

ABUTMENT TRESTLE — 6 MILES NORTH OF VIENNA

The railroad changed hands through the years. Other operators and owners included the Wabash, St. Louis, Pacific; New York Central; Penn Central; Conrail; and, during its most productive years, the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis line, also known as the CCC & St. Louis or Big Four. The last owners were the Southern Line and, following a merger, Norfolk Southern Railroad.

In 1991, Norfolk Southern gave the State of Illinois the railroad right-of-way between Harrisburg and Karnak, where it had abandoned operations. The Department of Natural Resources has worked to develop the railroad ballast as a trail for hikers, joggers and cyclists, surfacing the trail with crushed limestone, installing privy toilets and providing drinking water. The first segments of Tunnel Hill State Trail opened in 1998. The trail was completed in the fall of 2001.



Natural Features

The trail at Harrisburg begins in flat farm country. At New Castle, the old railroad bed enters the Shawnee National Forest purchase area, remaining there for roughly half of the trail’s length. By New Burnside, it’s among bluffs, and south of Vienna it passes through a lush wetland. At Karnak, it emerges from the Cache River State Natural Area’s ancient cypress-tupelo swamp.



As one landform melds into another, the countryside offers ever-changing vistas. Woodland wildflowers dot the forest floor each spring, while prairie flowers and grasses lend their beauty to the summer landscape. Contrasting with the profuse greenery of summer, the lack of foliage on the oak, hickory, tulip poplar, cottonwood and sweet gum trees brings the river valleys and rocky bluffs into sharp focus from late fall to early spring.

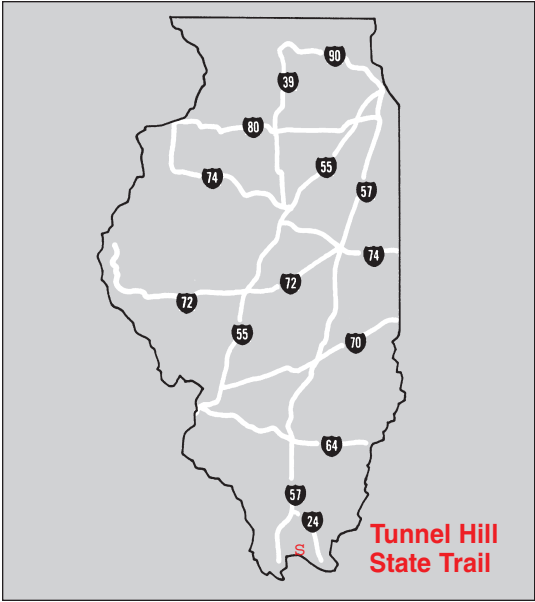
Wildlife abounds in this section of the state, and Tunnel Hill State Trail offers habitat to a variety of animals.



River Trail; the U.S. 76 Bicycle Route, a part of the TransAmerica Bike Route; and the Trail of Tears, the primary route the Cherokee Indian tribe took in the winter of 1838-39 during their forced move from the Great Smokies to Oklahoma.

History

The nation's history and economy are entwined with 19th-century railroad construction since the federal government made land available to the states for developing a cross-country railway system. Among the developers in Illinois was a hapless Civil War general, Ambrose Burnside, perhaps best remembered for his style of facial hair, for which his compatriots transposed the syllables of his last name to create the term "sideburns." In 1872, Burnside and others began the Vincennes and Cairo Railroad, named for its terminuses at Vincennes, Ind., and Cairo, Ill. In addition to passengers, the railroad transported coal, salt, wood products and orchard-grown peaches and apples.



Tunnel Hill State Trail
Rt. 146 East, P.O. Box 671
Vienna, IL 62995, (618) 658-2168

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park’s facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Public Services, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, call (217) 782-6302 or visit our website at <http://dnr.state.il.us>.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources’ TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

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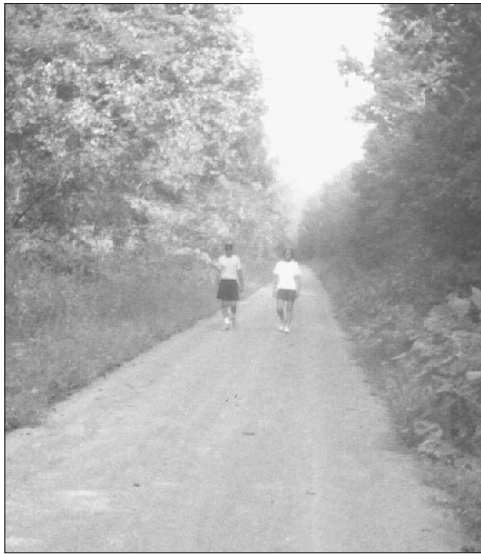
At one time, the rumble of freight cars reverberated through the narrow tunnel. Wooden trestles, with their system of slanted supports and horizontal cross pieces, spanned numerous bluffs and creeks. Passengers in Pullman cars clocked the miles with these and other landmarks as they traveled one of southern Illinois' most scenic routes.

