



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides   



**Coal Creek  
Trail (WA)**  
*Washington*



## Coal Creek Trail (WA)

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The Coal Creek Trail offers trail users a wealth of coal history, fitness, and nature in a forested fish and wildlife habitat, with interpretive signs that highlight the relics to be found along the 3.7-mile soft-mulch route.

Moderate and flat terrain defines the 2.5-mile eastern segment, while continuous hills comprise the lower 1.2 miles. Boardwalks, stairs, bridges, and benches add not only safety and ease in a fairly dense forest but also artistry and impressive engineering.

From the Red Town trailhead, the trail extends into a history of coal mining beginning in the 1860s. In 1917, this multiethnic community of 1,000 people produced 360,000 tons of coal. The Seattle and Walla Walla coal trains carried their loads to the coal docks, where the coal

was shipped to San Francisco. Though the rail never reached past Coal Creek, Seattle developed as a port city.

The trail begins across the street from the parking lot of Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. Once inside the deep forest, you'll find a sealed mine shaft and a short loop exposing a coal seam. The trail crosses a bridge, where a group of log benches, rust colored from the iron salts leached from coal, faces the North Fork Falls. The route continues through thick and diversely populated forest and past a cedar flume and coal bunker foundations.

The narrow trail diverts from the railroad grade due to man-made hills of coal tailings (discarded rock). One mile in, if you take the 0.8-mile Primrose Trail, you'll pass the site of the old locomotive turntable. Switching back down (creek side), you'll cross three bridges before you loop back to the main trail. Wildflowers, snails, and butterflies; the tiny Sandstone Falls; and a pair of coal car axles are all visible along this part of the trail.

The main trail descends 500 feet, with occasional slippery and muddy sections. Neighborhood access trails can be found along the level creek-side section, along with a retention pond and a fish ladder (a structure that helps fish migrate around barriers). Under Coal Creek Parkway is a 1.1-mile lower trail with a fairly steep series of hills frequented by runners. You'll pass a spur up to a tiny lot at SE 60th Street as you reach the end at 119th Avenue SE.



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**States:** Washington

**Counties:** King

Length: 3.7 miles

**Trail end points:** 119th Ave. SE at I-405  
(Bellevue) to Red Town trailhead at Lakemont  
Blvd. SE and Newcastle Golf Club Rd.  
(Newcastle)

**Trail surfaces:** Ballast, Dirt, Grass, Woodchips

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Walking

## Parking & Trail Access

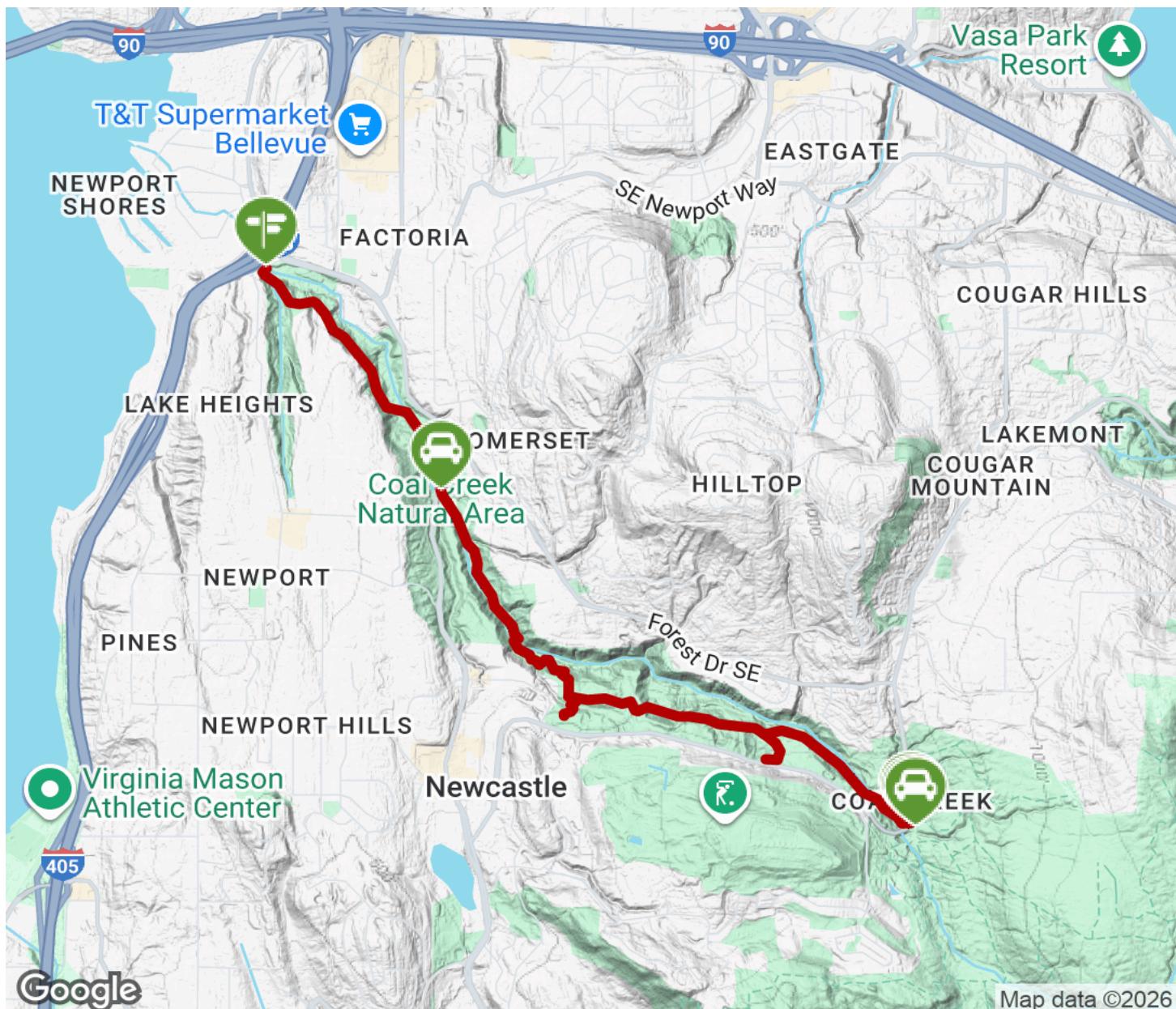
To reach the eastern endpoint, take Interstate 90, Exit 13. Drive south on Lakemont Boulevard SE for 3.1 miles. Slow down to look for the entrance to the Red Town trailhead, located on the left side of the road at the start of a sharp curve. The Coal Creek east trailhead is located 0.4 mile beyond Red Town, on the right.

To reach the Coal Creek Trailhead from I-405, take Exit 10, and follow Coal Creek Parkway SE for 1.3 miles east. Just after the light at Forest Drive, turn left into the lot. Note: No parking exists at the western endpoint of the lower trail. This section is served by a bus.



# Coal Creek Trail (WA)

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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