



2026

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**J. Manley  
Robbins Trail**  
*Pennsylvania*



## J. Manley Robbins Trail

Pennsylvania

*Although the J. Manley Robbins Trail spans only 2.6 miles, its rich history and natural beauty make a stop in the rural Pennsylvania*



Although the J. Manley Robbins Trail spans only 2.6 miles, its rich history and natural beauty make a stop in the rural Pennsylvania borough of Danville worthwhile. The rustic trail—forming a loop of hard-packed gravel tucked among the trees north of downtown—is best suited for hikers and mountain bikers. The J. Manley Robbins Trail is also the oldest known rail-trail conversion. It was used by the Danville Bicycle Club as early as the 1890s.

In the mid-19th century, Danville became a boomtown: iron mines peppered the surrounding hillsides, bustling iron mills were located in town, and local company Montour Iron Works was a major producer of T-rails, a key technological advancement in the flourishing railroad industry. Visit in July when the town celebrates its past with the Danville Heritage Festival; many of the event's

activities take place in the Hess Recreation Area, which the rail-trail traverses.

The Robbins Trail, also referred to as the Danville Cycle Path and the Old Reading Line Trail, is built along a former narrow-gauge railroad that once carried iron ore to furnaces for smelting. Fortuitously, just as use of the railroad was declining, bicycles were booming. In the 1890s, when the tracks were no longer in use, a local bicycle club converted the old railroad corridor into a pathway.

To journey through this piece of history, a good place to begin is the Hess Recreation Area, where you'll have access to parking, restrooms, and other park amenities. From there, a counterclockwise direction of travel will whisk adventurers into the solitude of the woods and away from State Route 54/Continental Boulevard, which parallels the east side of the park. Near the top of the loop, you'll encounter a delightful covered wooden bridge over Mahoning Creek, a crossing once used by the Reading Railroad. A branch of the trail stretches north to a trailhead at Liberty Valley Road. (Note that road construction is planned to begin in 2021 to realign PA 642/Jerseytown Road with SR 642/Liberty Valley Road at SR 54 near the northern point of the trail loop).

Heading southward, you'll be traveling along a slope overlooking Mahoning Creek, a popular trout-fishing stream and tributary of the Susquehanna River. The deciduous forest that envelops the trail makes this an enchanting place to view autumn's colors. For those who want to linger, additional nature trails are available in the park.

After 1.5 miles, you'll approach the Beaver Place trailhead in a residential neighborhood. You're not far from downtown at this point, so you could take an on-street side excursion down the quiet Beaver Place roadway to the bicycle/pedestrian crossing over Mahoning Creek and Continental Boulevard to reach central Danville. At the end of the bridge, turn right to head southwest on Mill Street to enter the business district,



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**States:** Pennsylvania

**Counties:** Montour

Length: 2.6miles

**Trail end points:** Beaver Place trailhead at Montour St., 150 feet west of Beaver Pl. (Danville) to Liberty Valley Road

