CHARLES RIVER LINK TRAIL GUIDE

www.charlesriverlink.org

A sixteen-mile, six-town regional trail from Newton to the Bay Circuit Trail in Medfield

Natural Resources Commission
Wellesley Trails Committee
www.wellesleytrails.org
Wellesley, MA

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General Information

The Charles River Link is a regional trail connecting two major trails in Boston MetroWest - The Bay Circuit Trail in Medfield and the future extension of the Charles River Reservation Path in Newton to Wellesley. It provides a trail along one of the most scenic parts of the Charles River, a linkage between open space and conservation reservations along the river, and eventually a connection between the Bay Circuit Trail and downtown Boston.

Length: 16.5 miles
Connected Towns: 6
Off Road: 11.4 miles (69%)
Touches the Charles: 5 times
Highest Elevation: 410 feet (Pegan Hill)
Lowest Elevation: 50 feet (Cordingly Dam)
Google Maps: Use link on website to view trail route

Trail markers are 4" circular disks mounted on trees, trail posts, telephone poles, and street sign posts. An evergreen tree serves as an arrow to indicate direction of travel. Turns are marked before or at a trail intersection and with a confirmation marker after the turn.

The trail route is through suburban towns, and users are asked to stay on the trail. If you wander off trail, you may enter private property and jeopardize future trail usage. Portions of the trail, as indicated in the trail description, have restrictions where dogs and/or bikes are not permitted. Please abide by these restrictions.

Practice good trail usage and etiquette. In all open space and conservation land, no motorized vehicles, littering, dumping, camping, fires, or alcoholic beverages are permitted. Off-road trails are closed dusk to dawn. Do not feed, approach or touch wildlife, including waterfowl. Use protection against ticks and mosquito bites. If trails are muddy, limit bike usage. And lastly, please pick up after your dog and properly dispose of the waste. Thanks for your cooperation!

Trail Maps and Descriptions

Map 1 - Newton, Wellesley, Needham

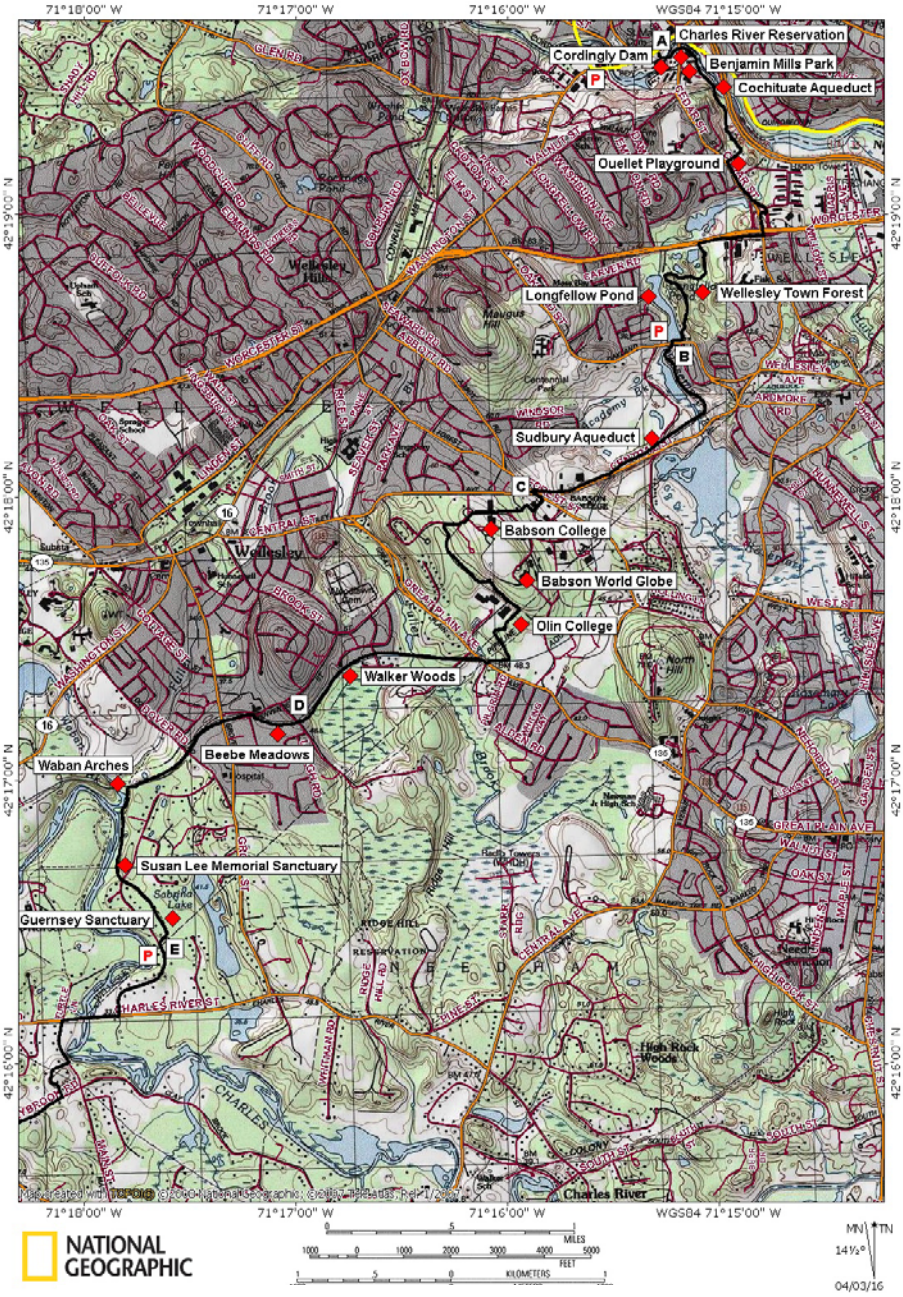
Trail begins in Newton, west of the intersection of I-95/Rt 128 and Rt 16. Park in the Wellesley municipal parking lot (50+ cars, metered with some 4-hr, free weekends) at Washington and River Sts. Cumulative miles in left-hand column. This section is 7.1 miles long.

