



MOUNTAIN BIKING

And Associated Recreational Opportunities in
the Greater Pittsburgh Region: An Atlas



INTRODUCTION

As cities and towns across the country continue to capitalize on their mountain biking assets to strengthen their local economies, the Pittsburgh region is ripe with opportunity to do the same. A common thread amongst many well-known cycling destinations is a deliberate approach to branding themselves as such. The region within a four-hour's drive of Pittsburgh includes a number of well-known mountain biking destinations, but because it encompasses such a large footprint over five different states (the western half of Pennsylvania, the eastern half of Ohio, much of West Virginia, and parts of New York and Maryland), it has not been looked at as a collective or with Pittsburgh as its central hub.

In order to evaluate the potential for promotion of the greater Pittsburgh region as a hub for outdoor recreation, especially cycling, the first step was quantifying the existing assets. The region already has a strong community of mountain bikers, support entities, and existing trail systems, as well as ample public lands and opportunities to expand or develop new trails. This report serves as a catalog of mountain bike trails, multi-use trails, and some notable gravel cycling areas, which are

mapped and described in the pages that follow. Knowing that mountain bikers often engage in additional outdoor recreational pursuits, select locations for complementary activities such as skiing, rock climbing, and whitewater paddling were also identified. We've also included a few examples of "Outdoor Hubs" within the region – communities that are centrally-located to excellent mountain biking in addition to other outdoor recreation opportunities.

This "atlas" of cycling assets is meant to be a companion to the two reports produced by Fourth Economy Consulting – **Growing Mountain Biking in the North Central Appalachian Rec Belt & From Rust Belt to Rec Belt: Growing the Outdoor Recreation Economy in North Central Appalachia** – both of which looked at case studies within the region and beyond to learn what makes an outdoor recreation hub successful, and how those practices could be applied to the greater Pittsburgh region. Finally, based on the findings of all three reports, we have provided a set of recommendations specific to growing and improving mountain biking, other types of cycling, and ultimately, the outdoor economy as a whole in the greater Pittsburgh region.

Starting time at the 2022 PEC Public Lands Ride.



The beginning of the infamous Crack Trail at Big Bear Lake Trail Center, WV.



MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking is defined simply as “riding bicycles off-road.” In practice, the sport is quite varied, as are its participants. Some trails that mountain bikers ride on are so rocky they are hardly hikeable, while others are smooth and flowy, with barely any rocks or obstacles at all.

Most trail systems offer a combination of climbs and descents, utilizing whatever terrain exists in the landscape, on trails that are mostly singletrack. However, many mountain bike trail systems also include doubletrack or utilize gravel or dirt roads to connect sections of singletrack.

The character of trails in the greater Pittsburgh region is highly variable, with a mix of “old-school” handbuilt trails that are often rocky and more “raw” than newer, machine-built trails. Plenty of technical features such as rocks and roots are characteristic of many of the most well-known locations, though purpose-built systems such as the Allegrippis Trails break the mold with smoother, “flow” trails. Being in the Appalachians, plenty of elevation gain and loss is

typical of most mountain bike trail networks in the region.

The following pages (**6 to 16**) detail “**Noteworthy Destinations**” within a 4-hour drive of Pittsburgh. Each of these locations encompasses enough trail mileage for a multi-day visit, and/or is somehow otherwise special because of unique features or popular events at the trail system.

Trails within Allegheny County and the immediate vicinity are described on pages **18 to 22**.

While there aren’t large-scale trail systems on vast expanses of land like in more remote areas of the region, there are over 150 miles of singletrack within less than an hour’s drive of Pittsburgh. Most of Allegheny County’s parks offer some level of mountain bike experience, with Frick and North Parks being two of the more popular locales. These systems offer close-to-home recreation opportunities for locals and a chance to practice skills and gain fitness, and lumped together, arguably make Pittsburgh itself a noteworthy destination for mountain biking.


Riding through the Rhododendron in Rothrock State Forest, PA.

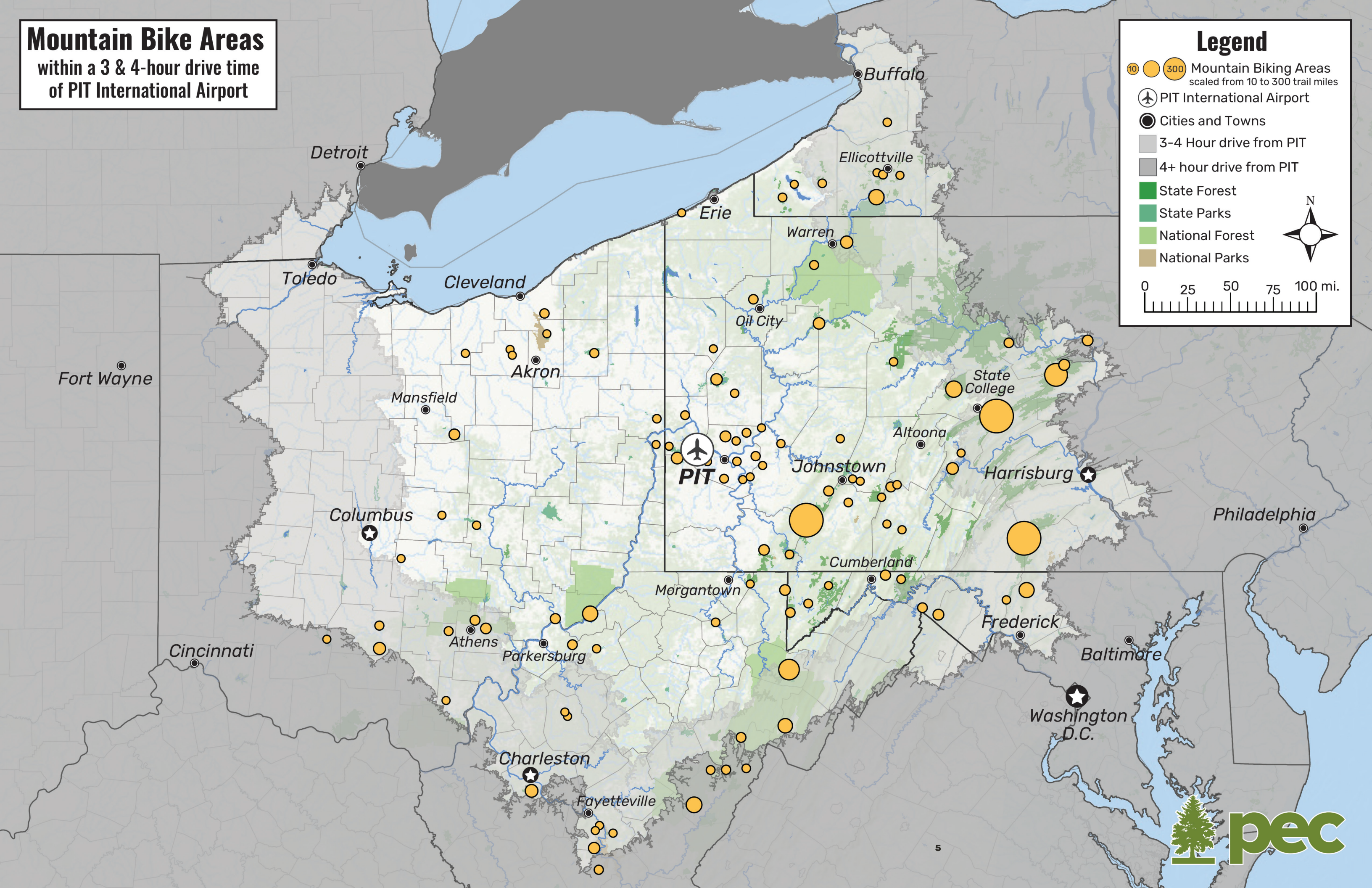


Mountain Bike Areas

within a 3 & 4-hour drive time of PIT International Airport

Legend

- Mountain Biking Areas scaled from 10 to 300 trail miles
 - PIT International Airport
 - Cities and Towns
 - 3-4 Hour drive from PIT
 - 4+ hour drive from PIT
 - State Forest
 - State Parks
 - National Forest
 - National Parks
- 0 25 50 75 100 mi.
- 



Noteworthy Destinations

PENNSYLVANIA

Laurel Highlands

Trail Mileage: 290+

Distance from PIT: 1.5 hours, 90 miles

The Laurel Highlands region of Pennsylvania spans over 3,000 square miles of Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland Counties. The area is known for the extensive network of trails, diverse plant and animal life, and scenic mountain ridges. The Laurel Highlands is loved for the many recreational opportunities in the area, including paddling, skiing, hiking, and mountain biking. With over 290 miles of trail in the region, the Laurel Highlands is a favorite of Pittsburghers and is a destination for Mid-Atlantic mountain bikers. Numerous distinct mountain bike trail networks are located in the Laurel Highlands. Notable areas and trail networks within the Laurel Highlands include Forbes State Forest, Seven Springs Resort, Laurel Mountain, Quemahoning Reservoir, Jones Mill Trails, Ohiopyle State Park, Quebec Run Wild Area, Roaring Run, and Yellow Creek State Park.

Across the nearly 2 million acres of the Laurel Highlands region, cyclists are able to experience a wide variety of terrain. Each trail network within the 2 million acres of the Laurel Highlands has something different to offer, ranging from rocky and technical trails to fast and smooth trails. Consistent elevation change offers visitors numerous lookouts over the landscape. The Laurel Highlands On and Off Road Bicycling Association (LHORBA) builds and maintains trails across the Laurel Highlands and beyond.

Laurel Mountain State Park is an icon of the Laurel Highlands featuring stunning rocky overlooks, Laurel Mountain Ski Resort, and 33 miles of trail.

Trails through the highlands have ample elevation change and are typically rocky and technical with fast sections in between. Exposed rock is common on trails and throughout the park. Laurel Hill State Park, adjacent to Laurel Mountain, has an additional 15 miles of trail and is home to old-growth forests and trees over 250 years old.

Seven Springs Resort is a privately owned mountain resort that features lift-access trails in the summer and is known for their hard-packed jump lines and wooden features. Seven Springs is open as a ski resort during the winter.

Yellow Creek State Park has 21 miles of well-maintained mountain bike trail around Yellow Creek Lake. Hard packed dirt trails with occasional rocky and rooty sections make for terrain that is suitable to all riders of all experience levels. Friends of Yellow Creek host a monthly mountain bike race series with multiple skill classes and distances offered.

The city of Johnstown, located just outside the Laurel Highlands boundary in Cambria County, has two local trail networks. The Inclined Plane trails are accessible from within the city and mountain bikers are even able to use the Incline for repeated gravity-powered downhill runs. (The Incline is currently being renovated but is expected to reopen in 2024). Highland Park is just outside Johnstown in Stoney Creek and offers a variety of terrain and built features that are designed for progression.

Allegrippis Trails

Trail Mileage: 30+


Distance from PIT: 2.75 hours, 145 miles

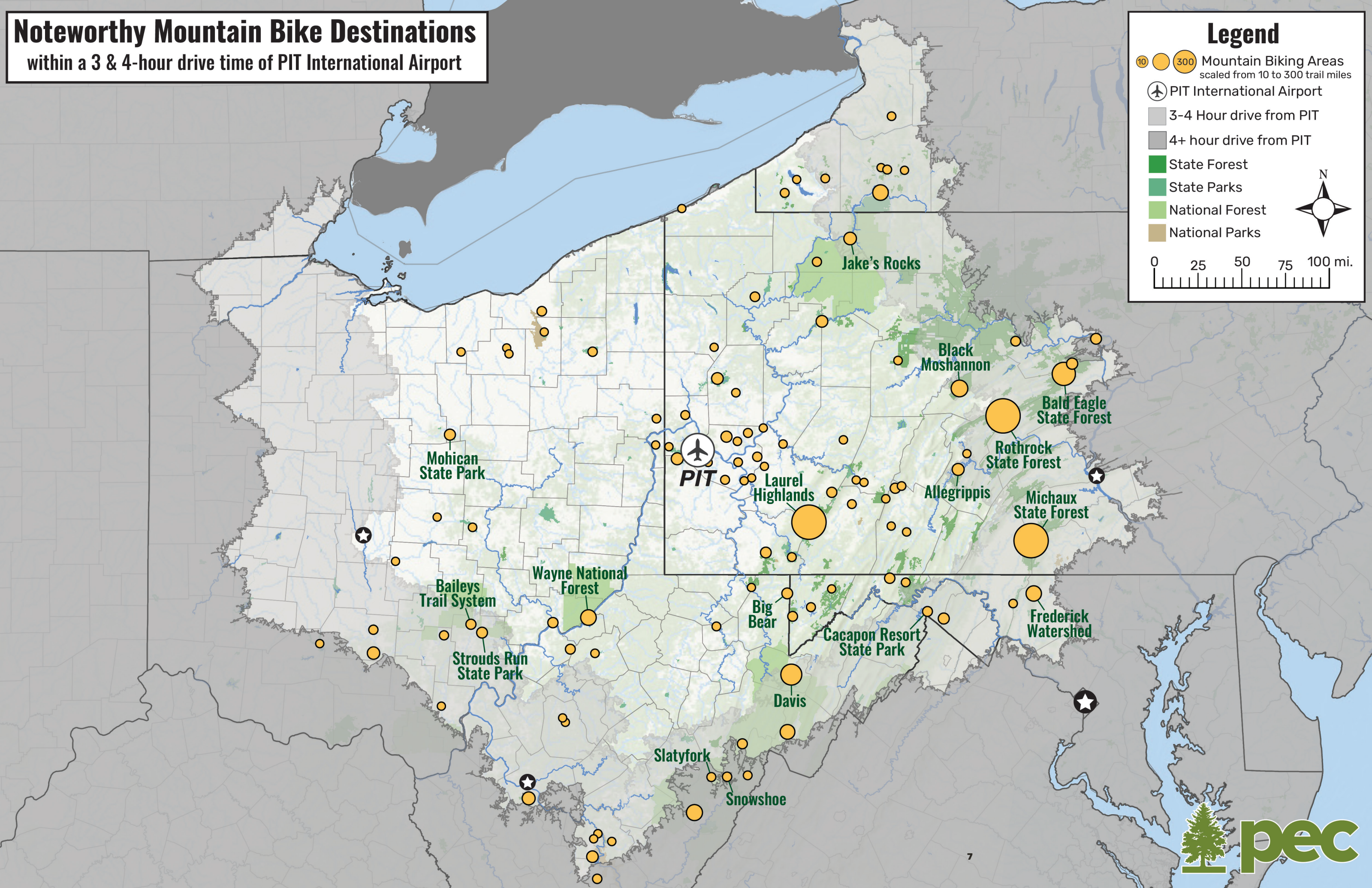
The Allegrippis Trail system located on Raystown Lake is a premiere destination for mountain biking in Pennsylvania. Offering 30+ miles of singletrack, Allegrippis is known for its smooth and flowing trails that provide glimpses of the lake from above. Positioned on the lake's northwestern slope, the trail network offers plenty of elevation change as riders can descend to the water's edge and climb back up Allegrippis Ridge. The 24 trails create a

Noteworthy Mountain Bike Destinations

within a 3 & 4-hour drive time of PIT International Airport

Legend

- Mountain Biking Areas scaled from 10 to 300 trail miles
 - PIT International Airport
 - 3-4 Hour drive from PIT
 - 4+ hour drive from PIT
 - State Forest
 - State Parks
 - National Forest
 - National Parks
- 0 25 50 75 100 mi.
- 



series of stacked loops that progressively venture farther from the central parking area and therefore, get more difficult simply because of the distance and elevation change required to return to the car. The Allegrippis Trail network is a great location for varying skill levels and allows riders to progress and challenge themselves with longer rides.

The trails were built by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and are currently operated by the Friends of Raystown Lake under a lease from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Laurel Highlands On and Off Road Bicycling Association (LHORBA) also helps maintain the Allegrippis Trails. Seven Points and Susquehannock

Campgrounds are adjacent to both the lake and the trail network.

The Allegrippis Trail Days event is a weekend event in late May celebrating the trails with vendors, skills clinics, and live music. The Raystown Mountain Bike Skills Park was the first MTB skills park to be built on federal land. Offering beginner, intermediate, and advanced lines, the skills park has a mixture of built features to catch air and test your control. On the lake is the Seven Points Marina, and a variety of additional campgrounds are located in the area. The trails are free and open year-round to bikers, hikers, cross-country skiers and even snow-shoers (except for between sunrise and sunset during the 2 weeks of deer rifle season).

Allegrippis Trails vista in the snow, PA.



Rothrock State Forest

Trail Mileage: 290+

Distance from PIT: 3 hours, 165 miles

Rothrock State Forest, home to over 290 miles of trails and forest roads, is considered world-class mountain biking and is a destination for east-coast mountain bikers. Multiple distinct riding areas comprise the vast network of trails, including Cooper's Gap, Greenwood Furnace State Park, Shingletown Gap, Tussey Mountain, and Kepler Road. The nearly 100,000 acres of Rothrock State Forest expose riders to a variety of trails, but the area is known for its technical terrain. Fast descents and rocky climbs through the series of Appalachian ridges and valleys that make up the forest offer plenty of elevation change and are suited for more experienced riders.

