

CLARION-LITTLE TOBY TRAIL
Elk & Jefferson County
(Hiking)

Distance: 7.5 miles

Time: 3 ¾ hours

Comments: The Clarion-Little Toby Trail is a rails-to-trails trail from north of Ridgway in Elk County to Brockway in Jefferson County. It follows an abandoned branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The northern part of the trail follows the Clarion River adjacent to PA949. This hike is on the northern portion, which follows Little Toby Creek through State Game Lands Numbers 44 and 54. From the old Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp to the ghost town of Carrier it's devoid of roads and buildings. It was once the site of industrial activity but has now returned to the wild.

The Clarion-Little Toby Trail requires a lengthy car shuttle of 29.2 miles. If you don't want to use two cars, the trail could also be hiked on an in-and-out from either end.

Access: From the traffic light in Brockway (there's only one) go south on PA28 (Main Street) for 0.4 miles then turn right on 7th Avenue where there's a sign for Toby Terrace. Drive north for 2.8 miles, passing the southern end of the trail, to a parking lot at Jenkins Run. Leave one car, and return to Brockway and the junction of PA28 and US219. Follow US219 north for 17.5 miles to Ridgway. In downtown Ridgway turn south on PA949 and follow it for 7.7 miles to the signed turnoff on the left. Follow this road south for 0.8 mile, and park just beyond the old CCC camp.

Mileage log:

- 0 Head south on the old railroad grade crossing Laurel Run.
- 1.2 You'll see what remains of an old stone crusher. Following a yellow-blazed side trail for about 0.6 miles can do a side trip to the quarry. You'll pass the site of the ghost town of Grove and its train station. There are at least six ghost towns in this valley.
- 1.7 Cross Coward Run and just beyond you'll reach Short Mill, another ghost town. Pass the site of a December 1932 train wreck (two coal cars).
- 3.8 There's a swinging bridge over the creek between the stone abutments of a much larger 19th century bridge. The ghost town of Blue Rock is located nearby.
- 4.9 Cross Vineyard Run. There is another ghost town here that was associated with a sawmill.
- 5.5 There are cliffs to the left and the railroad grade enters a cut.

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- 5.9 You'll leave the state game land and begin to pass some hunting camps. Then you'll arrive at the ghost town of Carrier.
- 6.8 The old railroad grade is now someone's yard. The trail bypasses this on a new alignment. Turn left to the parking lot just before Jenkins Run.

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