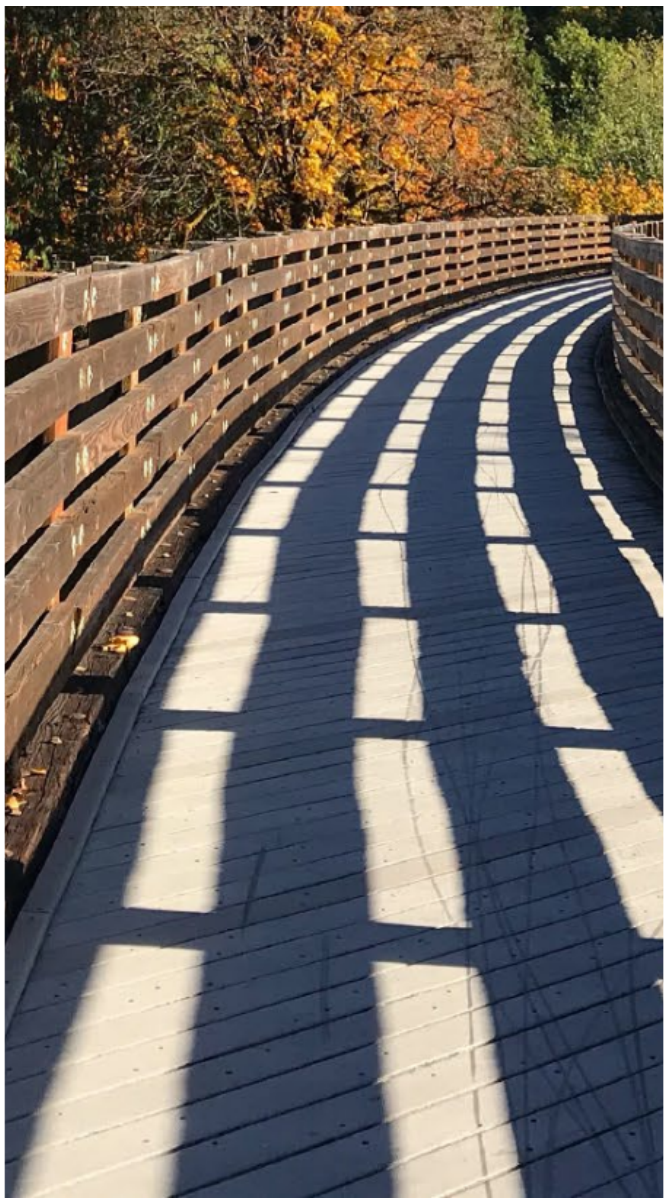
TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

2025

TrailLink Unlimited

Guides



Little Tennessee River Greenway

North Carolina

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From woods to wetlands to meadows, the 4.9-mile Little Tennessee River Greenway passes through a variety of habitats as it follows the scenic banks of the Little Tennessee River. Part of the North Carolina Birding Trail, it meanders along the river as it makes its way through the small city of Franklin. A network of dirt trails off the path offers a more strenuous experience for mountain bikers and hikers. Other features include a disc golf course, exercise stations, a monarch butterfly garden, a playground, and a splash pad. Plans call for adding about 1.5 miles to the greenway on its southern end to reach the Macon County Recreation Center.

Most sections of the greenway have Cherokee names to honor the Indigenous peoples who lived in three ancient villages that were located along the banks of the river.

Other historical features include a section of the early-20th--century Tallulah Falls Railroad, as well as a section of an abandoned airport runway. In addition, a section called the Tartan Trail recalls early settlers from the 1700s.

About the Route

Starting at the south end behind the Macon County Public Library, where restrooms are available, the trail heads north and passes by the open meadow of the Walasi Trail Circle, where you'll be treated to sweeping views of the river and wildflowers in the field. Moving north on the Tartan Trail, the greenway passes by a community garden and part of the disc golf course before crossing the covered Nonah Bridge in 1.4 miles. Just 0.2 miles farther, the trail crosses the river again on the 1890s steel-truss Nickajack Bridge.

Next up is a section of the Tallulah Falls Railroad Trail, which follows a train route that carried passengers between Franklin and Cornelia, Georgia, from 1907 to 1946. In 0.8 miles, the trail crosses over the river. the 120-foot-long wooden Tassee Bridge, which offers a picture-perfect view of the confluence of the Little Tennessee River and its tributary, the Cullasaja River. Restrooms are available at the Tassee Shelter. Here, the greenway heads north on the Old Airport Trace—a section consisting of about 2,700 feet (0.5 miles) of an old north-south airport runway used from 1946 to 1968.