The scenic woods are the site of many famous mountain bike races, including stages of the Trans-Sylvania Epic, the Wilderness 101, and the Seasons of Rothrock. The forest is also home to a variety of trail running and gravel cycling races, including the Tussey Mountainback 50-Mile Ultra Race & Relay and the Rothrock GRIT Gravel Grinder. The state forest is managed by DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, and the trails are primarily cared for by the Nittany Mountain Bike Association (NMBA) and Friends of Coopers Gap.

Rothrock State Forest has opportunities for camping ranging from rental cabins, primitive campgrounds available for reservation, and backcountry campsites that let you stay right on the trail. Bald Eagle State Forest, home to over 150 miles of trail and forest road, is adjacent to Rothrock. Adjacent to the State Forest, the Harvest Fields Bike Park in Boalsburg, PA (just outside of State College) is a jump and skills park for all experience levels.

Enjoying the sunset in Rothrock State Forest, PA.



Michaux State Forest

Trail Mileage: 300+

Distance from PIT: 3.5 hours, 200 miles

Michaux State Forest, located in south-central Pennsylvania, has over 85,000 acres of public land for outdoor recreation. The forest is home to 300 miles of trail and service road for biking and hiking, and is also open to cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. Michaux State Forest also has a selection of climbing routes that include bouldering, top rope, and trad climbing.

The expansive trail network has a variety of terrain, but the majority is technical and natural

feeling. Rock gardens and steep punchy climbs are common on the trails. The over 100 individual trails have consistent elevation change that is best suited to moderate or advanced riders. Michaux State Forest is also a favorite amongst gravel cyclists, and even hosts Michaux GRVL, an annual gravel race with inclusive categories and a range of distances offered.

The forest is contiguous but is less than a mile wide at the narrowest point, creating a distinct northern and southern section. Michaux State Forest is home to 40 miles of the Appalachian Trail, a 2,200 mile hiking trail that runs from Georgia to Maine. Four different state parks are adjacent to Michaux, including Mont Alto, Caledonia, Pine Grove Furnace, and Kings Gap Environmental Education Center. Camping is available in the state forest and ranges from cabins to primitive tent camping.

Mixed use riding in Michaux State Forest, PA.



Bald Eagle State Forest

Trail Mileage: 150+

Distance from PIT: 3+ hours, 170 miles

Bald Eagle State Forest, located in central Pennsylvania, provides expansive and remote mountain biking opportunities, spread over multiple distinct areas across the noncontiguous state forest. Seven Mountains, Poe Paddy and Poe Valley State Parks are located in the southern portion of Bald Eagle State Forest, with R.B. Winter State Park in the northern portion. Additionally, the northern portion of Bald Eagle State Forest is adjacent to Tiadaghton State Forest, with trails connecting northward along South White Deer Ridge, just north of I-80.

This remote section of the Appalachians is home to over 150 miles of mountain bike trail. The terrain varies, featuring rolling hills, technical sections, rocky paths, and the occasional steep climb or descent. The wide variety of trails and terrain in the area provides endless loops and challenges for riders to enjoy.

The Bald Eagle Mountain Bike Association advocates for mountain biking in Bald Eagle State Forest and host events including trail maintenance days, social group rides, and an annual Jamboree Weekend in September. The Trans-Sylvania Mountain Bike Epic is an annual well-known multi-day mountain bike race with stages through the southern section of Bald Eagle State Forest and neighboring Rothrock State Forest. UnPAved is a respected annual gravel bike race through the state forest with multiple distances offered.

Managed by the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Bald Eagle State Forest has a selection of campgrounds and rental cabins that give guests dark skies and a remote experience. R.B. Winter State Park has a mountain lake and wading beach, and many scenic overlooks are located on the surrounding peaks.

Jakes Rocks

Trail Mileage: 35+

Distance from PIT: 3 hours, 160 miles

Jakes Rocks is a 35+ mile renowned trail system in Warren County at the northern edge of the Allegheny National Forest. The trail system is located along the Allegheny Reservoir, created by the Kinzua Dam on the Allegheny River. Large boulders and vertical rock walls are scattered throughout the area, creating a unique landscape and trail experience and the namesake of the trails. Trail difficulty ranges from mostly smooth hard packed trails with little elevation change to fast descents and advanced terrain, meaning there's something for everyone at Jakes.

Events are regularly held at Jakes Rocks, ranging from social group rides to the Jakes Rocks MTB Marathon in June and the Jakes Rocks Trail Fest in September. The Trail Fest features a shuttle service, demo bikes, vendors, and entertainment for the weekend.

Camping is available at Dewdrop Campground, which connects via singletrack to the rest of the trail network. Kinzua Beach and the Kinzua Wolf Run Marina are right on the reservoir, and offer a place to paddle or cool down. Kinzua Bridge State Park is located nearby, the site of the now-collapsed Kinzua Bridge, touted as the tallest and longest railroad structure in the world before being destroyed in a 2003 tornado. The remaining viewing area looks over the mangled bridge in the valley below.

The trails were constructed by Dirt Artisans in association with the Northern Allegheny Mountain Bike Association, Trail Solutions of IMBA, and the Allegheny National Forest. The Allegheny National Forest is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

WEST VIRGINIA

Big Bear Lake Trail Center

Trail Mileage: 50

Distance from PIT: 2 hours, 115 miles

Located within two hours of Pittsburgh, the Big Bear Lake Trail Center is a privately owned trail system located in northern West Virginia. Visitors to the trails experience 50 miles of professionally developed singletrack specifically designed for

mountain biking. The trails are open to cyclists, hikers, and cross country skiers from January 1st through October 31st, with both day and season passes available.

Big Bear Lake Trail Center offers a diverse selection of trails and features including exposed boulders, challenging rock gardens, and fast descents. The trail network has a moderate amount of elevation change that allows for riders of all ability levels to enjoy the trails. Campsites are located at nearby Beaver Creek Village, and additional amenities include Bearfoot Springs Water Park, equipment rentals, and Baby Bear Lake Beach. Big Bear Lake Trail Center is host to the annual Bike Bash WV event featuring vendors, clinics and group rides, and entertainment.

Through the understory in Big Bear Lake Trail Center, WV.



Davis Trails

Trail Mileage: 175+

Distance from PIT: 3 hours, 150 miles

Davis, West Virginia is a mountain bike destination consisting of multiple distinct areas and a variety of trails and stunning landscapes. Distinct areas and trail networks include the CVI Trails, Blackwater Falls State Park, the Canaan/Backbone Mountain, and Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

The Davis Trails allow hikers and bikers to experience the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, a federal designation to preserve the

unique high-elevation wetlands and landscapes. Blackwater Falls State Park is known for the 57-foot cascade waterfall, and has a campground that connects by trail to the network.

Across 175+ miles of trail, riders will experience a thorough variety of terrain including exposed rock, wooden features, and lush singletrack. Riders can tailor their routes to match the distance, elevation, and difficulty that they're looking for. Davis is located within 3 hours of both Pittsburgh and Washington D.C, and is a must-ride in West Virginia.

The Davis trail network hosts multiple mountain bike and trail running races each year, but is known for its feature event in June, the Canaan MTB Festival. The social event draws people for group rides, skills demos, and entertainment.

Roaring Blackwater Falls near Davis, WV.



Cacapon Resort State Park

Trail Mileage: 25 miles

Distance from PIT: 3.5 hours, 180 miles

Established in 2018, Cacapon Resort State Park is quickly becoming a destination for mountain bikers. The park currently has 25 miles of purpose-built mountain bike trails, and plans to expand their trail network with an additional 30 miles. Located in northeastern West Virginia, Cacapon Resort State Park has trails for all styles of riding, from fast downhills to methodical backcountry across the

1400+ feet of elevation change. The 6,000 acre state park has both technical sections and flow trails, with the occasional built feature and rollable jumps.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) has worked with the Appalachian Conservation Corps (ACC) to create a featured gravity trail called Thunderstruck -- a hand-built expert level trail to serve as the park's signature trail. The West Virginia Mountain Bike Association helps put on two major races a year at Cacapon -- the Rock and Roll at Cacapon and the 5-stage Cacapon Enduro. The Rock and Roll at Cacapon is an interscholastic race that is meant to get youth on bikes.

Singletrack riding in Cacapon Resort State Park, WV.



Snowshoe & Slatyfork

Trail Mileage Total: 102

Snowshoe Bike Park: 24 miles

Snowshoe trails: 25 miles

Slatyfork trails: 53 miles

Distance from PIT: 4 hours, 200 miles

Snowshoe and Slatyfork are two separate mountain biking areas within Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. The area is known to cyclists for the remote feel, dark skies, and purpose-built mountain bike trails.

Mountain biking in Snowshoe consists of Snowshoe Bike Park and Snowshoe 'back-country' mountain bike trails. Snowshoe Bike Park is privately owned and offers chairlift access for downhill runs on their machine-groomed trails. Snowshoe Bike Park has 24 miles of trail with 1,500 feet of elevation change. The bike park is open May through October, and regularly hosts events and races with many designed to be social events inclusive of beginners. Snowshoe Bike Park is a host of the annual UCI Mountain Bike World Cup, where the best in the world come to compete.

The Snowshoe Backcountry mountain bike trails are adjacent to the Snowshoe Bike Park and are free to access year-round. With over 25 miles of diverse trails through scenic woods, Snowshoe Backcountry trails are a favorite among locals. Nearby lodging includes the Snowshoe Campground and a selection of inns.

Slatyfork mountain bike trails are only a few miles east of Snowshoe Bike Park. Slatyfork has 53 miles of flowy trail through the Tea Creek area. Slatyfork has been the host of many races put on by the West Virginia Mountain Bike Association (WV MBA), including the well-known Slatyfork Enduro. On the eastern side of Slatyfork are the Sharp Knob Base Trails, a novice-friendly set of trails that offer a great warmup or place to progress.

The land is managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR). Cabins are available within the state park with additional lodging and amenities in nearby Berkeley Springs.

OHIO

Wayne National Forest

Trail Mileage: 34 miles

Distance from PIT: 2.5 hours, 140 miles

Wayne National Forest - Marietta Unit, is a part of the noncontiguous Wayne National Forest in southeast Ohio. Mountain bike trails are located in two separate areas - near Wade, within Wayne National Forest, and near Marietta, just outside the forest boundary. These two sets of trails are disconnected but proximate to each other.

Wade, Ohio is an unincorporated community along the Ohio River on the Ohio/West Virginia border. Over 80 miles of mountain bike trails are accessible from the Ohio River Scenic Byway. The North Country Trail, a legacy hiking trail from South Dakota to Vermont, is open to mountain bikes in this area from April through December providing riders with out-and-back rides.

The trails in this area are mostly singletrack, ranging from leaf-covered dirt to technical rock gardens. Ample elevation change and the remote nature of the trails makes Wayne National Forest more suited to advanced riders. Leith Run Campground is only a half mile from the trailhead and is on the bank of the Ohio River, although bikepacking to backcountry camping spots is popular. Wayne National Forest is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. A paid permit was previously required to cycle in Wayne National Forest, but has been changed and is no longer required.

Marietta, Ohio is adjacent to a section of Wayne National Forest referred to as the Marietta Unit. Marietta has a network of trails that spans 34 miles easily accessible from the city. These urban trails are maintained by the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike

Association (RVMBBA) and offer a mix of rugged, rocky terrain and hard-packed singletrack. The RVMBBA holds annual events in the area such as The Challenge at Mountwood and Take a Kid/Friend Mountain Biking Day.

Mohican State Park

Trail Mileage: 30+

Distance from PIT: 3 hours, 150 miles

Mohican State Park, located in north-central Ohio and is known for the massive cave overhangs in the park, is also home to over 30 miles of mountain bike trail. The trails are mostly hard-packed and leaf-covered singletrack that offer riders a natural-feeling trail experience. A moderate amount of elevation change throughout the trails keeps rides interesting and helps cyclists challenge themselves.

The annual Mohican 100 MTB Race offers both a 100-mile and 100-kilometer option that puts mountain bikers to the test as part of the National Ultra Endurance (NUE) race series. Trail Jamboree events and group rides are also held for cyclists who aren't looking to compete. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources manages the state park land, and Mohican State Park Campground is accessible via the trail.

Athens - Baileys Trail System & Strouds Run State Park

Trail Mileage: 71 miles

Bailey's: 31 miles

Strouds Run: 40 miles

Distance from PIT: 3 hours, 190 miles

The Baileys Trail System and Strouds Run State Park are two separate trail systems located on opposing sides of Athens, Ohio. Positioned on the southern edge of the Wayne National Forest - Athens Unit, these two areas boast flowy and fast singletrack that is suitable for riders of all skill levels.

Baileys Trail System, located northwest of Athens, currently has 31 miles of trail, but will be expanded to over 80 miles of purpose-built mountain biking trails. Baileys features a variety of trails designed for beginner to expert riders, but is known for the flowy hard-packed trails and fast singletrack.

Strouds Run State Park is located just northeast of Athens, Ohio and blends with Sells Park to create a 40-mile network of trails. The trails offer a mixture of flowy singletrack and moderately steep pitches as they circle Dow Lake. Strouds Run State Park Campground is connected by trail to the rest of the network.

Athens, Ohio is a bike-friendly city with ample bicycle infrastructure including a 22-mile paved bikeway, bike shops, and a cycling community. Lake Hope is an additional mountain bike area, just 30 minutes from Athens that is home to another 25 miles of mountain bike trail.



Pittsburgh

Frick Park

Trail Mileage: 29

Frick Park in Pittsburgh is a favorite amongst locals for getting into nature within the city. At just over 1 square mile, Frick Park boasts 64 individual trails. Frick Park has something for mountain bikers of all experience levels featuring hand-built sweeping berms and wooden obstacles. The trails are squeezed onto the banks of Nine Mile Run, creating a unique feel of being tucked away in nature while still being very much in the city. The Roller Coaster Trail is a favorite at Frick Park for its swooping rises, dips, and sweeping corners.

The single- and double-track trails of Frick Park are shared by both hikers and bikers. Frick Park is managed by the City of Pittsburgh Parks & Recreation Department of Public Works.

North Park

Trail Mileage: 39

Spanning over 3000 acres, North Park is the largest park in Allegheny County and has many opportunities for recreation. North Park has 39 miles of trails for hiking and biking, an ice skating rink, a 75-acre lake, and an 18-hole golf course. The trails are hard-packed and have a fun mixture of exposed roots and rocks, and smooth descents. The terrain is suitable for riders of all experience levels and is a great way to get out of the city and experience a piece of nature.

The pump track and Freeride Skills Park help riders build their skills to take on the Dr. J Freeride trail - a freestyle downhill trail with jump lines, banked corners, and built wooden features that keep enthusiasts entertained. The Rachel Carson Trail is a hiking trail that connects to North Park and links to multiple communities, Hartwood Acres as well as Harrison Hills Parks.

Boyce Park

Trail Mileage: 28+

The 1000-acre Boyce Park in Allegheny County has over 28 miles of singletrack wound together through the park. The 160-foot hill only has mild elevation change throughout the trails, making Boyce suitable for riders of all skill levels. The 56 trails are a series of well-blazed stacked loops that let riders take a different route each ride.

The smooth and flowy trails snake around trees with banked corners that creates a unique feel and is loved by locals. Boyce Park has the only downhill skiing in Allegheny County and also boasts a wave pool, skate park, and archery range. The West Shore Composite Mountain Bike Team hosts multiple events a year with emphasis on the Boyce Big Ring Rally each September.

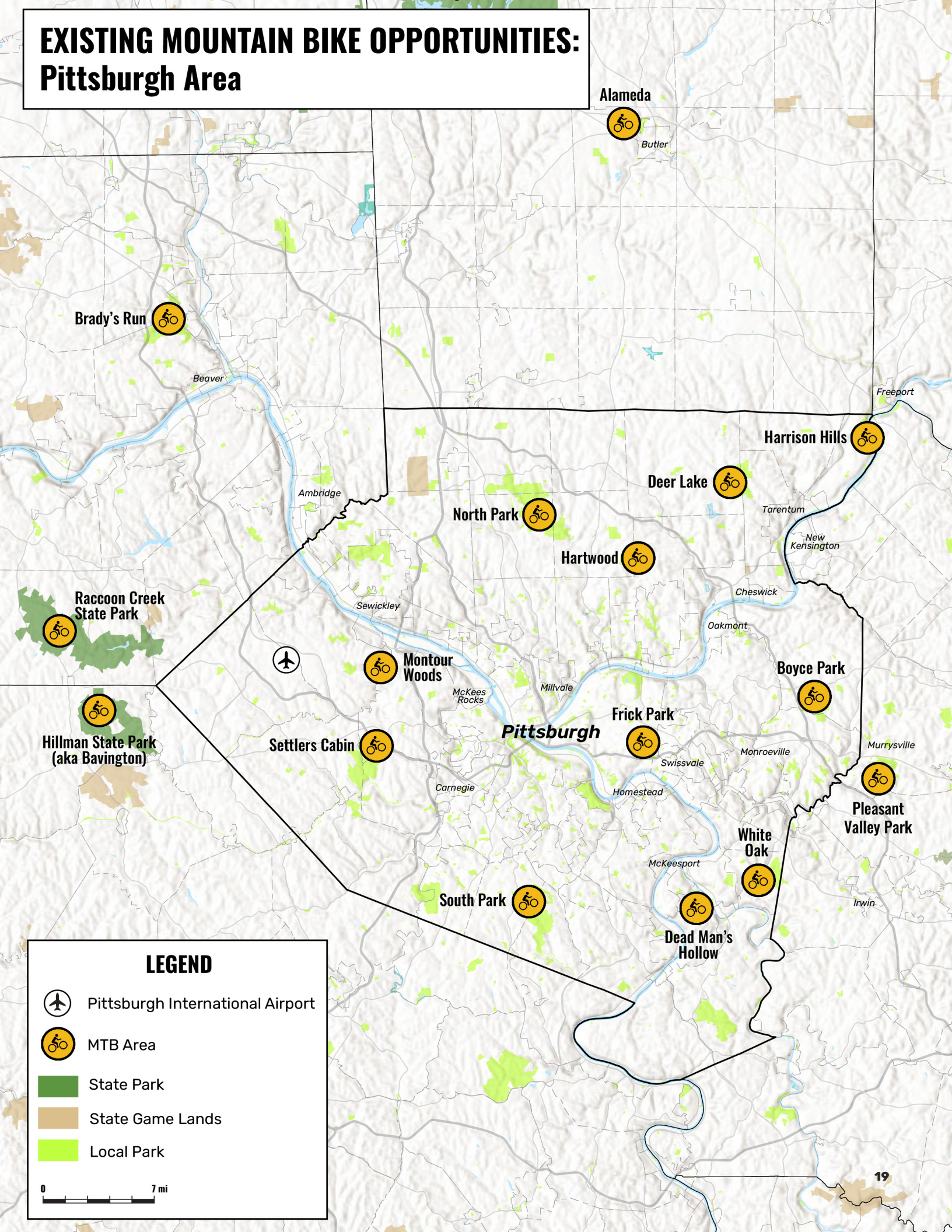
South Park

Trail Mileage: 20+






South Park is the second largest park in Allegheny County at 2000 acres and is home to 20+ miles of trails for hiking and biking. The park is equipped with a golf course, ice skating rink, BMX track, skatepark, and amphitheater. The trails are compacted dirt and are relatively smooth with a moderate amount of elevation change possible on the trails. South Park Skills Area has purpose built features for riders to get creative and test their control. The skills park is designed for progression and can still keep advanced riders entertained.

The Montour Trail, a 62-mile rail trail around Allegheny and Washington counties, serves as a trail connection to the park and surrounding communities. South Park previously served as the Allegheny County fairgrounds until the 1960s, and plans to restore the fairgrounds have been proposed. The Fairgrounds Flow Trail was built in 2021 by Allegheny County and Trail Pittsburgh and is a favorite at the park.

EXISTING MOUNTAIN BIKE OPPORTUNITIES: Pittsburgh Area



LEGEND

-  Pittsburgh International Airport
-  MTB Area
-  State Park
-  State Game Lands
-  Local Park

0 7 mi

Hartwood Acres

Trail Mileage: 23+

Hartwood Acres houses over 23 miles of wooded trail for hikers, bikers, cross-country skiers, and equestrians. The park also has an enclosed dog park, and hosts outdoor concerts and events through the summer. The trails are known for the quick plunging descents and fast corners. The 57 individual trails create a series of loops with mild overall elevation change.

The Rachel Carson Trail runs just 1/4 mile north of Hartwood Acres and is easily accessed via a low-volume road.

Getting muddy in Hartwood Acres, PA.



White Oak Park

Trail Mileage: 9

White Oak Park is located in southeastern Allegheny County and is a great place for beginner and intermediate mountain bikers to ride. The 9 miles of singletrack have mild to moderate elevation change that is friendly to all riders. Multiple parking areas and picnic shelters are available, and riders can create a variety of trail loops. The smooth trails flow in both directions and are enjoyed by hikers and bikers alike.

Harrison Hills Park

Trail Mileage: 12

Harrison Hills Park is located in the northeastern corner of Allegheny County, positioned along the Allegheny River. This 524-acre park has 12 miles of trail in both the wooded and pastoral sections of park. The trails are mostly raw feeling with packed dirt and leaf litter. The trails have mild to moderate elevation change on the bank of the Allegheny River, making it perfect for beginner and intermediate riders. Trail users can access an overlook platform and many views over the river.

Harrison Hills Park is connected to the Rachel Carson Trail and is just outside of Freeport, the southern end of the 21-mile Butler-Freeport Community Trail.

Deer Lakes Park

Trail Mileage: 20

Deer Lakes Park is nearly 2 square miles and encompasses 3 fishing lakes, an observatory, a disc golf course, water spray park, and an equestrian area, as well as trails for hiking, biking, and trail running. The 20 miles of singletrack around the rolling hills is hard packed and flowy, with only mild elevation change that is suited for beginner and intermediate skill levels. Riders can opt to take the park roads uphill for easy climbing to focus on repeated downhill runs. Called a hidden gem of Pittsburgh, Deer Lakes Park has something for the whole family.

OUTSIDE ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Raccoon Creek & Bavington / Hillman State Park

Raccoon Creek State Park and Hillman State Park are both known for their networks of mountain bike trails. These two separate state parks are less than 10 miles apart and combined have nearly 100 miles of trail and forest roads. Hillman State Park is colloquially known to mountain bikers as Bavington because the village of Bavington is adjacent to the state park.

The trails at Bavington are winding but not overly technical with exposed roots with mild elevation change on the long runs. Multiple day-long loops are approachable by riders of varying skill levels.

The 30 miles of singletrack and 20 miles of service roads at Hillman State Park are appreciated by hikers, snowshoers and cross country skiers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. The park also allows fishing in the many streams and has a dedicated area for radio controlled model planes. The Bavington trails are maintained by the Pittsburgh Trails Advocacy Group (PTAG) stewards and volunteers each year.

Raccoon Creek State Park is just over 5 miles north of Hillman State Park and only 25 miles from the city of Pittsburgh. The 7,500 acre park has a 100+ acre lake, and 32 miles of trail for hikers and bikers to enjoy. The lake is open to non-motorized boats with equipment to rent on the lake. Cabins and primitive camping are offered at both state parks.

Alameda Singletrack

Alameda Singletrack in Butler, Pennsylvania is a sustainable and purpose-built mountain bike park that is connected to the city of Butler via the Alameda Park Multi Use Trail. Alameda Singletrack is known for winding flow trails, rolling hills, and sweeping banked corners. The 15+ miles are designed to gradually get more difficult as you get further from the trailheads. This design lets beginners comfortably get their tires on the trail

and easily find harder terrain. Alameda Singletrack has unique and creative wooden features throughout the forest and a variety of jump lines for advanced riders.

Alameda is a Butler County park and includes a pool, dog park, and extensive park and playground area. Alameda Singletrack can be reached from downtown Pittsburgh in less than an hour and is a popular destination for mountain bikers in the region.

Roaring Run / Apollo

Trail Mileage: 10

The Roaring Run trail system is positioned just south of Apollo along the Kiskiminetas (“Kiski”) River and the Roaring Run Furnace Trail. The Roaring Run Furnace Trail is a 13-mile multi-use trail that connects Apollo to Edmon along the Kiski River. The multi-use trail provides direct access to the mountain biking and hiking trails that overlook the river below. The trails have tight corners around punchy climbs, fast drops, and technical terrain that can challenge cyclists.

The Roaring Run Furnace Trail passes a boat launch, providing paddle access to the river and water trail. The Roaring Run Watershed Association is responsible for the multi-use path, and the Roaring Run Rock Riders maintain the mountain bike trails.

Moraine State Park

Trail Mileage: 11

Moraine State Park, in Butler County, surrounds Lake Aurthur, a 3,200 acre man-made reservoir. Moraine State Park has a 7-mile multi-use trail that traverses the north side of the reservoir and connects to the rest of the trail network. Moraine State Park has 11 miles of mountain bike specific trail, featuring technical terrain with lots of exposed roots and rocks. Moderate elevation change makes Moraine State Park best suited for intermediate or advanced riders.

Moraine State Park has many other recreational opportunities, including sandy beaches, boat launches onto the lake, a golf course & disc golf course, multiple marinas, and educational preservation areas. Cabins and campgrounds are available right on the lake, or at nearby Cooper’s Lake Event Venue and Campground. Moraine State Park is managed by DCNR’s Bureau of State Parks.

Brady’s Run Park

Trail Mileage: 19

The 2,000-acre Brady’s Run Park is equipped with a 22-acre lake and an extensive recreation facility. Brady’s Run Park also has 19 miles of mountain bike trail with a diverse selection of terrain. Between the fast drops and punchy climbs the trail ranges from smooth singletrack to rough and rocky sections to purpose-built wooden features. The trails are open to bikers, hikers, and equestrians.

The park also has sports fields and courts, a dog park, an ice arena, a skatepark, and an indoor jogging track. The lake is open to fishing year-round. Brady’s Run Park is maintained by the Beaver County Department of Public Works.



OTHER CYCLING ASSESTS

Gravel

WHAT IS GRAVEL?

Gravel riding, also known as “mixed surface” riding, is a fast-growing form of cycling that features dirt and gravel roads as the backbone of routes, though routes can use a mix of surfaces including pavement, some singletrack, rail trails, and doubletrack. Routes can be any distance and often feature great scenery and points of interest. Gravel cycling is a great way to link from remote forests into towns and back again, connect off-road paths, and experience the true flavor of a region. Its popularity has resulted in an ever-growing number of events, both of the competitive and non-competitive variety, and mapped routes that riders can explore on their own time and own terms.

GRAVEL ROUTES

Because gravel riding is not confined to one trail system, riders often will create routes through platforms such as RideWithGPS or Strava as a way of exchanging information and intel about the best places to ride. Routes can be created by individuals, but routes of varying distances are also created by event organizers that are custom-designed for the event. More recently, state agencies, tourism promoters, organized cycling groups, and bike shops have begun developing and marketing routes as well. These routes are more likely to be carefully vetted, and are also typically developed in support of a larger agenda, such as tourism or economic impact, or land stewardship.

On the Sheepskin Trail, PA.



Routes & Resources in the Greater Pittsburgh Region

[Ohio Gravel Grinders](#)

The Ohio Gravel Grinders (OGG) website is a grassroots effort to bring gravel routes, an event library, and information to cyclists in Ohio and beyond. The website and companion RideWithGPS page boasts an impressive library of over 450 routes in Ohio, as well as Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, and other states. Additionally, it provides articles on tips, tricks, and considerations for gravel riding, as well as event and ride recaps. The OGG community is also a Facebook group with over 6,000 members, and members organize a number of group rides each year.

[Pennsylvania Environmental Council Public Lands Rides](#)

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Public Lands Ride initiative celebrates and showcases the wealth of public parks and forests across the Commonwealth via mixed surface cycling routes. Each of these rides begin and end in state parks and venture into surrounding state forests, highlighting excellent scenery, interesting natural features and history, and varied terrain.

[Ride PA Gravel](#)

The Ride PA Gravel website is a library of routes created by SweetWater Bikes in Ambridge, PA. Due to its location, it has thus far been western PA focused, but aims to expand the library into other parts of PA and surrounding states.

[Parker Dam in Moshannon State Forest, PA.](#)



GRAVEL BIKE EVENTS

***Disclaimer: this is a small sampling of events, not a comprehensive list.**

unPAved - The biggest gravel event in the region with over 1,000 participants each year. Coincides with Lewisburg, PA's fall festival for a weekend of festivities. The main race is 120 miles but other distances include 30, 50, 90, and 200-milers, as well as an "overnighter" option to do the 120-mile route over two days with camping.

Gravel Race Up Spruce Knob (GRUSK) - A mixed surface ride on and around the highest peak in West Virginia, with a variety of distance options from the 27-mile "Highlights Tour" to the 260-mile "Lungo."

Mammoth Endurance Gravel - Based out of Wellsboro, PA in the Pine Creek Gorge/PA Grand Canyon area and perhaps the hardest gravel event in PA with 15,000 ft of climbing over 140 miles. There is also a shorter version with half that distance and elevation. The route changes from year to year but is always a figure-8 that loops back through town halfway through.

Beginning the ascent up Mt. Davis, the highest point in PA.



Trans-Sylvania Gravel Epic - A gravel stage race in central PA that hits the highlights of Bald Eagle, Rothrock, and Moshannon State Forests, with 4 and 2-day versions and long (60ish mile) and short (40ish mile) course options.

Black Fork Gravel Grinder - A gravel race out of the Mohican Wilderness, where the well-known Mohican 100 mountain bike race also takes place. The event typically happens in early May and offers 54, 30, and 23 mile courses.

Funk Bottoms Gravel - Ohio's first organized gravel event and "Ohio's Toughest Gravel Grinder" with 14,000 feet of elevation gain over 200K. Many riders say this is one of the hardest single-day races in the U.S. There are also 100K and 34K options.

McLain Farm Adventure Race - A 60-mile ride that includes a bit of singletrack, creek crossings, grueling climbs and fast descents, with elements of both mountain bike and gravel rides thrown in. The race ends with a meal, beverages, and live music. There are also 40 and 20 mile distances.

Multi-Use Paths

LONG-DISTANCE TRAILS

1. Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) & 2. C&O Canal Towpath

Most notably, Pittsburgh is one endpoint of the 150-mile [Great Allegheny Passage](#), which terminates in Cumberland, MD at its other end. However, it does connect to the [C&O Canal Towpath](#), which travels another 185 miles to Washington, D.C. for a 335-mile trip.

The Great Allegheny Passage, PA.



3. Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

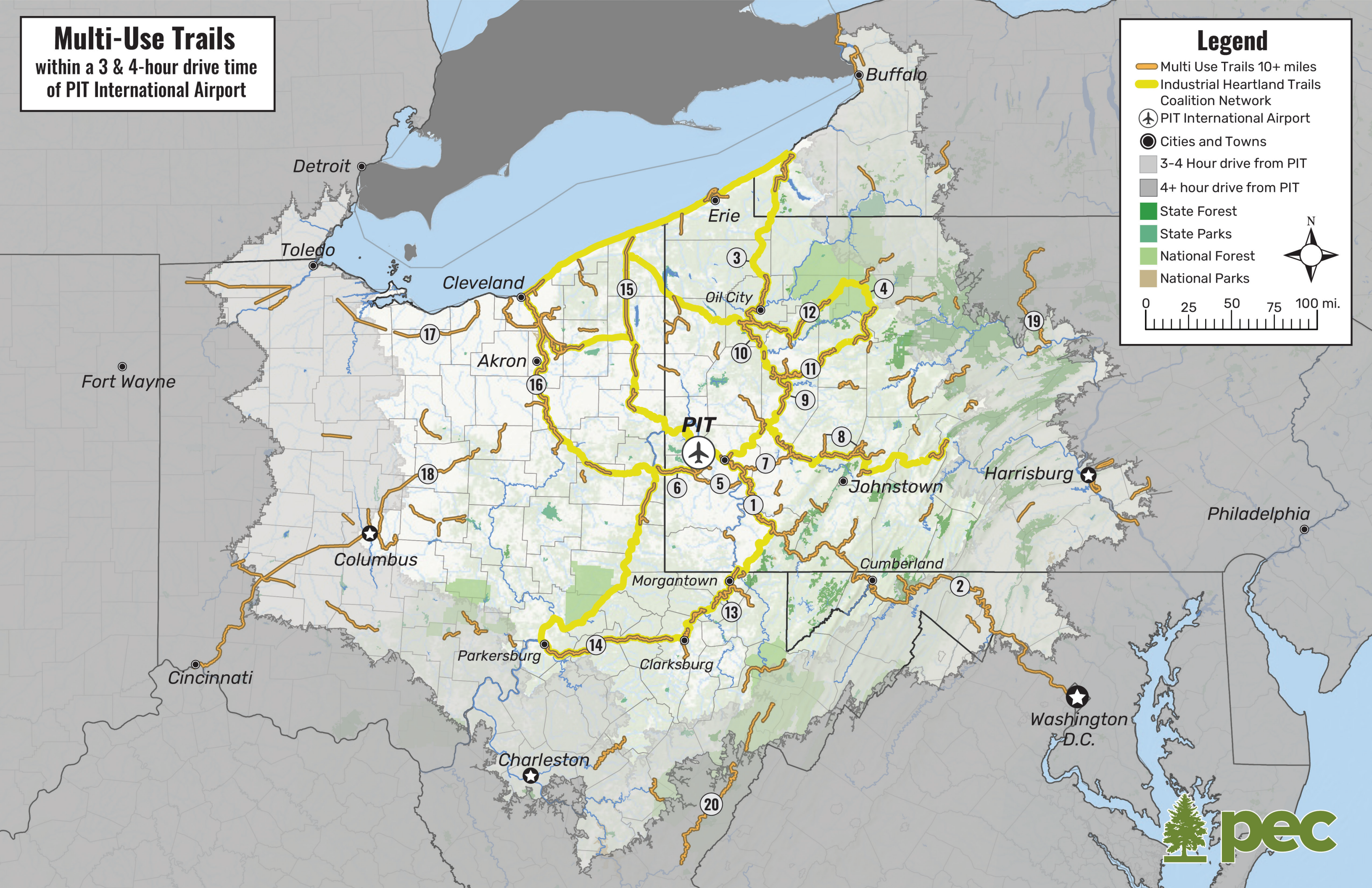
Pittsburgh is also the terminus of the planned Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, which, when completed, will stretch 260 miles northward to Erie, PA. The corridor is currently about 70% complete, with long stretches of contiguous trail on the Armstrong Trails, Allegheny River Trail, Oil Creek State Park Trail, East Branch Trail, and others. Branching off the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail is the 250-mile PA Wilds Loop, another collection of trails in various stages of development linked by rural roadways that connects to Kinzua Bridge State Park via the Knox and Kane Trail.

Multi-Use Trails
within a 3 & 4-hour drive time
of PIT International Airport

Legend

- Multi Use Trails 10+ miles
- Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition Network
- PIT International Airport
- Cities and Towns
- 3-4 Hour drive from PIT
- 4+ hour drive from PIT
- State Forest
- State Parks
- National Forest
- National Parks

0 25 50 75 100 mi.



OTHER DESTINATION TRAILS WITHIN THE GREATER PITTSBURGH REGION

4. PA Wilds Loop

The PA Wilds Loop includes the Armstrong Trails, Redbank Trail, Five Bridges Trail, Clarion-Little Toby Trail, Rail 66 Country Trail, Clarion Highlands Trail, Allegheny River Trail, and Knox and Kane Trail, which branches off to Kinzua Bridge State Park. The trails of the PA Wilds connect the 12.5 counties that make up the region in northwestern Pennsylvania: Warren, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Lycoming, Clinton, Elk, Cameron, Forest, Clearfield, Clarion, Jefferson, and northern Centre. The PA Wilds Loop also connects to the Erie to Pittsburgh corridor of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition.

5. Montour Trail

Trail Length: 74 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 30 min

The Montour Trail is a privately owned and operated rail trail encircling Pittsburgh and is the nation's longest suburban rail-trail. With a main line spanning approximately 47 miles and additional branch routes increasing its length to over 60 miles, this relatively flat half-loop connects Coraopolis to Clairton, while a northwest branch provides direct access to Pittsburgh International Airport. It links to other notable trails in western Pennsylvania, including the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), the C&O Canal Towpath, and the Panhandle Trail, offering an extensive trail system spanning hundreds of miles.

The Sandy Creek Trail on the PA Wilds Loop, PA.



6. Panhandle Trail

Trail Length: 29 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 25 min

The Panhandle Trail follows the historic route of the Panhandle Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, stretching from Walkers Mill in Collier Township, Pennsylvania to Colliers, West Virginia. The trail is predominantly crushed limestone with some paved sections and an average 1% grade. Maintenance of the trail shifts as the trail traverses multiple communities and managing organizations.

7. Westmoreland Heritage Trail

Trail Length: 17.9 miles

Drive Time From PGH: 40 min

The completed segments of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail total 17.9 miles as of July 2019, with plans to expand the distance and connections to other regional trails. The trail meanders through the countryside from Saltsburg to Delmont and Export to Trafford, revealing breathtaking vistas of the Conemaugh River, Loyahanna Creek, and Beaver Run Reservoir. Along the way are landmarks such as the historic Haymaker Gas Well site, the first and most productive gas well in Westmoreland County, offering a glimpse into the region's industrial past shaped by industries such as salt mining, coal mining, natural gas extraction, and steel making.

OTHERS

8. Ghost Town // Hoodlebug Trail

Trail Length: 49 miles // 10 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 1.5 hr

Both the Ghost Town and the Hoodlebug Trails are a part of the larger Trans Allegheny Trails network. This collection of 13 trails spans the area between Pittsburgh and Huntingdon, roughly following the path of the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway. The Hoodlebug Trail, named after the self-propelled passenger coach that ran on the line until 1940, is a popular ten-mile rail-to-trail in Indiana County, PA, commonly used for both recreational activities and commuting. It follows the abandoned Indiana Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, paralleling U.S. 119 for the majority of the ride, with its northern terminus on the Indiana University of Pennsylvania campus. The Ghost Town Trail spans 49 miles, including the 32-mile mainstem from Blacklick to Ebensburg and the 17-mile C&I Extension, which loops northward from Vintondale. The trail passes through scenic landscapes, iron furnaces, and coal-mining remnants.

9. Armstrong Trails

Trail Length: 52.5 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 50 min

The Armstrong Trails travels 52.5 miles along the eastern bank of the Allegheny River. The well-maintained trail offers a range of gentle grades, spanning from 1% to 8%, and is predominantly surfaced with crushed limestone. Select sections within Ford City and Kittanning Boroughs feature smooth asphalt surfaces, increasing trail accessibility.

10. Allegheny River Trail

Trail Length: 32 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 1.5 hr

The Allegheny River Trail offers 32 miles of smooth, asphalt surface stretching from Oil City to Emlenton via a scenic route alongside the Allegheny River. The trail features two historic railroad tunnels, the Kennerdell Tunnel and Rockland Tunnel, with reflectors marking the paved path through the dark passages, and many opportunities to view the wildlife of Western Pennsylvania.

11. Redbank Valley Trail

Trail Length: 42 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 1 hr

The Redbank Valley Trail runs 42 miles along Redbank Creek in Clarion and Jefferson counties. Serving as part of the PA Wilds Loop, this trail begins at the confluence of Redbank Creek and the Allegheny River, connecting with the Armstrong Trail. The trail is volunteer-maintained with a crushed limestone surface that predominantly follows an average grade of less than 1% for all but a half-mile segment. Notably, recent enhancements have been implemented, including the construction of ramps near New Bethlehem to replace a missing bridge, effectively reducing the slope of the section to an 8-9% grade.

12. Knox & Kane Trail

Trail Length: 40 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 2.5 hr

Once finished, the 73.8-mile Knox and Kane Trail will stretch from Kinzua Bridge State Park to Clarion Junction. The 7.5-mile section from Kinzua Bridge

State Park to Mt. Jewett was named the DCNR 2023 Trail of the Year. Portions of the trail are open to horseback riding and snowmobiles, but the majority of the trail is for bicycle and pedestrian use only.

13. Mon River Trail

Trail Length: 29 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 1.5 hr

The Mon River Trail is divided into two sections: the Mon River Rail-Trail north and south sections, connected by the Caperton Trail. Mon River Rail-Trail north section is located between the West Virginia/Pennsylvania state line and Star City, WV, spanning a distance of 6 miles in Monongalia County. It connects to the Sheepskin Trail at the state line, extending the trail by an additional 3 miles. The Mon River Rail-Trail south section extends from the city limits of Morgantown to Pricketts Fort State Park in Marion County, covering a total distance of 18 miles. Both sections of the trail are predominantly crushed limestone, with paved sections of the Caperton Trail through Morgantown. Also under the authority of the Mon River Trails Conservancy is the Deckers Creek Rail Trail, connecting the Mon River Trail in Morgantown to Reedsville, WV.

14. North Bend Rail Trail

Trail Length: 72 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 2.5 hr

The North Bend Rail Trail spans 72 miles through the north-central and western regions of West Virginia, running parallel to U.S. Route 50. Its starting point can be found just west of Clarksburg in the Wolf Summit community, while the trail concludes near Parkersburg in the west. A notable feature of this trail is its abundance of bridges and tunnels, specifically passing over 36 bridges and traversing through 10 tunnels.

15. Western Reserve Greenway

Trail Length: 50 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 2 hr

The Western Reserve Greenway is an expansive 50-mile paved multi-use trail that traverses Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties in northeast Ohio. Within Ashtabula County, 33 miles of this scenic trail meander alongside farms and wooded areas, offering a lush tree canopy that provides much-needed shade during summer months. Maintained by a dedicated team of volunteers, the Greenway boasts well-placed benches, clearly-marked road intersections, and 12 interpretive signs that illustrate the history of the Underground Railroad in Ashtabula County.

16. Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

Trail Length: 90 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 2 hr

The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail served as the route via which mules pulled canal boats between 1827 and 1913, transporting passengers and goods along the historic Ohio & Erie Canal. Today, the trail closely follows the original towpath, guided by historical maps and remnants of the original trail, occasionally deviating in areas where the old path has disappeared over time. Stretching over 90 miles as of 2022, with a planned completion length of 101 miles, the Towpath Trail offers opportunities to explore cultural, historical, natural, and recreational resources along its course. The trail begins at Canal Basin Park in downtown Cleveland and extends southwards to its southernmost trailhead at Canal Lands Park in New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Riding the Mon River Trail, WV. (Credit: Renee Rosensteel, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.)



17. North Coast Inland Trail

Trail Length: 105 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 2.5 hrs

The North Coast Inland Trail is an evolving network of paved trails that traverse several counties in northern Ohio, gradually emerging as a long-distance route between Cleveland and Toledo. While much of the corridor is already well-defined, ongoing efforts aim to fill the remaining gaps along the approximately 105-mile span. The trail showcases the picturesque Midwestern landscape, with expansive farmlands, tree-lined paths, and historic landmarks such as the restored 1871 stone double-arch bridge over the East Branch of the Huron River.

18. Ohio to Erie Trail

Trail Length: 326 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 3 hrs

The Ohio to Erie Trail spans 326 miles, linking the Ohio River to Lake Erie. The trail's southern terminus is located along the Ohio-Kentucky state border near the Ohio River in Cincinnati. Soon after, the trail splits away from the river and heads north through Columbus, Akron, and finally to Cleveland where it meets Lake Erie. Along the way, the trail passes through diverse scenery, from well-paved paths winding through bustling towns and cities to serene stretches of countryside, with occasional sections surfaced in crushed stone.

On the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath, OH. (Credit: Renee Rosensteel, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.)



19. Pine Creek Rail Trail

Trail Length: 62 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 4 hr

The Pine Creek Rail Trail is a 62-mile rail-to-trail, located predominantly in the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. The trail offers opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing. With a 2% grade throughout its length, the trail begins at Wellsboro Junction and concludes in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania. Along the way, trail users can immerse themselves in natural landscapes, including dramatic rock outcrops, cascading waterfalls, and a diverse array of wildlife such as eagles, ospreys, coyotes, deer, wild turkeys, herons, river otters, and black bears. Additionally, the trail boasts a variety of plant life, scattered old-growth timber, and historic pine and spruce plantations, as well as remnants of the Civilian Conservation Corps era. The trail itself features a hard-packed gravel surface suitable for hikers and bikers, while equestrians can enjoy a designated section designed specifically for horses.

The scenic Pine Creek Rail Trail, PA.



20. Greenbrier River Trail

Trail Length: 78 miles

Drive Time from PGH: 4 hr

The Greenbrier River Trail is a scenic 78-mile former railroad, now transformed into a multi-purpose trail for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Once a part of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, the land was abandoned by the 1970s and donated to the state of West Virginia. The trail is now operated by the Parks and Recreation Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. It is West Virginia's longest trail, offering captivating views as it winds through small towns, crosses numerous bridges and tunnels, and traverses remote areas. Recognized as one of the top hiking trails in the country, this trail is part of the National Radio Quiet Zone, ensuring an escape from the digital world and a chance to immerse oneself in the natural beauty of the region's history and landscapes.

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Cyclists often engage in additional outdoor recreation activities, some of which are described on pages **36** to **40**. This is not a comprehensive look at all the activities or locations in the region.

PADDLING

The region offers a variety of opportunities for both whitewater and flatwater paddling. Pittsburgh itself sits at the confluence of three rivers, making up the Three Rivers Water Trail, a series of over 30 access points along the Ohio, Monongohela, and Allegheny Rivers. There are currently 29 official water trails in Pennsylvania alone, and Ohio and West Virginia have similar programs. Water Trails are “recreational waterways on lakes, rivers, and streams between specific destinations with access points and day-use and/or camping sites for the boating public.” Most of Pennsylvania’s water trails are suited for low-impact paddling and are beginner-friendly,

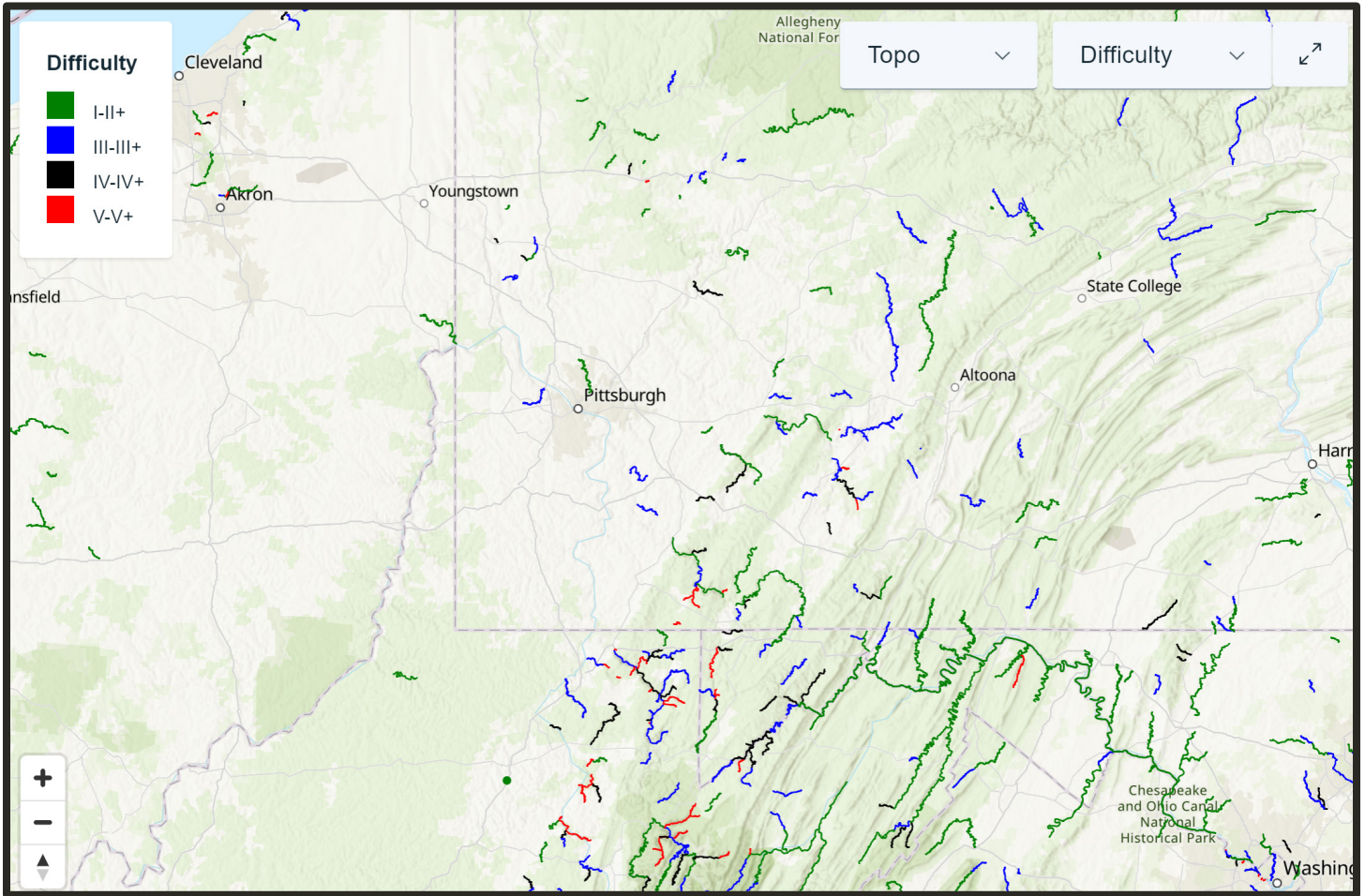
but others in West Virginia are whitewater-specific. There are also countless lakes and reservoirs in the region for flatwater paddling. Many state parks with lakes have boat rentals during the summer months, and a number of outfitters also provide rentals and shuttle services for river trips.

Notable whitewater paddling destinations within the region are the Lower Yough (Ohiopyle) and Stonycreek River in Pennsylvania, and the Cheat, Gauley, and New Rivers in West Virginia, among many others. Guided raft trips are available at most of these destinations. Annual paddling “festivals” and events take place at many of the popular whitewater destinations as well, including the long-standing and iconic Red Moshannon Downriver Race (on Moshannon Creek, also known as the “Red Mo,” just northwest of State College, PA), the Stonycreek Rendezvous, American Whitewater’s Gauley Fest, and the Cheat River Festival.

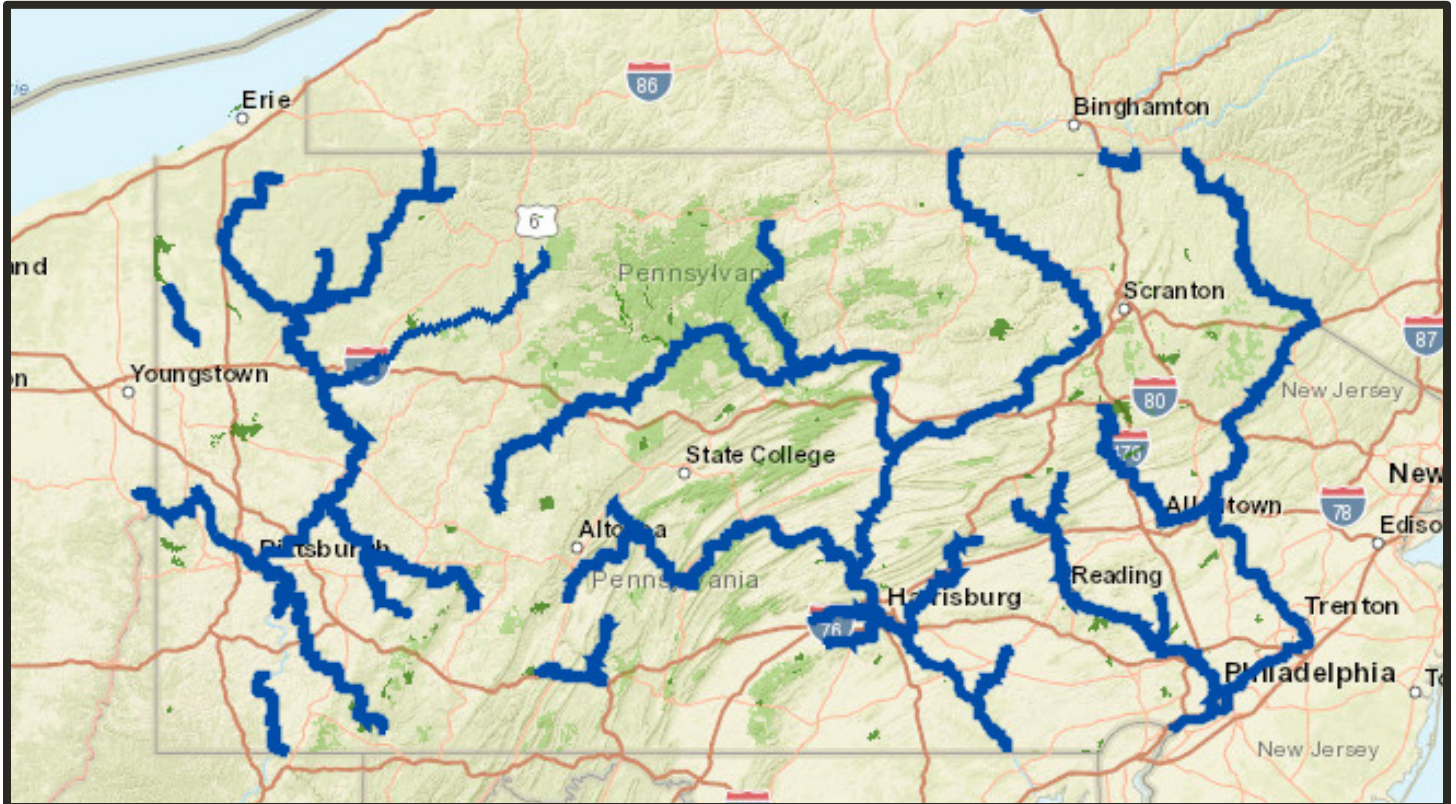
Paddling the Red Moshannon Creek, PA.



American Whitewater webmap of whitewater paddling opportunities in the Greater Pittsburgh Area. (Credit: americanwhitewater.org.)



Webmap of major water trails in Pennsylvania. (Credit: pawatertrails.org.)



SKIING

While increasingly unpredictable winter conditions have been making skiing in the northeast and mid-Atlantic region more of a challenge, there are a number of destination-worthy ski areas to enjoy when there is enough snow. Notably along the Appalachian Mountains through West Virginia and Pennsylvania, a number of resorts for both downhill and cross-country skiing dot the landscape. In Pennsylvania, the Laurel Highlands region boasts Laurel Mountain, Seven Springs, and Hidden Valley Ski Resort as well as Laurel Ridge XC Ski Center, which grooms trails for both skate and classic skiing and offers rentals.

In West Virginia, the area just south of Davis is a skiers paradise with the lift-served Timberline and Canaan Valley Resorts, as well as the iconic Whitegrass Ski Touring Center. Whitegrass offers more than 30 miles of maintained trails over 1,200 vertical feet, allowing cross-country skiers to ascend to the 4,463-foot Weiss Knob and descend back down. Whitegrass also hosts a fat bike race,

known as the Mountain State Fat Bike Champs, every year on the ski trails.

Farther south in West Virginia and just inside the 4-hour drive time radius is Snowshoe Mountain Resort, which not only offers downhill skiing but also has facilities for cross-country skiing and alpine touring, snow tubing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. In the summer, the mountain becomes a world-class lift-served bike park, and is adjacent to many miles of other mountain bike trails.

Another notable skiing hotspot in the region is Ellicottville, NY, home to HoliMont and Holiday Valley. Their proximity to Lake Erie means that often these resorts see lake-effect snow when others in the region do not.

Snow and conditions-willing, there is excellent cross-country skiing at countless areas throughout the region, including Black Moshannon and Prince Gallitzin State Parks in PA, Alpine Lake and New Germany State Park in WV, and Boutwell Hill State Forest in NY, among many others.










Cross country skiing in the Quehanna Wild Area, PA.




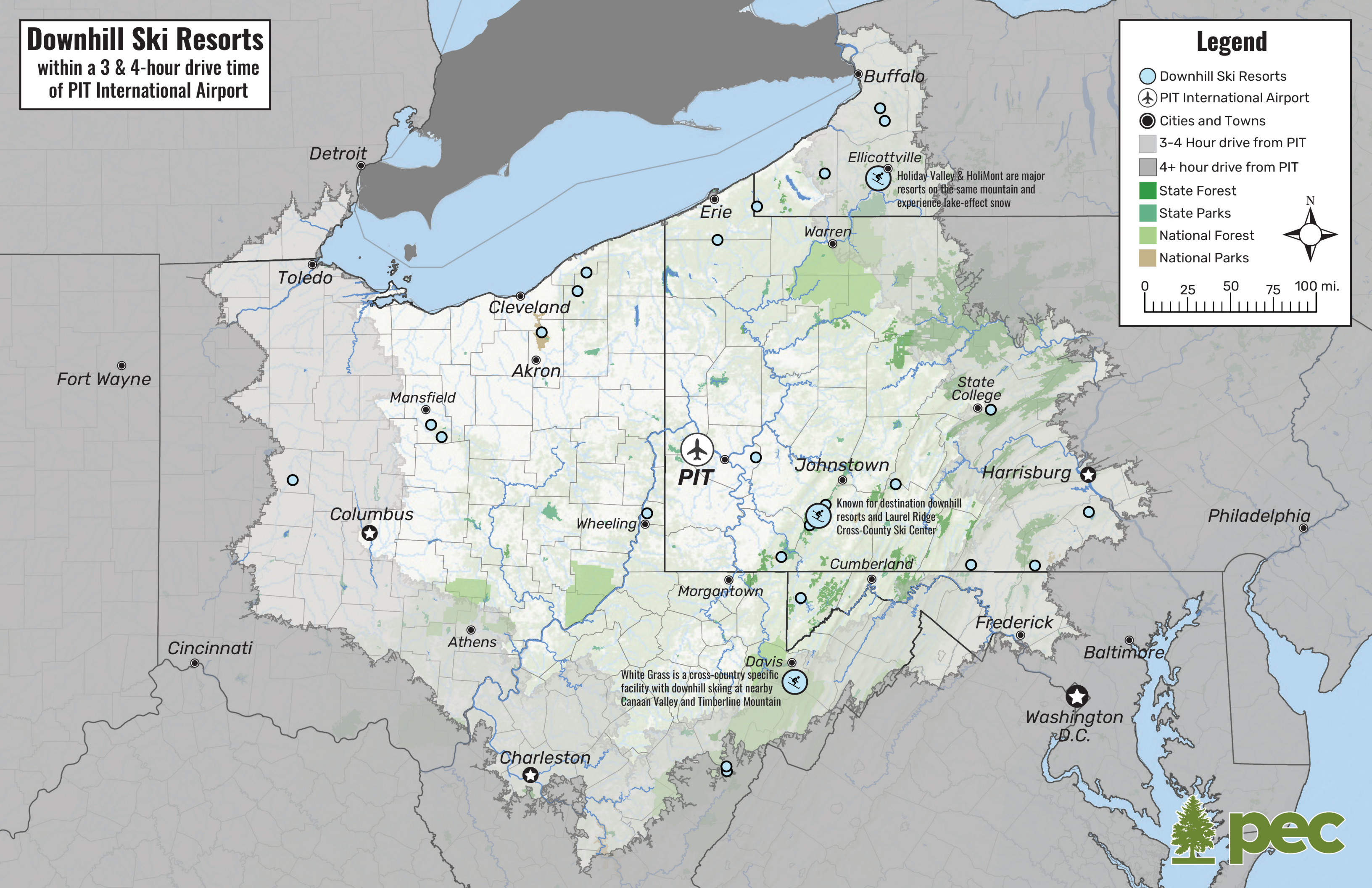
Downhill Ski Resorts

within a 3 & 4-hour drive time of PIT International Airport

Legend

-  Downhill Ski Resorts
-  PIT International Airport
-  Cities and Towns
-  3-4 Hour drive from PIT
-  4+ hour drive from PIT
-  State Forest
-  State Parks
-  National Forest
-  National Parks

0 25 50 75 100 mi.

OTHERS

In addition to the extensive and varied mountain, gravel, and rail trail cycling opportunities; miles of whitewater and flatwater paddling; and cross-country and downhill skiing and snowboarding at select destinations, there are countless other complementary outdoor activities and amenities within 4 hours of the Pittsburgh International Airport.

Long-distance hiking trails such as the Mid-State Trail, Rachel Carson Trail, and North Country Trail pass through the area, and there are thousands of miles of singletrack trails in the many national, state, and local parks and forests that cover the region. Outdoor rock climbing abounds, notably in many areas of West Virginia such as the New River Gorge and Summersville Lake. Acres of preserved land and backcountry experiences in the remote parts of the region provide ample opportunities for birdwatching, wildlife viewing, and more.

From below to clockwise on following page: hiking in the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area near Davis, WV; hiking the Chimney Rocks in Michaux State Forest, PA; cross country skiing the Allegheny Front Trail, PA; whitewater kayaking on Kish Creek, PA.





OUTDOOR HUBS

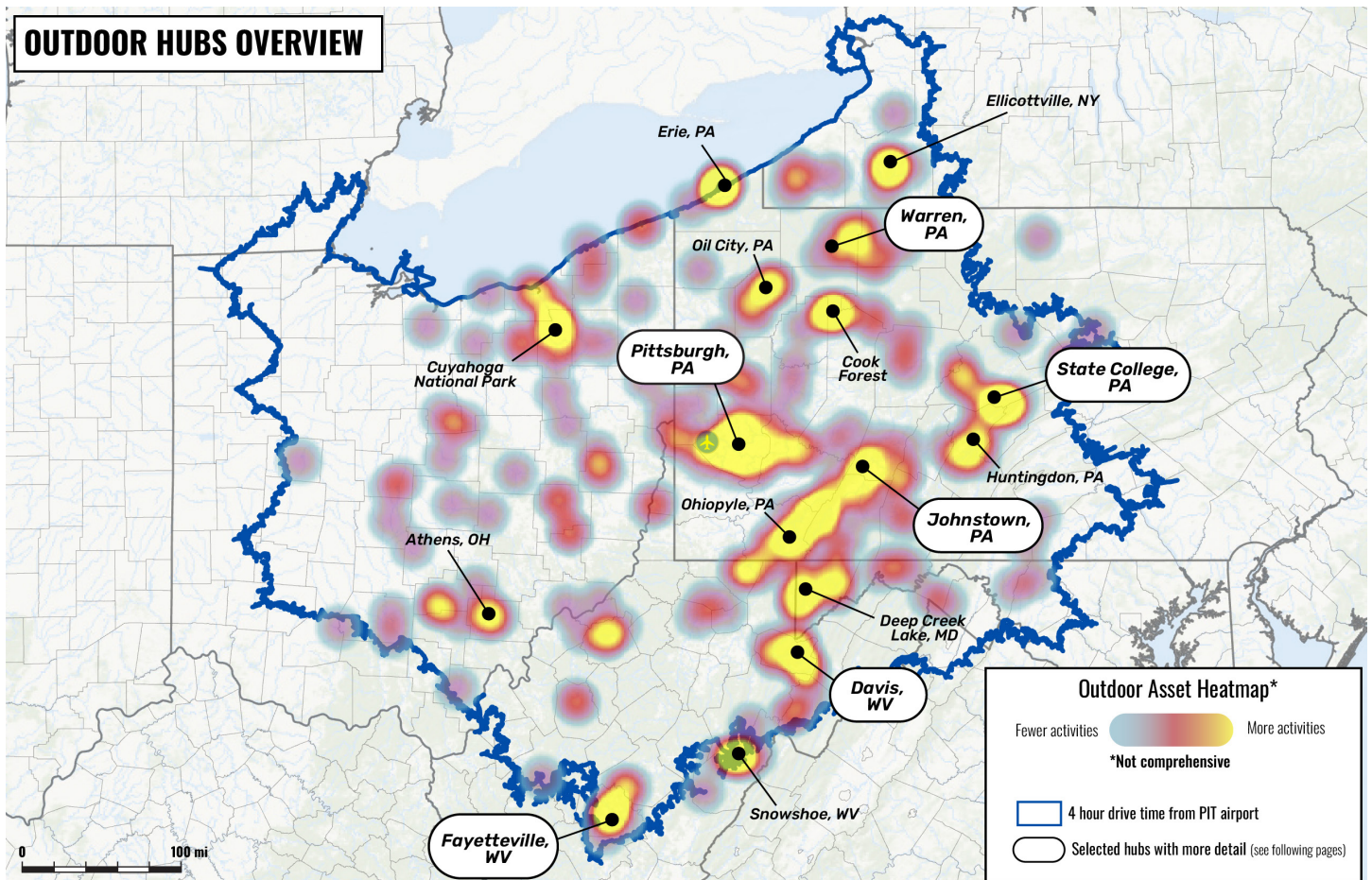
This section describes a sampling of outdoor recreation “hotspots” throughout the region, which offer a variety of complementary activities such as skiing, paddling, rock climbing, or long-distance hiking opportunities in addition to mountain bike trails.

Disclaimer: These examples are not comprehensive - there are other communities with a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and there may be assets in each of the map regions that are not shown.

Outdoor Hub Map Legend at right is intended for Outdoor Hub Maps on pages 44 to 54.

Outdoor Hub Map Legend

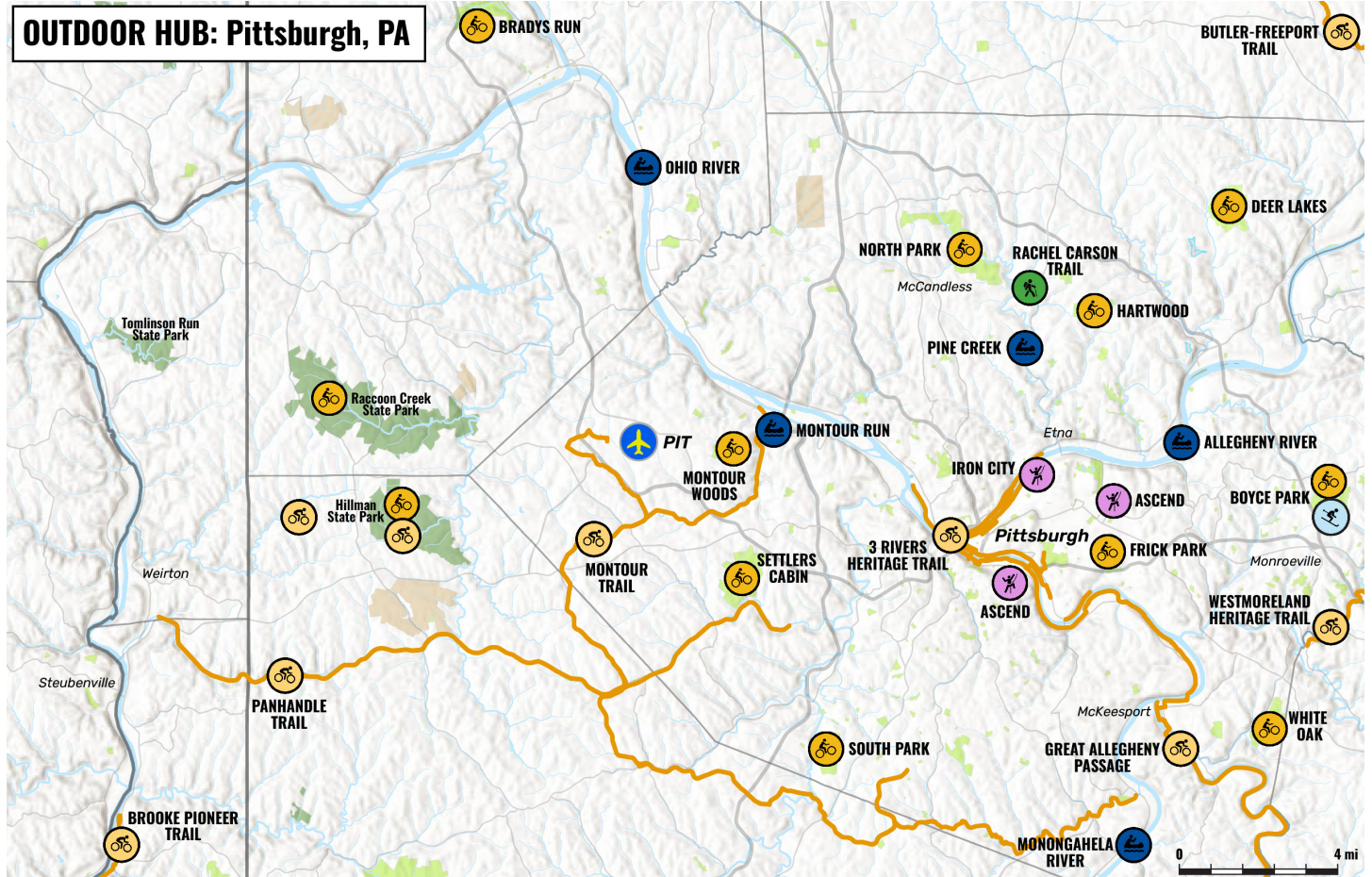
- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|
|  | MOUNTAIN BIKING |  | STATE FOREST |
|  | RAIL TRAILS & GRAVEL BIKING |  | STATE PARK |
|  | PADDLING |  | STATE GAME LANDS |
|  | DOWNHILL SKIING |  | LOCAL PARK |
|  | XC SKIING |  | FEDERAL LAND |
|  | HIKING | | |
|  | ROCK CLIMBING | | |



Going for a ride in the snow in Rothrock State Forest (near Outdoor Hub State College, PA).



Pittsburgh, PA



The only major city on this list, Pittsburgh's flavor of outdoor adventure is different from the other locations featured, but it has its fair share of outdoor recreation activities just the same. While there aren't vast expanses of wilderness, there are plenty of hidden trail gems tucked away in county parks, including the purpose-built freeride area in North Park. Other parks with notable trail networks include Frick, Hartwood Acres, and Boyce, while countless others offer smaller trail systems.

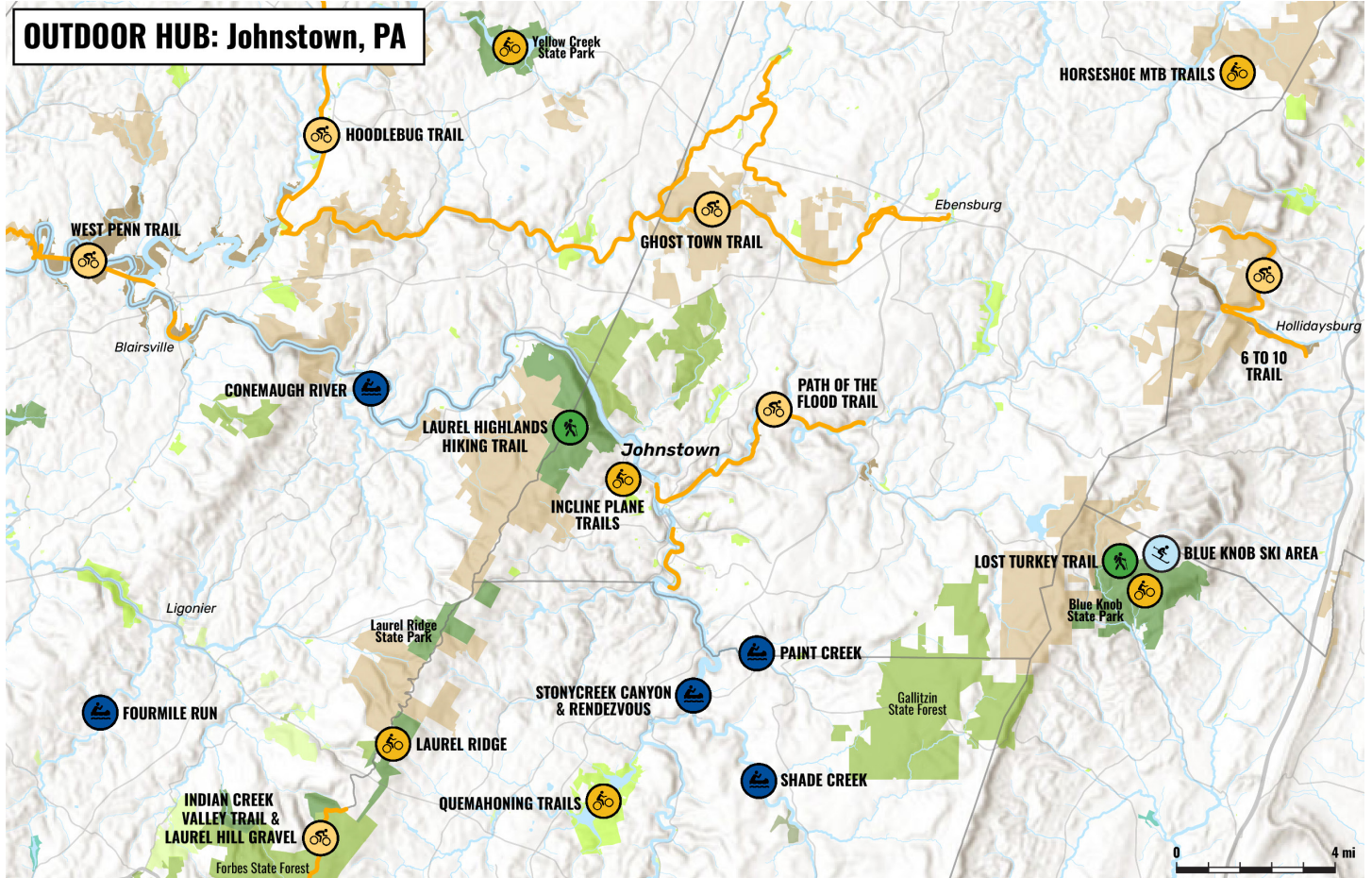
Pittsburgh is the northern terminus of the 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage, which connects to the C&O for a continuous 335-mile ride to Washington D.C. It is also the southern terminus of the planned 260-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. The Panhandle and Montour Trails traverse the western side of Allegheny County and beyond, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail hugs the riverfronts in the city, and the Westmoreland Heritage Trail heads west and connects into the Trans Allegheny Trail corridor towards central PA.

The Rachel Carson Trail travels the 36 miles between North Park and Harrison Hills, and the annual Rachel Carson Trail Challenge tests those willing to take on the entire trail in one day. The Ohio, Monongahela, and Allegheny Rivers, among other smaller streams, offer paddling opportunities, and there are several prominent rock climbing gyms in the city and its outskirts.

Popping a wheelie at Point State Park in Pittsburgh, PA.



Johnstown, PA



The Johnstown area is probably best known for whitewater paddling, with the Class III Stonycreek River, its summer dam release weekends, Greenhouse whitewater park, and annual Stonycreek Rendezvous event being popular draws. The even more difficult Paint Creek, Shade Creek, and others offer Class IV+ runs at high water, while the Conemaugh River offers a more relaxed experience that can be enjoyed by novice paddlers.

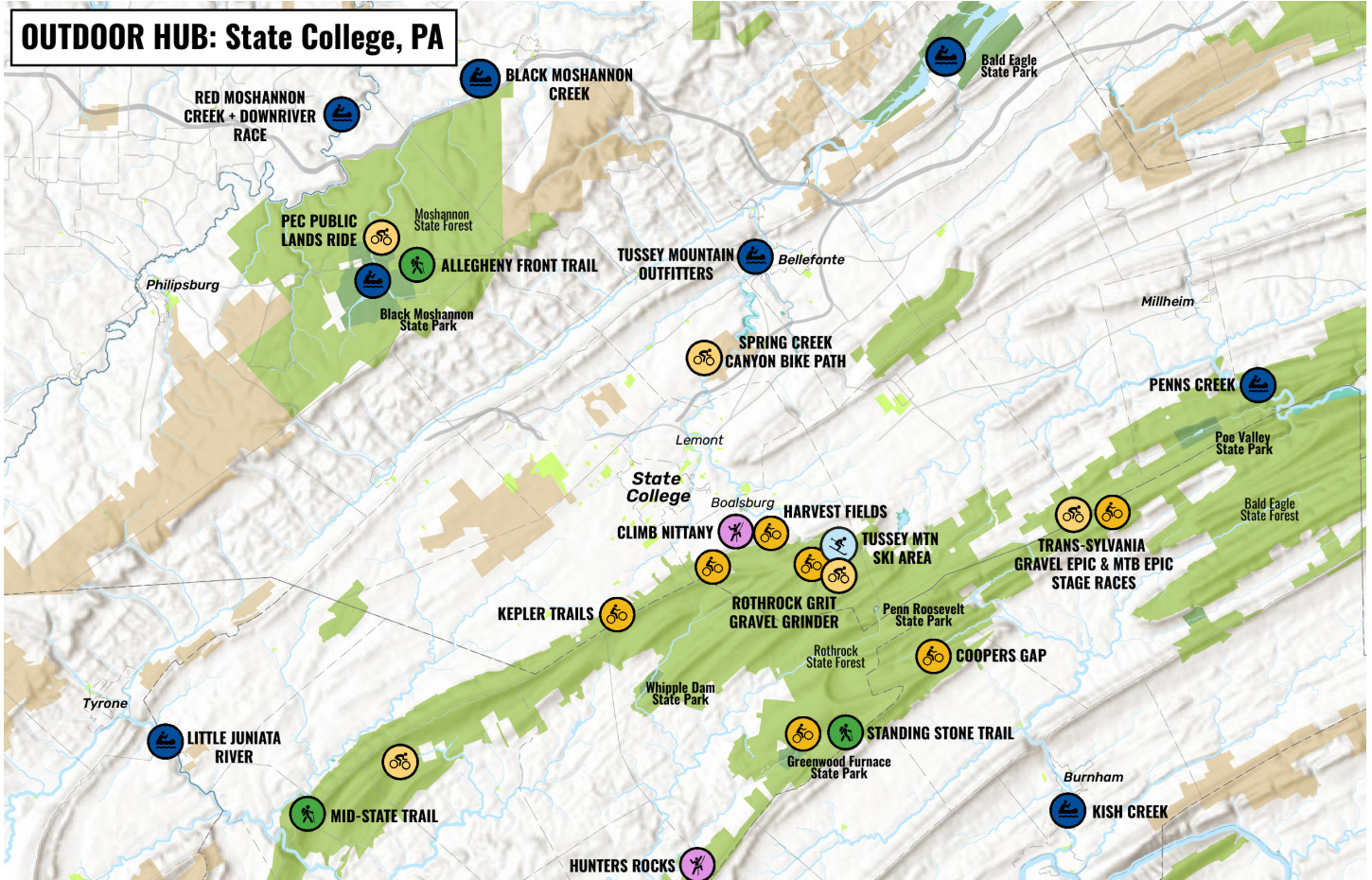
Most visitors may come for the water, but the area also offers a variety of mountain bike, rail trail, and gravel riding options within a half hour drive time. The Incline Plane Trails can be accessed from town and shuttle runs can be done via the historic inclined plane, while a variety of other singletrack options are available to the south, east and north. Nearby rail trails include the Path of the Flood Trail (connects into town), Ghost Town Trail, and West Penn Trail. A gravel bike event, the Higher Ground Hundo, leaves Johnstown every fall and loops into the surrounding mountains and forests.

Blue Knob Ski Area, the highest skiable mountain in PA, is about 40 minutes to the east, while Seven Springs is an hour south. The Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, which stretches 70 miles to the southwest, also terminates near Johnstown.

Hinckston Run (top left), & the inclined plane in Johnstown, PA.



State College, PA



The mountains and forests around State College, Pennsylvania boast hundreds of miles of singletrack and gravel roads, featuring mostly rocky, technical trails and long climbs. The combination of difficulty, remoteness, and beauty of Rothrock, Moshannon, and Bald Eagle State Forests have been drawing mountain and gravel bikers for years, including for nationally-known events such as the Wilderness 101 and Trans-Sylvania Epic stage race. Recently, the addition of the Harvest Fields Community Trails, just outside of Boalsburg, have provided a place for beginners to learn bike handling skills and dip their toes in the sport before venturing onto the harder trails in the state forest.

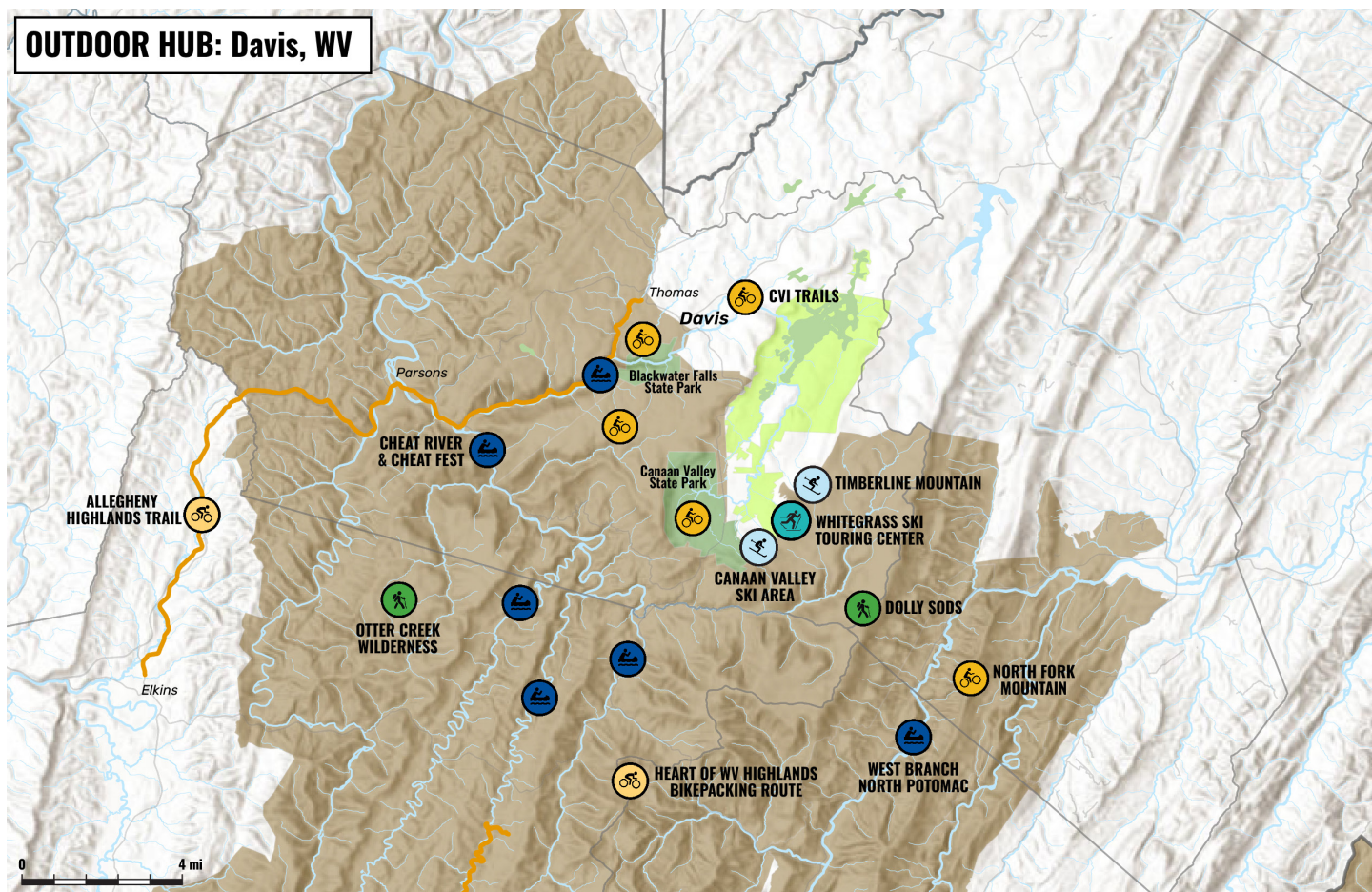
While State College can stand alone as a mountain and gravel bike destination in its own right, the region also offers a number of complementary activities, including whitewater paddling on Class I-III rivers and beautiful flatwater paddling options; indoor and outdoor rock climbing; and several long-distance hiking trails, including the Allegheny Front, Mid-State and Standing Stone Trails.

There is a strong cycling and outdoors community in the region, with group rides most nights of the week, several bike shops and a paddling shop, and complementary businesses such as breweries that cater to the outdoor crowd. The area is rich with events such as the Red Moshannon Downriver Race, which has been running for over 50 years; several different trail running races; and close to a dozen mountain and gravel bike races annually.

Riding the trails in Rothrock State Forest near State College, PA.



