



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



# Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail

*Maryland*



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The Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts because of its proximity to populous Baltimore and its relatively flat course, which winds along river valleys through the picturesque rolling hills of northern Maryland.

The crushed-stone trail rolls for nearly 20 miles from Cockeysville to the Pennsylvania border, where it connects to the [Heritage Rail Trail County Park](#), which continues for 27 miles to north of York, Pennsylvania. Together, the trails were added to the [Rail-Trail Hall of Fame](#) in 2015.

And it's not just bikers, hikers, and equestrians who are drawn to the trail; folks lugging inner tubes use it to escape the muggy Maryland summers by floating the cool

waters of Big Gunpowder Falls, which flows along the southern half of the trail.

The rail corridor of the Northern Central Railway dates back to 1832 and served towns between Baltimore and upstate New York. Some of the original white whistle posts and mileage markers still stand. The railroad ran for 140 years until flooding from Tropical Storm Agnes devastated the railbed in 1972.

After acquiring the rail corridor, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources opened the first 7.2-mile segment from Cockeysville to Monkton in 1984 as part of the Gunpowder Falls State Park. Originally named the Northern Central Rail Trail (NCR Rail Trail), the trail was renamed in honor of the agency's former director, Torrey C. Brown, in 2007.

Trail users can learn more railroad history at Monkton Station, which dates to 1898 and today serves as a visitor center and museum. Food and ice cream sales, as well as bike and inner tube rentals, make Monkton a popular stop about 7.2 miles up the trail from Cockeysville. Be sure to park only in designated areas.

The trail passes through several other towns and communities, such as Glencoe, White Hall, Parkton, and Bentley Springs, although these offer little in the way of food or refreshments. If you're traveling through, it's best to carry your own supplies and plan for stops in Monkton and New Freedom (about a mile north of the state line).

The trail starts in the community of Ashland on the outskirts of Cockeysville. The parking lot here can fill up early on summer and fall weekends; a larger lot less than a mile away on Paper Mill Road/MD 145 has more spaces.

About 3.5 miles from Ashland, you'll pass the Sparks Bank Nature Center, which is open during the summer and has interpretive displays on local wildlife. Many bird species



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**States:** Maryland

**Counties:** Baltimore

Length: 19.7miles

**Trail end points:** Ashland Road (Cockeysville, MD) to MD-PA state line at a connection with Heritage Rail Trail County Park (New Freedom, PA)

**Trail surfaces:** Crushed Stone, Dirt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Fishing, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback Riding, Walking, Cross

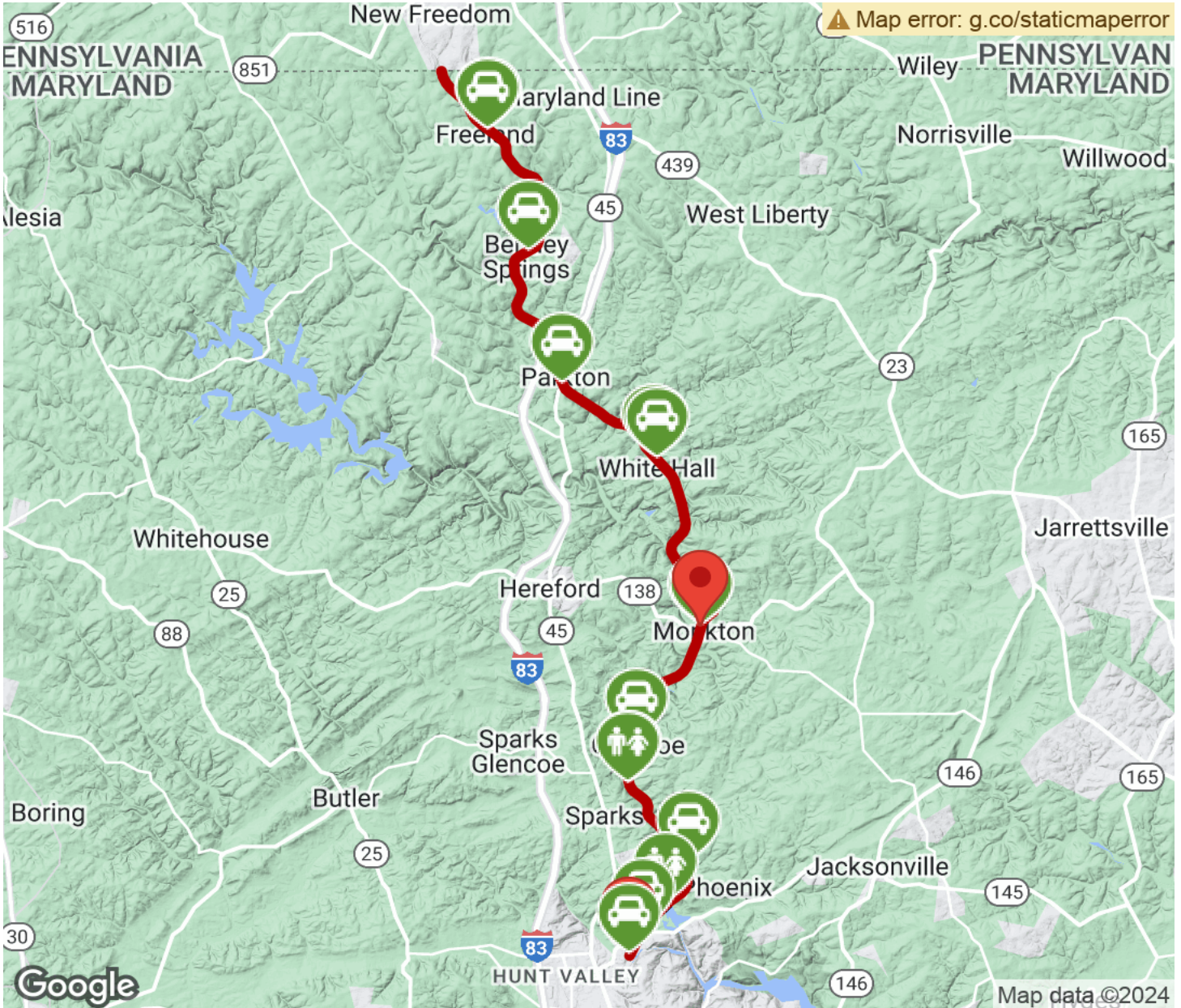
## Parking & Trail Access

The southernmost trailhead and parking area is located just off York Road/State Route 45 in Cockeysville. A larger and more popular parking lot is located just a half-mile farther north along Paper Mill Road (Torrey C. Brown Trail Parking Lot 1, 1302 Paper Mill Road). There are numerous other access points and parking areas along the entire route; refer to the map for more details.



# Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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