2025

TrailLink by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink Unlimited ∞

Guides

James River Heritage Trail

Virginia

James River Heritage Trail
Virginia

The James River Heritage Trail is one of the premier urban trails in the state, passing through lush forest and the heart of historical, industrial downtown Lynchburg. The well-marked 10-mile trail is actually an inter-connected system of shorter trails: the Blackwater Creek Trail, Point of Honor Trail, Kemper Station Trail, RiverWalk, and Percival's Island Trail. You can hop on the James River Heritage Trail from many places along its route. Drop by the Lynchburg Visitors Center (216 12th St.) for detailed maps of the trail system.

In October 2020, the City of Lynchburg opened the half-mile Black-water Creek Trail Extension, which runs from the Ed Page Trailhead to the new westernmost endpoint at Linkhorne Middle School. Included in this extension is the Langhorne Road Trestle, which was converted into a beautiful pedestrian and bike bridge.

From the Ed Page Trailhead, the Blackwater Creek Trail follows an old railroad grade for 3 miles to Jefferson Street in downtown Lynchburg, near where the creek flows into the James River. The trail traverses the Blackwater Creek Natural Area, and a few unpaved (but clearly marked) paths lead into the woods down a steep bank to the creek.

Shortly after you go under a railroad bridge high above you near mile 2.5, the Point of Honor Trail (1.75 miles long) branches off to the left. To the right, you'll find the 1-mile Kemper Station Trail. Approaching the historical Kemper Street Station, the trail features a long uphill grade that can be challenging for cyclists and wheelchair users; backtrack to return to the main trail.

If you continue on the main Blackwater Creek Trail, you'll go through the nearly 0.5-mile Hollins Tunnel, which bends but is well lit. If you take the Point of Honor Trail, you'll cross a spillway. Use caution when water is flowing over the top; if it's too high and fast, cross above at Hollins Mill Road.

At mile 3.5 (4.25 if you take the Point of Honor Trail), the Blackwater Creek Trail meets the RiverWalk, a 1-mile segment along Jefferson Street's sidewalks to Washington Street. At Washington Street, turn left, cross the tracks, and continue on the trail (which becomes Percival's Island Trail). You'll cross a spectacular refurbished railroad bridge onto the island. The trail traverses the mile-long island before crossing a second former rail bridge to the river's eastern shore. Back on the mainland, private property surrounds the trail, and signs warn you to stay on the trail to avoid trespassing.

The James River Heritage Trail continues another 1.25 miles along the river's edge to its eastern endpoint—0.6 mile past

James River Heritage Trail
Virginia

States: Virginia

Counties: Amherst,Lynchburg

Length: 10.1miles

Trail end points: Kemper Street Station (Park Ave & Kemper St) to Civitan Park (0.5 mile east of Fertilizer Rd)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt,Dirt,Woodchips

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike,Fishing,Mountain Biking,Inline Skating,Walking,Wheelchair Accessible,Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the Blackwater Creek Bikeway trailhead from the Lynchburg Expressway, go north on US 501 Business, which becomes Langhorne Road. Be on the lookout for a quick right turn onto Old Langhorne Road; the trailhead is on the left. To reach the Fertilizer Road trailhead from the Lynchburg Expressway, take State Route 210 east to Fertilizer Road and turn right to follow it all the way the trailhead for parking.
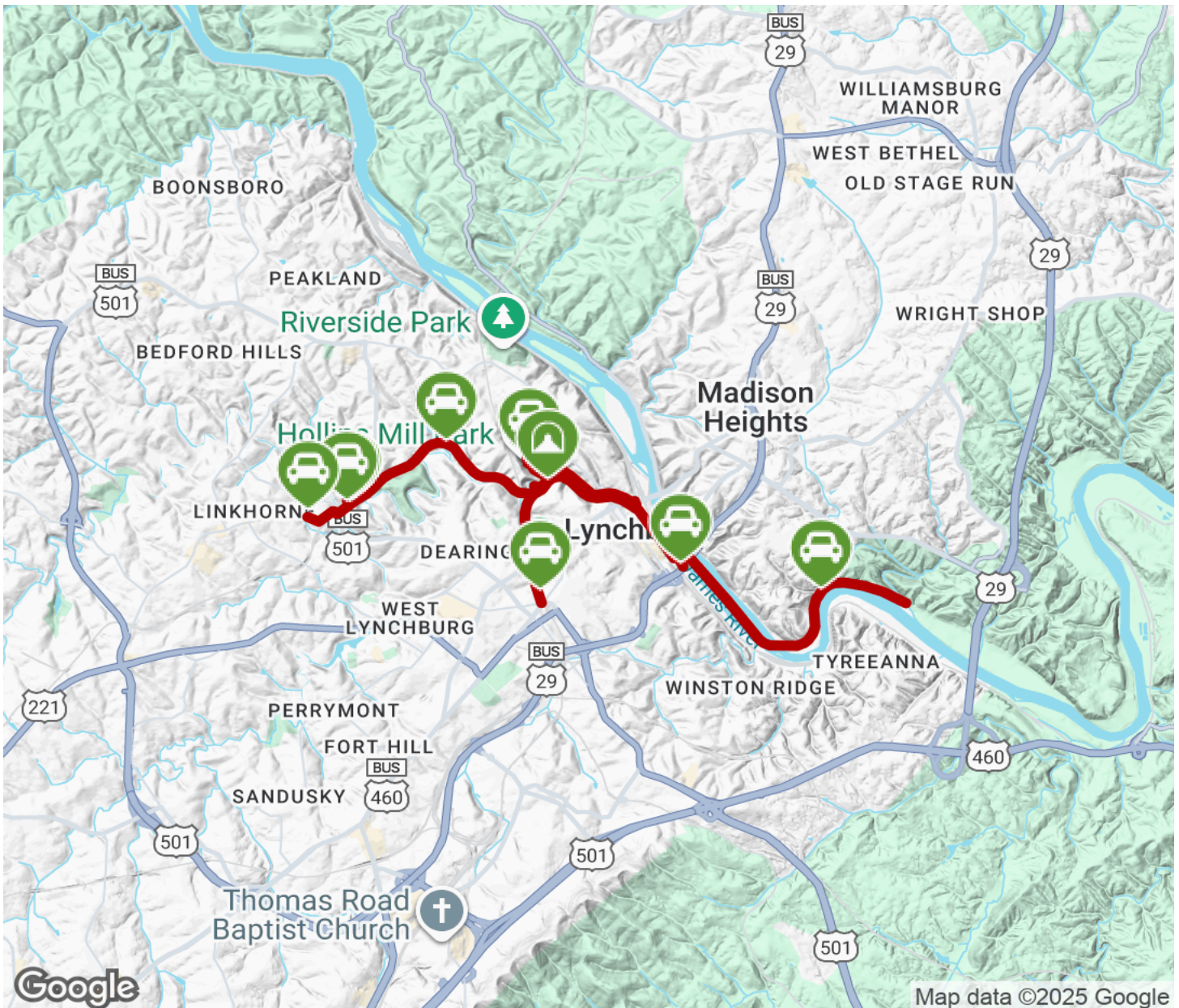
There are numerous other access points and parking areas along the entire route; refer to the TrailLink map for more details.

You can hop on the James River Heritage Trail from many other places along its route. Drop by the Lynchburg Visitors Center (216 12th Street) for detailed maps of the trail system.

TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com

James River Heritage Trail
Virginia

Trailhead   Restroom   Parking   Water Fountain   Tunnel

TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com