Little Tennessee River Greenway

North Carolina

States: North Carolina
Counties: Macon
Length: 4.9miles
Trail end points: Siler Farms Disc Golf Course (Franklin) to Little Tennessee River Greenway, 123-145 Arthur Drake Rd (Franklin)
Trail surfaces: Asphalt
Trail category: Rail-Trail
Trail activities: Bike,Inline Skating,Fishing,Wheelchair Accessible,Walking

Parking & Trail Access

The Little Tennessee River Greenway runs between Siler Farms Disc Golf Course (Franklin) and Little Tennessee River Greenway, 123-145 Arthur Drake Rd (Franklin).

Parking is also available at:

- 862 Ulco Dr (Franklin)
- Wesley's Playground, 573 NE Main St (Franklin)

See TrailLink Map for all parking options and detailed directions.

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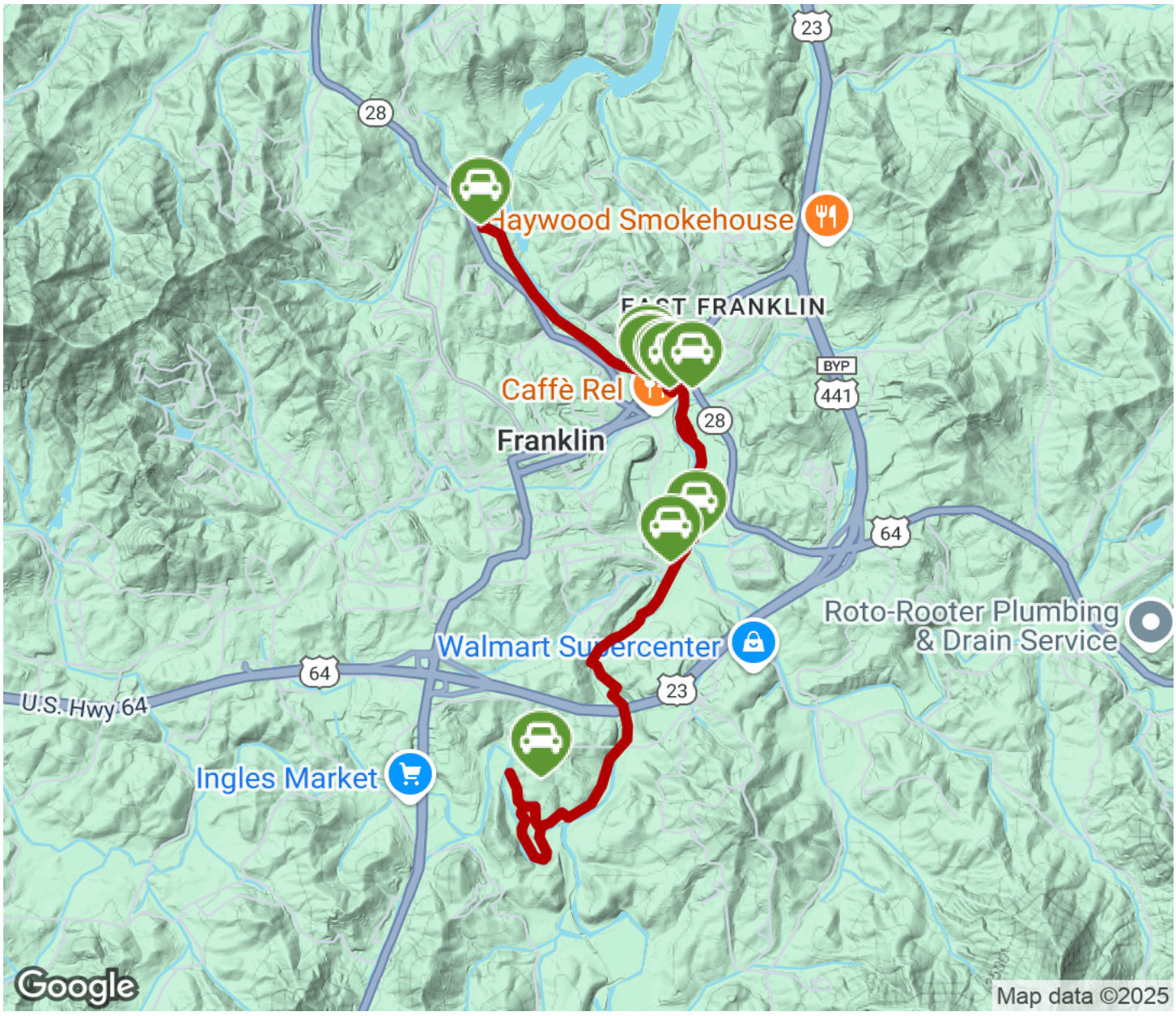

Trailhead Restroom Parking Water Fountain Tunnel

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