

Paradox Trail MAP

Montrose West Recreation
P.O. Box 281 • Nucla, CO 81424

Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike
Trail Association (COPMOBA)
P.O. Box 4602 • Grand Jct., CO 81502



ENJOY THE PARADOX TRAIL AND
PROTECT OUR PRIVILEGE TO USE IT BY
PROTECTING THE TRAIL'S NATURAL
AND CULTURAL VALUE



A project of the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike
Trail Association, Bureau of Land Management,
United States Forest Service
and Montrose West Recreation

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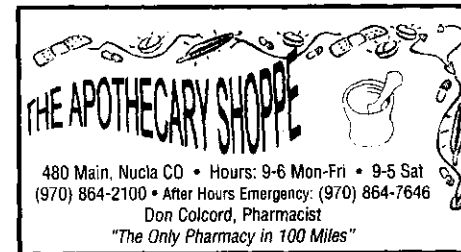
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IMBA Rules of the Trail

Ride on open trails only.

Respect trail and road closures (ask if not sure), avoid possible trespass on private land, and obtain permits and authorization as may be required. Federal and State wilderness areas are closed to cycling.

Leave no trace.

Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Even on open trails, you will leave evidence of your passing, such as on certain soils shortly after rain. Observe the different types of soils and trail construction: Practice low-impact cycling. This also means staying on the trail and not creating any new ones. Be sure to pack out what you pack in.

Control your bicycle!

Inattention for even a second can cause disaster. Excessive speed maims and threatens people; there is no excuse for it!

Always yield the trail.

Make known your approach well in advance. A friendly greeting (or a bell) is considerate and works well; startling someone may cause loss of trail access. Show your respect when passing others by slowing to a walk or even stopping. Anticipate that other trail users may be around corners or in blind spots.

Never spook animals.

Animals are startled by unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. This can be dangerous for you, for others, and for the animals. Give animals extra room and time to adjust to you. In passing, use special care and follow the directions of the horseback riders (ask if uncertain). Running cattle and disturbing wild animals is a serious offense. Leave gates as you found them, or as marked.

Plan ahead.

Know your equipment, your ability, and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly. Be self sufficient at all times. Wear a helmet, keep your machine in good condition, and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. A well executed trip is satisfying to you and not a burden or offense to others.

*Rules of the Trail carries a 1990 copyright by International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA).



The Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association, Inc. (COPMOBA)

is a non-profit organization of trail cyclists, bike shops, local businesses, federal land managers and government entities dedicated to the development and maintenance of a regional mountain bike trail system. We see mountain biking as a vehicle to promote low impact outdoor recreation, natural history education, bike safety and environmentally and socially responsible use of land. Individual memberships start at \$25. We urge you to join and to encourage commercial bike shops and other business sponsors to join. Visit our website at www.copmoba.org.

Minimizing Impacts Leave No Trace

Plan ahead and be prepared.

- Obtain information and maps before you go.
- Plan for small groups.
- Check on local rules and regulations.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you will return.

Camp and travel on durable surfaces.

- Use existing campsites whenever possible.
- Avoid places where impact is just beginning.
- Select a campsite 300 feet or more from water sources.
- Travel in small groups.

Pack it in, pack it out.

- Trash and litter have no place in the back country.

Properly dispose of what you can't pack out.

- Human waste should be disposed of properly to avoid polluting water sources and minimizing contact with other users. The "Cathole" method is the most widely accepted means of waste disposal. Dig a six to eight inch hole. After use, fill in the hole with soil and disguise it with natural materials. Do not bury toilet paper. Burn it completely in a fire or better yet, pack it out. Locate catholes at least 100 paces from water, trails, and camps.

Leave what you find.

- Avoid damaging live trees and plants.
- Do not disturb cultural resources.

Minimize use and impact of fires.

- Use existing fire rings.
- Use only dead and downed wood in small sizes.
- Make sure your fire is dead out.

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West End Loop Rides

The West End of Montrose County has a variety of loop rides waiting to be discovered and explored. Years of mining exploration and ranching have created hundreds of miles of backcountry jeep trails through this rugged and unique landscape. Many of these trails have been long abandoned so caution should always be exercised when traveling on them. Be prepared for hazards of any kind including rough, rocky and overgrown trails, carry and know how to read a topographical map and pack food and plenty of water for this high desert environment. Always let someone know where you are planning on traveling and stick to your planned route. The West End is world famous for its big game hunting. Riders should be familiar with the various seasons when rifle hunting is allowed and wear blaze orange when riding in the back-country. The Nucla section BLM 1:100,000 map is highly recommended which can be purchased at most sporting goods stores in the region. All loop rides described in this brochure are unmarked. Riders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the route using maps and be prepared for unexpected delays. Ride times are estimated for continuous traveling at average riding abilities.

(A) RED CANYON LOOP

Distance: 12.6 miles
Elevation gain: 2400'
Estimated ride time: 2 1/2-3 hours
Difficult

This loop utilizes a section of the Paradox Trail which is marked for half of its length beginning at the Dolores River bridge at Biscuit Rock, 5 miles northwest of Uravan on Hwy. 141. Park on the south side of the bridge and follow the road as it parallels the Dolores River upstream on a bench. The trail enters the mouth of Red Canyon after 1 mile of gentle climbing on a graded road. Following the Paradox Trail signs, the old jeep road becomes narrower and more rugged as it climbs the canyon. About four miles up, the trail takes a final pitch up a steep hike a bike section which will eventually top out at a spectacular overlook of the Paradox Valley. The trail continues to climb as it parallels Carpenter Ridge. The road is soft in places as it passes through old pinion stands, eventually coming to a road on the right at approx. 6.2 miles. As you leave the Paradox Trail, follow this road down for about 1/2 mile until intersecting with a seasonally graded road coming from the left. This road continues its descent down the uplift from the Dolores River. Stay on the main road, there are roads coming in from either side. Old mining areas can be seen as the road descends, eventually making it's way back to Biscuit Rock and the Dolores River.

(B) ATKINSON CREEK LOOP

Distance: 25.5 miles
Elevation gain: 3600'
Estimated ride time: 5-6 hours
Very difficult

The Atkinson Creek drainage area holds many loop ride possibilities. The one described joins the Paradox Trail in upper Bull Draw where it begins its return to upper Spring Creek Mesa via the "Koski Traverse".

Park on Rd. S 17 which accesses Atkinson Creek off Hwy 141, 1 1/2 miles downstream from the old milltown of Uravan. Follow the main road as it parallels the creek. After almost two miles the road heads north to the left of Hog Point. 1/2 mile beyond, Rd. S17 heads to the right. A gate is found a short way up and should be left as you found it. The road climbs the drainage to a short switchback up onto the rim of Atkinson Breaks. Continue on the main road across and to the north side of the mesa. The road drops a short distance at mile 7.5 to cross West Atkinson Creek and continue up Bull Draw. Less than three miles up Bull Draw the Paradox Trail is met. The loop climbs to the right as it begins the traverse across West Atkinson Creek, Big Johnson Creek, Big Atkinson Creek and down a long incline to meet Rd. U 18 in a sage covered flat. The 4.5 mile traverse is steep and rocky in places with more than one hike a bike section.

Continue to the right (south) down Rd. U18 as it descends toward Spring Creek Mesa, Uravan and Hwy. 141. At Hwy 141 go right for 1 1/2 mile until you meet Rd. S17.

(C) NATURITA RIDGE LOOP

Distance: 17 miles
Elevation gain: 2200'
Estimated ride time: 2-2 1/2 hours
Difficult

From Naturita travel north on Hwy 141 for 2 miles, turn left on Hwy 90 which heads toward Paradox. After two more miles is the Coke Oven Ranch on the left. Turn left and go down the county road which crosses Dry Creek. Follow that road for less than a mile and park at Rd. HH 26. This road will begin climbing soon as it switchbacks it's way up to the top of the ridge. After almost 4 miles BLM Rd. 4088 comes in from the left which pitches up to the top of the ridge a short distance later. Commanding views of Dry Creek Basin and beyond can be seen to the south. The road starts a short descent for approx. 1 mile. Take the first left and traverse across a grassy open area. This road will eventually begin climbing back up to the ridge top at approx. 7.5 miles where a road comes in from the right. To access the Naturita Burn and spectacular views of the lower San Miguel Basin area, go straight (north) for a few hundred yards. To continue the loop go back to the ridge road, turn left (east) and follow this road as it slowly descends toward a major cross intersection at approx 10 miles. Go left and begin a major descent down a rough and rocky road. At approx. 13 miles go left at GG25 Rd. This road meanders through old pinion and juniper stands and crosses a variety of minor drainages. Eventually it will head north and meet up with a well graded county road. Go left (west) and follow until you come back to your start point.

