



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Sweetser Switch Trail

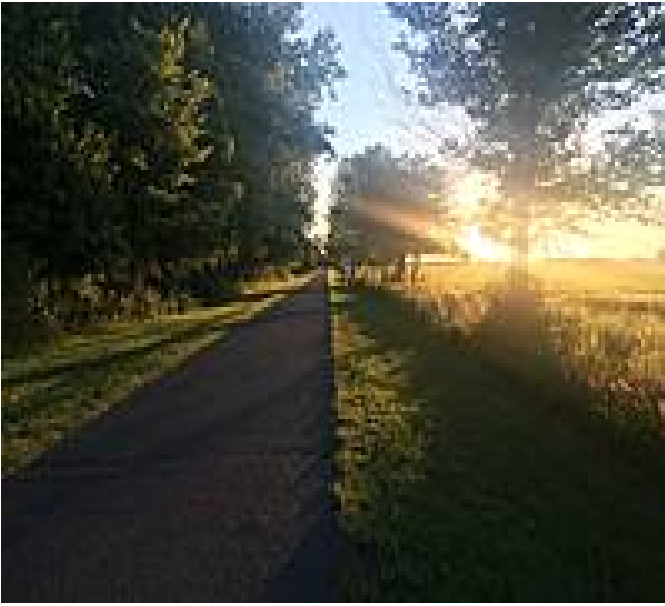
Indiana



Sweetser Switch Trail

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The Sweetser Switch Trail is a “sweet” paved rail-trail and an important regional connector in spite of its short 4-mile length. The trail joins the 2-mile [Converse Junction Trail](#) in the west and a segment of the [Cardinal Greenway](#) in the east, making it a key piece of north-central Indiana’s trail system.

The path runs from the community of Mier in the west to the east end of the small town of Sweetser. It follows the original corridor of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad branch line built through here between Columbus, Ohio, and Chicago in the 1860s. Conrail took over the corridor in 1976 before service ended in the 1980s.

Local lore says Sweetser’s unusual name is derived from

the installation of a 0.5-mile railroad switch in 1869 that spawned the community, which the railroaders first called Switch, then Switzer, and then Sweetser. At one time, the town’s depot served eight passenger trains daily between two different railroads.

The history of the trail itself is a little uncommon. When residents explored the possibility of turning the right-of-way into a trail, they first had to create a park board because the small town didn’t have a parks and recreation department. Then the residents chipped in with donations and volunteer labor to complete the path’s first mile. Maybe that’s why the trail is so beloved locally.

The route expanded to 3 paved miles in 2003, and by 2011 the Cardinal Greenway met it on the east side. In 2016, the Sweetser Switch Trail extended another mile to the community of Mier, this time using federal and state grants in addition to private donations.

Beginning at the Converse Junction Trail terminus in the west, the path parallels the short-line Central Railroad of Indianapolis, primarily a grain hauler. You’ll cross a covered bridge in a mile, then continue down a path bordered by trees, with wildflowers in the clearings, until you reach Sweetser.

Two restored railcars and a caboose, outfitted with restrooms and water, sit at the Main Street trailhead, making this a worthwhile stop. Food is available in town. You’ll also find a 5-foot statue of Garfield the comic strip cat in Sweetser; it’s one of almost a dozen such statues scattered around Grant County to acknowledge the cartoon’s creator and area native Jim Davis.

Heading east for the final mile, you’ll pass more railroad artifacts and notice more clearings along the route. The Sweetser Switch Trail ends at a trailhead shortly after another covered bridge. Cross the railroad tracks here to pick up the Cardinal Greenway heading east toward Marion.



Sweetser Switch Trail

Indiana

States: Indiana

Counties: Grant

Length: 4miles

Trail end points: County Road 800W, just south of W. Mier 27 (Mier) to County Road 400W, 0.2 mile south of IN 18 (Sweetser)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike,Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

To access the eastern trailhead in Sweetser: From I-69, take Exit 264 to IN 18 toward Marion. Head west 10.7 miles and turn left onto County Road 400 W. Go 0.2 mile and find the trailhead on the right.

