



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Paint Creek  
Trail (MI)**  
*Michigan*



## Paint Creek Trail (MI)

Michigan

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Even though the Paint Creek Trail is Michigan's oldest nonmotorized rail-trail, the occasional face-lifts and renovations keep it looking as young as ever. Established in 1983, the crushed-limestone trail runs for 8.9 miles between Rochester and Lake Orion through a mostly wooded corridor alongside Paint Creek. It is also part of the developing 2,000-plus-mile Iron Belle Trail, comprising separate routes for hiking and biking from Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula.

The trail's many charms include a variety of wildlife, historical sites, rest stops, and a trout-filled creek that the route crosses 12 times. Maps and announcements are posted at the trailheads, where you can also pick up folding maps. Mileage markers, left over from the days when this path was a railway, announce the distance to

Detroit. Free bike fix-it stations are installed at the Rochester, Tienken Road, and Goodison trailheads.

The trail follows a former segment of the Detroit and Bay City Railroad that launched service in 1872. The Michigan Central and the New York Central Railroads became subsequent operators, running trains between Detroit and Mackinaw City, and the Penn Central took over in 1968. Emerging from bankruptcy, the railroad in 1983 sold the rail bed to a commission comprised of trail advocates and local communities. The commission surfaced the 8-foot-wide trail with crushed limestone, rather than asphalt, in the early 1990s to maintain a rural experience.

Beginning at Lake Orion, you'll follow a barely perceptible downhill slope to Rochester. Lake Orion originally grew up around a sawmill built in 1825 but later became a resort destination. Two miles south, a historical marker notes the site of the water-powered Carpenter Rudd Mill that stood here until 1926. This is also where you can connect to the Bald Mountain State Recreation Area for fishing, swimming, and mountain biking.

For the next couple of miles, Paint Creek meanders alongside and crosses the trail, presenting many opportunities for fishing. If you want to try your hand with a bow and arrow, there's an archery range at mile 2.5. Use caution to cross at busy Adams Road in 0.5 mile.

You'll pass some open prairie and woods before you reach the Gallagher Road trailhead at mile 5. A short side trip leads to good eats in Goodison—home of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission—at the Paint Creek Cider Mill and Goodison Cider Mill. Just before arriving at the Silver Bell Road trailhead in 0.6 mile, you'll pass the Paint Creek Heritage Area—Wet Prairie on the right, where land managers perform spot burning to remove invasive plants and restore a prairie.

As you enter the suburban sprawl of Rochester Hills



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Oakland

Length: 8.9miles

**Trail end points:** Atwater St & Atwater  
Commons Dr (Lake Orion) to Rochester River  
Walk just north of Pine St & Civic Center Dr  
(Rochester)

**Trail surfaces:** Crushed Stone

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike,Fishing,Wheelchair  
Accessible,Horseback Riding,Mountain

## Parking & Trail Access

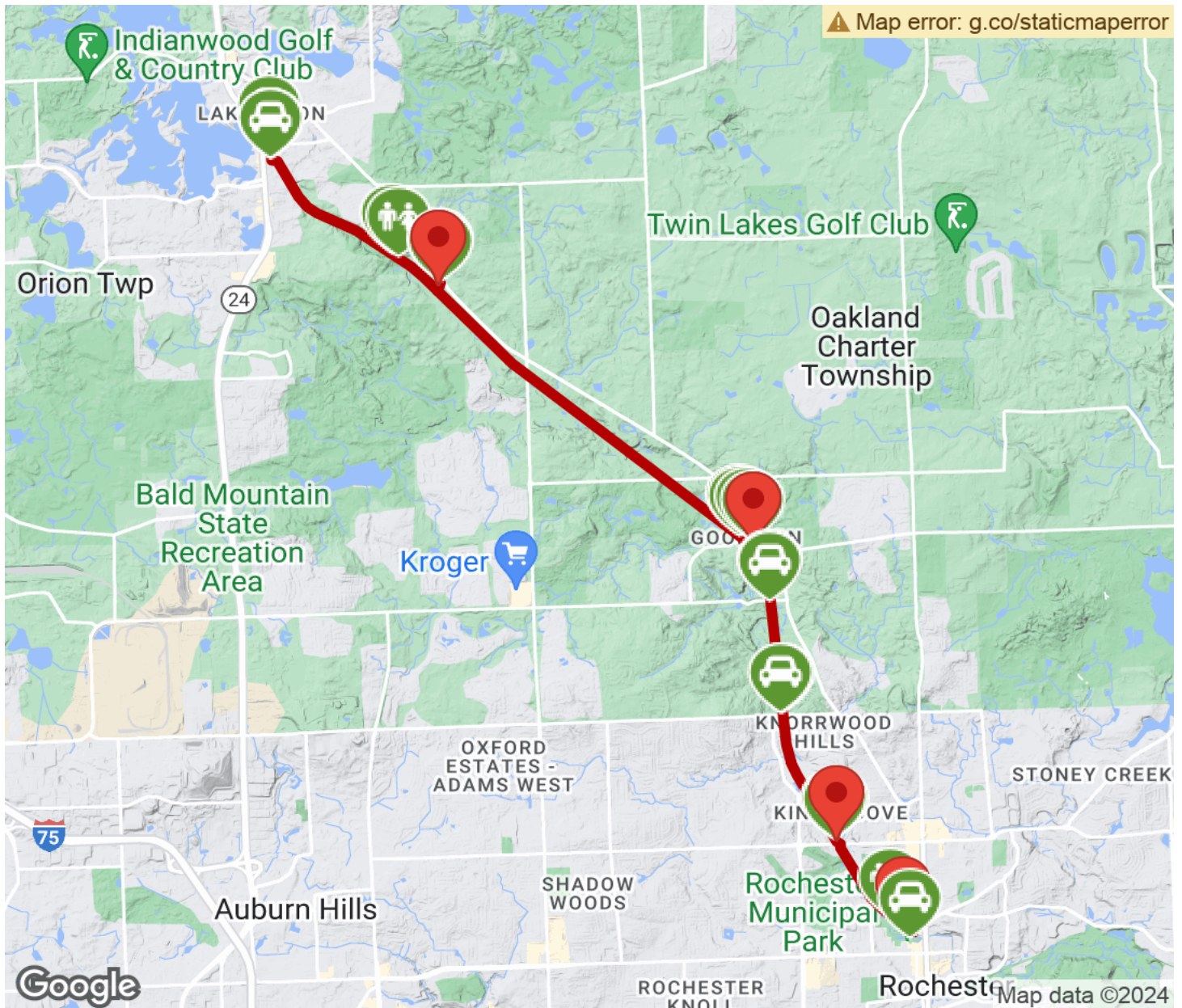
Parking is available at a number of locations along the trail.  
Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.





# Paint Creek Trail (MI)

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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

**TrailLink.com**