



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Potts Valley
Rail Trail**
West Virginia



Potts Valley Rail Trail

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Nestled in a remote mountain valley deep in the Appalachians, the Potts Valley Rail Trail skirts a wilderness area and farmland as it rolls through forests for 4.5 miles in the southern part of the state just east of the Continental Divide.

The trail is partly built upon the former corridor of the Norfolk and Western Railway. Called the Potts Valley Branch, the line opened in 1909 to haul iron ore from local mines and virgin timber cut from the mountainsides. By 1932, those industries had fallen into decline, and rail operations ended, allowing the valley to return to its agricultural pursuits. The trail opened in 2010.

About 3.5 miles of the trail run just outside the border of the Mountain Lake Wilderness in the George

Washington & Jefferson National Forests. Most of the remainder uses a right-of-way through private property. Along the trail, you will find interpretive signs about Potts Valley's history, as well as benches where you can rest and enjoy the forest's solitude and views from overlooks.

The southwest trailhead on Waiteville Road/CR 17 lies a few hundred yards from the Eastern Continental Divide and 0.2 mile from the Virginia state line. Mountain ridges on each side of the valley trail reach elevations of 3,700–4,100 feet, and the trail runs slightly uphill from the South Fork of Potts Creek, a brook trout stream. The trail traverses a forest of mixed pine and hardwood, with rhododendron in the understory.

The trail on the railroad grade slopes gently downhill from the Waiteville Road trailhead. Short side trails lead to culverts carved by stone masons to drain the streams that frequently cross the path of the railbed.

At about 3.5 miles, you'll arrive at the site of the former trestle across Crosier Creek that once soared 98 feet over the creek on a 600-foot-long bridge. This marks the end of the railroad grade. Taking the switchbacks down to the creek, you'll have to cross on stepping-stones near the century-old bridge supports. Expect to get your shoes wet if the creek is high.

You'll follow singletrack through the woods for about another mile to the northwest trailhead on Rays Siding Road, which was formerly the railroad's route downhill on an S curve. A short section crosses private land; be sure to stay on the trail. A bench just before the trailhead overlooks a pastoral view, complete with a red barn in the distance.

From here, mountain bikers often loop back to the southwest trailhead via a 4.2-mile on-road route by taking Rays Siding Road/CR 15/5 to a left onto Waiteville Road/CR 17. A right turn onto Waiteville Road would lead you to the former depot (now a private business), located at the intersection with Bert



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States: West Virginia

Counties: Monroe

Length: 4.5miles

Trail end points: Rays Siding Rd/CR 15/5
(Waiteville) to Waiteville Rd/CR 17 (Waiteville)

Trail surfaces: Dirt,Grass

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Mountain Biking,Walking

Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available off Waiteville Rd/CR 17 (1.5 miles east of N Fork Mountain Rd/VA 613) and off Rays Siding Rd/CR 15/5 (0.7 mile east of Waiteville Rd/CR 17).

From US 219 at Union: follow State Route 3 east for 9 miles to Gap Mills, and turn right onto Zenith Road. After 3.5 miles, turn left onto Limestone Hill (Waiteville) Road. Follow for 5.5 miles across Peter's Mountain. At the bottom of the mountain, turn right onto County Route 17. Follow CR 17 for 1 mile to Waiteville, and then for another 4.5 miles to the SW trailhead, on the left, not far from the Giles County line.

From US 460: about 4 miles east of Pearisburg, VA, turn onto SR 635 (Forest Service Sign for White Rocks Campground). After 5.5 miles, turn left to stay on SR 635. Continue for another 12 miles. At the Monroe County line, SR 635 becomes CR 17. The SW trailhead will be on the right, roughly 0.25 mile in from the border.

From SR 311 at Paint Bank: follow SR 600 (CR 17 at the Monroe County line) for 12 miles to Waiteville. Continue on CR 17 for another 4.5 miles to the SW trailhead.

From Mountain Lake: follow SR 613 north, past the War Spur and Wind Rock trailheads, and the road to White Rocks Campground. At the bottom of the mountain, turn right on SR 635 (CR 17), and follow 1.5 miles to the SW trailhead.

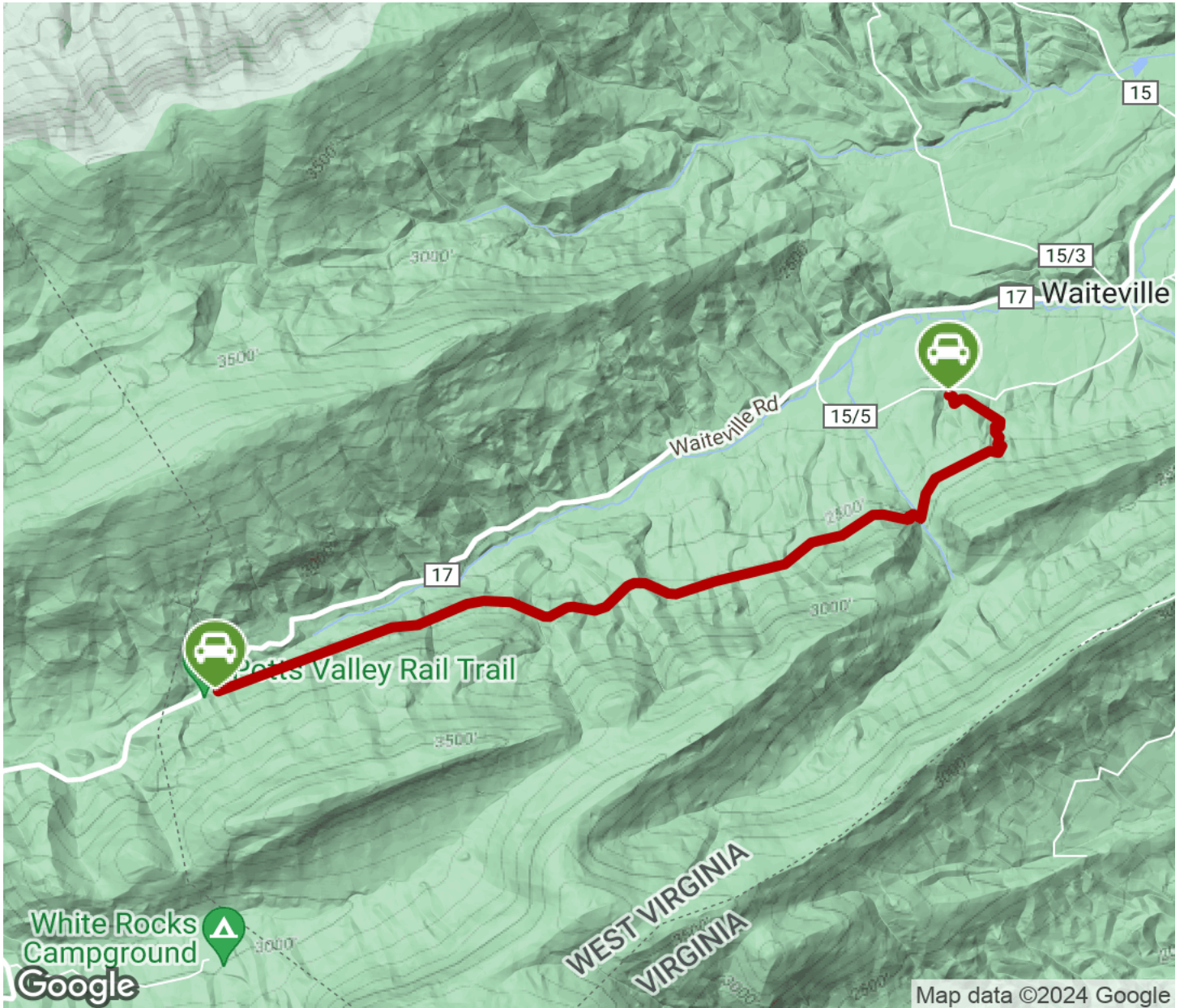
NE trailhead from SW Trailhead: follow CR 17 to the northeast for 3 miles. Turn right on CR 15/5, Ray Siding Rd. Follow for 0.75 mile to the trailhead, on right.

NE trailhead from Waiteville: follow CR 17 to the SW for 1.5 miles. Turn left on CR 15/5, Ray Siding Rd. Follow for 0.75 mile to the trailhead on right.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
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