Today, the railroad is gone. The route, known as Tunnel Hill State Trail, remains.

Tunnel Hill State Trail stretches for 45 miles from Harrisburg to Karnak. The trail continues on a trail spur for 2.5 miles from Karnak to Cache River State Natural Area - Henry Barkhausen Wetlands Center on the old Chicago and Eastern Illinois railroad bed.

The 9.3-mile section between Tunnel Hill and Vienna crosses trails already known to outdoor recreationists: the River-to-River Trail, which extends from the Mississippi to the Ohio River; the unmarked American Discovery Trail, which in southern Illinois follows back roads and some of the River-to-





TRAIL NORTH OF BREEDEN TRESTLE

Bluebirds and other songbirds flit through the trees, while killdeer, dove, quail and wild turkey also are present in the area. Squirrels often are seen scampering among the tree tops, and white-tailed deer are frequently observed. Less noticed, but having a presence, are red foxes, eastern cottontail rabbits, raccoons and opossums.

Landmarks

If the 45-mile length of Tunnel Hill State Trail could be seen in cross-section, it would taper to its lowest points at either end, with Harrisburg at 370 feet and Karnak at 340 feet above sea level. The highest point is midway at Tunnel Hill, which has an elevation of 680 feet. By mountain standards, it's just a molehill, but it was high enough that railroad builders decided rather than going over it, they'd tunnel through it, giving the landmark its name. Their decision resulted in a comfortable 2-percent grade the length of the trail.

For more than 50 years after the railroad was built, the tunnel was longer than 800 feet, but when a portion of the tunnel collapsed in 1929, the landmark was shortened by 300 feet. Now 543-feet long, it is the only tunnel on the trail. The tunnel is located 1/4 mile south of Tunnel Hill on the trail toward Vienna.



TRAIL CUT THROUGH ROCK AT TUNNEL HILL STATE TRAIL

The 23 picturesque trestles along the sections of Tunnel Hill State Trail feature decking and side rails, which entice trail users to stop. The trestles range in length from 34 to 450 feet. The longest is Breeden Trestle, which is also the highest at 90 feet. It is located 2½ miles south of Tunnel Hill.

The trail corridor, which varies from 40 to 200 feet in width, connects numerous communities: Karnak in Pulaski County; Belknap, Vienna, Tunnel Hill and New Burnside in Johnson County; Stonefort in Williamson and Saline counties; and Carrier Mills and Harrisburg in Saline County. Each has parking areas from which hikers, runners and cyclists can access the trail.

The parking lot with amenities at Harrisburg is city-owned and maintained. Located at Walnut Street and U.S. Route 45, it is at the northern end of a 2.5-mile-long, city-owned trail. The Harrisburg trail skirts the city's east side parallel to Route 45 and runs to the city's southeast limits, where it connects to Tunnel Hill State Trail at the intersection of Feazel Street (Pauper Crossing) and the highway.

In addition to the large communities, there also are hamlets along the trail, including Bloomfield, Sanburn and Ledford. In addition, there are a handful of locations that could be described as ghost towns—Forman, Bender, Rago, Parker City and New Castle. All serve as landmarks to trail users.

Facilities

Tunnel Hill State Trail is a day-use trail, offering drinking water, privy toilets and parking at the access areas. Motorized vehicles, horses and



TUNNEL HILL STATE TRAIL SITE OFFICE

hunting are not allowed on the trail.

Although an experienced cyclist should be able to travel the complete trail in about a day, hikers are advised that the trail does not have camping facilities. Several campgrounds, however, are located nearby. Shawnee National Forest has three campgrounds within 10 miles of the trail: Lake of Egypt, north of the community of Tunnel Hill; and Teal Pond and Bell Smith Springs, both southeast of New Burnside. A fourth, Lake Glendale, is about 15 miles east of Vienna. Also located in the same vicinity as Lake Glendale is Dixon Springs State Park. Two other state park campgrounds are about 10 miles from the trail: Ferne Clyffe, west of the community of Tunnel Hill; and Cache River State Natural Area, southeast of Harrisburg.

The site office for Tunnel Hill State Trail is located on State Highway 146 on the east side of Vienna. For more information about the trial, contact the site superintendent at Tunnel Hill State Trail, P.O. Box 671, Vienna, IL 62995, or phone (618) 658-2168.

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