



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail (Portsmouth Branch)

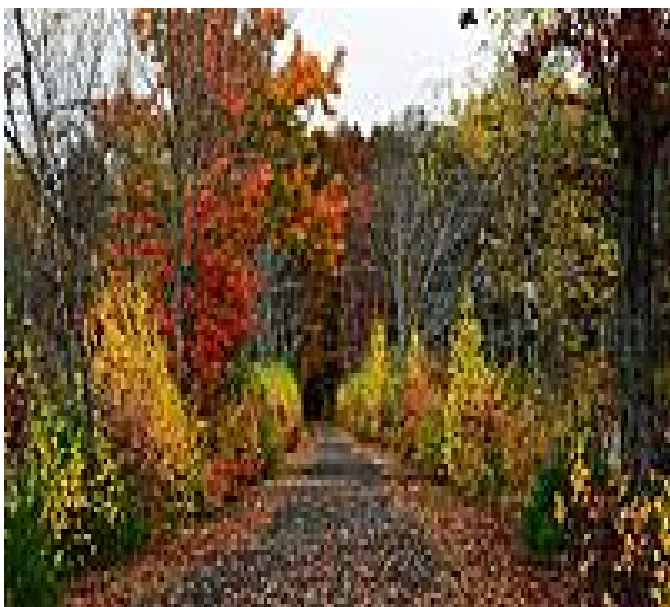
New Hampshire



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Overview

The Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail brings at least two superlatives to mind: it's one of New Hampshire's longest rail trails at just more than 28 miles, and it runs from Manchester, the state's largest city. Travelers will find lakes and forests here, as well as former mill towns where they can stock up, relax, or visit historic buildings and relics left over from the railroad days.

About the Route

The first 2 miles of trail in Manchester are paved, while gravel or crushed rock covers the rest. There are few at-grade road intersections east of town, as the old railbed passes beneath the roads. Some of these underpasses

have low ceilings, however, as the bottom of the culverts are planked with wood, cyclists and equestrians should be prepared to dismount. In winter cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and dogsledding are permitted.

Leaving off at the paved trail at Mammoth Road/SR 28A, trail users head east for 0.9 miles to a tunnel under I-93/SR 101. The trail turns to packed gravel at Lake Shore Road (mile 2). In another 0.5 mile 0.5-miles, trail users will arrive at the trailhead for the 2,500-acre Massabesic Lake, the source of water for Manchester. It's also home to deer, foxes, loons, and other wildlife. This is a popular trailhead for the rail trail because of adequate parking and the scenic location. Motorized use is prohibited west of here in Manchester. About 8.5 miles from the Massabesic Lake trailhead, trail users will cross paths with railroad history at a marker for the demolished site of an 1889 railroad station on Depot Road in East Candia. The railbed rises above the forest floor in places here, while other stretches thread through high-walled cuts blasted through New Hampshire's famous granite.

4 miles from East Candia is a surviving railroad station in Raymond. There, trail users will find plenty of places for food and refreshments near the depot and on the outskirts of town in 1 mile. The last 7.3 miles passes through more forestland and ends at the still-standing circa 1891 Rockingham Junction railroad station, which served the Boston and Maine Railroad's Main Line and Portsmouth Branch. Trains operated by Pan Am Railways still pass this station.

Trail History

The Boston and Maine Railroad was the last to run trains on the Portsmouth Branch between Newfields and Manchester, selling the corridor to the state in 1988. The oldest railway section dates to about 1850 and was built by the Portsmouth and Concord Railroad. Succeeding railroads finished other sections of the Portsmouth Branch to Manchester in the early 1860s. The eastern section of the branch from Newfields to



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New Hampshire

States: New Hampshire

Counties: Hillsborough, Rockingham

Length: 28 miles

Trail end points: Tarrytown Rd (Hallsville) to Rockingham Jct Rd. (Newfields)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone, Dirt, Grass, Gravel, Sand

Trail category: Rail-Trail

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

Parking & Trail Access

The Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail (Portsmouth Branch) runs between Tarrytown Rd (Hallsville) and Rockingham Jct Rd. (Newfields).

Parking is available at:

- 270 Mammoth Rd. (Manchester)
- 16 Londonderry Turnpike (Auburn)
- 85 Old Rte 108 (Newfields)

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



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