

Bike Trail Fourmile Travel Management Area



The Colorado Midland Railroad provided the Upper Arkansas Valley passenger and freight service from 1887 until 1918. Much of the Midland Bike Trail follows the old grade which remains virtually intact since the removal of its rails and ties.

A triumph of engineering, the Midland held the descent from Trout Creek Pass into the Arkansas Valley to a maximum of 1.65%. The route stayed high on the northern side of the Trout Creek Canyon using sidehill construction, cuts, fills and large wooden trestles thrown across tributary gulches. Today, mountain bikers and hikers must follow four specially constructed steep detours circumventing missing trestles. Several are being rerouted in 2015.

On April Fool's Day 1908 a passenger train speeding upgrade from Buena Vista saw the wooden Shield's Gulch trestle on fire! The crew applied the brakes and jumped. The locomotives crashed through the blazing structure, but the rest of the train came to a stop, poised on the brink. No one was seriously injured.

Buena Vista's Midland Depot was nearly 400 feet above the town, high on Midland Hill. The Colorado Midland Stage carried passengers from the depot to the town via a steep and winding route down to the Arkansas River, and across it on an old stage bridge. This stage line is now the central segment of the Whipple Trail.

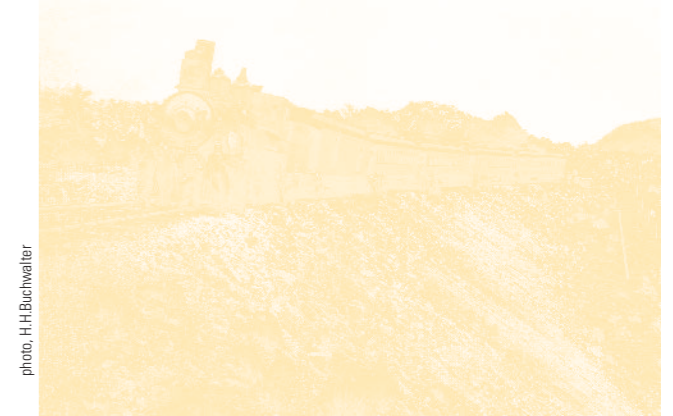


photo: H.H. Buchwalter

The Midland Bike Trail, established in 1991, extends about 18.8 miles between Trout Creek Pass and Buena Vista at the Arkansas River. It is best to be dropped off at the eastern Trout Creek Trailhead and be met in Buena Vista when riding the full route. (Other options on reverse side.) Minimum ride time is about 3 hours in the downhill direction. The profile below illustrates the full route east to west. Although primarily a downhill ride suited to beginning and intermediate riders, the central section over the Lenhardy Pass requires high fitness, and has some steep rocky sections and long downhills where speed must be controlled. On the old RR grade from Shields Gulch to CR 304, the route is mostly wide and gentle but is interrupted by four steep singletrack detours (see Midland Trail Out and Back on reverse). Several of these are being rerouted in 2015.



