



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Bay County Riverwalk/ Bangor Rail Trail

Michigan



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The Bay County Riverwalk/Railtrail System connects a nature trail in a wildlife refuge on the shores of Lake Huron to a loop trail



The Bay County Riverwalk/Railtrail System connects a nature trail in a wildlife refuge on the shores of Lake Huron to a loop trail around the bustling port of Bay City. From the same 17-mile paved trail, visitors can see thousands of migratory waterfowl on Saginaw Bay, cargo and naval vessels in the Saginaw River, and lumber barons' homes in the city's historic district.

A 7.7-mile-long rail corridor links the Tobico Marsh Nature Area in the north with the 9.8-mile Bay City loop in the south. Originally created in the 1880s as the Detroit, Bay City & Alpena Railroad, the rail line hauled pine from northern forests to the growing port of Bay City. Renamed the Detroit and Mackinac Railroad in 1894, the railway was acquired in 1992 by Lake State Railway, which stopped using some sections.

Shaped overall like a lasso, the trail has many access points. It is mostly paved with asphalt as a separate path, although there are sidewalk sections alongside roads and boardwalks on the waterfront. Follow the directional arrows to stay on the path through Bay City.

Beginning at the Bay City State Recreation Area trailhead just off East Beaver Road/State Park Drive, you can visit the Tobico Marsh Nature Area by heading north for 1 mile on the Frank N. Andersen Nature Trail (part of the Bay County trail system). Bird-watchers use the two observation towers and 2.7-mile nature trail loop to view migratory birds.

Heading south from the Bay City State Recreation Area, you'll cross the Kawkawlin River and leave the rail corridor in 3.2 miles. From here, travel begins on paved paths separated from city streets or sidewalks. Just past the riverfront DeFoe Park, you'll arrive at the start of the Bay City loop. Going south to make a counterclockwise loop, you'll find many tempting eateries specializing in ethnic cuisine.

The trail continues past a bustling marina to the popular waterfront Veterans Memorial Park, featuring gardens in the Kantzler Memorial Arboretum, riverside benches, and memorials of bygone shipbuilding days. Bird-watchers will enjoy the riverfront boardwalk and pedestrian bridge over to Middleground Island and Bigelow Park. (Another pedestrian bridge at Hotchkiss Road is planned to link with the [Saginaw County to Bay County Connector](#) trail, which begins at the easternmost end of East Hotchkiss Road.) Taking the Lafayette Street Bridge, the route continues south past waterfront businesses before heading into the residential district.

After Trumbull Street, the corridor opens up for a smooth pass through farmland and woodlots for a couple of miles on a former Penn Central Railroad corridor. Heading north, you'll brush the eastern edge of Bay City's Center Avenue Historic District, where the local 19th-century elite built homes that



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States: Michigan

Counties: Bay

Length: 17.8 miles

Trail end points: N. Tuscola Road between 27th St. and 22nd St. (Bay City) to Killarney Beach Road near Athlone Beach Road at Bay City State Recreation Area (Tobico Marsh)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Boardwalk, Concrete

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the Bay City State Recreation Area trailhead from I-75, take Exit 168 (about 7.4 miles northwest of Bay City) onto Beaver Road/State Park Dr., heading east. Follow for 5.1 miles, and turn left to find parking in the recreation area.

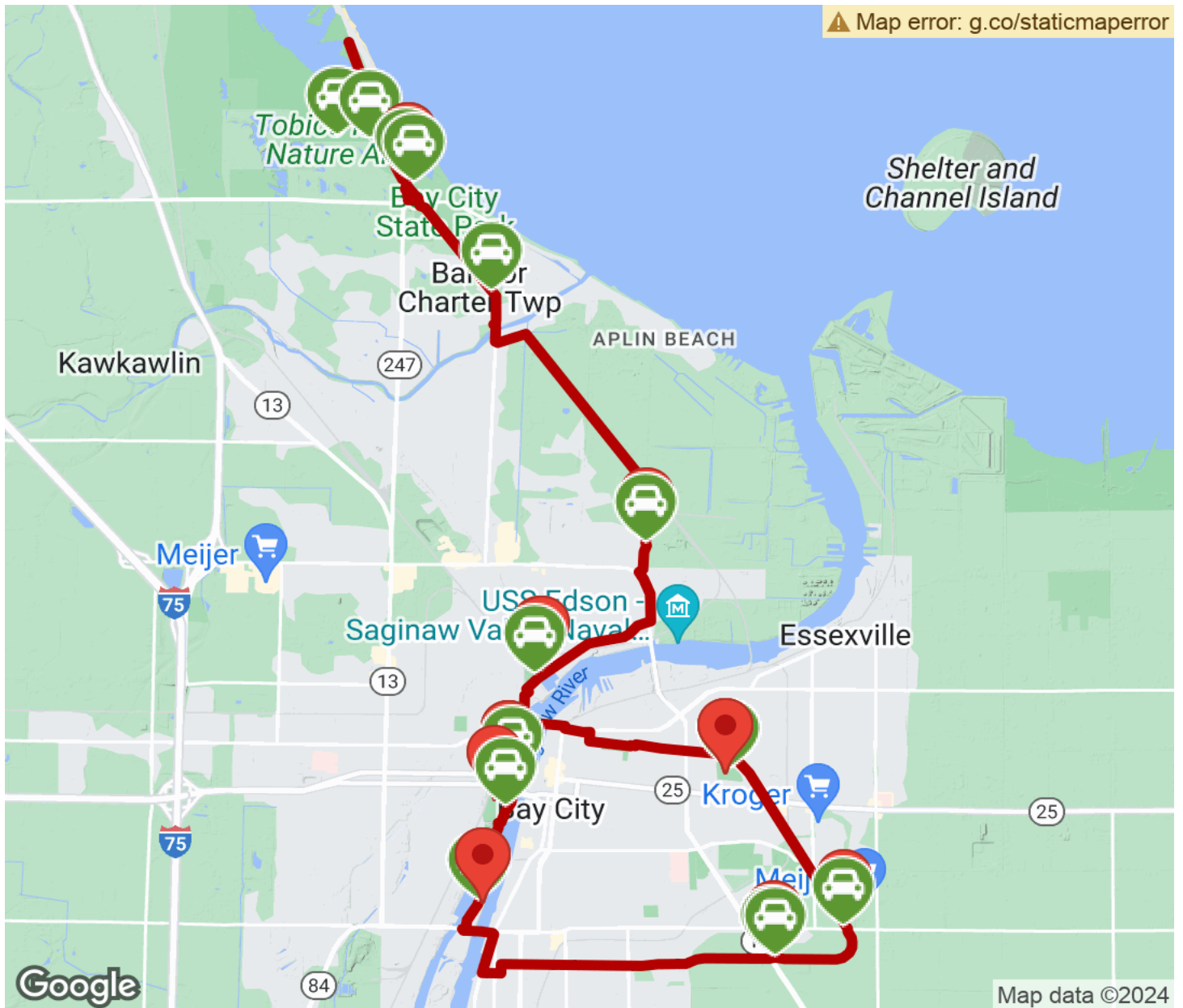
To reach the DeFoe Park trailhead from I-75, take Exit 164 (about 2.7 miles northwest of Bay City) onto Wilder Road, heading east. Go 2.1 miles, and turn right onto N. Henry St. Follow Henry for 0.8 mile, and turn left onto W. Hart St. Go 0.6 mile, and turn right onto Marquette Ave.; then go 0.2 mile, and turn right into DeFoe Park.

To reach the southern trailhead at N. Tuscola Road from I-75, take Exit 160 for SR 84/Saginaw Road, just southwest of Bay City. Continue onto SR 84 N. for 2 miles, and bear right to continue east for 1.1 miles on SR 84/Salzburg Ave., crossing the Saginaw River. Continue straight on Lafayette Ave. for 0.6 mile, and then continue onto 22nd St./Kosciuszko Ave. for 1.5 miles. Turn right onto SR 15 S./Tuscola Road, and follow for 0.3 mile. Make a U-turn at 27th St., and look for parking immediately to your right, just past the railtrail sign.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel