

MCRT, Wachusett Greenways' Section Tour Along the Quinapoxet

Thomas Street, West Boylston round trip to Wachusett Street (Route 31), Holden. 12 miles total round trip, with 10.3 miles on stone dust-paved accessible, shared-use path, plus 1.4 miles on-road to reach local shops.

Wachusett Greenways <https://www.wachusettgreenways.org/wordpress/> is developing and maintains the central 30 mile section of the Mass Central Rail Trail through Sterling, West Boylston, Holden, Rutland, Oakham and Barre. Key partners are MA DCR Watershed, MassTrails and eight Wachusett/Ware towns including Paxton and Princeton.



Ride through pristine woodlands in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed, a main source of water for the metro Boston area. Next to you is the Quinapoxet River, a clear stream that flows around boulders and over small rapids. There are plenty of locations for a stop along the route to see the sights, including the Charlotte Kaplan and the Jeremiah Kaplan Bridges constructed on the rail trail over the old stone railroad abutments.



Spring brings ladyslippers and other wildflowers along the trail.



Check out the Springdale Mill site, once a village and woolen factory along the tracks (see <https://www.wachusettgreenways.org/wordpress/springdale-mill-history/self-guided-tour/> for a self-guided tour).



Just before crossing Manning Street, you will cross over the Quabbin Aqueduct, one of the longest underground aqueducts in the world, supplying over 500 M gallons of water to the Boston area each day.



Next is a section of gentle switchbacks that bring riders west 2.3 miles, between Manning and Wachusett Streets. This section constructed by Wachusett Greenways with MassTrails support was completed in summer 2025.

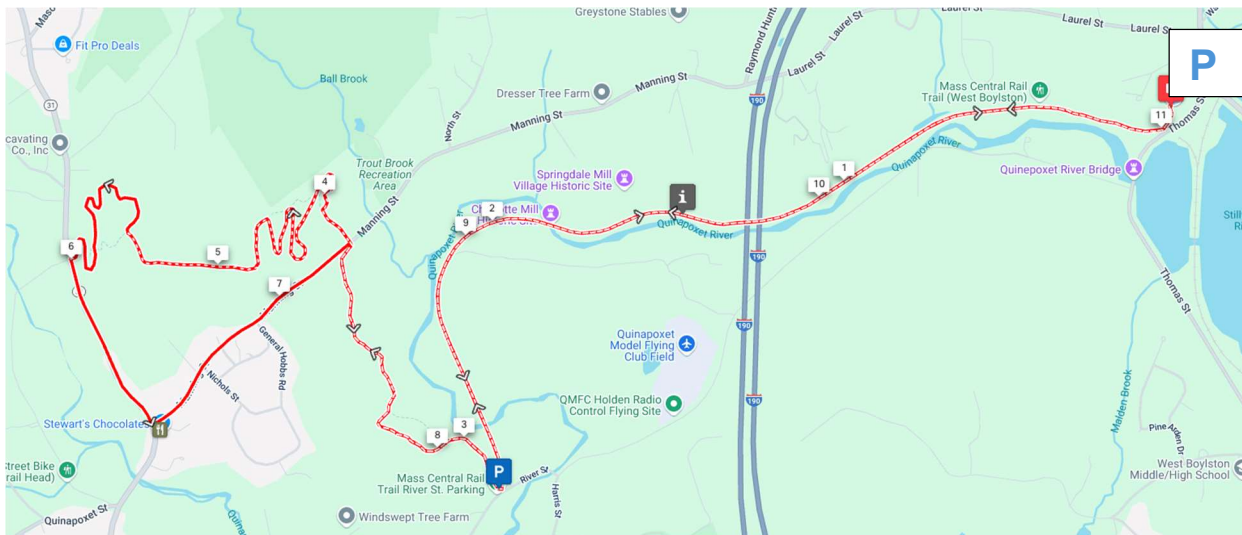
At the western end of this route, you'll find refreshments at the intersection of Manning and Wachusett streets – see Google Maps.

Start: Thomas St Parking Lot, 155-159 Thomas St, W Boylston MA

Additional parking along trail: just beyond 300 River St, Holden MA

(year round accessible portable restrooms provided by Wachusett Greenways at Thomas St., West Boylston and River St., Holden MCRT parking lots)

RWGPS route: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/51300073>



Route description:

0.0 mi – Thomas St., West Boylston, MCRT parking lot

0.1 mi- Trail from parking lot turns right to pass along Quinapoxet River on left.

1.2 mi – Cross underneath I-290 at the West Boylston/Holden line (only noisy place along the route).

1.4 mi – Springdale Mill interpretive site.

1.8 mi – Charlotte Kaplan bridge over the Quinapoxet River constructed by Wachusett Greenways.

2.7– Jeremiah Kaplan bridge over the Quinapoxet River constructed by Wachusett Greenways.

3.0 mi. – River Street. Turn sharply to right and continue on trail next to parking.

3.2 mi – Overlook high over Quinapoxet River

3.25 – Bear left at fork in trail

3.8 mi – Crossing Quabbin Aqueduct.

4.0 mi – Cross Manning St (caution: busy road. Use flashing crosswalk light button) and continue on the MCRT.

6.3 mi – Left on Wachusett St, Route 31, (busy road, bumpy pavement)

6.7 mi –Left on Manning St. See corner store and chocolate shop on right at the corner. Enjoy. Then continue on Manning St.

7.6 – Right onto MCRT at flashing light crossing.

7.9 – Bear right at fork.

8..6 – Sharp left at bottom of hill (at River St.) onto MCRT trail

11.5 - Left on connector to Thomas St. parking lot

11.6--End