



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Paulinskill
Valley Trail**
New Jersey



Paulinskill Valley Trail

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The Paulinskill Valley Trail follows a creek by the same name through a section of rural New Jersey with a strong German influence. In fact, the word kill is Dutch for “riverbed or stream channel.” German refugees from European wars settled along the Paulins Kill during the Colonial period, and their influence survives in communities along the 27-mile trail. Visitors will see plentiful wildlife, such as bear, bobcat, mink, and deer, along the path, and sightings of more than 100 species of birds have been documented. Fishing is also available in the Paulins Kill.

The New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway laid tracks down the valley between Kittatinny Mountain and the New Jersey Highlands in 1886. Trains hauled coal from Pennsylvania and carried passengers, produce, and

dairy products from the agricultural valley until hard times hit in 1962, and the railroad removed the tracks west of Sparta Junction. Used unofficially as a trail for many years, the corridor was purchased by the state in 1986 and became a state park in 1992. The remains of icehouses, creameries, and depots can be spotted from the trail.

The path runs from near the Paulins Kill confluence with the Delaware River in the west to active railroad tracks at Sparta Junction in the east. The trail’s primarily cinder surface is better suited to bikes with wide tires. Note that the tips of the trail are where you will encounter different surfaces; there is a short section (about 20 feet) of ballast at the trail’s western end, and a 0.6-mile section of dirt and grass from Sunset Inn Road to the trail’s eastern end.

Start on the west end at the Brugler Road trailhead in Knowlton Township. In 1.1 miles the trail arrives at the massive Paulinskill Viaduct, also known as the Hainesburg Trestle. Built by the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad in 1910, the viaduct soars 115 feet above Paulins Kill and Station Road as seven arches carry it 1,100 feet across. At one time, it was the world’s largest reinforced concrete structure.

In 4 miles, you’ll arrive at Blairstown Airport, which interrupts the trail. Take Airport and Lambert Roads to resume the trail in 0.6 mile. Footbridge Park in Blairstown is 2 miles ahead, where you can find something to eat or explore the town’s historic district that features a gristmill dating to 1825. This is the last chance to stock up on trailside snacks.

Crossing the creek four times in the next 4.5 miles, the trail also passes the 400-acre White Lake Natural Resource Area. Nine miles past Blairstown, trail users descend a side path to cross West End Drive/Paulinskill Lake Road, and then go left a short distance to South Shore Terrace, where they regain the railroad grade. The trail provides an elevated view of 3-mile-long Paulinskill Lake. The path crosses Swartswood Road/



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States: New Jersey

Counties: Sussex, Warren

Length: 27.1 miles

Trail end points: Sparta Junction, 0.6 mile southeast of Sunset Inn Rd & Limecrest Randazzo Rd (Sparta Township) to Brugler Rd, 0.2 mile north of Warrington Rd (Knowlton Township)

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

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the western trailhead on Brugler Road from I-80, take Exit 4C-A or 4C, and merge onto NJ 94 N. Go 1.3 miles, and turn right onto Brugler Road. Go 1.2 miles, and look for parking just past the bridge in 0.4 mile. A parking permit is required from Knowlton Township for the Station Road trailhead, but not for the Brugler Road trailhead.

To reach the eastern trailhead at Warbasse Junction Road from I-80 in Lafayette Township, take Exit 25 toward Newton. Merge onto US 206 N, go 10.9 miles, and turn left to stay on US 206/Main St. Go 1 mile, and turn left onto US 206/Spring St. Then go another 0.1 mile, and bear right onto US 206/NJ 94/Water St. Go 2.2 miles, and turn right onto NJ 94/Morris Farm Lafayette Road. Go 2 miles, and turn right onto Warbasse Junction Road. Go 0.5 mile, and look for trail parking on the right.

