

Bicycling Lenoir County Style

ABOUT THE MAP

Lenoir County, endowed with roads that traverse an agriculturally-rich and gentle terrain, is a joy for bicycle travelers. The county's Bicycle Route system lends itself well to short and long day trips, yet provides enough variety to bicycle for a whole weekend. In addition, the Ocracoke Option, a cross-state route from Wilson to the Cedar Island ferry to Ocracoke passes through Lenoir County, expanding the possibilities for bicycle adventure even more.

This map was developed to enable you to understand the different bicycle trip options. The routes shown on this map are marked by numbered bike route signs. "Share the Road" signs are posted in areas where traffic is heavier and more caution should be taken. Despite these roadside aids, this map will be your most accurate guide since signs do sometimes disappear.

The five bicycle routes, marked in red on the map, are designated along more lightly-traveled and scenic roads. Areas which warrant extra caution are highlighted with a thicker light red line. Names are shown for all roads which are part of a route or which intersect a route. Secondary road numbers are shown for all other roadways. The location of country stores is indicated by a gray square, points of interest locations are highlighted with blue stars and the campground location is marked with a tent symbol. An enlargement of Kinston is included to make finding your way through town easier. The accompanying mileage chart indicates distances between towns via the designated bicycle routes.

With its level landscape, its quiet, winding roads, the pleasant climate and the friendliness of its people, Lenoir County offers a variety of bicycling adventures. So once you get acquainted with the routes on this map, plan a trip and get going!

SERVICES

The towns and crossroads of Lenoir County provide every need for an enjoyable bike trip. Country stores dot the rural areas; grocery stores, restaurants, and overnight accommodations can be found in Kinston. Camping facilities are available at the Newseway Nature Center in Kinston and nearby at Cliffs of the Neuse State park in neighboring Wayne County.

Since Bill Fay Park, in Kinston, is the "hub" of the bicycle route system and has ample parking facilities, it is a good place to start your trip.

SAFETY TIPS

In North Carolina, the bicycle is legally considered a vehicle, thus giving bicyclists full rights and responsibilities on the roadway. Bicycle riders are subject to all regulations governing other vehicle drivers and should:

