

## About the Ernst Trail

The Ernst Trail is a five mile long recreational trail that was constructed on the abandoned bed of the former Bessemer- Lake Erie Railroad. The completed segment is part of a proposed trail connecting Meadville with Conneaut Lake. As such, the trail is an "out-and-back" one with access near the mid-point of the trail on the Mercer Pike south of Meadville (see map and directions).

The eastern branch of the trail (toward Meadville) extends for approximately three miles, winding its way through woods and meadows along French Creek. The western branch of the trail takes the visitor through equally beautiful countryside that also includes some marshland with its own unique habitat.

With its crushed cinder surface it is well suited for most bicycles. (However, due to some areas with rough surfaces, street bikes with narrow tires are not recommended.)

In winter, the eastern branch of the trail, protected from the wind by hillside and dense forest, is especially prized as a place for cross-country skiing. Skiers are advised that an adequate base is needed (due to the cinder surface) or damage may occur to their skis.

The trail is open year-round during daylight hours for all manner of non-motorized use such as:

- biking
- walking
- running
- birding
- cross-country skiing
- horseback riding

## Trail Highlights

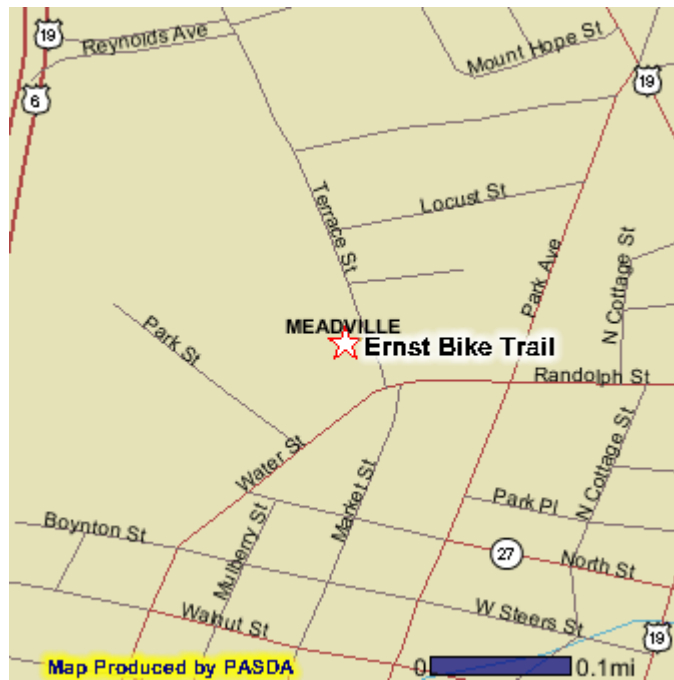
- Ernst Trail parallels French Creek - the most biologically diverse body of water in Pennsylvania - and a popular canoeing and fishing stream.
- Nearby Geneva Marsh is a major stop-over point for migratory birds of the Mississippi Flyway.
- With a mixture of rich bottomlands, dry shale hillsides and glacial deposits, a diverse array of plant species populates the Ernst Trail corridor.
- Benches, a bike rack, an information kiosk, and a port-a-john (summer months) can be found at the trail's parking lot.
- The Ernst Trail was constructed through the volunteer efforts of the community and members of French Creek Recreational Trails, Inc. The right of way was donated by Calvin Ernst, owner of neighboring business, Ernst Conservation Seeds.
- Food and lodging are available at the Interstate 79 and US 322 interchange at Meadville.

## Getting There

From Route 322 leaving Meadville

- Take a left turn at the Sheetz gas station (Kennedy Hill Rd)
- Go past the Crawford County Humane Society
- Take the first left turn onto Mercer Pike
- Drive approximately 2 miles south on Mercer Pike
- The Ernst Trail parking area is on the right, just before the railroad crossing at the bottom of the hill

## Ernst Trailhead



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