



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



## Otter Creek Trail

*West Virginia*



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The Monongahela National Forest's Otter Creek Wilderness has many trails, mostly for hiking through the scenic landscape of rhododendron, timber and mosses. Biking is prohibited on the trails, but horses are allowed in some areas.

The Otter Creek Trail, the most popular, follows an abandoned logging railroad grade along Otter Creek between Condon Run and the Dry Fork River. The trail is the spine of the system, offering direct connections to seven other hiking trails in the Otter Creek Wilderness.

The rugged trail offers spectacular views and a moderate to challenging hike. You will find yourself following large rock outcrops and peering through trees at roaring waterfalls. There are a number of stream crossings along

its path and, depending on the season, some are quite significant, with fast, rushing water. With the exception of a very long, suspended footbridge over the Dry Fork tributary of the Cheat River toward the end of the trail, there are no bridges to aid your stream crossings.

Like all of the trails in the Otter Creek Wilderness, attention has been given to keeping this trail very primitive. There are no signs or blazes. However, confusing sections are marked with stone cairns. This rail-trail is not for the faint of heart, but it is worth the hike if you are up for a challenge.

Horseback riders are urged not to use the segment of the Otter Creek Trail between the [Moore Run Trail](#) and [Green Mountain Trail](#); the trail is narrow through here and the drop-off steep. Equestrian users should instead take the [Possession Camp Trail](#) to bridge the gap.

The Monongahela National Forest's Otter Creek Wilderness covers 20,000 acres in a bowl formed by Shavers and McGowan Mountains east of Elkins and south of Parsons. Because it is wilderness, bicycles are prohibited.

There are 45 miles of trails in the Otter Creek Wilderness, and the Otter Creek Trail connects with seven of them. These trails have intentionally been kept very primitive, so there are no signs or blazes, although potentially confusing sections are marked with stone cairns. Trail maintenance is kept to a minimum, so fallen trees remain where they land and water drains onto the trails, which can be muddy and overgrown. All stream crossings are by foot, except for the suspension bridge over Dry Fork at the northern trailhead. The trail is not recommended for wheelchair use.

The whole area was clear-cut from 1897 to 1914 by the Otter Creek Boom and Lumber Co. The Otter Creek Trail follows a railroad corridor used to haul that timber to sawmills. The rails were later removed, but you'll likely see sections of railroad ties buried in the dirt. The forest has been healing



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**States:** West Virginia

**Counties:** Randolph, Tucker

Length: 11.8 miles

**Trail end points:** Condon Run Trailhead on Forest Road 303 (Condon) to Dry Fork Trailhead on Dry Fork Road/WV 72 (Parsons)

**Trail surfaces:** Dirt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Horseback Riding, Walking

## Parking & Trail Access

Bowden parking is available by the Condon Run Trailhead at end of FR 303, 0.6 mile north of Stuart Memorial Dr./Forest Road 91.

Parsons parking is available by the Dry Fork Trailhead on Dry Fork Road/WV 72, 4.5 miles south of US 48.

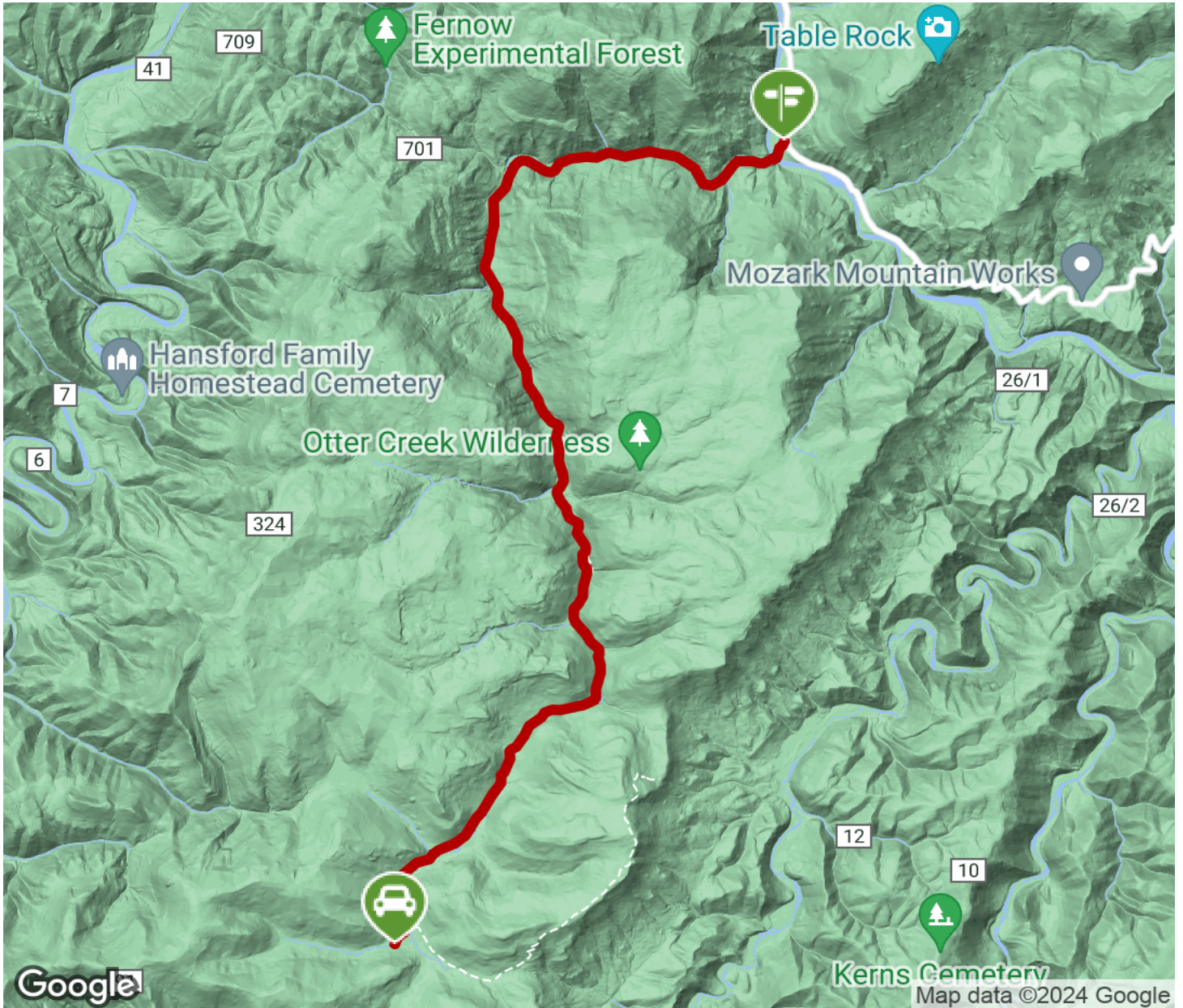
The Otter Creek Wilderness is located in the Cheat-Potomac Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest in Tucker and Randolph counties. The gate on McGowan Mountain Road/Forest Road 324 at the boundary with the Fernow Experimental Forest is closed between April 15 and August 15.

To reach the Condon Run Trailhead, take Stuart Memorial Drive/FR 91 1.4 miles north of US 33/State Route 55; go right at the fork (FR 303). Trailhead parking is 0.6 mile away. The Dry Fork Trailhead is off Dry Fork Road/SR 72 southeast of Parsons.



# Otter Creek Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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