



This is the West

Escape to our Landscape...

Steamboat Springs' Cultural Landscape

Recreation Culture: Wild about the Outdoors

For Immediate Release

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Hiking Culture: A Walk on the Wild Side

President Teddy Roosevelt visited the forests surrounding Steamboat Springs on hunting and fishing trips in the 1890s. With the vast beauty and unique landscapes, it's no wonder President Roosevelt felt the National Forest Service was a necessity and thus we have these open areas to enjoy today. In 1905 he established the National Forest Service and along with it, the Routt National Forest. Named for Col. John N. Routt, last governor of the territory of Colorado, first governor of the State of Colorado. Contains the following wilderness areas.

Routt National Forest, 1,126,346 acres 1760 square miles

Mt. Zirkel Wilderness Area, 159,935 acres

The Mt. Zirkel Wilderness is literally in Steamboat Springs' backyard. Stretching from Summit Lake on Buffalo Pass (about 17 miles from downtown) along the Continental Divide to Encampment just shy of the Wyoming border. The area contains three mountain ranges including the Park Range, Sawtooth and Sierra Madre Range. There are over 70 lakes along with the headwaters for the Elk River's three forks. There are 173 miles of trails including 27 miles of the Continental Divide Trail. The Mt. Zirkel Wilderness was one of the five original wilderness areas designated by the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Elevation: 7,000' to 12,180', Mt. Zirkel

Must do/must see: Gold Creek-Gilpin Lake Loop (6 hours roundtrip from Slovenia TH)

Sarvice Creek Wilderness, 47,190 acres

Sarvice Creek is named so for its stock of Sarvice berries, a favorite cuisine of native black bears. What makes Sarvice Creek stand out among other Colorado Wilderness areas is its complete lack of alpine tundra. It is due to the solitude of its lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir forests that it received its designation. This designation did not come easily. As interests in biological diversity began to grow, the area gained interest from conservationists until it was finally designated in 1993. Only 13 miles south of downtown, Sarvice, Silver and Morrison Creeks meander their way to the Yampa River and eventually through Steamboat Springs.

Elevation: 7,000' to 10,687', Gore Mountain

Must do/must see: Shuttle cars at both ends of either the Sarvice Creek or Silver Creek trails for a long day trip without backtracking.

Flat Tops Wilderness Area, 235,035 acres

Also part of White River National Forest as well as the Routt National Forest, the Flat Tops Wilderness Area compares to no other mountain range in the state of Colorado. A massive block of rock pushed upward and planed level. Arthur Carhart's 1919 visit to Trapper's Lake inspired him to initiate the plea for Wilderness preservation. There are close to 110 trout-laden lakes and ponds dotted below the flat-topped cliffs. The headwaters for the Yampa River begin here, capturing the snowmelt of the many storms that blow through in the winter, rendering many of its 160 miles of trails unusable in the early summer. The Flat Tops Wilderness is Colorado's second largest wilderness.

Elevation: 7,600' to 12,354' Flat Top Mountain

Must do/must see: Devil's Causeway (4 hours roundtrip from the Stillwater Reservoir TH)

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