



Alpine tundra occupies high-mountain summits, slopes and ridges above timberline. The weather and climate are more dynamic and severe:

- The air is thinner, making every activity more difficult.
- The air gets colder as the elevation increases.
- High winds are common above the timberline.
- There is no shelter from the sun, wind or precipitation.

### High Tundra Weather

- When traveling the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway, clockwise travel is recommended.
- Check with local cities and counties for additional regulations.



### Rules of the Road

- Uphill traffic has the right-of-way, but common courtesy works best.
- Motorized vehicles must stay on designated routes as depicted on this map.
- Off-highway vehicles (OHV) must be registered or permitted in Colorado.
- Colorado state law requires all unlicensed motor vehicles, including those registered in other states, Annual registration permits may be purchased locally. Contact a local Chamber of Commerce for details.

The Alpine Loop's natural resources (such as vegetation and wildlife) are susceptible to human impact. One person leaving the designated route could cause damage that takes decades to repair—others doing the same compounds that effect.

Adventure and exploration is exciting and invigorating, but don't get carried away. Blazing a new trail could result in legal action and a hefty fine in addition to the damage it causes.

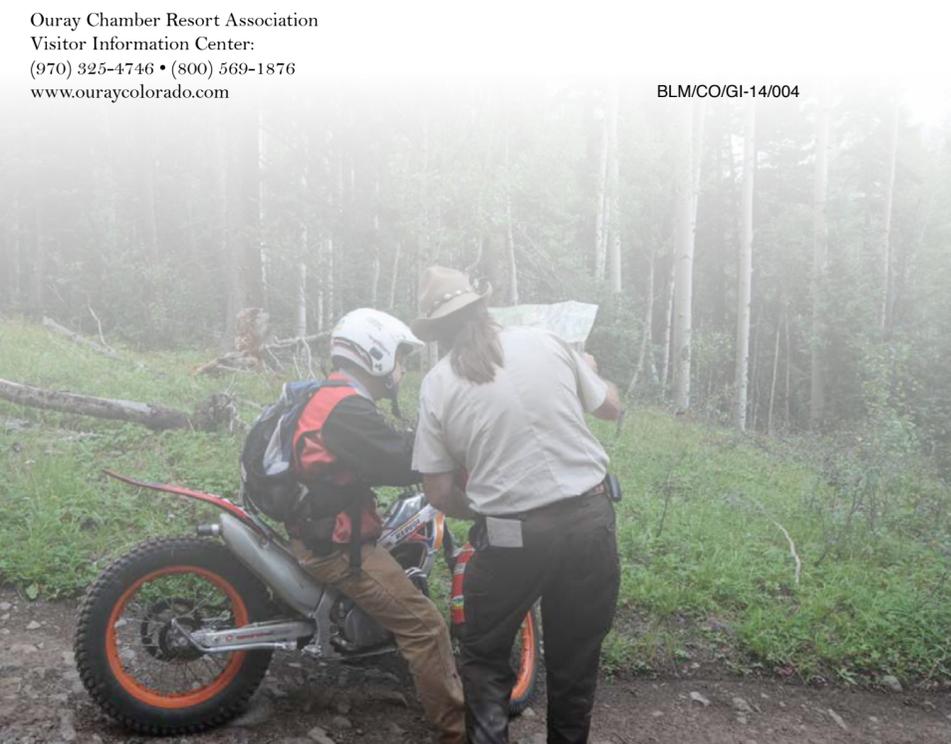
### Designated Routes and Resource Protection

**Silver Thread**  
 Alpine Loop Interpretive Center:  
 (970) 944-2527 • (800) 569-1874  
 www.lakecity.com

**Silverton Area Chamber of Commerce**  
 Visitor Information Center:  
 (970) 387-5654 • (800) 752-4494  
 www.silvertoncolorado.com

**Telluride Area Visitor Information:**  
 (970) 728-3041 • (888) 605-2578  
 www.visittelluride.com

BLM/CO/GI-14/004



BLM

# The Alpine Loop

## Back Country Byway

Off-Highway Vehicle Guide

COLORADO

### Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are non-renewable resources that include historic and prehistoric artifacts, structures, sites and materials important for their irreplaceable values.

When you visit a historic site, follow these simple steps to help ensure its preservation.

- Be respectful to the area.
- Stay on the established trails and roads when riding or driving.
- Be careful around historic buildings; they are not stable.
- Do not camp within 100 feet of the historic site.
- Do not smoke or build campfires within 200 feet of historic buildings.
- Keep pets leashed while visiting these sites.
- Avoid eating near the sites; animals and insects can damage resources.
- Do not remove any of the material artifacts you find.
- Do not deface the buildings (trying to remove graffiti could do more harm than good).
- Do not enter historical structures.

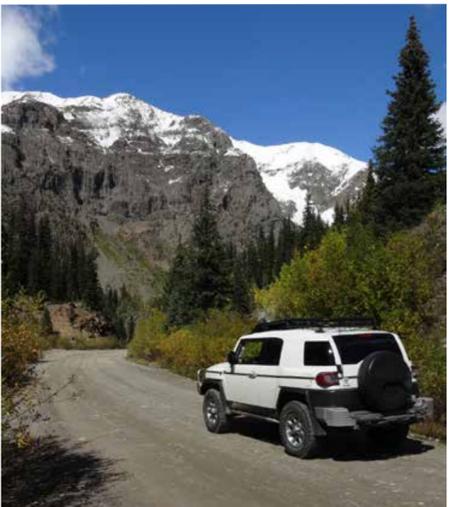
Report looting and vandalism to BLM Law Enforcement (970-882-6849) and the Colorado State Patrol (970-249-4392).

### The Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway Off-Highway Vehicle Guide

Welcome to the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway. This often rugged road winds through the spectacular scenery of the San Juan Mountains, connecting the communities of Lake City, Silverton and Ouray. Managed for high-clearance vehicles and demanding a leisurely pace, the 65-mile loop provides the chance to slow down and experience the hard rock mining history of the area. Most travel routes are available by full size 4x4s, though utility terrain vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles are popular modes of transportation.

Tackling the loop in its entirety is easily an all-day event. However, the main loop is only part of the experience; miles of designated side routes allow visitors to either take a short tour or extend their trip to multiple days.

For more information, go to: <http://blm.gov/dwld>



### Stay Out, Stay Alive

Part of the attractiveness of the Alpine Loop is the rich mining history of the region. Along with the rustic buildings and captivating stories, lies danger in openings. These features pose many threats (building collapse, fall hazards, low air quality, etc.). The words to live by in this area are: "Stay Out, Stay Alive."

### Tread Lightly

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### Safety

- Make sure you are not the only one who knows your travel plans; give yourself more time than you think you need.
- Do your homework and research before you begin your trip. Know your routes and destination.
- Know how far you are going and where to stop for gas.
- Make sure you have enough water, fuel, rest and experience to make it to your destination.
- Know your abilities: if you have to ask yourself if your "expertise" is enough to negotiate a harder trail, it probably isn't.
- Many of the historical sites contain mining passages and buildings—DO NOT enter them. These structures are not stable and may collapse.
- Not all of the land along the Alpine Loop is public; respect private property.
- Electronics and wireless devices DO NOT work in most areas within the Alpine Loop—download or print maps, destination and emergency contact information.
- **In the event of an emergency, dial 911 or contact the Sheriff's office:**
  - Hindsale County 970-944-2291
  - Ouray County 970-325-7272
  - San Juan County 970-387-5531
  - San Miguel County 970-728-1911

### Starting in Silverton?

**Short Trip (about two hours)**

- Mayflower Mill
- Howardsville (formerly Bullion City)
- Minnie Gulch and Maggie Gulch

**Half-day trip (about four to six hours)**

- Eureka (2WD accessible)
- Animas Forks (2WD accessible)
- Scenic loop through Gladstone, Hurricane Pass and California Gulch
- Historic Loop through Placer Gulch and Picayune Gulch

For more information, go to: <http://silvertoncolorado.com>

### Starting in Lake City?

**Short trip (about two hours)**

- Pike Snowden Cabin
- Capitol City
- Lake San Cristobal

**Half-day trip (about four to six hours)**

- Whitmore Falls
- Rose's Cabin
- Scenic and historic route through Engineer Pass to Mineral Point
- Scenic and historic route through Cinnamon Pass to Animas Forks

