

Common Access points on the American River Bike Trail

For Cyclists living in the Sacramento – Folsom area, the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail, or the American River Bike Trail (ARBT) is it's most commonly called, is both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it provides over 30 miles of smooth and car-free bike path just a short bike or car ride from your front door. A curse because it's almost too easy to get to and ride on. Because of its accessibility and lack of car traffic, riders are suckered into spending almost all of their training time on the ARBT and don't venture out onto the hillier, more challenging terrain they'll need to ride in order to be fully prepared for the NCAC.

But all in all, having the ARBT nearby is a boon to the Sacramento-area cyclist. And as long as you make the effort to ride in other locations, it's fine if training on the ARBT comprises the majority of your NCAC training plan. As a general rule of thumb, try to spend at least ¼ of your bicycling time somewhere other than the ARBT.

Below, we've listed several of the most common ways to access the trail to help you discover the ARBT for yourself. The trail gains in altitude and the mile markers painted on the path increase as you head east. So once you get to the trail, head east and make sure the mile markers are increasing if you want to start out riding mostly uphill. And vice versa if you want to start by going downhill.

1. Discovery Park (Mile 0.0)

The western end of the American River Bike Trail is located in Discovery Park, which sits just north of Old Town Sacramento at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. The entrance is off of I-5. Take the Garden Highway exit and head east for less than a mile. The entrance is on your right. There's plenty of parking but there's a \$4 entrance fee to the park.

Once you get into the park you can find the trail by riding or driving toward where the American River flows beneath the I-5 overpass and the old green trestle bridge. **NOTE:** During especially wet winters and springs the Park can be closed due to flooding.

2. Behind Blue Diamond Growers (Mile 2.5)

This is a good entry point from midtown Sacramento. Park on the street in midtown near 20th and C. Get onto 20th and ride North (i.e. letters going down) to C St. Left on C, cross the RR tracks, and make an immediate right onto the trail – it's well marked. Follow this feeder trail behind Blue Diamond until you reach a T intersection at another bike trail. Turn right. This will take you over a foot bridge across the American River. A quarter of a mile or so past the bridge will bring you get to the trail proper.

3. Guy West Bridge/Sac State (Mile 6.5)

You can access the ARBT at this point by either parking on the Sac State campus and crossing over the American River via Guy West Bridge or by parking near the intersection of University Ave. and Howe Ave. If you choose to access the ARBT from the Sac State campus, make sure to bring money for parking and consult any campus map and look for Guy West Bridge along the eastern border of the campus, off of State University Drive. From the other side of the river, head west on University Ave. for $\frac{3}{4}$ from the intersection of Howe and University. Look for the bridge towers and entrance to the path on your left. Free street parking is available all along University Ave.

4. Watt Ave Bridge

The ARBT can be accessed from the Watt Ave. bridge over the American River just south of the intersection of Watt Ave. and American River Dr. There is a bike trail on either side of the Watt Ave. bridge and there are obvious bike ramps that lead down to the river and the ARBT from either side.

5. William Pond Park (Mile 13.5)

William Pond Park can be found at the East end of Arden Way, about a mile after you cross Fair Oaks Blvd. You can park in the park for \$4. There is often free street parking just outside the park entrance. You can also park at the Five Points Shopping Center on the corner of Fair Oaks and Arden Way. There is a handy bike shop there as well as a coffee shop that serves wonderful food. If you park there, leave the parking lot on the Arden Way side, turn right and proceed to William Pond Park, bear left onto the bike trail spur just before the toll booth.

6. Goethe Park (Mile 14.5)

Going East on Folsom Blvd, turn left on Rob Beaudry Rd. Proceed for 0.3 miles, turn right on Goethe Park Road. A parking lot is about 0.1 miles on the left. This will cost \$4 for parking

7. Sunrise Blvd. (Mile 19.5)

For free parking, park in the Gold River Town Center shopping center parking lot near the corner of Sunrise Blvd. and Gold Country Drive. Take the Sunrise Blvd. exit from Hwy 50 and drive north. Turn right onto Gold Country Drive, immediate right onto Gold Field Drive and then right into the Gold River Town Center parking lot (2095 Golden Centre. Ln). To get to the trail, leave the parking lot the way you came, turn left onto Gold Field Dr., turn left onto Gold Country Drive and then turn right onto the bike trail parallel to Sunrise Blvd. Follow the bike trail as it swings right along S. Bridge St, and then swings left as it enters the park after about 0.6 miles. You will enter the park and cross a park road as you head towards the foot bridge straight ahead. Bear left onto the feeder trail before the bridge and enter the main bike trail.

8. Fish Hatchery (Mile 22.5)

This access point to the bike trail is located just off Hwy 50 at the Hazel Ave. exit in Fair Oaks. There's tons of parking at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery and it's free. Touring the fish hatchery itself is also free and can be pretty fun, especially if you're there in October when the salmon are running. To get to the hatchery, travel East on I-50 and take the Hazel Ave exit. Turn left onto Hazel Ave. at the end of the ramp. Turn left at the 2nd traffic light onto Gold Country Blvd. Turn right at your first opportunity onto Nimbus Rd. and down into the hatchery parking lot. Watch for cyclists crossing the driveway at the bottom of the hill.

The bicycle path crosses immediately in front of the car entrance to the parking lot. Turn right on the bike path for a very flat training ride toward Discovery Park. Turn left for a hillier, but still very doable, ride toward Beal's Point. **NOTE:** If you do turn left, make sure to bear RIGHT about 100 yards up the initial climb so you cross over the American River on the bike path right next to Hazel Ave.

9. Folsom (Mile 27.5)

You can drive or take the light rail to Folsom. If you take light rail, just get off the train and ride to the nearby Folsom Blvd Bridge crossing over the American River. Ride or walk your bike along the right side of bridge on the protected sidewalk. Cross the river and take an immediate right after bridge and stay on the sidewalk. Then take an immediate right onto a switchback trail that feeds into the bike trail.

If you're driving, take highway 50 east to Folsom Blvd then take this north to Folsom. After about 2.5 miles bear right towards downtown Folsom and then right onto Leidesdorff St, and an immediate right onto Decatur St. Park on the street or in the parking lot for free parking. There is a wonderful coffee right nearby (Karen's, not open on Sunday) for pastry and sandwiches and also a big bike shop. This will put you right next to the Folsom Bridge. Follow directions above to cross river.

10. Beal's Point (Mile 33)

The eastern end of the American River Bike Trail is in Folsom at Beal's Point on Lake Folsom. When you drive into Beal's Point you'll cross the path shortly after passing the ranger station and just as you enter the parking lot. There's a \$4 entrance fee. To get to Beal's Point take I-50 East, exit at Folsom Blvd., and head North. Folsom Blvd will become Auburn Folsom Blvd. after you cross the American River. The entrance to Beal's Point will be on your right.

To find the path, bicycle back out the way you drove in and turn left onto the path at the crosswalk at the top of the driveway hill. You will immediately began a long gradual descent.