



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Banks-
Vernonia
State Trail**
Oregon



Banks-Vernonia State Trail

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The 23-mile Banks-Vernonia State Trail runs between its namesake towns of Banks and Vernonia in the deep suburbs of Portland, OR.



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About the Route

Most of the route consists of an 8-foot-wide hiking and bicycling trail paralleled by a 4-foot-wide horse trail. The trail rises from Banks to Vernonia on an average 2% to 5% grade. One exception is the Horseshoe Trestle bypass, which switchbacks up 700 feet and descends 300 feet at Tophill.

Equestrians will find ADA-accessible loading platforms and hitching posts at several trailheads. Please use caution cycling on any speedy downhill shots. Yield to

horses and be visible or audible when approaching.

Thirteen bridges, as well as two 700-foot-long, 80-foot-high railroad trestles at Buxton and Horseshoe, offer amazing views along the length of the Banks-Vernonia State Trail. The gentle grade (in all but one area) provides beautiful scenes of the Coast Range from forested hills, as well as access to side trails displaying railroad relics and to a number of rivers and creeks. A variety of flora and fauna also populates the trail.

From Banks, enjoy a gentle 5-mile incline—good for families—through pastoral farmland. The grade steepens a bit on mostly wide and sweeping switchbacks as the route approaches the Buxton trailhead in a canopy of trees. The Horseshoe Trestle was half-destroyed by fire, but bikers and hikers can cross the curving 700 feet of the restored Buxton Trestle at about mile 6. A ground-level equestrian bypass crosses Mendenhall Creek.

The route continues to the Buxton trailhead, where trail users may picnic and wander interpretive trails. Trail users will then pass through L. L. Stub Stewart State Park, a 1,700-acre full-service state park and campground. Just before reaching the Tophill trailhead at mile 12, the route descends into short, steep switchbacks across Nehalem Highway, bypassing the Horseshoe Trestle, and then climbs back to the trailhead.

After the Beaver Creek trailhead at mile 17, the path emerges from the woods and hugs the highway for a gentle descent into Vernonia. Prepare for a few bumpy spots and tight turns near Vernonia. The route goes through Anderson Park, just blocks from downtown Vernonia, and continues for a couple more miles to Mill Pond/Vernonia Lake. Vernonia offers shops, galleries, and a museum.

Trail History

The Banks-Vernonia State Trail stretches through the hills (east of the Coast Mountains) between its two namesake



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States: Oregon

Counties: Columbia, Washington

Length: 21.2 miles

Trail end points: NW Banks Rd & NW Sellers Rd (Banks) to Vernonia Lake (Vernonia)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Boardwalk

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Horseback Riding, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible

Parking & Trail Access

The Banks-Vernonia State Trail runs between NW Banks Rd & NW Sellers Rd (Banks) and Vernonia Lake (Vernonia), with parking available at both ends.

Additional parking can be found at:

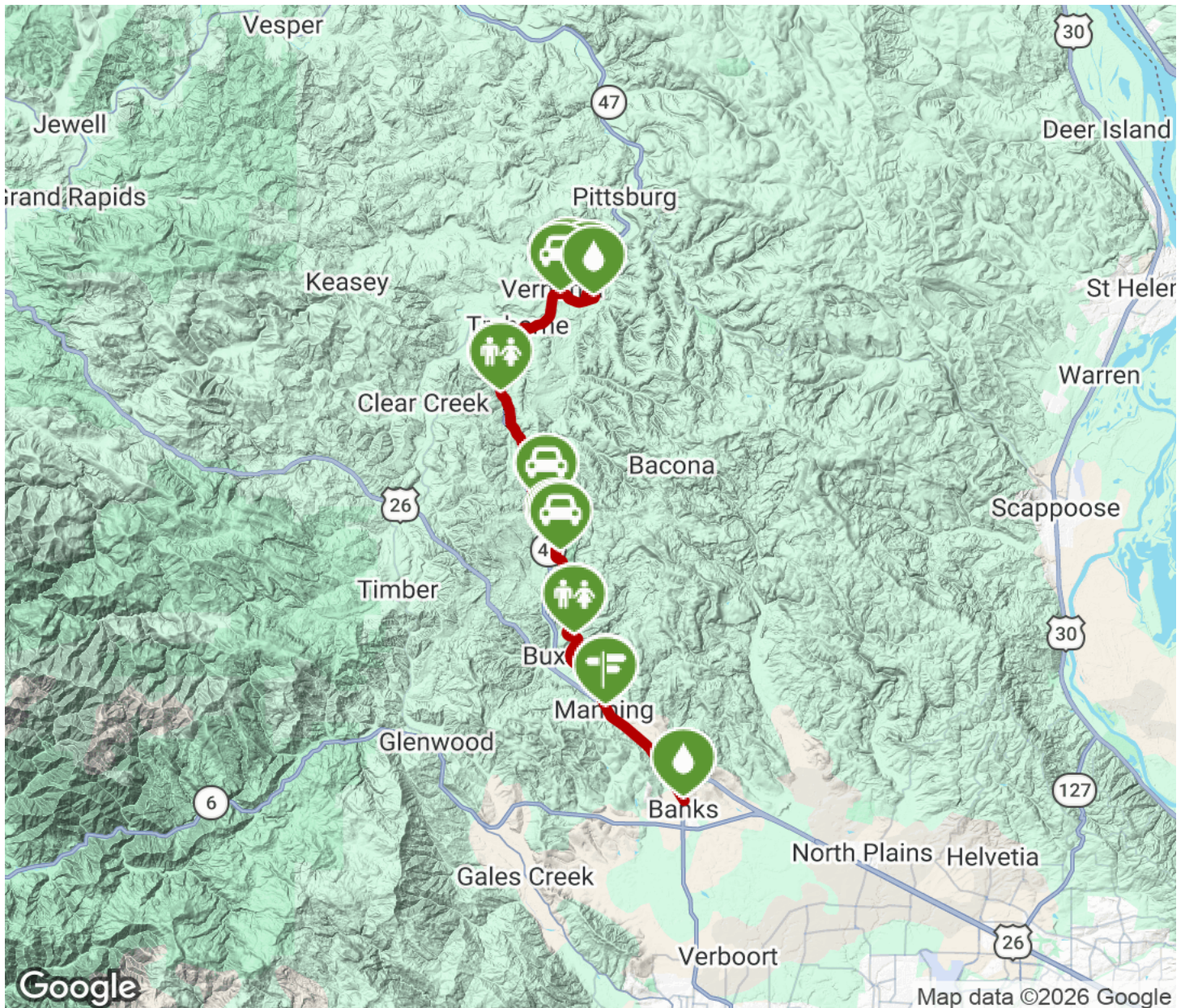
- 56039 Nehalem Hwy S (Vernonia)

There are multiple parking options along this route, please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



Banks-Vernonia State Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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