



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Ernst Trail
Pennsylvania



Ernst Trail

Pennsylvania

Connecting Meadville, known as the home of the zipper, and Conneaut Lake, the 12-mile Ernst Trail meanders through farms



Connecting Meadville, known as the home of the zipper, and Conneaut Lake, the 12-mile Ernst Trail meanders through farms and forests. The trail is named for Calvin Ernst, who owned the unused right-of-way of the Meadville and Linesville Railway and donated it to French Creek Recreational Trails in 1996 for trail development.

About the Route

The northeast end of the trail is at the eastern end of Shippen St in the Kerrtown section of Meadville; crushed limestone and gravel comprise the trail surface of the first mile to Bean's Trailhead (18701 Smock Hwy, Meadville). The trail surface is paved asphalt for the 4.25 miles between Bean's Trailhead and Krider Road Trailhead.

Continuing south from Bean's Trailhead, there is a covered bridge and the route then passes through a short stretch of cropland and forest alongside French Creek. Curving west away from the creek, the route crosses Mercer Pike. The Mercer Pike Trailhead (9055 Mercer Pike, Meadville) has a paved parking lot, trail signage, and portable restrooms during the summer.

Continuing west through the forest, the trail crosses under I-79 and then heads through more forest. There is a split in the trail, with the 0.2-mile branch heading north (right) leading to the Krider Road Trailhead, where there is a paved parking lot and a small covered picnic area.

From the split, follow the south (left) branch to continue on the trail. The next 2 miles have a gravel surface. Briefly heading south, the trail crosses Semerad Road and then turns to follow it west. The trail crosses US 19/Perry Highway onto Pinetree Road, which the route uses to briefly head north. Turning west, the gravel trail continues off-road through the forest to the Bailey Road Trailhead, which has parking, a small covered picnic area, trail signage, and portable restrooms during the summer. Like the first mile, the gravel surface of this section is fine for walkers and mountain bikers but dicey for road cyclists and not conducive to inline skating or using a wheelchair.

The trail follows the former railway for almost 5 miles (4.82 miles) before reaching its southwest end just off US-322/US-6 in the town of Conneaut Lake. There is a boardwalk bridge over Watson Creek. The trail surface is dirt and grass, which is better suited to walking and mountain biking. This section runs alongside the former Meadville to Conneaut Lake Canal and through the headwaters of the Conneaut Marsh. Sections of the canal are still visible. The marsh is a haven to wildlife, especially birds.

Trail History



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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Crawford

Length: 12miles

Trail end points: Shippen St near Park Row (Meadville) to just off US-322/US-6 (Conneaut Lake)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone, Dirt, Grass, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible, Cross

Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at several locations along the trail, including:

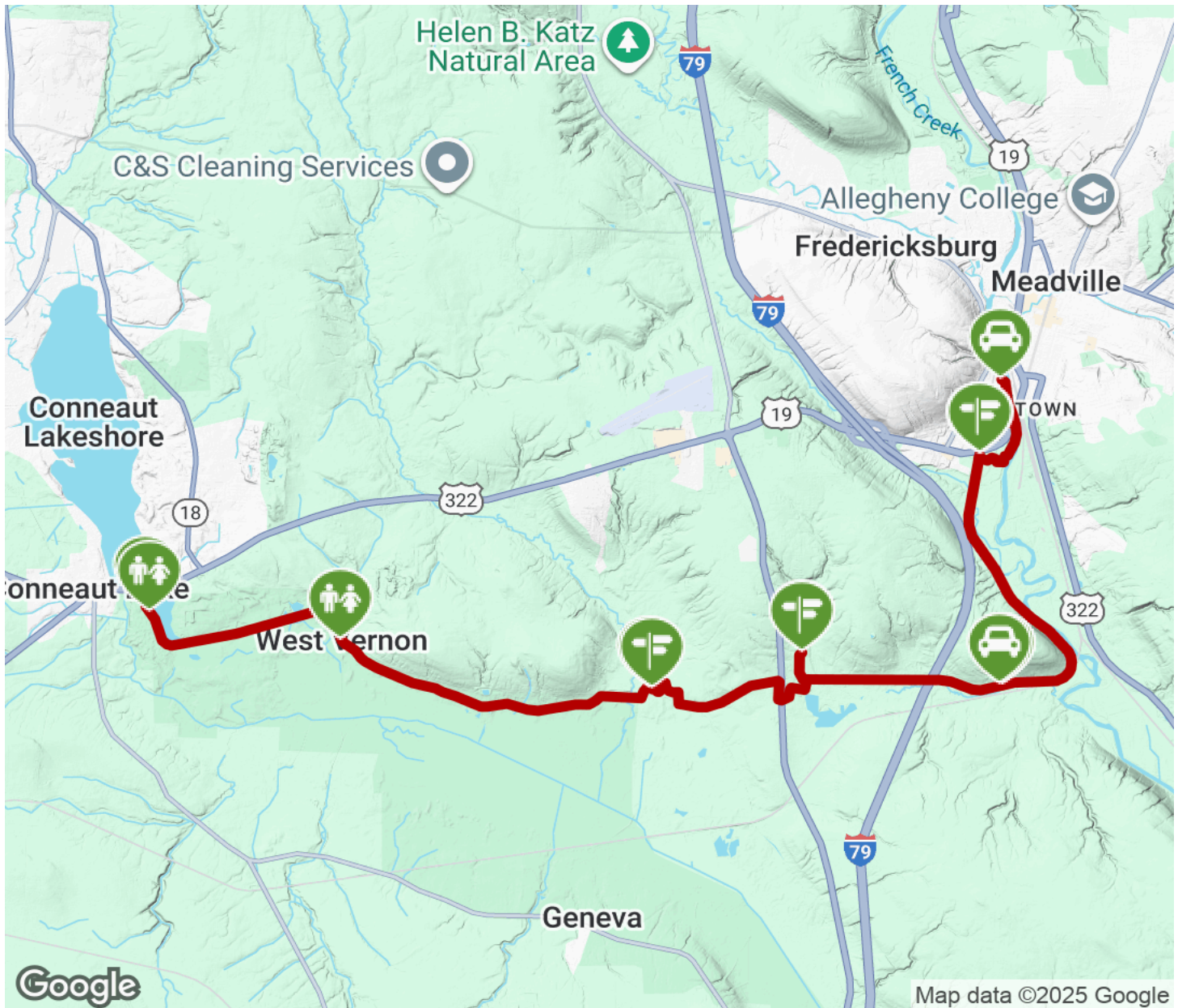
- Northeast end (Shippen St near Park Row, Meadville)
- Bean's Trailhead (18701 Smock Hwy, Meadville), where there are restrooms during the summer.
- Mercer Pike Trailhead (9055 Mercer Pike, Meadville), where there are restrooms during the summer.
- Krider Road Trailhead (9568 Krider Rd, Meadville)
- Bailey Road Trailhead (15909 Bailey Rd, Meadville), where there are restrooms during the summer.

Please view the [TrailLink map](#) for all the options and for detailed directions.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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