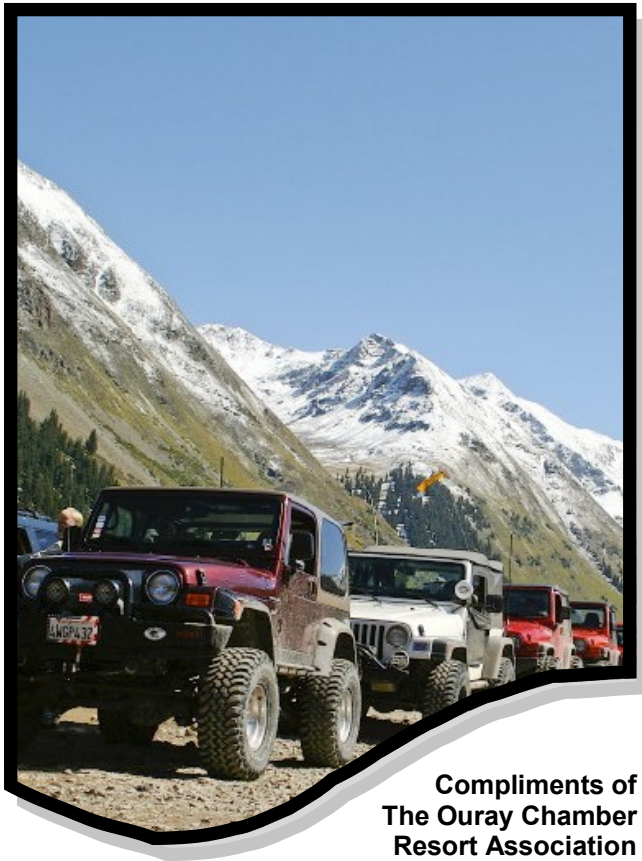


Four-Wheeling in the San Juans



Compliments of
The Ouray Chamber
Resort Association
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Photo courtesy of Kane Scheidegger.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Although we refer to four-wheeling throughout this brochure, this information can also be used by anyone wanting to explore this magnificent area on ATV's or off-highway motorcycles, or with a locally guided tour.

Our immediate vicinity offers limitless opportunities for four-wheelers, from easy scenic drives to rugged challenges, along trails the miners built to passes that climb to spectacular heights. All of these have one factor in common: they traverse some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, abundant with wildflowers, ghost towns, abandoned mines and wildlife, all with breathtaking vistas.

If you're not used to mountain driving, take the less challenging trips first. When preparing to take a four-wheel drive trip, remember the following safety and courtesy tips:

- Know your vehicle and its limits.
- Always check locally for road conditions.
- If you are feeling unsure, scout ahead on foot, rather than driving into an unknown situation.
- Stay on established roads and NEVER go off cross-country. The tundra is extremely fragile.
- On steep grades, gear down and proceed slowly. Use your gears, not your brakes.
- Always stop to lend aid or assistance if required.
- As a reminder, the vehicle traveling UPHILL has the right-of-way but taking turns based on where turnouts are located is a common courtesy.
Pull over only where there is room to pull off and yield to on-coming traffic if you are going downhill!

- The trails and roads in this guide are rated according to class (relative difficulty):

Class 1 -- Easy
Class 2 -- Moderate
Class 3 -- Difficult
Class 4 -- Very Difficult
Class 5 -- Use Extreme Caution

PROPER OHV USE IN OURAY COUNTY

Many of our off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails cross privately owned mining claims. Most owners have allowed people to pass through their property. It is the responsibility of all back-country enthusiasts to respect that privilege and treat Ouray's "backyard" respectfully. Please pick up a free OHV packet at the Visitor's Center.

There are more four-wheel drive trails in this region than those listed here. Topographical maps and more detailed books are available in many Ouray shops. Some are: *Guide to Colorado Backcountry & 4-Wheel Drive Trails* by Charles A. Wells; *Mountain Mysteries* by Gregory Smith; *The Best of Colorado 4-Wheel Drive Roads* by Outdoor Books & Maps; and *4-WD Trails Southwest Colorado* by Peter Massey & Jeanne Wilson.

