Steppin’ Out
with Colorado State Parks

your guide to western slope trails

Funded in part through Great Outdoors Colorado with Colorado Lottery proceeds.

Colorado State Parks
1313 Sherman Street, Room #618
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303.866.3437
Web site: www.parks.state.co.us
CSP-CS-10M-4/08
Welcome to Colorado State Parks Steppin’ Out Guide!

Colorado State Parks is committed to helping people enjoy the beauty of the state while achieving their goal of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through physical activity. This guide is intended to help people of all ages use local trails to increase their activity.

Being physically active every day is simple and attainable. However, more than 60% of American adults do not get enough exercise and 25% are not active at all. Physical activity reduces the incidence of heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure and obesity. It also builds muscle, bone and joint health, increases energy levels and raises self-esteem.

This guide is a result of the America on the Move program (www.americaonthemove.org). Their message is to eat 100 fewer calories and take 2,000 more steps each day. This guide shows you how to get those extra 2,000 steps by steppin’ out on Colorado State Parks trails. Walking an extra 2,000 steps a day may take a little extra effort or can be a goal you build up to over time. Please know that adding more steps to your day will get easier as you go.

A quick guide to calculate your steps is:

2,000 steps = 1 mile

If you prefer, you can also purchase a pedometer at the America on the Move Web site or at any sporting goods store to calculate the steps for you.
Most of the trails in this guide were chosen for their proximity to urban areas, making it easy for people to add more steps into their regular routine.

There are many benefits to using trails for outdoor recreation:

- Trails provide access to natural, scenic beauty, which motivates people to be outside and physically active.
- Trails provide safe, cost-effective, easy-to-use places to increase activity compared to the interruptions and traffic hazards that are possible on urban streets.
- Surveys have shown that recreation is linked to overall happiness, family unity, improved educational opportunities, better health, and deters crime and substance abuse.
- Scientific evidence shows that providing access to places, such as trails, increases the level of physical activity in a community.

Exercise doesn’t need to be strenuous to be beneficial: people of all ages benefit from physical activity. Walking for fitness and recreation is among the top three activities people choose for outdoor recreation.

Here are a few considerations to take into account before hitting the trail:

- Before starting any new activity, have your physician evaluate and monitor your health status.
- One thing you can count on with Colorado weather is that it will change. **Dress in layers** and wear comfortable shoes.
- **Bring water** to help you stay hydrated. People are prone to dehydration in Colorado’s dry climate and high altitude.

With an average of 300 days of sunshine per year, always **apply sunscreen** to exposed skin before going out, even on cool or overcast days. At higher altitudes, ultraviolet rays are 50-60% stronger than at sea level. Remember to wear sunglasses to protect your eyes as well.

- In Colorado, lightning is the number one life-threatening weather hazard. While on the trail, keep an eye out for approaching storms. Retreat from high or open ground if a storm threatens and wait for it to pass.
- On some trails you may encounter wildlife. Be sure to stop and read postings at trailheads about wildlife so you can become familiar with handling these situations if necessary.

Whether you are steppin’ out for 10 minutes or for two hours, please remember to follow the **Leave No Trace** principles when you are on a trail:

1. Plan ahead and prepare (take a small daypack or fanny pack with water, sunscreen, sunglasses, light jacket, and bug spray)
2. Travel on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly: pack it in, pack it out
4. Leave what you find
5. Respect wildlife
6. Be considerate of other visitors

To learn more about **Leave No Trace** principles, visit www.lnt.org.
Trail Locations

Delta
1 - Confluence Park Trail

Durango
2 - Animas River Trail

Fruita
3 - Little Salt Wash Trail

Grand Junction
4 - Audubon/Blue Heron Loop
5 - Canyonview Park Loops
6 - Connected Lakes Loops -
   James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park
7 - Corn Lake Loop -
   James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park

Montrose
8 - Montrose Area Trails

Ridgway
9 - Uncompahgre River Walk
Hidden behind a shopping center on the north end of Delta lies a walker’s paradise. The Confluence Park Trail System was designed with exercise in mind from the outset. The park, in addition to housing a community recreation center, tennis courts and living history museum, also hosts no less than 3.36 miles worth of road-width, walking trails. These trails are surfaced in red crusher fines that provide nearly all-weather walkability while also being much softer on the body than asphalt or concrete. What’s more, the trails are arranged in a stacked loop pattern so you can design your own custom routes based on your needs for distance.

There is also a network of single-track trails in the northern end of the park. The main trail loops in the northern section also feature exercise stops along the way to build muscle tone and overall agility. If all of that isn’t enough, the trail winds through some very scenic cottonwood stands and offers great views of the Grand Mesa. Add to that the fact the park is within walking distance of downtown and you have a recipe for a beautiful thing. The area hosts all manner of waterfowl and other bird species. Like any good, river bottom area, there are also rabbits, squirrels and an occasional deer. The park has fishing and river access.
Finding the Trailhead

There are many parking areas and the best access to them is from Hwy. 50 and Gunnison River Drive. This is the street that goes west between the McDonald’s and Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurants and goes back to, and past, the recreation center. Drive past the recreation center and turn either right or left to find a suitable parking area on the east or west side of the park. Restrooms and water are available at the recreation center.

Waypoint List
Delta 01 = Parking
Delta 02 = Parking
Delta 03 = Recreation center
Delta 04 = Parking

Phone: 970.874.0923
Address: 530 Gunnison River Drive
Delta, CO 81416
Web Site: http://www.delta-co.gov/cityDepts_parks.htm

Animas River Trail - Durango

Durango is home to friendly people, good weather, great scenery and an awesome urban trail system. The Animas River Trail is one of the jewels of western Colorado. It traverses the length of town along the Animas River. When finished, the trail will complete this journey without any traffic crossings. As of 2007, most of the trail through historic downtown is finished; work is now concentrated south of downtown as Durango progresses through another growth cycle.

The trail is “easy walking” on gentle grades through a patchwork of parks and developed areas. The entire river corridor is well cared for and enjoyed by all. Summer brings rafters and kayakers right through downtown and fly fishermen ply the waters year round. The trail also runs next to the Durango Silverton, narrow gauge train tracks in northern downtown, and offers exceptional opportunities to photograph steam locomotives in action and up close.

This trail is a wealth of history and natural beauty all tied up in a convenient downtown walk. The scenery along this trail alone is worth a stop if you are in the area, and the exercise benefits will seem like a bonus. The trail system here is immense, so use your watch and pedometer or GPS to track your success. Most of the trail here is linear, so plan for “out and back walks” or build your own loops through town and get in some
Finding the Trailhead

This trail can be accessed from a multitude of trailheads. Your best bet is to look for the river as it flows south through town. It is on the east side of Main Street, north of downtown, and then crosses Main Street and flows on the west side of downtown Durango. Once the river is located look for one of the many city parks along the river. Stop and explore the park for a few minutes then pick up the trail and get walking!

exercise and window-shopping at the same time. Since there is much more trail than shown on the map, explore and take a part of Durango’s scenic history home with you. If you get bored with this, then try some more challenging hiking at Animas Mountain northwest of town, or a trail network on the southeast side of town. Both of these trails, used extensively by local runners, walkers, and mountain bikers, offer natural surface trails with challenging grades and a more remote feeling while only minutes from downtown.
Fruita, usually known for its spectacular mountain biking, also has a lot to offer walkers. The Little Salt Wash Trail is a mix of an on-street and trail ramble. Walking the full length requires crossing Maple Street and about three blocks of on-street hiking. The portions of the trail constructed along the wash are very nice and the trail is a good alternative when the rest of your favorite walking trails around Fruita are too muddy. There are no amenities along the trail. Trailheads have on-street parking.

Finding the Trailhead

The easiest access is on Sierra Street, just east of Mesa Street.

