



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Northwest Branch Trail

Maryland



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The Northwest Branch Trail travels a sylvan setting through a string of parks in the Maryland suburbs northeast of Washington, D.C. The 15.8-mile greenway connects the commercial-residential centers of Hyattsville and Wheaton on a trail that's paved for 7 miles through Prince George's County and then mostly soft-surfaced in Montgomery County.

It's part of the 40-mile [Anacostia Tributary Trail System](#), which begins in Hyattsville where the tidal main stem of the Anacostia River splits into the Northwest and Northeast Branches. The trail system is bordered by stream-valley parkland acquired by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission beginning in the 1930s.

The Northwest Branch Trail begins in Hyattsville, where it joins the [Northeast Branch Trail](#) and the [Anacostia River Trail](#). It also hosts the cross-country American Discovery Trail and is part of the 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway—a growing network of multiuse trails connecting 15 states and 450 cities and towns between Maine and Florida—for its first 2 miles through Prince George's County, until the greenway network splits off toward the District of Columbia at Chillum Community Park. That's just after the Northwest Branch Trail passes a junction to the West Hyattsville Metro Station at 1.8 miles, and before the fork to [Sligo Creek Trail](#) at 2.2 miles.

Although the trail follows parkland for its entire distance, there's scarce tree cover at the beginning. A thicker tree canopy emerges around Heurich Park at mile 3, and the trail becomes very woody after a power line corridor at about 4.5 miles.

A notable historical site is the Adelphi Mill at mile 5, just past Riggs Road. Built in 1796, the gristmill was served by boats using the tributary in the early 19th century. It was restored in the 1950s and is now a meeting place, open by reservation only.

The trail's character changes about a mile after crossing into Montgomery County at New Hampshire Avenue/MD 650. The pavement ends just shy of the Capital Beltway (a utility access road connects to Oakview Drive) and the path continues as a dirt trail northward along the Northwest Branch for 8.5 miles to Alderton Road in Wheaton.

Mountain bikes are recommended on the narrow dirt trail. At Burnt Mills East Special Park on Columbia Pike, a junction puts mountain bikers on the Copperhead Run Trail, which follows a snaky, singletrack course along the hillside overlooking the creek.

Across Columbia Pike, at Burnt Mills West Special Park, the Northwest Branch Trail passes a dam used by an 18th-



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States: Maryland

Counties: Montgomery, Prince Georges

Length: 15.8 miles

Trail end points: Baltimore Ave./US 1 and Charles Armentrout Dr. (Hyattsville) to Oakview Dr. south of I-495 (Silver Spring)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Dirt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback Riding, Walking

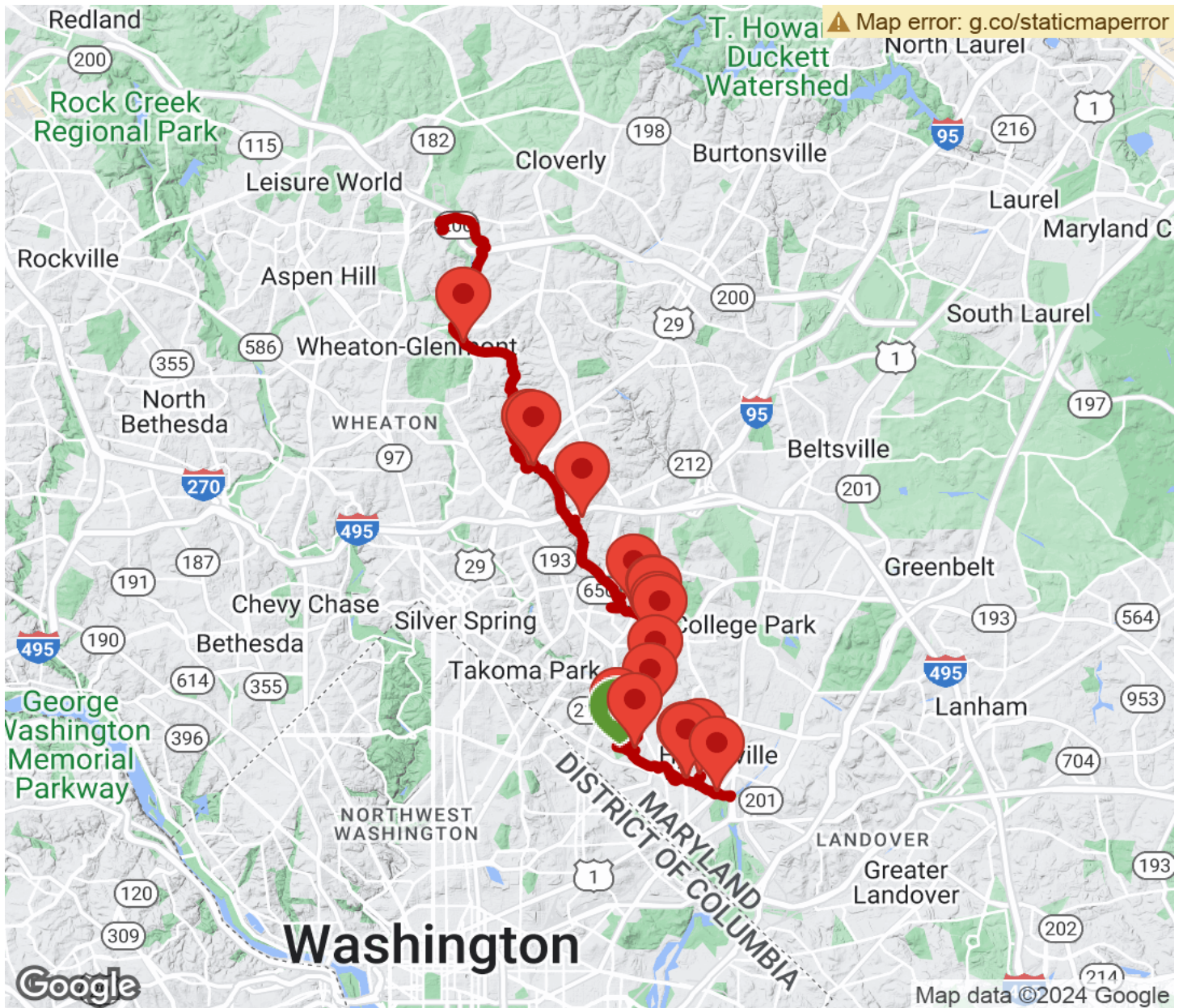
Parking & Trail Access

Parking for the Northwest Branch Trail can be found at the trail's northern endpoint at Roscoe Nix Elementary School on Hedin Drive in Silver Spring. Most of the parks along the trail's route have their own parking lots; for the exact locations of these parks, refer to the TrailLink map.



Northwest Branch Trail

Maryland



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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