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## Nashua river rail trail

Nashua Railway | Photo Milo Bateman -Marion Stoddart, a member of Friends of the Nashua River Rail Trail New England in the fall is a nature spectator sport, and a special place to view its stormy colors is the Nashua River Rail Trail, covering just over 12 miles in Massachusetts and spilling into New Hampshire. Maples, oaks, beeches and birch trees adorn the cobblestone road that connects several picturesque cities northwest of Boston. Bright-eyed observers will note several granite posts along the way; these centuries-old structures in the woods' tranquility-marked on one side with a 'W' and miles to Worcester, and on the other with a 'P' and miles to Portland, Maine-offer whisper trails hoarse rail past. An old railway mileage sign along the Nashua railway | Photo The TrailLink sc302 I like the stretch between Pepperell and Groton because it offers the closest views of the Nashua River, said Steve Kalter, who co-chairs the Friends of Nashua River Rail Trail. And there's a lot of wildlife along the trail. People have seen bald eagles, owls, deer and turkeys running across the trail, but my favourite is seeing swans on the river. It's always my day. A bright splash of artificial color also adorns two underpasses in Groton, towards the southern end of the trail. The murals, painted by local art students, depict the history of the corridor, from steam engine trains to the railway path, and represent a diverse mix of contemporary passengers, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrian riders, wheelchair users and skiers enjoying their journey in the seasons. Nashua River Rail Trail community connector | Photo Milo Bateman Roughly in the middle, several shops and restaurants surround the trail in Pepperell (almost everyone interviewed noted that there's a popular ice cream shop here), which is the optimal lunch destination, or a nice turnaround point for shorter walks and rides. At the southern end in Ayer, the MBTA station serves the suburban rail line that leads to Boston, opening access to the trail is a beautiful natural setting for urbanites and tourists. Even simpler: Bikes are allowed on board trains. Nashua, New Hampshire, at the other end of the trail, offers a mile-long stretch ending at a picturesque tree-framed pond. Combining road travel and connections with other local trails, travellers can connect about an 8-mile route from here to the city centre to enjoy the city's amenities. This northern part of the trail was the last to fall into place and merged very quickly; Nashua Urban Planner Roger Houston recalls that it takes less than 30 days to complete once construction has begun. It just as quickly became a popular community asset. The adjacent division even named all its streets after bicycle brands such as Schwinn, Trek and Huff, It's amazing how many kids have nowhere to ride a bike, especially in New England with narrow, busy roads, Houston said. As soon as we opened this trail, we saw a lot of children – and many older people – riding their bikes. People came to us and were so grateful. It takes the Village Nashua River Railway Trail | Photo User TrailLink sc302 With so much to go for it, it's no surprise the rail trail sees a lot of use, especially on warm, sunny weekends. Since the trail opened in 2002, some sections have recently been in need of repair and repaved just a few years ago; further paving is planned to smooth out the rest of the trail in the future. Unfortunately, one of the best assets of the trail, its tree buffer, can also keep maintenance demanding with downed branches, leaf debris and root tremors. Although Massachusetts, like many states, faces budget constraints and staff time to manage a large number of routes through large territories, a dedicated local volunteer group-Friends of the Nashua River Rail Trail-stepped out in support of efforts by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to keep the Nashua River Rail Trail in good condition. We just got half a dozen of our members officially approved to use chainsaws, Kalter said. They have to go through a course provided by the state that will allow us to walk the trail with dcr's permission to mitigate some of the work. We can do it ourselves now, and we have people who are willing to do it for free at volunteer time.DCR it maintains many routes in addition to the Nashua River rail trail, so they are happy to have us, and we work closely with them. Judy Lorimer is one of the members who took the chainsaw course and can't wait to be there this fall to clean up the equestrian path adjacent to the paved rail-trail. Part of it has become overgrown and she is looking forward to taking Sweetpea, her bay mare, on another ride on the trail once the work is complete. For equestrian, the railway trail serves as an important channel to the J. Harry Rich State Forest, as well as other conservation plots and equestrian trails in the area. I moved to Pepperell in 1976, and at that time the railroad trail was still a railroad, Lorimer said. I belong to several different horse organizations, and when we heard that it was going to convert to a rail-trail, we went to a lot of meetings and put in a plug for equestrian access-and so they did! They left an unpaved trail that is parallel to the bike path. For his fellow trail-goers, Lorimer recommends calling when passing a horse, as the cyclist comes quickly and quietly behind them could give the horse the impression that the predator is approaching and make them afraid. The human voice is also preferred over that might startle them. River Revolution Nashua River Rail Trail | Photo By TrailLink sc302 Another volunteer, Marion Stoddart, also illustrates this unwavering work ethic and dedication to the cause. Even at 91, she rarely misses the trail cleanup event organized by the Friends group. Before her work on the trail, Stoddart's first passion was to restore the Nashua River, which is a large part of the road parallel. After being used as a landfill for decades, the river was in a terrible state when Stoddart first moved to Groton in 1962. Lorimer, also a longtime resident, remembers once riding near railway tracks, but the smell from the river was so bad that she turned around and returned home. The river was so polluted -- one of the worst in the country, she said. Every town along the river discharged its raw sewage into it, and there were paper and plastic factories that dump industrial waste. Stoddart rallied thousands of civic activists around the issue, which pushed lawmakers to pass the Massachusetts Clean Water Act in 1965, becoming the first state in the country to pass clean water legislation. Just this month, Stoddart was honored for her work at the 50th 1950s event. Nashua Railway | Photo TrailLink user TheresaJaquez River Nashua literally ran psychedelic colors of red, blue, green, yellow-of all the different types of chemicals that were dumped into it in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, said Dwayne Ericson, DCR's Central Highlands District manager. It's intact today! And that's because all the hard work from the catchment association brings the problem to light, talking about science, good stewardship and pollution control, and getting everyone on board. Now the river is a recreational resource that is used for canoeing, kayaking and fishing, and the railway trail leads right next to it. As Stoddart reflects on her own legacy and those who have tirelessly supported these efforts, she notes the intertwined importance of the river and the trail. We had the river cleaned while we worked to protect the land along the river for protection and recreation, she said. There are countless reasons why the Nashua Railway Trail is important. It is very important to have natural vegetation along the river that helps to filter the pollutants and store the water to be gradually discharged into the river. Greenway offers a 300-foot bumper between the ground and the river, preventing any development along the edge of the river. It protects the river from pollution and run-off and provides habitat for wildlife. It's a corridor for wildlife and humans. Having recently moved to the neighbouring town of Ayer after Over 50 years in Groton, Stoddart loves that he can now ride from the southern end of the trail to his northern tip, and enjoys seeing all the use he gets. I live very close to the Nashua River Railway Trail so I can ride my bike from where I live to get to the trail, get a little peddly. The next day I rode my bike to Nashua. I reckon I'm going back and forth, I've been driving about 25 miles! I really, really enjoyed it and on the way back I stopped in Pepperell and got a root beer. Nashua Railway | Photo Steve Kalter Laura Stark is a senior writer and editor for Rails to Trails magazine, responsible for highlighting the trails and people working hard to support them across America. Nashua River Rail TrailThe Nashua River Rail Trail at the Groton School Pond in Groton, MALength12.5 mi (20.1 km)LocationMiddlesex County, MassachusettsHillsborough County, New HampshireDesignationMassachusetts State ParkTrailheadsPark St. and Main St., Ayer, Massachusetts (42°33'36N 71°35'23W/42.560083°N 71.589646°W/42.560083; -71.589646) Gilson Rd. at Country Side Dr., Nashua, New Hampshire (42°42'57N 71°31'55W / 42.715919°N 71.531963°W / 42.715919; -71.531963)UseBicycling, inline skating, walking, horseback riding, cross-country skiingHiking detailsRight of wayFormer railroad lineMaintained byDepartment of Conservation and RecreationWebsiteNashua River Rail Trail NashuaAyer Location of trailheads in New Hampshire and Massachusetts The Nashua River Rail Trail is a 12.5-mile (20.1 km) paved mixed-use rail trail in northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire control of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It roughly tracks the flow of the Nashua River, passing through the cities of Ayer, Groton, Pepperell and Dunstable, Massachusetts, and ends about a mile across the New Hampshire state line in Nashua, New Hampshire. The trail is used by walkers, cyclists, inline skaters, riders and cross-country skiers. [2] The history of Ayer was the main crossroads of both north-south and east-west railway lines during the rapid development of rail transport. The Nashua River Rail Trail is located on the former Hollis Railroad branch in Boston and Maine, which follows the old Indian Nashaway Trail. [quote required] The line was originally part of the Worcester & Nashua Railroad, which connected Worcester, Massachusetts and Nashua, New Hampshire, which opened on July 3, 1848. The line was extended to Portland, Maine in 1874 and it became part of the Worcester, Nashua and Rochester railroads connecting Worcester and points east to Canada's Grand Trunk Railroad via Portland, Maine. Boston & Maine Railroad took over the line in 1886 and called it Worcester, Nashua & Portland (WN & P) division. Between 1911 and 1912, a second track from Worcester was added to the Passenger transport on the line ended in 1934. After World War II, with a gradual decline in rail traffic, the track fell into use, and the last freight train ran on the line in 1982. Some concrete signal bases can still be seen and railway slabs and ties can be found buried under the sand. [3] DcR bought the Hollis Branch in 1987, and the trail was paved with mass highway between 2001 and 2002. The official opening and dedication was October 25, 2002. [3] Presents pepperell businesses along the Nashua River Rail Trail, which moves along a flat and picturesque landscape with many opportunities to see wildlife. The trail passes through wetlands, ponds, forests, swamps and farmland, where you can see a variety of wildlife such as beavers, herons and swans. In the Ayer Trail, which is close to Ayer Train Station, which offers access to rail services between Boston and Fitchburg, there is a 60-seat parking lot with public toilets. Along the trail there are several other parking spaces that cross many roads and bridges. Visitors to the trail can stop for a snack at the nearby

Groton Center or at pepperell's restaurant and ice cream stand. Free parking is available at Pepperell, where the trail passes through Massachusetts Route 113 and on the Nashua Trail in Yudicky Park. See also List of Railway Paths Reference ^ Nashua River Railway Trail. railstrails.us 12 March 2019. ^ Nashua River Railway Trail. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 12 March 2019. † a b Nashua River Railway Path. Department of Conservation and Recreation. Archived from the original 12.1.2006. 12 March 2019. Wikimedia Commons external links have media related to the Nashua River Rail Trail. Nashua Railway Trail, Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation Nashua River Rail Trail, Nashua City Coordinates: 42°39′00″N 71°34′36″W﻿ / ﻿42.65000°N 71.57667°W﻿ / 42.65000; -71.57667 Taken from

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