

# Taunton River Pathways



## FIND YOUR PATHWAY TO THE TAUNTON RIVER

The slowly meandering miles of the Taunton River will surprise you with scenic beauty and varied wildlife. Its landscape, like the river itself, is gentle and accessible, perfect for families and casual or novice recreationists. Pastures, woodlands, meadows and marshlands along the river banks are rich with nesting birds like kingfisher, osprey and heron, providing an outdoor experience that feels surprisingly removed from the city. The Taunton is also rich in history, with examples of colonial millworks and stories of early contact between English settlers and the Wampanoag. Whether it's a bike ride with friends, family picnic, or quiet evening paddle, Taunton River Pathways offers many ways to explore and find new adventures and treasures that have been here all along.



## NATURE AND HISTORY OF THE TAUNTON RIVER



The Taunton is tidal for 12 miles north of Mount Hope Bay to north of Weir Village in Taunton; the tide averages 4.4 feet in Fall River and 2.8 feet at Weir Village.

The lower Taunton River is host to the rare Atlantic Sturgeon, which can grow to 14 feet long.



In the 19th century, herring were so plentiful—millions “whistled through” the fish weirs—that they were known as “Taunton Turkey.” Today, the Taunton River is part of the state’s largest alewife run, including the Nemasket River with headwaters at the Assawompset Ponds.



The first iron forge was established on the Forge River in Raynham in 1652. It became the longest operating forge of its kind in the country—more than 230 years in operation.

Hessel's hairstreak, a globally rare butterfly, lives in the Taunton River's Atlantic white cedar swamps.



The gently flowing Taunton drops only 20 feet in elevation over its 44-mile course.

Plymouth gentian and pale green orchis live with more than 360 plant species on Taunton River lands



The new Veterans Memorial Bridge is a four-leaf bascule bridge connecting Somerset and Fall River via Route 6 and Route 138. Opened in 2011, it includes a separated bike path on its north side dedicated in honor of Pvt. Michael E. Bouthot.

River otters and harbor seals have returned to the river, a sign of improved habitat and water quality.



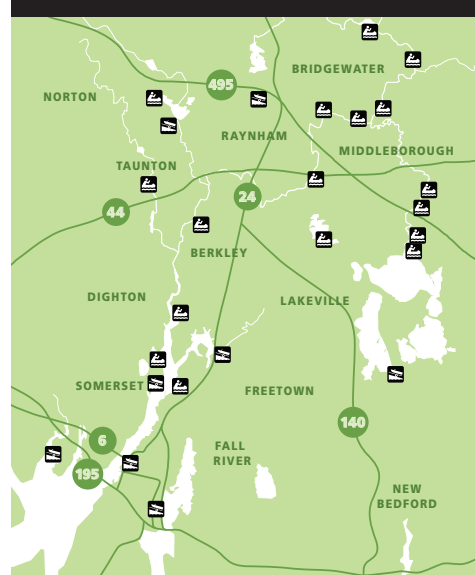
Wampanucket, at the Assawompset Ponds in Middleborough, is the one of the most significant Paleoindian depositions in New England. This site contains evidence of dwellings dating from 12,000–8,000 years before present day.



The waters of the Taunton River are naturally tea-colored due to the decomposition of leaves from overhanging trees.

Cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, pumpkins, Christmas trees and corn, are among the primary agricultural products grown along the river.

## RIVER ACCESS



## TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

For details and an interactive map of the region's boat ramps, access points, and dams, visit [www.exploreri.org/mapper2.php](http://www.exploreri.org/mapper2.php)

## BIKE ROUTE NETWORK



## GETTING AROUND BY BIKE

A 22-mile network of off-road trails and on-road bike lanes is planned from Fall River to Taunton. [www.srpedd.org/regional-bike-plan](http://www.srpedd.org/regional-bike-plan)

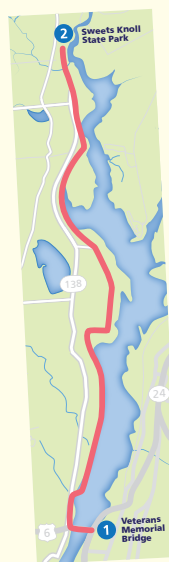
## PROTECTED LANDS



## PROTECTING LANDS ALONG THE RIVER

2200+ acres have been protected through public-private conservation partnerships. [www.savethetaunton.org](http://www.savethetaunton.org)

## A TAUNTON RIVER AFTERNOON



An exhilarating bike ride from Fall River takes you over the new bikeway on the Veterans Memorial Bridge ① with its panoramic river views; then along the shaded river roads in Somerset and Dighton to a grassy picnic spot overlooking the river in Sweets Knoll State Park. ② After lunch, you follow the trail down to the river's edge as a small group of kayakers arrives. On their paddle down river, they spotted great blue herons, osprey, bald eagles, songbirds and a great horned owl. Next to the launch site, you discover remnants of an old granite ferry crossing. Now come the decisions—Relax here? Explore the old railbed along the river?



Beguiled by the cool breezes and sun on your shoulders, maybe you sit back, watch the clouds, listen to the river, and imagine sleek clipper ships cruising these waters on a fine afternoon in the 1850s.



