



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**6 to 10 Trail
System**
Pennsylvania



6 to 10 Trail System

Pennsylvania

Spurred by the success of New York's revolutionary Erie Canal, Pennsylvania started constructing its own canal system in 1826 to



Spurred by the success of New York's revolutionary Erie Canal, Pennsylvania started constructing its own canal system in 1826 to link Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. But the Allegheny Mountains complicated Pennsylvania's task.

In the years it took to establish Pennsylvania's canal system on either side of the Alleghenies, trains were coming into use. Forward-thinking engineers looked to these machines to traverse the final 40 miles of rugged terrain, but the primitive locomotives couldn't manage the mountain slopes. Pennsylvania's solution was the Allegheny Portage Railroad, a complex system that saw entire canalboats transferred from canals onto trains that, much like the canals themselves, ran over more or less level ground before coming to an elevation change. At each steep incline, the locomotive would be disconnected

and its line of cars hoisted up the slope by a stationary steam engine at the top. The train cars would be connected to a new locomotive and transported to the next incline, where the process would be repeated. On the downhill side, the same machinery controlled the train cars' descent.

Ten such inclines brought canalboats and other cargo up and over the Alleghenies between Johnstown and Hollidaysburg—five each on the eastern and western slopes of the range. Once the barges had been portaged across the mountains, they were returned to canals to finish their journeys. It was a massive undertaking that reduced travel time between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh from about 23 days to just under 4. Officially opening in 1834, the system would run only for a little more than two decades before more powerful locomotives rendered it obsolete.

Today, the 10.3-mile route between inclines 6 and 10 has been converted into a rail-trail featuring both hiking and biking sections, with historical culverts (drainage structures) visible along the hiking-only route. The trail makes up a small part of the September 11th National Memorial Trail that connects the 9/11, Flight 93, and Pentagon Memorials.

Start your visit at the top of the mountain, where the National Park Service maintains a visitor center at the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site dedicated to the history of the railway, as well as restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic areas. At the summit is a reproduction of an engine that lifted the train cars and a re-creation of the steep tracks of incline 6, as well as a tavern restored to its 1840s appearance. These buildings are open daily (9 a.m.–5 p.m.) in spring, summer, and fall, and weekends only in winter. This area also provides access to a hiking-only trail heading westward, the Summit Level Trail.

From the visitor center, hikers can tackle the 6 to 10 Trail as it heads east and downhill along the path of the Allegheny Portage Railroad; this twisting section is a steep and tricky



6 to 10 Trail System

Pennsylvania

States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Blair

Length: 10.3miles

Trail end points: Muleshoe Bridge, Old Route 22 to Dry Run Road between A T386 and Mill Road (Duncansville)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the endpoint at the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site visitor center from I-99, take Exit 28 to merge onto US 22 W. In about 7 miles, take the Gallitzin exit, and turn right onto Tunnelhill St. Go 0.7 mile south, following signs for the Allegheny Portage Railroad. The road terminates at the visitor center parking lot.

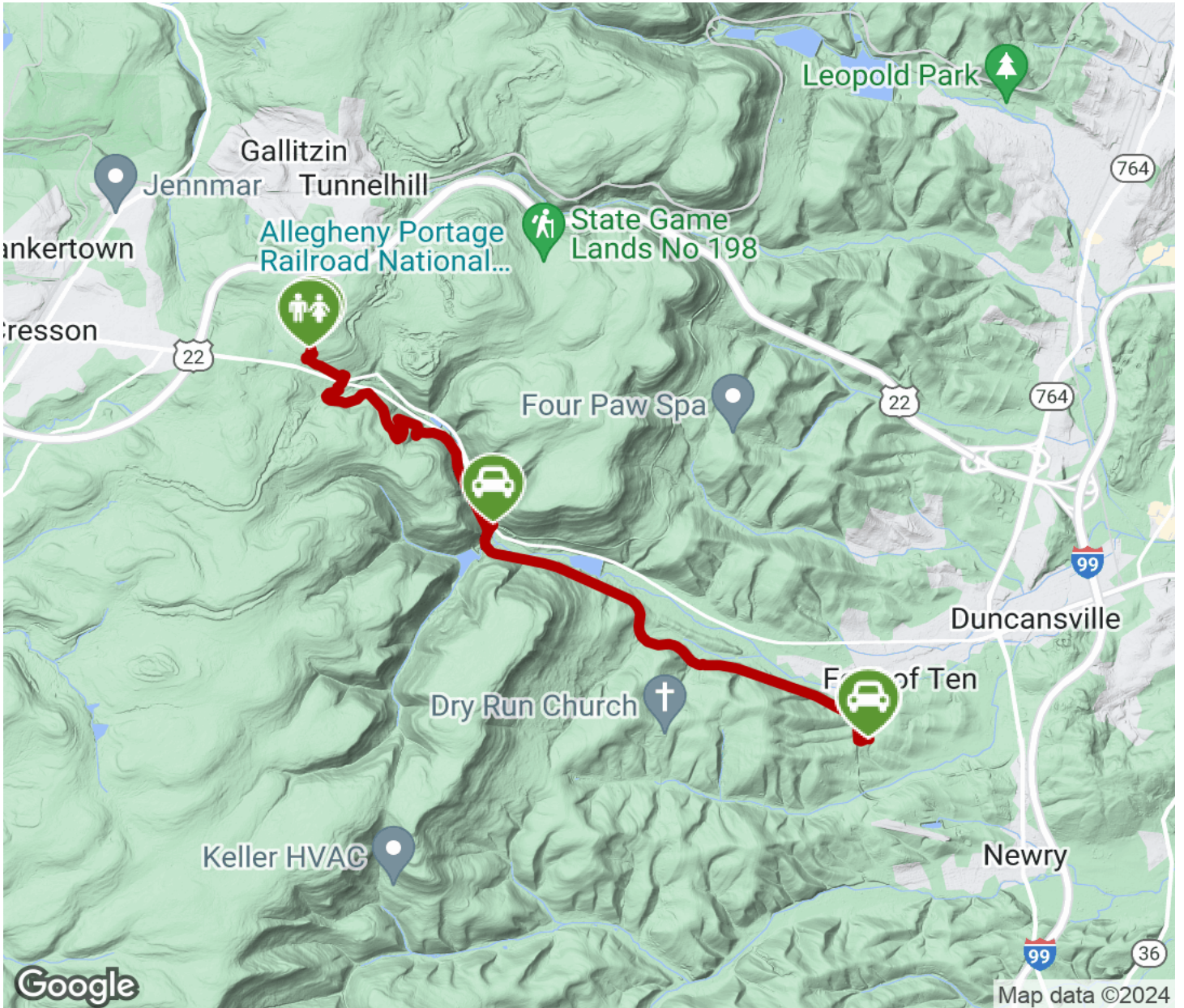
To reach the Muleshoe trailhead from the visitor center parking lot, take US 22 W 1.7 miles to the exit for Old US 22, following signs for Cresson/Summit. Turn left onto Old US 22/Admiral Peary Hwy. In 3.0 miles, you'll find a parking area on the right, immediately before the curved stone archway of the Muleshoe Bridge; if that lot is full, another option is just 700 feet farther down the road on the left.

To reach the Dry Run Road trailhead from I-99, take Exit 28 for US 22 E. Keep right to immediately exit onto US 22 E, and go 1.5 miles. Turn right onto Old US 22 in Duncansville. Go 0.2 mile, and turn left onto Foot of Ten Road. Go 0.5 mile, and turn left onto Mill Road. Go 0.3 mile, and turn right onto Dry Run Road. Go 0.6 mile, and turn right into the trailhead parking lot.



6 to 10 Trail System

Pennsylvania



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com