

# 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.

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

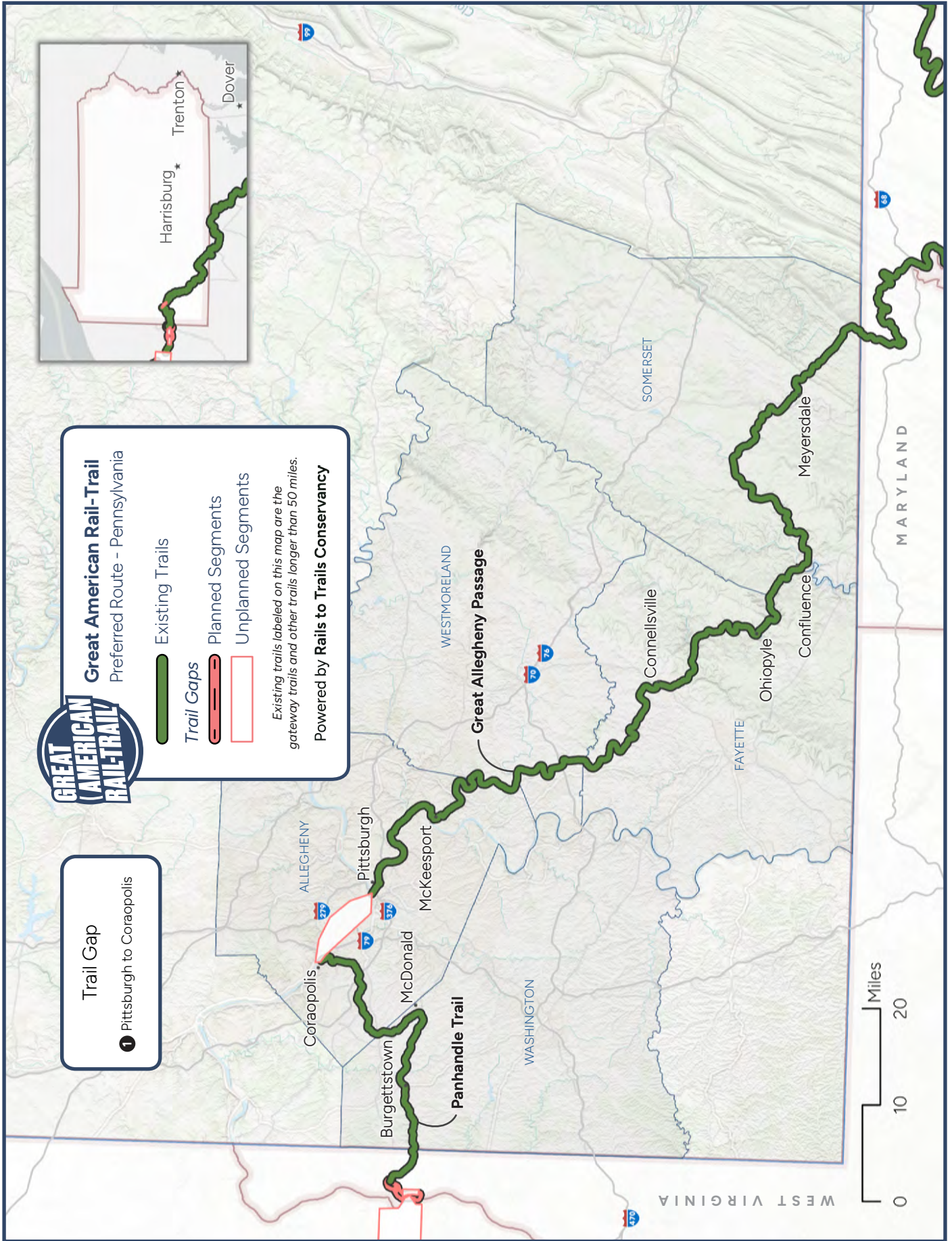
Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Pa. (% of Total State Mileage)	162.7 (94.3%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Gap Miles in Pa. (% of Total State Mileage)	9.8 (5.7%)
Total Trail Gaps in Pa.	1
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Pa.	172.5

**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	124.7
Three Rivers Heritage Trail	3.6
TRAIL GAP 1 – Pittsburgh to Coraopolis	9.8
Montour Trail	18.4
Panhandle Trail	16.0
Total Miles	172.5
Existing Trail Miles	162.7
Trail Gap Miles	9.8

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2024

## MAP 3: PENNSYLVANIA



# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT PENNSYLVANIA



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

## GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

Total Length (in Miles)	145.2
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	124.7
Trail Type	Greenway, rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh, Friends of the Riverfront, Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy, Ohiopyle State Park, Point State Park, Regional Trail Corporation (Yough Trail Council, Whitsett-Fayette Yough Trail Council, McKeesport Trail Commission and Steel Valley Trail Council), Somerset County, Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association
Website	gaptrail.org
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/great-allegheny-passage

The GAP enters Pennsylvania just north of Frostburg, Maryland, and it hosts the Great American Rail-Trail through Pennsylvania for 124.7 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 Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy 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; 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 a shared corridor with the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

# 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 now encompasses 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 Point State Park, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail continues 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. Currently, signs mark the route along Neville Road as an on-road portion of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. In the fall of 2020, Trail Gap 1 was shortened by a 0.8-mile extension of the Montour Trail into Coraopolis. Riverlife, a nonprofit organization working to redevelop Pittsburgh's downtown riverfronts, is leading a planned extension from Station Square northwest to the West End Bridge, which would close this gap by about a half-mile.

## MONTOUR TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	46.8
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	18.4
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 them. Highlights of the trail include the 500-foot Enlow Tunnel in Findlay Township and the 900-foot-plus McDonald Trestle. In the fall of 2020, the Montour Trail was extended by 0.8 mile into Coraopolis.

The Montour Trail connects to Pennsylvania's Panhandle Trail at the borough of McDonald. The 46.8-mile Montour Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 18.4 miles.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT PENNSYLVANIA



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

## PANHANDLE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	29.2
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Pa. (in Miles)	16.0
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 29.2-mile multiuse trail known as the Panhandle Trail. The Panhandle Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 20.6 miles, including 16 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.