A N42 19.569 W71 15.288

0.0 At the historic stone building (Ware Paper Mill, 1790) on Washington St in Newton, follow Charles River Path (red arrows). Cross the Charles River over Mary Hunnewell Fyffe Footbridge into Wellesley at Cordingly Dam.

> Side trail for Cordingly Dam: Walk downstream on paved path to view the falls below the dam and see the fish ladder. Especially spectacular in the spring with abundant water and in the winter when it is iced over.

Charles River Link Trail
Map 1 - Newton, Wellesley, Needham



P Parking

Jewel

Charles River Link Trail

Proposed Charles River Reservation Path

Left at office parking lot, cross Walnut St to Benjamin Mills Park, and follow paved path along the Charles River Reservation in back of office buildings (partly grass).

0.3 Cochituate Aqueduct and intersection with Crosstown Trail (green arrows). Leave the Charles River, follow trail through woods, and right at Charles St to Ouellet Playground parking area (10 cars).

0.7 Left on Cedar St, cross over Rt 9 on overpass, and right down ramp to Rt 9 highway.

1.4 Left onto trails in Wellesley Town Forest off Rt 9. ***Note: No more than 2 dogs per person or 3 dogs with permit.*** Right on Esker Trail (purple arrows). Just before Longfellow Pond, ascend 80-ft high esker with steep drop-offs on both sides. Right on Charles River Path (red arrows), and descend esker to Longfellow Pond.

B N42 18.553 W71 15.220

2.0 Longfellow Pond parking lot (20+ cars) on Oakland St. Cross Oakland St and climb steep eskers along Rosemary Brook on Charles River Path (red arrows).

2.4 Right onto Sudbury Path (blue arrows) and follow the Sudbury aqueduct to Wellesley Country Club.

Sudbury Aqueduct: Built in 1876 to provide water to Boston from the Sudbury Reservoir in Southborough. The two "castles" seen on the aqueduct are siphon houses that provided access to underground pipes. The Sudbury Aqueduct was deactivated in the 1950s, but still is used for backup service.

Continue along Wellesley Ave, pass monument commemorating Wellesley's original Town Hall, and cross over golf course footbridge to Forest St.

C N42 18.018 W71 15.885

3.2 Babson College. Left at Forest St and right to enter campus. Follow service road, paths, and sidewalks to Woodland Hill Dr.

3.7 Left onto woods trail bordering parking lot and continue on trail behind Center for Executive Education. Right on paved path.

4.1 Emergency phone box.

Side trail to Babson World Globe (0.15 mi): Left on paved path, right at end of path, continue on roadway and see globe to left. The 28-ft, 25-ton world globe was erected in 1955 and was the world's largest revolving globe. It served as a teaching tool for global planning and visualizing economic relationships.

Continue along ridge overlooking the Boston Sports Center and Babson Skating Rink.

4.2 Right on pipe line at Olin College, and enter Needham. At bottom of hill, follow woods trail, and right onto Sudbury Aqueduct.

4.6 Cross Rt 135, reenter Wellesley and continue on Sudbury Aueduct. Cross over Fuller Brook at aqueduct gate house. Cross Wildon Rd and pass Walker Woods and town wetlands adjacent to the Recycling and Disposal Facility.

D N42 17.207 W71 16.985

5.5 Cross Cartwright Rd and follow paved path along Beebe Meadow. ***Note: No more than 2 dogs per person or 3 dogs with permit.*** Left at Benvenue St, cross Grove St, and left to reconnect with Sudbury Aqueduct. Cross Dover Rd, pass Wellesley College's Nehoiden Golf Course, and continue to Waban Arches.

Nehoiden Golf Course: Constructed in 1892, it was one of the first golf courses in New England and is the oldest 9-hole course in the country.

Waban Arches: The stone arches are 500-ft long and carried water across Waban Brook 50-ft below. Walk about one-third the way across the arches, and look left to see the Charles River and Pegan Hill, the highest point on the trail.

6.3 Just before Waban Arches, left on connector trail to bottom of the arches and left on Guernsey Path (orange arrows). Follow trail along Charles River ***Note: Town easement - stay on trail, private property on either side***. Across the river is Elm Bank. Cross Livingston Rd at the Susan Lee Sanctuary, and continue on easement.

7.0 Trail intersection with Guernsey Sanctuary Trail.

Side trail through Guernsey Sanctuary (0.6 mi loop): Left at trail intersection to sanctuary (purple arrows). Back in 1880s, this was "Disneyland East," an 800-acre extravaganza of castles, steamboats, gardens, amusements, exhibits, hotel, ballroom, and a lake. Only thing remaining is Sabrina Lake, an artificial lake with two islands.

E N42 16.418 W71 17.643

7.1 Guernsey Sanctuary parking area (3 cars). Left on Winding River Rd.

Map 2 - Needham, Dover, Natick, Medfield

Cumulative miles in left-hand column from start of trail. This section is 9.4 miles long.

E N42 16.418 W71 17.643

7.1 Needham town line on Winding River Rd. Guernsey Sanctuary parking area (3 cars). Walk south on Winding River Rd, right on Charles River Street, and cross the Charles River into Dover. Charles River St now becomes Dover Rd.

7.7 Left at Main St, and right at Belden Rd. Look left for view of Charles River heading downstream to Dedham. Right at Clay Brook Rd, left at Pleasant St, and enter Natick along Pleasant St. ***Note: Most of these roads are well traveled. Stay left facing traffic and yield to traffic.*** Right onto Pegan Ln, a designated scenic road with Lookout Farm to right.

