



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Sakatah
Singing Hills
State Trail**
Minnesota



Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail

Minnesota

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This trail is so nice they named it twice: Sakatah is the Dakota word for "singing hills." The Dakota people of the Great Sioux Nation originally lived in this scenic part of Minnesota, where the Big Woods once met the prairie. A rail line was built through the area in the late 19th century and rendered inactive by Chicago and North Western in the 1970s. In 1980 the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources opened the route, which it had acquired as a rail-trail shortly after it went inactive.

The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail runs through a beautiful landscape of farmland, lakes, wetlands, and woods. The two anchor towns of Faribault (on the eastern end) and Mankato (to the west) are the trail's largest and are home to many restaurants and shops. In Waterville, near the trail's midpoint, the trail leaves the former

railroad corridor for a short signed detour on city streets. Other towns on the route are smaller, but can serve as refreshing rest stops.

Although the trail is paved for its entire length, conditions vary. In 2012, a 10.5-mile section from Morristown to Faribault was repaved. In the fall of 2015, a section of the trail between County Road 12 and Madison Lake was closed for construction, and the process of milling and repaving this segment began. In 2020, a 5-mile section of the trail from Elysian to Waterville was repaved.

At times, the trail runs immediately adjacent to several large lakes, including Wells Lake, Cannon Lake, Sakatah Lake, Lake Elysian, and Eagle Lake. Be sure to stop for an extended rest at Sakatah Lake State Park; the trail runs through the park for 3 miles and the area is a great place to picnic, hike, or swim. In Mankato connect directly with the North Minnesota River Trail, which leads to the Red Jacket Trail and its stunning trestle over the Blue Earth River. In Faribault, the planned Mill Towns Trail will eventually link the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail with the existing Cannon Valley Trail. The addition of that proposed 20-mile segment from Mankato to Red Wing (the eastern endpoint of the Cannon Valley Trail) would create a trail just shy of 100 miles long on a single converted railroad corridor.



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States: Minnesota

Counties: Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Rice

Length: 39 miles

Trail end points: North Riverfront Dr & US Rte 14 (Mankato) to State Rte 21 north of 7th St Northwest (Faribault)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback

Parking & Trail Access

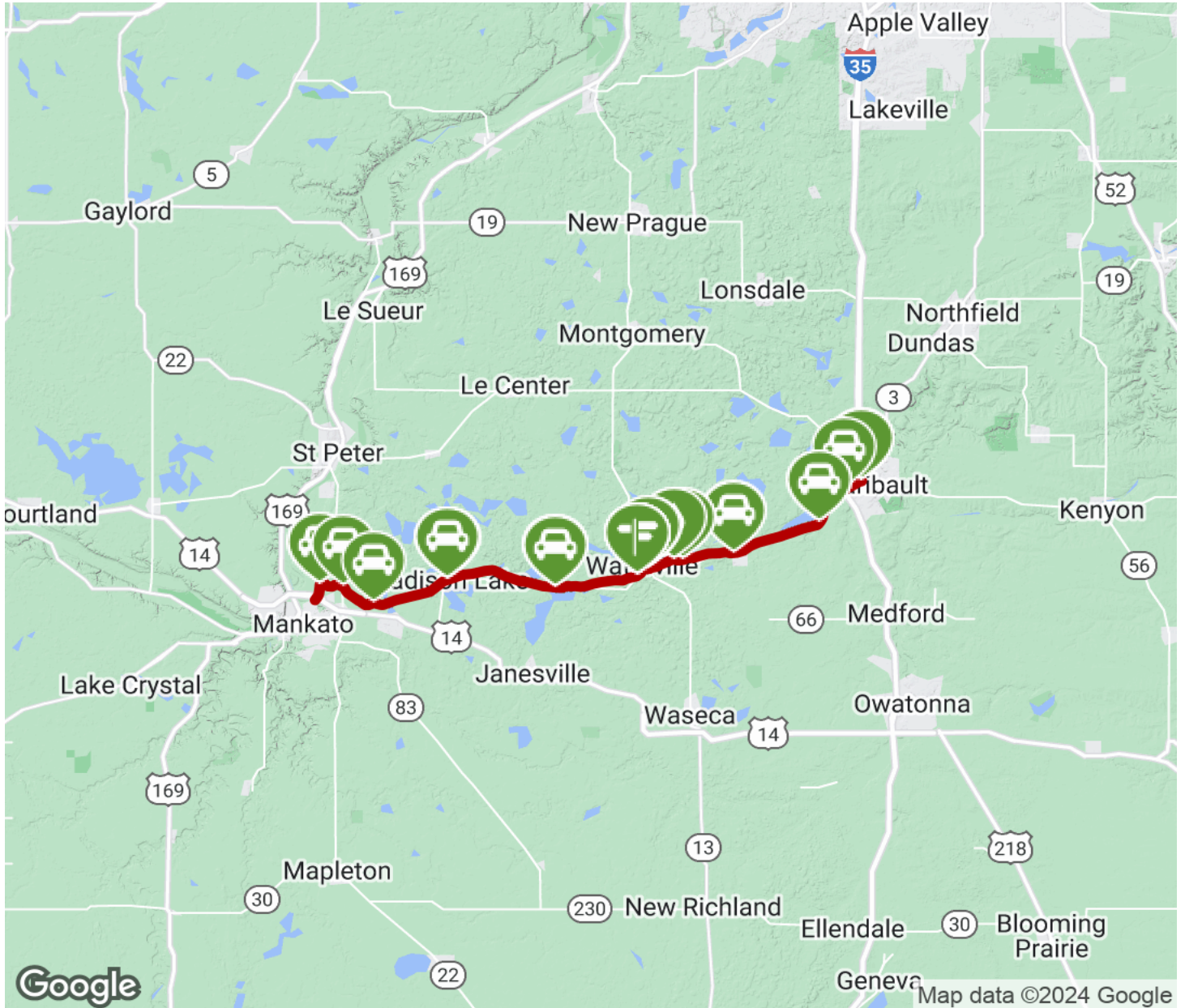
The primary western trailhead is located in Mankato at a small parking lot on Lime Valley Road, just north of US 14. The actual trail end is south of US 14 at W. Dukes St. Take I-35 to Exit 56. Turn left (southwest) onto MN 60, and go 31.1 miles. Turn right onto US 14, and go 8 miles to the Riverfront Drive exit. Turn right onto N. Riverfront Drive, and in 0.6 mile turn left onto Lime Valley Road. Parking will be on the left in 0.25 mile.

In Faribault, park at White Sands Park. Take I-35 to Exit 59. Turn right (southeast) onto MN 21/Lyndale Ave., and go 1.6 miles. White Sands Park is on the right.



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Minnesota



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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