



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Columbia Trail

New Jersey



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Overview

The Columbia Trail has the distinction of being named for a natural gas pipeline that runs beneath the 15 miles of the trail that spans rural northern New Jersey. The crushed-stone trail rolls along the South Branch of the Raritan River, passing through historical communities such as High Bridge and Califon, as well as a steep, natural gorge.

About the Route

The Columbia Trail leaves off from its northern endpoint about 3 miles past Long Valley on Bartley Road, just shy of the Mount Olive community.

The Columbia Trail travels through mature deciduous

and evergreen forests that create a canopy from the summer sun. White-tailed deer, raccoons, and coyotes, as well as the occasional black bear, make their home here. Heading north, the trail passes farm- and pastureland. There are several towns in which to stop for snacks along the way.

6 miles down the trail is Long Valley, Washington Township, where trail users can find diners south of the trail on NJ 24.

South of Long Valley is the Victorian-style town of Califon, which has more than 240 structures on the National Register of Historic Places. Local legend says the town was originally called California, but a sign painter ran out of room and abbreviated the name.

Not far downstream, the trail passes through the Ken Lockwood Gorge Wildlife Management Area for 2.5 miles. The steep slopes and boulders create a whitewater paradise for kayakers. The trail crosses a bridge here that was the scene of a tragic train wreck in 1885 when an engine and 45 cars plunged off a wooden trestle, which was later replaced.

The trail then passes the falls at the Lake Solitude dam and begins to follow the South Branch, one of the state's best fly-fishing rivers.

Starting from Long Valley, the trail follows a slight downhill grade all the way to the trail's southern end in High Bridge.

Connections

Three miles from the northern endpoint, the trail crosses the [Patriot's Path](#).

Half a mile from the southern end of the trail, the trail connects with the [Taylor Steel Workers Historical Greenway](#).

Trail History



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States: New Jersey

Counties: Hunterdon, Morris

Length: 15 miles

Trail end points: 296 Bartley Rd. (Chester) to 77 Main St. (High Bridge)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Horseback Riding, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

The Columbia Trail runs between 296 Bartley Rd. (Chester) and 77 Main St. (High Bridge), both of which offer parking.

Additional parking can be found at 40 Vernoy Rd (Califon).

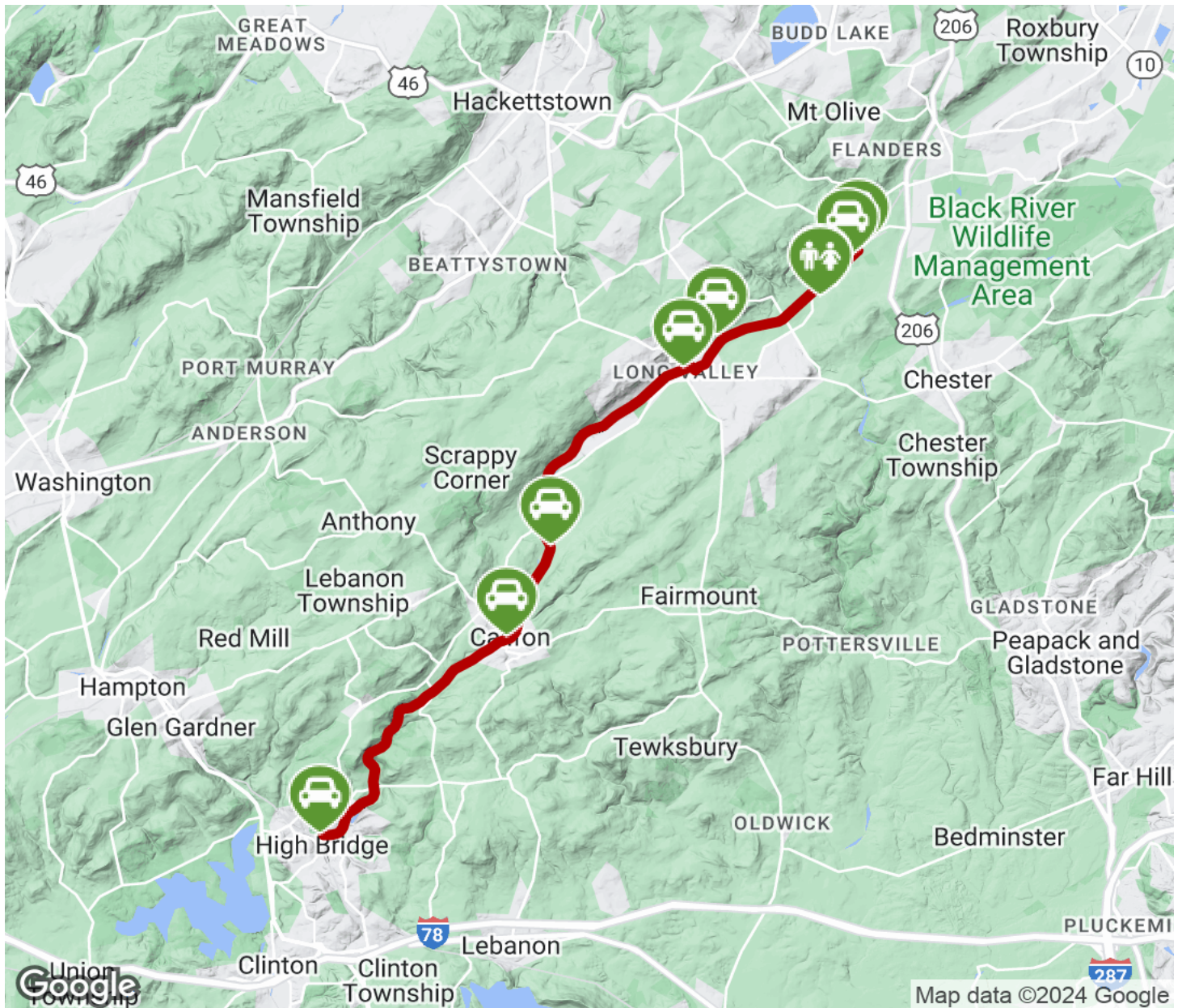
Those who want to start their trail experience by train can take the [Raritan Valley Line](#), a regional commuter route from Newark Penn Station to High Bridge. The train station is located at Central Avenue and Bridge Street, just a few blocks from the Columbia Trail's southern endpoint on Main Street.

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



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel