



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Ironton Rail-Trail

Pennsylvania



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The Ironton Rail Trail connects nearly a dozen parks and two dozen historical sites in east-central Lehigh County. The rail-trail comprises a 5-mile loop around Coplay and Hokendauqua on the Lehigh River north of Allentown and a 4-mile spur west toward Ironton.

The trail follows the route of the Ironton Railroad, which obliged the future trail makers by creating a lasso-shaped corridor to connect iron mines in the ore-rich county to iron foundries along the river and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Built in 1860, the railroad survived the local iron industry decline by serving the growing cement-making industry, which left behind some of the most striking artifacts along the trail. Certain segments fell into disuse starting in 1955, until the last section was discontinued in 1984.

Whitehall and North Whitehall Townships and the borough of Coplay jointly acquired the corridor in 1996. All The trail is paved from end-to-end. The 142-mile [D&L Trail](#) is just across the Lehigh River from Coplay.

The north side of the loop on Chestnut Street is a good place to start, with parking and restrooms. Heading east, clockwise around the loop, you'll arrive at Saylor Park in 0.7 mile. From a distance, you might think you've stumbled into Hogwarts on the set of a Harry Potter movie. What you're seeing are the nine 90-foot-high brick cement kilns built for the Coplay Cement Company in 1893. They only operated 11 years before they became obsolete, but the kilns survive today as an open-air museum of the cement industry. The Coplay community pool sits across the trail from the kiln.

The trail bends right at the Lehigh River, a Pennsylvania Scenic River. Heading south, you can see some of the deteriorating buildings of the Thomas Iron Company on the riverfront. Beginning in the 1850s, the company ran hot blast iron furnaces using locally mined iron ore until it went out of business in 1921. The community of Hokendauqua grew up around it.

The trail's riverside run ends 2.1 miles from the trailhead as you turn right and arrive at the athletic fields at the Hokendauqua Park and Playground. The route heads north along Coplay Creek and comes to a junction 1.4 miles past the park. Turn right to finish the loop, or turn left for the 4-mile spur toward Ironton.

The spur trail rolls through the 110-acre Whitehall Parkway for 0.5 mile, where you'll find dirt trails heading into the forest, as well as ruins of kilns and other historical buildings. The path then passes along the shoreline of Ranger Lake for about 0.5 mile before you come to the Troxell-Steckel House and Farm Museum. The stone farmhouse here was built in 1756, and the red barn dates from the 1800s.



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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Lehigh

Length: 9.2miles

Trail end points: Chestnut St. near N. Ruch St. (Coplay) to Water St. (Hokendauqua) to Levans Road/SR 4008 and Mauch Chunk Road/SR 1017 (North Whitehall)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the northside trailhead in Coplay from I-78, take Exit 57, and head north on Lehigh St. Go 1.9 miles and veer right onto St. John St. In one block, turn left onto S. Eighth St. In 1.7 miles, turn right onto Greenleaf St., and go 0.1 mile. Turn left onto SR 145 N/N. Seventh St./MacArthur Road. Go 4.6 miles, and take a sharp right onto Chestnut St. Go 0.5 mile, and turn right into the parking lot.

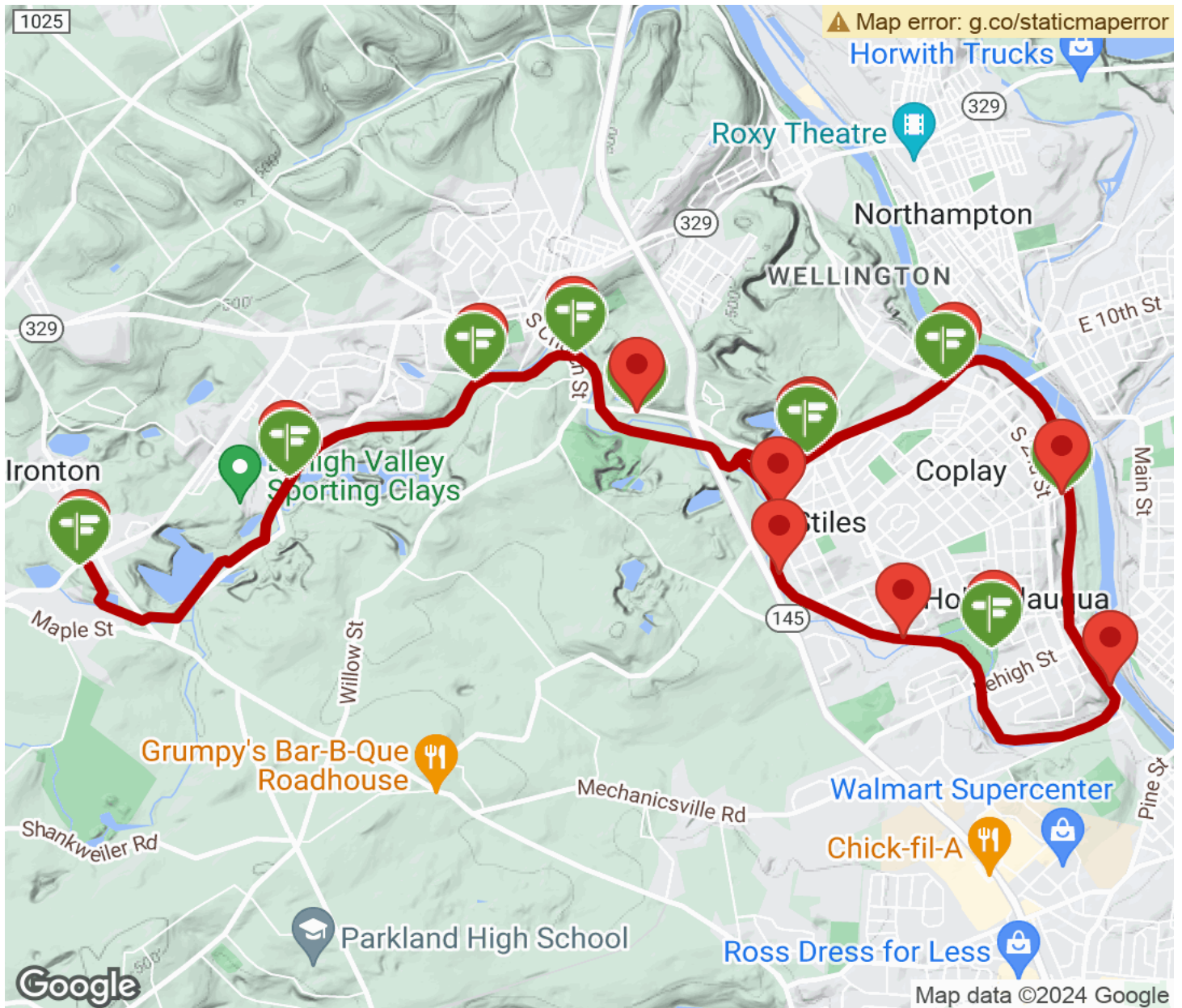
To reach the eastern trailhead on Water St. from I-78, follow the directions above to SR 145 N/N. Seventh St./MacArthur Road. Go 2.5 miles, and take a slight right toward Eberhart Road. Go 0.1 mile, turn right onto Eberhart Road, and go 0.9 mile. Turn left onto Water St., and go 0.2 mile. Turn left into the parking lot.

To reach the western trailhead in North Whitehall from I-78, take Exit 55, and head north on S. Cedar Crest Blvd. Go 6.4 miles. Turn left onto Mauch Chunk Road, go 0.8 mile, and turn left onto Levans Road. Turn left into the parking lot for North Whitehall Township Recreation Park.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel