



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



# Musketawa Trail

*Michigan*



## Musketawa Trail

Michigan

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The Musketawa Trail is one of the best places to get away from it all if you live and work in the western Michigan population centers of Muskegon or Grand Rapids. The 25-mile paved rail-trail rolls between the outskirts of both cities through the peaceful agricultural countryside.

The trail got its start as the Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad in 1886. Muskegon and Grand Rapids were in the midst of a lumber production boom, and Grand Rapids was gaining a reputation as a furniture-making center. A series of business deals over the years resulted in several railroads—the Pennsylvania, the Penn Central, and the Grand Trunk Western—using the tracks. The last owner, Central Michigan Railroad, discontinued service in 1989 and pulled the tracks the following year.

The Musketawa Trail earned its name in a contest; the winning entry combined the two counties through which it passes: Muskegon and Ottawa. By 1997, the town of Ravenna had paved the first mile, and by 2000 the entire trail was paved.

Now trail advocates are looking for connections to other parts of western Michigan's trail network. The trail already connects to the [Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail](#) in the east, which brings it closer to Grand Rapids and the 90-mile [Fred Meijer White Pine Trail](#). In the west in Muskegon, bike lanes bridge the gap between the Musketawa Trail and the [Muskegon Lakeshore Trail](#).

Starting about 10 miles from downtown Grand Rapids in Marne, you'll leave from a 40-car parking area. The village of Marne sits about a mile south of the trailhead. If you stop there for coffee, you might notice that the fairgrounds and some buildings carry the former name, Berlin. The residents changed the name during World War I to Marne to commemorate an Allied victory.

The trail sets off in a northwest direction through cropland and pastures, a common scene for the next 25 miles. Trailside growth gives partial shade in the east, while overhead utility lines in the corridor closer to Muskegon create a less sheltered border.

In about 7 miles you'll reach the old whistlestop of Conklin, which has a small market. In another 5 miles you'll cross Crockery Creek on a 216-foot trestle—the longest of 13 trestles on the trail—and enter Ravenna. The trailhead features an old Grand Trunk Western caboose sitting next to a restored 100-year-old railroad water tower. The business district for the town, settled in the 1840s, has markets, cafés, and pubs located less than a half mile to the right on Crockery Creek Road.

The next 12.6 miles are a straight shot, except for a slight



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Muskegon, Ottawa

Length: 25 miles

**Trail end points:** 8th Ave, Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail between E Garfield St & Arthur St (Marne) to Black Creek Rd, between E Sherman Blvd & Olthoff Dr (Muskegon)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback

## Parking & Trail Access

To reach the Marne trailhead from westbound I-96, take Exit 25 to northbound Eighth Ave. Turn right onto Eighth Ave. and then left onto Hayes St., which becomes Eighth Ave. again. Go 1.4 miles, and turn left into the parking lot immediately after crossing the trail.

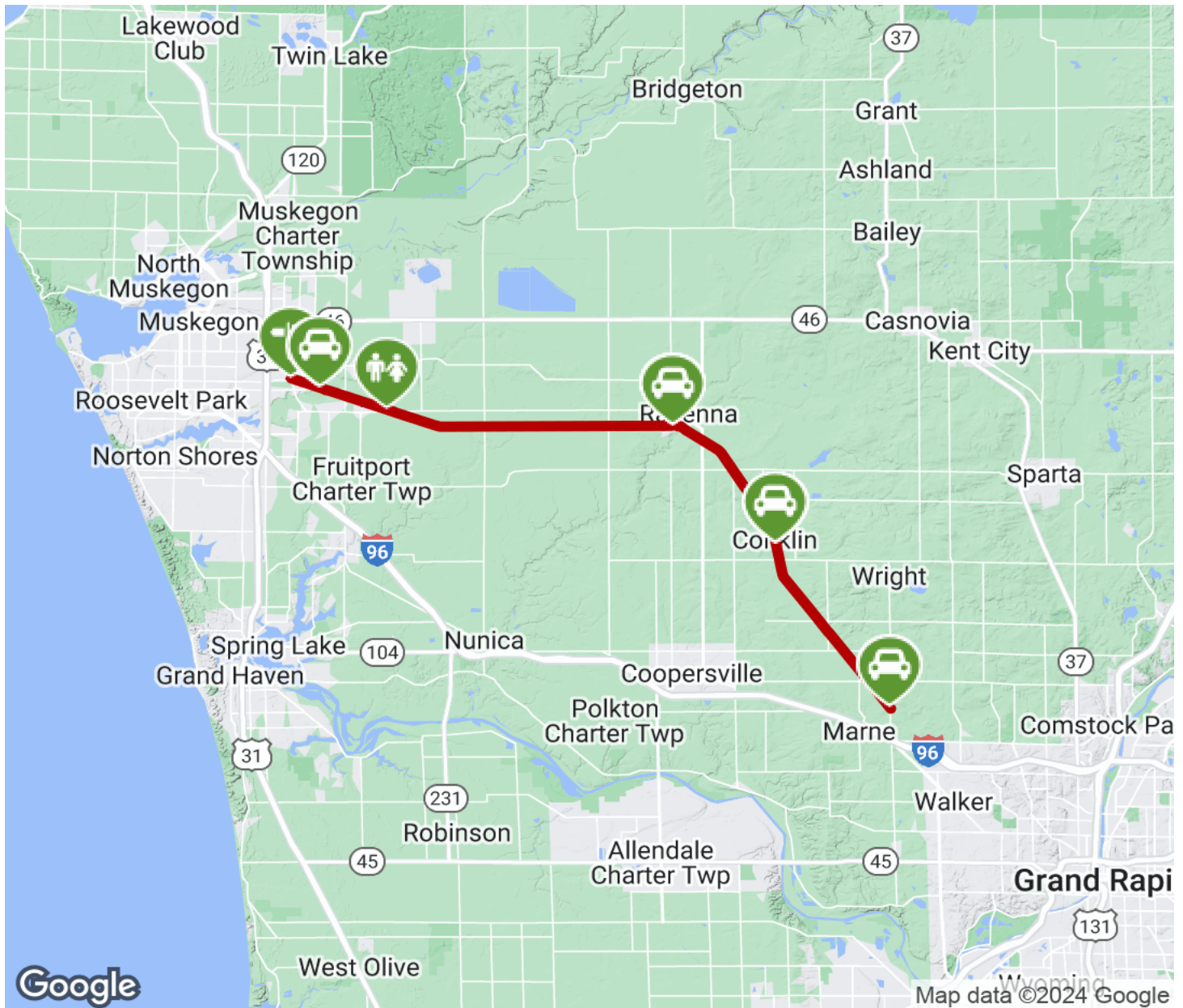
To reach the Marne trailhead from eastbound I-96, take Exit 23 toward Marne. Turn right onto Jackson St. and then right onto 16th Ave. Go 0.7 mile, and turn right onto Garfield St. Go 1 mile, and turn left onto Eighth Ave. Go 0.1 mile, and turn left into the parking lot immediately after you cross the trail.

To reach parking for the trailhead in Muskegon from I-96, take Exit 1B onto northbound US 31. Go 2.3 miles, and take Exit 112 to E. Sherman Blvd., heading right (east). Go 1 mile—Sherman bears right at the intersection and becomes Black Creek Road—and turn left onto E. Broadway Ave. Go 0.9 mile and look for parking on the left. The western trail endpoint is 1 mile west of the parking lot.



# Musketawa Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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