



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides

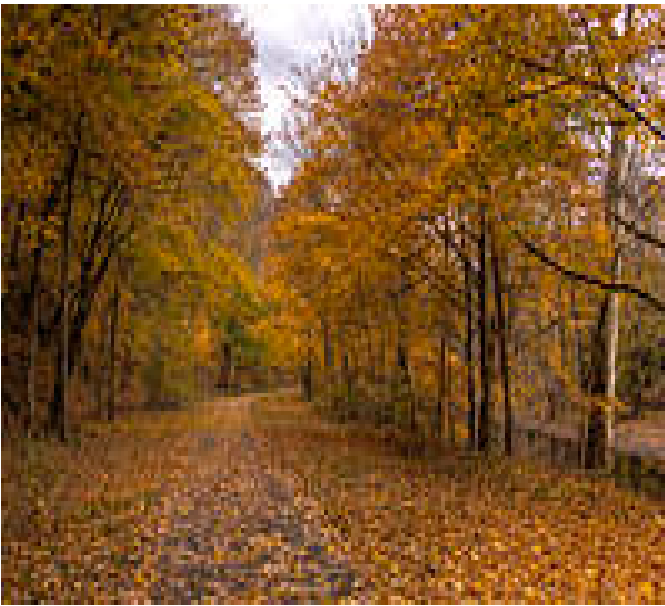


Lower Trail *Pennsylvania*



Lower Trail Pennsylvania

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The Lower Trail ranks high on the list of many Central Pennsylvania residents when they're searching for a remote path with a woody feel. The Lower (rhymes with flower, and named in memory of trail benefactor R. Dean Lower) Trail traces the meandering Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River as it meanders through the water gaps that the river cut through the Allegheny Mountains. The trail, with a mostly crushed-stone surface, rolls 17 miles between trailheads near Canoe Creek State Park and Alexandria. How remote is it? One segment goes 11 miles without a road crossing.

Pennsylvania's canal and railroad eras intersect on the Lower Trail. Originally a path used by local tribes, the corridor in the 1830s became part of the Pennsylvania Canal, a system of waterways connecting Philadelphia to

Pittsburgh. Mules slogged on adjacent towpaths and pulled barges through numerous locks. Some of the canal locks and channels, as well as remnants of the lock tenders' houses, can be seen through the thick vegetation.

This section of canal ceased operations in the 1850s but survived until the late 1870s, when a flood washed it away, and the Pennsylvania Railroad built a spur—the Petersburg Branch—to serve limestone quarries in the area. In 1989 the right-of-way came under control of the nonprofit Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania, which built the trail.

The Lower Trail is part of the Trans Allegheny Trails System, a group of rail-trails in western Pennsylvania. The trail is also part of the September 11th National Memorial Trail that connects the 9/11, Flight 93, and Pentagon Memorials, as well as the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition's developing 1,500-mile trail network through Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and New York.

Starting at the Alfarata Station trailhead near Alexandria, the trail follows the river upstream through a water gap at Tussey Mountain. Just 0.8 mile from the trailhead, a short turnoff on the right leads to a diner with soft-serve ice cream.

About 3 miles from the trailhead, you'll see dam abutments left behind from the canal. Your first bridge, 4.3 miles from the trailhead, is a stone-arch bridge across Fox Run. Then in 0.5 mile, you'll cross the river twice on bridges the railroad built to avoid a river bend. After the second bridge, you'll come to the Mount Etna Furnace trailhead, named for a pig iron furnace that predates the canal. The ironmaster's residence still stands as a burned-out mansion here.

Continuing 2.6 miles, you'll pass through the remains of Carlisle, an old limestone-mining town, near the Cove Dale trailhead. The surface improves to asphalt here for the next 3.5 miles through Williamsburg, where you can catch a bite at a general store or diner. The trail crosses Juniata River Road a



Lower Trail

Pennsylvania

States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Blair, Huntingdon

Length: 17 miles

Trail end points: SR 4014 and Brick Yard Road (Alexandria) to Beaver Dam Road and Flowing Springs Road (Williamsburg)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Wheelchair

Accessible, Horseback Riding, Mountain Biking, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

