



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Windsor Locks Canal State Park Trail

Connecticut



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The Windsor Locks Canal State Park Trail occupies a narrow strip of land between the Connecticut River and the eponymous canal. Also known as the Enfield Falls Canal, the waterway opened in 1829, allowing boats to avoid shallow water along this stretch of the adjacent river. Now operated as a state park, the paved trail replaced the towpath once used by mules and their human drivers to tow freight along the canal until the system was rendered obsolete by railroads in the mid- to late 19th century.

The trail's isolation between two waterways, as well as its abundant vegetation, makes it the perfect place to spot wildlife. The natural beauty and tranquility, coupled with its convenience to large population centers in both Connecticut and Massachusetts, make the trail a popular destination, and you'll likely run into scores of happy trail users no matter the day. Families, many with leashed dogs, are particularly abundant. A short segment of the route built more recently extends the trail over the CT 190 bridge to the east, providing nonmotorized access to residents of Enfield and no doubt increasing the trail's use even more.

Begin your journey in the north at a large parking lot at the end of Canal Road in Suffield. Shortly after you start heading south, you're forced to navigate a narrow footbridge over the canal. Carefully avoid the fishermen who are almost guaranteed to be plying their craft—indeed, you'll often see cyclists riding down the trail with rods slung over their shoulders en route to their favorite fishing spot—and you'll enter the comfortable shade of the official towpath.

The scenic, well-used path is a straight shot south, giving you ample opportunities to take in expansive views of the Connecticut River to your left. Do keep your eyes on the pavement, though: aggressive tree roots pushing up the asphalt can make for a bumpy ride, while the many geese who lay claim to the trail don't like to clean up after themselves. Occasionally, you'll spot old stonework that will remind you of the canal's rich history.

Closer to the trail's southern end, you'll pass under Amtrak's active New Haven–Springfield Line, which crosses the Connecticut River here—making the trail an ideal vantage point for railfans. Shortly thereafter, you'll end at a nondescript parking lot and traversable gate intended to prevent cars from accessing the trail. The lot is located behind a vacant factory, one of many that once used water from the canal to power its mills after the waterway's transportation use ceased. Continue down the paved access road behind the



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States: Connecticut

Counties: Hartford

Length: 5.4 miles

Trail end points: East St. N/CT 159 and Franklin St./CT 190 (Suffield) to Bridge St./CT 140 and Main St./CT 159 at the Connecticut River (Windsor Locks)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Canal

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

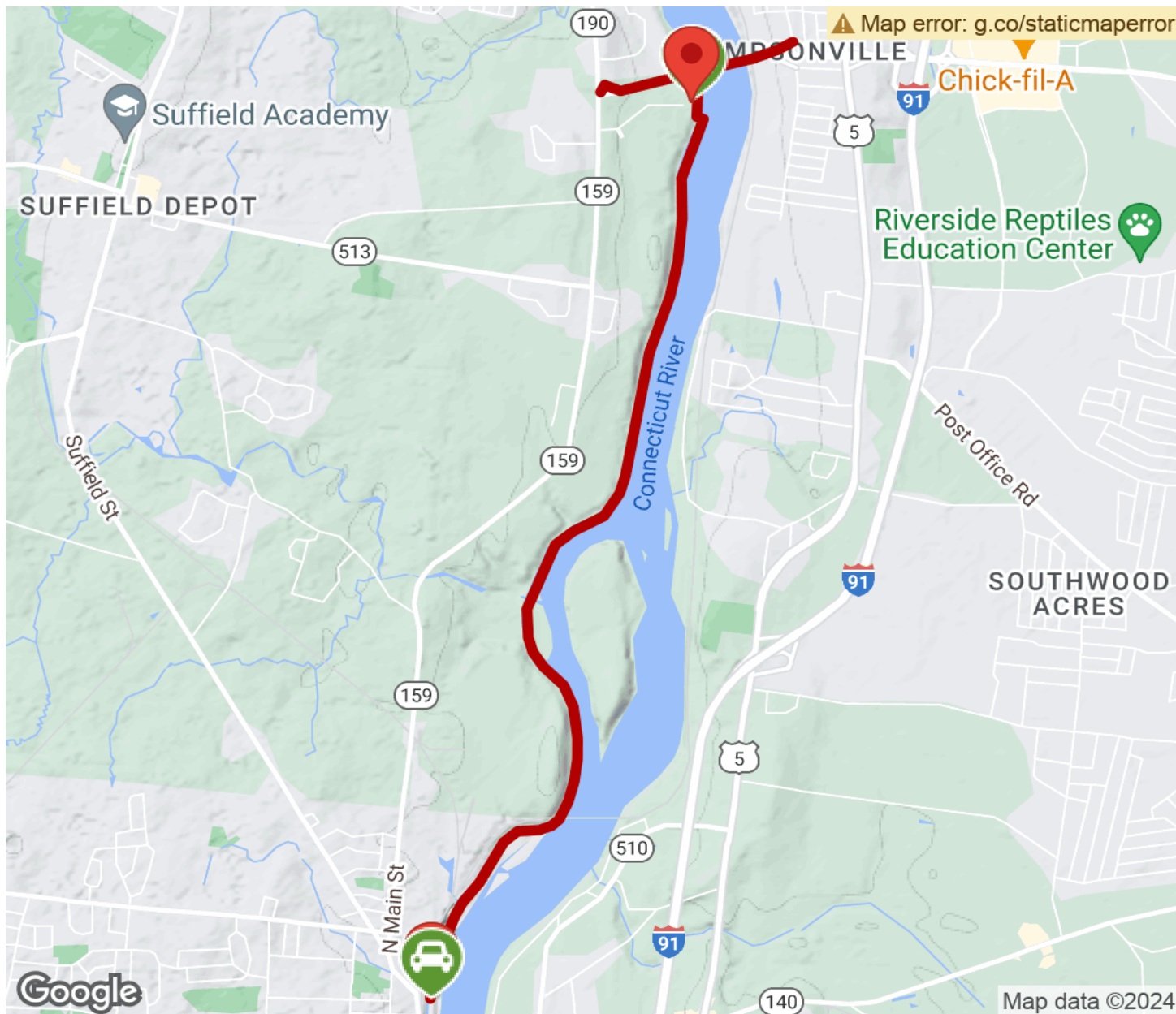
To reach the northern trailhead in Suffield from I-91, take Exit 47W, then head west (right) on CT 190 toward Suffield. Shortly after you cross the Connecticut River (1.4 miles in all), turn left onto CT 159/East St. N. Next, take the first left onto Canal Road. Go 0.4 mile on Canal Road to its end at the trailhead parking lot.

To reach the southern trailhead in Windsor Locks from I-91, take Exit 42 for CT 159 toward Windsor Locks, then turn left onto S. Main St. After a little more than a mile, turn right onto CT 140/Bridge St. Take a left behind the vacant factory building, immediately after you cross the canal but before you cross the Connecticut River. The access road ends shortly thereafter at the trailhead parking lot.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
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