



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



West Creek Recreational Trail

Pennsylvania



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The West Creek Recreational Trail connects St. Marys and Emporium in a forested area of northern Pennsylvania known as elk country. The 19.5-mile trail follows the route of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad that began serving the area in the 1860s. It was later acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad and then became one of the many short-line railroads: the Allegheny and Eastern Railroad, owned by Genesee & Wyoming. In 2008 that company hammered out an agreement to deed the corridor to the West Creek Recreational Trail Association. Work on the trail proceeded in stages over the years until it was completed in 2017.

The crushed-stone trail loses about 600 feet from St. Marys to Emporium. Emporium's motto is Land of the Endless Mountains, but the trail only takes the one long

grade along West Creek. Round-trip bicyclists like to start in Emporium to enjoy the long downhill on the return trip. In the wintertime, snowmobilers flock to the trail, groomed by the St. Marys Snowmobile Association.

In the west, the trail starts approximately 0.6 miles east of the West Creek Wetland Learning Center. Future plans call for the trail to be extended westward to the Wetland Center and beyond into the town of St. Marys. Currently, this section of the trail is undeveloped where its surface is comprised of the original railroad ballast.

Elk and Cameron Counties are populated with elk, reintroduced in the early 20th century after native herds were hunted to oblivion by the 1870s. You might see them on your travels, although the prime viewing areas are the hills and valleys south of the trail. During the summer, the best viewing times are early morning and evening as the elk spend the days in the shade.

Following the meandering West Creek, you'll pick up the northern boundary of State Game Land No. 293 in 3 miles. Deer, turkeys, bears, beavers, bobcats, and coyotes inhabit the area. You'll leave the vicinity of the state game area about 4 miles down the trail as you cross West Creek Road.

In another 2.5 miles, you'll come to SR 120, which accompanies the trail for about 7 miles into Emporium. Use caution at occasional cross streets and driveways along this section. In 4.8 miles, you'll pass a valley on the right called Hercules Hollow, named for one of the seven dynamite factories based in the Emporium area that operated from the late 1800s to the 1950s.

As the trail approaches Emporium, you'll see more reminders of the manufacturing that once flourished here as you pass the old Sylvania plant, where incandescent light bulbs and radio tubes were once manufactured. The town, which serves as the county seat, is surrounded by hills. Trailside signs



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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Cameron, Elk

Length: 19.5 miles

Trail end points: W. Creek Road and Wilson Road (St. Marys) to E. 2nd St., just south of SR 120/E. Allegheny Ave. (Emporium)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Wheelchair Accessible, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

