Welcome to Southeastern Illinois

This map is one of nine bicycle maps for the State of Illinois. It covers a region from Vandalia and Effingham south to Mt. Vernon and Carmi and east to the Wabash River. Counties covered are Clay, Clark, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Macon, Moultrie, Richland, Shelby, Wabash, and Wayne as well as portions of adjacent counties. We hope you will find it helpful in planning your bicycle trip in or through southeastern Illinois.

The following is provided to give information about Southeastern Illinois. In it you will find information about natural and scenic features, plant and animal life, important phone numbers and addresses, and helpful tips to make your southeastern Illinois bicycling trip more pleasant. Stop and take some time to enjoy the rural scenery and local history of this region.

The Terrain

The land through southeastern Illinois is gently rolling with a few larger hills near river and creek beds and along ridges. Like much of the rest of the state, this land is primarily agricultural. Low bluffs line parts of the Wabash River while moraines and low ridges occasionally break the generally flat terrain. There are many attractive tree-lined valleys along most rivers and streams. In many areas, you will find picturesque rural scenes worthy of a Currier and Ives print: farms nestled between low hills, meadows hedged by rows of trees, and streams winding through fields and pastures. In August and September the corn stands seven feet tall, lining country roads throughout the region.

Lakes, Rivers, and Streams

This area includes Newton Lake in Jasper County. It is primarily a fishing lake although there are hiking trails in the adjacent fish and wildlife areas.

The Wabash River forms the eastern boundary of this region. There are plenty of public access points as well as places to bank fish. A significant conservation area along the Wabash is Beall Woods State Natural Area, located in southern Wabash County. This bottomland forest is the largest stand of virgin timber left in Illinois. Unusually large trees stand testimony to the age of this forest. Take your mosquito repellent if you decide to hike the trails. Other country roads access the Wabash River at many points; however, some of these roads are suitable for mountain bikes only.

Plants and Animals

Thanks to aggressive cultivation of the land, corn and soybeans dominate the flora in southeastern Illinois as they do in much of the rest of the state. Many birds and animals have adapted to farmed areas, while along streams and lakes and in state parks and conservation areas, a number of native species flourish.

Typical wooded areas fall under two broad categories: oak-hickory uplands and elm-ash-soft maple bottomlands. Other species found are beech--more prevalent in the eastern half of the region--and widely scattered groves of sugar maple, as well as walnut, sycamore, willow, cottonwood, horse chestnut, and gum. Pine trees exist almost exclusively in plantations and are not native to the area. A few native stands of tall-grass prairie are still in existence--primarily on protected lands.

A number of animal species feel at home in the corn and soybean fields, most prominent being the red-winged blackbird roosting on fences and reflectorized poles next to fields. Robins, blue jays, and a number of other birds also are common in farmed areas.

Deer are ubiquitous, having adapted well to the agriculturization of the area. Of course, squirrels can be found wherever there are stands of trees--or friendly people sharing popcorn or nuts with these furry creatures. The rare white squirrel can only be found in and around Olney. These squirrels are protected by law and have the right-of-way wherever they go.

In wooded areas raccoons and rabbits are more common. Less common, but still frequently spotted are a variety of nonpoisonous snakes such as the garter and the prairie king. Poisonous species are quite rare, although an occasional copperhead may be found around the Wabash River. The endangered timber rattler is found in isolated spots throughout the region, but rarely encountered. Snakes tend to be more common in the southern portions of this region. Frogs of all types haunt wetlands and lakes and can be heard most summer nights. Occasionally, small lizards may be spotted.

Conservation and Recreation Areas

The State of Illinois manages a number of scenic natural areas where hiking, fishing, camping, and picnicking can be enjoyed in natural settings. Although many sites have trails, please note that bicycles are not allowed on any unpaved trails unless otherwise indicated.

Bicycle Paths, Rides, and Routes

Most bicycling opportunities are on the abundant low-volume local roads in rural areas. Although generally flat, there are many low hills in this region--more so to the south and east.





The Rating System – Bicycle Level of Service

In an effort to provide cyclists with information on the suitability of roads for cycling in the state, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) calculated a bicycle level of service (BLOS) (1) for thousands of road segments. IDOT maintains a computer database on most roads in the state and used this to generate six scales of bicycle service. These scales were color-coded on these maps, from bright green for most suitable to dark red for least suitable. The following factors are included in the calculation of the BLOS.

1. Traffic volumes – average daily traffic, peak traffic volumes and directional traffic
2. Speed of traffic
3. Percentage of truck traffic
4. Pavement condition
5. Lane and shoulder widths and number of lanes
6. On-street parking

As an example, a road with moderate traffic may still rate high for suitability if it has wide outside lanes, wide shoulders, and a good road surface.

All gravel and earth-based roads are shown as gray and the BLOS has not been calculated for them. These roads are generally unsuitable for bicycling. However, roads with an oil-and-chip surface provide a hard surface suitable for riding and have been included. Bicyclists should exercise caution, however, because the suitability of this and all surfaces can vary with the seasons and the general conditions of the particular road.

All roads that have been assigned colors are reassessed every three years, so it is possible that roadway conditions, and thus ratings, may have changed since the information was gathered.

Who the Rating System is for

These green/yellow/red ratings are offered only as general information for adult cyclists of average or better than average experience and who are comfortable sharing the road with vehicular traffic. **(Note: This map is not intended as a guide for children.)** More experienced cyclists may find the yellow roads very satisfactory, but this comfort level will vary on a person-to-person basis. Inexperienced bicyclists should exercise added caution and ride with more experienced cyclists.

Limitations of the Rating System

Vertical grades (hills) are numerous in the southernmost and northwestern portions of our state. This information is not included in the rating system at this time. An experienced cyclist knows hills can present significant physical challenges and recognizes that precautions should always be taken when cresting hills that could limit the cyclist's visibility to vehicles coming from behind. Cyclists should always ride on the right edge of the roadway and comply with all bicycle rules of the road. We recommend the use of pole-mounted flags for added visibility.

Other Items

Roadways are generally designed to keep rush-hour traffic at a tolerable level. Although the ratings for roadways on this map are partially based on average and peak traffic, roads that are more tolerable at off-peak times may be more intolerable for cycling at rush hour. Additionally, roads around resort or recreational areas (which may be marked green on the map) may be subject to periodic or irregular high-volume traffic. Before you plan a bicycle trip, determine which sites along your intended route are having special events. Not all traffic peaks can be anticipated.

We have attempted to include as much useful information as possible without cluttering the map. Not all information can be included. We hope this map is a useful guide as you plan your bicycling excursion. **Always wear a helmet and obey the rules of the road. Have a safe and enjoyable trip.**

1) Landis, Bruce, "Real-Time Human Perceptions: Toward a Bicycle Level of Service," Transportation Research Record 1578 (Washington DC, Transportation Research Board, 1997).

Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

Emergencies - Dial 911

Amtrak

1-800-USA-RAIL. www.amtrak.com

Bike Advocacy Organizations

National Center for Bicycling & Walking (NCBW), NCBW is a resident program at Project for Public Spaces, Inc. NCBW was establishing in 1977, as the Bicycle Federation of America, Inc. NCBW's mission is to create bicycle-friendly and walkable communities. www.pedbikeinfo.org

Active Transportation Alliance, 35 E. Wacker Dr, Suite 1782, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-427-3325. The mission of Active Transportation Alliance is to advocate for walking, bicycling, and public transit to create healthy, sustainable and equitable communities. www.activetrans.org

League of America Bicyclists, 1612 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20006, 202-822-1333. Mission: To lead the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change. www.bikeleague.org

Ride Illinois, 815 Leicester Rd #314, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, 630-216-9282. The statewide bike advocacy organization works for bike-friendly roads and trails, for favorable legislation, and to educate cyclists and motorists. www.rideillinois.org

Bus Service

Greyhound, 800-231-2222
www.greyhound.com

Campgrounds, Public

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
One Natural Resource Way, Springfield, IL
62702-1271, 217-782-6302, www.dnr.illinois.gov
e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Department of Natural Resources (State Parks and Recreation Areas) - Office of Land Management

IDNR, One Natural Resource Way Springfield, IL
62702-1271 217-782-6752 e-mail:
dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov, www.dnr.illinois.gov

Hiking Opportunities

IDNR, One Natural Resource Way Springfield, IL
62702-1271, 217-782-6302 www.dnr.illinois.gov
e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Historic Agencies/ Organizations

Preservation Services,#1 Old State Capital Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, 217-782-4836
www2.Illinois.gov/dnrhistoric

Road Conditions (Winter)/ Road Construction (Spring /Summer / Fall)

1-800-452-4368
www.gettingaroundillinois.com

Secretary of State (Bicycle Education/ Safety)

Illinois Secretary of State, Driver Services Department, 213 State Capitol, Springfield, IL 62756, 217-782-6212
www.cyberdriveillinois.com

State Agencies

IDNR Office of Public Services, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, 217-782-6302
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy. Springfield, IL 62764, 217-782-7820
http://idot.illinois.gov

Illinois Historic Preservation Office,#1 Old State Capital Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, 217-782-4836
www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric

Illinois State Police, 801 South Seventh Street, P.O. Box 19461, Springfield, IL 62794-9461
https://isp.illinois.gov

State Police

District 13
1391 S. Washington Street, DuQuoin, IL 62832
618-542-2171.
Counties Served: Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, Randolph, Washington, Williamson
District 19
919 Illinois Route 14, Carmi, IL 62821, 618-382-4606.
Counties served: Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Saline, Wabash, Wayne, White
District 22
1154 Shawnee College Rd., Ullin, IL 62992, 618-845-3740.
Counties Served: Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Union

Tourism Bureaus

Illinois Tourism Bureau, 800/2-CONNECT
TTY: 800/406-6418. www.enjoyillinois.com

Illinois Tourism Bureau, 1-800-2CONNECT
www.enjoyillinois.com
e-mail: ceo.enjoyillinois@illinois.gov

Carbondale Convention and Tourism Bureau, Saluki Plaza, 815 South Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL 62901, 800-526-1500.
www.cctb.org e-mail: cctb@neondsl.com

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, P.O. Box 378, Anna, Illinois 62906, 800-248-4373.
www.southernmostillinois.com

Williamson County Tourism Bureau,
1602 Sioux Dr, Marion, IL 62959, 800-433-7399.
www.visitsi.com e-mail: info@wctb.org

SHARE THE ROAD

Helmets...

...one piece of equipment you can live with.

Be Prepared

Studies have shown that a cyclist not wearing a helmet is between two and three times more likely to suffer a head injury in a crash than one who is wearing a helmet. The League of American Cyclists recommends that cyclists frequently check their helmet for wear and damage and replace the helmets every few years and/or in the event of a crash, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Buy the Right Helmet

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends that you only purchase helmets that have been manufactured in accordance with recognized safety standard, ASTM. Look for a sticker indicating this safety standard on the inside of the helmet.

Please...

...to prevent injuries, wear a helmet. You can live with it.



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MAP 2 LEGEND

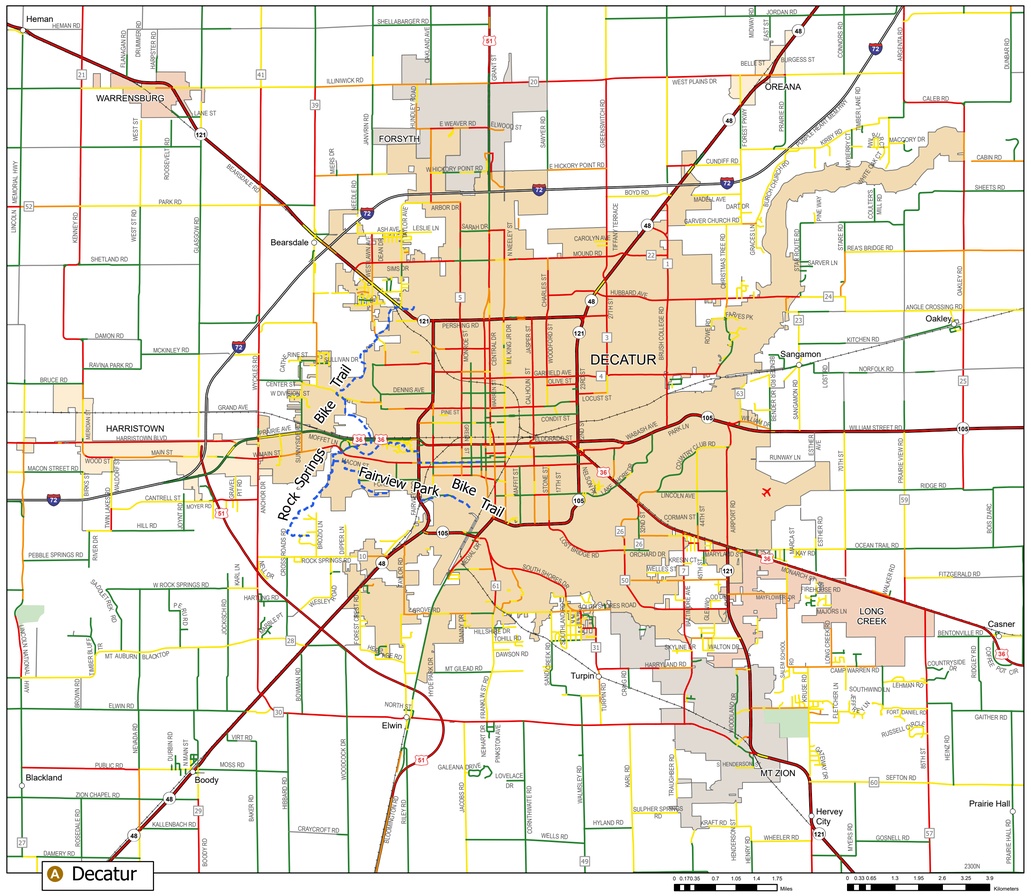
BIKE ROUTES

- MOST SUITABLE FOR BICYCLING
- CAUTION ADVISED
- NOT RECOMMENED FOR BICYCLING BICYCLES PROHIBITED
- GRAVEL, OILED GRAVEL, EARTH OR CILED EARTH SURFACE — Use at your discretion

ROUTE MARKERS

- INTERSTATE ROUTE MARKER
- U.S. ROUTE MARKER
- STATE ROUTE MARKER
- COUNTY ROUTE MARKER

- UNINCORPORATED TOWN
- GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT
- COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORT
- COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
- HISTORIC SITE
- RAILROAD
- WATER
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- TOWN
- STATE PARK & WILDLIFE AREA
- BIKE TRAIL



The Rating Systems – Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) was generated from the 2025 Illinois Roads data and using the BLOS calculations from the most current Highway Capacity Manual.
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