FOUR-WHEELING TOURS IN THE SAN JUANS

Yankee Boy Basin (Class 2, Moderate)

Follow the Camp Bird Road 10 miles, through the remains of the Sneffels town site, taking the right fork to Yankee Boy Basin. After stopping to enjoy Twin Falls, follow the trail into the basin just below the 14,000 foot peak of Mt. Sneffels. The last two miles are very steep and rough; you may want to park and hike the remaining distance. Yankee Boy Basin is an ideal area for viewing vast meadows of wildflowers in mid-summer.

Governor Basin (Class 4, Very Difficult)

Following the directions to Yankee Boy Basin, from just above the Sneffels town site, follow the old wagon road branching left passing the Ruby Trust Mine. The trail climbs easily up the east side of the basin through pine forests, and begins a series of switchbacks. There are several steep, narrow rocky sections that should only be attempted by an experienced four-wheeler. Once you level out, the trail forks. The left fork goes to Sydney Basin and the remains of the famous Virginius Mine. The trail straight ahead leads you to the Mountain Top Mine (built against an enormous granite boulder to protect it from avalanches). Above this area are the impressive spires of the St. Sophia Ridge.

Corkscrew Gulch (Class 3, Difficult)

This popular drive branches east off Hwy 550 in Ironton Park, 8 miles south of Ouray. It climbs via numerous switchbacks; the last few are steep and narrow. The summit at 12,217 feet is the red soil of the famous Red Mountains 1, 2 & 3, visible to the south.

The eastern descent into Cement Creek drainage gives access either south to Silverton or up the north ridges over Hurricane Pass and down into California Gulch, connecting to the road to Animas Forks. At the top of Hurricane Pass, your view of Lake Como is worth the trip. The southern trailhead into Poughkeepsie Gulch is by Lake Como. This is an extremely dangerous trail and not recommended unless you have your own vehicle and are an experienced four-wheeler. When leaving Poughkeepsie Gulch, plan to descend from Lake Como rather than going up the extremely steep grade from Engineer Pass road.

Brown Mountain (Class 2, Moderate)

The trail up Brown Mountain splits off from the Corkscrew Gulch trail. This trail is not difficult but is steep in some places. You'll encounter many abandoned mine sites along the way. The basin, high on the side of Brown Mountain, is a fun, short trip with incredible views of Ironton Park, the Hayden Range, and the Red Mountain area.

Black Bear Pass (Class 5, Extreme)

This is not for the inexperienced or "faint of heart". It is recommended that you go with one of the local tour companies. Leave Ouray south on Hwy 550 and drive 13 miles past the summit of Red Mountain. Turn right onto the marked trail. Black Bear is a two-way trail from 550 to the summit but becomes ONE-WAY ONLY from the summit to Telluride. The ascent is easy, with spectacular views. At the top you may turn around and return the way you came. If you're still feeling bold, continue on to the infamous "steps" and sharp switchbacks. The road is extremely narrow. Short wheel base vehicles are preferred. On the way down, make sure to stop at Bridal Veil Falls. The remaining distance is easy but watch for mountain bikers.

Imogene Pass (Class 4/5, Very Difficult)

Imogene Pass is one of the more difficult drives between Ouray and Telluride. Follow the Yankee Boy Basin description up Camp Bird Road 5 miles. The road turns left over Canyon Creek, climbing along cliffs and looking down over Camp Bird Mine. The ascent to Imogene Basin is rough and steep. The basin boasts spectacular wildflower displays over the mid-summer months. The views from Imogene Pass, at 13,114 ft., are impressive. Take time to stop and look, both west to the mountains surrounding Telluride and north to the Red Mountains. Bring a jacket; it can be cold and windy at the top. The descent into the Tomboy Mine area and Telluride is more gradual. This 18-mile trip will take three to four hours to complete.

Engineer Pass (Class 3, Difficult)

Although this is not as technically difficult as Black Bear and Imogene, it does demand more skill than other trails. Choose from three different trail heads to get to Engineer pass.

The first choice is about 4 miles south of Ouray on Hwy 550. Look for the trail entrance on your left, marked by a cascading waterfall and a staging area. This road involves 2 miles of extremely rocky areas that are hard on many vehicles. Novices should proceed with caution. The second option follows the trails to Corkscrew and California Gulches. In Animas Forks, pick up the Engineer Pass trailhead to the left. This road is a smoother ride for you and your vehicle.

The third option follows the trail for Cinnamon Pass out of Silverton and is also accessible from the Animas Forks area. Engineer Pass continues on for all routes until the turnoff for Poughkeepsie Gulch where you will continue LEFT. Poughkeepsie Gulch is one of the more difficult trails in the area and should be left to experienced four-wheelers, in groups of two or more, with a winch. Most local outfitters prohibit this pass in their rental contract. Several miles past the Poughkeepsie Gulch turnoff the road forks. Left continues to climb up to Engineer Pass at 12,850 feet. From here you can turn around and return or continue to Lake City. Go right at the fork over Cinnamon Pass to Animas Forks.

Cinnamon Pass (Class 2, Moderate)

One way to reach the Cinnamon Pass trailhead is from Silverton, 23 miles south of Ouray on Hwy 550. Drive through Silverton on Greene St., veering right on CR 2. Drive 12 miles on this dirt road to Animas Forks. Allow extra time to explore this great ghost town.

Here, pick up Cinnamon Pass east to Lake City. After you've reached the top of the pass at 12,620 ft., the road becomes smoother. Descend to the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River past Lake San Cristobal and on into Lake City. Cinnamon Pass can be linked with Engineer Pass to form a long loop trip from Ouray to Lake City with great interpretive signs, known as the Alpine Loop.

Clear Lake (Class 2, Moderate)

Just north of Silverton, the route to Clear Lake is an easy, short trail perfect for a limited schedule. You will encounter beautiful wildflowers during the summer season, pass historic mine sites and dead-end at a spectacular mountain lake. From there you must return the way you came. To get to Clear

Lake, drive south on Hwy 550 for 22 miles to the Mineral Creek Campground turnoff to the west. Follow the road past the camping areas to the trailhead leading steeply off to the right.

Last Dollar Road (Class 1, Easy)

One of the easier trails in the San Juans, and one of several that link Ouray and Telluride. Some of this trail is passable in a passenger vehicle but becomes difficult in the steep sections. After turning onto Hwy 62 at Ridgway, drive 10 miles to the sign for Last Dollar Road on your left and continue 6 miles to the trail fork. Take the right fork to the town of Sawpit on Hwy 145 or the left fork, along Hastings Mesa (with great views of Sneffels Range), to join Hwy 145 just past the Telluride Airport.

Ophir Pass (Class 2, Moderate)

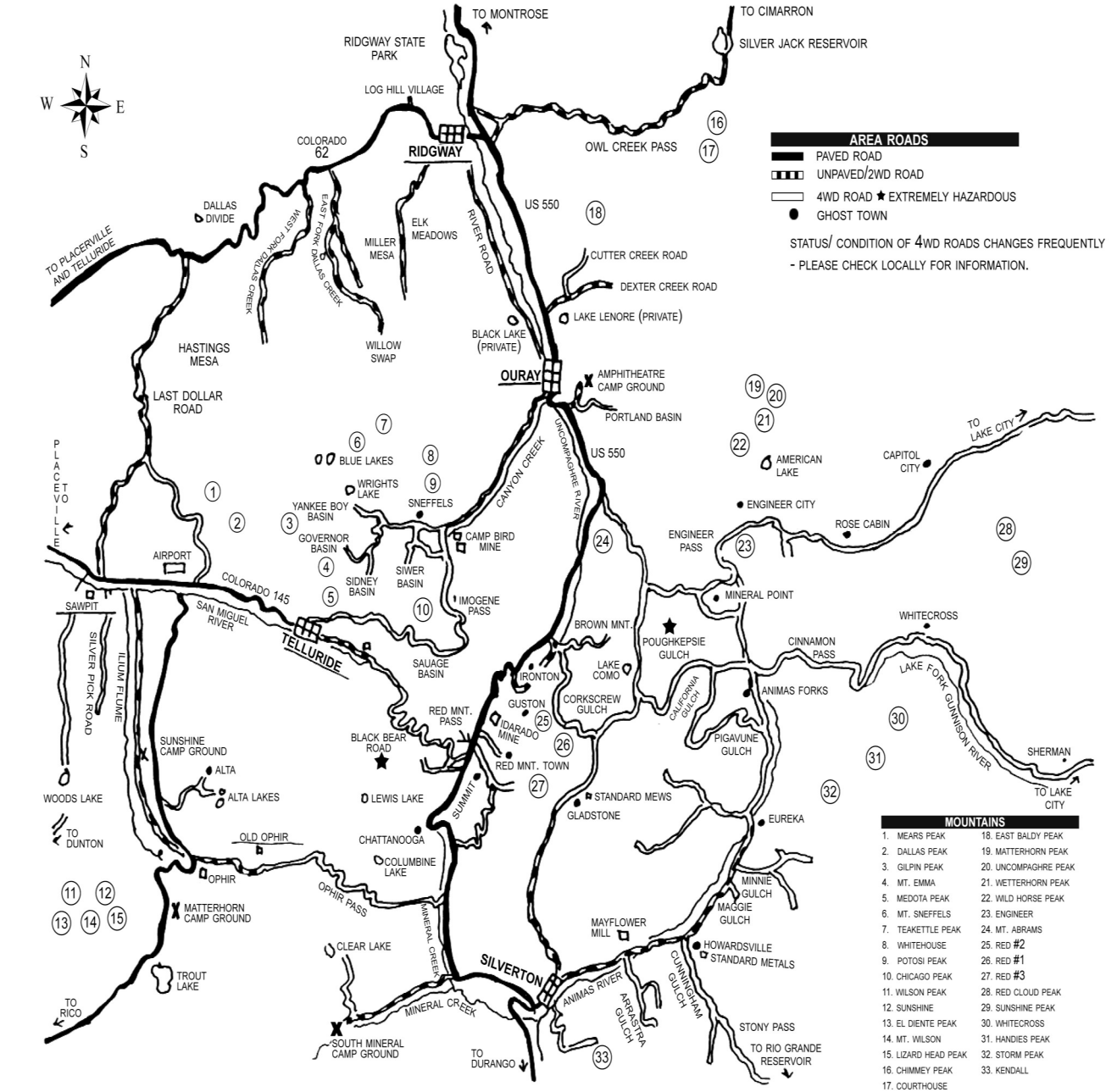
This is an easier pass in the area and will take you to the Telluride side of the mountains. It was originally a wagon road between the mines in Ophir, Telluride and Silverton. Drive south of Ouray on Hwy 550 for 18.1 miles to the "National Forest Access, Ophir Pass" turnoff on your right. The ascent is gradual, winding through aspen forests and wildflower meadows, to an elevation of 11,789.

The descending trail is narrow & shelf-like, with one sharp switchback just over the pass, followed by an easy road to the bottom. The intersection of Hwy 145 is just beyond Ophir. Turn right onto 145 and follow it to a point where it turns right to Telluride or left to Ouray.

Brooklyn Road (Class 2, Moderate)

This is a beautiful drive with panoramic views and beautiful flowers during the summer. Be cautioned that heavy rain will cause muddy terrain.

This trail starts at the top of Red Mountain Pass turning east off Hwy 550 just beyond the Red Mountain Pass sign. This trail leads you past the St. Paul Lodge and along a winding ledge on the west side of the mountains. You will pass areas with mining remnants, including the Brooklyn Mine site. This is not an all-day drive. It joins Hwy 550 just north of the turnoff to Ophir Pass, 18 miles south of Ouray.



NOTE: MAP IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE