



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



## Gandy Dancer Trail (Southern Section)

*Wisconsin*



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*Running between St. Croix Falls and Danbury, the 47-mile Gandy Dancer State Trail (Southern Section) commemorates gandy*



Running between St. Croix Falls and Danbury, the 47-mile Gandy Dancer State Trail (Southern Section) commemorates gandy dancers—those hardworking section crews who manually restored the railroad tracks in alignment to prevent train derailments. While "dancer" likely referred to their rhythmic motion of working in unison to tamp down ties or adjust rails, "gandy" comes from the fact that the tools were made by the Gandy Tool Company of Chicago (according to the website for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources).

Combined with the [northern section](#), the rail-trail rolls for 98 miles from St. Croix Falls north to Superior. Along the way, it crosses into Minnesota for 32 miles and then returns to Wisconsin.

The crushed-limestone trail follows an old route of the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad, which became the Soo Line Railroad after a 1961 merger. Wisconsin Central Ltd. gained control in the late 1980s, disusing this branch. The states of Wisconsin and Minnesota acquired the right-of-way, and Wisconsin surfaced the southern section with limestone in 1995.

Beginning in St. Croix, you can set off on the Interlink Trail that leaves the Polk County Information Center. With 15 trails for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, the town on the St. Croix River has earned its nickname of "City of Trails." This portion of the Gandy Dancer Trail also overlaps the western tip of the state's expansive Ice Age Trail; this National Scenic Trail spans 1,200 miles from here to the Lake Michigan shoreline.

As you leave Riegel Park, you'll be passing through forests and farmland for the rest of your journey. This area is sparsely populated, but you'll find small towns with services every 4–8 miles. The first of these is Centuria, which you'll reach in less than 5 miles, where the trailhead has a library.

Another 10 miles up the trail, after passing through Milltown, you'll arrive in Luck. The town earned the title "Yo-Yo Capital of the World" after Duncan Toys opened a yo-yo factory here in 1946 to take advantage of the area's hard maple forests. You'll find Frederic in another 6 miles where the circa-1901 Soo Line Railroad Depot has been renovated and serves as a museum.

After visiting Lewis, in another 5 miles you'll arrive in Siren, named for the (misspelled) Swedish word for "lilac." The town also has a vintage railroad depot, privately owned, and a park on the shores of Crooked Lake just north of town. The trail passes through Veterans Park, in the heart of Siren.

North of Crooked Lake, the trail passes the Amsterdam Sloughs State Wildlife Area, where bald eagles and blue



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**States:** Wisconsin

**Counties:** Burnett, Polk

Length: 47 miles

**Trail end points:** Pine St, south of Riegel Park (St. Croix Falls) to SR 77, just west of SR 35 (Danbury)

**Trail surfaces:** Crushed Stone

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** ATV, Bike, Snowmobiling, Walking

## Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at numerous locations along the trail. Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.

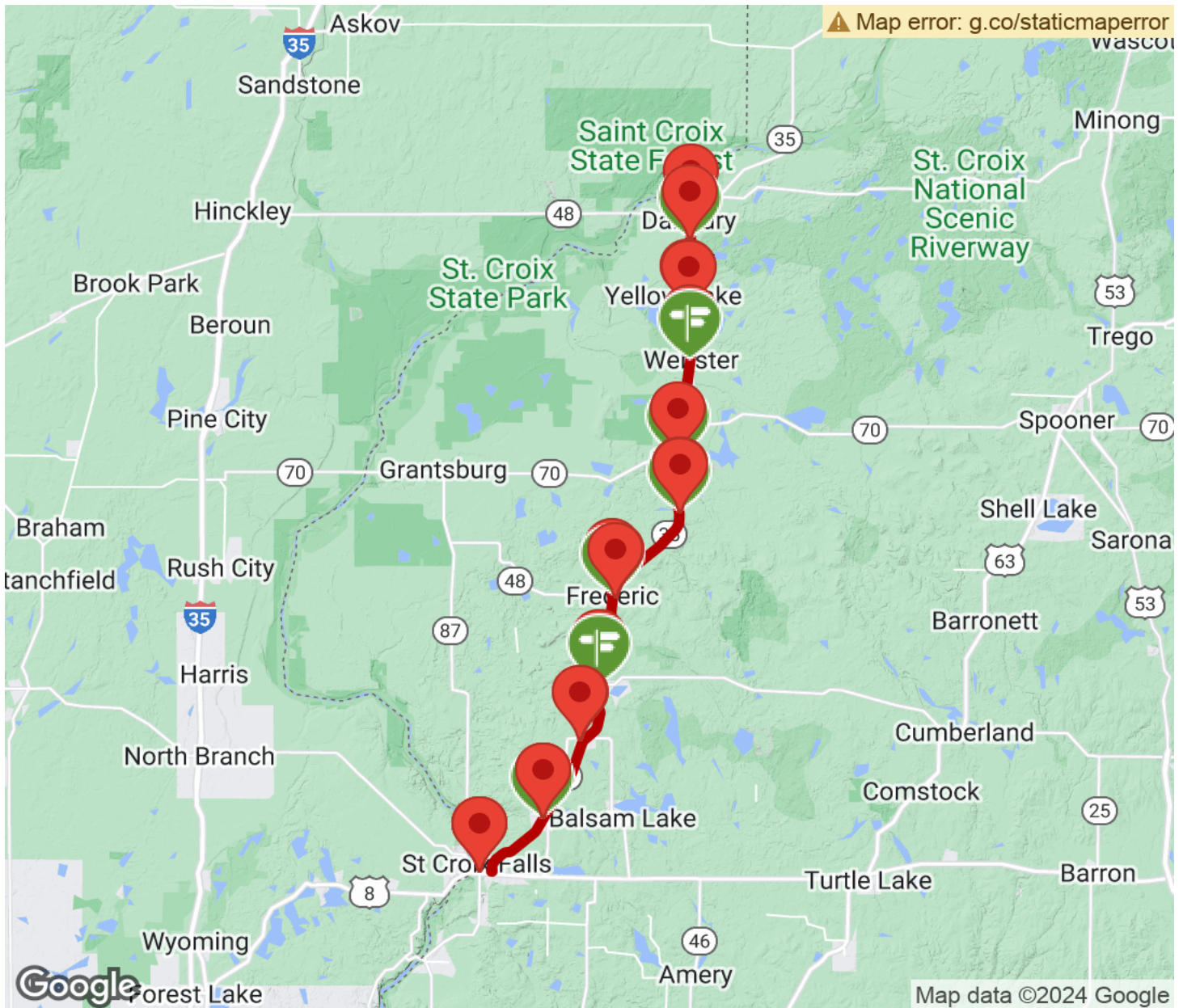
Options include the Gandy Dancer Park (320 Polk Ave, Centuria), River's Park (223-299 Milltown Ave S, Milltown), Gandy Dancer 2 Eagle Bike & Snowmobile Trailhead (112 W 1st Ave, Luck), and Blueberry Junction Park and Playground (7475 WI-77, Danbury).

When parking at the Polk County Information Center, the entrance to Wisconsin Interstate State Park is on your right. A connector trail that leaves the information center heading southeast meets and then follows little-used Old Highway 8 for a short distance to Industrial Parkway. Turn left at Industrial Parkway and then, with a fast-food restaurant on your left, veer right onto the pathway to head southeast underneath SR 35 and then north to Pine Street. Turn right onto Pine Street, and go 2 blocks to where the rail-trail begins, curving left and heading north.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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