



COLORADO
Department of
Transportation



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Colorado Byways Celebrates Silver Anniversary

DENVER – Colorado's Scenic and Historic Byways program is commemorating 25 years of service to tourists and the state's economy by designating routes that provide exceptional scenic, historical, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

The state's 25 Scenic and Historic Byways all function independently and each one offers the traveler a unique "Centennial State" experience. Overall, Colorado's Byways consist of:

- 2,492 miles (state highway miles 2,006; county/local roads 486)
- 140 driving hours
- 47 counties
- 11 America's Byways® (more national designations than any other state – * below)
- 10 are part of U.S. Forest Service Byways; two are Bureau of Land Management Back Country Byways

As part of commemorating the 25th anniversary, CDOT is hosting the "Byways. Elevated." Conference in Black Hawk this week for people directly involved with the program. The purpose is to provide information on future planning and funding, historic preservation, and the best ways to gain awareness and increase travel along the byways. More information is available at:

www.coloradodot.info/travel/scenic-byways/colorado-scenic-and-historic-byways-25th-anniversary

Listed below are all the Scenic and Historic Byways and a fact or two that make each one unique:

THE FIRST FIVE DESIGNATED BYWAYS (1989)

- **Alpine Loop (Ouray/Silverton/Lake City)** – The only one with two high altitude 4-wheel-drive passes, seven ghost towns and the history of Alfred G. "Alferd" Packer.
- ***Gold Belt Tour (Cripple Creek/Victor/Cañon City)** – The circuit of gold mining and all that it brought with it, such as red light districts, railroads and saloons.
- **Scenic Highway of Legends (Trinidad/La Veta/Walsenburg)** – Ties together an area rich in Native American and Wild West lore. The Tarahumare Indians believed the Spanish Peaks to be the place where all life emerged on Earth.
- **Peak to Peak (Black Hawk/Central City/Nederland/Estes Park)** – View the largest glacier in Colorado: Arapaho Glacier.
- ***San Juan Skyway (Telluride/Cortez/Durango)** – The geological heritage is so rich that this is one of two All-American Roads in Colorado.

EASTERN PLAINS

- ***Santa Fe Trail (Lamar/La Junta/Trinidad)** – Roughly follows the same route as the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Includes Bent’s Old Fort, which once served as the center of commerce, a meeting place, a shelter from attacks and inclement weather. Travels through the Comanche National Grassland.
- **Pawnee Pioneer Trails (Fort Morgan/Sterling/Ault)** – The Pawnee National Grassland is a massive tract of short-grass prairie where pronghorn antelope and songbirds thrive. It includes the dual mesas of the Pawnee Buttes – an anomaly on the Eastern Plains – popular with hikers and, due to numerous fossil discoveries, paleontologists.
- **South Platte River Trail (Julesburg/Ovid)** – Colorado’s shortest byway (19 miles), it begins and ends in Julesburg, where Colorado’s only Pony Express station was located. This byway also includes the site of Fort Sedgwick, arguably the most important military installation along the Overland Trail.

PLATEAU

- **Trail of the Ancients (Four Corners/Cortez/Mesa Verde National Park)** – At 116 miles, it is America’s only National Scenic Byway dedicated solely to archaeology.
- **Unaweep Tabeguache (Whitewater/Naturita/Placerville)** – “Unaweep” means “parting of the waters” or “canyon with two mouths,” depending on who you ask. But long ago, the Utes realized the important point, that Unaweep Canyon is the only known canyon in the world with a divide that drains water out each end.
- ***Dinosaur Diamond (Grand Junction/Fruita/Rangely)** – The Dinosaur National Monument, which claims to be the most productive Jurassic Period dinosaur quarry in the world, is nearby. The monument includes a walkway where visitors can view a sandstone wall embedded with over 2,000 dinosaur bones, and watch paleontologists chip away the sandstone to expose the fossilized dinosaur bones.

NORTHWEST COLORADO

- **Flat Tops Trail (Meeker/Buford/Yampa)** – Trappers Lake, located in the area, was what inspired Arthur Carhart, a U.S. Forest service official, to plead for wilderness preservation. Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964 and is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
- ***Colorado River Headwaters (Grand Lake/Granby/Hot Sulphur Springs/Kremmling/State Bridge)** – Parallels the Upper Colorado River to State Bridge with various access points for boating and fishing. Wildlife and scenic landscape viewing opportunities are plentiful. Hot Sulphur Springs features outstanding hot springs.
- ***Trail Ridge Road – Rocky Mountain National Park (Estes Park/Grand Lake)** – The highest paved *through*-road in the country. Grand Lake, headwaters of the mighty Colorado River, is the state’s largest natural body of water and its oldest tourist destination. Trail Ridge also is an All-American Road – one of two in Colorado.
- **Cache la Poudre – North Park (Fort Collins/Walden)** – Travels along one of America’s few federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. It also is one of the most reliable places in Colorado to see a moose.

SOUTHWEST/WEST & SOUTH CENTRAL COLORADO

- **Silver Thread (South Fork/Creede/Lake City)** – North Clear Creek Falls is the most photographed waterfall in Colorado and a major attraction along this byway.
- ***Grand Mesa (Mesa/Cedaredge)** – The largest flat-top mountain in the world is one of Colorado’s best hideaways with more than 300 stream-fed lakes.
- **West Elk Loop (Carbondale/Crested Butte/Paonia/Gunnison)** – Travels through the North Fork Valley, a region synonymous with farm-fresh cherries and apples. Skirts the North Rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and includes Crested Butte, famous for its preserved Victorian architecture.
- ***Top of the Rockies (Leadville/Minturn/Aspen)** – Traverses the Continental Divide three times. Mount Elbert (14,433 feet above sea level) and Mount Massive (14,421) – Colorado’s two highest peaks – are along this byway.
- **Collegiate Peaks (Salida/Buena Vista)** – The Sawatch Range, which contains the highest concentration of 14,000+ foot peaks in the country, parallels this route. The state gemstone, the aquamarine, is mined on Mt. Antero. The Arkansas River is the most commercially rafted river in the United States.

- **Los Caminos Antiguos (Alamosa/San Luis/Antonito)** – Takes you to Colorado's oldest surviving community (San Luis, 1851), its oldest parish (Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Conejos - 1858), and one of its first military posts (Fort Garland). The Stations of the Cross Shrine in San Luis gets approximately 60,000 visitors per year. Includes the historic Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad in Antonito.
- **Guanella Pass (Georgetown/Grant)** – Includes the Georgetown/Silver Plume National Landmark Historic District – one of the state's earliest silver rushes and the Georgetown Loop Railroad.
- **Mount Evans (Idaho Springs/Echo Lake/Bergen Park)** – Colorado's highest byway also is the highest paved road in North America. Explore the former gold camp of Idaho Springs and Echo Lake Mountain Park.
- ***Lariat Loop (Golden/Morrison/Evergreen)** – Lookout Mountain Road was one of the original drives developed by the city of Denver in the early 1900s to help Coloradans experience nearby mountain parks. Views of the Denver area from atop Lookout Mountain. Passes by Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre, one of the world's foremost outdoor concert venues.
- ***Frontier Pathways (Pueblo/Westcliffe/Colorado City)** – Squirrel Creek Canyon in the San Isabel Forest was the birthplace of developed recreation with the construction of shelters, campgrounds, fireplaces, and a lodge. Includes great views of the Wet Mountain Valley and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, passing the spectacular Bishop Castle.

For more information about the Scenic and Historic Byways, visit www.ColoradoByways.org.

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