**Trail surfaces:** Grass,Gravel

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Fishing,Mountain

Biking,Walking,Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

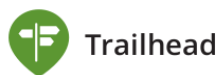
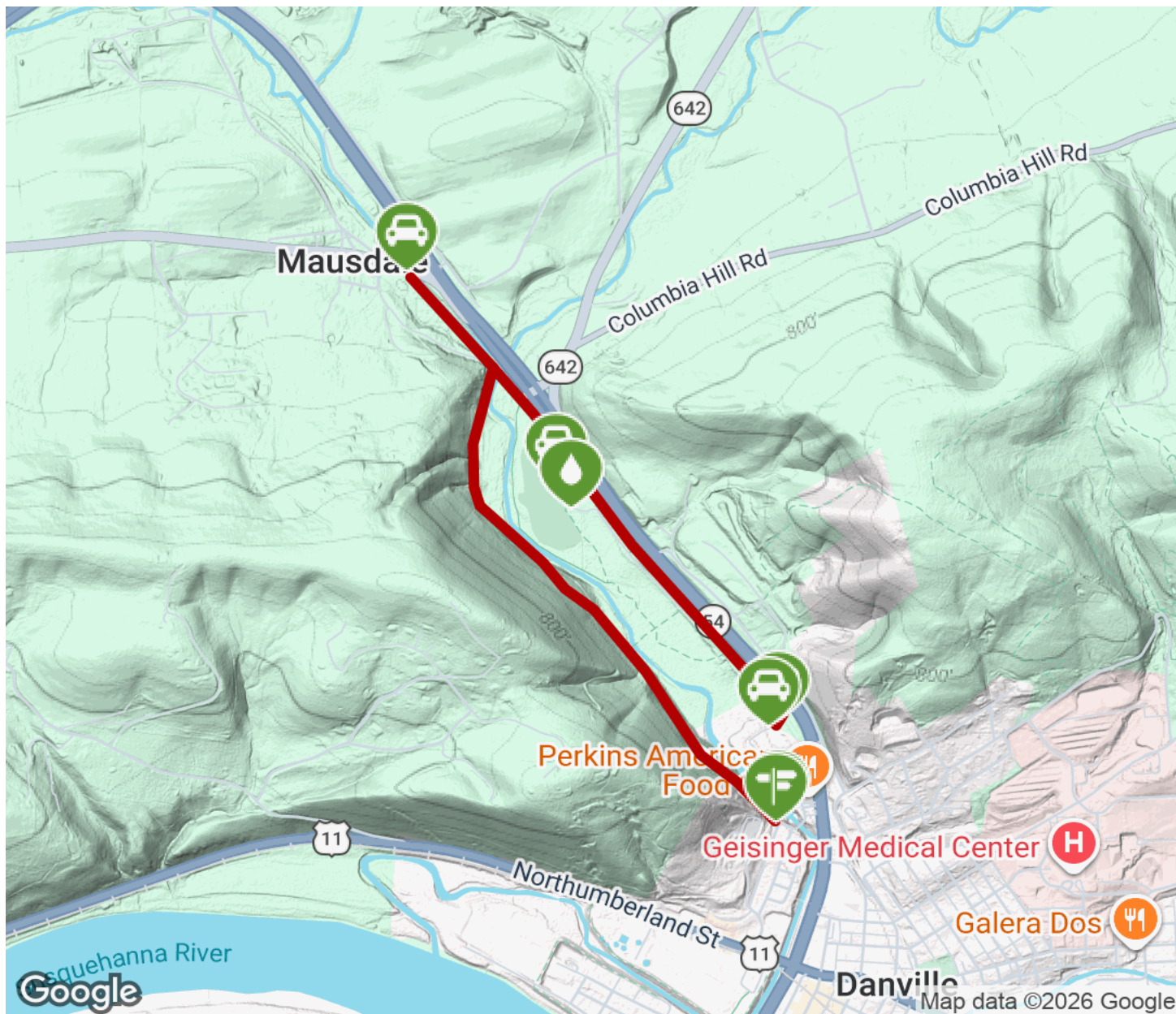
To reach the Hess Recreation Area from I-80, take Exit 224 to SR 54/Continental Blvd. toward Danville. Head south 2.5 miles, and turn right onto Montour St.; the road is unmarked, but the turn is located at the Perkins Family Restaurant. Take an immediate right onto Meadow Lane. Go 0.2 mile (the road veers left in 400 feet and then turns right in another 0.1 mile), and you'll have the option of turning right into a trailhead parking lot here. To reach the Hess Recreation Area, continue on Meadow Lane an additional 0.7 mile north to the park's main parking lot, and look for parking immediately to your left, adjacent to the sports fields.

To reach the Beaver Pl. trailhead from I-80, take Exit 224 to SR 54/Continental Blvd. toward Danville. Head south 2.5 miles, and turn right at Perkins Family Restaurant onto Montour St., and then immediately turn left to stay on Montour St. Go 0.1 mile, and look for parking on your right, where the road bends.



# J. Manley Robbins Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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

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