



Twenty Years Later, Glenwood Canyon Highway is a Marvel of Engineering and a Top Glenwood Springs Attraction

Driving through Glenwood Canyon today, it's hard to imagine it was once a narrow, congested and often hazardous roadway. It took 13 years of construction and nearly \$500 million before one of the nation's most extraordinary highway projects, Interstate 70 through Glenwood Canyon, opened to motorists on October 14, 1992. It celebrates its 20th anniversary this fall. After two decades, the 12.5-mile gorge carved by the Colorado River remains a marvel of engineering, and one that has grown into a marvelous Glenwood Springs attraction.

Glenwood Springs, Colo. (October 10, 2012) For many visitors traveling to Glenwood Springs, Glenwood Canyon is the gateway to the town's famed Glenwood Hot Springs, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, whitewater rafting on the Colorado River and skiing at Sunlight Mountain Resort. But getting to the mountain resort town wasn't always so easy. October marks the 20th anniversary of the completion of Interstate 70 through Glenwood Canyon. Thanks to the dedication of visionary designers, project managers, engineers, construction workers, landscapers and others, the Glenwood Canyon that travelers drive through today is a smooth, safe and stunning engineering showpiece with extraordinary attractions of its own.

"Glenwood Canyon's wonders, both natural and man-made, are astonishing," said Lisa Langer, vice-president of tourism marketing for the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association. "Since its completion 20 years ago, Glenwood Canyon has become a place where motorists can take a respite on their journey and recreationists can hike, view wildlife, cycle, inline skate, fish, raft, canoe, kayak or picnic in the unparalleled beauty of the canyon."

Glenwood Canyon was honored for its accomplishments in planning, context-sensitive design, management and construction and won more than 30 awards, including the 1993 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

One of biggest challenges the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) faced was how to squeeze a four-lane freeway into a gorge barely wide enough to accommodate the existing two-lane highway with minimal impact to the environment. CDOT's solution was clever: construct two roadways, one nearly on top of the other.

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The final design features an elevated roadway including 40 bridges and viaducts spanning more than six miles between sections. The highway also houses a state-of-the-art traffic management and maintenance facility tucked inside the Hanging Lake Tunnels. From here CDOT employees monitor road conditions and traffic, and can quickly alert travelers to unexpected weather or circumstances. A fleet of tow trucks, fire trucks and emergency vehicles are on 24-hour standby if needed.

While the engineering feats in Glenwood Canyon are nothing short of spectacular, so are the natural wonders. CDOT designers made sure drivers, cyclists, hikers and boaters all had an opportunity to enjoy the surroundings. Four rest areas, Bair Ranch, Hanging Lake, Grizzly Creek and No Name, invite visitors to stop and explore different sections of the canyon. Each rest area features parking areas, restrooms, interpretive displays, picnic grounds, water fountains, trash receptacles and access to hiking trails. Hanging Lake is the most popular. A recently refurbished trail and designation as a National Natural Landmark attracts hikers every day during the summer season. With its large, designated boat ramp, Grizzly Creek is the top choice for rafters and kayakers.

Spanning the entire length of Glenwood Canyon and connecting all four rest areas, the Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail provides endless opportunities to explore on bike or by foot. The Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail is accessible from Glenwood Springs and a perfect place to view wildlife, fish the riverbanks, enjoy a family picnic, watch the Amtrak trains roll through the canyon and cycle for miles on end. Local businesses rent bikes and provide drop-off services so riders only have to ride in one direction.

In the twenty years that have passed since its completion, Glenwood Canyon is still an awe-inspiring feat of human ingenuity and teamwork, and one that has enabled countless people to travel safely and efficiently, as well as play in one of Colorado's most magnificent and rugged landscapes.

Glenwood Canyon Fast Facts:

- 40 bridges over 12.5 miles
- 15 miles of retaining walls
- 2 4,000-foot-long tunnels
- 150,000 new trees and shrubs planted
- 30,000 tons of structural and reinforcing steel used
- 810,000 tons of concrete used
- 2 million tiles in Hanging Lake tunnels

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- 300 engineers consulted on the project
- \$490.3 million final cost of construction
- 4 full-service rest areas that provide access to trails and the Colorado River
- The project won more than 30 awards, including the 1993 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers
- A French-made overhead gantry was used to place 1,751 individual pre-cast concrete segments that make up French Creek and Hanging Lake Viaducts
- In 2011, Hanging Lake was designated a National Natural Landmark
- Glenwood Canyon is home to a thriving wildlife population including bighorn sheep, marmots, raccoons, birds, bears, deer, mountain lions and coyotes
- The CDOT traffic management facility in the Hanging Lake Tunnels also monitors the conditions in the Wolf Creek Pass Tunnel approximately 200 miles away

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About Glenwood Springs

Glenwood Springs is located between Aspen and Vail, 165 miles west of Denver or 90 miles east of Grand Junction, on I-70 off Exit 116. For more information about Glenwood Springs, Colorado, call 970-945-6589 or go to <http://www.visitglenwood.com/>. For lodging reservations, call 888-4-GLENWOOD (888-445-3696). A complete press kit and press releases are available at <http://www.visitglenwood.com/press-kit> and <http://www.visitglenwood.com/press-releases>. Access to downloadable photos is available at <http://www.visitglenwood.com/photos>.

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