



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Heritage Trail
(IA)**
Iowa



Heritage Trail (IA)

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The Heritage Trail rolls along like a dream for nearly 30 miles from the Mississippi River town of Dubuque to Dyersville, home of the movie set for *Field of Dreams*. Along the way it passes through the deeply carved valley of the Little Maquoketa River, historical sites, and a handful of small farming and former mining communities.

The trail follows the corridor of the Chicago Great Western Railroad built in the 1880s to link Chicago, Minneapolis, Omaha, and Kansas City. Merging with the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in 1968, the company determined that many of the 32 bridges and trestles were unsafe for railroad traffic and abandoned the line in 1981. The Dubuque County Conservation Board acquired the railbed and created the crushed-limestone trail in the

mid-1980s. Several of those historic railroad bridges have since been replaced after severe flooding.

Beginning in Dubuque, you'll start your trek a couple of miles north of the historic riverfront that's home to an excursion riverboat and the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium. You'll head north out of Dubuque on pavement through an older residential and commercial area to a greenway that leads to the Heritage Pond trailhead and interpretive site in Sageville.

By now the trail is crushed limestone as you pass about 2 miles south of the Little Maquoketa River Mounds State Preserve on the way to Durango, where canoeists like to launch flow trips down the river to the Mississippi. Lead mining was an early industry in this area, and some landmarks still carry the name "furnace" referring to lead smelters.

The trail continues through the river drainage for nearly 8 miles to the town of Graf. Fossil hunters come here to look for remains of tiny prehistoric sea creatures in the limestone cliffs along the river and old railroad cuts. Endangered plant species, such as prairie dock and Leonard's skipper, also can be found in the trailside vegetation. A picnic shelter and restrooms are available in Graf, but there's no drinking water.

You'll gain a gentle slope as you climb out of the river bottoms toward Epworth and Farley. Both are less than 2 miles south of the trail and provide cafés and other services for travelers. The Centennial Ballpark north of Epworth has restrooms and drinking water.

The final 6 miles to Dyersville is all farmland, where you can be forgiven for expecting to see old-time baseball players emerging from the cornfields. Movie producers chose a farm 3.5 miles northeast of the Dyersville trailhead as the setting for *Field of Dreams*. The farm has since become a tourist attraction.



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States: Iowa

Counties: Dubuque

Length: 29.4miles

Trail end points: Beltline Road between Fourth Ave. NE and 11th St. SE (Dyersville) to E. 22nd St. at Elm St. and Kniest St. (Dubuque)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair

Accessible, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross

Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at a number of points along this trailhead. Some notable points along the trail include along Beltline Rd. in Dyersville, at Jamesmeier Rd. in Farley, Rupehollow Rd. in Sageville, and at the intersection of 22nd St. and Prince St. in Dubuque.

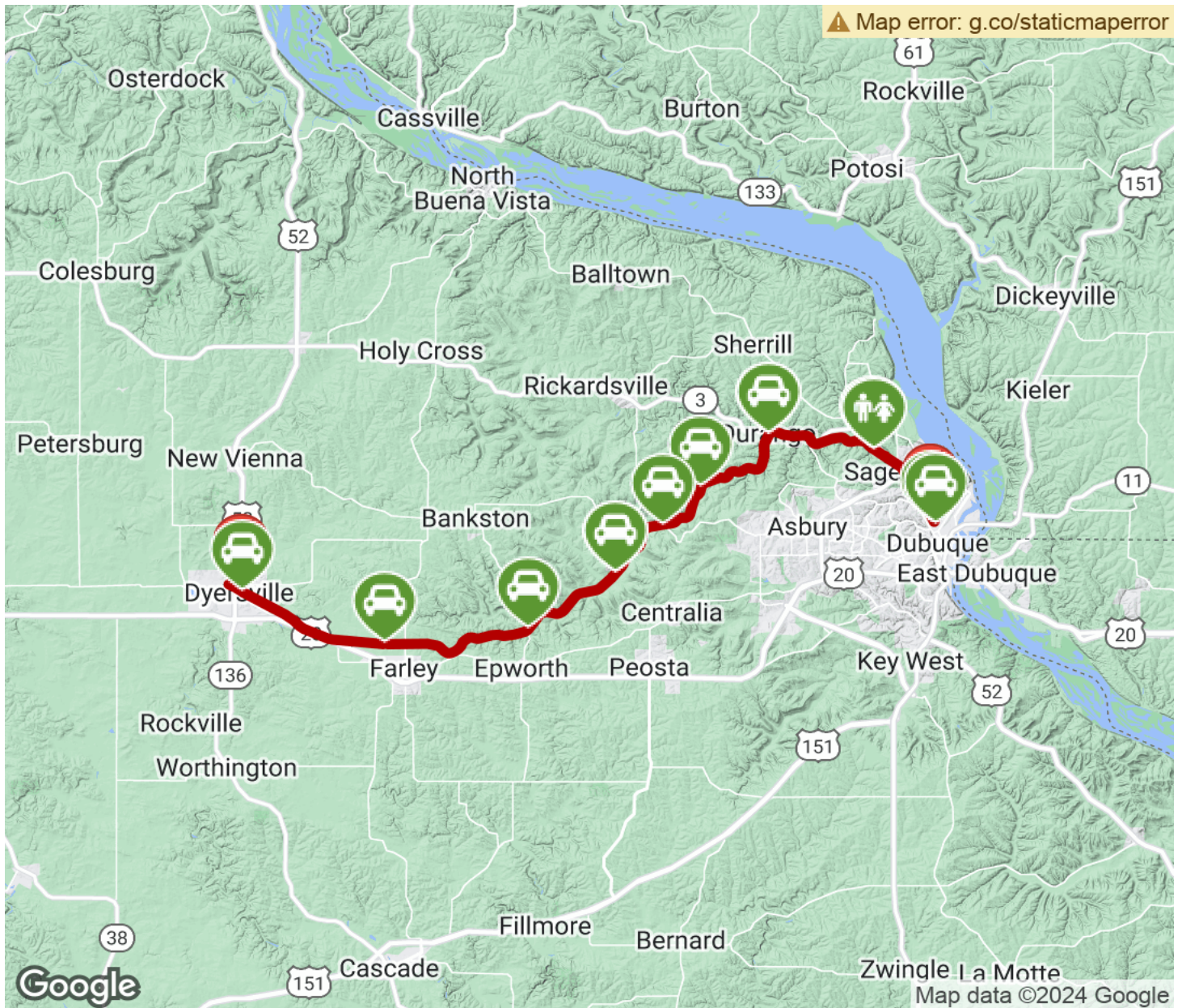
See [My County Parks](#) for information on restrooms at these parking locations.

See [TrailLink Map](#) for more parking options and more detailed directions.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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