



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Sleeping Bear  
Heritage Trail**  
*Michigan*



# Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

Michigan

*Overview When completed, the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail winds 21.2 miles through the stunning Sleeping Bear Dunes National*



## Overview

When completed, the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail winds 21.2 miles through the stunning Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore on Lake Michigan in the northwest corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The trail is built partially on what once was a narrow-gauge railroad (constructed in 1907) that transported lumber from a sawmill on Glen Lake to the port town of Glen Haven on Sleeping Bear Bay. Most of the trail, however, was not constructed on a former rail bed, and visitors will find steep grades of as much as 12 percent in some parts of the currently 21-mile route.

## About the Route

The northeastern endpoint for the trail is located at South Bohemian Road and MI 22/West Harbor Highway in Maple City, between Little Traverse Lake to the east and Bass Lake and School Lake to the west. Leaving off from South Bohemian Road, the trail heads northwest to the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, which showcases Midwestern turn-of-the-century farm life. The area preserves a rare collection of more than a hundred buildings and farming sites dating back more than a century. Note that most of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is paved except for the section of hard-packed crushed stone running through this historic district.

After leaving the historic farm area, the trail then turns south toward Glen Lake and then west into the town of Glen Arbor, where the trail continues on low-traffic roads. Here, trail users can find a grocery store, several restaurants, a bike rental shop, and numerous other stores catering to the tourist trade.

After exiting Glen Arbor, the trail continues west and winds through D. H. Day Campground and the historic town of Glen Haven before arriving at the Dune Climb—the primary point of public access to the Sleeping Bear Dunes and one of Michigan's most famous natural features.

Rising to 260 feet, Dune Climb is a popular climbing point that provides a breathtaking view of Glen Lake below. The climb can be strenuous, however, with a 20 percent grade on loose white sand, but you can choose to walk, run, or roll back to the bottom. Or trail users may continue the dune hike for another 1.5 miles to reach Lake Michigan. Those who do so should be prepared with sturdy shoes, a hat, sunscreen, and plenty of water, particularly during the summer, when the sun and sand can be extremely hot.

The trail turns south after the Dune Climb and enters a deeply forested part of the park. This section includes one major hill that is challenging but results in a long descent into the town of Empire. The trail passes a small trailhead on the right at



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Leelanau

Length: 21.2miles

**Trail end points:** M-22 and S Bohemian Road  
(Maple City) to W Salisbury Dr. (Empire)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt, Crushed Stone

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross  
Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail runs between M-22 and S Bohemian Road (Maple City) and W Salisbury Dr. (Empire).

Parking is available at:

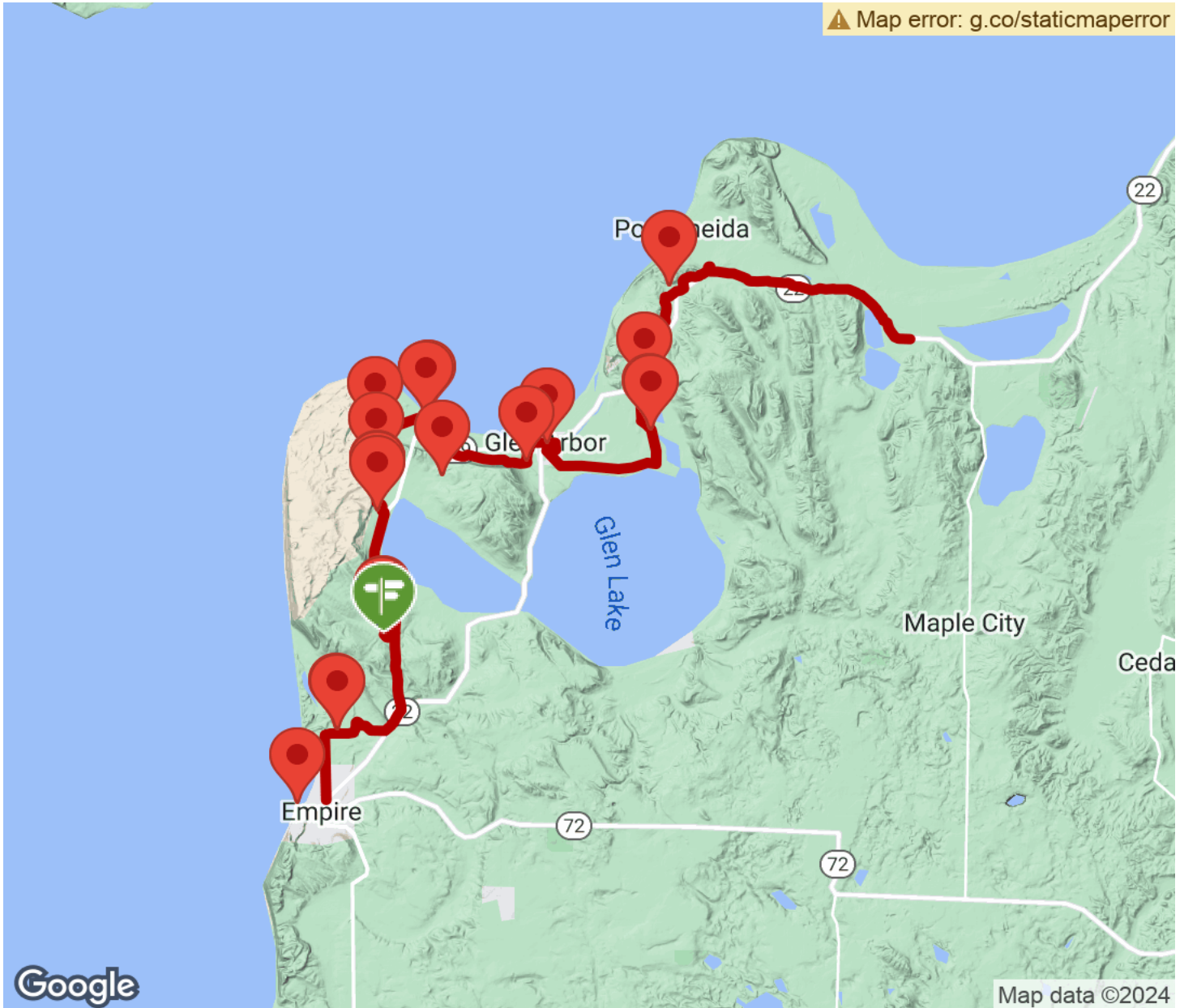
- 6748 S Dune Hwy (Glen Arbor)

Please see [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



# Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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

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