



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Root River  
State Trail**  
*Minnesota*



## Root River State Trail

Minnesota

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Along much of its route, the Root River State Trail follows the winding course of its namesake river for 42 miles through the Minnesota towns of Fountain, Lanesboro, Whalan, Peterson, Rushford, and Houston. The paved trail is mostly level, although a section just west of Houston (around Money Creek Woods) has some steep hills for about 0.5 mile.

Along the way, you'll have outstanding views of the tall limestone bluffs and the steep hills thickly wooded in maples and birch that rise above the river. Watch for wildlife, such as turkeys, deer, raccoons, and birds of prey. You might also encounter rattlesnakes sunning themselves on rock outcrops or along the river bottom and trail. Rattlesnakes are a protected state species and should be left alone.

The towns along the route provide many amenities, including bed-and-breakfasts, campgrounds, restaurants, museums, outfitters, and interesting shops and historical buildings. The trail is built on an old railroad right-of-way that followed the river, linking rural communities throughout this alluring tourism region of southeastern Minnesota.

Cross-country skiing is popular during winter, and the trail intersects with a system of groomed snowmobile trails. Between Lanesboro and Fountain, the trail meets up with the 18-mile-long [Harmony–Preston Valley State Trail](#). There is an access point on the Root River State Trail at Isinours Management Unit, with parking available about 0.5 mile west of the northern trailhead for the Harmony–Preston Valley State Trail, just beyond County Road 17. The combined Root River/Harmony–Preston Valley network provides more than 60 miles of paved trails through Minnesota's most scenic bluff country.

Every trailhead in the towns along the route has a bicycle tune-up station. Restrooms are at every official trailhead along the route, except in Whalan.



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Minnesota

**States:** Minnesota

**Counties:** Fillmore, Houston

Length: 42miles

**Trail end points:** County Highway 8 at Maple Street (Fountain) to West Plum Street (Houston)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline

Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair

Accessible, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

To reach parking in Fountain, take I-90 to Exit 218. Turn left (south) onto US 52, and go 21.3 miles. Turn left onto County Road 8, and in 0.3 mile reach the parking lot near the city park/softball field on the right.

In Lanesboro parking is available on the street and at the lot by the Lanesboro Community Center and Sylvan Park. Take I-90 to Exit 218. Turn left (south) onto US 52, and go 21.3 miles. Turn left onto CR 8, and in 9.1 miles turn right onto Parkway Ave. S. In 0.2 mile Sylvan Park is on the left. Trail access is 0.2 mile north at CR 8/Elmwood St.

Parking is available near the midpoint in Peterson. Take I-90 to Exit 242. Head south on CR 29, and go 1.6 miles. Turn left to stay on CR 29, and go 5.6 miles. Continue straight on CR 25, which becomes S. Church St., and go 5.8 miles. Turn right onto Park St., and immediately turn right onto Fillmore St. to reach the city park. The bike station is located on the trail at the intersection of Park St. and S. Church St./CR 25.

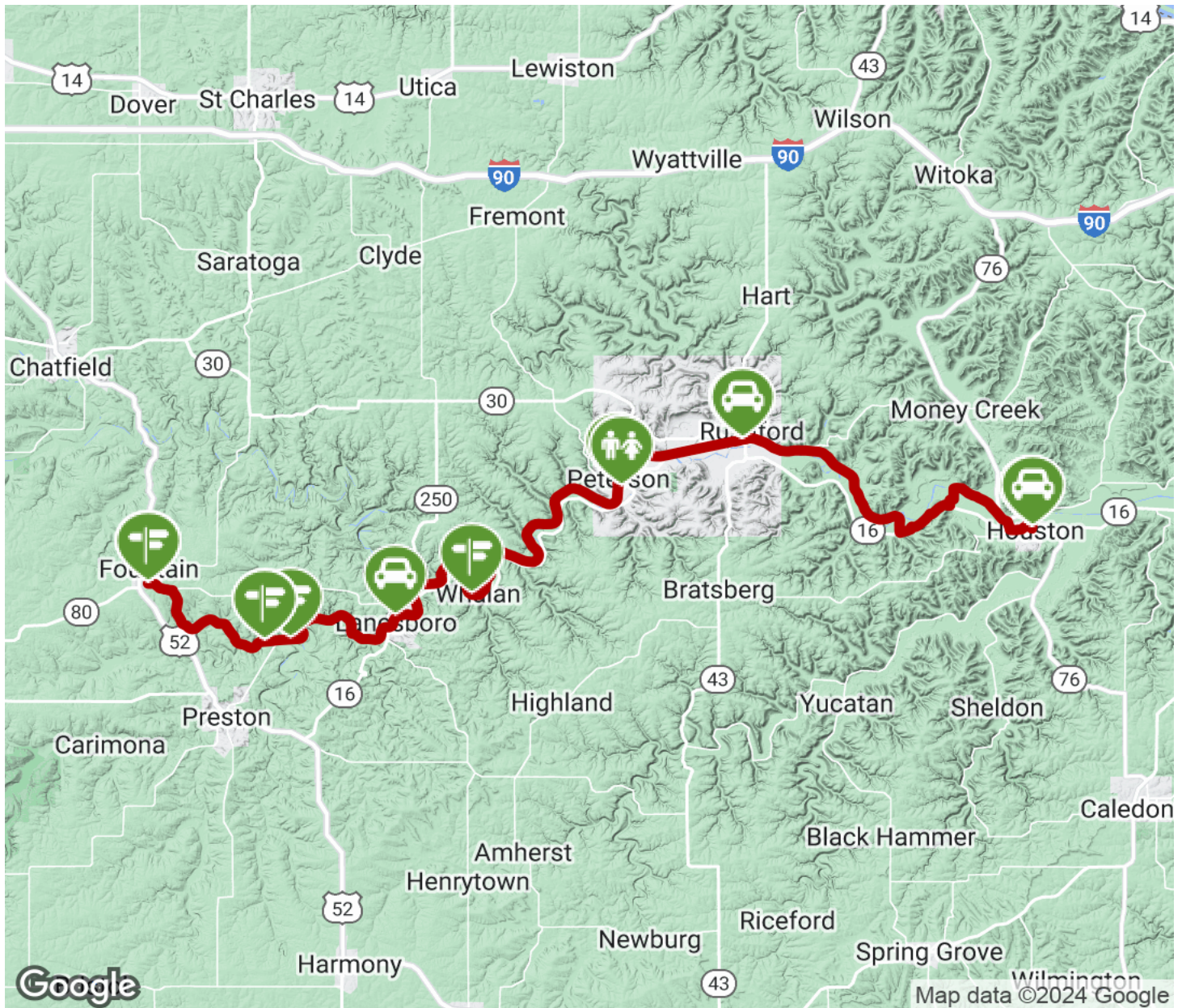
For the eastern trailhead, take I-90 to Exit 258. Head south on MN 76, and go 13.5 miles. Turn right onto W. Plum St. Parking will be on the right.





# Root River State Trail

Minnesota



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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