For more information, go to: <http://www.lakecity.com>

### Starting in Ouray?

**Short trip (about two hours)**

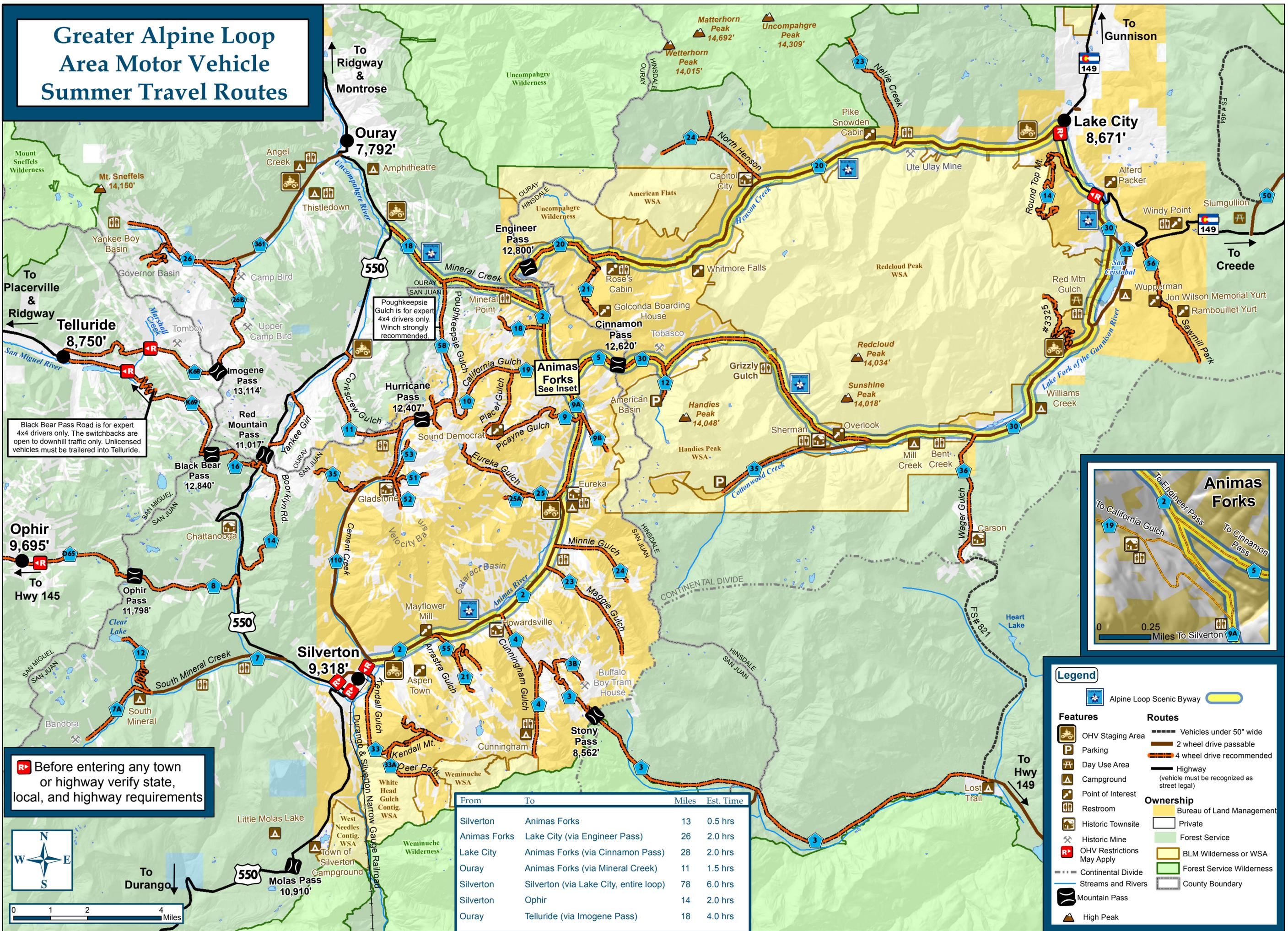
- Camp Bird
- Yankee Boy Basin

**Half-day trip (about four to six hours)**

- Yankee Girl Mine
- Cortesew Gulch
- Gladstone

For more information, go to: <http://www.ouraycolorado.com>

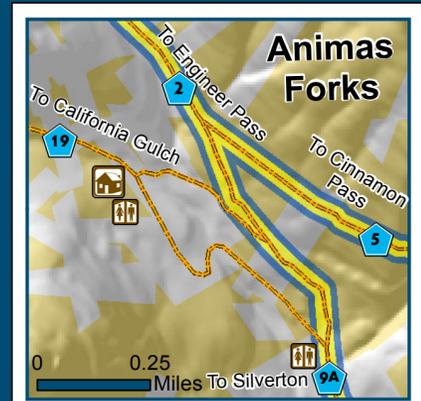
# Greater Alpine Loop Area Motor Vehicle Summer Travel Routes



Black Bear Pass Road is for expert 4x4 drivers only. The switchbacks are open to downhill traffic only. Unlicensed vehicles must be trailed into Telluride.

Poughkeepsie Gulch is for expert 4x4 drivers only. Winch strongly recommended.

**Before entering any town or highway verify state, local, and highway requirements**



From	To	Miles	Est. Time
Silverton	Animas Forks	13	0.5 hrs
Animas Forks	Lake City (via Engineer Pass)	26	2.0 hrs
Lake City	Animas Forks (via Cinnamon Pass)	28	2.0 hrs
Ouray	Animas Forks (via Mineral Creek)	11	1.5 hrs
Silverton	Silverton (via Lake City, entire loop)	78	6.0 hrs
Silverton	Ophir	14	2.0 hrs
Ouray	Telluride (via Imogene Pass)	18	4.0 hrs

**Legend**

**Features**

- OHV Staging Area
- Parking
- Day Use Area
- Campground
- Point of Interest
- Restroom
- Historic Townsite
- Historic Mine
- OHV Restrictions May Apply
- Continental Divide
- Streams and Rivers
- Mountain Pass
- High Peak

**Routes**

- Vehicles under 50" wide
- 2 wheel drive passable
- 4 wheel drive recommended
- Highway (vehicle must be recognized as street legal)

**Ownership**

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- Forest Service
- BLM Wilderness or WSA
- Forest Service Wilderness
- County Boundary