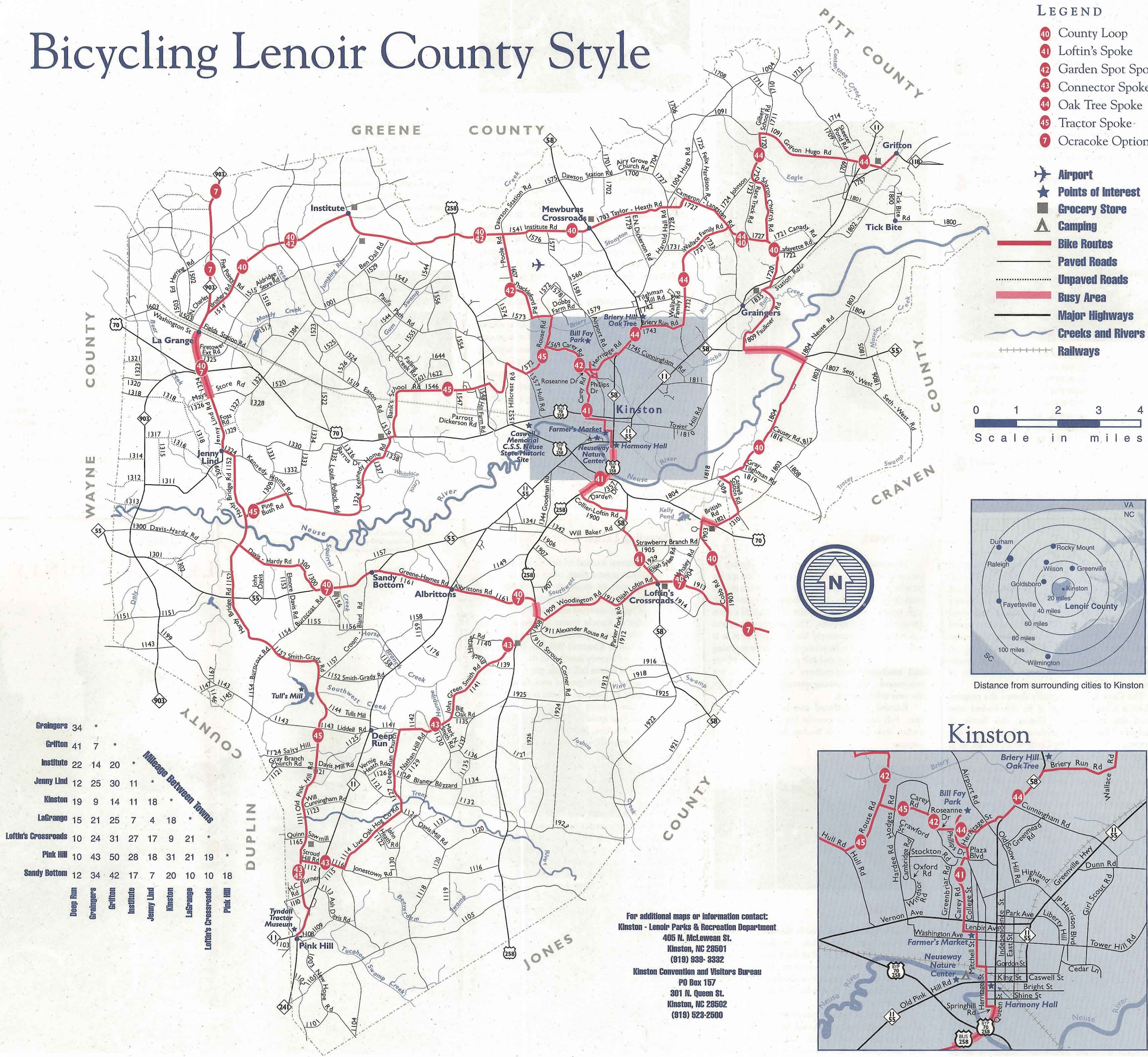
- always ride on the right, with the flow of traffic
- obey all traffic signs and signals
- signal all turns
- equip their bicycle with a front headlight and rear reflector for riding at night

In addition, bicyclists should ride defensively and predictably and take these precautions:

- always wear a helmet
- ride single file
- look ahead for sand, loose gravel, wet leaves or other hazards
- wear bright clothing
- avoid night riding, especially in rural areas
- be sure your bicycle is the right size and in good repair

For information on other bicycle maps, safety materials, or a calendar of bicycle events, contact:

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
PO Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611
phone (919)733-2804 or fax (919)715-4422



HISTORY

In 1584, English explorers sent by Sir Walter Raleigh landed on the Carolina coast. They questioned the native Indians to find out what lay to the west of the narrow strip of beach that they could see. Arthur Barlowe and Philip Amadas then explored the territory eventually declared Lenoir County. They sent reports back of the Neusiok Indians living on a goodly river called the Neuse.

The first Europeans to actually survey the Lenoir County area were John Lawson and Baron DeGraffenried. They secured this tract of land around the junction of the Neuse and Trent rivers for a colony of German Palatines and Swiss settlers.

When this land was first settled, it was part of Bath County in the Precinct of Craven. Over time county boundaries changed often. Hence, the Lenoir county area was within Bath County from 1696 until 1705, in Archdale County until 1712, in Craven until 1746, Johnston until 1759, and in Dobbs until 1791, when Lenoir County was established independently on December 21 as the land that was formerly the southern half of Dobbs County. This county was named after William Lenoir, who at the time, was Speaker of the State Senate and was a Revolutionary War hero.

Early on, according to a State Board of Agriculture handbook, Lenoir County was well-suited for growing cotton, and there were "no lands

in the entire State of North Carolina better adapted to the cultivation of bright yellow [smoking] tobacco..." Despite this, the lack of a good transportation system held back the county's growth. In October of 1833 a group of concerned citizens met to address this issue and determined that the Neuse River was too crooked and shallow to be practical as a waterway to the sea. Their conclusion was that, for the county to grow, a railroad system was needed that would connect the coastal city of Beaufort to neighboring Goldsboro.

The Civil War temporarily slowed the progress of Lenoir County as most of its able-bodied men joined the war effort. During the Battle of Southwest Creek the Confederate Ram 'Neuse' was destroyed near Kinston by Confederate troops, so as to disable its use by the Union.

In the years following Reconstruction, the county focused on rebuilding itself from the rubble of the war. It was not until the early 1900's that Lenoir County could take the large step forward of constructing a sand-clay road system with steel and concrete bridges. With this improved way of transporting goods to market, several industries developed, including: cotton, meat-packing, lumber, brick and textiles. Along with agricultural projects, the emergence of new industries have helped Lenoir county expand its growth into the future.



CLIMATE

Moderated by easterly breezes, the climate of Lenoir County, is with few exceptions, pleasant for bicycling all year long. The short winters are marked by cold spells, but generally are quite mild; high temperatures being in the 50's and 60's even during the coldest months. The summer is long and can bring some excessively hot days, however, it is still comfortable for bicycling in the early morning and evening. Spring and fall provide plenty of sun and moderate temperatures for lots of biking enjoyment. The resulting average temperature for the year is 65 degrees.

Rainfall is distributed evenly throughout the year. Fall and winter months average three to four inches with five to six inches during spring and summer.



TERRAIN

Lenoir County is located in the center of eastern North Carolina's coastal plain. Its elevation ranges from 44 feet above sea level at the headwaters of the Trent River in the southeast, to an elevation of 125 feet in the west. The county is divided by the Neuse River, which snakes its way for 75 miles through the middle of the county.

The land is good agricultural land with an eastward-sloping plain crossed by shallow valleys and a few gently rolling hills. Large stands of pines and hardwoods abound throughout the county.

Bicycling Lenoir County Style

Lenoir County, located in the center of eastern North Carolina's coastal plain, offers ideal conditions for bicycling with its moderate temperatures and level terrain. This unique set of routes covers nearly 160 miles of lightly-traveled country roads.

The series of bicycle routes in Lenoir County consists of four 'spokes' branching off from a central 'hub'. This hub is Kinston's Bill Fay Park, a park with something for every member of the family with its lighted tennis courts, ball fields, par 3 golf course, picnic shelters/areas, playground area, fitness/nature trail and plenty of parking. There is also an outer 'rim' route, the County Loop, that connects the outside of the four spokes. The spokes, themselves head north, south, east, and west.

Also traversing the county is the Ocracoke Option, a 175-mile route from the Wilson area to the Cedar Island Ferry to Ocracoke. This route is part of the Bicycling Highways System, a series of long-distance touring routes designated by the NC Department of Transportation Bicycle Program. The Connector Spoke, the Tractor Spoke, and Loftin's Spoke all connect to this route.

There are endless bicycling adventures offered through this series of routes. Traveling to and from Kinston, LaGrange, Pink Hill and Grifton; coming off of the Ocracoke Option Route to spend a day or the weekend in the Kinston/Lenoir County area; or having a leisurely ride out into the county to take in a point of interest; are just a few of the opportunities these routes provide.

This publication was produced by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle Program through the Transportation Improvement Program. 6,000 copies were produced at a cost of \$2,580 or \$43 each. This is recycled paper.

Photography by Brady McNamara
Cartography by R&M Group
Design by Aly Khalifa

bicycling LENOIR COUNTY



P O I N T S O F I N T E R E S T

Neuseway Nature Center

This 55-acre park has lots to offer — a nature museum, both RV and tent camping, showers, picnic facilities, fishing ponds, hiking trails and river access. The nature center houses wildlife exhibits which include live snakes, alligators, aquatic life of the Neuse River and some small mammals. The center is open to the public, free of charge, with a small fee for camping. Call ahead at (919) 939-3367 for more information or to make camping reservations.



Harmony Hall

Richard Caswell, who in 1776 became the first governor of the Independent State of North Carolina, lived in what is now Lenoir County most of his life. He is believed to have been buried in the Caswell family cemetery on this site, where a small museum has been erected in his memory. The museum offers a sound-and-light presentation that covers his military and political career.

On the other part of this site, and separated by more than 100 years of history, lie the remains of the ironclad gunboat CSS *Neuse*. Artifacts recovered from the ship and an audio-visual presentation about her history are housed in the nearby visitor center, built to resemble the casemate of the *Neuse*. Admission is free. Call (919) 522-2091 for hours of operation.

