

## West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)

### Overview

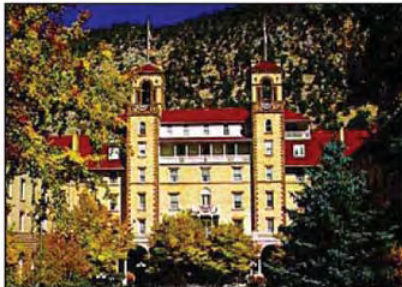
The western portion of the Corridor is composed of nine Scenery Analysis Units (Glenwood Springs, Glenwood Canyon, Colorado River/Dotsero, Lower Eagle River Canyon, Eagle Valley, Red Canyon, Wolcott, Eagle Valley/Avon, Dowd Canyon), each with distinct landscape characteristics. Below are descriptions and context photographs documenting the character and context of the landscape within these units. These nine Scenery Analysis Units are described collectively for ease of comparison in both inventory and analysis because the majority of project alternatives extend between Vail and C-470, not affecting these Scenery Analysis Units. While scenery throughout these units varies, the general character is described as follows:

**Broad river valleys** centered on riparian corridors and surrounded by steep hillsides with sparse vegetation. The westernmost units are dominated by the Colorado River and associated riparian corridor and include red rock escarpments and contrasting piñon-juniper woodland vegetation. The remaining units are centered on the Eagle River and associated riparian corridor, which provides striking contrast to the surrounding hillsides. The scenery along the Eagle River includes 30 miles of colorful and rugged sandstone cliffs and canyons from Edwards to Dotsero. Spruce trees, cottonwoods, alder, dogwoods, and various other riparian vegetation border the river. Spruce-fir and aspen forests are seen in the mountain backdrop, and serviceberry, scrub oak, piñon-juniper woodland, sagebrush and grasses occur in the foothills foreground. The lower Eagle River valley is characterized by agricultural and livestock ranches.

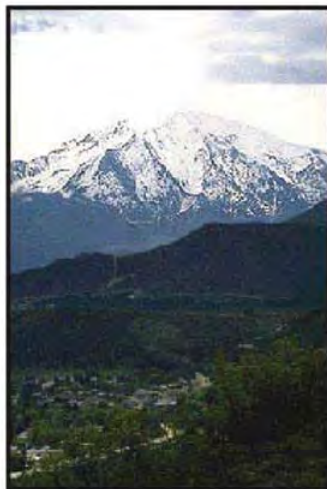
**Enclosed and rugged canyon environments** that extend up from 1,500 to 2,500 feet above the Colorado River (Glenwood Canyon, Red Canyon, and Dowd Canyon).

Overall, these units are composed of common variety, unity, and vividness attributes and are rated Class B scenery. Outstanding scenic attractiveness within these units is present within Glenwood Canyon and Red Canyon and are rated Class A scenery. While the towns of Glenwood Springs, Gypsum, Eagle, Wolcott, and Avon are urban mountain communities and constitute deviations from the naturally appearing landscape, they are valued for their small town characteristics, rural landscapes, undeveloped wooded hillsides and ridgelines, and scenic views. Existing elements, such as minor cut-and-fill slopes associated with roadways, remain subordinate to the setting.

### Glenwood Springs Unit (Mileposts 113 to 118)



Hotel Colorado, view north



Sunlight Peak, view south



Natural Hot Springs Pool, view east

### Glenwood Springs Unit: Landscape Character

- Broad river valley defined by steep hillsides, red rock escarpments
- Foothills zone
- North- and south-facing slopes dominated by homogeneous piñon-juniper woodland
- Undeveloped wooded hillsides and ridgelines

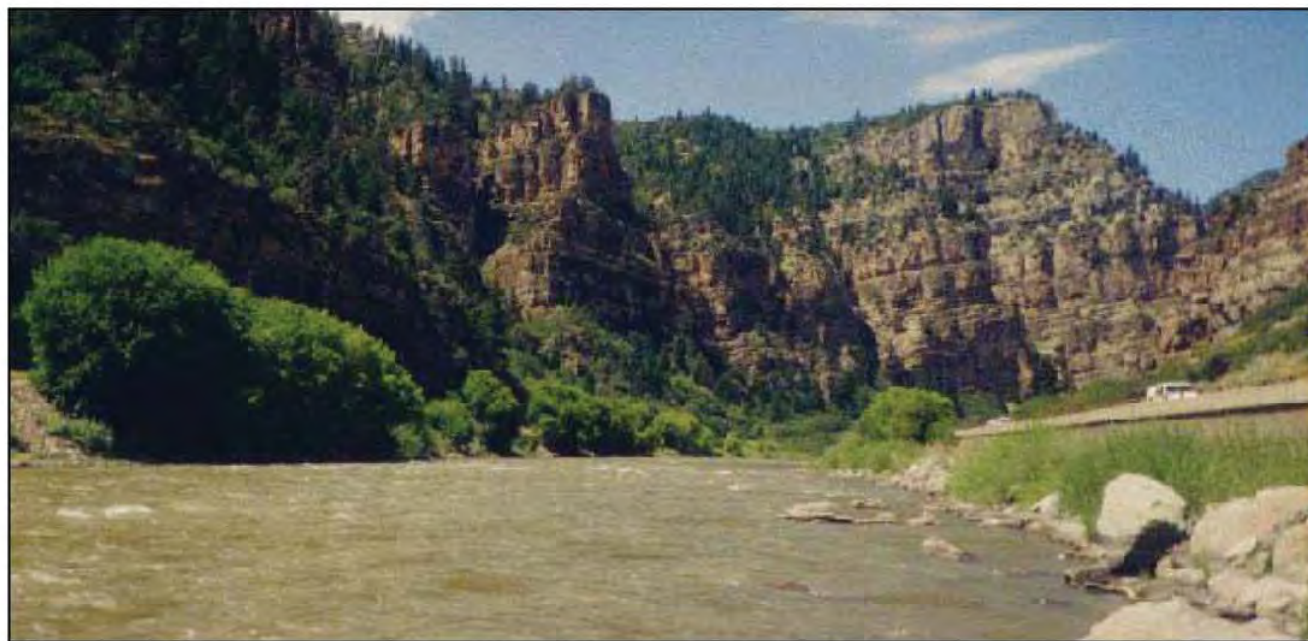
## West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)

### Glenwood Springs Unit: Landscape Context

(Source: J.F. Sato and Associates observations)

- Jurisdiction: town of Glenwood Springs, unincorporated Garfield County, BLM Glenwood Springs District, White River National Forest
- Small town characteristics
- Confluence of Colorado and Roaring Fork rivers
- Primarily privately owned lands surrounded by BLM lands

### Glenwood Canyon Unit (Mileposts 118 to 128)



Glenwood Canyon, view west

### Glenwood Canyon Unit: Landscape Character

- Steep and rugged canyon walls extend 2,500 feet above Colorado River
- Oakbrush and aspen add color along canyon walls
- Very resistive rock, white river uplift: Saguache quartzite
- White sandstone cliffs
- Extensive cave network at canyon rim
- Layers of sedimentary deposits contain abundant Paleozoic fossils
- South-facing slopes dominated by scrub oak and piñon-juniper
- North-facing slopes dominated by scrub and woodland
- Riparian corridor of serviceberry, choke cherry, box elder, cottonwood
- Some areas composed of limestone and dolomite; springs exist
- Parallels Colorado River

### Glenwood Canyon Unit: Landscape Context:

(Source: J.F. Sato and Associates observations)

- Jurisdiction: White River National Forest, BLM Glenwood Springs District
- Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail provides scenic access to numerous and varied recreation opportunities
- Intersected by many recreation trails

**West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)**

**Colorado River/Dotsero Unit (Mileposts 128 to 134)**



**Dotsero Area, view east**

**Dotsero Unit: Landscape Character**

- Broad river valley surrounded by steep hillsides
- Eagle Valley Formation
- Soft sedimentary rock, highly erodible; sparse vegetation in valleys
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Foothills zone
- North- and east-facing slopes dominated by piñon-juniper woodland
- Lower side valley contains alluvial fans of sagebrush-rabbitbrush scrub
- Large riparian meadow and forest riparian complex along Eagle River
- Parallels Colorado River west of Dotsero and Eagle River east of Dotsero

**Dotsero Unit: Landscape Context**

(Source: J.F. Sato and Associates observations)

- Jurisdictions: BLM Glenwood Springs District, White River National Forest, unincorporated Garfield County, unincorporated Eagle County
- Includes unincorporated town of Dotsero
- Rural, open character of Eagle County
- Recreation orientation
- Preservation of open space through clustered development

**West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)**

**Lower Eagle River Canyon Unit (Mileposts 134 to 139)**



**Eagle River Valley, view east**



**Eagle River Valley, view east**

**Lower Eagle River Canyon Unit: Landscape Character**

- Eagle Valley Formation, soft sedimentary rock, highly erodible; sparse vegetation in valleys
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Foothills zone
- North- and south-facing hillsides dominated by homogeneous piñon-juniper woodland
- Large riparian meadow and forest riparian complex along Eagle River
- Parallels Colorado River

**Lower Eagle River Canyon Unit Landscape Context**

(Source: J.F. Sato and Associates observations)

- Jurisdiction: BLM Glenwood Springs District, unincorporated Eagle County, town of Gypsum
- Rural, open character of Eagle County
- Recreation orientation
- Preservation of open space through clustered development

## West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)

### Eagle Valley/Eagle-Gypsum Unit (Mileposts 139 to 148)



Gypsum, view east



Gypsum, view east

#### Eagle Valley/Eagle-Gypsum Unit: Landscape Character

- Broad river valley surrounded by steep hillsides
- Eagle Valley Formation
- Soft sedimentary rock, highly erodible; sparse vegetation in valleys
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley about 0.5 mile wide
- Abrupt elevation change of 600 feet from side slopes to valley floor
- Foothills zone
- South- and west-facing slopes are open areas with dispersed piñon pine and Rocky Mountain juniper
- North- and east-facing slopes include denser piñon-juniper woodland
- Large riparian meadow and forest riparian complex along Eagle River

#### Eagle Valley/Eagle-Gypsum Landscape Context

(Source: Eagle County Master Plan)

- Jurisdiction: BLM Glenwood Springs District, unincorporated Eagle County, towns of Gypsum and Eagle
- Includes unincorporated town of Dotsero
- Rural, open character of Eagle County
- Recreation orientation
- Includes Gypsum Ponds State Wildlife Area
- Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad traverses unit
- Preservation of open space through clustered development
- Parallels Eagle River

## West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Glenwood Springs to Dowd Canyon (Mileposts 113 to 172)

### Red Canyon Unit (Mileposts 148 to 153)



Red Canyon, view west



Red Canyon, view west

#### Red Canyon Unit: Landscape Character

- Spectacular red rock escarpments east of Eagle rising 1,000 to 1,500 feet above I-70
- Enclosed landscape
- Bright red rock formations contrast vividly with dark green coniferous forest cover and grass bottomlands
- Red sandstone cliffs, Mesozoic rock
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Upper Foothills zone
- North- and south-facing slopes dominated by complex of sagebrush intermixed with piñon juniper and mountain scrub
- North-facing slopes include large patches of aspen
- Valley bottom lined by large riparian forest
- Parallels Eagle River

#### Red Canyon Unit: Landscape Context

(Source: J.F. Sato and Associates observations)

- Jurisdictions: BLM Glenwood Springs District and unincorporated Eagle County
- Traversed by I-70, US 24 (old US 6), Arkansas-Eagle main line of Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, and several overhead utility lines
- Ranching activity present