

# PENNSYLVANIA

## ROUTE

The Great American Rail-Trail route through Pennsylvania connects several existing trails with one trail gap just west of Pittsburgh. By connecting the trail through Pittsburgh, the Great American Rail-Trail also connects to the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC), a vision for a 1,500-mile network of trails that is part of RTC's TrailNation™ portfolio. The IHTC network will stretch across 51 counties in four states—Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and

New York—from the shores of Lake Erie to the confluence of the Three Rivers in Pittsburgh and on to the Ohio River and Appalachian foothills.

RTC found and reviewed 22 plans in Pennsylvania to better understand the commonwealth's trail priorities. A full list of these plans can be found in Appendix A.

**TABLE 6 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL STATISTICS IN PENNSYLVANIA**

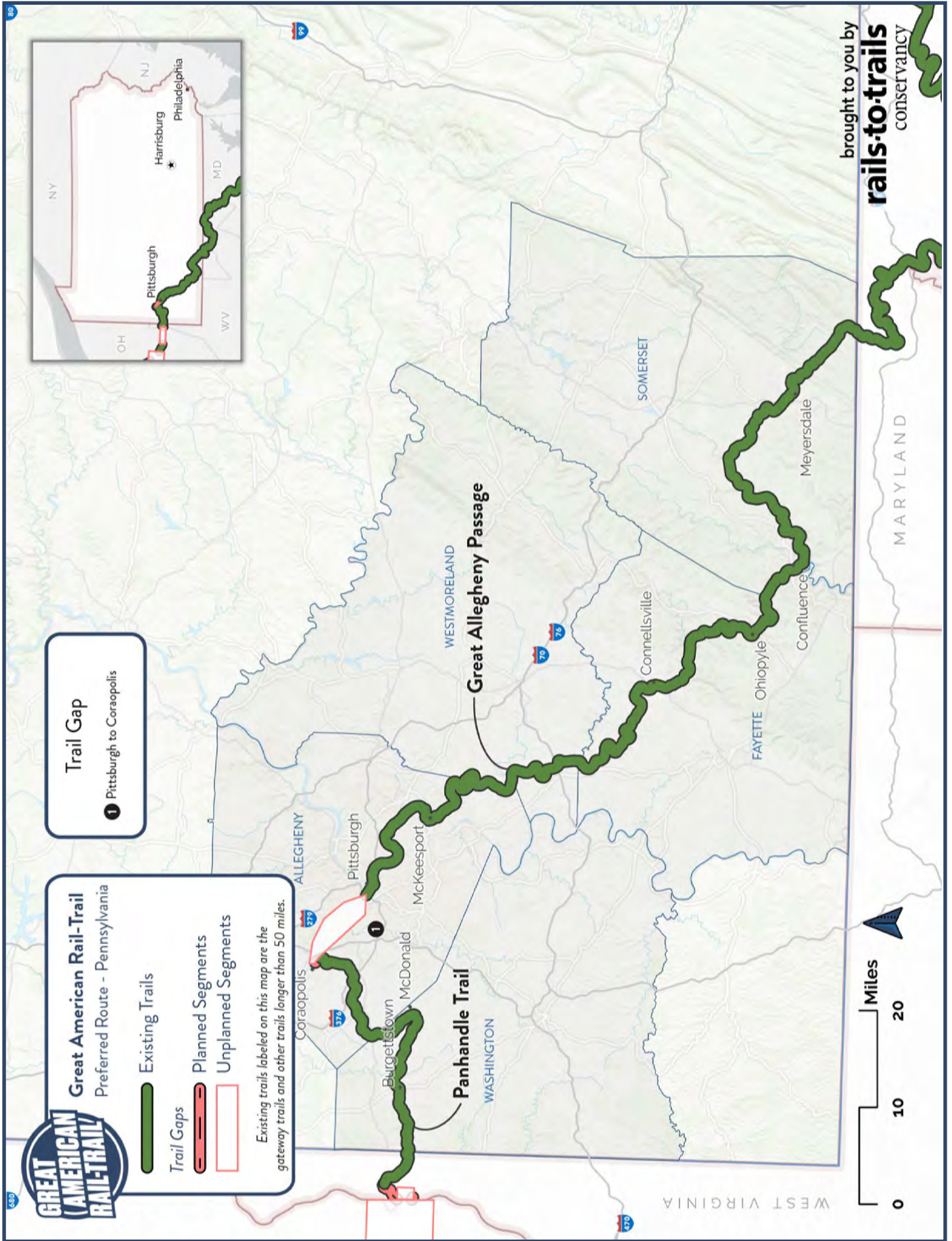
Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Pa. (% of Total State Mileage)	161.3 (93.8%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Trail Gap Miles in Pa. (% of Total State Mileage)	10.6 (6.2%)
Total Trail Gaps in Pa.	1
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Pa.	171.9

**TABLE 7 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH PENNSYLVANIA**

Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name	Length in Pa. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)
Great Allegheny Passage	124.3
Three Rivers Heritage Trail	3.6
TRAIL GAP 1 – Pittsburgh to Coraopolis	10.6
Montour Trail	17.5
Panhandle Trail	15.9
Total Miles	171.9
Existing Trail Miles	161.3
Trail Gap Miles	10.6

