



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Merced River
Trail**
California



Merced River Trail

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About 20 miles southwest of Yosemite National Park, the scenic Merced River Trail functions as both a bike/pedestrian trail and a lightly trafficked vehicular road used to access campsites and recreational amenities within the Merced River Recreation Area. Following the historical Yosemite Valley Railroad along the Merced River, the trail offers a relatively flat grade for intermediate skill levels. It's especially beautiful in the spring with an explosion of wildflowers that lasts from March to May.

The eastern entrance at the Briceburg Visitor Center provides parking, river access, and shade for resting or a picnic lunch along the river. Upon setting off westward from the parking lot, you will pass over a narrow bridge that accommodates both automobiles and bikes. Turn left

after the bridge and follow the path west along the Merced River; going straight would take you instead to a switchbacking hiking trail up a mountainside.

The Merced River will be a constant companion, and there are river access points throughout, including places to hop in for a quick swim or to go rafting. Gold prospecting and trout fishing are also common. A popular place to enjoy these activities is the Cable Rock Day Use Area, which you'll reach after 1.4 miles.

As you continue west down the gravel road maintained by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), you may encounter the occasional vehicle sharing the road to access three campgrounds along the route, all providing restrooms and parking: McCabe Flat (1 mile west of Cable Rock), Willow Placer (1.5 miles after McCabe Flat), and Railroad Flat (0.8 mile after Willow Placer).

Although the multiuse pathway (and BLM road) ends at a gate just north of Railroad Flat Campground, adventurers can find hiking-only opportunities beyond it.



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States: California

Counties: Mariposa

Length: 4.9miles

Trail end points: Briceburg Visitor Center on Central Yosemite Hwy/SR 140 (Briceburg) to Gate located 600 feet north of the Railroad Flat Campground (Midpines)

Trail surfaces: Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Fishing, Mountain Biking, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

Parking for the Merced River Trail is available at the Briceburg Visitor Center. Daily parking is free, but a camping fee of \$10 per night applies at any of the three campgrounds. Restrooms are available at the campgrounds.

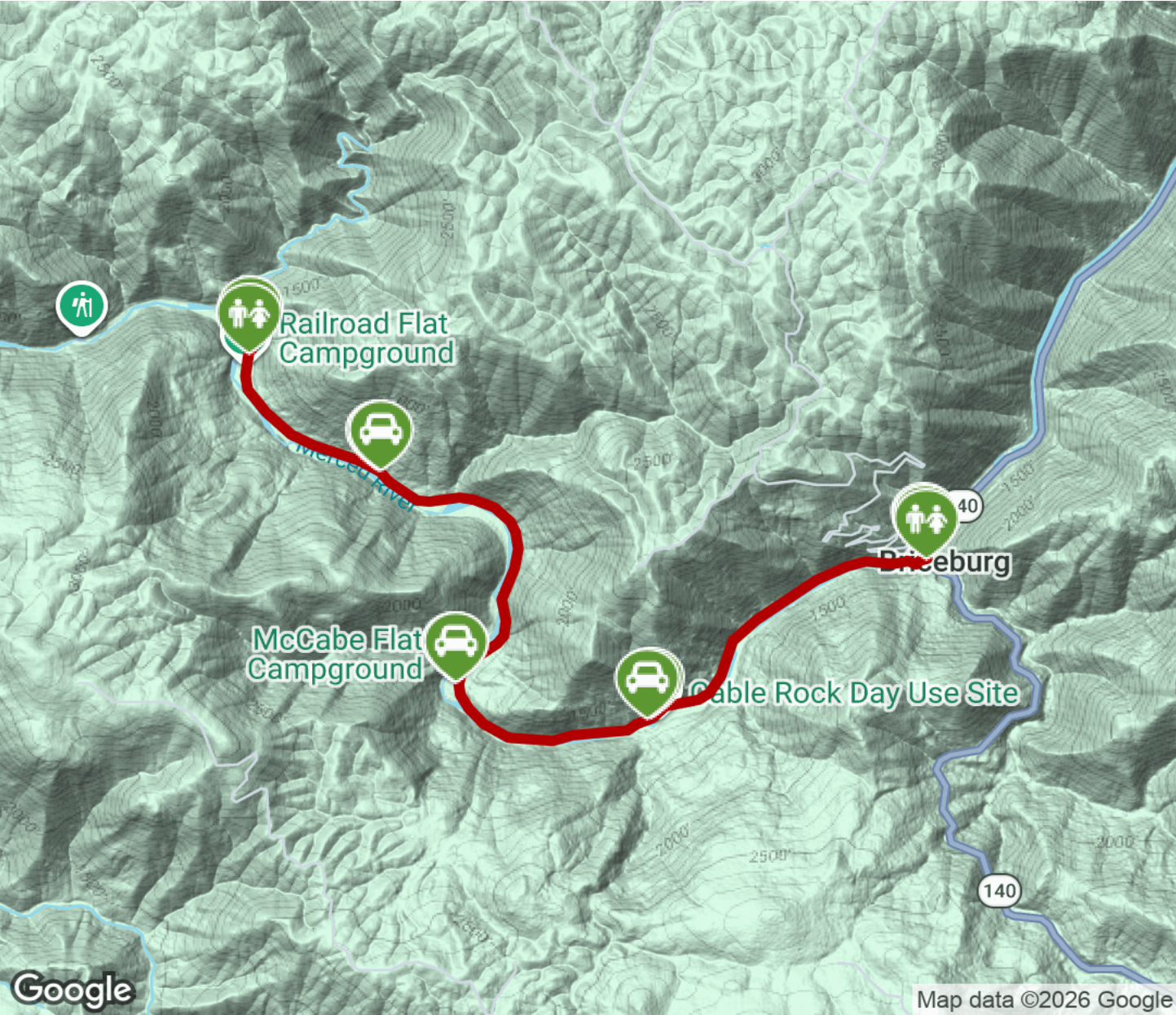
To reach the Briceburg Visitor Center from Merced, travel east on State Route 140 for approximately 36 miles to the town of Mariposa, then travel 12 miles north on SR 140 to Briceburg. The visitor center will be on the left.

Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel