2024

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Guides

TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Cheese Country Recreation Trail

Wisconsin

Overview

Most suited for ATVers, snowmobilers and motorized trail-bikers, the Cheese Country Recreation Trail, also knowns as the Tri-County Trail, spans 47-miles through Wisconsin's rugged Driftless Area. On dirt, crushed stone and gravel surfaces, non-motorized users on foot or bike might find this trail difficult. Some areas areas have deep mud or dust while other sections are rutted or deeply graveled. Motorized traffic is heaviest on weekends.

About the Route

The Cheese Country Recreation Trail's northwestern endpoint is at Commerce St & Old Darlington Rd (Mineral Point). Adjacent to the trail entrance is the Old Railroad

Depot Museum, built in 1856 and the oldest in the state. A historic mining village, the town is rich with artists' studios and galleries, restored homes, restaurants, and bed-and-breakfasts.

Heading south from Mineral Point, the trail follows Brewery Creek, winding through a mix of forest and farmland for about 9 miles before reaching Calamine, a small village where the trail connects to the Pecatonica State Trail. The next town, 6 miles further south, is Darlington, and has dining and convenience options. South of Darlington, the trail snakes through wooded ridges and farmland and begins to curve eastward. The old mining town of Gratiot, more or less in the middle of the trail, offers and a good place for a break at the local restaurants and shops.

In Browntown, the trail crosses a 440-foot trestle bridge, whose stone supports have been around since the 1880s. East from Browntown, the trail passes the lakes of the Cadiz Springs State Recreation Area. Here the trail begins to gain altitude on an incline heading east to Monroe, the easternmost town on the trail, which bills itself as the "Swiss Cheese Capital of the USA." The Cheese Country Recreation Trail's southeastern endpoint is at W 21st St & Fourth Ave W (Monroe). The trailhead is just 0.2 mile from the Badger State Trail and 0.7 mile from the National Historic Cheesemaking Center, both east on 21st Street.

Connections

In Calamine, the trail connects to the Pecatonica State Trail, another ATV/snowmobile route. From the endpoint in Monroe, a connection is available to the Badger State Trail 0.2 miles east on W 21 St.

Trail History

The Cheese Country Recreation Trail follows a corridor of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, which used

Cheese Country Recreation Trail
Wisconsin

States: Wisconsin

Counties: Dodge,Green,Iowa,Lafayette

Length: 46.4miles

Trail end points: Commerce St & Old Darlington Rd (Mineral Point) to W 21st St & Fourth Ave W (Monroe)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone,Dirt,Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: ATV,Bike,Horseback Riding,Mountain Biking,Snowmobiling,Walking,Cross Country

Parking & Trail Access

Parking and Trail Access

The Cheese Country Recreation Trail runs between Commerce St & Old Darlington Rd (Mineral Point) and W 21st St & Fourth Ave W (Monroe), with parking available at both endpoints.

Parking is also available:

- 400 Washington St at Pecatonica River Trails Park (Darlington)
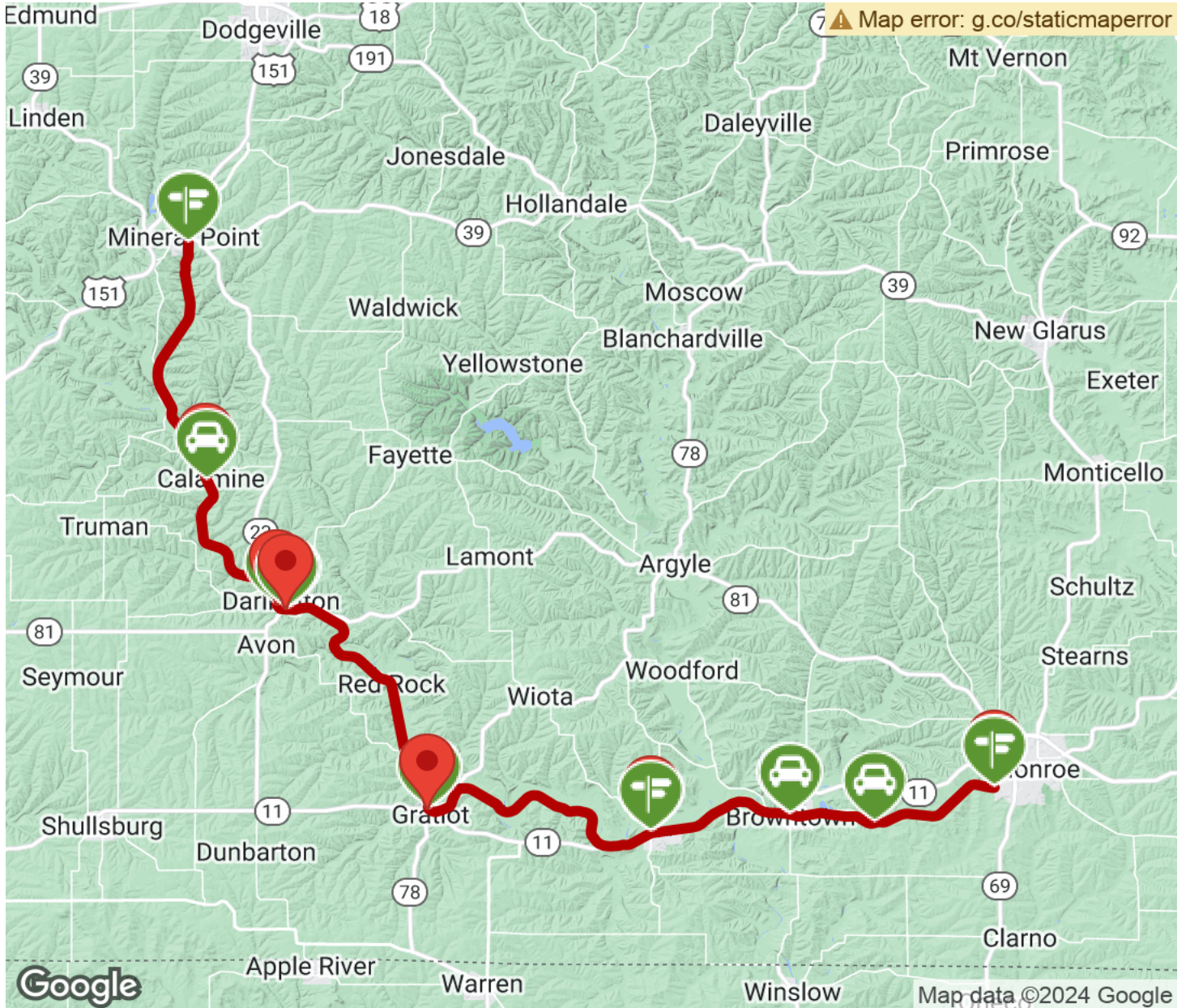- Gratiot Park (Gratiot)
- 116 E Old Hwy Rd (Browntown)

These are approximate addresses. There are numerous parking options along this route, see TrailLink Map for all parking options and detailed directions.

Note: Cheese Country Recreation Trail stickers are required for motorcycles, mopeds, golf carts, and dirt bikes, as well as bicyclists and horseback riders ages 18 and older. ATVs and UTVs are not required to have a Cheese Country sticker, although they do need an in-state DNR registration sticker. For information, go to https://www.lafayettecountywi.org/trails/page/trail-passes

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Cheese Country Recreation Trail
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Trailhead **Restroom** **Parking** **Water Fountain** **Tunnel**

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