



2026

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



# Mendota Trail

*Virginia*



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The Mendota Trail stretches the entire length of the former Southern Railroad corridor between Bristol and Mendota. This 12.5-mile rail-trail became fully connected in September 2023.

## About the Route

Trail access is available at the Bristol Trailhead (3460 Island Rd), in the community of Benhams (7720 Rich Valley Rd, Bristol), and at the Mendota Trailhead (across from 2421 Mendota Rd). Mile markers run south to north from Bristol (0.0) to Mendota (12.5) in half mile increments.

Starting from the Bristol Trailhead, the first 0.4-mile asphalt section is fully ADA accessible with an

accompanying ramp leading to the trail. The remainder of the route is composed of primarily crushed stone. Mountain bikes are recommended. Cyclists, walkers, and runners can use the trail to meander through a tranquil countryside of farmlands, fields, and forests.

The route includes multiple creek crossings and seventeen restored trestle bridges. At mile marker 11.5, the trail crosses the North Fork of the Holston River via the restored Sunny Side Trestle, which is paralleled by a 275-foot-long swinging bridge.

Amenities include a covered pavilion with picnic tables and a seasonal restroom in Bristol. Port-a-potties are available year round in Benhams and Mendota, and during the off-season in Bristol. Additional picnic tables are available creekside in "the gorge," an especially scenic segment of the trail between mile marker 7.0 and just north of mile marker 9.5.

As a rail-trail, the majority of the route is flat with a maximum of a 3% grade. The two exceptions are at mile markers 1.0 and at 10.7 (just north of mile marker 10.5), which have short grades approaching 8%. These short, steep sections were necessitated by the prior removal of two trestles in the 1990s for the purpose of highway improvements.

The trail is owned and maintained by Washington County, Virginia as a county park. Be advised that cell service is absent or very limited over much of the trail due to its remoteness. Dogs are welcome, though they must remain leashed. Equestrian usage is not permitted.



# Mendota Trail

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**States:** Virginia

**Counties:** Washington

Length: 12.5miles

**Trail end points:** Across from 2421 Mendota Rd (Mendota) to 3460 Island Rd (Bristol)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt, Boardwalk, Cinder, Crushed Stone, Dirt, Grass, Gravel

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Mountain

Biking, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible

## Parking & Trail Access

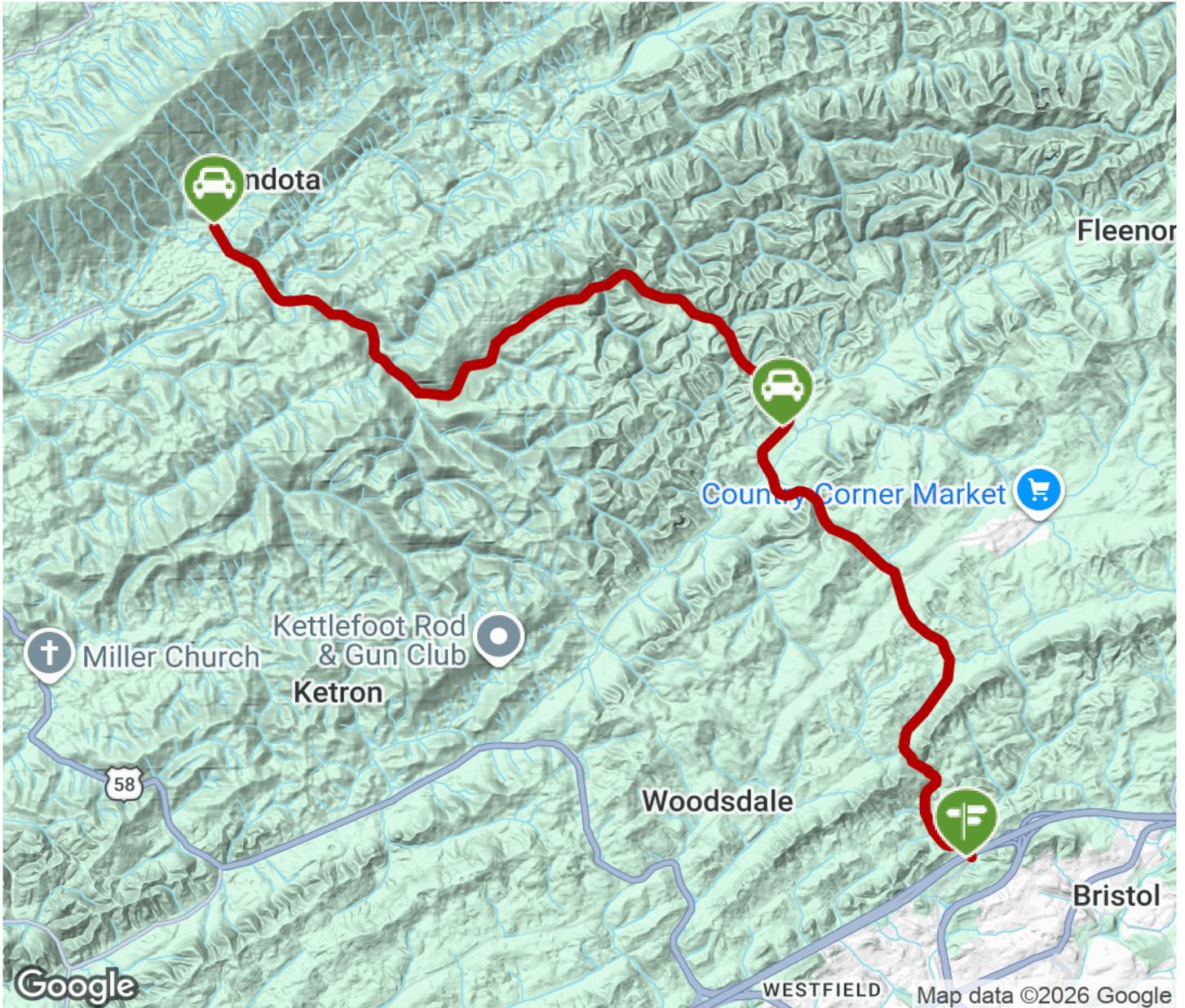
For those driving, parking is available at the southern trailhead (3460 Island Rd, Bristol), midway along the route (7720 Rich Valley Rd, Bristol), and at the northern trailhead (across from 2421 Mendota Rd, Mendota).

Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for step-by-step directions.



# Mendota Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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

**TrailLink.com**