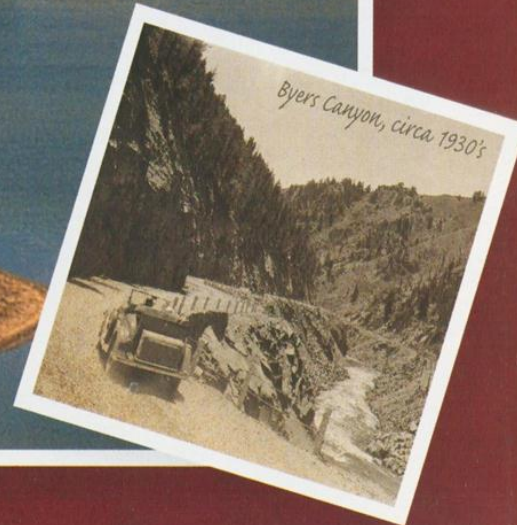
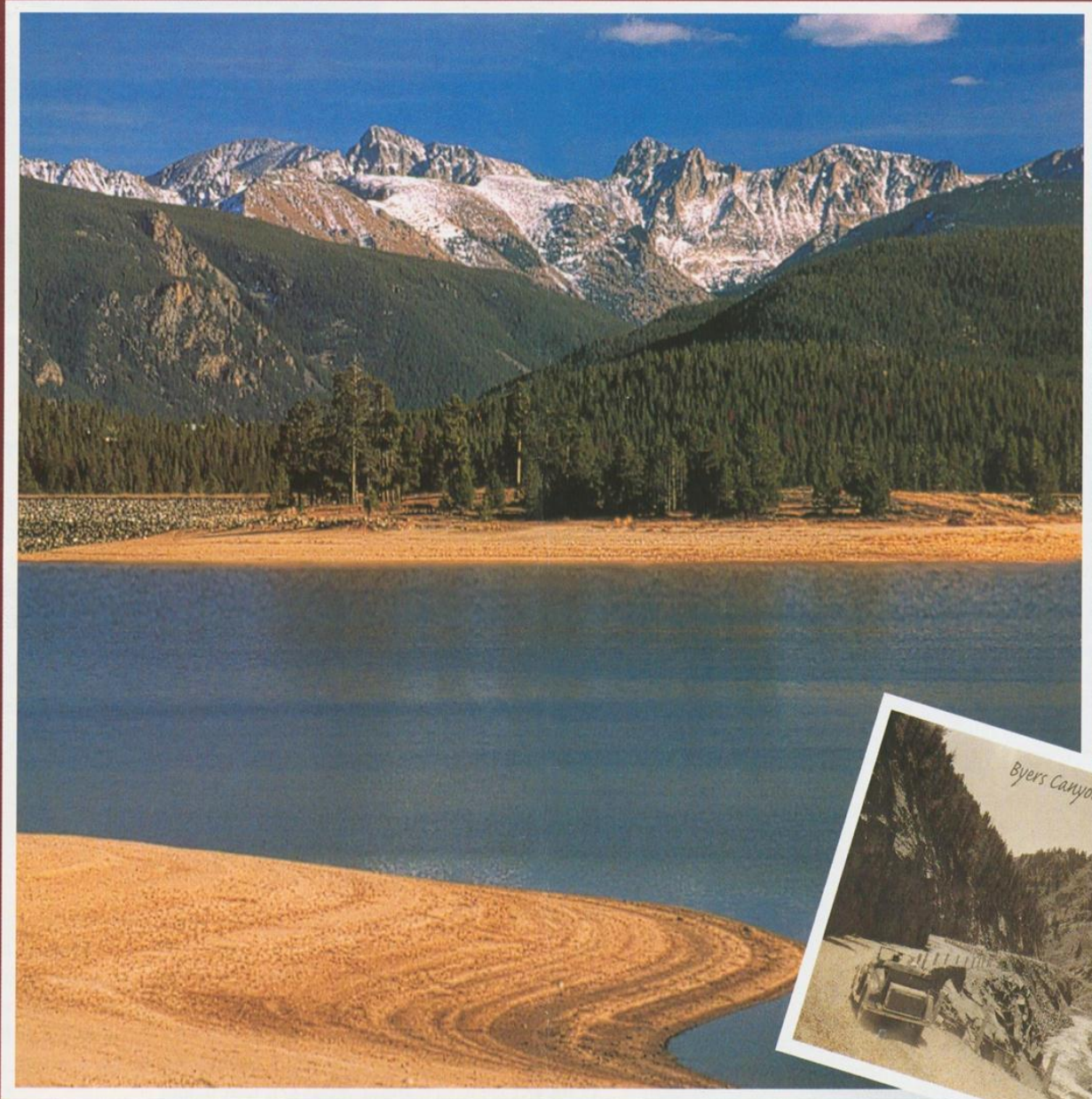
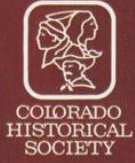


Colorado River Headwaters Scenic & Historic Byway



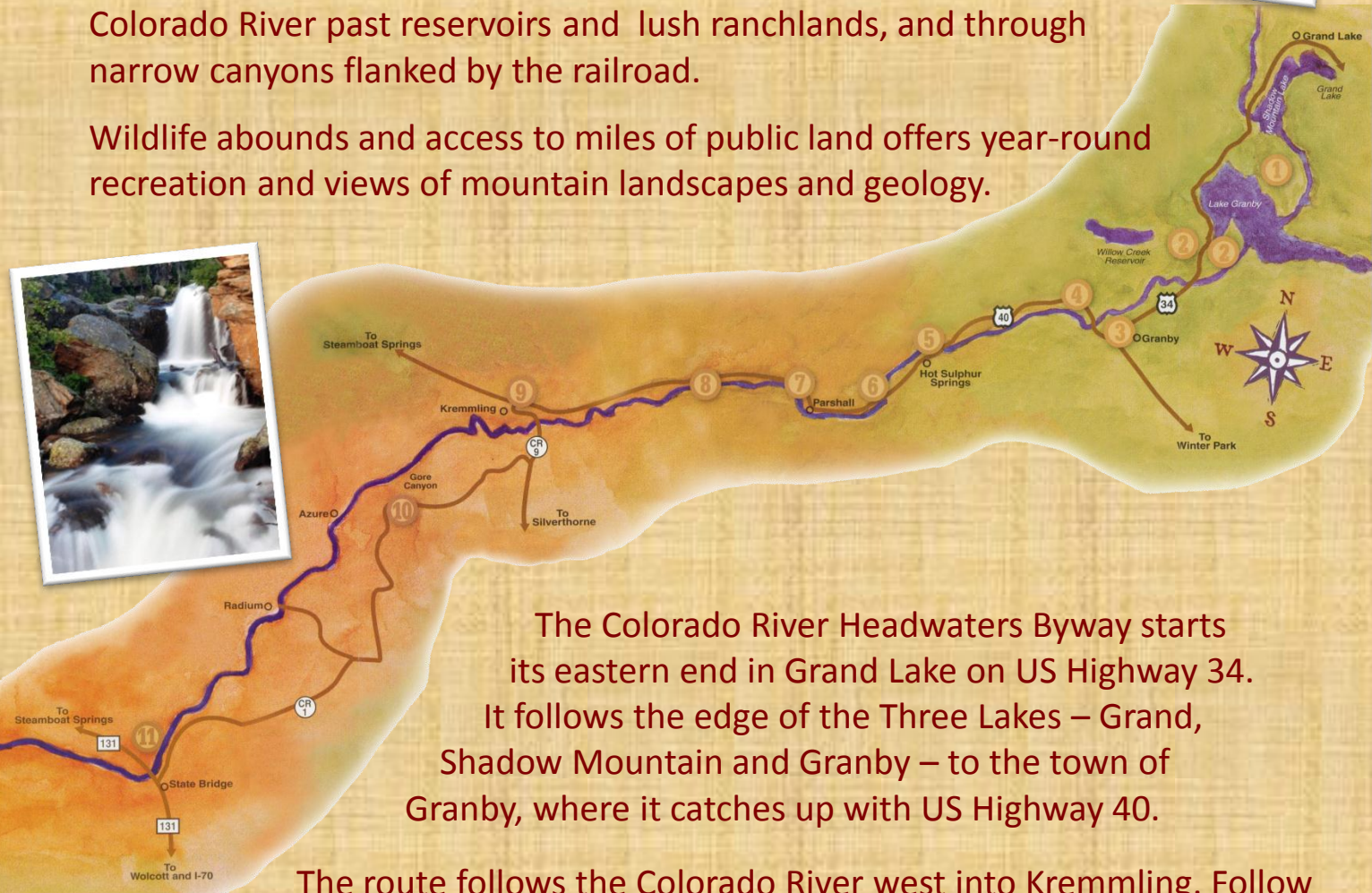
Colorado River Headwaters Byway

Length: 69.0 mi / 111.0 km

Time to Allow: at least 90 minutes to drive or three to six hours to enjoy this byway

Dropping 1,700 feet in elevation from end to end, the Colorado River Headwaters Byway follows the Colorado River past reservoirs and lush ranchlands, and through narrow canyons flanked by the railroad.

Wildlife abounds and access to miles of public land offers year-round recreation and views of mountain landscapes and geology.



The Colorado River Headwaters Byway starts its eastern end in Grand Lake on US Highway 34. It follows the edge of the Three Lakes – Grand, Shadow Mountain and Granby – to the town of Granby, where it catches up with US Highway 40.

The route follows the Colorado River west into Kremmling. Follow Colorado Highway 9 south until the Byway turns south on Grand County Road 1, the Trough Road. The Trough Road is a well-maintained gravel road and is open year around, but is not suitable for buses or large RVs. The Byway ends at State Bridge on Colorado Highway 131.

To everything there must be a beginning

When people speak of the Colorado River, they often put the adjective “mighty” before the name. The river most often linked with the Grand Canyon, however, begins as a trickle of snow melt high in the Never Summer Range of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. The river officially begins at La Poudre Pass on the west side of Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park. From here it starts a 1,440 mile journey through mountain canyons and across arid mesas.

The line that divides

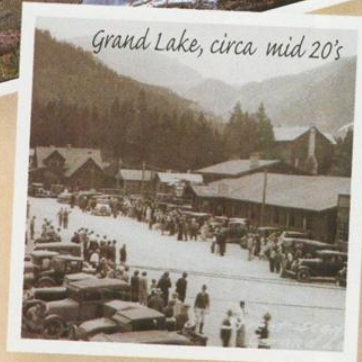
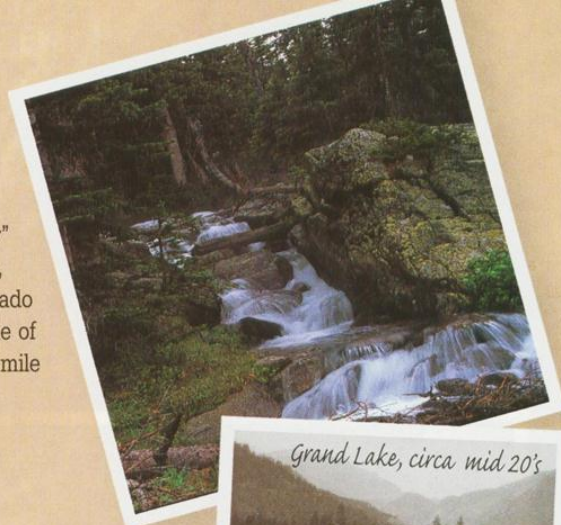
The Continental Divide is an imaginary line that winds its way through the peaks of the Rocky Mountains. On the eastern side of the divide, the streams drain to the Atlantic Ocean. On this side of the divide where the Colorado River begins, streams flow toward the Pacific Ocean.

Side trip

Just off Highway 34

The picturesque village of Grand Lake is one of Colorado's oldest resorts. First settled in 1876, it became a supply center in 1879 when gold and silver were discovered nearby on the Colorado River. Prospectors poured into the area, crossing mountains and plains, hoping to acquire new found wealth. The much sought-after gold existed only in small amounts. By the early 1880s, the prospectors started to move on. Grand Lake survived by becoming a lakeside resort.

By 1902, the area was attracting families who built summer homes along the shores of the lake and in the surrounding hills. What gold couldn't do the “motor vehicle” did. Although it was a two-day drive from Denver, Grand Lake soon became a favorite vacation destination. Today the village has preserved its western heritage with wooden boardwalks and split lodge pole pine facades on homes and downtown buildings. In the summer, the lake is a favorite spot for boating. Beaches, footpaths, parks and picnic areas are snuggled along the lake shoreline. In the winter, the Grand Lake area offers numerous cross country ski trails and one of the largest snowmobile trail systems in the state.



High & Dry

Settlers to the arid west, many of whom came from a much more humid climate, soon learned that every drop of water must be wisely used.

The Three Lakes: Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain and Lake Granby.

While Grand Lake is a deep glacier-carved, chasm-filled natural lake, many mountain lakes are actually man-made reservoirs. In an enormous undertaking called the Colorado Big Thompson Project, Shadow Mountain and Granby were built as reservoirs to collect the waters of the upper Colorado River. Water is stored in Lake Granby and pumped into Shadow Mountain Reservoir. It flows by gravity into Grand Lake, then through the thirteen-mile Adams Tunnel under the Continental Divide to a power plant at Estes Park. From Estes Park the water flows into the Big Thompson River where the water is finally delivered, through a system of siphons, canals and reservoirs, to the northeastern cities and farmlands of Colorado.

Row, row, row your boat, gently across the reservoir

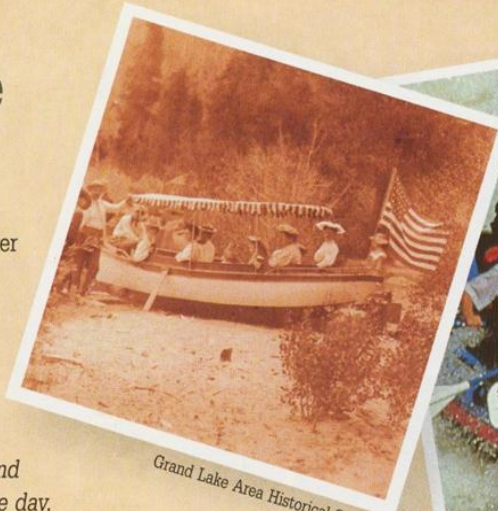
Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Lake and Lake Granby are popular for boating, sailing and fishing. Granby, the largest of the three lakes, is famous for its mackinaws, rainbows, browns and kokanee salmon, and is popular in the winter for ice fishing. Shadow Mountain and Grand Lake are connected by a natural outlet used as a boat channel. Together the three lakes offer more than 150 miles of scenic shoreline for camping, fishing or hiking. All three lakes have marinas, docks and boat rentals.

In the west, water is life

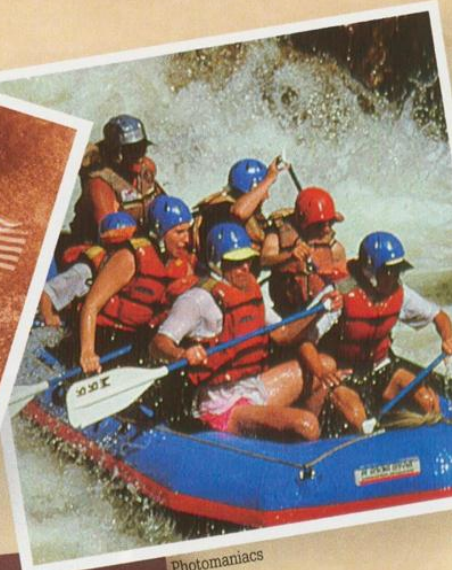
The water in the Colorado River has been allocated since 1922 by the Colorado River Compact. Under the compact, Colorado receives 52%, Wyoming 14%, and Utah 23% of the upper basin water. The remaining amount flows to the lower basin where California is allocated 59%, Arizona 37% with New Mexico and Nevada receiving the remaining amount.

Animal Alert.

Herds of deer can be seen on the mountainside paralleling the highway. The mountain streams are home to beavers and river otters. Moose can be spotted at almost any time of the day, usually in the willow bottoms. Elk, famous for their bugling in the fall, roam throughout the pine forests. Look for pronghorn antelope on the buttes. In the sky above, keep an eye out for bald eagles. Watch for fox in the meadows. Coyotes with their distinctive singing/howling sound can be heard at night. While black bears live in the back country, they often venture into mountain towns looking for food. Do not feed or try to touch any wild creature. Always watch for animals crossing the road. Deer and elk are seldom alone; if you see one animal cross the road, look out for others that may follow.



Grand Lake Area Historical Society

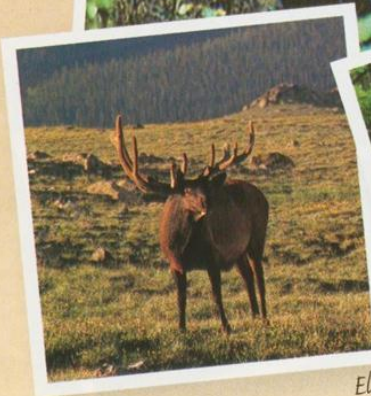
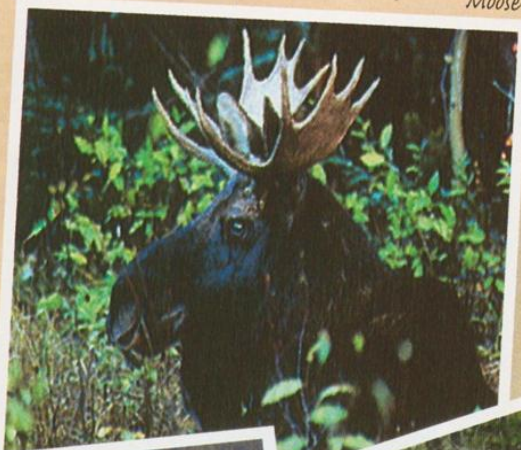


Photomaniacs

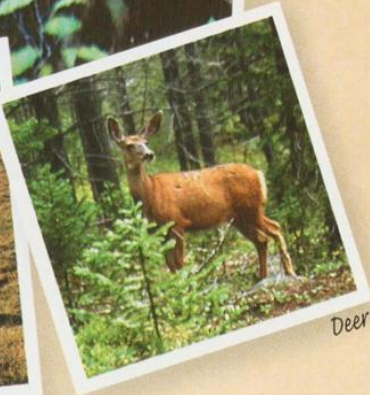
Side trip

The Farr Pumping Plant, 5 miles south of Grand Lake, County Road 64, on the north shore of Lake Granby. Because Granby Reservoir is 186 feet below Shadow Mountain, a pumping station transfers water from Granby to Shadow Mountain. To understand the complexity of collecting and distributing large amounts of water from one area to another, visit the Farr Pumping Plant. Tours are given 7 days a week hourly (except noon) from 9am - 3pm, Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Moose



Elk



Deer

Granby, 15 miles from Grand Lake.

Railroads built the West. Without a method of bringing people to this part of the state, growth would have been difficult, if not impossible. The town of Granby was founded when the Moffat Railroad was built through this area in 1905. The valley had remained isolated despite early growth in the rest of Colorado. Seeking a much-needed rail route from Denver to Salt Lake City, David Moffat finally succeeded in opening the valley by laying railroad tracks over the top of the Continental Divide at Rollins Pass near Winter Park. Granby soon became an important railroad center. In the 1920s, lettuce was introduced and cultivated in small irrigated tracts in the area where Lake Granby is today. This remarkable mountain crop was shipped to eastern hotels in railroad boxcars refrigerated with ice. Today, the farmers in the valley still grow lettuce along with spinach, snow peas, beets, potatoes, fresh herbs and raspberries.

Sidetrip

Willow Creek Reservoir

Off Highway 34 on County Road 40, 9 miles from Grand Lake. A sign clearly marks the dirt road to Willow Creek Reservoir (2.5 miles). The road dead ends at the reservoir. This is the cowboy west with working ranches and open ranges. The green, water-fed meadows contrast with the dry sagebrush hills. When arriving at the reservoir, look back at the towering and magnificent mountains on the horizon. The Willow Creek Reservoir is a favorite place for family outings, camping and fishing.

Signposts

Most signs refer to Shadow Mountain Lake and Lake Granby. Both, however, are not natural lakes but man-made reservoirs.

A Stream Runs Through It

Just 11 miles from Grand Lake, two miles from the Willow Creek Reservoir road, a nondescript highway bridge crosses a small almost ditch-like stream. The very young Colorado River is just starting its long important journey westward.

Name Change

In March 1921 the name of the river was changed from Grand to Colorado by resolution of both houses of Congress and approved by President Harding on July 25.

Just past Byers Canyon, the landscape seems out of character with the surrounding mountains. It is rolling and almost desert like. As a large basin surrounded by high mountains, the dry regions are a result of low precipitation on the leeward side of the mountains. This accounts for the sage and sparse grasses – unlike the heavy precipitation in other parts of Middle Park.



Byron Hetzler

Sidetrip

Monarch Lake

The town of Monarch was founded on logging and mining – gold, silver, copper. It was deserted when the town's main industry, a box factory, burned in 1909. Today just Monarch Lake retains the name – a pretty, quiet lake accessible only by foot. This tranquil oasis is located at the southern end of Granby Reservoir. The parking area for Monarch Lake is the trailhead into the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area. There is a user fee for entering Arapaho National Forest at this point.

Note: Highway 34 ends just outside of Granby. The byway continues west on Highway 40.

The Colorado River Headwaters Scenic and Historic Byway stretches from the Grand Lake Visitors Center on U.S. Hwy 34 to State Bridge at Colorado Hwy 131. Total length: Grand Lake to State Bridge: 69 miles.



The Cowboy Hat... symbol of the West

The hats worn by early trappers and gold seekers were often flea-infested coonskin caps. John Stetson changed all that when, somewhere in Colorado, Stetson, who had learned the hat trade in his father's shop in the East, took the untanned hides of rabbit, muskrat and coyote and through the art of felting, turned the hides into the soft felt used in hats. He designed the wide-brimmed hat that provided cowboys with protection from the wind, sun, rain and snow. Today, the Stetson is the symbol of the West.



To
Steamboat Springs

Sir George

The canyon and range are named for Sir St. George Gore, Baronet, who conducted hunting parties of legendary proportions in this area in 1854.

Kremmling O

CR
9

Gore
Canyon

To
Silverthorne

Azure O

10

Radium O

CR
1

To
Steamboat Springs

131

O State Bridge

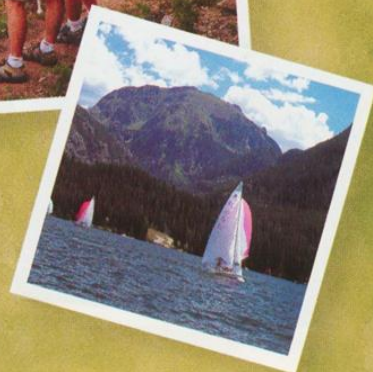
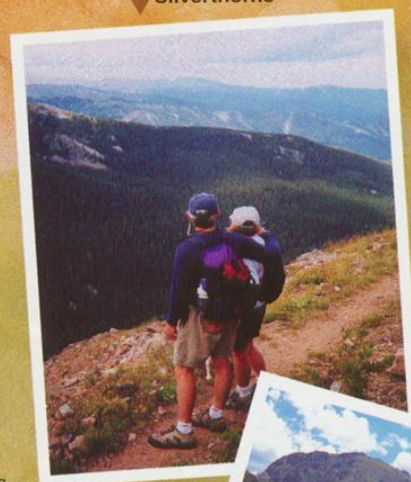
131

To
Wolcott and I-70

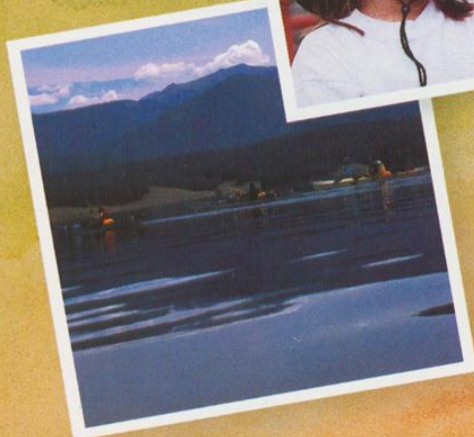
Along the Colorado River

Here is a river you can fish or raft. Lakes on which you can sail. An area with trails up mountains to reach by foot, bike or horseback. And, mountains covered with deep snow to ski, snowboard or snowmobile.

