Go left to Hay St trailhead.
- 5.0 Right on Hay St.
- 5.2 After crossing Little River, turn left onto Newman Rd causeway. Views of extensive salt marshes. Newman Rd is occasionally under water at extremely high tides.
- 5.8 Shortly after leaving the marsh, and opposite a small parking area (with a side trail to the Little River) go left, then shortly left again on a cart road. Follow to the top of the hill for panoramic view 100 ft above sea level. Continue right down trail to stile at Newman Rd.

D N42 46.024 W70 50.929

- 6.6 Left on Newman Rd to Newbury Lower Green. Take next right (dirt rd) skirting west side of the Green to pass historic former tavern and one-room school.
- 6.8 Cross Rte 1A (*CAUTION: fast traffic*). Turn right; use sidewalk. This road crosses the Parker River. Then angle left on Newbury Neck Rd, bearing

right at top of hill.

E N42 45.364 W70 51.152

7.5 Cross Rte 1A again (*CAUTION: fast traffic*). continue straight on Old Rowley Rd to the Newbury/Rowley town line.

8.3 Angle left on Redgate Rd (becomes gravel). Do not cross the RR.

8.7 Right along Rt. 1A. In another 0.8 miles cross the bridge over the RR.

F N42 44.145 W70 51.685

9.5 Continue along Rte 1A for 0.2 mile. Veer off to the west (right) onto Old Main St., a short tree-lined dirt road offset from Rte 1A.

10.2 The "Rowley Gap," an undeveloped part of the BCT, begins here. The Rowley Bay Circuit Committee (see the For More Information section) is hard at work to find a suitable route. In the meantime, to reach the next designated section of the BCT beginning at **Prospect Hill**, take the temporary route (blazed) and continue along Rt 1A south.

G N42 42.889 W70 52.836

11.4 Right on Summer St to its end, left on Bradford St, then right on Rte 133 for 0.15 mile to the Prospect Hill parking area on the left (south side of Rte 133).

K N42 42.544 W70 53.478

12.1 Prospect Hill parking area (P=5). The BCT dedicated trail resumes here.

(Rowley route continues on Map 2)

Map 1A – Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley – THE JEWELS

Plum Island - northern end has a popular public beach. However, parking is very limited, especially on summer weekends. Small pay parking lots at the end of the Plum Island Turnpike and at the northern end of the Island, but no on-street parking. Served by a MVRTA bus from Newburyport train station and downtown Monday thru Saturday. No Sunday service. Beware biting greenhead flies in late July and early August, as on most North Shore beaches.

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (4662 acres) - occupies most of the rest of Plum Island and much of the wetlands along Plum Island Sound. Fee. Limited

parking and access. No boat access. The Refuge is first and foremost maintained for wildlife. Therefore the beach is closed during plover nesting season from 1 April to July. However, there are short hiking trails in the southern part of the Refuge and wonderful shorebird watching all year. 978-465-5753

Salisbury Beach State Reservation (DCR) - a wonderful life-guarded ocean beach and camping. Fee. 978-462-4481

Maudslay State Park (DCR, 476 acres) - one of the most beautiful parks in eastern Massachusetts, with spectacular views over the Merrimack River (look for eagles) and lovely gardens. Many hiking trails, including some open to mountain bikes and equestrians. Outdoor sculpture show in June. Summer theater and concerts. 978-465-7223 Map online: www.mass.gov/dcr

Moseley Woods - a city park with giant trees and picnic tables overlooking the Merrimack River. The Merrimack River Trail connects this park to Maudslay SP.

Old Town Hill Reservation (TTOR, 497 acres) - trails, great views of 3 states from the summit of the hill and views over the Parker River marshes from many places. 978-356-4351 Map online: www.thrtrustees.org

Prospect Hill (DCR, 90 acres) - acquired by DCR in 1995 with the help of the BCA and other open space organizations. It is a glacial drumlin rising 267' above sea level that provides a spectacular view from Cape Ann to the Isles of Shoals in New Hampshire. BCT passes over the summit.

Merrimack River - the tidal section (up to Haverhill) is a favorite of boaters, fishing enthusiasts, and bird watchers. Experienced canoeists or kayakers can put in at Cashman Park or Joppa Park (above half-tide), but time your paddle with the tides. Beautiful tidal streams to be explored on the north side between Rte 1 and the Chain Bridge, best at high tide. The Chain Bridge at Deer Island is a famous and very picturesque landmark.

Joppa Flats (Massachusetts Audubon) - one of the premier shorebird watching areas in the U.S. New sanctuary and education center on the Plum Island Turnpike where the BCT turns south. Courses, guided walks, kayaking. 978-462-9998. No dogs, horses, bicycles allowed. Birdwatching is also excellent at **Hale Park** (a private park) and **Joppa Park** (a city park) a little farther up-river.

Parker River - the short but beautiful tidal stretch through the salt marshes is a wonderful canoe trip, but launching is difficult. Try Middle Road near high tide.

Little River Nature Trail follows course of river, parallel to old Rte 95, between Storey Ave and Hale St. Planned extension to MBTA lot in Newburyport

Martin Burns Wildlife Management Area - a very large and beautiful but little known area with numerous trails. Purchased by the state for hunting with money from hunting licenses. There is no hunting in Massachusetts on Sundays and the area is open for hiking and mountain biking. Avoid the area during grouse and deer seasons (roughly October through December except Sundays) or wear hunter orange. Trail map available at Riverside Cycles in the Tannery in Newburyport or download from <http://coastaltrails.org/xoops>

William Forward Wildlife Management Area - large, beautiful, little known hunting area, which includes Kent's Island between the Parker and Little Rivers. John Marquand's summer home was here, but is now gone. A trail crosses a footbridge over the RR and goes to Ireland Point where the rivers join, but it is only passable at low tide. Trail map available at Riverside Cycles in the Tannery in Newburyport or download from <http://coastaltrails.org/xoops>

Newburyport Downtown - burned in 1812 and replaced by the present brick buildings. Saved from urban renewal in the 1950's, it has been restored to become a vibrant shopping center with many restaurants. Waterfront Park and the Boardwalk are the scene for concerts, whale watching, harbor excursions, and other events. The Newburyport Maritime Society's museum in the old Customs House is also the local Visitors Center. Yankee Homecoming Days the last week of July and first week of August are a town-wide party

Newbury High Road and Newburyport High Street - from Newbury Upper Green into Newburyport is one of the most beautiful streets in America, lined with historic houses and sea captains' mansions. These include HNE's Coffin House (ca. 1654, open summer weekends, fee) and Swett-Ilsley House (ca. 1670, at one time the Blue Anchor Tavern, open by appointment), the Historical Society of Old Newbury's Cushing House

(a museum, open in summer) and the house where Lord Timothy Dexter lived and became the city's most famous eccentric (see John Marquand's two books about him)

Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm (Historic New England) - maintained as a working farm. The manor house is the oldest stone house still standing in New England (ca. 1690). Maintained as a museum and open for tours in summer (fee). Beautiful tree lined entrance drive at the end of Little's Lane. The BCT passes in front of the house. 978-462-2634

Newbury Upper Green - classic New England town green surrounded by historic houses, one block north of the BCT on Rte 1A

Newbury Lower Green - another classic green at the foot of Old Town Hill. Here Newbury was first settled in 1635. HNE's Dole-Little House (ca. 1670, open by appointment) is located at the south end of the green by the Parker River

Stackyard Road - from the end of this rough road a short trail leads to great views over Plum Island Sound. Part of the saltmarsh here belongs to the National Wildlife Refuge and part is protected by Essex County Greenbelt

Map 1A – Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley - FOR MORE INFORMATION

Public transport: MBTA trains from Boston's North Station to Rowley and Newburyport. Rowley station is close to the temporary BCT route in the "Rowley Gap." Just walk west on Railroad Ave. to Rt. 1A. No bus transport here.

Monday to Saturday bus service from the Newburyport train station to downtown and beyond to the BCT terminus on Plum Island. On Sundays, walk from the train station: cross Parker St at end of RR tracks, then go diagonally up little street to left of Cyrano to Rte 1. Use ped. xing at Rte 1. On other side of highway turn right, go down around courthouse and left up State St to High St. Either turn right to reach BCT in Newbury, or go straight down State to Market Square, then right on Water St toward Plum Island. There may be tram service from Market Square to Plum Island during the summer. Inquire at the information booth just northwest of the Square. Also MVRTA bus service between Newburyport and Haverhill.

Maps and trail guides:

- Relevant topo maps 7.5 x 15 are Newburyport & Ipswich
- Maudsley SP maps at park hq or online:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/maudslay-state-park-trail-map/download>
- Parker River NWR brochures and trail maps at hq and at: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/parker-river/map>
- Newbury BCT map in trailside boxes along the route
- Maps of Martin Burns, William Forward, and Crane Pond Wildlife Management Areas available at Riverside Cycles in the Tannery in Newburyport, published by FOOT.
- Old Town Hill Reservation:
<https://thetrustees.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/old-town-hill-trail-map.pdf>

Trail and land/water protection organizations:

The Mass. Dept. Of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administers Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Maudsley State Park and Prospect Hill, and Plum Island State Reservation at the southern tip of Plum Island (off the map). Contact them at Maud-slay, 978-465-7223 or Salisbury, 978-462-4481

Maudsley State Park Assn - volunteers lead walks, help maintain the formal gardens in the park, and help organize events. Contact them through the Park headquarters. 978-465-7223.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Headquarters at the northern end of Plum Island 978-465-5753

Friends of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge - volunteers help at the Refuge, publish newsletter, sometimes lead hikes and nature walks. P.O.Box 184, Newburyport MA 01950

Massachusetts Audubon, the largest conservation organization in New England, works to preserve the natural world thru conservation, education, and environmental advocacy. It protects over 34,000 acres of land in Massachusetts and maintains dozens of wildlife sanctuaries that are open to the public, including the Joppa Flats Wildlife Sanctuary and Education Center near Plum Island Turnpike. Mass. Audubon also offers courses and leads local bird walks. 978-462-9998. Members receive reduced program and admission fees and a

beautiful bi-monthly magazine. For membership info 1-800-AUDUBON; www.massaudubon.org

The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), the oldest land trust in the world, with 111 outstanding reservations and conserve 45,000 acres in Massachusetts, including at least 6 thru which the BCT passes, including Old Town Hill Reservation in Newbury. They sell accurate trail maps for most of their properties, including Old Town Hill. Some maps also online. www.thetrustees.org

Merrimack River Watershed Council works for protection of the watershed in MA and NH, lead canoe trips and supervise volunteer stream monitoring programs. 600 Suffolk St, Lowell 01854 978-275-0120 www.merrimack.org

Eight Towns and the Bay - nine towns from Salisbury to Rockport who work with local organizations for protection of the coastal environment and water quality of the upper North Shore. 978-374-0519 www.8tb.org

Essex County Greenbelt Association owns or holds conservation restrictions on many properties in the area, especially salt marsh. Maps sold online. [Www.ecga.org](http://www.ecga.org)

Newbury Bay Circuit Committee - volunteers working to maintain and improve the local BCT 978-462-4605

Rowley Bay Circuit Committee is working on closing the BCT gap between Newbury and Rowley.

Historic New England (formerly The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities) preserves many historic places in New England, including 4 properties on or near the BCT in Newbury: the SpencerPeirce-Little Farm and Manor House, the Coffin House, the Swett-Ilsley House and the Dole-Little House. Spencer-Peirce-Little house c. 1675 is open for tours in summer; view original construction and 20th century preservation techniques 978-462-2634 www.historicnewengland.org

Greater Newbury's **Friends Of Our Trails** (FOOT) merged with the Coastal Trails Coalition. Info on the website: www.coastaltrails.org/j1/

Parker River Clean Water Assn conducts water quality surveys, advocates for protection of the river, and sponsors events. Working on a hiking guide. 978-462-2551 www.parker-river.org

Massachusetts Dept of Fish and Game manages the Martin Burns and William Forward Wildlife Management Areas. They publish the annual schedule of hunting seasons; free. 978-263-4347. Law enforcement 1-800-632-8075 maps and pond maps online:
www.mass.gov/dfwele

Essex County Velo has both road and mountain biking rides and events for people of most abilities; some events in the Greater Newbury area. 978-465-5566
www.ecvcycling.org

MassBike/North Shore is the local chapter of the Mass. Bicycle Coalition. They lead rides and advocate for bike trails, including the proposed Border to Boston trail through this area. web page: <http://MassBike.org>
617- 542-2453

Charles River Wheelmen - very active group of bicyclists that lead rides of varying lengths throughout Bay Circuit area. Excellent website lists rides, other information, and membership info. www.crw.org

BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL & GREENWAY
E-Mail: info@baycircuit.org
Website: www.baycircuit.org