

# New U.S. Bicycle Routes Approved in Maryland and Tennessee



**Adventure Cycling Association**

*Approved routes in U.S. Bicycle Route System now encompass 5,847 miles in 12 states*

**MISSOULA, MONTANA, November 5, 2013** — [Adventure Cycling Association](#) and the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials](#) (AASHTO) today announced that AASHTO's Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering has approved U.S. Bike Route 50 in Maryland, which follows the C&O Canal Towpath, and U.S. Bike Route 23 in Tennessee.

“Development of the U.S. Bicycle Route System is a product of the many partnerships being fostered all across the country between state transportation departments and community groups,” said Bud Wright, executive director of AASHTO. “We are proud of the role state DOTs play in helping grow this national bicycle system and appreciate the work of Adventure Cycling and all the organizations involved in making these new routes possible.”

The [U.S. Bicycle Route System](#) (USBRS) now encompasses 5,847 miles of approved U.S. Bike Routes in 12 states: Alaska, Kentucky, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

## **U.S. Bicycle Route 50 in Maryland**

U.S. Bicycle Route 50 (USBR 50) follows the established Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal National Historical Park through Maryland. Located along the north bank of the Potomac River, the 184.5-mile canal towpath originates in Washington, DC, then crosses Maryland to Cumberland, where it connects with the Great Allegheny Passage Trail.

“The alignment of USBR 50 with the C&O Canal in Maryland is a clear example of how the U.S. Bicycle Route System project is leveraging existing infrastructure to map a national network of U.S. cycling routes in a cost effective manner,” said Ginny Sullivan, director of travel initiatives for Adventure Cycling. “In addition, the C&O is already popular with cyclists in the region and is a well-known tourism destination for traveling cyclists from around the world.”

The canal became a National Historical Park in 1971. Today, much of the canal has been drained of water and reclaimed by the forest, however the canal's towpath remains a favorite of hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. There are many opportunities to engage with early American history along the route: Antietam National Battlefield lies within 3 miles of the towpath, and Fort Frederick State Park and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park are adjacent to it. The route connects with the Great Allegheny Passage Trail in Cumberland, Maryland, making it possible to ride 330 traffic-free miles from Washington, DC, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

“The Canal Towns Partnership would like to offer our support for the designation of U.S. Bicycle Route 50 through our communities,” said Lois Turco, chair of the [Canal Towns Partnership](#). “We recognize that bicycle tourism is a growing industry in North America, contributing \$47 billion a year to the economies of communities that provide facilities for such tourists. The Canal Towns Partnership stands to benefit from this opportunity both economically and in terms of the health and environmental benefits related to encouraging bicycle travel in our region.”

## **U.S. Bicycle Route 23 in Tennessee**

Newly designated U.S. Bicycle Route 23 (USBR 23) in Tennessee covers 154 miles between the Kentucky border, where it joins Kentucky's existing Mammoth Cave state bicycle route, and Alabama. Heading south from Kentucky, USBR 23 begins in rural Robertson County before passing through the community of White House with its marked bicycle lanes. From there the route enters metropolitan Nashville, traveling through residential neighborhoods and past unique culinary establishments through East Nashville, Downtown, The Gulch, and Midtown. The route then cuts through the heart of Nashville's music scene past the Ryman Auditorium, the Country Music Hall of Fame, and dozens of local clubs, as well as skirting several universities including Vanderbilt, Belmont, Lipscomb, and Fisk. Leaving Nashville, cyclists have the option to take a three-mile spur to connect with the 444-mile Natchez Trace Parkway, or continue on USBR 23 south through Franklin, which features several Civil War historic sites and a wonderful downtown. The route south of Franklin is rural and very scenic; there, a second spur connects to food and lodging at Henry Horton State Park, Chapel Hill, and Lewisburg. Further south, cyclists may travel for an hour or more and not see an automobile. U.S. Bicycle Route 23 enters Alabama at Ardmore, a city whose main street is also the Tennessee-Alabama state line.

“The designation of U.S. Bicycle Route 23 presents a great opportunity to partner with local agencies and nonprofits in order to promote Tennessee’s vibrant tourism industry and rich cultural heritage,” said Jessica Wilson, bicycle and pedestrian coordinator at the Tennessee Department of Transportation. “Communities across the state are embracing new ways to attract visitors while still preserving the natural beauty of Tennessee.”

The U.S. Bicycle Route System is a developing national network of bicycle routes, which will serve as visible and well-planned trunk lines for connecting city, regional, and statewide cycling routes, offering transportation and tourism opportunities across the country. Adventure Cycling Association has provided dedicated staff support to the project since 2005, including research support, meeting coordination, and technical guidance for states implementing routes. Work on the U.S. Bicycle Route System is highly collaborative and involves officials and staff from state DOTs, the Federal Highway Administration, natural resource agencies, and nonprofit organizations including the East Coast Greenway Alliance and Mississippi River Trail, Inc.

AASHTO's support for the project is crucial to earning the support of federal and state agencies and provides a major boost to bicycling and route development for non-motorized transportation. Securing approval for numbered designation from AASHTO is a required step for all U.S. Bicycle Routes. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. A powerful voice in the transportation sector, AASHTO's primary goal is to foster the development of an integrated national transportation system.

Support for the U.S. Bicycle Route System comes from Adventure Cycling members, donors, and a group of business sponsors that participate in its annual Build It. Bike It. Be a Part of It. fundraiser each May. The U.S. Bicycle Route System is also supported in part by grants from the Lazar Foundation, New Belgium Brewing, Climate Ride, and the Tawani Foundation.

When complete, the U.S. Bicycle Route System will be the largest official bike route network on the planet, encompassing more than 50,000 miles of routes. Learn more at [www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs](http://www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs).

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*Adventure Cycling Association inspires and empowers people to travel by bicycle. It is the premier bicycle-travel organization in North America with more than 46,500 members. Adventure Cycling produces cycling routes and maps for North America, organizes more than 80 tours annually, and publishes the best bicycle-travel information anywhere, including Adventure Cyclist magazine. With 41,420 meticulously mapped miles in the Adventure Cycling Route Network, Adventure Cycling gives cyclists the tools and confidence to create their own bike-travel adventures. Contact the office at (800) 755-BIKE (2453), [info@adventurecycling.org](mailto:info@adventurecycling.org), or visit [www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org).*

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