



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Sugar River State Trail

Wisconsin



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If you can't make it to Switzerland, then you can do the next best thing: take the Sugar River State Trail to "America's Little Switzerland," New Glarus, Wisconsin. Settled in 1845 by a small group of Swiss pioneers, New Glarus today is a living monument to all things Swiss, with chalet-style buildings, restaurants dishing up savory Swiss fare, and annual celebrations including Polka Fest, the Heidi Festival, and Volksfest, which marks the Swiss independence day.

The Sugar River State Trail follows the route of the New Glarus Branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. Known locally as the "Limburger Special," the railroad laid tracks from Brodhead to Albany in 1880 and extended the line a few years later to New Glarus.

The scenic Sugar River State Trail crosses the Little Sugar and Sugar Rivers as it rolls southeast nearly 23 miles past gently rolling hills and meadows and through the farming communities of Monticello and Albany to Brodhead. In the section between Monticello and Albany, the trail overlaps the Ice Age Trail, a hiking path spanning 1,200 miles across Wisconsin.

Beginning at the restored railroad depot in New Glarus, you'll ride a paved trail for 0.3 mile until it crosses WI 69 and becomes screened limestone. (Remaining on the paved path alongside WI 69 takes you on a side trip to the New Glarus Brewing Company in 1 mile.) From here, the trail follows the course of the Little Sugar River. Near mile 6, approaching Monticello, you arrive at a brightly painted railroad depot (not open to the public). You'll also be running alongside the [Badger State Trail](#), which you'll cross south of Monticello nearly 7 miles after leaving New Glarus.

About 12 miles from New Glarus you'll enter a 3-mile stretch of the Albany Wildlife Area, where hunting is allowed. Bright bicycling wear is recommended. Between Monticello and Albany there are five stream crossings with views of scenic farmland. At mile 14, the trail crosses the Sugar River on a long, curving bridge that provides spectacular views of lowlands of cattails and reeds, and woods of oak, hickory, walnut, cherry, and willow.

At mile 21, the trail crosses Norwegian Creek on a replica of a covered bridge built in 1984 from wood supplied by the DNR from demolished old barns and other buildings in the state.

You'll arrive in Brodhead at the crossing of Decatur Road. Cross the street and take West Third Avenue south for about a mile to the trailhead parking lot at the corner of West Exchange Street.

The town was named for Edward Brodhead, chief engineer of the Milwaukee Road's predecessor, the Milwaukee and



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States: Wisconsin

Counties: Green

Length: 22.7miles

Trail end points: Railroad St. just north of Fifth Ave. (New Glarus) to W. Exchange St. and W. Third Ave. (Brodhead)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Wheelchair

Accessible, Mountain

Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country

Parking & Trail Access

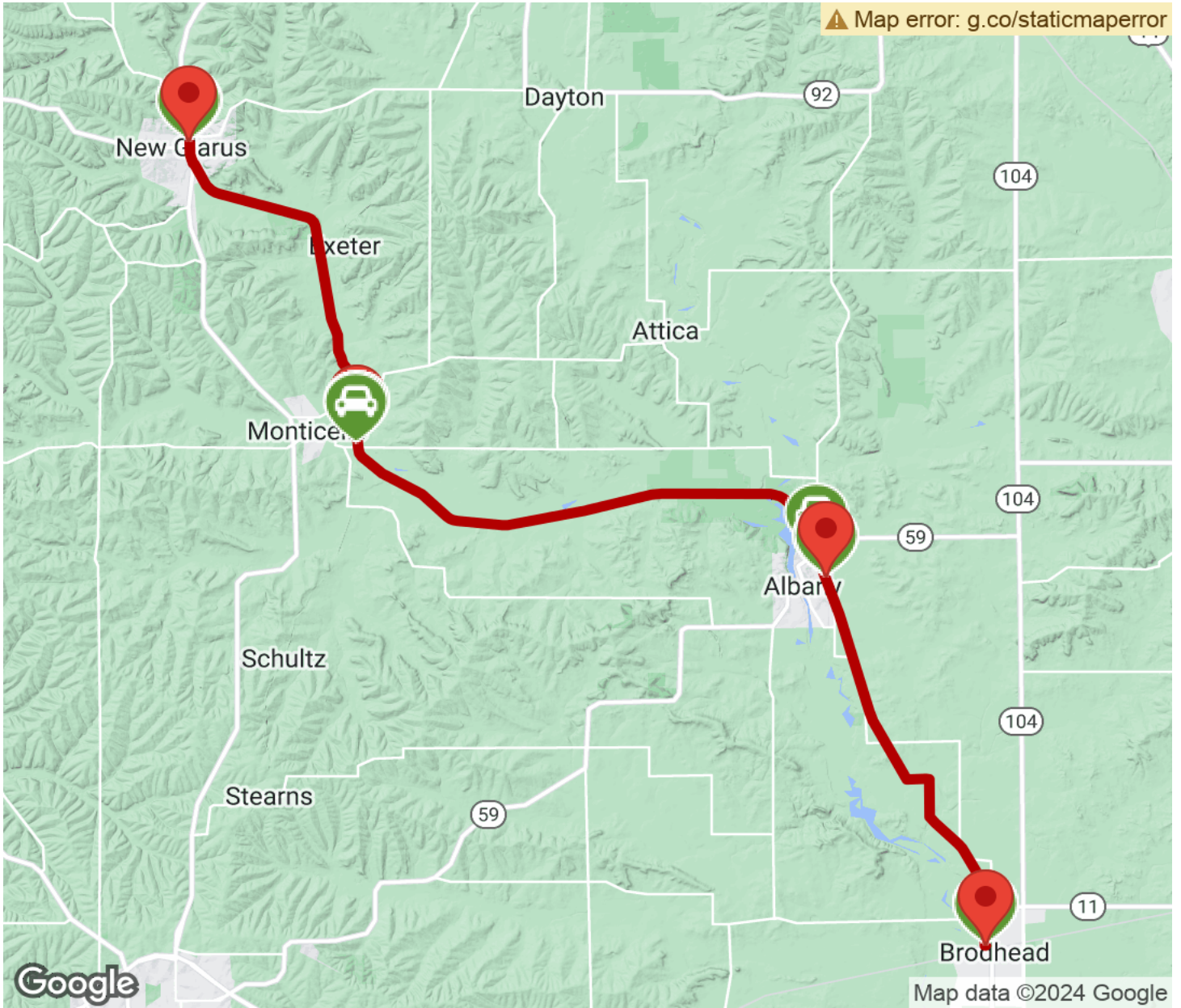
To reach the trailhead in New Glarus from US 18/US 151, take Exit 79, and head south toward Paoli on Old County Road PB. Go 3.3 miles, turn right across the Sugar River onto Paoli Road, and then, in 0.2 mile, turn left to follow County Road PB south through Paoli. Go 5.3 miles, turn right onto SR 69/SR 92, and then, in 2.2 miles, bear left to stay on SR 69. Go 4.3 miles, and turn right onto Sixth Ave. in New Glarus. Go about 250 feet, and turn right onto Railroad St. Look for parking on your right.

To reach the southern endpoint parking in Brodhead from I-90/I-39, take Exit 171A in Janesville to southbound WI 26/ Milton Ave. Go 0.3 mile, and turn right (west) onto US 14. Go 6.9 miles, crossing the Rock River along the way, and turn left onto County Road H; after 3 miles, turn right to continue west on H. In 0.9 mile, bear left at the Y to continue south on H. In 1 mile, turn right onto SR 11. Go 13.3 miles west all the way into Brodhead, bearing left (south) at 12.7 miles to continue on SR 11, and, in 0.6 mile, turn right onto W. Exchange St. Go 0.1 mile (2 blocks), and look for Sugar River State Trail Southern Terminus parking on the right, just before W. Third Ave. The off-road trail heads north on W. Third Ave. for 0.9 mile and reaches the on-road portion of trail at Decatur Road.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
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