The West's flair is still here. Warm days, cool nights and wide open spaces to just roam and explore.



A marked turnoff shows the road to Radium, a town with only eight to ten houses and no services. Named by a man who, because of the radioactivity found in a mine, thought he'd discovered radium. He hadn't.



Hot Sulphur Springs, after 1905



Pelicans

Folklore

The hot springs are said to be heated by the magic fire of an ancient Ute chief who still waits for his band of young warriors to return from raiding the encampment of a neighboring tribe. The old chief's campfire burns at the water's edge, perpetually warming the spring. His warriors never returned.

Moffat Road, Engine 207

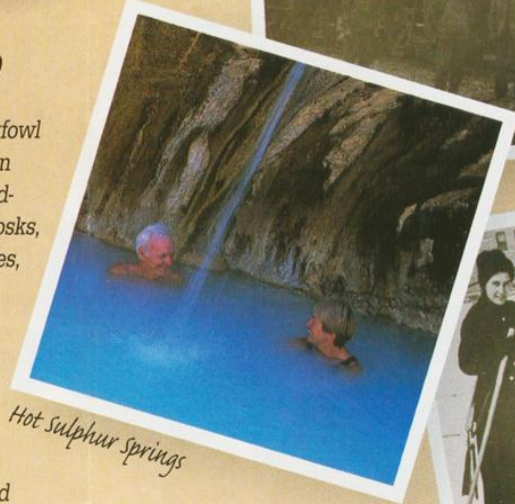


Windy Gap, two miles west of Granby on Highway 40 just past Highway 34 intersection.

Windy Gap Reservoir is an archeological site and a waterfowl migration route. A favorite bird-watching spot, wildlife can be seen from a viewing area, which includes handicapped-accessible viewing blinds, a half-mile trail, information kiosks, restrooms and parking lots. Watch for pelicans, bald eagles, geese, osprey, falcons, owls, woodpeckers and sea gulls. Facilities are open only in the summer.

Hot Sulphur Springs, 25 miles from Grand Lake, 10 miles from Granby.

The Ute Indians used hot springs to ease rheumatism and arthritis. (The Utes even treated their sick horses in the hot soothing mineral water.) By 1870, William N. Byers, a land speculator as well as the founder of the Rocky Mountain News, had built a resort at the hot springs. By the early 1900s, it was the most popular hot springs resort in the Rocky Mountains with train loads of people arriving daily to "take to the waters." The newly renovated resort is still a popular spot with a spa, inside and outside pools and lodging. The first competitive skiing and jumping competition in Colorado was held here in 1911. An annual winter sports carnival of skating, skiing and ski jumping was held until 1940. Hot Sulphur Springs is the county seat of Grand County.



Hot Sulphur Springs



Hot Sulphur Springs, circa 1912

Byers Canyon begins just outside Hot Sulphur Springs.

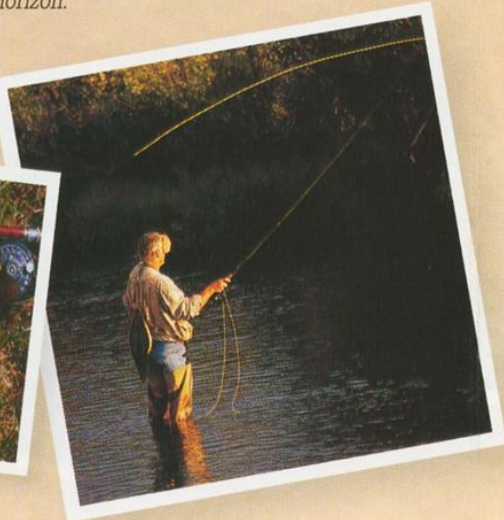
This is the first of many canyons cut by the Colorado River. Named for William N. Byers, the canyon is short, steep and hemmed in by orange cliffs. Note the railroad tracks clinging to the side of the cliffs alongside the Colorado River.

Middle Park . . . the secluded great basin

Parc is French for enclosure or park. In the west, high, flat areas surrounded by mountains are called "parks," probably a name given by the early French trappers. Settlers found these parks an ideal place to farm and ranch. Colorado has four mountain parks – Middle Park which includes all of Grand County and through which the byway runs, North Park, South Park, and the San Luis Valley. Middle Park is a variety of mountain landscapes and working ranching areas.

