



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**North Bend
Rail Trail**
West Virginia



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History beckons around every rocky bend and in every chilly tunnel on the North Bend Rail Trail, which follows an old railroad corridor through hills and hollows in northern West Virginia. Winding through the counties of Wood, Ritchie, Doddridge, and Harrison, it is the second-longest rail trail in the state.

Previously closed for over a year for the installation of fiber-optic cable, the entire 69-mile North Bend Rail Trail is now open to the public. The trail surface is primarily crushed stone or coarse gravel and is typically 10 feet wide. In West Union, there is a 0.8-mile paved section from about 0.7 miles east of Bridge #24 (over old U.S. Route 50) to Bridge #22 (over Middle Island Creek). There

is a paved section roughly 4 miles long meandering through Salem between Moore Street and Brandy Gap Tunnel #2. For the unpaved sections, cyclists are advised to use tires 1.5 inches or wider. A flashlight/headlight is recommended as the tunnels can get very dark.

About the Route

Of the original 13 tunnels the builders bored through the rugged Allegheny Plateau to shorten the route, 10 are still passable today. Visitors in the summer will feel a blast of cool, moist air at the stone-block tunnel portals—quite a change from the smoke, cinders, and heat that filled the tunnels as 19th-century locomotives passed through. Some are long enough inside to require a flashlight.

At 2,207 feet long, the Central Station Tunnel, located at milepost 49.5 near West Union, is the longest on the trail and played a role in a 1915 train robbery that netted some \$1 million in today's value. The Silver Run Tunnel (1,376 feet long), at milepost 22.8 between Cairo and Petroleum, is reputed to be haunted. Tunnel No. 13, the Bonds Creek Tunnel near Cornwallis, was the site of a deadly train crash in 1956 when a westbound train emerged onto the scene of a fresh avalanche and plummeted into the creek below.

Other human-made features of the trail include the 36 bridges and trestles that visitors cross. The longest bridge spans Middle Island Creek on the east side of West Union. Old, refurbished B&O depots are still standing in Pennsboro, Smithburg, and Salem. These towns and others along the route offer dining and refreshments to travelers, as well as marble and hand-blown-glass factories, arts-and-crafts markets, fairs, festivals, and veterans memorials.

A major attraction along the trail is North Bend State Park, located slightly off-trail between Cairo and Ellenboro. Here, trail users will have access to more than a dozen miles of trails, camping, showers, and the only indoor lodging along



North Bend Rail Trail

West Virginia

States: West Virginia

Counties: Doddridge, Harrison, Ritchie, Wood

Length: 69 miles

Trail end points: Happy Valley Rd.
(Parkersburg) to 5049 Wilsonburg Rd.
(Clarksburg)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Boardwalk, Concrete,
Crushed Stone, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Horseback Riding, Mountain
Biking, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

The North Bend Rail Trail runs between Happy Valley Rd. (Parkersburg) and 5049 Wilsonburg Rd. (Clarksburg), with parking on either end.

Parking is also available at:

- 3980 Petroleum Rd. (Petroleum)
- 153 E Main St. (Salem)

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



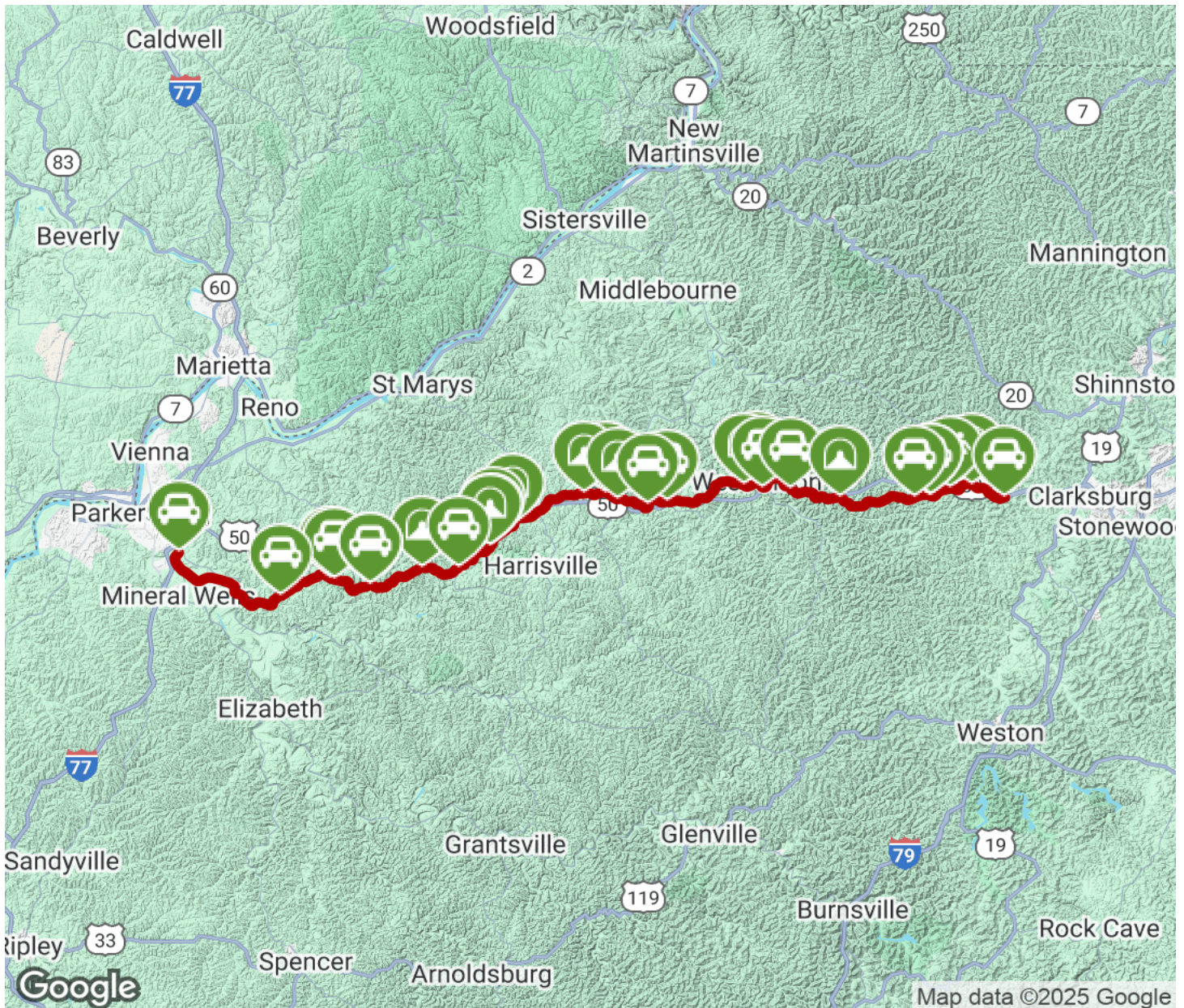
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North Bend Rail Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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