

Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway 2024 Season Report





Table of Contents

- Introduction** **3**
- Summary of Projects** **4**
- Thru Hike** **5**
- AmeriCorps** **6**
 - Cow Common Boardwalk 6
 - Cow Common Reroute 7
- Engagement Events** **8**
 - Tables 8
 - Trails Fest @ Wachusett Mountain 8
 - West Bridgewater River Walk 9
 - Pedal Power @ The Museum of Science 10
 - Presentations 11
 - Mass Trails Conference 11
 - Boston 20s & 30s Potluck/Slideshow 12
 - Custom Crews/One Day Events 13
 - Bemis @ Stoneymeade Conservation Land 13
 - Trail Adopter Training 14
 - Guided Hikes @ Old Town Hill 15
 - Volunteer Projects 16
 - Two Rod Road Turnpike 16
- BCT Committee** **18**
 - Committee Stats 19
- User Resources** **20**
- Thank You** **21**





A note from the BCT Coordinator,

I began my role as the Bay Circuit Trail Coordinator in November of 2023. Since then, I've met hundreds of people that have spent time working on and enjoying the Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway. This 230-mile trail provides its surrounding communities with beautiful places to spend time in and enjoy. I had no idea the BCT existed before I applied for this job, and it has impacted me in a much larger way than I anticipated. The people who maintain and care for this trail do so because they love their work, and they love what their work provides for others. I have found a community among them that I wish to expand, so I have focused on engaging more people and communities with the Bay Circuit.

I have just fulfilled one year in my position with AMC and am still finding my footing and my confidence, but I am proud of the work we've accomplished on the BCT this year. I have lofty goals for the future and look forward to expanding access and enjoyment of the BCT to folks that have yet to discover the beauty of this trail. Long distance trails like this one are never quite finished, there is always work to be done but I'm glad I have the support of the volunteers, partner organization, grant funders, the state, and AMC to continue the ongoing efforts to improve and promote the Bay Circuit.

I've had the pleasure of speaking with Al French several times. Al, essentially the father of the Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway, has expressed to me his deep passion for land conservation and close-to-home greenspaces. His enthusiasm for the BCT is quite contagious and I am grateful to learn from Al as I continue my role as the BCT Coordinator.

Take a look at the rest of this report for an overview of the projects, events, and volunteer work that have occurred on the BCT in 2024. There is more to come, but for now, I hope this work report inspires you as much as Al French has inspired me.

- Amber Stearns





Summary of Programs: Jan – Oct 2024

Programs	# Events	# Engaged	Volunteer Hours
AmeriCorps	1 Week	7 Crew Members	280
AMC Boston 20s&30s Events Potluck/Slideshow (20a) Invasive Removal (10v)	2	10 Vols, 20 Attendees	42
Custom Crews/One Day Events Bemis Stonymeade Cons (9v) Trail Adopter Training (1v) Old Town Hill Hikes (17a)	4	10 vols, 17 Attendees	72
Volunteer Projects Two Rod Road (35v)	1	35 vols	300
Tabling Trails Fest West Bridgewater River Walk (2v) Pedal Power	4	2 Vols, 80+ Attendees	8
Presentations Mass Trails Conference NEMBA Engagement	3	105 Attendees	0
BCT Committee & Associated Quarterly Meetings Trail Maintenance Management	3	30 Members	870+
Total	18 Events	309	1,572+

PR
Cole Crosby Interview – AMC Website
Thru Hike Blog – AMC Website
Hike For Change Article – Boston 25 News
Two Rod Road Turnpike - Carlisle Mosquito.

Behind the Scenes
Annual PDF Map Updates
New Interactive Map Development
Trail Gaps: Bridgewater, Billerica, Tewksbury, Hanson
BCT Committee





BCT COORDINATOR THRU HIKE

Amber had the pleasure of spending 14 days walking the entire length of the Bay Circuit Trail in April and June of 2024. This trek was meant to acquaint Amber with the ins and outs of the BCT, its communities, and its maintenance needs. Amber catalogued the trail's needs; from locations to install new bog bridges and boardwalks to sections needing corridor maintenance to dangerous road crossings. She hiked some regions with BCT Committee members, familiarized herself with the trail's geography and landowners, and thoroughly enjoyed her two weeks on the trail. For more details, check out [this blog post](#).



BCT 2024 Season Report



AMERICORPS - Cow Common Boardwalk

One AmeriCorps crew, led by the AmeriCorps Supervisor was stationed on a reroute for the Bay Circuit Trail in Wayland, MA. This was the crew's first construction project and the group of six built a 48 ft-long by 4ft wide boardwalk. This boardwalk has allowed for the Bay Circuit Trail to be rerouted off approximately two miles of road-walk, onto a 0.25 mile wooded trail that links the BCT to the Mass Central Rail Trail and a new Senior Center in Wayland Town Center.

The crew had to clear vegetation from the site, stage lumber, cut sills and decking boards to size, construct and level the frame of the boardwalk, and install decking.

DATES:
July 29 – Aug 1

STATS:
4ft x 48ft Boardwalk
Hours - 280



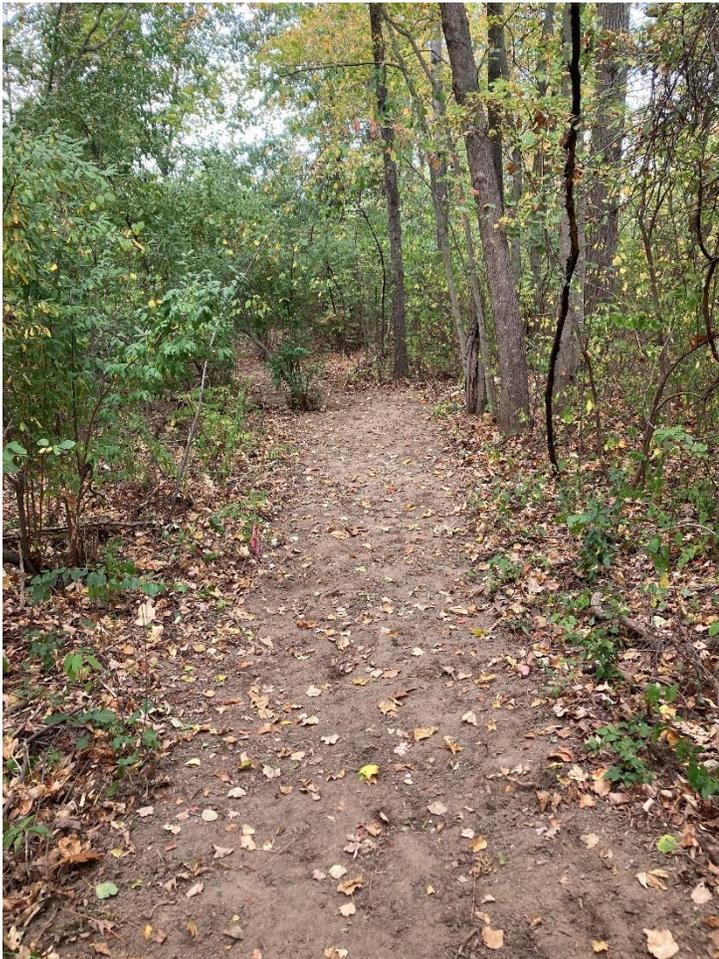


Cow Common Reroute

To reroute the BCT off nearly 2 miles of road, a new trail and boardwalk were built on Wayland Conservation Land. The reroute connects Wayland's Cow Common Conservation Area to the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). The trail was laid out, cleared, and constructed by the BCT Coordinator and five volunteers over the course of six project days.

Benefits of this reroute include the elimination of dangerous road walk, access to a viewpoint over the Sudbury River, connections to a residential area and Wayland's Town Center, and the future benefit of the MCRT continuing westbound in Massachusetts. This project was funded by a grant from Sudbury Assabet Concord River Stewardship Council (SuAsCo).

STATS:
New Trail ~ 0.25 mi
Vol Hours - 31
Blazes Installed - 10





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – TABLES - TrailsFest @ Wachusett Mountain

The BCT Coordinator attended TrailsFest at Wachusett and hosted a Bay Circuit Trail table with a trifold poster, stickers, and brochures. Attendees were encouraged to write down their favorite part of the BCT on a sticky note and post it on the BCT table. Twenty-five different folks stopped at the BCT table to talk, ask questions, and discuss related projects. The coordinator also spoke with different table hosts throughout the event and networked with other AMC chapter chairs and partners.

DATES:
June 1

STATS:
Attendees ~ 25+
Handed out merch
Spoke with partner
orgs





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – TABLES - West Bridgewater River Walk

BCT Committee members Jack Ames and Celia Roberts hosted a Bay Circuit booth at the annual West Bridgewater River Walk event on June 2, 2024. Amber was invited to co-man the booth. Jack, Celia, and Amber talked to dozens of event attendees about the BCT, its volunteer opportunities, trail connections, and existence in the three Bridgewaters. Partner organizations Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater (NRTB) and West Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation were both stationed nearby and spoke about the BCT to attendees.

The BCT booth handed out BCT and AMC stickers, brochures, and Techu and encouraged folks to take pictures with the example blazed tree that Jack constructed.

DATES:
June 2

STATS:
Attendees ~ 30+
Vol Hrs - 8





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – TABLES – Pedal Power @ Boston Museum of Science

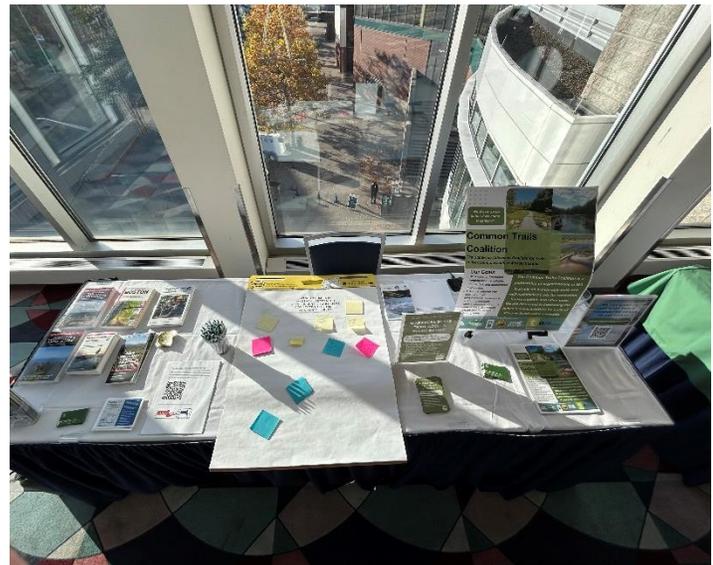
Amber and Rae Ettenger (AMC Conservation Policy Specialist) attended the HubLuv sponsored Pedal Power event at the Museum of Science. They spoke with event partners, local residents, museum visitors, and cyclist enthusiasts about bike connectivity in Eastern Massachusetts and how the BCT provides connectivity. Rae and Amber handed out BCT themed word searches to the kids in attendance, stickers, and BCT brochures to promote the trail. The interactive map was available for event attendees to explore.





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – PRESENTATIONS - Mass Trails Conference

Southern New England Trails Staff attended the Mass Trails Conference. The BCT Coordinator gave an hour presentation; the BCT in Bloom, to conference attendees interested in management and volunteer engagement on the BCT. Other trails staff hosted AMC booths for the NET and our Professional Trail Crews. The team networked with partner organizations and Amber left with multiple new leads for volunteer resources in the region.





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – PRESENTATIONS

Boston 20s & 30s Potluck/Slideshow

In partnership with Kate Bentsen and Aaron Valentine, Boston 20s & 30s hosted a BCT Potluck/Slideshow at AMC’s City Square office. The event ran for three hours and highlighted Amber’s work on the Bay Circuit Trail with an hour-long presentation. After the presentation, attendees discussed BCT engagement, volunteer opportunities, how to get involved, and BCT collaborative needs.

DATES:
June 9

STATS:
Vol Hours – 8
Attendees - 20



Bay Circuit
Trail &
Greenway

Amber Stearns – BCT Coordinator





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – CUSTOM CREWS/ONE DAY Bemis Volunteer Day @ Stoneymeade Conservation Land

Amber and Ian Bergemann of Acton Conservation Department organized a corporate volunteer work party with Bemis Associates. Eight volunteers from Bemis met up with Amber and Ian at the Stoneymeade Conservation Land in Acton. The BCT passes through this conservation property. The volunteers worked from 8am to 12pm sawing, lopping, and clearing a large hedge of invasive plants that had surrounded a stand of native trees in the field. Five truck beds of invasives were then brought to the Acton DPW by Ian and Amber. The volunteers were thoroughly engaged and hardworking, accomplishing far more removal than anticipated. Amber and Ian hope to host a similar event with Bemis in the future.

DATES:
May 13

STATS:
Vol Hours – 32
Attendees – 8
Cleared 5 truck beds of
invasives
Saved 4 trees



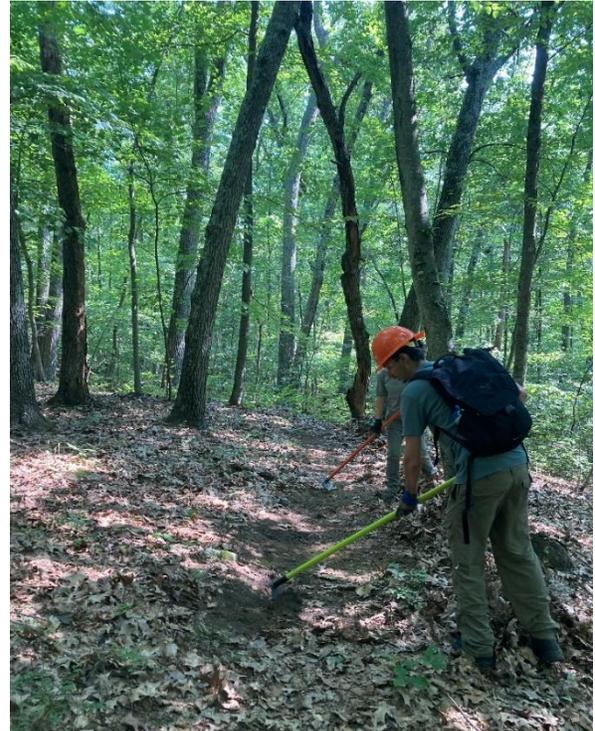


ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – CUSTOM CREWS/ONE DAY Trail Adopter Training – BCT in Framingham

Amber and Nora Sackett, AMC Volunteer Programs Manager, hosted a Trail Adopter Training on the BCT in Framingham. One volunteer showed, so the adopter training was very focused and collaborative with the volunteer, Aaron Valentine, of Boston 20s&30s chapter. About 0.5 miles of trail were maintained, clearing duff from the trail, opening the corridor, re-blazing where necessary, and sawing and clearing blowdowns. Aaron plans to host volunteer maintenance events with Boston 20s&30s now that he is certified as a Trail Adopter.

DATES:
July 28

STATS:
Attendees – 1
Blowdowns cleared - 4
Corridor cleared ~ 0.5mi
Blazes – 5
Certified 1 new adopter





ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – CUSTOM CREWS/ ONE DAY – Old Town Hill Guided Hikes – Trails & Sails Event Series

Essex National Heritage Area organized the free, regional event series Trails & Sails in September 2024. Under Trails & Sails, Amber lead two guided informational hikes at the Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) Old Town Hill property on the BCT in Newbury, MA. These hikes served to inform local trail users about the ins-and-outs of BCT trail management and construction and details about the BCT network. These hikes had good weather, turnout, and engagement!

DATES:
Sept 14 & 15

STATS:
Attendees – 17





VOLUNTEER PROJECTS – Two Rod Road Turnpike

AMC’s Volunteer Program Coordinator Nora Sackett and BCT Coordinator partnered with the town of Carlisle Trails Committee to restore the historic Two Rod Road. Two Rod Road was once a carriage road connecting Carlisle to Concord in the late 1700s, walked by Thoreau. Age has sunken the path and resulted in muddy pits during the wet seasons. To help restore a section of trail, 35 Carlisle volunteers, Nora, and Amber, built a 60ft section of turnpike in one of the muddiest spots.

