

ERNST TRAIL VISITOR INFORMATION

updated 10/17/23

The following information is designed to assist you in planning a visit to Ernst Trail.

Ernst Trail is a work in progress continuing to grow and improve as funding permits. Trail building and maintenance take constant effort from the team of dedicated volunteers/members of **French Creek Recreational Trails Inc.**, the trail's parent organization. Ernst Trail travels through remote areas, with a variety of wildlife, where services and cell service may be limited. It follows French Creek and traverses wetlands so flying insects, ticks and wildlife may be present. Insect repellent is beneficial at certain times of the year. **From October through February**, or during any PA hunting season, it is recommended you and your pets **WEAR ORANGE** for visibility. Please report any maintenance problems you may encounter. Volunteers and/or donations are always welcome. Visit www.ernstrail.org for more information.

General Information - All bridges are decked, railed and open. Use caution when crossing bridges as they may be slippery due to dampness or icing. **Stop at all road crossings and use caution.** Do not expect cars to stop for you. Some gates may require you to dismount and may be difficult for trikes to get through without assistance. Some sections have steep drop-offs. Please stay on the trail, do not park on the trail or in front of gates. Pack out what you pack in. More detailed parking information can be found below or on our website. The trail is closed to motorized vehicles. However, occasionally it is necessary to drive or operate vehicles and equipment on the trail for maintenance or construction. Thank you for your patience whenever you encounter such equipment.

SPECIFIC TRAIL, SURFACE & PARKING INFORMATION BY SECTION TRAVELING WESTWARD

The Shryock-Bailey Connector - Beginning at the end of Shippen Street in Kerrtown near Meadville, PA there is a limited number of parking spaces. From there the trail travels through wetlands and along French Creek for one mile where it joins the paved trail at Bean's Trailhead. The surface is a mix of gravel and crushed limestone. To help preserve the environment this section was built at ground level so portions may be flooded during wet weather. The plan is for this section to be extended eastward into the City of Meadville at Bicentennial Park.

MILE 0 - 5 - Improved with a paved, mostly level blacktop surface. There is parking and a temporary restroom at Bean's Trailhead mile 0, at Mercer Pike Trailhead mile 3, and at Krider Road Trailhead mile 5. There are many benches and picnic tables along this section. **Mercer Pike, at mile 2.9, is a busy road.** The approach on the east side is steep. Riders should dismount and walk across this road.

MILE 4.4 - 7 - At mile 4.4 of the paved trail this graveled section turns south for a short distance, follows Semerad Road to cross US route 19 then follows Pinetree Road a short distance to get back on the railbed. **US route 19 is a very busy road.** Please use **EXTREME CAUTION** when crossing. Riders should dismount and walk across this road. The surface of this section is gravel and may be unsuitable for some street bikes. Parking, a picnic shelter, and a temporary restroom are available at the Bailey Road Trailhead mile 7.

MILE 7 - 12 - From the Bailey Road Trailhead, you can follow the road south for 500 ft, turn west on South Watson Run Road for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to get on the trail again heading west. This short detour is due to a bridge being out which will be replaced in summer 2024. Parking and a temporary restroom are available at the McMichael Road Trailhead mile 9.5 and at the Conneaut Lake Trailhead mile 12 just behind Conneaut Cellars Winery located at 12005 Conneaut Lake Rd, Conneaut Lake, PA 16316. This section is suitable for walking or mountain biking as the surface may be loose gravel. Construction is ongoing to improve this section.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or to report any problems you see to info@ernstrail.org. Please check back frequently and visit Facebook for current updates as improvement continues and for emergency trail alerts. The trail is privately owned and maintained by volunteers. Donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible as French Creek Recreational Trails Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.