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT

## MAP 3: PENNSYLVANIA



# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT PENNSYLVANIA



*Great Allegheny Passage (gaptrail.org) in Pennsylvania*

## GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

Total Length (in Miles)	150.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	124.3
Trail Type	Greenway, rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	Allegheny Trail Alliance, Somerset County, Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association, Ohiopyle State Park, Regional Trail Corporation (Yough Trail Council, Whitsett-Fayette Yough Trail Council, McKeesport Trail Commission and Steel Valley Trail Council), Allegheny County, Friends of the Riverfront, City of Pittsburgh, Point State Park
Website	gaptrail.org
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/great-allegheny-passage

The GAP enters Pennsylvania just north of Frostburg, Maryland, and it will continue to host the Great American Rail-Trail through Pennsylvania for 124.3 miles through rolling hills and forestland to Pittsburgh. The GAP is a compilation of several trails built on the former corridors of the Western Maryland Railway, Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad and Union Railroad. The Allegheny Trail Alliance and its partners oversee trail development, enhancements, promotion, interpretation and maintenance of the GAP.

Just after crossing into Pennsylvania from Maryland, the GAP reaches the Eastern Continental Divide at 2,392 feet above sea level. The GAP features several great engineering feats, including the newly restored 849-foot-long Pinkerton Tunnel<sup>5</sup>; the 101-foot-high Salisbury Viaduct, which spans more than 1,900 feet; and the 3,294-foot-long Big Savage Tunnel, and passes through the trail towns of Meyersdale, Rockwood, Confluence, Ohiopyle, Connellsville, West Newton and Boston.

At McKeesport, Pennsylvania, the GAP follows the Monongahela River through the region’s “Steel Valley” communities of Duquesne, Munhall, Homestead and West Homestead. Once in Pittsburgh, the GAP will host the Great American Rail-Trail route along the Three Rivers Heritage Trail portion of the GAP.

<sup>5</sup> In 2015 and 2016, RTC awarded a total of \$60,000 to the Allegheny Trail Alliance to support the rehabilitation of the Pinkerton Tunnel. The funding was provided by the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT PENNSYLVANIA

## THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	25.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	3.6
Trail Type	Greenway, rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	Friends of the Riverfront
Website	<a href="http://friendsoftheriverfront.org">friendsoftheriverfront.org</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://traillink.com/trail/three-rivers-heritage-trail">traillink.com/trail/three-rivers-heritage-trail</a>

Since its inception in 1991, Friends of the Riverfront has been a pioneering organization working to protect and restore the Pittsburgh region's rivers and riverfronts after decades of legacy pollution. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail<sup>6</sup> now encompasses over 25 miles of urban riverfront trails along both banks of the mighty Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers. Through broad and diverse collaborations, Friends of the Riverfront continues the work of providing environmental restoration, economic vitality and public health benefits to the Pittsburgh region through the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail connects to the GAP at the Hot Metal Bridge and continues northwest through Riverfront Park along the Monongahela River. The trail then travels through Station Square, a shopping and entertainment complex occupying buildings once used by the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. From where the GAP ends at the Point, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail continues from Point State Park across the Fort Pitt Bridge to the North Shore Trail and continues down the Chateau Trail.

## TRAIL GAP 1 – PITTSBURGH TO CORAOPOLIS

Friends of the Riverfront, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Allegheny County, along with its partner organizations, have explored various options to connect the Three Rivers Heritage Trail to the Montour Trail between Pittsburgh and Coraopolis. Options to complete the trail connection along the southern shore of the Ohio River are in the planning stages. A 0.8-mile extension of the Montour Trail to Coraopolis will open in late 2020.

## MONTOUR TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	46.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	17.5
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	Montour Trail Council, Peters Township Parks & Recreation
Website	<a href="http://montourtrail.org">montourtrail.org</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://traillink.com/trail/montour-trail">traillink.com/trail/montour-trail</a>

The Montour Trail follows a portion of the old Montour Railroad, which was built between 1877 and 1914 to link the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad with the region's many coal mines. Forming a semicircle around Pittsburgh, the Montour Railroad also connected to other railroads, including the Pennsylvania Railroad, Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railway, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Union Railroad. Both the trail and railroad are named for the creek that runs alongside. Highlights of the trail include the 500-foot Enlow Tunnel in Findlay Township and the 900-foot-plus McDonald Trestle.

The Montour Trail connects to Pennsylvania's Panhandle Trail at the borough of McDonald. The 46-mile Montour Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 17.5 miles.

<sup>6</sup> RTC provided Friends of the Riverfront with a \$3,000 pass-through grant from the outdoor recreation retail company REI for a stewardship event on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail in 2014.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT PENNSYLVANIA



Montour Trail | Photo by Kevin Belanger, courtesy Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

## PANHANDLE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	28.3
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	15.9
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	Collier Friends of the Panhandle Trail, Montour Trail Council, Washington County Parks & Recreation Department
Website	<a href="http://panhandletrail.org">panhandletrail.org</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://traillink.com/trail/panhandle-trail">traillink.com/trail/panhandle-trail</a>

A Conrail line known as the Panhandle Railroad once connected Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Cincinnati, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; and St. Louis, Missouri. The portion of the rail corridor between Carnegie, Pennsylvania, and Weirton, West Virginia, is now a 28.3-mile multiuse trail known as the Panhandle Trail. The Panhandle Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 20.5 miles, including 15.9 miles in Pennsylvania, starting in McDonald where the trail meets the Montour Trail. The Panhandle Trail features many small bridge crossings as it cuts through the rolling and occasionally rocky hillside.

The remaining 4.6 miles of the Panhandle Trail along the Great American Rail-Trail will be discussed in the West Virginia chapter.