



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**West Penn
Trail**
Pennsylvania



West Penn Trail

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The West Penn Trail is named for a branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad that paralleled the Western Division Canal of the cross-state Main Line of Public Works from Lockport to Freeport and then to Pittsburgh. Canal barges negotiated locks, aqueducts, and tunnels in this division to carry cargo between Pittsburgh and Johnstown. The Pennsylvania Railroad used the corridor until 1950, when a portion of tracks near Bow Ridge was moved to a less flood-prone route during the construction of the Conemaugh Dam.

Today, the trail, which is open dawn–dusk, extends from north of Saltsburg to just west of Blairsville, with plans to expand north to Avonmore and east to the [Hoodlebug Trail](#). The trail is part of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition’s developing 1,500-mile trail network through

Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and New York. Along the way, you’ll see remnants of the historic Main Line Canal that was replaced by railroads in the late 19th century, as well as rare rail-trail features, including switchbacks and a flight of stairs. Other than the middle sections, which are best suited to mountain or hybrid bikes with thicker tires, most of the rail-trail is accessible by wheelchair. Equestrian use is allowed west of Auen Road in Conemaugh Township.

Begin your journey at the northernmost endpoint by the Kiskiminetas River. Head south to cross Blacklegs Creek, and continue 1 mile to North Park on Salt Street, where parking can be found. Traverse historic Saltsburg along the canal path to a trailhead on the east end of town. For an alternate route along the Conemaugh River, turn right off the trail onto Point Street, take a left onto Water Street, and head 0.4 mile to the trailhead. At Canal and Water Streets, this trailhead also serves as the northernmost endpoint of the 17.8-mile [Westmoreland Heritage Trail](#). You’ll then follow the river through wooded areas and beside an active rail line for the next few bends in the pathway.

About halfway through the route, the terrain becomes hilly, making for a challenging workout. Elders Run marks the start of the 2.2-mile Dick Mayer Section stretching to the Conemaugh Dam. Expect challenging uphill grades as you make your way up and across railroad tracks and through the forest, as well as a quick downhill stretch approaching State Route 3003/Tunnelton Road, less than a mile from Elders Run. Follow the steep zigzagging trail to the Conemaugh Lake National Recreation Area at 7.7 miles. To your left, the Conemaugh Dam offers beautiful views of the river. As portions of trail can be submerged east of the dam, especially in the spring, be sure to check the trail website for the latest conditions. Continue through the park past a visitor center, playground, parking lot, picnic area, water fountain, and restrooms.

The trail then diverges from the rail corridor onto a low-traffic



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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Indiana, Westmoreland

Length: 15 miles

Trail end points: Urban Road, 0.5 mile north of Nowrytown Road, near Kiskiminetas River (Saltsburg) to Newport Road near Blacklick Creek, 0.25 mile north of Lakeview Dr. (Blairsville)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Wheelchair

Parking & Trail Access

To reach parking near the western endpoint in Saltsburg from I-76, take Exit 57 for I-376 W/US 22 W toward Pittsburgh. Keep right, following signs for US 22 E/Murrysville. Merge onto US 22 E, and go 1.7 miles. Take the SR 286 E/Golden Mile Hwy. exit, and go 17.4 miles. Veer right to remain on SR 286 E/Waukeena Road, which becomes SR 981 as it approaches the Kiskiminetas River. Go 1.9 miles, and turn left onto SR 286 E/Washington St. to cross the river. Go 0.2 mile, and turn left onto SR 286 E/Salt St. Parking at North Park is on the left, across from the fire department. The endpoint by Blacklegs Creek is located 1.0 mile farther north along the trail.

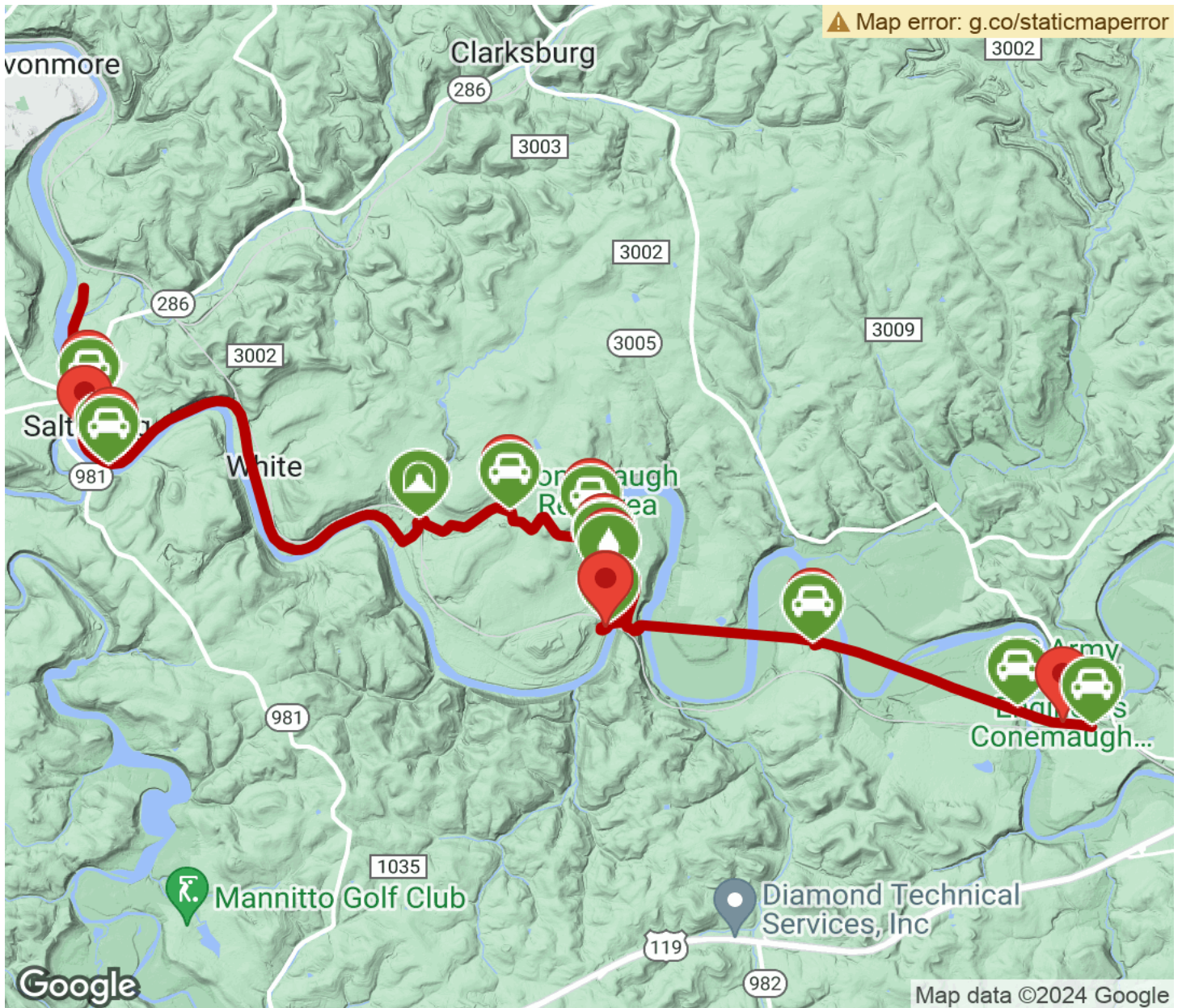
To reach parking at the Conemaugh Lake National Recreation Area from I-76, take Exit 57 for I-376 W/US 22 W toward Pittsburgh. Keep right, following signs for US 22 E/Murrysville. Merge onto US 22 E, and go 18.5 miles. Take a left onto SR 981 N, and follow it 4.7 miles. Turn right onto Tunnelton Road, and go just under 2 miles (the Conemaugh River will be on your left). Turn left to continue on Tunnelton Road/SR 3003, crossing the river. Go 1.0 mile, turn right onto Auen Road, and go 0.75 mile. Turn right onto the access road to the Conemaugh Lake National Recreation Area, and follow the roadway to the parking area.

To reach parking at the eastern endpoint in Blairsville from I-76, take Exit 57 for I-376 W/US 22 W toward Pittsburgh. Keep right, following signs for US 22 E/Murrysville. Merge onto US 22 E, and go 27.4 miles. Take the exit toward SR 217/Blairsville, and turn right onto W. Ranson Ave. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right onto SR 217 N. Go 0.7 mile, and turn left onto Newport Road. After about 0.8 mile, as the roadway begins to bend north, turn left onto a small gravel driveway marked with a West Penn Trail sign. Slowly follow this gravel access road west 0.2 mile to a small parking area and trailhead.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel