



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



# Hop River State Park Trail

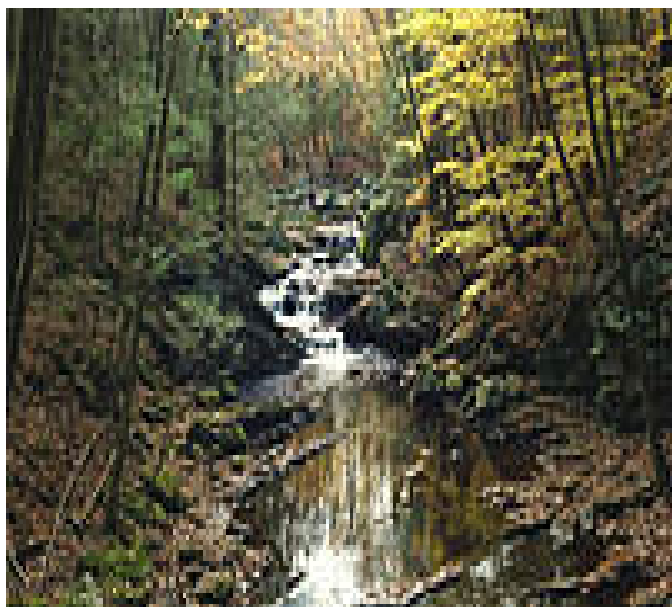
*Connecticut*



## Hop River State Park Trail

Connecticut

*It's hard to pick a favorite season to experience the Hop River State Park Trail, set amid the dense forests of Eastern Connecticut.*



It's hard to pick a favorite season to experience the Hop River State Park Trail, set amid the dense forests of Eastern Connecticut. Sections of the 20-mile rail trail dive through steep rock cuts that seep moisture, supplying air-conditioning in summer and freezing into glistening icefalls in winter. Maples and oaks bring fiery autumn hues, and in the spring, trilliums and other wildflowers speckle the ground with color. Three tunnels and a covered bridge complete the trail's picturesque backdrop.

Following the former Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill Railroad, the rail trail feels like it's transporting visitors to the days when rail was the predominant mode of transportation. The telegraph poles from days gone by still jut out of the hillside, and a few miles into the trail from the western side, trail users can see a turnabout that

was used to reverse the direction of the train.

### About the Route

After leaving Manchester, trail users will have the opportunity to connect to another trail in 2.6 miles. At Church and Phoenix Streets in Vernon, a trail called the Rockville Spur (sometimes known as Vernon Rails-to-Trails) branches north. The scenic 4.2-mile pathway is definitely worth exploring.

From that trail intersection continuing east on the Hop River State Park Trail, the route climbs gradually for a few miles past rock outcrops. Along the way, the trail passes Valley Falls Park, and then Bolton Notch State Park, both of which are accessible via hiking paths that spin off from the rail trail. Just south of Bolton Notch, trail users will also have the opportunity to connect to the Charter Oak Greenway, which heads west to Hartford.

Beyond the Bolton Notch parking lot, the trail passes beneath US 44 and US 6, threading through a narrow rock cut and then descending several miles among thick woodlands. Past Steeles Crossing Road in Bolton, US 6 comes into view on the left, but not so close as to disrupt the tranquil experience. Keep watch for small waterfalls like the one near Burnap Brook Road, and enjoy the covered bridge over CT 316.

In another mile, the trail passes beneath US 6 through a 100-foot lighted tunnel. The route continues along the river to its end at Columbia Avenue in Willimantic. Here, a bridge over the Willimantic River connects the trail to the Air Line State Park Trail, which spans more than 50 miles, running northeast to the Massachusetts border and southwest to East Hampton.

### Connections

Near the western end of the trail, there is a connection to



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**States:** Connecticut

**Counties:** Hartford, Tolland

Length: 20 miles

**Trail end points:** 178 Colonial Rd. (Manchester)  
to 249 Columbia Ave. (Willimantic)

**Trail surfaces:** Crushed Stone

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Horseback

Riding, Mountain Biking, Walking, Wheelchair

Accessible, Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

The Hop River State Park Trail runs between 178 Colonial Rd. (Manchester) and 249 Columbia Ave. (Willimantic).

Parking is also available at:

- 17 Burnap Brook Rd.

Please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



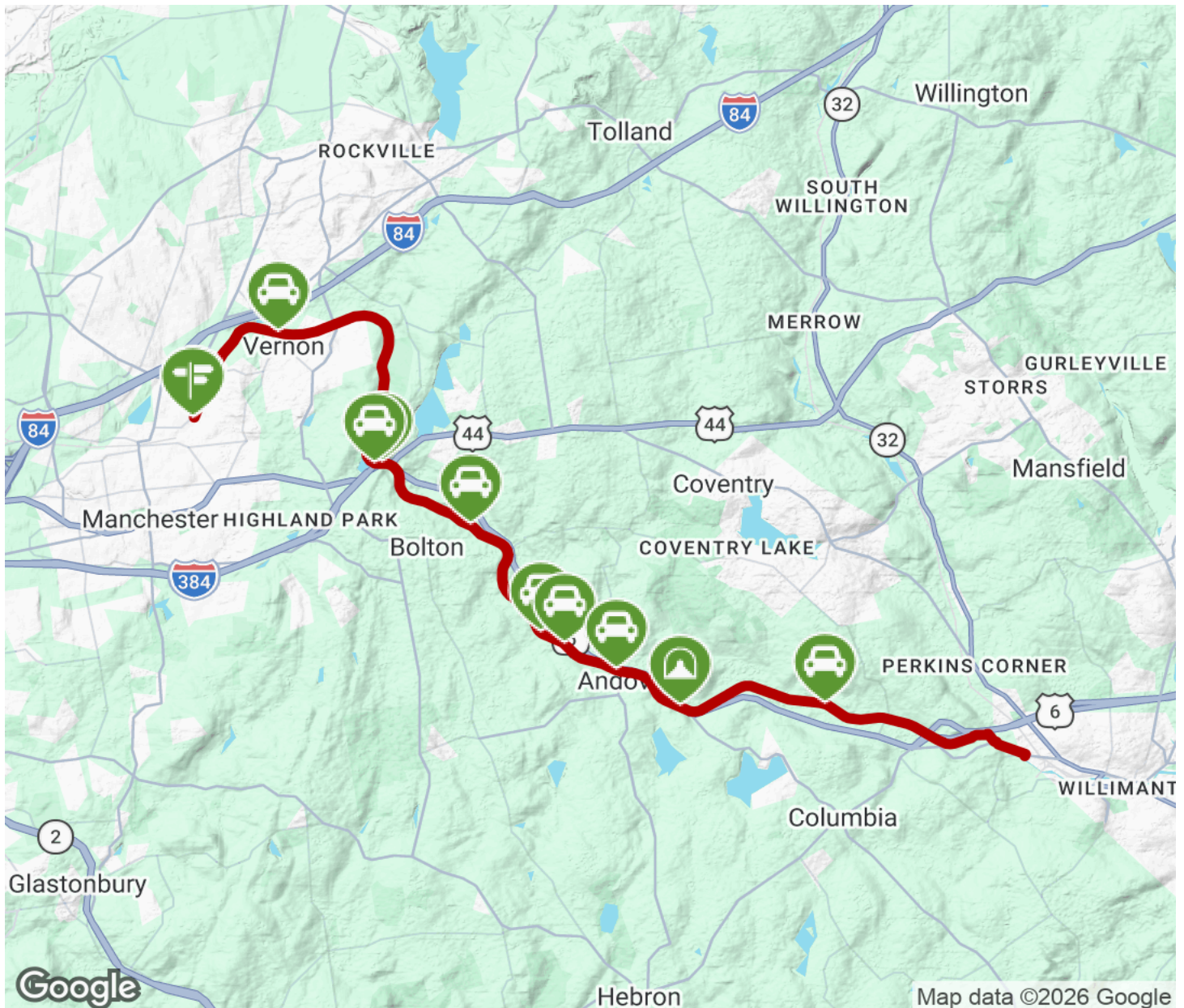
**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

**TrailLink.com**



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel