



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Conewago Recreation Trail

Pennsylvania



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Farms and pastures surround the Conewago Recreation Trail, but it was the discovery and mining of iron ore that led to the development of the railroad that eventually resulted in this trail. The path rolls northeast from the outskirts of Elizabethtown for about 5 miles to a seamless connection at the Lancaster–Lebanon County line with the [Lebanon Valley Rail-Trail](#). The connecting trail continues nearly 15 miles to Lebanon. Both trails are part of the September 11th National Memorial Trail that connects the World Trade Center, Flight 93, and Pentagon Memorials, and both occupy the former railbed of the Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad, built in 1883 as a private venture to compete with a railroad that already served the iron ore mines in Cornwall. To challenge an established railroad was risky enough; now consider that the new railroad's owner was Robert Coleman, one of the

richest men in Pennsylvania and a cousin of the existing railroad's president. Lawsuits ensued, and the newcomer's railroad tracks were torn up at least once.

As it turns out, there was enough business for everyone. Coleman, however, made bad investments elsewhere and eventually lost his railroad; the Pennsylvania Railroad ended up with it in 1918. After Hurricane Agnes washed out portions of the line in 1972, the route fell into disuse, and Lancaster County bought it in 1979 and soon thereafter turned it into a rail-trail.

The Conewago Recreation Trail follows a creek of the same name for its entire length. Its crushed-limestone surface (renovated in 2007) is hard packed and flat enough to make it wheelchair accessible, except for the Mill Road crossing about 1.4 miles from the Elizabethtown trailhead. Open dawn–dusk, the trail is shaded in the summer, although the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has been removing trees infested with emerald ash borer beetle. You can pick up supplies for your trip in Elizabethtown, called E-town by the locals and located about 2 miles southeast of the trailhead. The town's population has ballooned since the early days of the 20th century, when it was home to a shoe factory and Klein Chocolate (now owned by Mars and making Dove brand chocolate).

The path is wooded for a short distance, and then passes some fields before plunging back into the woods. There's a steep slope at the Mill Road crossing at 1.4 miles where a trestle has been removed; note that this specific intersection is not conducive to wheelchairs. Other road crossings along the trail are at level, except for the passage under PA 283. Crossing Hershey Road/PA 743 (use caution at this busy road) at 2.7 miles, you'll pass Rails to Trail Bicycle Shop, which offers rental bikes, snacks, and a place to fill your water bottles. A couple of road crossings later you'll pass through Bellaire, which has an old mill that's now used as a carpentry shop. Not long after passing Prospect Road, you'll see that the trail



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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Lancaster

Length: 5miles

Trail end points: PA 230/N. Market St. just south of Industrial Road to Lebanon Valley Rail-Trail near PA 241/Mount Gretna Road and T326/Milton Grove Road (Elizabethtown)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Fishing,Horseback Riding,Mountain Biking,Walking,Cross