Waypoint List
Fruita 01 = West end trailhead
Fruita 02 = Maple Street crossing/street walking
Fruita 03 = Trail leaves street and returns to wash
Fruita 04 = East end of trail

Phone: 970.858.0360
Address: 325 E. Aspen Avenue
Fruita, CO 81521
Web Site: http://www.fruita.org/fruitarec
If you want to go for a long walk in the country without ever leaving the city then this may be right up your alley. The Audubon / Blue Heron Loop trail runs adjacent to both the Colorado River and the Redlands Power Canal. Some on-street walking connects the two trails (about 1.5 miles), but most of the trail is off on its own. Portions of this trail also make for great “out and back walks” to keep the distance and time required manageable.

Typical of the area, the trail passes through river bottom ecosystems and all manner of plants and animals can be observed. A portion of this trail goes through Connected Lakes, part of the James M. Robb Colorado River State Park. Although the state park is a fee area, walk-in access is free. See the Connected Lakes Loops Section for more details.

The rest of the loop is free access. Along the trail you will find the Redlands Power Plant. The plant is quite old and has some interpretive signing at the trailside. This plant uses water diverted from the Gunnison River to develop hydroelectric power. The used water from the plant then flows down the canal until meets the Colorado River just upstream from the Redlands Parkway Bridge. Even though the trail follows this canal a ways, it feels much more like a stream.

Climbing off the river bottom onto the Redlands to make the loop connection is a challenge either way you’re going. Facilities along this trail are limited. There isn’t any drinking water. You’ll find a portolet at the Blue Heron Trailhead, and a vault toilet in Connected Lakes. There are water and restrooms at the Monument Road Shopping Center on the south side of the loop, and at Banana’s Fun Park on the north side of the loop. The trail also connects to the downtown segment of the
Riverfront Trail at Broadway and the river. Plans are underway to link these segments of trail with others so that you could walk from Palisade to Fruita on a dedicated, off-street trail.

### Finding the Trailhead

The Audubon/Blue Heron Loop has five, good access points from the trailhead and most of these have parking lots (South Rim Drive is the only trailhead that does not offer parking). The north side of the loop features two trailheads off of River Road. A lot of folks use the shopping center at Monument and Broadway. At the end of Dike Road, you can use Connected Lakes, as well.

#### Waypoint List

- **ABH 01 = Blue Heron Main Trailhead, parking, and restroom**
- **ABH 02 = Eastern Blue Heron Trailhead Parking**
- **ABH 03 = Link to Riverfront Trail through downtown**
- **ABH 04 = Shopping center trailhead**
- **ABH 05 = Connected Lakes trailhead, parking, and restrooms**
- **ABH 06 = South Rim Drive trailhead**

### Phone

970.254.3842

### Address

Grand Junction Parks and Recreation 1340 Gunnison Avenue  Grand Junction, CO 81501

### Web Site

[www.gjcity.org/CityDeptWebPages/ParksRecreation/ParksRecreation](http://www.gjcity.org/CityDeptWebPages/ParksRecreation/ParksRecreation)

---

Don’t let this sports’ complex throw you off - there is some great walking to be had here. This park has plenty to offer including up to 2.3 miles of walking trails that weave among the park’s other amenities. Portions of the trails are wide concrete while others are narrow crusher fines. Most of the concrete trails also have an adjacent crusher fines lane as well. These crusher fine paths offer the firm footing and all weather usability of concrete without its joint pounding hardness. There are numerous parking areas and restrooms with drinking water.

The park hosts softball, baseball, soccer, tennis, roller hockey, handball, basketball, volleyball, football, playgrounds, ponds and a dog park. Come catch some of the excitement of a game after your walk. Spring PeeWee Football Games are most entertaining.

The park can get crowded on evenings and weekends with sports leagues and other park users, so mornings and weekdays are best for a quiet walk. The park offers an abundance of walking loop possibilities so you can pick the perfect arrangement to reach your step goal for the day.
Finding the Trailhead

The primary entrance for Canyonview is off of 24 Road, about 2/3 of the way from G Road to I-70. There is also an entrance just east of 24 Road on G Road. The other entrance is on the east side of the park from 24 Road. This entrance will take you in the back way, but is nearest the tennis courts and baseball diamond. Once in the park just pick one of the many parking areas and start walking.

Waypoint List
CVP 01 = Trailhead to neighborhood. No parking
CVP 02 = Parking at softball area
CVP 03 = Soccer parking area
CVP 04 = Baseball parking area

Phone: 970.254.3842
Address: Grand Junction Parks and Recreation
1340 Gunnison Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81501
Web Site: www.gjcity.org/CityDeptWebPages/ParksRecreation/ParksRecreation
Welcome to a hidden gem of the city. These reclaimed gravel pits offer superb wildlife viewing opportunities close to the heart of downtown. You can make this walk into whatever you want it to be because of nearly flat walking and a variety of loop sizes and patterns. Walking lengths can vary between .84 miles (1680 steps) and 4.6 miles (9200 steps) with only a little back tracking. The trail is a mix of asphalt, concrete, gravel and some natural surface. Width varies from three feet up to ten feet. This park also offers warm water fishing, picnicking and a boat ramp, and river access.

Commonly seen critters in this river bottom ecosystem include birds, rabbits squirrels, fish, amphibians and other aquatic animals. You may also see raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and deer, as well. Since this park is located in the bottom of the valley it is a good choice for windy days.

This park is truly a success story for reclamation and urban renewal. Only ten years ago the area was barren. Today there are good-sized trees around the lakes and the area is revegetating nicely. Park management is now fighting tamarisk and other invasive, noxious plants. As reclamation continues, the environment will only improve. It is a joy to have such a splendid place to walk so close to downtown.

Finding the Trailhead

The Connected Lakes Loops Trail is part of the Colorado Riverfront Trail System that will eventually stretch from Fruita to Palisade. This section is located within James M. Robb Colorado River State Park, west of downtown Grand Junction. The park (a fee area) may
Finding the Trailhead (cont.)

This is a great trail for mid-winter strolls since most of the trail gets full sun most of the day and the ice melts off quickly. The trail is composed of a loop around Corn Lake that is .86 miles long and is mostly gravel, with some concrete. The route can be lengthened up to an additional six miles for a total trip of 6.8 miles (13,622 steps) by using the Riverfront Trail heading west from Corn Lake.

This trail winds past pasturelands, wetlands and several ponds as it parallels the Colorado River. This entire trail or any portions of it are great places to start an exercise program because the scenery is great and the walking is flat. Numerous opportunities exist along this trail to observe wildlife in action. Dozens of waterfowl and shorebird species make their homes along the trail, beavers are prevalent, and early morning walkers may see deer and other animals, as well.

The Corn Lake Loop Trail is part of the Colorado Riverfront Trail System that will eventually stretch from Fruita to Palisade. This section is located within James M. Robb Colorado River State Park in east Grand Junction and Clifton. The park (a fee area) may be accessed from Hwy. 141 (32 Road), about two miles south of I70B and Clifton. The park section around Corn Lake has several parking lots, and any will lead you to the Loop Trail.

If your goal is to walk west along the Riverfront Trail, consider parking on the north or west side of the lake. There is also parking at the James M. Robb Colorado River State Park Wildlife Area. This area is located

---

**Waypoint List**

Conn 01 = Riverfront Trail enters park from Broadway Shopping Center
Conn 02 = Parking Area
Conn 03 = Parking Area with Restroom
Conn 04 = Confluence Point (Colorado River and Redlands Power Canal)
Conn 05 = Riverfront Trail Exits to Redlands
Conn 06 = Trail connection to Redlands neighborhood
Conn 07 = Parking Area
Conn 08 = Trail connection to Redlands neighborhood

**Phone:** 970.434.6862  
**Address:** 361 32 Road  
Clifton, CO 81520  
**Web Site:** http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/jamesmrobbcoloradoriver  
**Email:** colorado.river.park@state.co.us

---

**Finding the Trailhead**

Please purchase a Colorado State Parks daily or annual pass for entry.
between 30 and 31 Roads on D Road and is also a fee area. Park and walk south along the connector trail to get to the main Riverfront Trail. Walk-in access is available from 29, 30 and 31 Roads as well, but there isn’t any parking at those locations.

Waypoint List
Corn 01 = East end of concrete portion of trail. Start of gravel loop trail
Corn 02 = Intersection of gravel loop trail and concrete Riverfront Trail
Corn 03 = Trail crossing of 31 Road
Corn 04 = Watchable Wildlife Gazebo at wildlife area adjacent to trail
Corn 05 = 30 Road access point
Corn 06 = West end of trail at 29 Road

Phone: 970.434.6862
Address: 361 32 Road
Clifton, CO 81520
Web Site: www.parks.state.co.us
Email: colorado.river.park@state.co.us
If you’re in Montrose and need to take a walk, head for Riverside Park, the central hub for the city’s recreational trail network. This park offers plenty of outdoor opportunities. From the center of the park, the trail system branches out in four directions - mostly north and south on the east and west sides of the river.

The real star of the show beyond a doubt is the Southeast Fork. This trail has two street crossings but then heads south to Ridgway on the old railroad grade. This is the same trail grade on which the Uncompahgre River Walk Trail is built. (Unfortunately, the reservoir flooded some key portions of the rail bed in 1976 and this event may prevent linking these two trail systems). You’ll cross the trail on an old rail bridge and walk along the river and then hike parallel to Hwy. 550, to the Ute History Museum. From here, the concrete trail continues south for about a half-mile and then changes to a red crusher fines trail for another two miles. The old rail bed is still intact, so you could walk as far south as the hamlet of Colona, although after Solar Road you may find yourself sharing the rail bed with the Frontage Road.

Walking on the Southwest fork along the river, you’ll climb to the top of a ridge and connect to another park with softball and soccer. The Northwest Route leads you through the river bottom, disc golf course and ends at a neighborhood access point. The Northeast Forks take you to various neighborhood access points and one dead end. No matter which of the four branches you select, remember your watch and pedometer. Enjoy the scenery and fresh air.
Step back in time when mining and ranching drove the economy of the West. The Uncompahgre River Walk lets you do just that, and enjoy the scenery and nature, as well. This 4.9-mile trail links the south part of Ridgway State Park to the Town of Ridgway as it follows the Uncompahgre River on an old railroad grade (that also used to link the Town of Ridgway and Montrose). This long abandoned line made this a great rails-to-trails opportunity. There are million dollar views of the river and the central San Juan Mountains while walking this trail. Right before town, the trail crosses from the east side of the river to the west side by way of the old railroad bridge.

In Ridgway, a gravel trail splits off the main, concrete trail and continues to follow the river. This area of town has undergone a major environmental restoration in the last few years. The river bottom was cleaned up, channel improvements made, fish structures installed and native flora planted. In the next few years the land will look even better as the plants take hold.

The main, concrete trail delivers you into downtown Ridgway, at the town park. This was the site of Fort Smith in the film, “True Grit” that starred John Wayne. Most of the block that fronts the park still wears its period façade from the movie. The town park also played a role in the film as the location for a hanging.

While you’re in town be sure to amble down to the fairgrounds at Highways 550 and 62. There you’ll find one of the seven, famous, Galloping Geese Rail Carriers. These truck-train hybrids provided service along the mountain rail lines after lower demands no longer justified the use of full-sized trains. Today they are...
Finding the Trailhead

The Uncompahgre River Walk has two trailheads. The south end in the town of Ridgway offers free access and several parking locations throughout town. The north trailhead is in Ridgway State Park and is a fee area. The trailhead is in Dallas Creek at the south end of the park. Once inside the park, look for the concrete trail running from the boat ramp south, linking all of the facilities in that area. If you want more to walk more after returning to the trailhead at Dallas Creek, try the nature trail loop on the west side of the Uncompahgre. A set of bridges near the restroom at the trailhead/road end will take you there.

Waypoint List
URW 01 = North end of trail near boat ramp
URW 02 = Southern end of road, restroom in Ridgway State Park
URW 03 = Parking in Town of Ridgway
URW 04 = Parking in Town of Ridgway

Phone: 970. 626. 5822
Address: 28555 Hwy. 550
Ridgway, CO 81432
Web Site: http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/ridgway
Email: ridgway.park@state.co.us