



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Saginaw  
Valley Rail  
Trail**  
*Michigan*



## Saginaw Valley Rail Trail

Michigan

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The Saginaw Valley Rail Trail offers a year-round rural retreat from the urban confines of Saginaw. Rolling through a continuous woodsy border past farms, fields, and game areas for 11 miles, the paved trail connects the manufacturing center of Saginaw with the former coal-mining town of St. Charles.

The trail follows a rail bed first used by the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad in the late 1860s. By 1881, it extended north all the way to Mackinaw City and was under the control of the Michigan Central Railroad, a subsidiary of the New York Central Railroad. Ownership changes put the line under the Penn Central in 1968, Conrail in 1976, and the Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Railway in 1982.

Advocates pressed for a trail after the railway became inactive. Work began on the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail in 1999, and it was completed in 2009. The trail's builders preserved much of the tree canopy to provide shade in the summer and color in the fall. Bird-watchers use viewing platforms and the trail's seven bridges to spot a share of the 100 species documented through the year. An equestrian trail parallels the paved trail for 8 miles.

Beginning at the Stroebel Road trailhead, you'll head southwest on the old railroad grade to get to St. Charles in 9.6 miles. In the other direction, a newer 1.4-mile trail addition alongside Stroebel Road intersects a sidewalk for South Center Road that crosses the Tittabawassee River for access to southern Saginaw.

Luscious displays of Queen Anne's lace and other wildflowers cluster along the route, and interpretive signs identify many of these species. A thick growth of vegetation flanks much of the trail, and the intact canopy of trees makes you feel as if you are in a large forest.

About 2 miles from the Stroebel Road trailhead, you'll come to a junction with the [Thomas Township Trail](#). The right fork heads due north through farmland for 2.3 miles to chain grocery stores and restaurants. Back on the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail, at mile 3 you'll come to a trailhead at Swan Creek and Van Wormer Roads that has restrooms, soda machines, drinking fountains, and parking. Crossing Swan Creek, there's a fishing platform where you may see anglers hoping to snag trout, perch, or smallmouth bass.

There are three pocket parks, complete with wooden gazebos and benches, along the trail. The first is located between Stroebel Road and River Road, the second between Spencer Road and Lakefield Road, and the third between Teft Road and Prior Road.

After crossing Marsh Creek just before mile 6, you'll skirt the



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Saginaw

Length: 11miles

**Trail end points:** S. Center Road & Stroebel Road (Saginaw) to Lumberjack Park at E. Water St. & N. Miami St. (St. Charles)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike,Inline

Skating,Fishing,Wheelchair

Accessible,Horseback Riding,Walking,Cross

## Parking & Trail Access

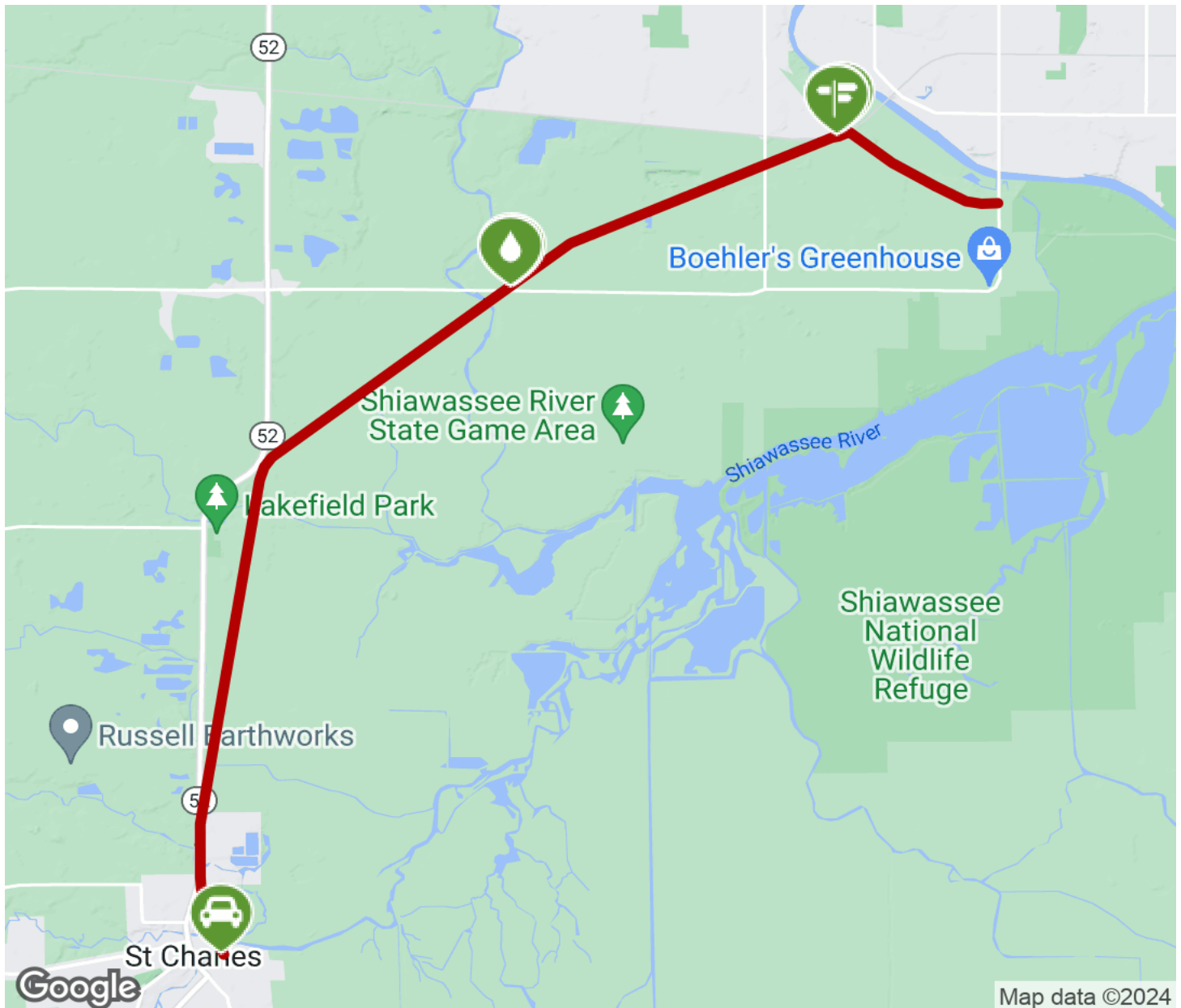
To reach the northern trailhead on Stroebel Road from I-75, take Exit 149B west onto MI 46/ E. Holland Road. Go 1.2 miles, veer right onto MI 46/E. Remington St., follow for 1.1 miles, and then turn left onto Sheridan Ave. Go 0.4 mile, and turn right onto MI 46/Rust Ave. Go 1.8 miles—Rust becomes Williams St. across the Saginaw River—and, in 0.2 mile, turn left onto S. Michigan Ave. Go 1.2 miles, and veer right onto W. Michigan Ave. Go 1.5 miles, and turn left onto S. Center Road, crossing the Tittabawassee River. After 0.7 mile, turn right onto Stroebel Road. Look for parking on the left in 1.4 miles, just before the railroad tracks. The trail endpoint is located about 1.4 miles southeast along the trail, which parallels Stroebel Road.

To reach the trailhead at Lumberjack Park in St. Charles from I-75, take Exit 136 onto westbound MI 83/Main St./Birch Run Rd. Go 10 miles, and turn right onto Bueche Road. Go 0.5 mile, and turn left onto Fergus Road. After 6.9 miles, turn right onto Sharon Road just after you cross the Shiawassee River. Go 3.3 miles—Sharon Road becomes Chesaning St.—and veer left onto S. Saginaw St. After 0.3 mile, turn right onto E. Water St. Go 0.2 mile and look for parking on the left in Lumberjack Park.



# Saginaw Valley Rail Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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