



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Franconia Notch Recreation Path

New Hampshire



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The Franconia Notch Recreation Path runs the length of the Franconia Notch State Park in the White Mountain National Forest. Commonly called the Recreation Path, the 8.7-mile trail visits most of the park's attractions, such as the Old Man of the Mountain Historic Site, Echo Lake, and Flume Gorge. The paved path roughly follows I-93 through the pass.

Heading south from the Skookumchuck trailhead, the spectacular views of peaks and forests will remind you that the Notch is indeed a mountain pass between the Kinsman and Franconia Ranges. The elevation changes are also a reminder, as the trail gains about 340 feet to the foot of Cannon Mountain, then drops 750 feet to the terminus at Mt. Pemigewasset trailhead. As satisfying as it will be to descend the hills you crest, observe the 20-mile-

per-hour speed limit on the trail.

The main attractions are marked with walking-only signs for trail users, and they are wheelchair accessible. The route is often shaded as you reach these locations, thanks to the steep mountainsides and trees lining the path. Bring your camera because, in addition to the major sites along the route, you soon will be treated to dazzling vistas at the Sunset Bridge.

In 2.1 miles you will arrive at Echo Lake Beach, where there's a store, restrooms, and boat rentals in season. The trail follows the lake 0.5 mile before you reach the legendary Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway. The cable car carries riders up to the 4,080-foot summit, where you can get beer and food at a café, and enjoy views of the Adirondack Mountains on clear days.

The Old Man of the Mountain Historic Site is the next stop, about 0.4 mile down the trail. The Great Stone Face, which appeared on a cliff as a person's profile, was mentioned in the 19th-century writings of Daniel Webster and Nathaniel Hawthorne and still appears in silhouette on state highway markers. Although it detached from the cliff face back in 2003, the park has provided informative signage and a viewing platform that re-creates the appearance of the stone face on the cliff for visitors.

The trail heads mostly downhill for the next 3.3 miles to The Basin, a huge granite pothole in the Pemigewasset River. The final 2 miles take you to the cascading waters and granite walls of the iconic Flume Gorge and Visitor Center before delivering you to the end of the path at the Mt. Pemigewasset trailhead and parking lot.

Note: Fees are charged at Flume Gorge, Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway, and Echo Lake Beach. Bike rentals and shuttles are available at the Tramway.



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States: New Hampshire

Counties: Grafton

Length: 8.7miles

Trail end points: Skookumchuck trailhead on US 3/Daniel Webster Hwy., 0.3 mile south of SR 141 (Franconia) to Mt. Pemigewasset trailhead/Flume Gorge and Visitor Center (Lincoln)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Bike, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the Skookumchuck trailhead from I-93 N, take Exit 35 onto US 3 N/Daniel Webster Hwy. toward Lancaster. Go 0.1 mile, and look for trailhead parking on the right.

To reach the Skookumchuck trailhead from I-93 S, take Exit 36 onto NH 141 toward South Franconia. Turn left onto State Route 141/Butterhill Road. Go 0.8 mile, and turn right onto US 3/Daniel Webster Hwy. Go 0.3 mile, and look for parking on the left.

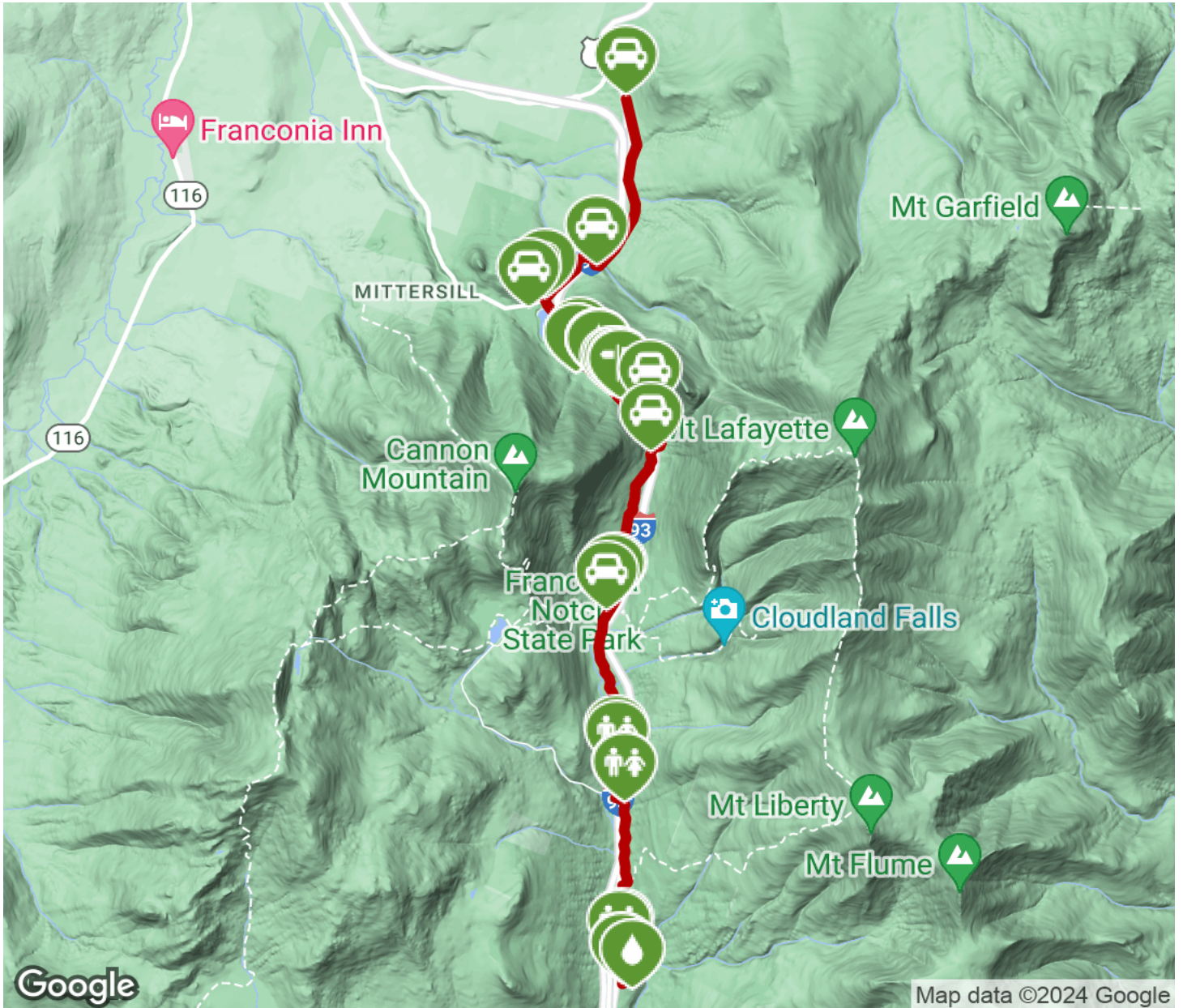
To reach the Mt. Pemigewasset trailhead from I-93 S, take Exit 34A and merge onto US 3 S/Daniel Webster Hwy. Go 0.4 mile, and turn left into the Flume Gorge and Visitor Center parking lot. The trail starts at the north end.

To reach the Mt. Pemigewasset trailhead from I-93 N, take Exit 34A and merge onto US 3 N/Daniel Webster Hwy. Go 0.1 mile, and turn right into the Flume Gorge and Visitor Center parking lot. The trail starts at the north end.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel