



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



## Northern Rail Trail

*New Hampshire*



# Northern Rail Trail

New Hampshire

*Overview Spanning nearly 58 miles from Lebanon to Boscawen, the Northern Rail Trail is New Hampshire's longest rail-trail*



## Overview

Spanning nearly 58 miles from Lebanon to Boscawen, the Northern Rail Trail is New Hampshire's longest rail-trail conversion. It weaves through Grafton and Merrimack counties and is less than a 2-hour drive from Boston and Portland. The trail was recognized as one of five top trails that have benefitted from America's Recreational Trails Program.

In addition to walking and biking, permitted uses include horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and dogsledding.

## About the Route

Starting from Lebanon at the trail's northern end, the trail travels slightly uphill until it reaches the high point of the trail in Orange, from there it is slightly downhill all the way to the end in Boscawen. The journey is easy and scenic as the trail crosses nine short bridges over the Mascoma River in the first 4 miles. The trail skirts the northern shore of the 1,100-acre Mascoma Lake, where trail users can enjoy a quick swim on a hot day. The trail then enters the lakeside community of Enfield, and goes through Canaan, Orange and Grafton, becoming narrow occasionally and slightly overgrown with plant life. Trail users will appreciate the dense tree cover in the summer.

About 20 miles past Enfield, the trail crosses into Merrimack County where the trail is upgraded to a crushed stone surface. Seven miles past Danbury, the trail passes Andover's Potter Place Railroad Station, restored to look as it did in 1874. The depot's museum, caboose, and nearby freight house are operated by the Andover Historical Society and open weekends through the summer. There is also a small park and rest stop with picnic tables next to the trail. In one mile, the trail crosses the Blackwater River next to the 1882 Keniston Covered Bridge. In another mile, there are signs that direct trail users to the restaurants on Andover's main street, just north of the trail.

East of Andover, the trail is more heavily used, particularly near the Highland and Webster Lake swimming areas. Continuing south, several interpretive signs scattered throughout the remainder of the trail inform trail users of the rail trail's history. Webster Lake is named for the 19th-century statesman Daniel Webster, whose birthplace is just off the trail on US 127. Trail users may also come across the stone remains of a turntable that once assisted in changing the direction of locomotives. For the remaining 11 miles south, the trail closely follows US 3 and the Merrimack River to the trail's end at the Route 4 overpass close to Hannah Duston Park & Ride in the southern reaches of Boscawen.



# Northern Rail Trail

## New Hampshire

**States:** New Hampshire

**Counties:** Grafton, Merrimack

Length: 57.8 miles

**Trail end points:** Spencer St. near Parkhurst St. (Lebanon) to 100 River Rd (Boscawen)

**Trail surfaces:** Cinder, Crushed Stone

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Wheelchair

Accessible, Horseback Riding, Mountain

Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country

Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

The Northern Rail Trail runs between Spencer St. near Parkhurst St. (Lebanon) and 100 River Rd. (Boscawen), with parking available at both ends.

Additional parking can be found at:

- 194 Main St. (Enfield)
- 15 High St. (Danbury)
- 185 Webster Lake Rd (Franklin)

There are numerous parking options along this route, please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.

Public transit provides access to the trail in several communities along the trail including Concord Area Transit (CAT) and Advance Transit.



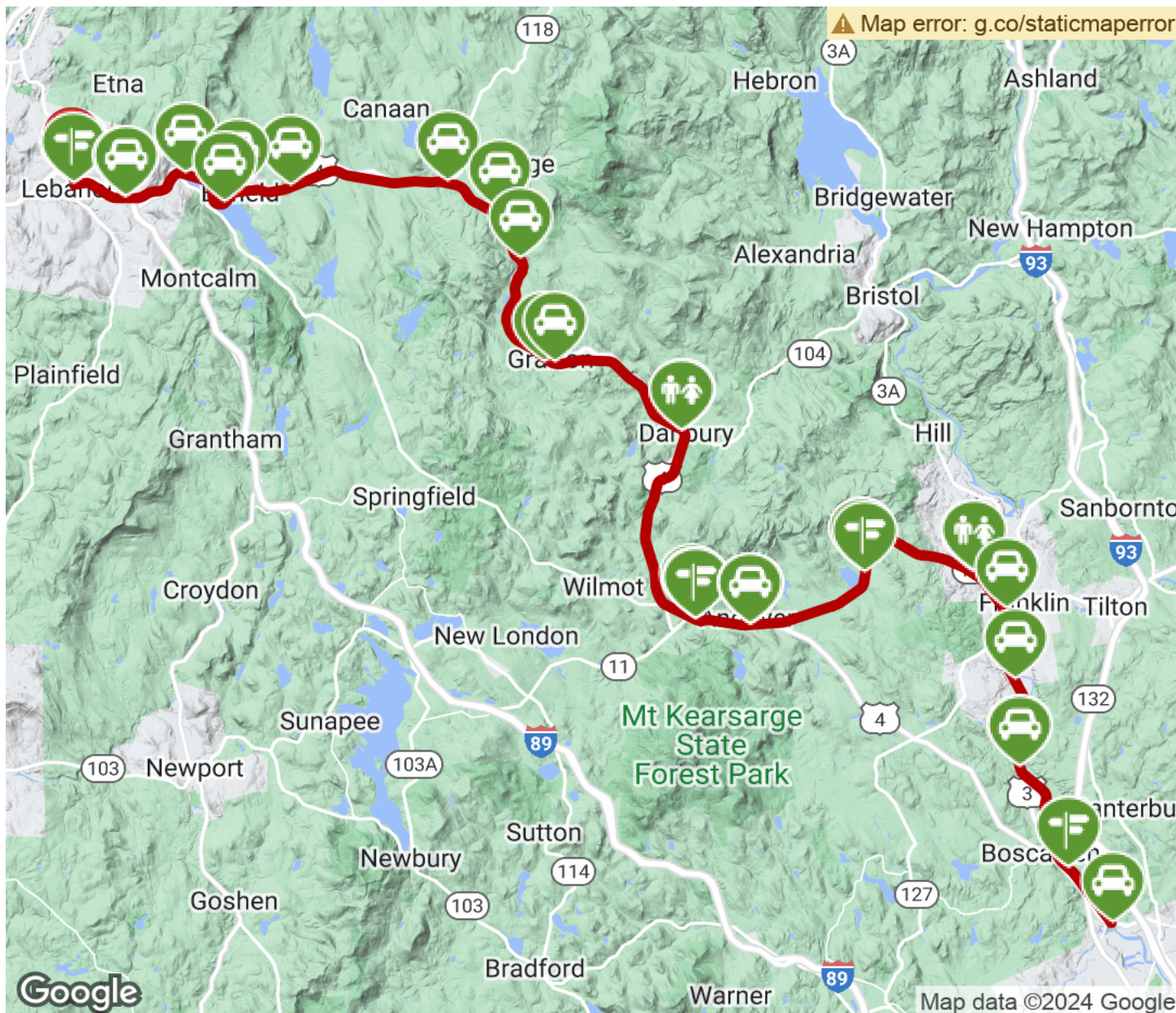
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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel