



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Betsie Valley  
Trail**  
*Michigan*



# Betsie Valley Trail

## Michigan

*Overview Remoteness and solitude describe a trip along the 42.8-mile Betsie Valley Trail in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula.*



### Overview

Remoteness and solitude describe a trip along the 42.8-mile Betsie Valley Trail in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. The trail slopes gently downhill in the Betsie River Valley through a state forest, a natural area, and a game refuge on its way to the port of Frankfort on Lake Michigan. The western 6 miles are paved, while the rest of the trail is covered in crushed limestone (which may be soft in some spots). Snowmobiles are allowed in season between Thompsonville and Beulah.

The easternmost 20 miles between Thompsonville and Yuma are not part of the official trail route and are not maintained. This section of rail trail is often rough and is most often reserved for snowmobile and ATV use.

### About the Route

The westernmost endpoint of the Betsie Valley Trail is located just steps away from the shores of Lake Michigan in the charming town of Frankfort. The trail here heads southeast first alongside Betsie Lake and then alongside River Rd. as the trail heads towards Beulah. Here, at the mouth of Betsie Lake, there are ruins of an old railroad yard. Between Frankfort and Beulah, the trail skirts alongside the Betsie River and adjacent marshland as well as the Betsie River State Game Area.

As the trail veers north and approaches Crystal Lake, it also crosses Mollineaux Rd. where the trail becomes crushed stone and leaves its paved asphalt surface. This section along Crystal Lake, which passes by a row of beachfront cottages, does not allow dogs (up until reaching Beulah). Additionally, between Railroad Point Natural Area and Beulah, trail users must stay within the 10-ft trail easement to protect the surrounding landscape.

The trail offers a gradual ascent along the 5.3-mile stretch between Beulah and Aylsworth Road, where trail users can stop by the replica railroad depot for visitor information, restrooms, and memorabilia.

As the trail heads towards Thompsonville, the trail crosses through a 7-mile stretch of pine and hardwood in the Pere Marquette State Forest. Along the way, trail users can spot the old turbine that supplied the sole source of electricity in this area, and near Aylsworth and Zimmerman Roads, the trail passes through the ghost town of Homestead, where railroad maintenance workers lived at the turn of the 19th century. At the end of this stretch, the trail crosses a renovated railroad bridge.

Thompsonville is the end of the official route, which is maintained by Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail. East of here, between Thompsonville and Yuma, the trail is not maintained



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Benzie

Length: 42.8miles

**Trail end points:** 510 Main St (Frankfort) to W 24 Rd. (Mesick)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt,Crushed Stone,Gravel

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike,Inline

Skating,Fishing,Wheelchair

Accessible,Mountain

Biking,Snowmobiling,Walking,Cross Country

## Parking & Trail Access

The Betsie Valley Trail runs between 510 Main St (Frankfort), where parking is available, and W 24 Rd. (Mesick).

Parking is also available at:

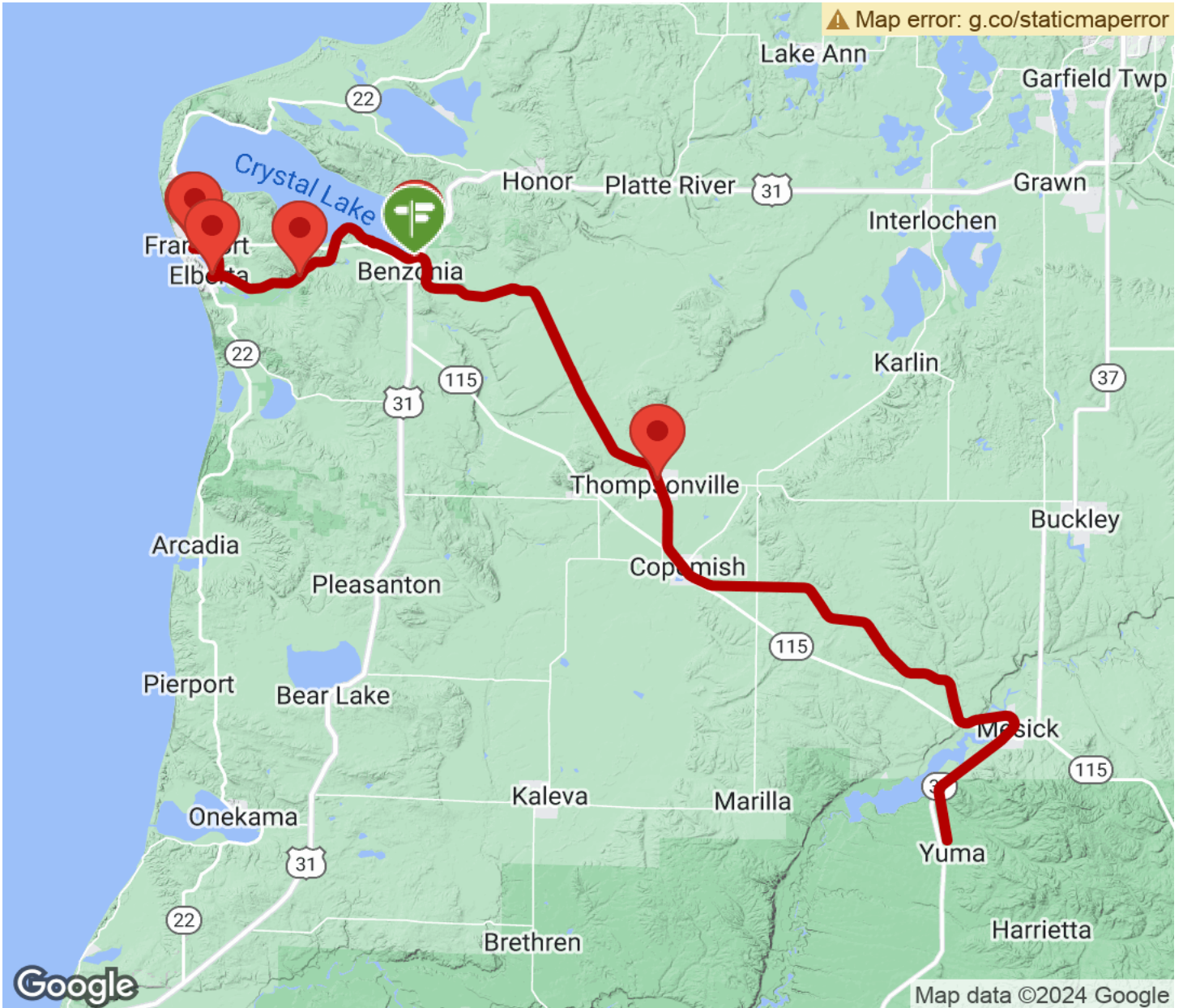
- 1098 Lakeside Blvd (Elberta)
- 7200 Crystal Ave (Beulah)

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



# Betsie Valley Trail

Michigan



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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