



# Family Bike Ride Recommendations

Take the family out on some of our great nearby biking paths. To make your planning easier, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

## Be sure to bring these necessities along on your ride:

- Helmet
- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Map and route directions
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Tire mini-pump or CO2
- Spare tube or patch kit
- Tire levers

For a complete cycling checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.



## Here Are Four of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Bike Rides

### USNWC Channel Trail

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **1.25-mile loop; no elevation gain.**

**Why This Ride:** Located at the U.S. National Whitewater Center, this trail is great for kids with training wheels and adults who are looking for an easy, relaxed ride.

**Ride Description:** Check out this trail at the new U.S. National Whitewater Center complex. It's a paved 1.25-mile loop around the whitewater channels at the Olympic training park. The Channel Trail starts from the trail information kiosk and is great for observing world-class paddlers on one of the few man-made whitewater rivers operating in the world—and kids love to play on the giant boulders ringing the path! This is an easy ride that is mostly flat. Plus, after your ride, don't forget to check out all the other great amenities the USNWC has to offer, such as rock climbing, hiking and whitewater rafting. Those looking for an off-road adventure should check out the 11 miles of mountain-biking/trail-running trails.

**Driving Directions:** From I-485 take Exit 9 at Wilkinson Boulevard and go west on Wilkinson for 2 miles, where you will turn right on Moore's Chapel Road. Follow the signs on Moore's Chapel Rd. for the USNWC. Go almost 2 miles to Hawfield Road and make a left. Follow the signs. There is plenty of free parking.

**Tips:** Great places for a picnic abound at the USNWC, or grab some lunch at the Eddy Restaurant. There are public restrooms available.

### McMullen Creek and Lower McAlpine Creek Greenways

Terrain: **Gravel, then paved path**

Distance: **8 miles roundtrip, out-and-back; no elevation gain**

**Why This Ride:** Located just minutes from the REI store, so you won't have to go far to enjoy an easy ride through this riparian greenway.

**Ride Description:** This horseshoe-shaped trail starts off as crushed gravel, for 0.75 mile, but turns into asphalt as it follows McMullen Creek through this dense urban forest toward I-485. After crossing under the highway, at the bottom of the horseshoe, the trail then hooks up with Lower McAlpine Creek and heads northeast. There are mileage markers every quarter-mile, which will help you determine your trip length if you don't want to do the entire 8 miles out-and-back. Deer and squirrels are active residents of this greenway and can be seen frequently. There is also a boardwalk with a wetlands observation area.

**Driving Directions:** Start at the McMullen Creek trailhead. From I-485, take Exit 64A and head east on Pineville-Matthews Road. Look for the greenway entrance after about a half-mile on the right. There is free parking at the trailhead.

**Tips:** Stop by the REI store, just minutes away, to get your tires pumped and helmet checked! There are porta-potties at the trailhead.

## Clark's and Mallard Creek Greenway

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **About 3.5 miles roundtrip, out-and-back; minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Ride:** It's a flat, multi-use trail through a verdant floodplain forest that's rich with wildlife viewing possibilities.

**Ride Description:** Though this trail stretches for several miles further, the route described here is the newest portion of the Clark's and Mallard Creek Greenway and is an easy out-and-back that can be extended another 1.2 miles on gravel trails through the University Research Park (and beyond) if desired. There are several parking trailheads for access, but this ride begins at the southern terminus of the trail at Kirk Family Fields, off East Mallard Creek Church Road. The path follows Mallard Creek (and passes a wetland area early in the ride), so watch for great blue herons, gray fox, white-tailed deer and a wide variety of birds that like to make this forest home. In the spring and summer you may see beaver and muskrats, and butterflies are a big attraction in the late summer and early fall. The gravel trail at the University Research Park is the turnaround point.

**Driving Directions:** From I-85 take Exit 46 to West Mallard Creek Church Road and head southeast toward Highway 29. Just after crossing Hwy 29 look for a parking lot on the left at Kirk Family Fields. Parking is free.

**Tips:** The gravel trails in the University Research Park are great for accessing excellent bird-watching spots. Bring a bird-identification guidebook and explore. There are no restrooms available.

## Little Sugar Creek Greenway (Freedom Park Section)

Terrain: **Paved path**

Distance: **2.2 miles one way; no elevation gain**

**Why This Ride:** It's an easy, smooth ride for beginners that's filled with beautiful scenery and fun activities—and it's conveniently located!

**Ride Description:** Though it's situated at the approximate midpoint of the 2.2-mile-long trail, Freedom Park is the best place to start this ride. There is ample parking and you have the option of going in either direction. Plus, Freedom Park is a great place for a post-ride picnic and is filled with plenty of things to keep kids of all ages entertained. Pick up the trail by Little Sugar Creek and follow it in either direction. If you go south, you'll pass by the Nature Center, with the trail eventually ending at Brandywine Road, near the Park Road Shopping Center. If you go north, the trail will end slightly sooner near the Carolinas Medical Center. Whatever direction you decide to go in, just plan to spend a little time enjoying Freedom Park upon your return,

**Driving Directions:** From I-277, take Kenilworth Avenue south to East Boulevard. Turn left on East Blvd. Freedom Park is on the left at 1900 East Blvd., in the Myers Park neighborhood. There is free parking available.

**Tips:** Check out Freedom Park's Charlotte Nature Museum, an interactive urban nature center that features live and mounted specimens of animal and plant life indigenous to North Carolina. It even has an enclosed butterfly habitat. There are restrooms in the park.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit [www.rei.com/PEAK](http://www.rei.com/PEAK) for more information.



**First Saturday in June** The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) for more information.