



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Panhandle Trail

Pennsylvania, West Virginia



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Overview

The Panhandle Trail offers a direct 29-mile journey between the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia and the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Although the trail follows an old railroad grade through the hilly terrain, there was only so much the railroad builders could do to flatten the route across the Allegheny Plateau. Expect a steady climb to Bulger, the high point on the rural journey.

About the Route

The Panhandle Trail leaves off from its western endpoint in Weirton, which borders both Ohio and Pennsylvania in West Virginia's narrow Northern Panhandle. It makes a

steady 16-mile climb through hardwood forests to Bulger, where the trail begins its descent to Collier Township in the western suburbs of Pittsburgh. The 17-mile center segment through Washington County is paved.

While the westernmost trailhead in Weirton is located at a dead end, the trailhead on McColl Road is often the westernmost access point for most trail users. Heading east, the trail follows Harmon Creek, with its wildflowers and flowering shrubs, through the small community of Colliers, to the Pennsylvania state line in 4 miles. The trail continues on a grade for 7 miles to Burgettstown, the first stop along the route with retail and dining options for hungry or thirsty travelers.

After a short descent, the trail continues to climb at a steady grade for 4.5 miles to the high point in Bulger. In 2 miles the trail arrives in Midway, so named because it is the railroad's halfway point between Pittsburgh and Steubenville, Ohio.

In 2.5 miles, the Panhandle Trail passes beneath the Montour Trail's 1913 railroad trestle, which also crosses Robinson Run. More services are available within a mile in McDonald, home of the McDonald Trail Station, a history center at the South McDonald Street (Railroad Street) trailhead, which is open on weekends from April–October. The substantial brick buildings in McDonald are evidence of the oil boom that struck in the late 1800s; coal is still mined, and coal piles can be seen.

Over the next 3.5 miles, the trail passes through Sturgeon, Noblestown, and Oakdale. All have food, refreshments, and trailhead picnic tables (some covered).

The trail crosses Robinson Run six times over the next 3.7 miles before the trail reaches its eastern endpoint at Walkers Mill Road in Collier Township. A pedestrian bridge 0.6 miles before the end crosses Robinson Run to Fossil Cliff, where fossilized fern leaves can be found.



Panhandle Trail

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States: Pennsylvania, West Virginia

Counties: Allegheny, Brooke, Hancock, Washington

Length: 29 miles

Trail end points: Harmon Creek south of Cove Rd. (Marland Heights) to Walkers Mill Rd. (Oakdale, PA)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair

Parking & Trail Access

The Panhandle Trail runs between Harmon Creek south of Cove Rd. (Marland Heights) and Walkers Mill Rd. (Oakdale, PA), with parking at the eastern end of the trail.

Parking is also available at:

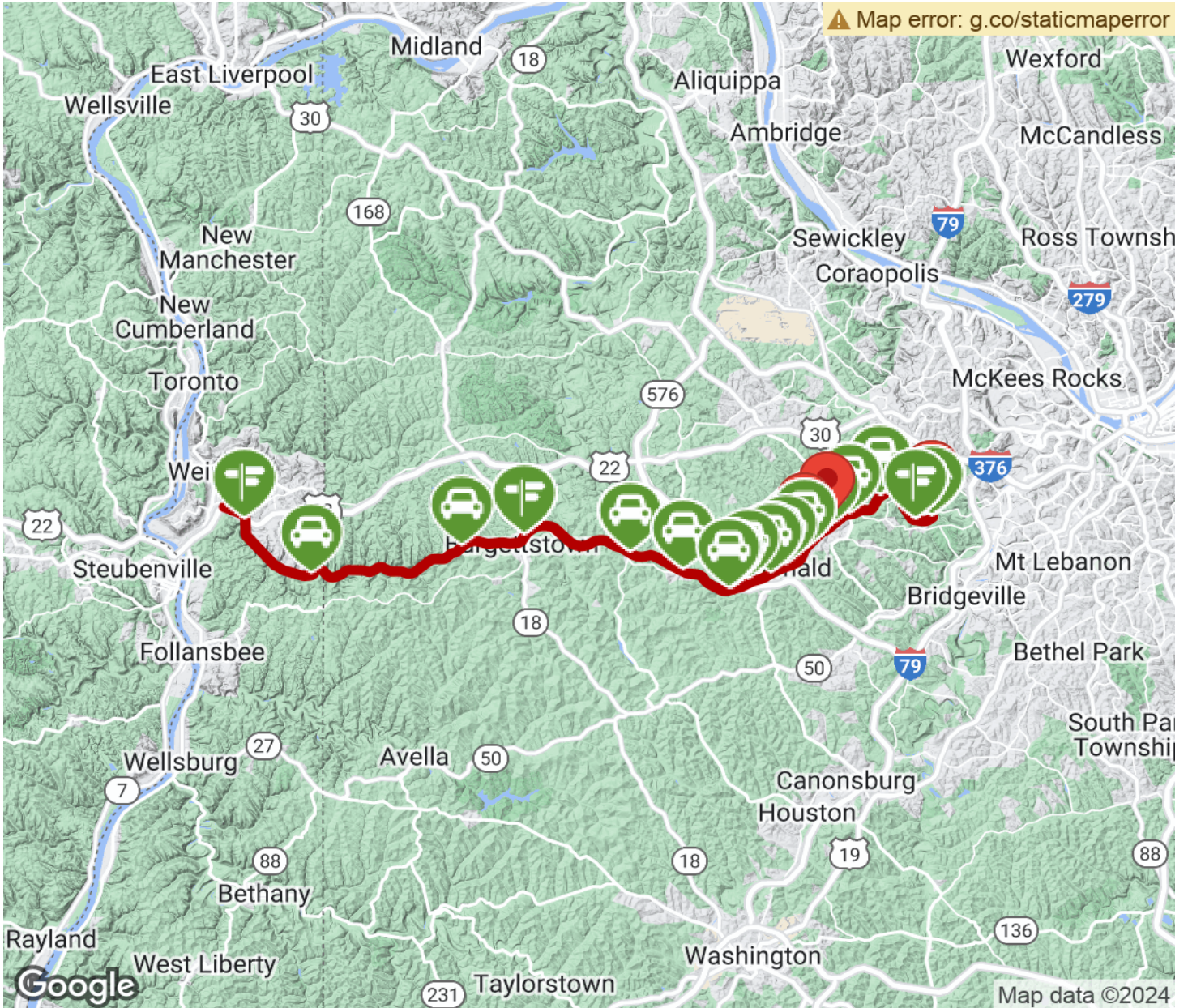
- 1802 N Main St (Burgettstown)
- 974-976 Bulger Candor Rd (Bulger)
- 73 Sunnyside Ave (Carnegie)

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



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com