



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Sauk Rail Trail

Iowa



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The Sauk Rail Trail offers some of the best riding in rural, west-central Iowa. The paved 33-mile trail is capped at either end by a state park and offers a diverse mix of views and experiences in between. Friendly small towns every few miles add comfort and convenience, while frequent nods to the corridor's railroad past add historical interest.

Start at the trail's north end in Lake View to be welcomed by a unique sculpture over the trail entrance: an arch made of bicycles. As you face the trail, you can swing your head to the left to see Black Hawk Lake just two blocks down. Black Hawk Lake State Park is nestled against its shoreline; the 86-acre site offers numerous amenities for camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, and horseback riding.

A trail user fee of \$2 per day is required for individuals age 18 and older; look for the self-service pay box at the trailhead. Heading south, you're soon enveloped by trees as you travel through a wildlife area and, just a mile later, alongside Black Hawk Marsh.

After about 13 miles of riding, you'll reach Breda, home to about 500 residents. Be sure to have a look inside the community's restored 1905 depot, which sits trailside and includes memorabilia from the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad.

South of Breda, the vista opens up to expansive farm fields. Windmills dot the horizon, and you'll likely see cows out in the pastures. Keep your eyes open for deer and rabbits; you might catch a fleeting glimpse of them as they dive into the underbrush along the trail. You'll also pass under an old wooden trestle bridge on your way to Carroll. As you enter the city, the bucolic flavor of the trail gives way to a suburban atmosphere.

Most of the trail thus far will have been fairly level, but as you approach the trail's end at Swan Lake State Park, you'll encounter a few hills. Plunk yourself down on a bench to enjoy some well-earned rest and lake views, or loop around the lake for a 3.8-mile ride. If you're planning to stay overnight, tent and RV camping are available within the park, a 510-acre multiuse area offering a range of outdoor activities and amenities.



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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Sauk Rail Trail

Iowa

States: Iowa

Counties: Carroll, Sac

Length: 33.2 miles

Trail end points: Third St between Vine St & McClure St (Lake View) to Swan Lake State Park (Carroll)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Concrete

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Snowmobiling, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the northern trailhead in Lake View from US 71 northbound, turn left (west) onto 330th St./SR 175. After 4.2 miles, turn left onto Third St. Go 0.5 mile (road turns into Crescent Park Drive), continue as the road turns into Lake St., and then take a slight left to stay on Lake St. Turn right onto Third St., and go 1.5 blocks. Parking and the trailhead with its distinctive arch are located on your left.

At the southern end of the trail, parking is available in Swan Lake State Park (22676 Swan Lake Drive). From US 71 northbound, turn right onto 220th St. After 1.4 miles, turn right onto the park access road, and look for parking on your right.



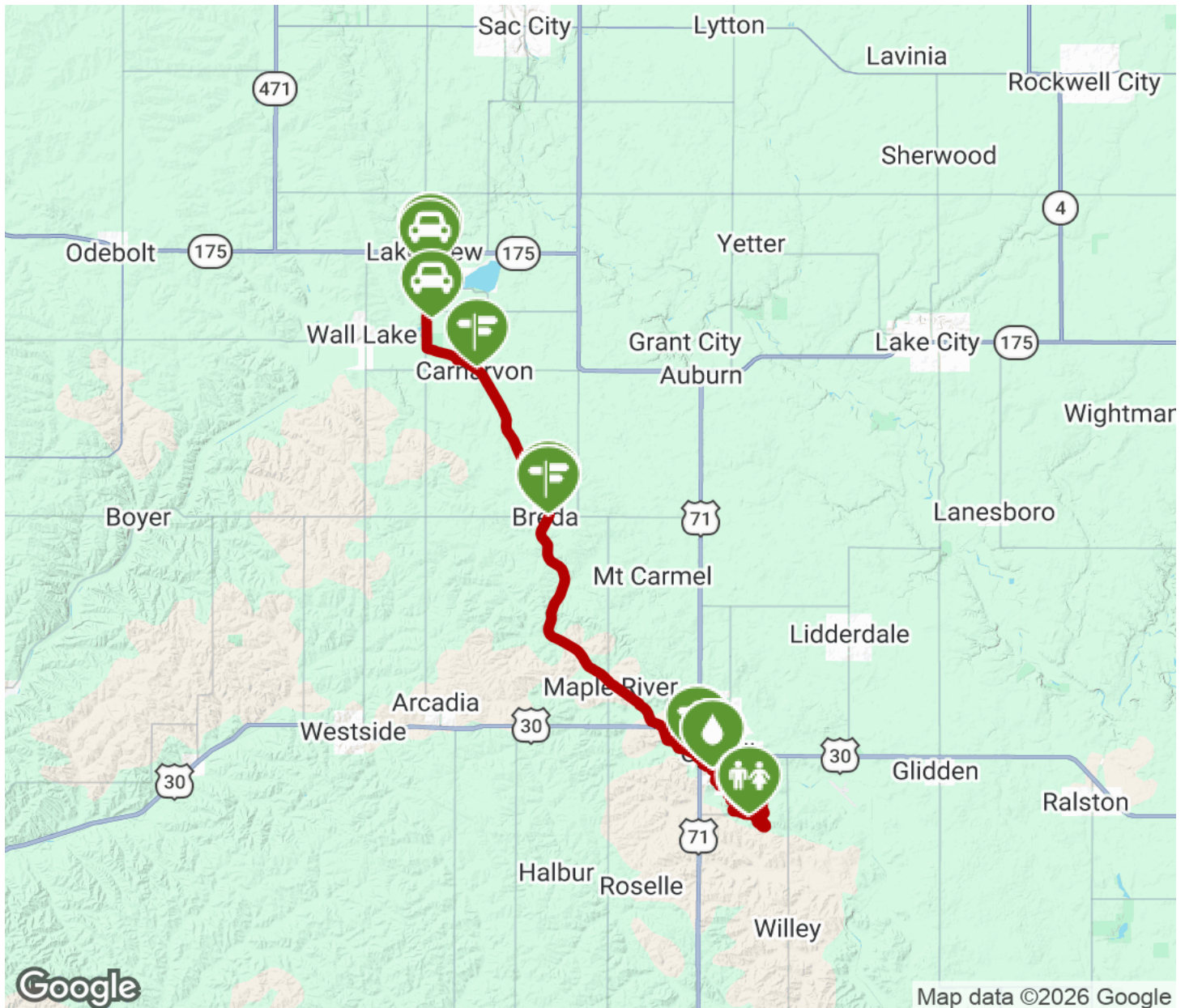
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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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