

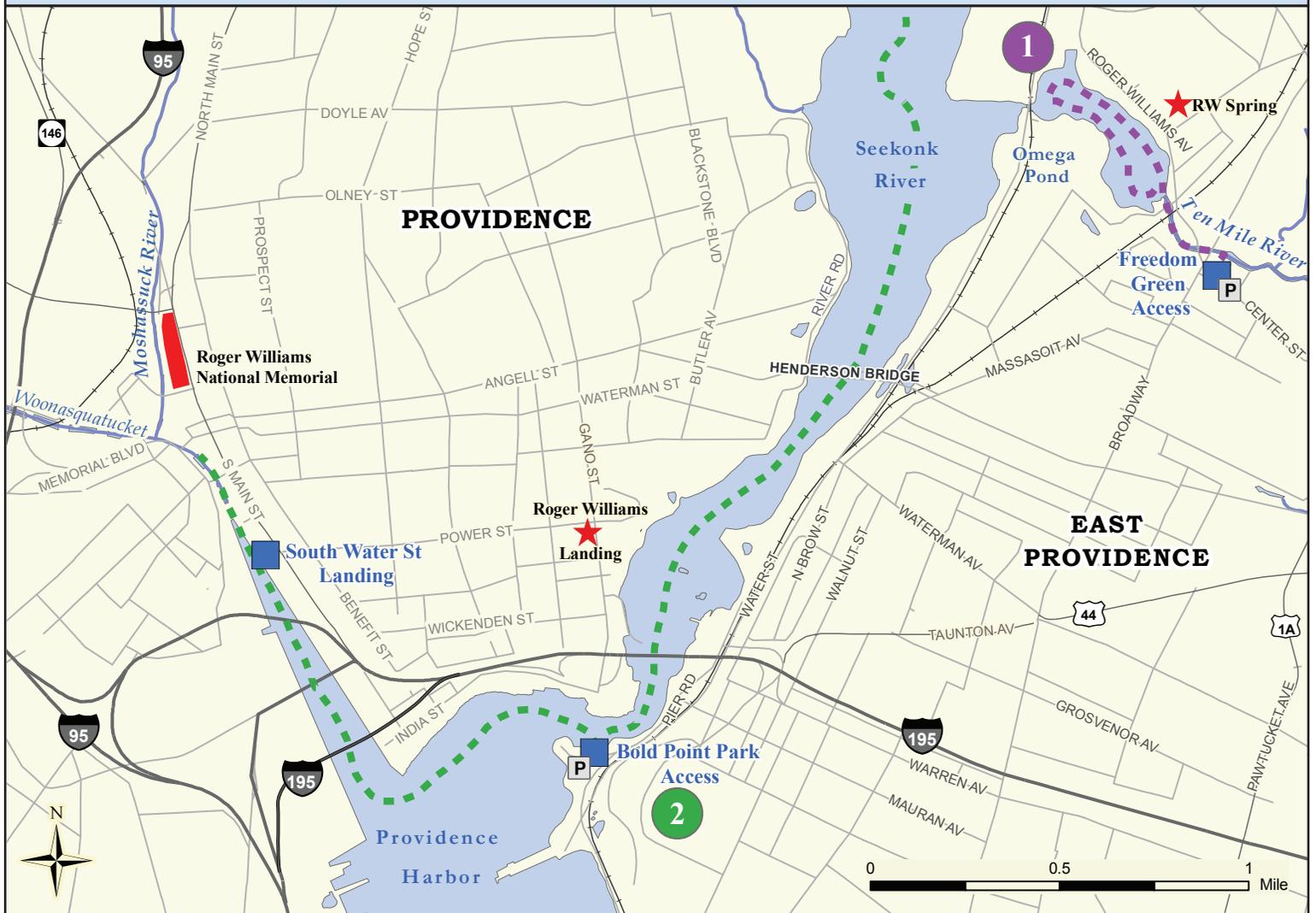


ROGER WILLIAMS PADDLE TRAIL

TWO RHODE ISLAND BEGINNERS TOURS



Ten Mile River



The Roger Williams Paddle Trail, celebrating William's journey from Bristol to Providence, is divided into two segments.

Tour 1

Tour 1: Put-in at Freedom Green on North Broadway, East Providence and paddle to the Omega Dam at the end of Omega Pond. This is a 2 mile round trip. Omega Pond to Seekonk River passage is blocked by a dam and a railroad.

Tour 2

Tour 2: Put-in at Bold Point Park in East Providence. Paddle northeast from the site through the narrows into the Seekonk River. Be prepared for tidal currents through the narrows. Continue up river along the east shore to Omega Dam. This is where the Ten Mile River enters the Seekonk. Turn around to head south. On your right, just after the perpetually open rail bridge is Roger Williams Landing. It is a short walk to the landing on Gano Street, but there is no place to land! There are plans to build a boat ramp here allowing access to the site where Roger Williams was greeted by the Narragansetts.

Staying close to the Providence shoreline; pass India Point Park, up into the Providence River and through the hurricane barrier. This close-to-shore etiquette keeps you clear of most commercial boat traffic. The Roger Williams National Memorial is located upriver - just past the confluence of the Mashassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. The South Water Street Landing provides the only boat access in downtown Providence. Paddlers can end their trip here or return to Bold Point Park.

Directions to paddle access points:

Freedom Green: Route 195 EAST to exit 6 right at end of ramp, at first light take a right onto Broadway, go about 2 miles, the park is on the right at the intersection of North Broadway and Roger Williams Ave. Route 195 WEST to exit 6 at end of ramp take a right onto Broadway, go 2 miles to the park on the right.

Bold Point Park: Heading EAST on I-195, take exit 4 (US44 Taunton Ave). Keep right at the fork, follow signs for Riverside. Take a quick right onto Mauran Ave. Turn left onto the Warren Ave Connector. Bear Right onto Pier Road to end.

South Water Street Landing: From I-95 North or South take at Exit 22A in downtown Providence. At the first light, go straight onto Memorial Boulevard. At the sixth light, turn left onto Delta Street, which will put you on a bridge across the Providence River. This is the last bridge across the river before the I-195 bridge. After you cross the river the road makes a sharp right turn. You are now on South Water Street. The landing is about 2/10 mile ahead on your right, near the round gazebo and the circular silver sculpture. There is limited parking on both sides of the street near the landing.

History of the Trail

In the fall of 1635, Roger Williams was convicted by the general court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of “new and dangerous opinions...” in regard to the religious authority of the government. Williams was sentenced to be sent out of the colony and back to England. Since he was sick at the time, Williams was allowed to stay in Salem until the spring under the condition that he not preach these dangerous opinions in church.

He agreed and kept his word but he still discussed his views outside of Sunday services. By February of 1636 the Massachusetts Bay authorities had enough and sent troops under the command of Captain Underhill to put Williams on the next boat back to England. Roger was warned that troops were on their way and escaped into the winter wilderness.

Cold, tired and probably lost, this son of a merchant tailor from London was found by Native American hunting parties and brought to present day Bristol and spent the rest of the winter with Massasoit. He was given land by Massasoit near a fresh water spring.



As the weather warmed, some of Roger’s followers from Salem joined him and helped to start a settlement, building houses and planting crops. Just as the crops were planted Williams received a letter from Governor Winslow in Plymouth saying that the new settlement was within the boundaries of the Plymouth Colony and Williams could not stay there. He was instructed to travel across the Seekonk River, Plymouth’s western boundary, and then all could live as good neighbors.

What Cheer, Netop?

Roger Williams and a small group of other English rowed across the Seekonk River in the Spring of 1636. About where Gano Street is today, Williams and the others encountered a group of Narragansett who greeted them with the phrase “What cheer Netop”. What Cheer was a common English greeting, short for “what cheerie news do you bring”. Today’s equivalent would be “What’s up?” Netop is the Narragansett word for friend.

This greeting and the familiarity it displays speaks to Roger’s relationship with the Narragansett. For several years he had traded with the Narragansett and the Wampanoag, trading English goods for food and furs.

Now this relationship, built upon respect would come to Roger’s aid. After explaining that he was looking for a place for a settlement, the Narragansett told him to sail around the point and up the Great Salt River, (now the Providence River) to a location inside the great Salt Cove. There, there was a fresh water spring, fish and shell fish in abundance. Here Williams started his new settlement. The first rule established in this new town was that no person would be called into question for their religious beliefs.

“Having made covenant of peaceable neighborhood with all the sachems and natives round about us, and having a sense of God’s merciful providence to me in my distress, called the place Providence, I desire that it might be a shelter for persons distressed of conscience.”

Williams established Providence as a safe haven for all consciences, where true religious freedom and liberty of conscience took root for the first time in an English settlement.

History provided by John McNiff, National Park Service



The **Rhode Island Blueways Alliance (RIBA)** is a non-profit corporation developing a water trail network linking Rhode Island’s rivers, lakes and ponds to Narragansett Bay and using the trail to promote safety, conservation, recreation and economic development. Information on the Blueways Alliance and the Blueway trail can be found at www.exploreri.org.



Ten Mile River

The **Ten Mile River Watershed Council (TMRWC)** is dedicated to preserving and protecting the Ten Mile River and its watershed. The Council educates the public on the importance of keeping the water and the land surrounding it viable and healthy and works to improve recreational opportunities in the watershed with water, biking and hiking trails.

The Roger Williams Paddle Trail is supported by **RIBA** and **TMRWC**.



REI is gratefully acknowledged for funding this project.