

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

Wolcott Unit (Mileposts 153 to 160)



Wilmor Lake, view west



Wolcott Area, view west

Wolcott Unit: Landscape Character

- Broad, open river valley surrounded by steep hillsides with sparse vegetation and highly erodible Eagle Valley Formation soft sedimentary rock
- Red sandstone, cliff forming (Mesozoic rock)
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Upper Foothills zone
- North-facing slopes include large patches of aspen
- North- and south-facing slopes include complex of sagebrush intermixed with piñon-juniper and mountain scrub
- Large riparian meadow and forest riparian complex along Eagle River

Wolcott Unit: Landscape Context

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

- Jurisdiction: BLM Glenwood Springs District, unincorporated Eagle County
- 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/Avon Unit (Mileposts 160 to 170)



Avon, view west



Edwards, view west

Eagle Valley/Avon Unit: Landscape Character

- Broad valley centered on Eagle River, bordered by steep hillsides
- Eagle Valley Formation
- Soft sedimentary rock, highly erodible; sparse vegetation in valleys
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Upper Foothills zone
- North- and south-facing slopes dominated complex of sagebrush intermixed with piñon-juniper woodland and mountain scrub
- North-facing slopes include large patches of aspen
- Valley bottom lined by large riparian forest

Eagle Valley/Avon Unit: Landscape Context

(Source: Eagle County Master Plan)

- Jurisdiction: BLM Glenwood Springs District, White River National Forest, unincorporated Eagle County, town of Avon
- Rural, open character of Eagle County
- Recreation orientation
- Preservation of open space through clustered development
- Parallels Eagle River

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

Dowd Canyon Unit (Mileposts 170 to 172)



Dowd Canyon, view west



Dowd Canyon, view west

Dowd Canyon Unit: Landscape Character:

- Broad river valley surrounded by steep hillsides with sparse vegetation and highly erodible soft sedimentary rock
- Enclosed canyon environment
- Abrupt elevation change from side slopes to valley floor
- Striking 200-foot banded cliffs of Minturn Formation, deposits of debris washed from ancestral Rockies, and limestone layers formed from marine organism shells
- South-facing slopes include sagebrush intermixed with piñon-juniper woodland and mountain scrub
- North-facing slopes have large patches of aspen
- River lined by large riparian forests
- Red beds, iron-rich sandstone

Dowd Canyon Unit: Landscape Context:

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

- Jurisdiction: White River National Forest, unincorporated Eagle County, town of Minturn
- Area not mined
- Confluence of Eagle River and Gore Creek
- I-70 and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad located parallel to Eagle River
- Includes towns of Wolcott and Avon

West Corridor Scenery Analysis Units: Key Viewpoints and I-70 Views

The Scenery Analysis Units between Glenwood Springs and Dowd Canyon include many sensitive community- and recreation-oriented views. I-70 and the Union Pacific Railroad are located parallel to the Colorado/Eagle River throughout these units. Views from I-70 vary considerably throughout these units, from open and expansive in areas of broad valleys to confined and enclosed within canyon environments. Interstate motorists experience diversity in color and form, viewing geologic formations primarily composed of soft sedimentary, highly erodible rock. Recreation is highly valued throughout these units on both public and privately owned lands.

Vail Scenery Analysis Unit (Mileposts 172 to 182)

Overview

A relatively broad, U-shaped valley centered on the Gore Creek riparian shrub complex characterizes the Vail unit. This unit has some distinctive landscape features, such as the red sandstone formations that create a vivid contrast to the riparian shrub complex. However, the overall unit is composed of common variety, unity, and vividness attributes, and is rated Class B scenery. The following provides descriptions and context photographs documenting the character and context of the landscape within this unit. Deviations from the natural landscape character are present in the Vail unit, primarily associated with community development and the Vail Ski Area.



Vail, view west



Vail, view west

Landscape Character

- Red beds, iron rich sandstone; very erodible soils
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, broad U-shaped valley
- Mixed montane forest and foothills mountain scrub zone
- South-facing slopes dominated by mountain scrub with intermittent sagebrush
- North-facing slopes dominated by Douglas-fir and aspen
- Gore Creek riparian shrub complex

Landscape Context

- Jurisdiction: White River National Forest, unincorporated Eagle County, town of Vail
- Resort destination (skiing, shopping, Gold Medal fishing stream)
- Relatively new community; includes Vail Ski Area
- Contains open space lands, numerous Vail recreation facilities, and designated WRNF recreation sites
- Adjacent to Eagles Nest Wilderness Area
- Parallels Gore Creek

Key Viewpoints and I-70 Views

Vail is a popular resort destination for skiing, shopping, and Gold Medal fishing. Sensitive views within this unit include open space lands, many recreation sites, parks, and trails within the town of Vail, as well as many designated recreation sites within the WRNF. The Eagles Nest Wilderness Area is located adjacent to this unit within the WRNF. Views along I-70 within this unit transition from the forested landscapes along Vail Pass to more open views of barren mountain peaks rising above groves of aspen and spruce. Due to the developed nature of this unit, project alternatives would be completely within foreground views from recreation areas, as well as the community of Vail.

Vail Pass/Black Gore Creek Scenery Analysis Unit (Mileposts 182 to 190)

Overview

The Vail Pass/Black Gore Creek unit is primarily characterized by its rural, forest setting. Distinctive landscape features within this unit include red sandstone rock outcrops, deep green spruce fir forest, alpine meadows, and meandering streams. Class A landscapes within this unit are associated with the rugged peaks of the Gore mountain range within the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area. Views to distant Class A landscapes of the rugged peaks of the Tenmile Mountain range are visible within this unit. Development within this unit is primarily related to recreation. Few deviations from the natural landscape character are present in the Vail Pass/Black Gore Creek unit.



Vail Pass, view west



Vail Pass, view west

Landscape Character

- Red beds, iron-rich sandstone; highly erodible soils
- Undulating mountains interrupted occasionally by modest-sized red sandstone cliffs
- Eastern slopes vary from gentle to moderately steep; steeper western slopes
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley and large meadows
- Subalpine zone with meandering streams
- Dominated by deep green spruce-fir with large areas of grass/forb meadows

Landscape Context

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

- Jurisdiction: White River National Forest, unincorporated Eagle County
- I-70 paralleled by Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail
- One of the highest interstate highway locations in the US (10,603 feet)
- Bordered on north side by Eagles Nest Wilderness Area
- Parallels Black Gore Creek

Key Viewpoints and I-70 Views

Much of this unit is within foreground, middleground, and background views from recreation sites, such as the Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail, Vail Pass Winter and Summer Recreation Area, and Two Elk Trail. Views from I-70 through the Vail Pass/Black Gore Creek unit are some of the more scenic natural landscapes throughout the Corridor. I-70 is paralleled by the Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail, which extends from east Vail to Silverthorne (throughout the unit area). Many other trails depart from locations near I-70 and extend to either the north or south of the interstate. Views from I-70 within this unit are dominated by broad mountain slopes covered with aspen, lodgepole pine, fir, and spruce. Further west on Vail Pass, the views become more dramatic as terrain becomes more rugged (see Key View photographs in Figure L-2).

Copper Mountain Scenery Analysis Unit (Mileposts 190 to 195)

Overview

Copper Mountain is characterized by a broad U-shaped valley dominated by imposing peaks of the Gore and Tenmile mountain ranges, which are considered an example of outstanding scenic attractiveness. Deviations from the naturally appearing landscape are primarily related to the Copper Mountain Resort development, I-70, and US 6. Below are descriptions and photographs documenting the character and context of the landscape within this unit.



Copper Mountain, view southwest

Landscape Character

- Broad valley dominated by Gore Mountain Range and Copper Mountain Resort
- Open expansive views to Copper Mountain ski runs
- Red beds, iron rich sandstone
- Area not mined
- Glaciated, U-shaped valley
- Subalpine zone
- Dominated by spruce and fir with large areas of grass/forb meadows

Landscape Context

(Source: Copper Mountain Sub-basin Plan)

- Jurisdiction: White River National Forest, unincorporated Summit County
- Ski resort
- Historic Ute hunting camp
- Slopes of Copper Mountain were mined in 1800s
- Includes Wheeler Flats, named for John S. Wheeler, who homesteaded in the area in the 1870s
- Parallels West Tenmile Creek

Key Viewpoints and I-70 Views

Much of this unit is within foreground views from recreation sites, such as the Copper Mountain Resort, Eagles Nest Wilderness Area, Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail, and Corral Creek Trail.