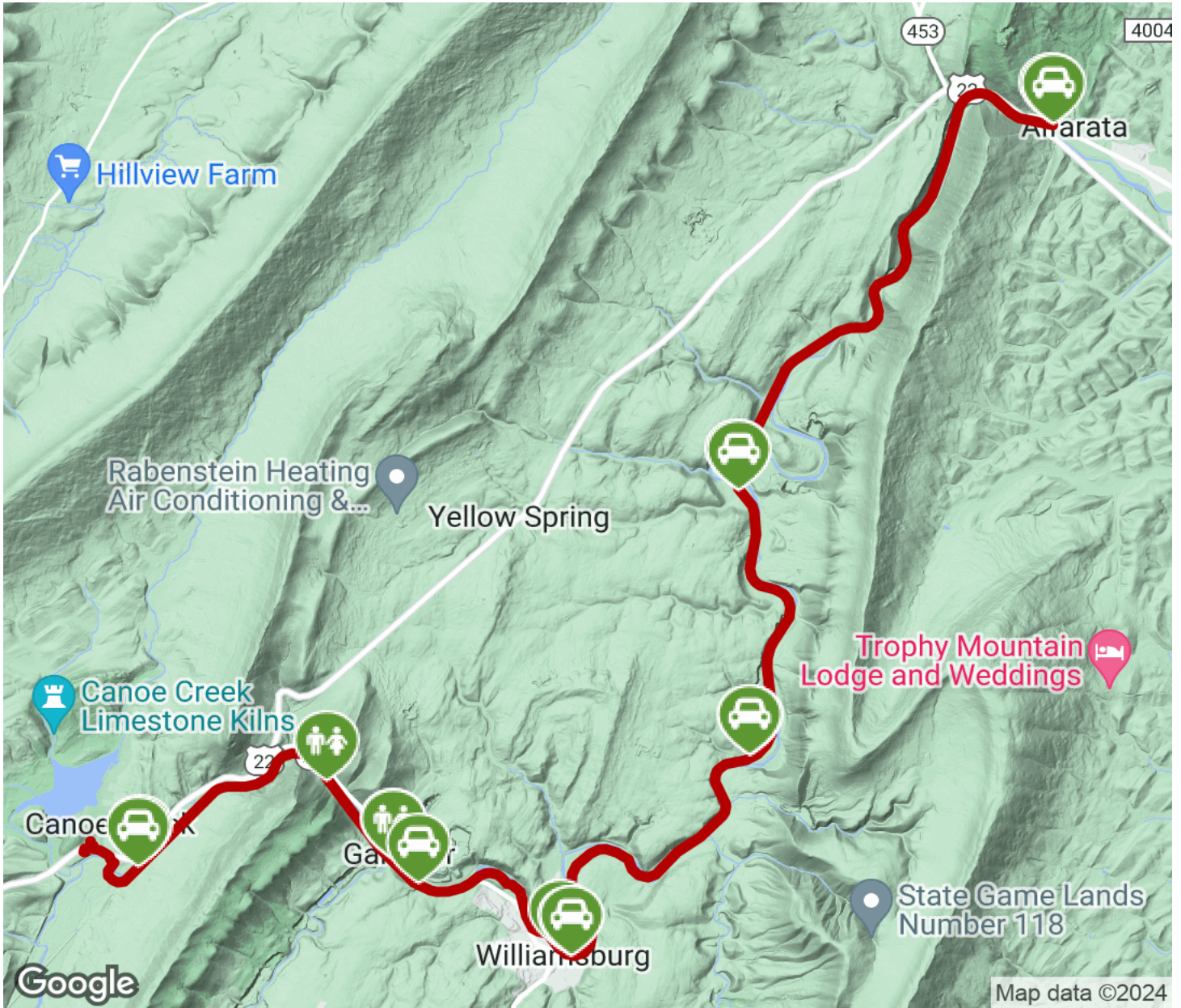
To reach the Alfarata Station trailhead from I-99/US 220, take Exit 48 toward SR 453/Tyrone. From I-99 S, turn left toward SR 453 S (signs for Water St./SR 550/SR 453 S). From I-99 N, turn left, then right onto SR 453 S. Go 0.5 mile. Then take a slight right to stay on SR 453 S, and go 8.3 miles. Turn left onto US 22 E, and go 0.7 mile. Turn left onto Logging Road 31101, go 0.1 mile, and continue onto State Route 4014. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right into the trailhead parking lot.

To reach the parking area at Flowing Springs Station from I-99/US 220, take Exit 32 for Frankstown Road toward SR 36. Head southeast on Frankstown Road, and go 3.7 miles. Turn left onto US 22, go 5.0 miles, and turn right onto Flowing Springs Road/T444. Go 0.2 mile, continue straight onto Long Road, and go another 0.2 mile. Turn left into the trailhead.



Lower Trail

Pennsylvania



- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel