



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**MCT Ronald J.
Foster
Heritage Trail**
Illinois



MCT Ronald J. Foster Heritage Trail

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You can make connections all over the countryside from the Madison County Transit (MCT) Ronald J. Foster Heritage Trail. The paved path travels 12.2 miles between the villages of Glen Carbon and Marine and hooks into a 130-mile network of interconnected trails that MCT has been creating since 1993.

The trail is named for a former mayor of Glen Carbon, Illinois; the city originally built the trail on the disused corridor of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1991. Illinois Central was one of three railroads that passed through the coal-rich community from nearby St. Louis, Missouri. In 2012 the village transferred trail ownership to Madison County Transit, which upgraded and extended it.

Today, the trail retains historical markers (that tell about

Glen Carbon's coal-mining history) and connects with two other trails, the [MCT Nickel Plate Trail](#) (more than 25 miles long) and the [MCT Goshen Trail](#) (which spans about 9 miles). These make off-road connections to other trails in the network: the [MCT Nature](#), [Quercus Grove](#), [Schoolhouse](#), and [Watershed](#) Trails.

Starting in Glen Carbon at the junction with the MCT Nickel Plate Trail near Citizen Park, you'll enter a wooded area along Judys Branch where the Illinois Central hauled coal from the mines. The area was settled as Goshen in 1801, but the coal boom from the late 1800s to 1930s prompted the name change.

Passing through woods and crossing suburban streets on the way out of town, you'll enter a 150-foot tunnel beneath Troy Road at 2.5 miles. Skirting the Greenspace East Park (bicycling is prohibited in the park), you'll cross the junction with MCT Goshen Trail and reach a trailhead parking lot less than a mile from the tunnel. Just past the trail crossing, there's another tunnel (Old Troy Road) and soon you're out into open farmland.

When there's a break in the trees that border the trail, you'll see that cropland is predominant. Keep your eyes open, however, for areas where biologists are attempting to reestablish grasses and other natural prairie vegetation.

At 4.8 miles past the Goshen Trail junction, you'll find the 340-foot Silver Creek trestle, 1 of 10 spans that MCT rehabilitated when it took over the trail.

In 4 miles, you arrive in Marine. Legend has it that sailors were among the first settlers in the 1800s, and the waving prairie grasses reminded them of the open seas, hence the name. Despite its "marine" history, the village prohibits swimming and wading in the lake at Marine Heritage Park that marks the end of the trail.



MCT Ronald J. Foster Heritage Trail

Illinois

States: Illinois

Counties: Madison

Length: 12.2miles

Trail end points: Citizen Park on S. Main St. near Steiss St. at the MCT Nickel Plate Trail (Glen Carbon) to Marine Heritage Park at N. Verson St. at Lubeck St. (Marine)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

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

Parking & Trail Access

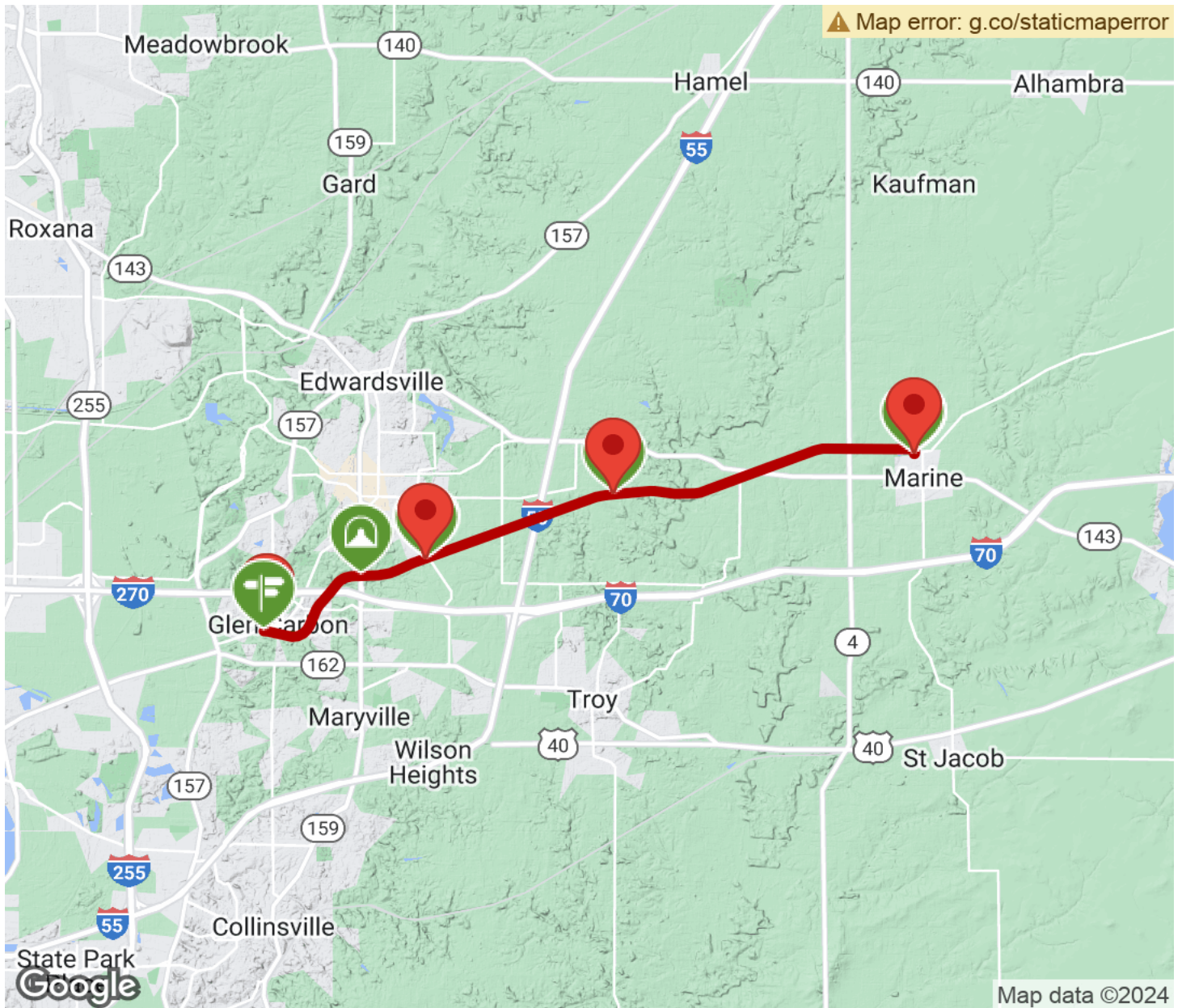
To reach the western trailhead at Citizen Park on S. Main St. in Glen Carbon: From I-270, take Exit 9 for IL 157 toward Glen Carbon and Collinsville. Go approximately 0.9 mile south on IL 157/N. Bluff Road, and turn left onto W. Main St. Go 1 mile (W. Main St. turns into S. Main St.) and turn right onto Daenzer Dr. at the fire station. Enter Citizen Park and take the first right at the baseball field and proceed to the parking lot.

To reach the eastern trailhead at Marine Heritage Park: From I-70, take Exit 21 toward Staunton and head north on IL 4. Go 1.7 miles and turn right onto IL 143/W. Division St. Go 1.1 miles and turn left onto N. Verson St. Go 0.4 mile and turn left onto Mill St., then immediately turn right into Marine Heritage Park.



MCT Ronald J. Foster Heritage Trail

Illinois



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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