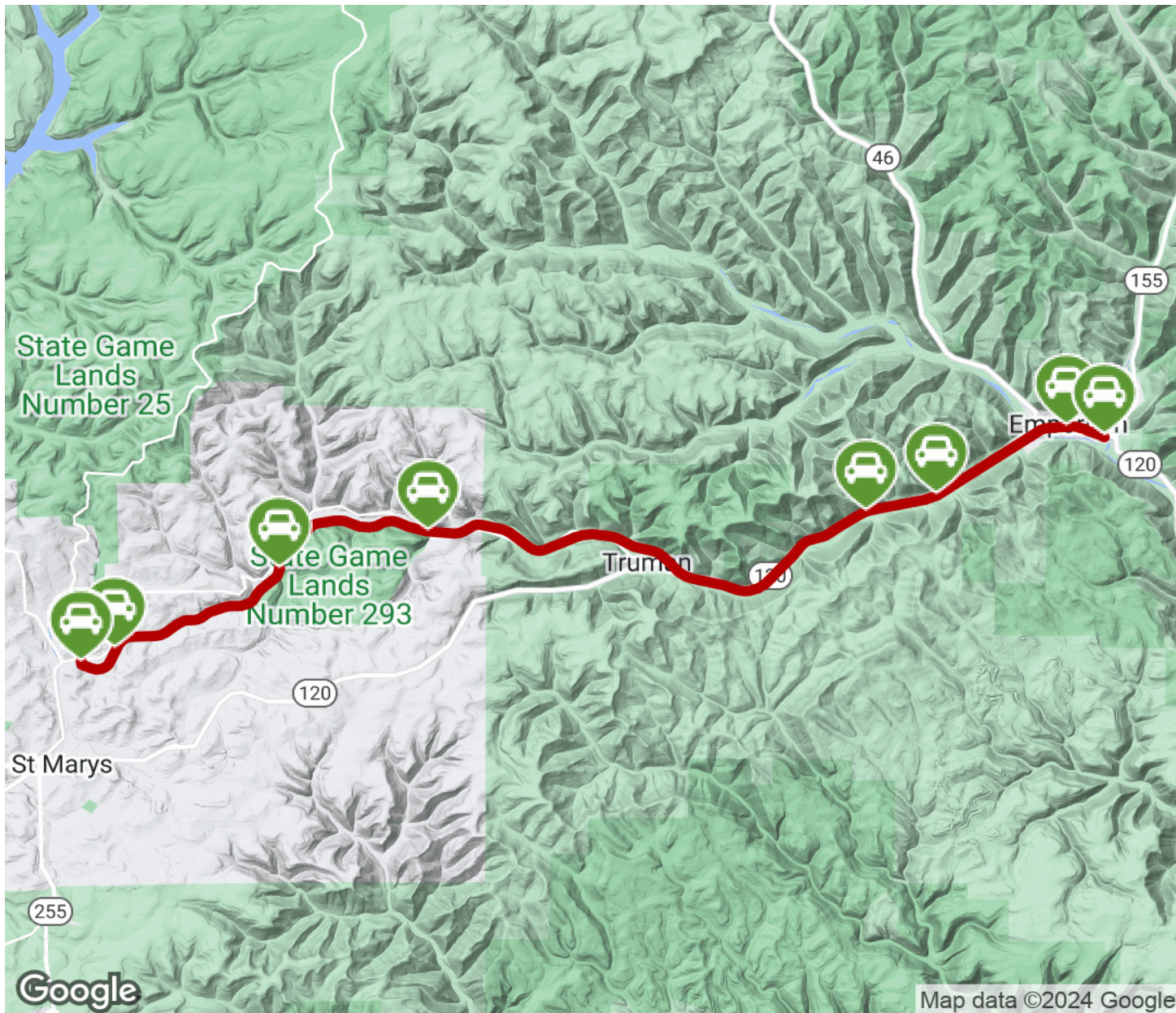
To reach the endpoint in St. Marys from I-80, take Exit 97, and head north on US 219. Go 10.4 miles, and turn right onto US 219/Main St. Go 6.5 miles, and turn right onto Toby Road/SR 2003. Go 6.7 miles, and continue straight onto SR 2007. Go 0.8 mile, and turn left onto Irishtown Road/SR 2007. Go 1.2 miles, and stay straight on Old Kersey Road/SR 2007. Go 1.9 miles, and turn left onto SR 255/S. St. Marys Road/Million Dollar Hwy. Go 2.8 miles, and bear right onto SR 120/Railroad St. Go 200 feet, and bear left onto Lafayette St. Go 370 feet, and turn right onto Washington St. Go 1.9 miles, and go straight onto W. Creek Road. Go 0.3 mile, and turn right onto the access road for the West Creek Wetland Learning Center trailhead parking lot. Another trailhead is located 0.6 mile farther east on W. Creek Road.

To reach the endpoint in Emporium from I-80, take Exit 178, and head north on US 220. Go 7.1 miles. Take Exit 111, and turn left onto Paul Mack Blvd. Go 0.7 mile, and stay straight onto SR 120/N. Jay St. Go 0.2 mile, turn left onto SR 120/E. Water St., and go 1.1 miles. Bear right onto SR 120/Susquehanna Ave., and go 71.4 miles. Turn left to stay on SR 120 W/E. Allegheny Ave. Go 0.1 mile, turn left onto E. Second St. at the caboose, and look for parking on the right.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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