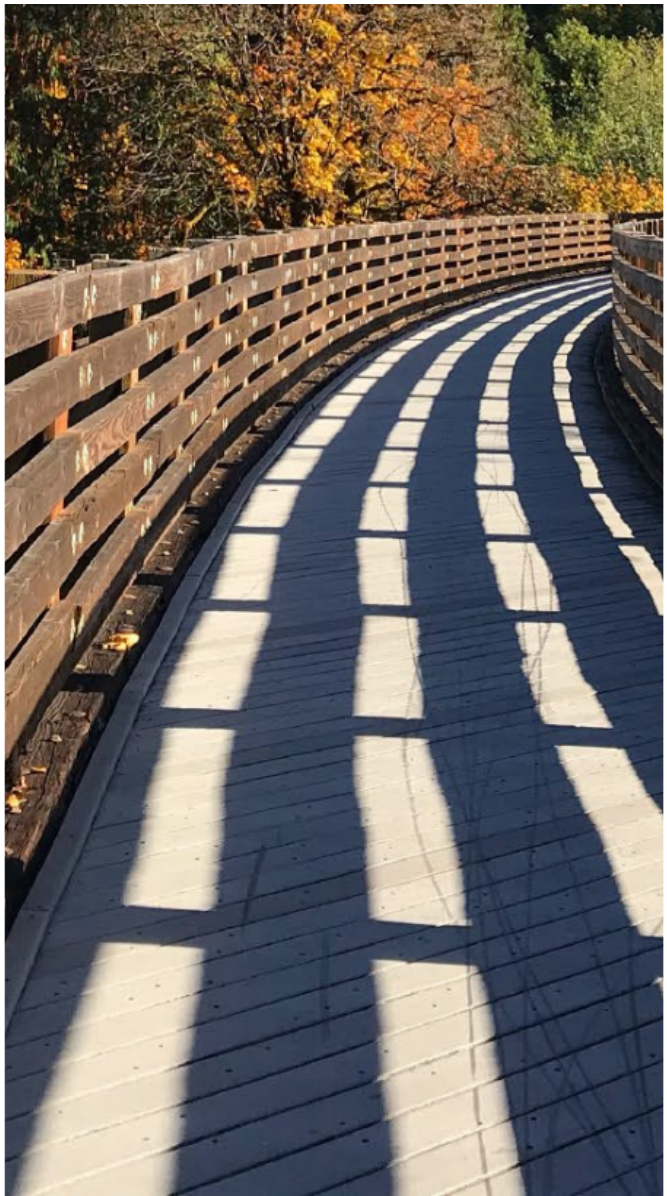
TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

2026

TrailLink Unlimited Guides



Tinley Creek Trail (North)

Illinois

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The northern section of the Tinley Creek Trail is a series of color-coded connected loops and spurs that weave through several forest preserves in Cook County. The 24-mile trail system is paved, making it a paradise for all types of trail users.

After parking near Turtlehead Lake at the northern end of the red trail loop, get your bearings at the first of a series of trailside maps. Decide whether to take the loop north or south, and enjoy the scenic, rural 9.4-mile trip around a series of small lakes and through beautiful prairie grassland. Along the way you will see many different species of birds, including sparrows and orioles, flying back and forth across the trail.

At the north end of the trail, you also have the opportunity to connect to the Orland Park Bikeway at 139th Street, which heads west and southwest to downtown Orland Park, as well as the Palos Heights Bike Trail at 131st Street, which heads north to the Lake Katherine Nature Preserve and the Cal-Sag Trail.

Not quite ready to return back to your car? At mile marker 0, take a left onto the green trail, which cuts along Oak Park Avenue to the 3-mile purple loop, which will take you through Yankee Woods and the George W. Dunne National Golf Course. Use this opportunity to stop at the excellent trailside picnic facilities in Yankee Woods. A short yellow spur leads to Bremen Grove, which is also a great spot to have a snack and take in a bit more of the forest preserve.

The trail continues along the 3-mile blue leg of the network through St. Mihiel Woods and around the Midlothian Reservoir. Feed the local geese or hop off the trail and cast a line in the reservoir, where fishing is allowed. After passing the reservoir on your left, use the crosswalk to traverse Cicero Avenue at 167th Street. Follow the trail along Cicero Avenue for about a mile. You may feel like you're traveling on a wide sidewalk, but you will soon reenter the forest preserve at Midlothian Meadows. There's another scenic 3-mile loop through the meadow, as well as two options for parking at the eastern end of the park.

A few miles south, there's another segment of the Tinley Creek Trail system that's disconnected from the rest. The 3.6-mile loop trail lies within the South Green Belt Forest Preserve, traversing wooded areas and open green space interspersed with wetlands.