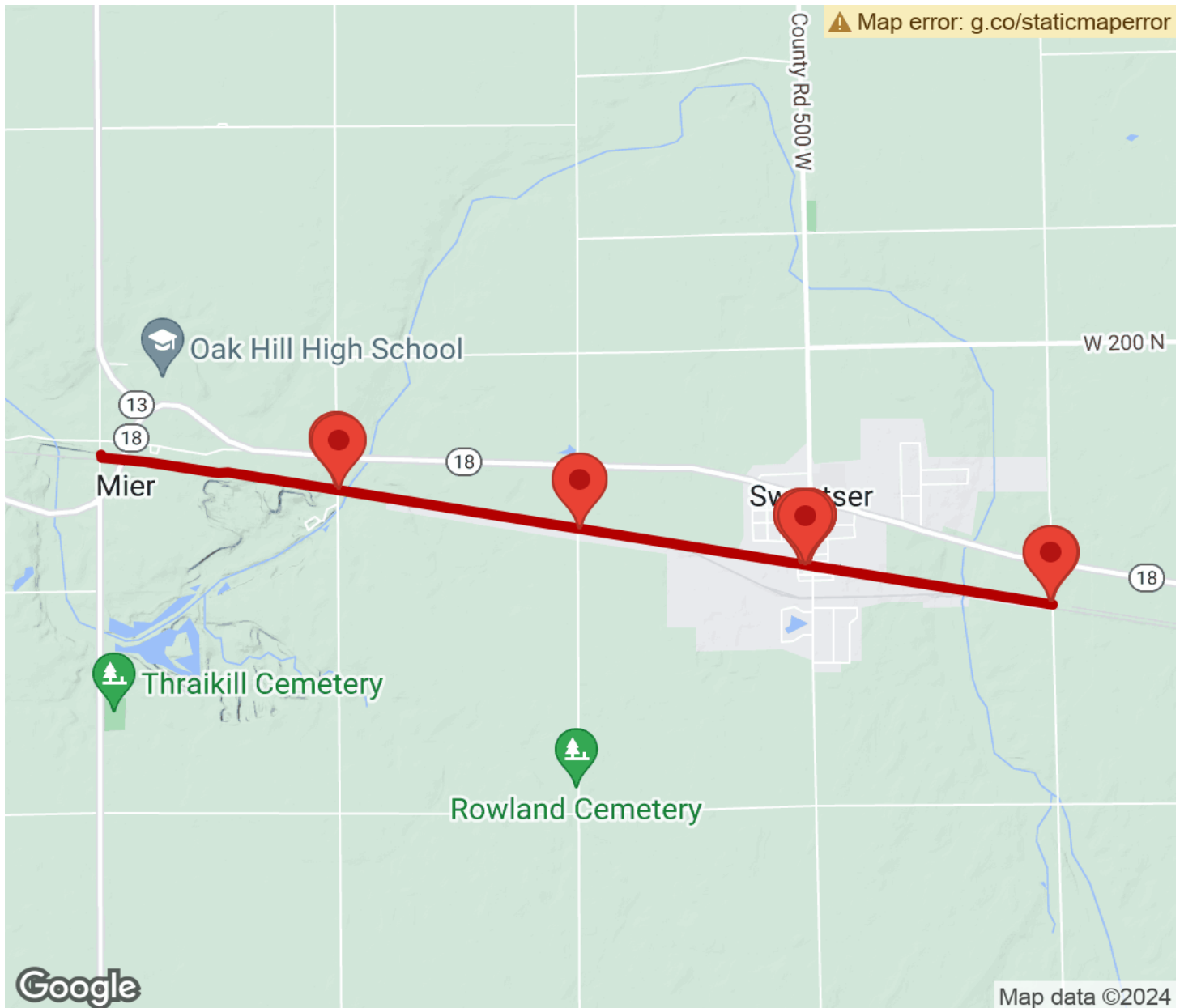
To access the main trailhead in Sweetser: From I-69, take Exit 264 to IN 18 toward Marion. Head west 11.7 miles and turn left onto Main St. Go 0.4 mile to the trailhead on Main St.

To access the western trailhead: From I-69, take Exit 264 to IN 18 toward Marion. Head west 13.7 miles and turn left onto CR 700 W. Go 0.1 mile and find the trailhead on the left. Take the trail 1 mile west to the endpoint.



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Indiana



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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