

JOYRIDE

By Ed Ravin

#9

Raiders of the Lost Greenway About 12 miles

MTB or hybrid a must

An off-road ride in Manhattan? Without intruding on sensitive parkland or riding on the horse trails? Yes, it can be done, thanks to miles of abandoned waterfront paths in Upper Manhattan. Of course, being a Manhattan ride, instead of logs, rocks, and creaks, this route may have garbage, car parts, and gravel—but it's also got river views that can't be beat. Call it an industrial strength Greenway ride.

But be forewarned—this ride is not a Sunday stroll in the park. Some of these areas are isolated for long stretches, so ride with a friend. You'll need to carry your bike through a few tricky spots, some of them right by the East River with no guard rail—so be careful. There are stretches with tall weeds and overgrowth that are a blast to bike through, but it's definitely easier to do it during the long-sleeve seasons. Make sure you've got everything you need to fix flats.

Start: Go East on East 96th St to end

Left on East River Promenade, pass under Wards Island Bridge, under Triboro Bridge, paved path bears left—but stay to the right, along waterfront. Path turns to dirt.

Follow waterfront dirt road North—past salt pile, through decrepit cement yard, across asphalt heap, carry bike to NE corner (caution!) through empty lot under bridges, through abandoned parkland

Leave waterfront via 142nd Street pedestrian overpass (just south of 145th Street Bridge—further progress along waterfront blocked by chainlink fence and parking lot)

West on West 142nd Street (against traffic 1 block)

Right on Lenox Ave

Left on West 143rd Street

Right on Bradhurst Ave

Left on West 145th Street

Right on St. Nicholas Ave

Ahead on St. Nicholas Place

Ahead and **Right** (North), downhill onto Harlem River Drive (alongside Highbridge Park) On-ramp for "Harlem River Drive North" at bottom of hill — take right lane

At bottom of ramp on northbound Harlem River Drive, hop **Right** as soon as fence ends (at merge with highway)

Follow Esplanade under High Bridge, under I-95 and Washington Bridge. Follow rabbit trails through weeds—stay to the right (alongside river). Emerge onto paved plaza (amazing how nice this place looks when the city takes care of it!)

Exit at Dyckman Street/10th Ave

West on Dyckman Street, to end (food and bathrooms along Dyckman or Broadway). Open the gate on left by marina (it's unlocked—close it behind you)

South on gravel/dirt road—enjoy Hudson River views. Path dead ends, go back to gate and Dyckman St

Right (East) Dyckman Street



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Right on Staff Street

Right Riverside Drive—follow signs for Henry Hudson Pk South....

Left immediately after underpass, up abandoned ramp (or right up abandoned stairs). Use caution crossing street.

South on Riverside Drive sidewalk path—watch out for trenches and construction debris

Pass Pergola (open air pavilion with columns). Check out great views of Hudson River

Follow sidewalk across highway U-turn ramp, stay alongside Northbound highway

Pass base of GW Bridge tower

Clamber over barriers to continue on path. Stay on main path.

Path forks—take right side (uphill)

Path loops onto bridge sidewalk

Path loops to Riverside Drive sidewalk (watch out for fallen trees)

Cross highway exit—continue on sidewalk

Leave sidewalk and join Riverside Drive southbound (near Psychiatric Pavilion construction)

Take Riverside Drive back south to West 96th Street.