



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Ashuelot
Recreational
Rail Trail**
New Hampshire



Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail

New Hampshire

Closure Notice: Due to flooding, the Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail is closed from Pine Street to Sawyer's Crossing Road in Swanzey.



Railroad, which began serving the area in 1851. The Connecticut River Railroad acquired the route in 1877, and the Boston and Maine Railroad took over in 1893. It ran until 1983, helping to spark the late-19th-century manufacturing boom for mills along the river by supplying raw materials and getting products to market.

Starting in Keene, the trail begins as an asphalt path that passes through the campus of Keene State College. It crosses a secluded trestle on the Ashuelot River and then takes a pedestrian bridge over busy NH 12/101. The packed gravel here becomes ballast, dirt, and sand a mile south of the bridge.

About 2.5 miles past the pedestrian bridge, you'll cross Sawyers Crossing Road, where the circa 1859 Cresson Covered Bridge sits about 500 feet to the left. The trail crosses the river in 0.3 mile near West Swanzey in an area considered moose territory. Passing on the east side of West Swanzey, a 0.3-mile detour right onto Railroad Street and then right onto Main Street which leads to the 1832 Thompson Covered Bridge.

Between West Swanzey and Winchester, the rail-trail passes east of Pisgah State Park. At Holbrook Avenue, you can detour off the trail to the right for 0.7 mile to find the 1862 Slate Covered Bridge (from Holbrook Avenue, turn right onto Westport Village Road). The trail crosses the Ashuelot River on a trestle about halfway to Winchester, where you'll find the old railroad depot on Elm Street put to use in a lumberyard.

About 2.2 miles past the old depot in Winchester, you arrive in the town of Ashuelot, where there's another restored railroad depot at the Gunn Mountain Road intersection. Next to the trail is the Ashuelot Covered Bridge, built in 1864 to bring wood across the Ashuelot River to fuel the burners of the railroad's steam engines. Considered one of New England's most sophisticated covered bridges, the span is 169 feet long

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The Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail passes such scenic and historical landmarks as covered bridges, abandoned mills, and postcard-perfect towns. Starting on asphalt in Keene, the rail-trail can be marked by deep puddles and potholes as it follows the Ashuelot River south to Hinsdale in southern New Hampshire. Mountain bikes are recommended in warmer months, and in winter, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and dogsledding are all permitted.

The 21.5-mile trail traces the corridor of the Ashuelot



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New Hampshire

States: New Hampshire

Counties: Cheshire

Length: 21.5 miles

Trail end points: Emerald St. at Ralston St./
Cheshire Rail Trail (Keene) to Northfield Road/
NH 63 (Hinsdale)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Ballast, Cinder, Crushed
Stone, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Wheelchair
Accessible, Horseback Riding, Mountain

Parking & Trail Access

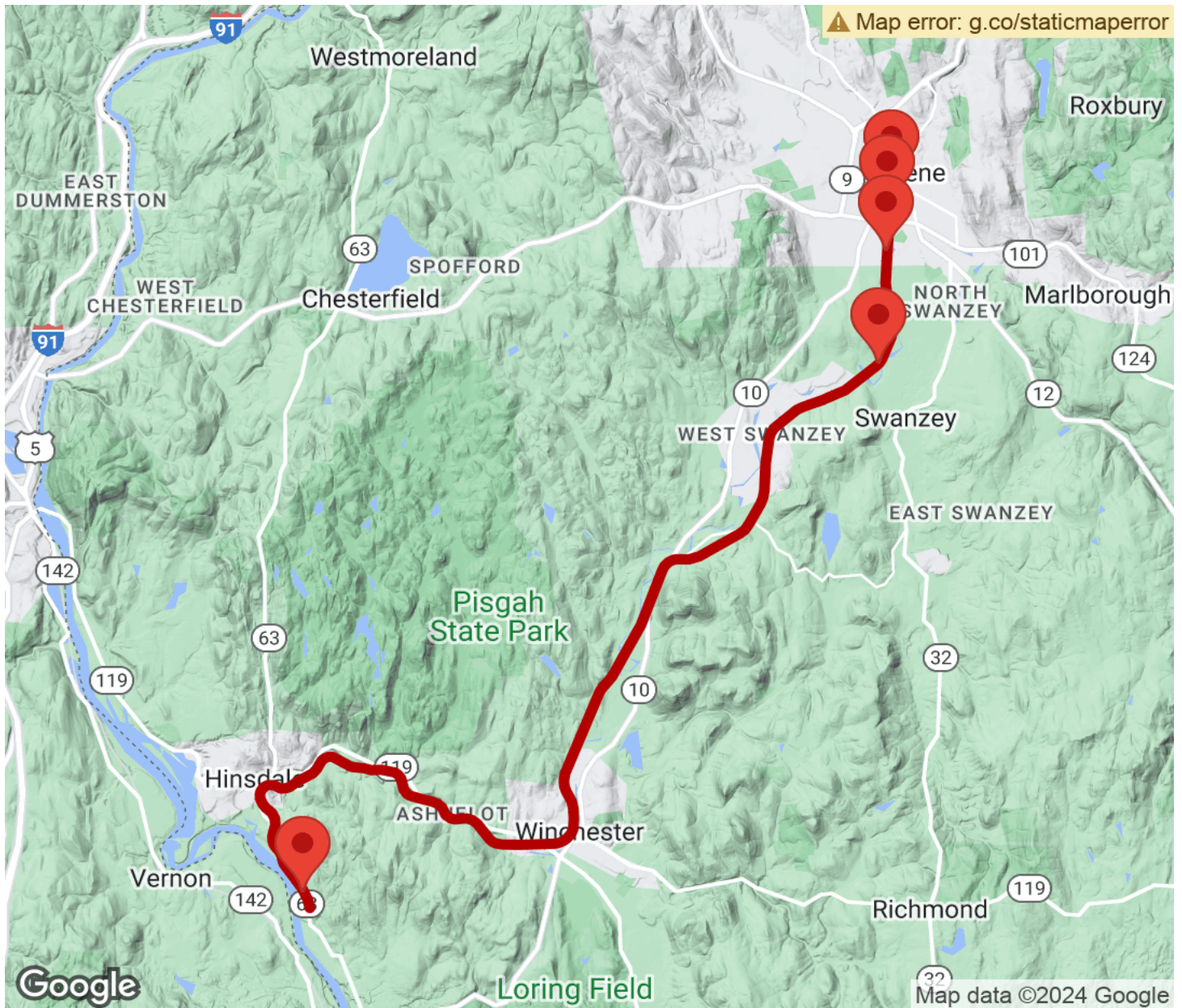
To reach the trailhead in Keene from I-91, take Exit 3 onto SR 9/Franklin Pierce Hwy. east toward Keene. Go 14.7 miles, and stay straight onto NH 10/NH 12. Go 0.4 mile, and at the roundabout take the third exit (left) onto Winchester St. Go 0.6 mile, and turn left onto Ralston St. Go 0.2 mile, and turn left onto Emerald St. Parking is available in the shopping center lot across from the trailhead.

To reach the trailhead near Hinsdale from I-91, take Exit 28 (from I-91 S) or Exit 28A (from I-91 N) onto MA 10 heading east toward Northfield. Go 4.4 miles east, and turn left onto MA 10/MA 63/Main St. Go 2.5 miles, and turn left to stay on MA 63/NH 63. Go 3.2 miles, and turn left into the parking lot. To reach the trailhead, backtrack 0.2 mile on NH 63/Northfield Road.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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