

Natural

4.33

Natural

Wayne

1. Big Sandy and Ohio Rivers

Cabell

2. Ohio River

Kanawha

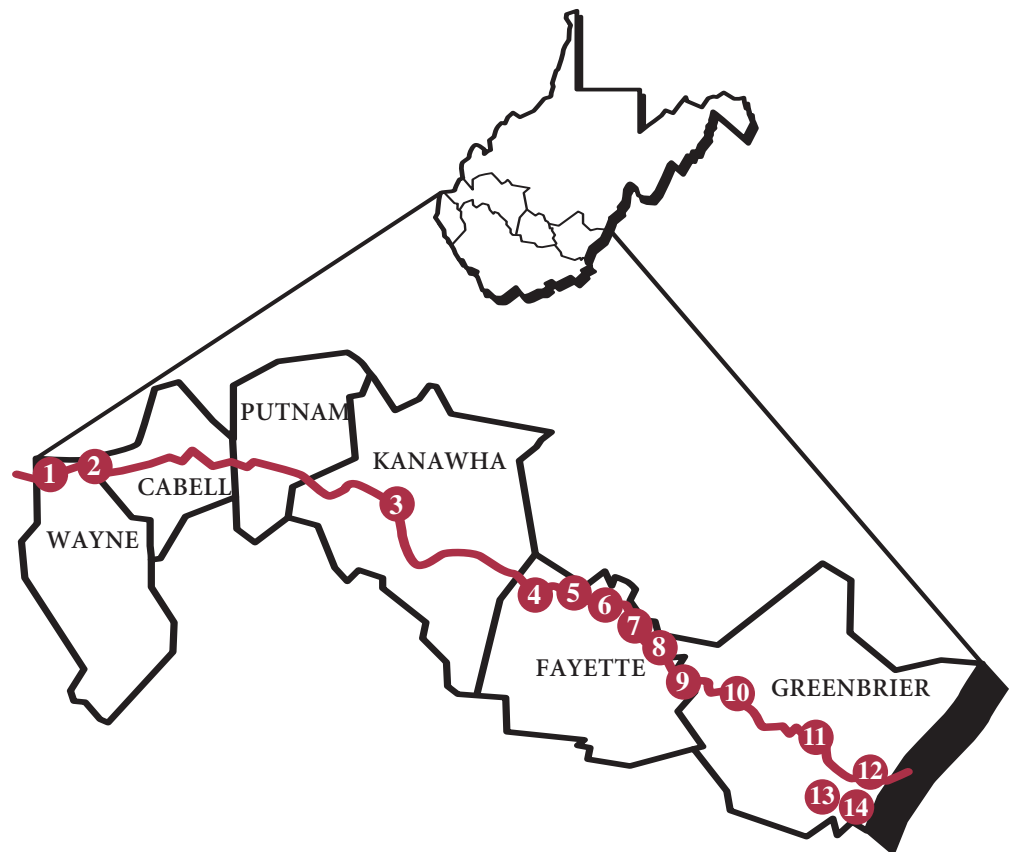
3. Kanawha River

Fayette

4. Roadside waterfalls and rock formations
5. New and Gauley Rivers merge to form Great Kanawha
6. Gauley Mountain
7. New River Gorge
8. Babcock State Park
9. Big Sewell Mountain

Greenbrier

10. Meadow Creek/Meadow River Wildlife Management Area
11. Lost World Caverns
12. Greenbrier River
13. Greenbrier State Forest
14. Organ Cave (nearby)



Natural Qualities

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Along The Midland Trail

“Twenty-One Centuries of exploration, conquest, American industrial history.”

Listen closely, and you will hear the echoes of the past. The footfalls of hooves. The creaks of wagon wheels. Feet marching in cadence to the drumbeat of war. Steam whistles and chugs of locomotives.

The Midland Trail offers nature in an undisturbed state: geological and land formations; bodies of water; flora, fauna, and forests; and wildlife, all which predate human residents. Humans abound today, but the Trail’s natural features reveal minimal disturbances.

Major rivers and their tributaries are an integral aspect of the Midland Trail’s natural qualities. Wayne and Cabell Counties are blessed with the Ohio, Big Sandy, and Guyandotte Rivers.

The Kanawha River cuts through Kanawha County and divides/defines communities along its way: St. Albans, Nitro, Dunbar, South Charleston, Charleston, Malden/Belle, Cedar Grove, Glasgow, and London.

While the river is important, these communities are also blessed with additional natural qualities. Little Creek Park, in South Charleston, is comprised of over 300 acres of scenic, hilly woodlands and is home to abundant wildlife in its urban setting. Kanawha County’s Coonskin Park, borders the Elk River and is a similar oasis of nature, with over 1000 acres of woodlands.

Even in the highly industrialized area of Alloy, travelers encounter natural beauty. The Kanawha River’s headwaters cascade over Kanawha Falls.



In the Glen Ferris and Gauley Bridge areas are at least seven waterfalls, the most well known of these being Cathedral Falls.

Further east is Fayette County. Gauley Mountain, Gauley River, and the New River and its famous Gorge are the anchors to this county. While the area is known as a naturalist's delight, the New River Gorge is called 'the Grand Canyon of the East.' The Gorge is protected by nature's design - steep, rugged mountains that act to ensure its beauty over the ages, but which can be appreciated from the overlook at Hawks Nest State Park.

Nearby, Babcock State Park is also a haven of rugged, serene beauty. Two varieties of rhododendron and other wildflowers provide a colorful display on the hillsides in spring through early summer.

Fayette County claims the western slope and summit of Big Sewell Mountain, while Greenbrier County begins near its eastern base. Early explorers followed buffalo trails through forests. The area's prickly green briars gave way to the county's name when early explored encountered them.

Rugged mountains in the west and savannah-like farms in the east mark the dramatic topography of



Greenbrier County. The Trail's western most county boasts many natural qualities, such as Big and Little Clear Creeks, and Meadow Creek. The Meadow River Wildlife Management Area consists of 2374 acres of primarily wetland habitat, West Virginia's second largest wetland.

The Greenbrier River Trail, part of West Virginia's Rails to Trails program, is a 76-mile trail that runs parallel to the Greenbrier River.

Ronceverte's Organ Cave and Lewisburg's Lost World Caverns are both Registered Natural Landmarks. These natural underground caverns celebrate life underground in a way the State's coalmines cannot. Organ Cave has over 40 miles of mapped passageways. Lost World Caverns is a cave approximately 1¼ mile in length and reaches a depth of 235 feet below its natural entrance.

Greenbrier State Forest, near White Sulphur Springs, offers visitors 5130 acres. White Sulphur Springs is home to a visitors center for the 800,000-acre Monongahela National Forest; fitting conclusions to the Midland Trail's natural qualities.