Davis, WV

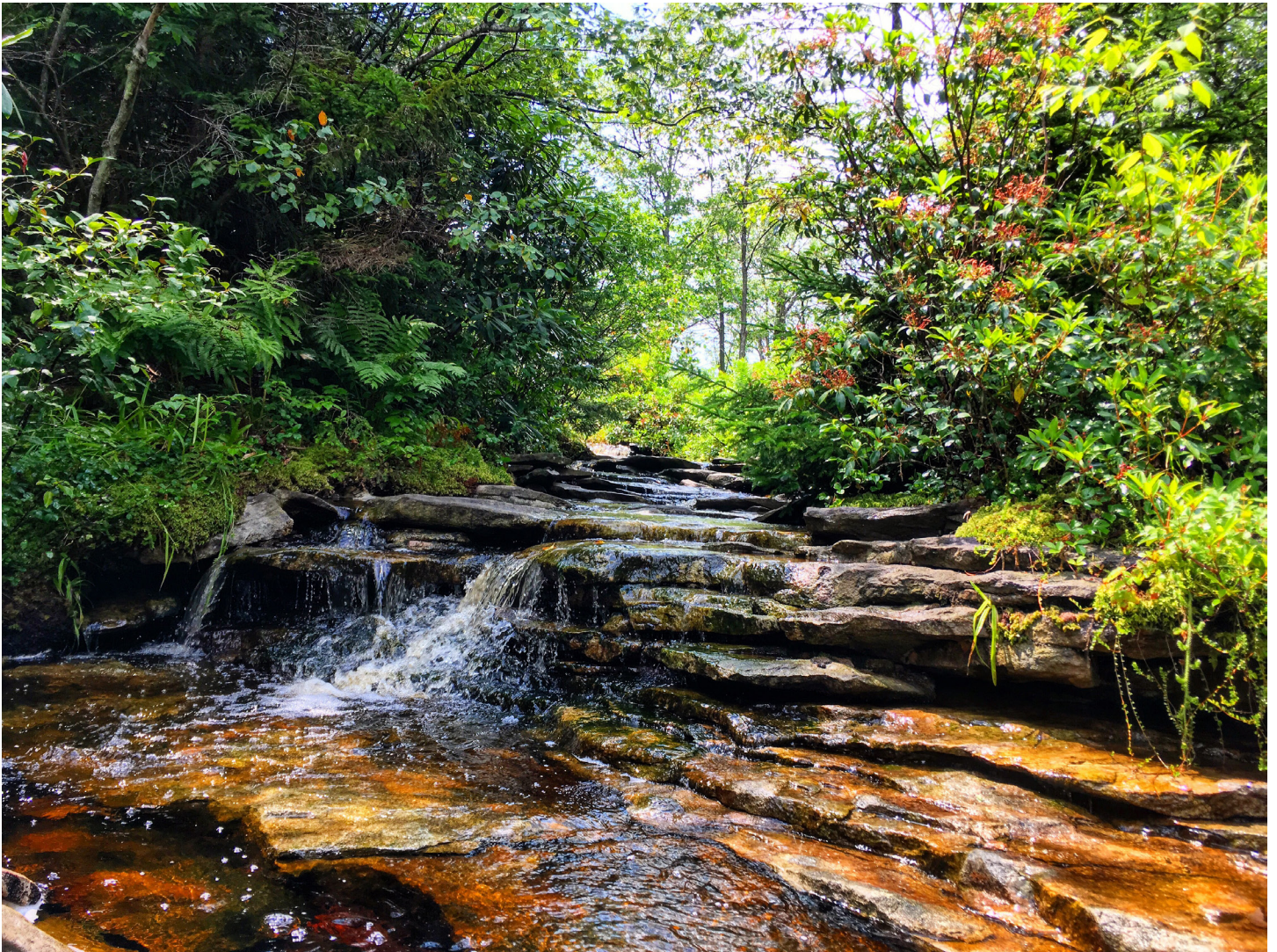


Davis is the highest-elevation incorporated town in the state of West Virginia, and is surrounded by a well-known and celebrated system of mountain bike trails, access to excellent whitewater paddling, and popular ski areas. Many of the mountain bike trails can be accessed directly from town, a situation that lends itself to cyclists staying, eating, and entertaining themselves in town before and after their rides. Classic restaurants are on the must-hit list, and the Purple Fiddle in the neighboring town of Thomas is a well-known intimate music venue. The Canaan MTB Festival happens annually in mid-June, offering group rides, clinics, and a sense of community.

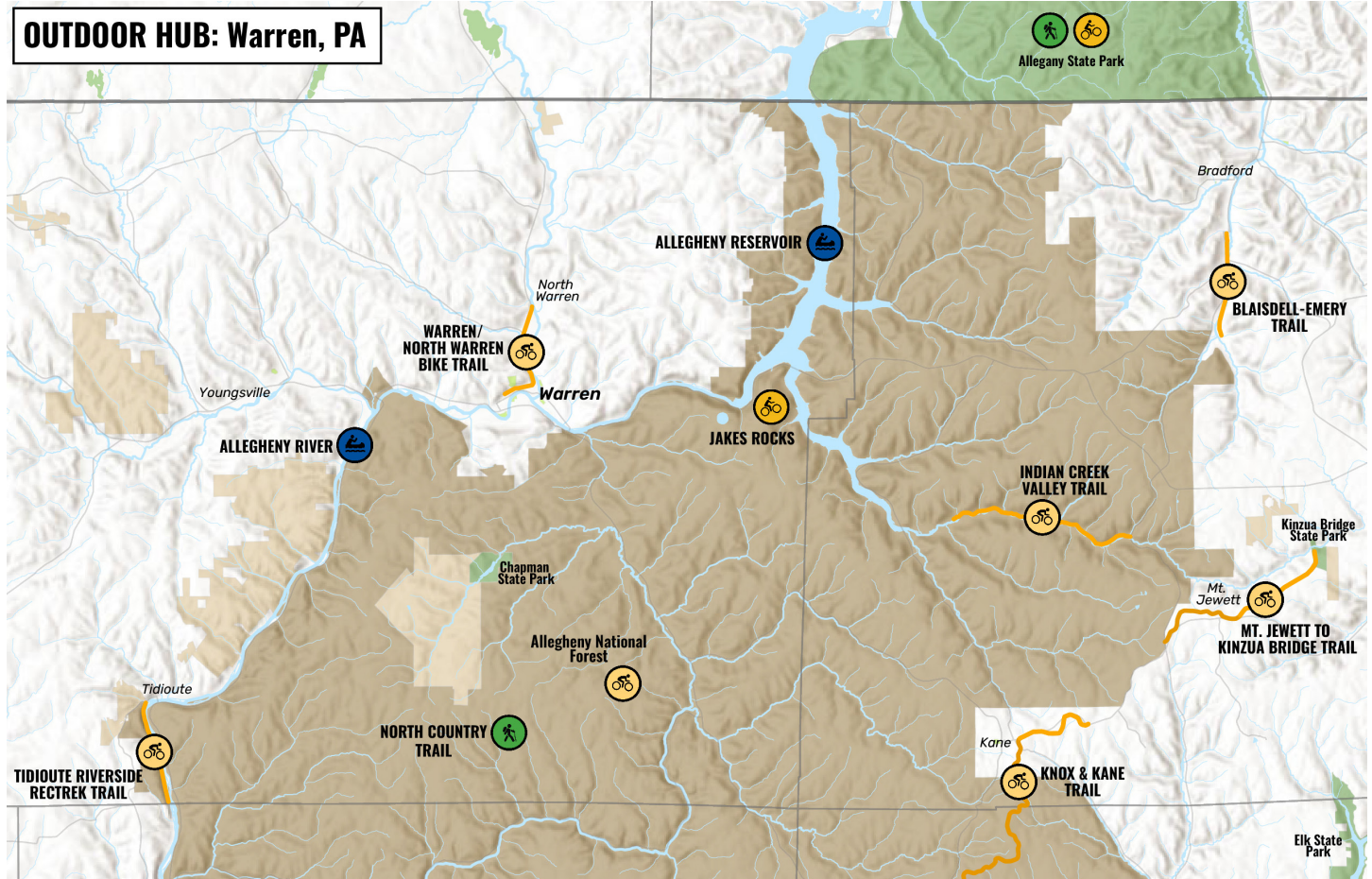
The Cheat River and its many tributaries offer a variety of paddling experiences, from mellow Class I-II on the Upper Cheat to Class V rapids through the Cheat Canyon. The Cheat River Festival (aka "Cheat Fest") is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Cheat featuring live music, an art market, and a weekend of camping.

Timberline and Canaan Valley offer downhill skiing, while White Grass Ski Touring Center is a unique venue for mountainous cross-country skiing and backcountry touring. Situated on the slopes of Weiss Knob, the 48 different trails cover over 60 kilometers and 1,200 feet of elevation gain and loss. The ski area offers both groomed trails and glades, as well as rentals, lessons, guided tours, events, and a cafe.

Views of the Dolly Sods & Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge near Davis, WV.



Warren, PA



A gateway to Allegheny National Forest (ANF), Warren has fully embraced its locale amidst the woods and waters of remote northern Pennsylvania and doubled down on promoting itself as an “Outdoor Town.” It has become well-known in mountain bike circles in recent years as the closest town to Jakes Rocks, a 30+ mile trail system developed by IMBA’s Trail Solutions featuring flowy, purpose-built trails amidst a unique landscape of giant boulders. The trails offer varying degrees of challenges, from beginner-friendly, gentle loops to long climbs and one-way gravity trails. The trails overlook the Allegheny Reservoir and connect to Dewdrop Campground, a feature that overnight guests find appealing as they can ride from camp and take a dip or paddle post-ride.

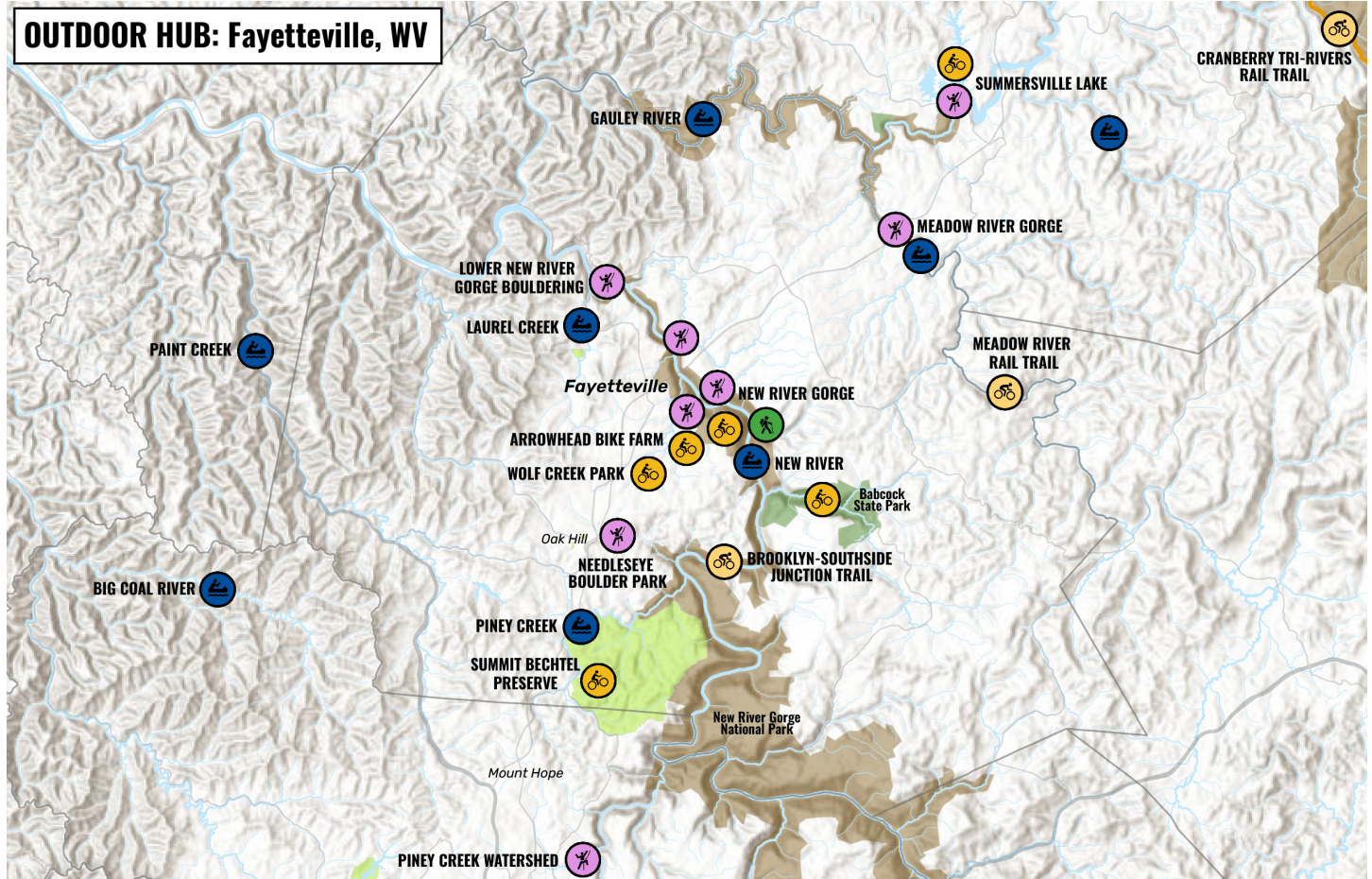
The National Forest also offers hundreds of miles of gravel riding, and nearby rail trails such as the Indian Creek Valley Trail and Knox and Kane Rail Trail provide an alternative cycling experience. The Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Rail Trail provides access to the must-see Kinzua Bridge State Park via bike, and is a spur of the planned 240-mile PA Wilds Loop, which will connect to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

The many singletrack trails in the ANF, including portions of the North Country Trail, are popular with cross-country skiers as well as hikers, backpackers, and trail runners. The Allegheny River offers mellow downriver paddling, and Allegheny Outfitters in downtown Warren provides rentals and shuttle services.

Plenty of mountainbiking opportunities at Jake's Rocks, near Warren, PA.



Fayetteville, WV



Fayetteville, West Virginia is the gateway to the New River Gorge, the nation's newest National Park and renowned destination for both whitewater paddling/rafting and rock climbing. The Class III-V waters of the New River, Gauley River, and various tributaries draw experienced paddlers, and guided raft trips are a popular summertime activity for all levels.

The greater New River Gorge region is also touted as one of the "East's largest, most diverse, and highest quality climbing areas," with over 3,000 established routes for both sport and trad climbing and hundreds of boulder problems spread throughout the river gorges of the New, Gauley/Summersville, and Meadow. Cliffs range from 40 to 150 feet in height, and are best for experienced climbers. There are several outfitters in the region that offer lessons and guide services.

Mountain biking has been increasing in popularity in the New River Gorge, with trails in the National Park that are rideable from town as well as from Arrowhead Bike Farm. This camping, dining, and gathering point on the edge of the Park offers bike rentals and a shop as well as trails on the property. Other nearby trail systems include Wolf Creek Park, Babcock State Park, and the Summit Bechtel Preserve.



VISITOR READINESS

Capitalizing on outdoor recreation as a tool for economic diversification is not a simple “build it and they will come” proposition. Preparing to attract and host visitors requires a thoughtful approach that gauges existing assets, amenities, and available services with the needs of the traveling public and local residents. The nature of the destination, be it urban or rural, will ultimately play a major role in the work to be undertaken to ensure a locale is ready to host an influx of purpose minded visitors.

Regardless of population size, one of the tenets of maximizing the positive impacts of the outdoor economy is assessing the readiness of the community. Is the existing infrastructure, be it physical, social, technological, or economic, adequate to meet the needs of tourists while still sustaining the needs of the resident population? Stakeholders, planners and elected officials must understand if they are prepared to meet the basic needs of visitors first and foremost and then begin to examine the specific needs of the targeted user-group. It is not uncommon to engage the services of specialized consultants to lead this planning process and promote a sustainable approach tailored to the capacity of the groups tasked with leading the work.

Cyclists refueling at Hepler’s Country Store, PA.



An exhilarating day on the nearby trails can be soiled by a negative experience in town when a rider can’t easily navigate their way around the business district, find an open restaurant to grab dinner or land proper accommodations. If there is little to do post-ride, chances are the visitor will look elsewhere to spend their dollars and you risk losing the valuable overnight stay metric so important to tourist promoters. Ensuring positive experiences also encourages return visits and favorable word-of mouth marketing (an amplified tool in the era of social media).

Most urban destinations are already equipped to generally host visitors, with a supply of varied accommodations, ample goods and services, and other attractions already driving visits to the region; the concept of “heads in beds” won’t be foreign. This is not to say there won’t be work required, specialization is key to attracting and meeting the specific needs of a cycling minded tourist. With the necessary basic infrastructure to host visitors already in place, stakeholders can take on the task of understanding the specific desires and services mountain bikers look for and perform assessments on how those are currently being met. These assessments might be a self-guided checklist-style evaluation or a more robust consultant led undertaking. Armed with resultant information, the task of planning and implementing what actions can be done to enhance or create solutions where lapses exist can begin.

Wayfinding signage on the Great Allegheny Passage.



Rural locations face greater challenges, particularly if the concept of outdoor recreation based economic development is new to them. In many cases these places need to be activated in order to attract the recreational consumer and fully maximize the potential for them to spend during their visit. The basic infrastructure that routinely exists in urban areas may be lacking or non-existent in rural environments so the visitor readiness challenge can be a much more daunting journey in isolated small towns. Things many people take for granted, such as reliable broadband, may not be present in rural areas like much of this report encompasses.

Once a community makes a decision to leverage it's natural assets to draw people in and improve the quality of life for its residents, there is a need to implement a deliberate process to achieve a vision. There are numerous resources to assist in charting the course. Tools such as PEC's Outdoor Town Toolkit (learn more here www.outdoortowns.org) or the Progress Fund's Trail Town Program® (www.trailtowns.org) are great places to gain valuable insight into the process and begin to formulate ideas. Regardless of how a community chooses to implement a visitor readiness program, one thing is certain, the adventure seeking public desires vibrant communities to eat, stay, and shop as part of their experience.

Orienting visitors in Ohioyle, PA.



Some of the assets visitors may expect when visiting a new area for outdoor recreation are:

- **Broadband**
- **Wayfinding signage**
- **Public art**
- **Accommodating parking (vans/trailers/bike racks)**
- **Welcoming public spaces**
- **Focused amenities (bike racks, fixit stations)**
- **Bike/ped infrastructure**
- **Expanded business hours**
- **Connectivity**
- **Events**

Allegrippis Trails signage, PA.



RECOMMENDATIONS

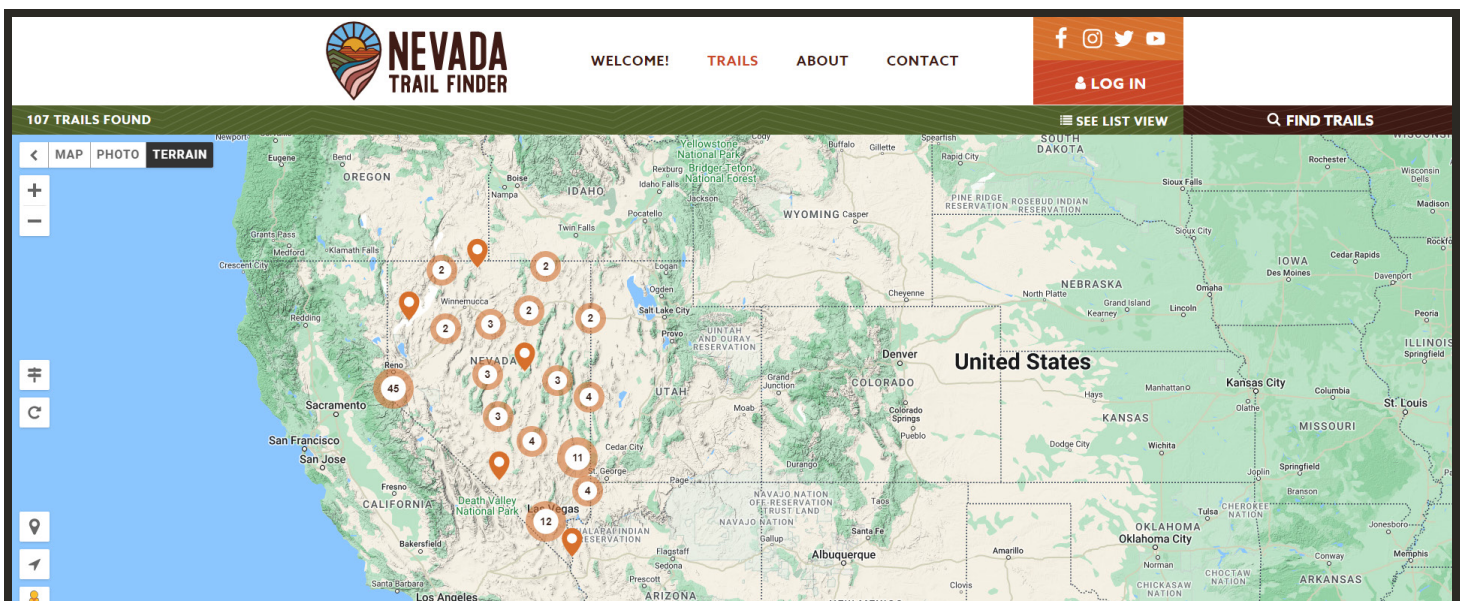
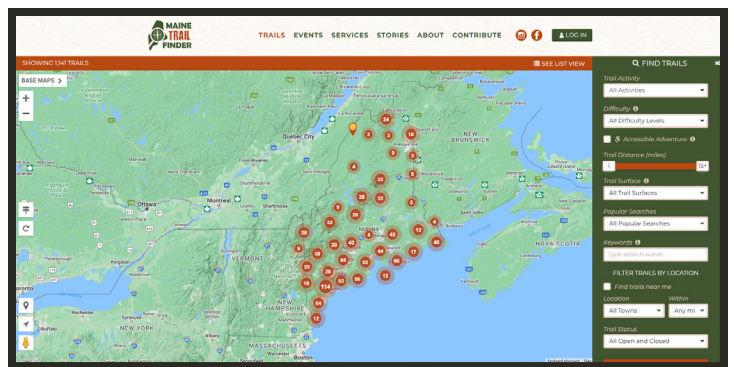
Develop a coordinated promotion strategy for mountain biking, outdoor recreation, and outdoor towns in the greater Pittsburgh region

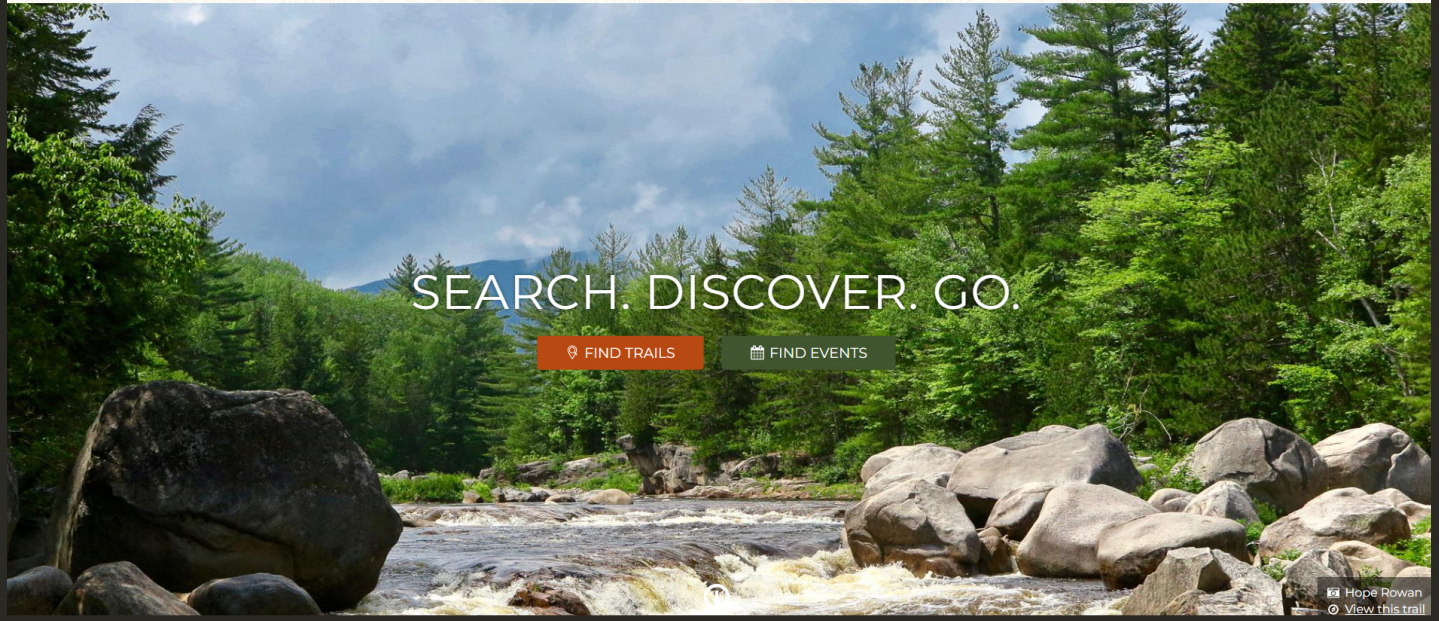
What we have learned from this mapping and cataloging exercise is that the region within four hours of the Pittsburgh International Airport has no shortage of mountain bike opportunities and other outdoor recreation assets. However, these assets have historically not been promoted as a package, with each smaller region (i.e. the Laurel Highlands) focusing only on their own assets and not how they relate to the broader area. A coordinated marketing strategy and collaboration between tourism promotion agencies to highlight outdoor recreation in the region has the potential to elevate each region and hub in addition to the region as

a whole. A visitor might not realize that just a half hour or an hour down the road there is an entirely different area to explore, and if they know, they might choose to stay in the area longer.

Trail Finder

One way to achieve better awareness of trails and outdoor recreation opportunities region-wide or state-wide is the development of a "Trail Finder" website similar to examples from Nevada, Maine, and others. These sites allow users to select what activity they are interested in and view all the trails for that specific activity on a map, as well as find out more information about each trail/trail system. This resource would serve as both informational and promotional, and can be built modularly.





NEXTpittsburgh Outdoor Guide

An example of a current promotion effort is a partnership with NEXTpittsburgh hoped to bring awareness to the outdoor recreation opportunities surrounding small towns within a four-hour drive time of Pittsburgh. Communities highlighted include Warren, Emporium, Wellsboro, Davis, Franklin, Summersville, and more, and stories focused on the outdoor recreation highlights of the area while also encouraging visitors to check out the towns at their heart. All the stories in the Outdoor Guide series can be found at:

nextpittsburgh.com/category/outdoor-guide

Emporium may be off the beaten path, but it's a hidden gem for gravel cycling

by NEXT guest writer
March 22, 2023



A historic rail car at the end of the West Creek Recreational Trail in Emporium. Photo by Helena Kotala.

By Helena Kotala

Cameron County is almost 70% public land, the [mountainous landscape](#) dominated by Elk and Susquehannock state forests, game lands, and wild and natural areas. It is the least populous county in Pennsylvania, with under 8,000 residents in the entire county as of the 2020 Census. There are two traffic lights in the entire county, both in Emporium, which is the only substantial

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West Virginia's Gauley River sets the standard for wild and wonderful in Summersville

by Sebastian Foltz
October 20, 2022



Identify Communities to Pursue IMBA Ride Center or Similar Designation

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a non-profit focused on creating, enhancing, and protecting mountain bike trail systems. The organization helps communities and smaller clubs build, design, and maintain trails, as well as advocating for access and proper management. One of the many initiatives that IMBA runs is the Ride Center™ designation program, which recognizes towns and trails systems that provide a premier ride experience.

According to IMBA, the Ride Center™ designation provides recognition for large-scale mountain bike facilities that are “designed for every type of mountain biker, provide a positive mountain bike experience with progressive skill building, and including facilities that break down the barriers for entry with bike rentals, quality maps, clear signage, and available instruction or guiding.” Furthermore, Ride Centers™ should provide beginner and family-friendly experiences as well as challenge expert riders, as well as demonstrate best practices for mountain bike trail design and construction, and bring economic benefits to their host communities.

Fat biking at Allegrippis, PA.



There is currently only one Ride Center within a four-hour drive time of Pittsburgh – Snowshoe, West Virginia at a Silver Level. However, there are a number of other communities and trail systems in the region that likely meet the criteria for designation.

Some communities that should consider pursuing an IMBA Ride Center™ or similar designation include:

- **Pittsburgh, PA**
- **State College // Huntingdon // Altoona, PA**
- **Warren, PA**
- **Davis, WV**
- **Fayetteville, WV**
- **Athens, OH**
- **Ellicottville, NY**

The Ride Center™ model could also be used simply for inspiration to create another way of identifying places in the greater Pittsburgh region that are exceptional for mountain biking and outdoor recreation.

Taking in the view of Rothrock State Forest, PA.



To become a Ride Center™, the destination must go through a process that includes a self-evaluation, in-person professional assessment and review, and thorough evaluation of existing conditions as well as opportunities for growth and next steps.

Potential Ride Centers™ are scored based on a variety of criteria, including miles of singletrack trail of varying difficulties, features of those trails such as long or technical climbs or descents, progressive dirt jump or skills development areas, lift-served trails, and trails groomed for riding in the snow. Complementary community assets such as bike shops, mountain bike guide services and rentals, varied types of lodging, quality restaurants, breweries, coffee shops, and even availability of organic food are also factored into the scoring. Trail system features such as opportunities for multi-day or long-distance rides and a backcountry experience also offer points, as do high levels of

community involvement (group rides, clubs, events, land manager support) and varied other recreation opportunities in the region.

The geographic area of a Ride Center™ is limited to a 30-minute drive time radius from a determined center point (which does not necessarily have to be a town). Regional Ride Centers™ can also be created by combining several Ride Centers™ within a 2-hour drive time, but those individual Ride Centers™ cannot have overlapping territories and must “stand alone on their own merits.”

In addition to many miles of high-class trails, thriving downtowns and cycling culture, and ample complementary assets, a common thread amongst these towns is an active group of trail and community advocates who may be primed to take on the pursuit of an IMBA Ride Center™ or similar designation.

The mountain bike skills park at Raystown Lake Recreation Area, PA.



Identify potential new sites for destination mountain bike trail system development

The region within a four-hour drive time of the Pittsburgh airport doesn't lack in mountain bike trails, but most of the "destination-worthy" trail systems are over 2 hours away by car – including the Allegrippis Trails, Jakes Rocks, Baileys and Wayne National Forest, Davis, and Snowshoe, WV. Where appropriate, opportunities for development of additional destination mountain bike trail systems, particularly closer to Pittsburgh, should be explored.

There has been an increasing interest in adaptive reuse of abandoned mine lands, landfills, and industrial sites for trail and bike park development, with successful examples coming out of the Redhead Mountain Bike Park in Minnesota and Coal Basin Trails near Aspen, Colorado, among others. The northern Appalachians are replete with former strip mines that are ripe for reclamation, and this path poses a solution in areas of the region where public lands may be lacking or where the existing public lands may not be suitable for large-scale mountain bike trail system development.

Considerations for mountain bike trail development

Successful mountain bike trails take much more than just land – to continue to exist for generations, be worth the investment, and provide a high-quality user experience, they must be well-planned, sustainably built, and have an ongoing stream of maintenance funding and stewardship. Once a potential site is identified, stakeholders need to be brought into the conversation to have input. Trails should be designed and built by someone knowledgeable in the process, and trail maintenance training should be provided to local volunteers to ensure they are best equipped to keep the investment in top shape. Buy-in from the landowner, local trail clubs and cycling advocates, and economic development and tourism agencies is key for developing a successful trail system and thriving mountain bike culture in a community.

Horseshoe Curve MTB Trails

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) is currently undertaking a project in Altoona, PA to pursue development of mountain bike trails on abandoned mine lands on Altoona Water Authority (AWA) property near the world-famous Horseshoe Curve. This project was inspired by PEC's reforestation work on the property in 2022, where a vision for adaptive reuse of mine-disturbed land was born. This project will expand upon and complement existing grassroots trail building efforts, and will ensure that continued trail development is done sustainably with room to grow into a destination-worthy trail network. Preliminary trail design and planning will likely begin in fall 2023 and extend into spring 2024, coinciding with a master plan for 12,000 acres of AWA land looking at mixed use recreation opportunities.

Overlooking Horseshoe Curve, PA.



Continue to responsibly grow gravel cycling in Pennsylvania and beyond

With the rapid growth of gravel cycling there is a recognized need for cooperation between riders, event promoters, route creators, tourism bureaus, land management agencies, and others involved in the sport in order to provide the best possible experience for cyclists and support the responsible growth of gravel riding. There is a robust gravel cycling community and culture, with dozens of organized events throughout the region and hundreds of promoted routes, but there is no go-to resource for information or coordinated effort to align the interests and goals of the involved groups.

In order to address potential issues and conflicts, and start the conversation around this topic, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council hosted the first PA Gravel Summit in spring 2022, bringing together over 30 stakeholders to discuss issues and opportunities for gravel riding in PA. Participants in the Summit emphasized that they would like to see improved coordination and communication between all parties, improved rider experiences, a focus on health and wellness, and responsible use of the land. Discussions at this gathering helped to inform a report that followed, *Recommendations for Supporting the Growth of Gravel Riding in Pennsylvania*.

The five recommendations detailed in the report include:

- 1. Conduct gravel-specific research to improve understanding of gravel demographics and economic impact**
- 2. Establish statewide coordination that improves communications between land managers, route planners, and the riding public, resulting in an increase in responsible gravel cycling on public lands**
- 3. Create a statewide resource for gravel riders that recommends vetted routes that support high-quality experiences and responsible land use, while strengthening the outdoor recreation economy**

4. Leverage the growth in gravel cycling to further support Pennsylvania's investment in multi-use trails

5. Position communities to flourish by taking part in the outdoor recreation economy

In order to begin moving forward with recommendation #2, PEC gathered representatives from DCNR forestry, state parks, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission in fall 2022 to get feedback on the biggest issues from the land managers perspective, and what steps can be taken to begin working together to improve coordination and mitigate conflicts.

As a follow-up and to continue the work, PEC will be hosting a second and larger Gravel Summit in October 2023 that will bring together more of the stakeholders from across the state with a focus on shared learning and continued discussions. PEC is also using its Public Lands Ride event in September as an opportunity to disseminate information about best practices for gravel riding to attendees.