F N42 15.313 W71 18.299

9.0 Pegan Hill parking area (10 cars). Ascend Pegan Hill on trail from parking lot to summit.

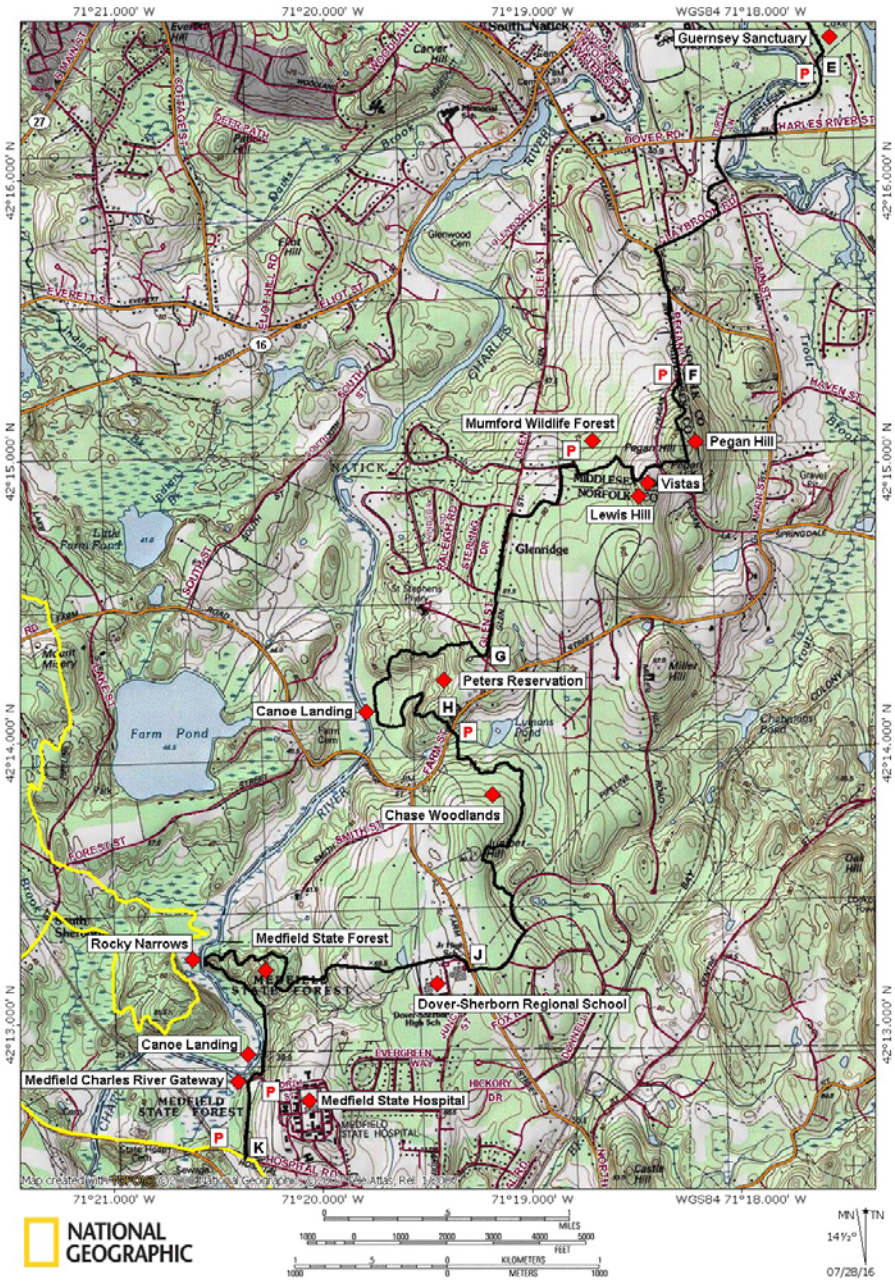
Pegan Hill is a 410 ft high drumlin and is the highest point in Natick. Summit is now overgrown, but was cleared in 1895 to establish a geodetic survey station.

Descend slightly, right on trail to field. Follow path across field to highest point.

Vistas: Near the maple/beach trees, look NW for Mt Wachusett (34 mi, 2,006 ft), Nobscot Hill with antennas (10 mi, 603 ft), and on a clear day, to the right in line with Natick Mall, is Mt Monadnock (59 mi, 3165 ft) with Mt Watatic (43 mi, 1832 ft) in front. Wander S through stone wall to Lewis Hill to see more of Mt Wachusett, and look E for top of Great Blue Hill (10 mi, 635 ft).

Right turn, and descend on path along tree line and into the woods. Left at bottom of the hill, and enter Mumford Wildlife Forest. ***Note: No bikes permitted in Mumford Wildlife Forest and dogs must be on leash.*** Follow trail to Sassamon Rd.

Charles River Link Trail
Map 2 - Needham, Dover, Natick, Medfield



Parking — Charles River Link Trail
Jewel — Bay Circuit Trail

10.0 Mumford Wildlife Forest kiosk at Sassamon Circle (6 cars). Follow Sassamon Rd, and left at Indian Springs Rd.

> Weatherbury Farm: On right along Indian Springs Rd, view farm animals in fenced area. Only place on the trail where you can see llamas!

Enter Dover before right bend in road. At bend road becomes Wildwood Rd.

10.4 Left onto Glen St sidewalk.

G N42 14.314 W71 19.218

11.2 Trail right into Peters Reservation off driveway on Glen St opposite Wight St. ***Note: No dogs or bikes permitted in Peters Reservation.*** Follow trails through intersections marked #26 through #32.

> Side trail to Charles River (250 ft): Right at trail intersection #29. Scenic river view at canoe landing along red pine grove.

Follow trails through intersections marked #24 through #21. Cross Farm St.

H N42 14.048 W71 19.393

12.4 Chase Woodlands parking lot (4 cars) off Farm St. ***Note: No dogs or bikes permitted in Chase Woodlands.*** Follow trails through intersections marked #1, #19, #18 #17, and #14 through #11. Trail follows a trail easement from #11 through residential property. At grassed area, proceed directly across lawn to trail into woods and follow trail easement adjacent to the driveway to Grand Hill Dr. ***Note: Stay on trail, private property on either side.***

13.3 Right onto Grand Hill Dr. (For northbound hikers: No left turn marker. Look for trail entrance between mailboxes 8 and 8A). Right at Donnelly Dr.

J N42 13.193 W71 19.289

13.8 At intersection of Donnelly Dr and Farm St, cross Farm St and onto paved path to Dover-Sherborn Regional School. ***Note: No dogs permitted on school property***. Immediate right on grass, cross driveway to parking lot, and left onto pipe line bordering tennis courts. Trail joins gravel service road to outer playing fields. Cross playing fields to stone wall. If playing fields are in use, walk around perimeter to point opposite the end of service road.

14.5 Proceed directly across hay field and enter woods trail in Medfield State Forest. Follow trail down to flat open area, over bog bridge, and reenter woods. Right at first trail intersection, and left before trail enters field (private property). Follow trails to the Charles River.

15.6 Bluff overlooking Rocky Narrows.

> Rocky Narrows: Known as the "Gates of the Charles," look for paddlers as they navigate the swift water through the narrows below the steep bluff.

Descend from bluff and follow trail along Charles River past canoe landing.

16.2 Ascend to an overlook at the Medfield Charles River Gateway.

> Spectacular view of the Charles River and Rocky Narrows Reservation across the river. This was a 2015 DCAMM project to restore the wetlands along the banks of the closed Medfield State Hospital. Parking at top of hill (20+ cars).

Continue on gravel and partly paved woods road to Hospital Rd.

K N42 12.523 W71 20.376

16.5 Trail intersection with Bay Circuit Trail on Hospital Rd. Parking to right (0.1 mi) on Hospital Rd before railroad tracks (8 cars).

Trail Jewels

A goal for the trail was to interconnect open space jewels and maximize off-road travel. Each jewel represents open spaces and places with quiet woods, picturesque views, and scenic attractions. There are 26 jewels along the trail, and the jewels and their administrators, from north to south, are:

1. Mary Hunnewell Fyffe Footbridge and Cordingly Dam, Department of Conservation and Recreation
2. Charles River Reservation, Department of Conservation and Recreation
3. Benjamin Mills Park, Department of Conservation and Recreation
4. Cochituate Aqueduct, Town of Wellesley
5. Ouellet Playground, Town of Wellesley
6. Wellesley Town Forest, Town of Wellesley
7. Longfellow Pond, Town of Wellesley
8. Sudbury Aqueduct, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
9. Babson College
10. Babson World Globe, Babson College
11. Olin College
12. Walker Woods, Wellesley Conservation Council
13. Beebe Meadow, Town of Wellesley
14. Waban Arches, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
15. Susan Lee Memorial Sanctuary, Wellesley Conservation Council
16. Guernsey Sanctuary, Wellesley Conservation Council
17. Pegan Hill, The Trustees
18. Lewis Hill, Dover Land Conservation Trust
19. Mumford Wildlife Forest, New England Forestry Foundation
20. Peters Reservation, The Trustees
21. Chase Woodlands, The Trustees
22. Dover-Sherborn Regional School
23. Medfield State Forest, Department of Conservation and Recreation
24. Rocky Narrows, Department of Conservation and Recreation
25. Medfield Charles River Gateway, Mass Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance.
26. Medfield State Hospital, Town of Medfield

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