**TAUNTON RIVER PATHWAYS** is a vision for a network of land and water based recreation trails along the Wild and Scenic Taunton River. [www.tauntonriver.org](http://www.tauntonriver.org)

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- National Park Service
- Rhode Island Blueways Alliance
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District [SRPEDD]
- Taunton River Stewardship Council
- Taunton River Watershed Alliance
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wildlands Trust

## Photo Credits

Top: Taunton River, Dighton/Jerry & Marcie Monkman  
Hessel's Hairstreak: Tom Murray  
Plymouth Gentian: Steve Arena

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## EXPERIENCE *the* TAUNTON RIVER

### SUGGESTED PADDLE

#### Weir Village Park to Dighton Rock State Park (6 miles / 3-4 hours)

When paddling these waters you should plan your trip around the tides. A one-way trip downriver from Weir Village Park to Dighton Rock can be made at any tide but will be much easier on an outgoing tide. On an incoming tide you can also paddle upriver from Berkley Bridge, Sweets Knoll or Dighton Rock quite easily, making it possible to do a round trip if you time the tides right. Especially in the lower reaches, low tide will expose mud flats, which attract interesting birds but can make launching and landing more challenging. For more details, visit [www.exploreri.org](http://www.exploreri.org)

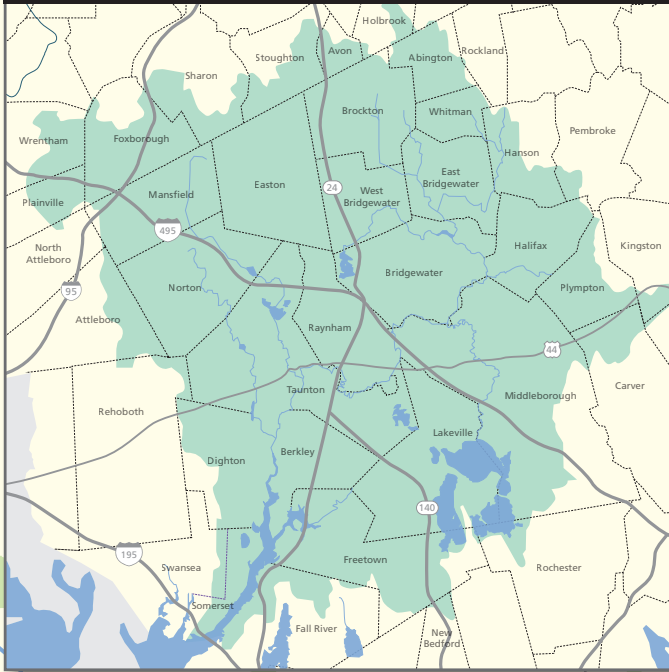
### SUGGESTED WALK AND PICNIC

#### Sweets Knoll State Park

#### (1 mile loop / 1.5 hours, including picnic)

Down the hill from the parking area, follow the wide grassy trail straight down to a picnic table with an expansive view at the river's edge. Retrace your steps to the old railroad crossing, then take the trail to the left to a stone wall, where the trail veers left again up a small knoll and picnic site overlooking the river. From the overlook, continue down to the river and then loop back to the trail along the railroad bed to return to the parking area.

### TAUNTON RIVER WATERSHED / 562 square miles

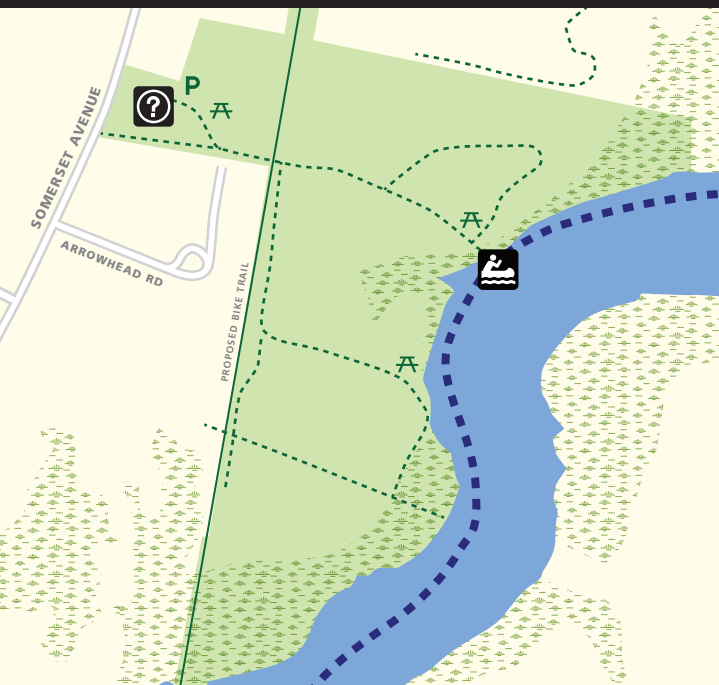


### Bicycle & Boating Tips

- Always wear your bicycle helmet on the trail and your life jacket on the river.
- Remove what you bring, clean up more if you can.
- Respect private property.
- Find bike safety publications at MassBike website: [massbike.org](http://massbike.org)
- Paddle safety info at American Canoe Society website: [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
- For canoe/kayak rentals, visit Nemasket Kayak Center in Wareham. [www.nemasketkayak.com](http://www.nemasketkayak.com)

- PROPOSED BIKE ROUTE
- WATER TRAIL
- PUBLIC & CONSERVATION LAND
- CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH
- TRAILERED BOAT LAUNCH
- INFORMATION

### SWEETS KNOLL STATE PARK / Dighton



### DIGHTON ROCK STATE PARK / Berkley