7 Parshall is the gateway to the William Fork Recreation Area.

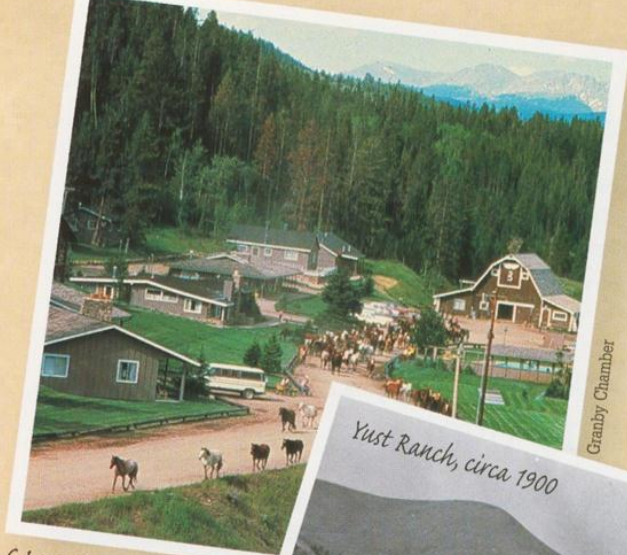
Having been joined by the Fraser River in Granby, the Colorado River is now wide, creating a broad valley and a landscape dotted with hay fields and grazing horses. The jagged peaks of the Gore Range and the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area are now prominent on the southern horizon.



8 Access sites to Gold Medal fishing.

The Colorado River is classified as Gold Medal Water from Granby downstream to Troublesome Creek, seven miles west of Parshall. (Gold Medal Waters are streams in Colorado offering the greatest potential for trophy trout fishing.)

From the lower boundary of Byers Canyon to Troublesome Creek (5 miles west of Kremmling) the area is flies and lures, catch and release only, meaning all trout must be returned to the water immediately upon the catch. Fishing is allowed on public waters, and even if the access is from public waters, permission must be given to fish on private waters. Handicapped fishing access available at Pioneer Park in Hot Sulphur Springs. Most waters of Colorado are open to fishing day and night, year-round with some exceptions.



Granby Chamber

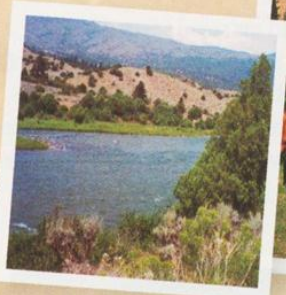
Yust Ranch, circa 1900

C Lazy U Ranch

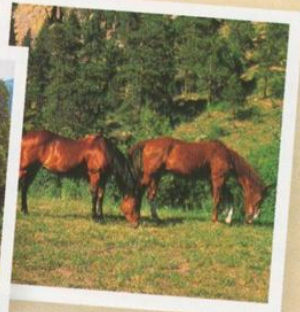


Wet a line

A fishing license is required for people 16 years or older. Children under 16 don't need a fishing license, but may take only half the legal limit. One-day licenses and five-day licenses are available for residents and non residents. Annual licenses are also available.



Jennifer Barnes



9 Kremmling, Junction with Colorado 9 and Highway 40.

Turn onto Colorado 9. Kremmling is 26 miles from State Bridge and 43 miles from Grand Lake. The town developed because of its location at the junction of the Muddy, Blue and Colorado Rivers. As early as 1839, travelers and military groups used the rivers, especially the Blue and Muddy, for transportation. In 1884, a retail business was established by Rudolph Kremmling. Zane Grey stayed in several of the hotels and many turn-of-the-century buildings still stand. The Blue River Valley is a leading region for livestock ranching. Throughout the area are many hiking and biking trails.

Lone Star Kremmling?

In the early 1800s, the boundary between the United States and the Republic of Texas was ill-defined. In fact, Texas claimed a northwestern panhandle that extended to what is now the town of Kremmling.

Across the river and over the hill

Take Colorado 9 south out of Kremmling, across the bridge over the Colorado River and up the hill to a junction marked by a sign (on the right) identifying the Trough Road. The byway continues on the Trough Road. The Pumphouse Recreation area is 12 miles, State Bridge is 29 miles.

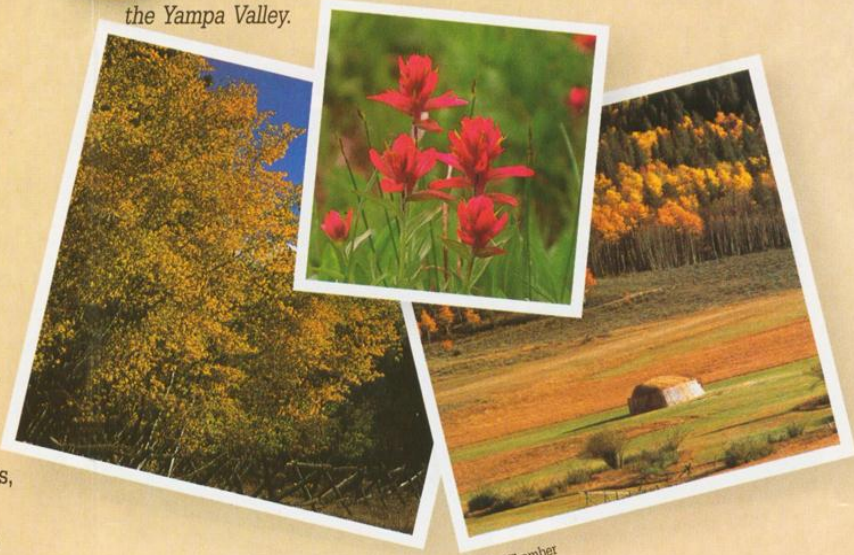
The "Don't Be in a Hurry Road" to the Village of State Bridge

The road is mostly gravel but well maintained. It climbs through open hillsides providing a view of the Blue River Valley, part of the Gore Range, and the Williams Fork Mountains. In some places the road is carved from the side of a cliff as it descends to the broad valley below. Here is a true picture of the remote and untamed west. A small number of ranches are hidden behind groves of cottonwoods, but few signs of human habitation exist. This is one of the undiscovered places left in Colorado's mountains. A bend in the road reveals a stunning view of the gorge carved by the Colorado River. Note: This road is not suitable for buses or large RV's.

Inspiration Point, 10 miles after leaving Kremmling.

This is a dramatic shelf road blasted from the south wall of Gore Canyon. Stop at the Inspiration Point turnoff, high above Gore Canyon, and take a better look at the white waters of the river, now a popular spot for rafting. Here is a bird's eye view of mountain landscape and geology. Although the river is only about 50 miles from its tiny beginning, it now is big and powerful as revealed by the deep multi-colored gorge carved by the river. From here the road levels out and slowly descends through groves of aspen and evergreen. This is a spectacular place to visit in the fall. When the color has gone from the high country, the aspen, cottonwoods and willows are just reaching their golden hues.

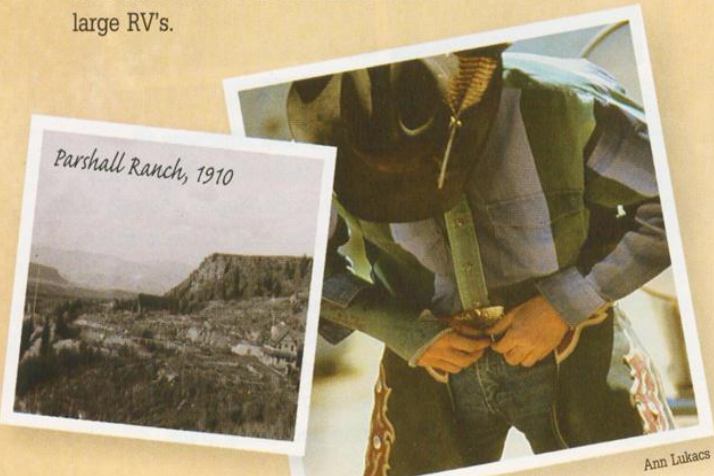
State Bridge. The road joins Colorado Highway 131 at State Bridge. The first state-constructed bridge across the Colorado River was built here, allowing access from the railroad at Wolcott north to the Yampa Valley.



Granby Chamber

And the river rolls on . . .

The Colorado River continues on through Glenwood Canyon to Grand Junction where it leaves the state and flows into Utah. More than half of the Colorado River's water comes from Colorado, another third comes from the mountains of Wyoming and Utah. Little comes by runoff from the other states strung along its growing banks. In seven states, the Colorado River has transformed 3.4 million acres of desert land into cities, farms and recreational playgrounds. From Colorado to California, the water flows through 33 reservoirs, 990 miles of pipes, 230 miles of tunnels, 188 pumping plants, 345 diversion dams, 50 power plants and 14,590 miles of canals. The little river that started as a trickle of melting snow high in the Colorado Rockies now has earned the name of the "mighty" Colorado River.



Ann Lukacs

For more information, contact:

Grand Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.grandlakechamber.com>

Visitor Center at US Highway 34 and West Portal Road

Grand Lake, CO 80447

(970) 627-3402 (800) 531-1019

Greater Granby Area Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.granbychamber.com>

475 East Agate, Granby, CO 80446

(970) 887-2311 (800) 325-1661

Pioneer Museum

Grand County Historical Association

<http://www.grandcountyhistory.com>

110 East Byers Avenue, Hot Sulphur Springs, CO 80451

(970) 725-3939

Kremmling Area Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.kremmlingchamber.com>

203 Park Avenue, Kremmling, CO 80459

(970) 724-3472 (887)573-6654