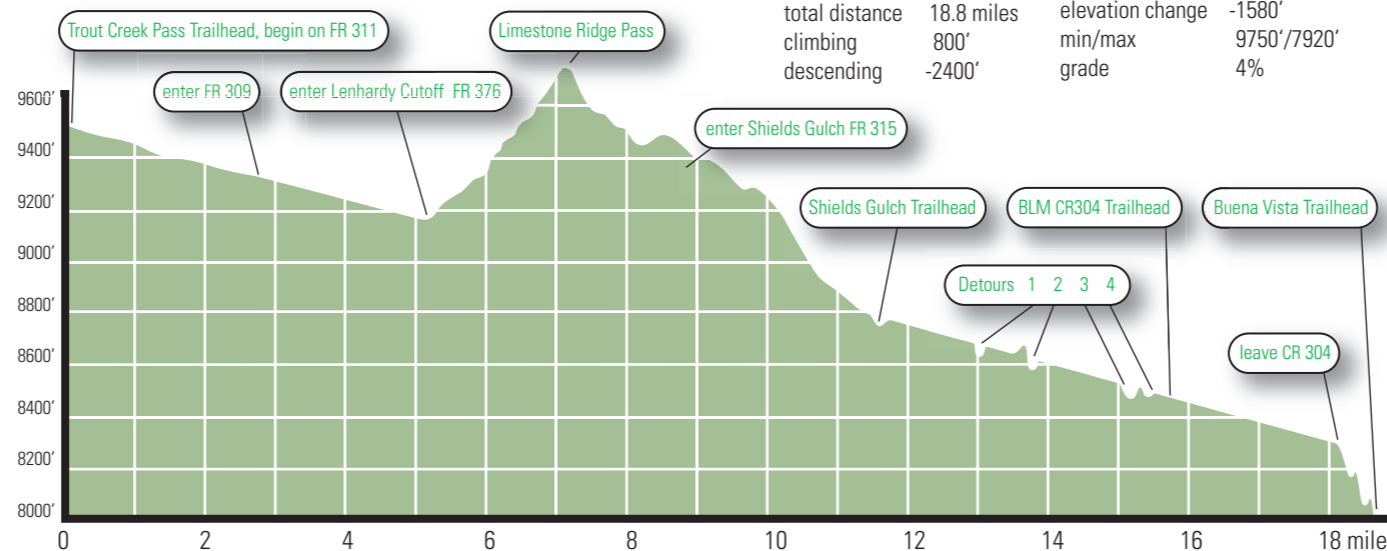
photo: Alan Robinson

Trail advice All routes described are usually open from April through November and can often be ridden between snowfalls December through March – ask locally. Temperatures in the summer can be hot, so begin rides early and take plenty of water. Bicyclists share the route with motorized vehicles on most sections, so exercise caution and respect the rights of others. Always yield to horses; slow down and speak up when approaching hikers. Please stay on designated trails and roads. In addition to the Midland Bike Trail, the Fourmile area has dozens of other options for cyclists on wide but unmaintained Forest Roads – see map on reverse, and also refer to the Fourmile Travel Management brochure.

The Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service and Friends of Fourmile patrol the area regularly. They can answer questions and advise on responsible use of the area.

Elevation and distance statistics

total distance	18.8 miles	elevation change	-1580'
climbing	800'	min/max	9750'/7920'
descending	-2400'	grade	4%



Downloadable map at
www.friends-of-fourmile.org



**Expect and respect
other users!**

To report a violation or for information

US Forest Service, Salida Ranger District
San Isabel National Forest
719 539-3591

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, Salida
719 539-7289

Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office, Cañon City
719 269-8500

Fire or other emergency 911

To join, volunteer or to make a donation
Friends of Fourmile, a GARNA chapter
719 539-5106 www.friends-of-fourmile.org

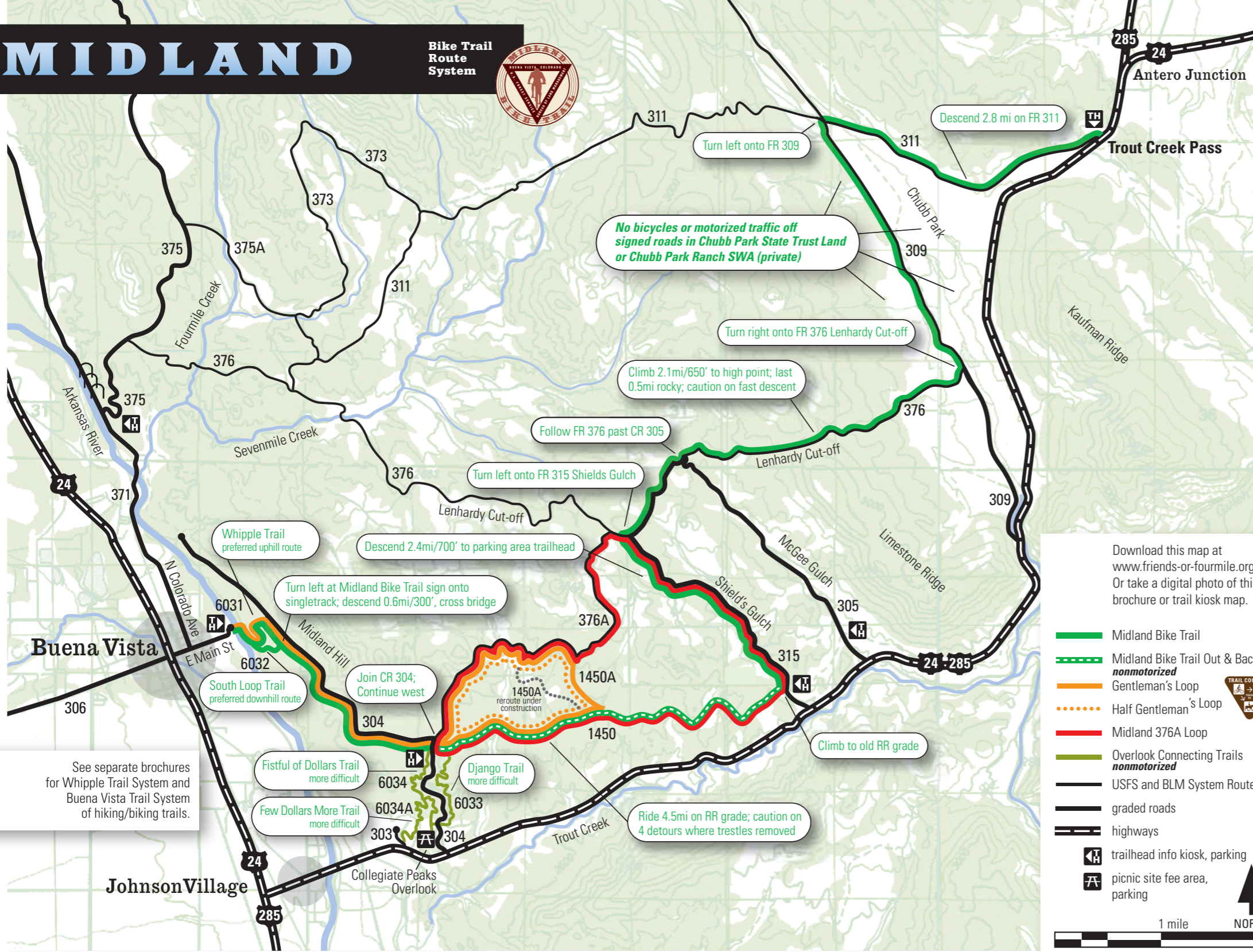
Download the Midland Bike Trail map
www.friends-of-fourmile.org

Recycle this brochure in kiosk boxes, please.



MIDLAND

Bike Trail Route System



Midland Bike Trail Options

Midland Bike Trail Out and Back

9.3mi/860' gain/loss from Shields Gulch or CR 304 Trailheads
 Beginner/Intermediate level
 Moderate fitness required
 2 plus hours

A good choice for a first experience on the Midland. The route follows the gently sloping old Midland RR grade, suited to beginning riders, but there are four short intermediate or advanced detours where old trestles have been removed. The route rises from west to east. If you want to climb first and cruise back, start at CR 304.

The Gentleman's Loop

11.1mi from Buena Vista/1,650' gain/loss
 Intermediate level
 Moderate to High fitness required
 3 hours

A local favorite and the Gold Rush Days burro race route, this starts and finishes at the pedestrian bridge across the Arkansas River in Buena Vista. Cross the bridge and follow the two track Whipple Trail main route (not the steeper singletrack South Loop) up rocky switchbacks that require good fitness to stay in the saddle. When you reach the graded road FR 304, turn right (south). This is the old Midland RR grade and the next several miles are easy. After reaching the CR 304 Trailhead proceed east and enter the nonmotorized section of the Midland Bike Trail FR 1450 (see 'Out and Back' above). Leave the RR grade on FR 1450A, and climb steeply to FR 376A. Turn left (west) and return to CR 304, cruising downhill on a wide infrequently maintained road. Retrace your route back to the Midland Trail sign at the top of the South Loop and descend carefully to the bridge, watching for hikers. For a stronger workout, do this route clockwise.

Half Gentleman's Loop

5.2mi from FR304/750' gain/loss
 Intermediate level
 Moderate fitness required
 1.5 hour

If you have less time, ride just the east end of the Gentleman's Loop. For a stronger workout, do this route clockwise.

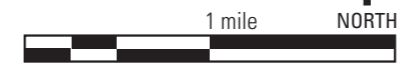
Midland 376A Loop

11.5mi/1,500' gain/loss
 Intermediate level
 Moderate to High fitness required
 3 hours

Starting at either CR 304 or Shields Trailhead, this route is similar to the Gentleman's Loop in distance and effort, but spends more time in the beautiful interior of the Fourmile area. The clockwise loop is more strenuous, starting at CR 304 and heading up the steep western end of FR 376A. This ride will end with a cruise westward down the Midland RR grade.

Download this map at www.friends-or-fourmile.org. Or take a digital photo of this brochure or trail kiosk map.

- Midland Bike Trail
- Midland Bike Trail Out & Back **nonmotorized**
- Gentleman's Loop
- Half Gentleman's Loop
- Midland 376A Loop
- Overlook Connecting Trails **nonmotorized**
- USFS and BLM System Routes
- graded roads
- highways
- trailhead info kiosk, parking
- picnic site fee area, parking



See separate brochures for Whipple Trail System and Buena Vista Trail System of hiking/biking trails.