(D) URAVAN TO BEDROCK VIA THE RIVER ROAD

Distance: 26 miles (round trip)
Elevation gain: 400'
Estimated ride time: 2-2 1/2 hours
Easy

This ride utilizes a section of the original Paradox Trail before it was re-routed. Park downstream of Uravan on Hwy 141 at the old iron bridge. Cross the bridge to access the River Road, which parallels the San Miguel River as it drops down into a deep canyon toward the confluence with the Dolores River almost 2 miles down. Remnants of the old hanging flume are still attached to the cliff sides as you head down this section. The road now follows the Dolores River upstream through a deep, spectacular canyon for five miles before emerg-

ing into the Paradox Valley; the paradox being that the river cuts perpendicular to the length of the valley through massive cliffs on both sides of the valley. Cross the valley floor until you intersect with Hwy 90. Turn right and travel for 2 miles until you cross the Dolores River and come to Bedrock and it's famous old store.

(E) NORTH NUCLA LOOP

Distance: 42 miles
Elevation gain: 3500'
Estimated ride time: 6-7 hours
Difficult to very difficult

Begin the ride in Nucla at the town park where vehicles can be left for the day. Head east on tenth street as it leaves town. After 1/2 mile turn left (north) and climb on a paved county road. This is the Delta - Nucla Road and it remains paved for five miles as it climbs toward the Uncompahgre Plateau. At mile 6 the road crosses onto National Forest lands on a well graded county road. Access to Pinto Mesa is on a road coming in from the left about a mile and a half after the pavement ends. Continue up the Delta-Nucla Road for another seven miles until coming to the Hauser Road and the Paradox Trail coming in from the right. The Paradox Trail continues on the Delta - Nucla Road for less than a 1/4 mile where it leaves the county road on the left and begins a gradual descent on an old jeep road. If you start dropping on the Delta-Nucla Road you've missed the turn off. The dramatic Tabeguache Creek Canyon and Special Management Area is found immediately to the north of the trail. Follow the old jeep road as it descends the bench overlooking the canyon. Some wet and boggy areas exist at certain times of the year. This is also a prime calving area for elk in the early spring.

At approx. 21 miles the trail rounds a rocky point and drops, then climbs quickly to reach Pinto Mesa. The trail emerges on a soft graded road. Turn left and follow for 1/2 mile until coming to a T intersection. The trail goes right (west) while the Delta - Nucla Road can be accessed by turning left. Head west for 1 mile on the graded road until coming to the mesa rim. The trail drops down a rocky jeep road with broad views to the west. Follow the Paradox Trail signs as it switchbacks to the south and continues the descent into Coal Canyon. After crossing a steel boundary fence you are now on BLM lands. The trail turns off this road to the left after about 1/4 mile after the fence. Use extreme caution as the trail drops down a very rocky section and eventually finds it's way down into and following the dry Coal Canyon drainage. Watch for an obvious trail leading out of the drainage on the right after a mile along the creek.

The old road eventually comes out close to private lands on the north end of Spratin Park. The trail can be seen climbing a steep hike a bike section to the north and it will then continue in a north westerly direction as it climbs in and out of various drainages. The Tabeguache Special Management Area lies to the north which is off limits to mtn. bikes. Follow the Paradox Trail signs as the trail becomes more rolling as it drops westerly until connecting with county road Z 26 at approx. 32 miles. Turn left on Z.26 Road and cross Third Park, drop and climb out of Coal Canyon and cross Second Park on paved county road. Continue bearing to the left at T intersections. Drop and cross Tuttle Draw and follow BB Road as it returns to Nucla.