



2026

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Northwest
Branch Trail**
Maryland



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 17.4-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.

About the Route

The Northwest Branch Trail leaves off in the south from Hyattsville, where the trailhead is also home to the Northeast Branch Trail and the Anacostia River Trail.

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-century gristmill. The Rachel Carson Greenway Trail—named for the noted conservationist who lived nearby as she wrote *Silent Spring*—runs through the woods across the creek and is reserved for hikers and equestrians only.

In 3.8 miles, the Northwest Branch Trail comes to an access trail for Wheaton Regional Park at Kemp Mill Road. The trail takes a right turn, following an on-road route for 0.4 miles. The off-road trail resumes on the north side of Randolph Road and winds through the woods for another 3 miles to its endpoint on Alderton Road.

Be aware that cross-country skiing is allowed on Prince George's County trails but is prohibited on trails in



Northwest Branch Trail

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States: Maryland

Counties: Montgomery, Prince Georges

Length: 17.4 miles

Trail end points: Anacostia River Trail
(Hyattsville) to Alderton Rd. (Silver Spring)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Dirt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

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

Parking & Trail Access

The Northwest Branch Trail runs between Anacostia River Trail (Hyattsville) and Alderton Rd. (Silver Spring).

Parking is available at:

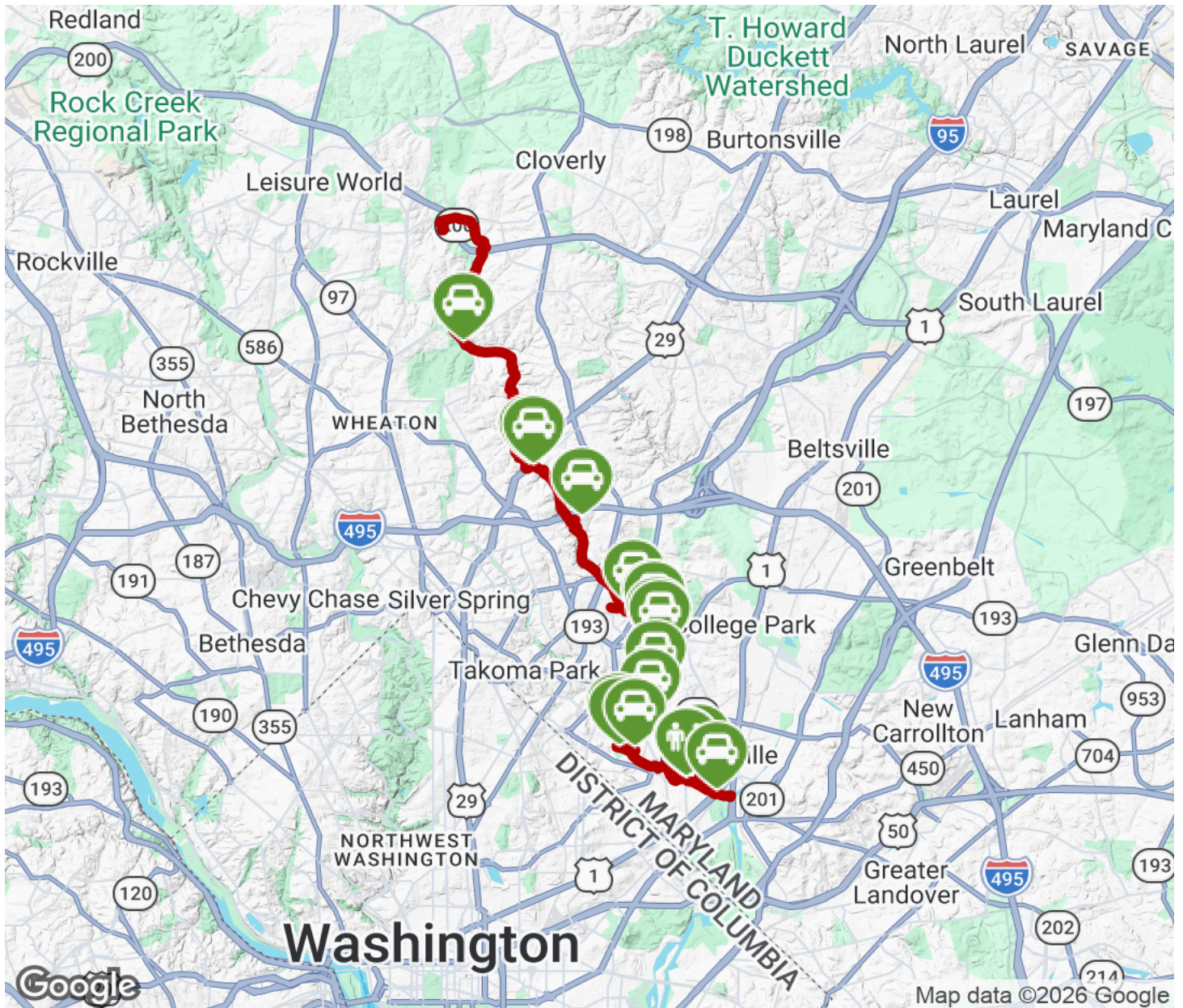
- Chillum Park, 1850 Chillum Rd. (Hyattsville)
- Lane Manor Splash Park, 7601 W Park Dr. (Adelphi)
- Burnt Mills East Special Park, 10701 Columbia Pike (Silver Spring)

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



Northwest Branch Trail

Maryland



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

[TrailLink.com](https://www.TrailLink.com)