The goals were to improve the drainage and sustainability of the trail while still allowing hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians use, and to teach Carlisle’s volunteers the skills necessary to build similar trail structures on their own. The event was exciting and successful, and the next few wet seasons will demonstrate the effectiveness of the turnpike.

DATES:
Sept 29 – Oct 1

STATS:
Attendees – 35
Vol Hours ~ 300
Turnpike – 60ft
Drains – 3





VOLUNTEER PROJECTS – Two Rod Road Turnpike CONT.

Photos taken by Nancy Hartle for the [Carlisle Mosquito](#).





BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL COMMITTEE

Amber hosts quarterly BCT Committee meetings with her 30 committee members. Since November 2023, three meetings have been held virtually to discuss updates and projects from the committee. The fourth meeting was held in person at Ashland Town Forest for a group hike. The next meeting will take place sometime in the winter to recognize the accomplishments of 2024 and the plans for 2025.

Committee members help to maintain the BCT, liaise between their towns, the AMC, and other project partners. They have also plotted out and built BCT reroutes. They host guided hikes and volunteer events and have brought Amber into the Bay Circuit community with open arms. Most recently, a few committee members took Amber on an 18-mile guided trek along a proposed section of trail through Billerica and Tewksbury to work on closing this gap in the trail.





BCT COMMITTEE STATS

The BCT Committee includes 30 members who represent many of the towns that the BCT weaves through. These members bring a spectrum of backgrounds and experiences to BCT management; some are municipal staff, members of town committees, or work for land trusts or state agencies. Many are involved in a variety of trail-related leadership in their regions, and all are dedicated volunteers. The committee is comprised of people working to maintain the Bay Circuit on and off trail. These folks conduct routine trail maintenance, update BCT maps and guides, plot reroutes for safer hiking and biking, and identify projects to improve the state of the trail. Many committee members have their own teams of maintainers and partners, and the stats below reflect much of the annual work they do for the Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway

Trail Maintenance

Volunteer Hours ~ 661+

- Feet of Bog Bridges Installed ~150ft
- # of Boardwalks/Bog Bridges Repaired ~ 3+
- Benches Installed – 1
- Blowdowns cleared ~50+
- Miles Trail Corridor Maintained ~ 200+
- Miles of Trail Rerouted and Blazed ~ 6

*Note: #s represent *reported* stats. True #s are likely much higher due to reporting inconsistencies.

Management (Off-Trail)

Volunteer Hours ~ 209+

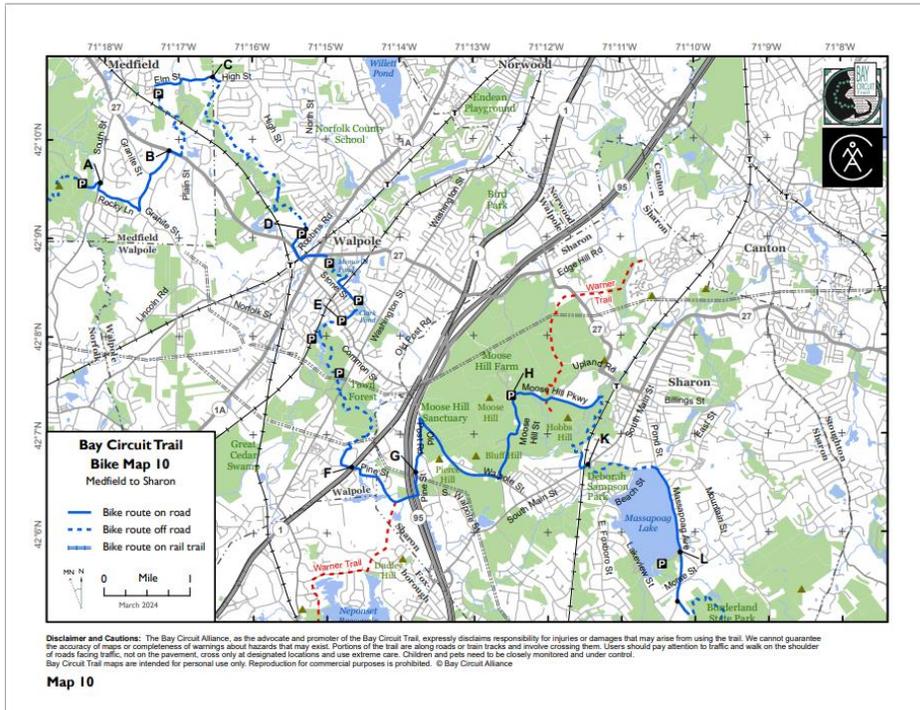
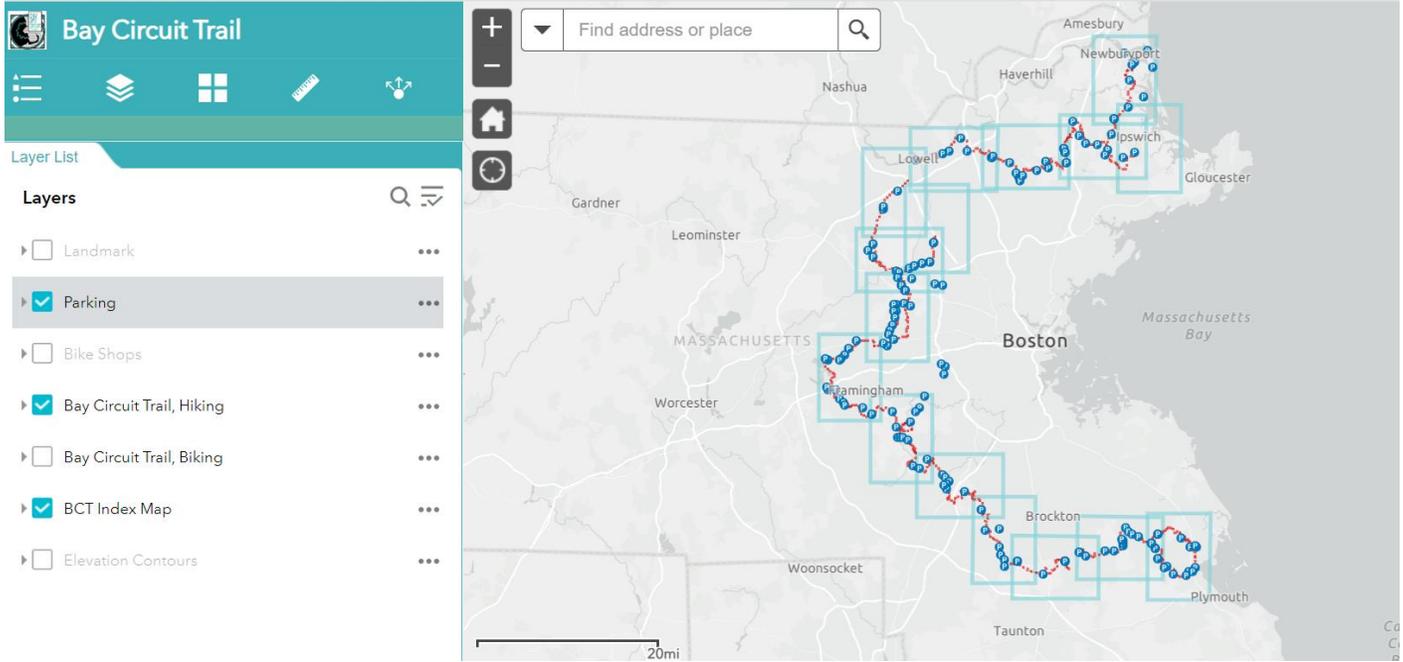
- Committee Meetings ~ 50hrs
- Mapping updates ~ 35
- Reroutes ~ 60+
- Reporting ~ 21
- Other ~ 43





MAPS AND USER RESOURCES

Between Amber, AMC's prior Cartographer Larry Garland, and Community Geographics, the BCT section guides and maps were updated, a new set of Bike Route maps and section guides are being created, and a new GIS interactive map is in development. The interactive map should be completed by the end of the year for use by the public. These will all be available on the Bay Circuit website.



MAP SET - BIKE

Disclaimer and Cautions: The Appalachian Mountain Club, 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.

BIKE

Bike Map 10 - Medfield, Walpole, Sharon - BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL route
As shown on Bike Map 10 updated February 2024, text updated February 2024

Know Before You Go:
All section guides provide written directions for the trail in a North to South (Southbound) direction unless otherwise noted.

There are two sets of BCT maps and guides. The Bike Map Set and the Bike Map Set. Each set shows the route for its specific use. Much of the bike route overlaps with the hike route, but the separate maps sets clearly display each route independently. To see where the trail uses overlap or differ, compare the map sets OR refer to the BCT Interactive Map on the Bay Circuit Trail website (<https://www.baycircuit.org>) to see the routes, and other trail use allowances, simultaneously.

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

Notes by Town
Medfield: (continued from map 9) white rectangular blazes. At turns two offset blazes are used, turn in direction of upper blaze. Medfield mileage shown is cumulative from the Sherborn-Medfield town line, and Map 9 point L is the same as Map 10 point A.
Walpole: White rectangular blazes. At turns two offset blazes are used, turn in direction of upper blaze.

Sharon: BCT is marked from Walpole to So. Main St. Trail with white rectangular blazes. At turns two offset blazes are used; turn in direction of upper blaze. BCT coincides with Warner Trail from just west of Rte. 1-95 to Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary visitors center. Look for triangular Warner Trail markers. Moose Hill trails are marked by trail signs, trail map available at visitor's center. Non-members of Mass. Audubon should pay trail user fee.

Bike Notes: The BCT can be traversed by bike but it is highly recommended that you research the segments you'll be biking for the level of difficulty/technical skill required. Much of the BCT is passable by road/gravel bike, but some off-road sections include boardwalks, steep hills, mud, and rocky terrain. These guides can provide you with brief descriptions of the trail and recommendations, but they should not be your only guide/resource. Check out the Trail Forks and All-Trails apps (open source, citizen resources), local guidebooks, and additional maps for detailed trail ratings/recommendations.

Terrain Labels:
R = Road
OFR = Off Road
PRT = Paved Rail Trail
URT = Unpaved Rail Trail

Medfield
BCT exists Noon Hill Reservation (parking) onto Noon Hill Rd; right to South St. Right briefly on South St A. N42 09.565 W71 18.064
0.0 R. From Noon Hill Rd and South St, follow South St south and turn left onto Rocky Ln.
0.6 R. Left onto Granite St.
1.1 R. Right onto Forest St.

B N42 09.892 W71 17.129
1.5 R. OFR. Right onto Rte. 27 (High St). Cross Rte. 27 immediately, proceed 0.15 mile. At Boston Edison utility lines overhead, turn left onto marked trail. Trail goes parallel to utility lines for a short stretch and then turns left into woods (look for blazes).

Bike Map 10 February 2024



BCT 2024 Season Report

10 City Square Suite 2 Boston, MA 02129 P: 617.523.0655

baycircuit.org



Thank You

The Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway would not exist without the thousands of hours of work that its volunteers contribute every year. Much like a young child, the BCT is in constant need of attention and affection and the volunteers who upkeep this trail provide these in abundance.

The BCT maintains partnerships across the region with 38 BCT towns, local land trusts, conservation commissions, trail committees, state agencies, local recreation groups, private landowners, AMC volunteer chapters, the BCT Committee, grant funders, and more.

These partnerships, grants, and volunteers have the shared goal of creating and maintaining natural places for all enjoy. I'm proud to be part of this work and so grateful for the dedication of this community to the network of trails and greenways in eastern Massachusetts.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the Bay Circuit project, and particularly to the BCT Committee this year. You have been kind and welcoming to me in this new role and I'm so glad to be working with you.

Happy Trails

-Amber Stearns