Tinley Creek Trail (North)

Illinois

States: Illinois

Counties: Cook

Length: 24miles

Trail end points: Turtlehead Lake, 0.3 mile southwest of IL 43 and 135th St. (Orland Township) to Midlothian Meadows near W. 155th St. and Crawford Ave. (Midlothian)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

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

Parking & Trail Access

To reach Turtlehead Lake: From I-294, take the exit for 127th St. and Cicero Ave. near mile marker 12. From I-294 S, head south on Cicero Ave. From I-294 N, turn left onto W. 127th St. and take the very next left onto S. Cicero Ave. After 1.5 miles on Cicero, turn right onto 135th St. and follow it 3 miles. Turn left onto IL 43 S., and in 0.2 mile take a right at the Turtlehead Lake sign. Parking will be visible immediately once you enter the park.

To reach Midlothian Meadows: From I-57, take Exit 348 for US 6 W/W. 159th St. Head 0.2 mile west on W. 159th St., and turn right onto Crawford Ave./Pulaski Road. Take the very next left at W. 155th St. into Midlothian Meadows. Parking is ahead in 0.5 mile.

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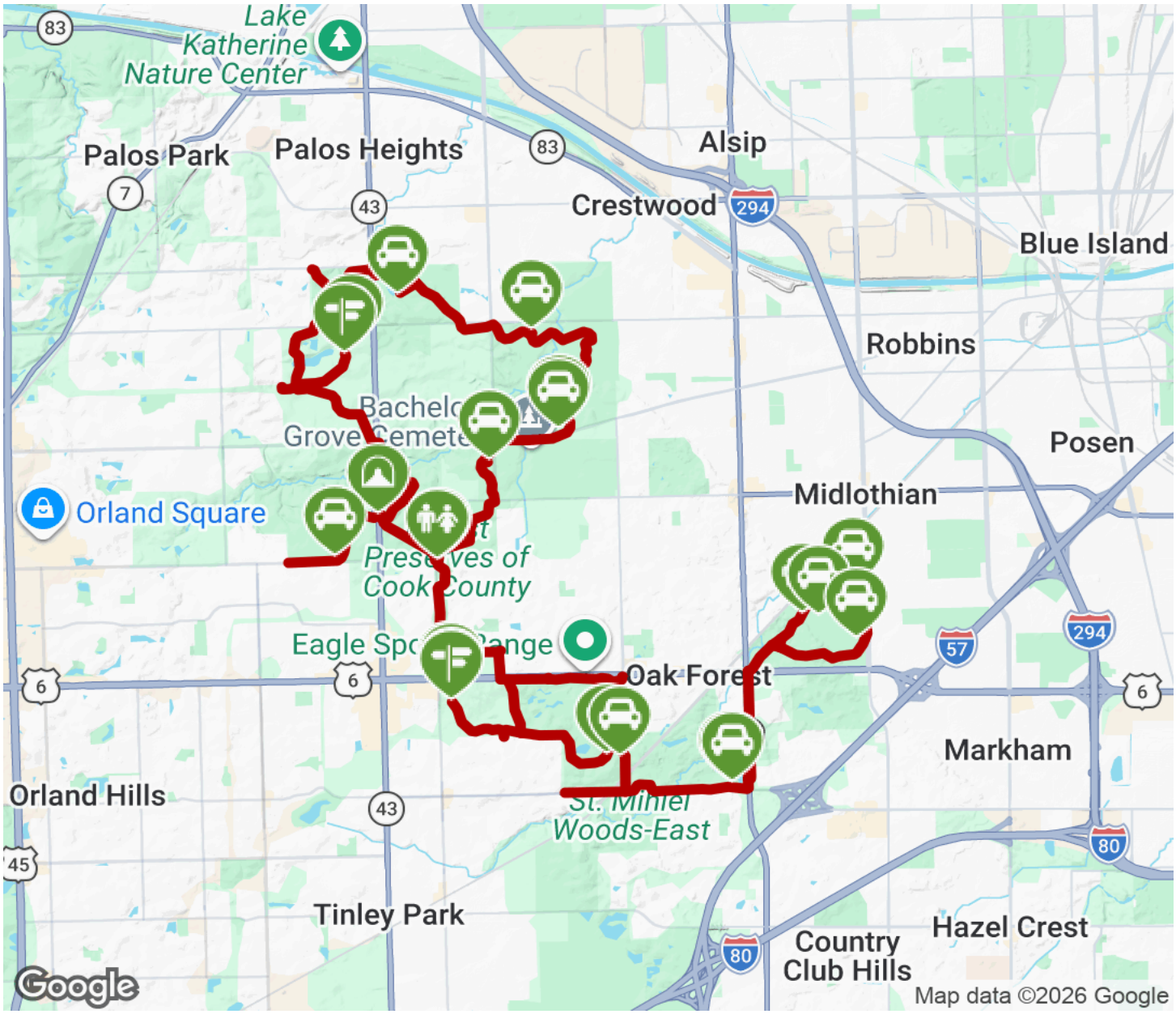

Trailhead Restroom Parking Water Fountain Tunnel

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