Parking & Trail Access

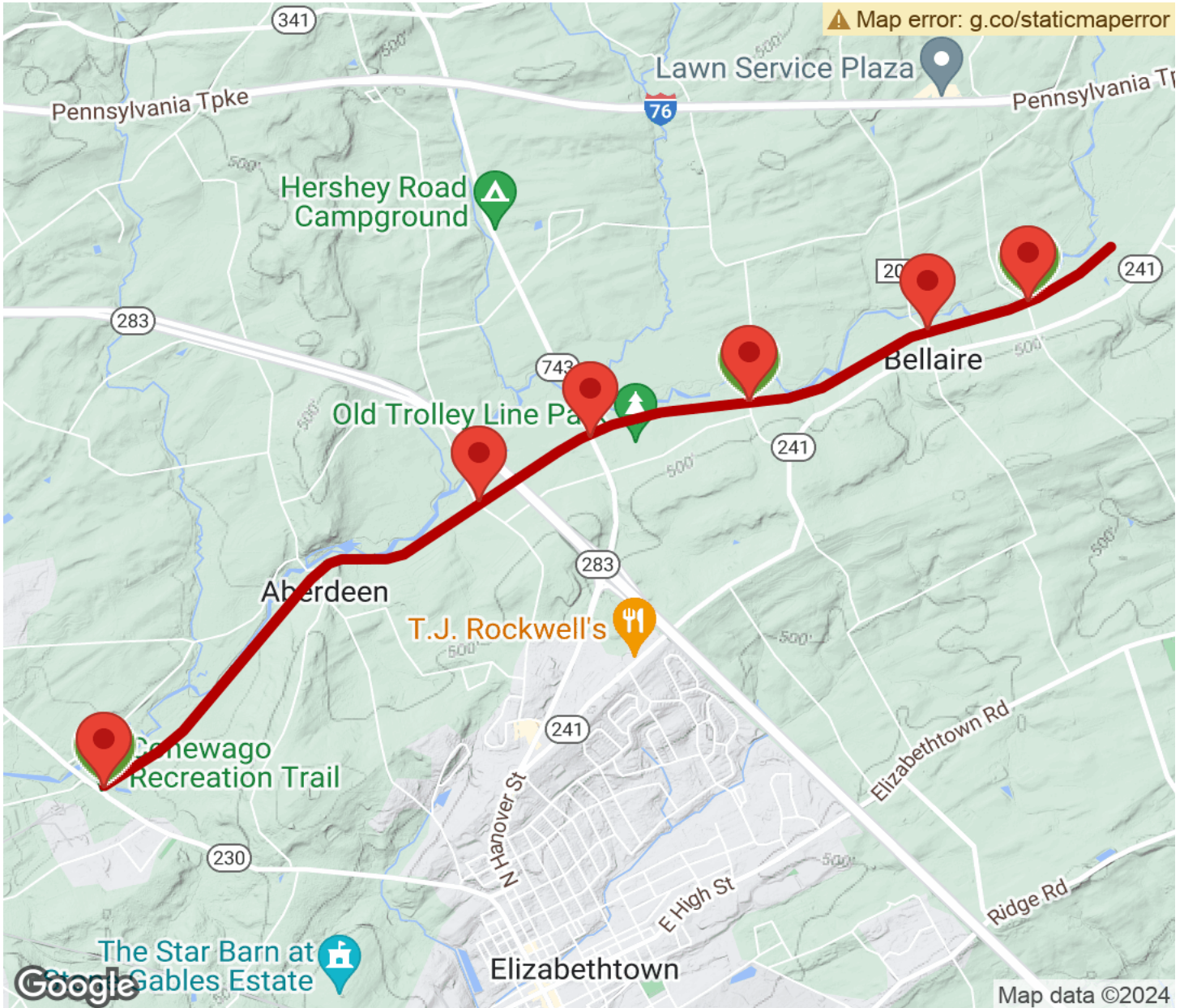
To reach the Elizabethtown trailhead from I-283 coming from Harrisburg, take Exit 1A onto PA 283 E. Go 6.4 miles east, and take the exit toward PA 230/PA 341/Toll House Road. Turn right onto Toll House Road, go 0.1 mile, and turn left onto E. Harrisburg Pike/PA 230. Go 3.1 miles, and turn left into the trailhead parking lot.

To reach the trailhead at Prospect Road/T300 from I-283, take Exit 1A onto PA 283 E. Go 11.5 miles east, and exit toward PA 743 for Hershey/Elizabethtown. Turn left onto PA 743 N/Hershey Road, go 0.5 mile, and turn right onto Beverly Road. Go 0.7 mile, and turn right onto Koser Road. Then go 0.2 mile, and bear left to stay on Koser Road. Go 0.1 mile, and turn left onto PA 241/Mount Gretna Road. Go 1.1 miles, and turn left onto Prospect Road/T300. Go 0.1 mile, and look for parking on either side of Prospect Road, where it intersects with the trail.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com