The Caswell Memorial and C.S.S. Neuse State Historic Site

Briary Hill Oak Tree

This tree, over 176 years old, is more than just a large tree. It measures 21 feet, 10 inches in circumference, and some limbs reach 75 feet in length. This tree is currently registered in the Live Oak Society of the Louisiana Garden Club Federation, Inc. According to history this massive oak sprouted during the war of 1812 from an acorn brought from Beaufort. Legend has it that this tree served as a shelter for encampments of Civil War troops on more than one occasion.

Tyndall's Tractor Museum

The Wilbur A. Tyndall Tractor Museum is located on Highway 11 North in Pink Hill. It is family owned and operated and was officially opened in the Bicentennial Year of 1976. It houses displays of tractors, farm implements, horse-drawn equipment, antiques, relics and other artifacts related to rural life.

Behind the museum is the Tyndall House, which was built in the 1840s and restored in 1975. In its basement is a collection of 25 balloon-tire bicycles restored from the 1920s - 40s. Among the manufacturers are: Columbia, Schwinn, Ivor Johnson, Hawthorne, Rollfast, Western Flyer, Murray, and Shelby. Call ahead for free tours at (919) 568-3261.



B I C Y C L E R O U T E S

41 Loftin's Spoke

This 8-mile spoke leads through the heart of Kinston into southern Lenoir County. Along the route, the Mitchell Town Historical District features houses built over a century ago.

Stop along the way and relax at Neuseway Park or get a locally-grown snack at the Farmer's Market. This Spoke also picks up the Ocracoke Option at the southern end of the county.



42 Garden Spot Spoke

Beginning in Kinston, this spoke's destination is LaGrange, commonly termed "The Garden Spot" due to its agricultural richness. Along the way is North Lenoir High School. Stop in at Bryan's Store in Institute for a snack before pedaling the rest of this 16-mile route to LaGrange where this spoke intersects the Ocracoke Option route.

43 The Connector Spoke

This spoke provides an 11-mile connection between the town of Pink Hill and the Ocracoke Option Route, and passes just outside of Deep Run. This route follows quiet country lanes with country stores only at each end, so carrying water and snacks is advisable.

40 The County Loop

Start anywhere along this 59-mile route and follow it full circle around the county or combine it with one of the spoke routes or the Ocracoke Option to create a shorter loop. Country stores are plentiful in the northern part of the loop, but less so in the southern part. One beautiful place to stop is on the loop's crossing of the Neuse River, where the Tractor Spoke and County Loop are joined.



44 The Oak Tree Spoke

Grifton is the destination of this spoke, and along the way you'll pass the Briary Hill Oak Tree. After biking this routes 15 miles, you might want to stop in Grifton for a rest before riding back to Kinston or connecting to the County Loop.

45 The Tractor Spoke

You are apt to see many tractors along this route whose destination is Pink Hill, home to Tyndall's Tractor Museum. Along this 29-mile route there are many churches and schools. Just before crossing the Neuse River the Tractor Spoke shares a stretch of roads with the Ocracoke Option and the County Loop. Tull's Mill provides a beautiful place to take a break before reaching Pink Hill.

Please be aware:

Although every effort was made initially to choose routes on less traveled roads, some areas of this map may have experienced significant growing. In these locations some of the selected bicycle routes could have increased traffic volumes. The NC Department of Transportation and the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation assume no liability for the increase use of any road on this map. We ask you to, as much as you are able, make yourself aware of the roads you intend to travel on, prior to your trip. To do so you may consider contacting the local government, bike shops or clubs in the area, for advise.

A Note of Caution

The highlighted bicycle routes shown on this map follow roads of the North Carolina highway system. These roads do not include any special accommodations for bicycles such as paved shoulders or designated bike lanes. Care has been taken to select more lightly traveled roads. In a few places, however, short sections of busier roads are used to make connections where no other options exist. These areas are marked with "Share the Road" signs, like the one shown here, to alert motorists to the presence of cyclists on the road. The bike routes are not intended for use by children, as their ability to judge traffic conditions and driver actions is not well developed.



Be predictable, be courteous, and obey all traffic laws, while traveling by bicycle.