The Barbara Whipple Trail, established in 1991, honors a prominent and much-respected Buena Vista citizen. Barbara Whipple (1920-1989) moved to Buena Vista from Pennsylvania in 1976 with her husband, the late Grant Heilman. An accomplished artist, she opened one of Buena Vista’s first galleries on East Main Street, and co-founded the Arkansas Valley Council on the Arts. Her art was based on nature, and she enjoyed hiking and exploring the river’s edge and the Midland Hill area which these trails serve.

The Arkansas River pedestrian bridge, constructed in 1990, connects the Buena Vista River Park to the Whipple Trail System, the Midland Bicycle Trail, and 100,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service public lands called Fourmile.

How to get to the Barbara Whipple trailhead

The trailhead, restrooms and parking are located at the eastern end of East Main Street in Buena Vista, adjacent to the Arkansas River at the pedestrian bridge. Brochures and large maps for the Whipple Trails, Fourmile area and Midland Bicycle Trail are provided at large signboards.

Elevation and distances

The profiles below illustrate the steepness and distance of the trails in this complex. More information is available on the map on the reverse side of this brochure.

Participants

The Barbara Whipple Trail is a part of the Buena Vista Trail System developed by the Town of Buena Vista and the Buena Vista Trails Advisory Board, with private and public support from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Department of Wildlife’s Fishing is Fun program, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Greater Arkansas River Nature Association, Buena Vista High School, Friends of Fourmile, generous private donors, and many additional community organizations and volunteers. The Midland Bicycle Trail, which begins here, is a BLM/U.S. Forest Service project, with assistance from the Friends of Fourmile and Ark Valley Velo bicycle club.

The Buena Vista Police, Chaffee County Sheriff, Bureau of Land Management and Friends of Fourmile patrol the area regularly. They will respond to concerns and advise on responsible use.

To report a violation or for information

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, Salida
719 539-7219
Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office, Canon City
719 269-8500
Buena Vista Police
719 395-8654
Chaffee County Sheriff
719 539-2596
Fire and other emergency 911

Expect and respect other users!
The Whipple Trail System begins in Buena Vista and extends 18.8 miles to the top of Trout Creek Pass along the historic Midland Railroad bed and several Forest Roads. For options and details see the MBT brochure and map. Although the South Loop Trail ends at CR 304, the MBT continues southward on CR 304.

**Whipple Trail Main Route**
Originally a stage road connecting Buena Vista to the Midland RR station above the river, this is the primary, widest and most gradual route in this complex network. The trail gains 300 feet over about 1 mile to CR 304 and has 4 interpretive kiosks with benches. Local cyclists usually ascend Whipple Main Route and descend South Loop Trail – see the first kiosk for more details.

**Whipple Trail Steep Shortcut**
This is a good pedestrian alternative for ascending or descending, but the steep lower section with steps is not suitable for bicycles. It provides quicker access to the North Loop; about 0.7 mile to CR 304.

**North Loop Trail**
An alternative up or down for a longer walk – 0.9 mile if combined with the Whipple Shortcut. A narrow single track, more challenging for cyclists than the Whipple or South Loop Trails.

**Broken Boyfriend Trail 6032A**
This newly accepted 1.5 mile route adds variety to the system. Although open to hikers, horses and intermediate to advanced cyclists, it is not recommended for horses due to difficult footing and possible conflicts with other users.

**Midland Hill Trail 6032**
NOT OPEN to bicycles except near CR 304 and not recommended for horses due to difficult footing. The longest trail in the complex network gains over 1,500 feet elevation in 2.4 miles (one way) from the river and is rated moderately difficult due to steep rocky sections from its mid-section to the summit of Midland Hill. Plan on 2-3 hours round trip and be prepared for weather changes. It has fantastic views of the Upper Arkansas Valley and the Collegiate Peaks 14ers.

**Arkansas River Trail**
This uppermost trail along the west bank of the river makes a good nearly flat walk or bike ride of 0.8 miles, and can easily be combined with the Whitewater Trail for a river-focused loop. The trail has a packed gravel surface 4-5 feet wide.

**Whitewater Trail**
The 0.3 mile Whitewater follows the high-water mark of the Arkansas, with great river views, fishing access, and access to several kayak whitewater play areas. Steps at the northern end require cyclists to carry their bikes up to Arkansas River Trail. It has a packed gravel surface 4-5 feet wide.

**Rock ‘n Roll Trail**
This short (0.15 mile) paved trail north of the pedestrian bridge provides wheelchair access to the riverbank for fishing and to observe the first kayak play area, constructed in 2004.

**Whipple Trail Options**
- **Midland Bicycle Trail MBT**
  - This intermediate trail begins in Buena Vista and extends 18.8 miles to the top of Trout Creek Pass along the historic Midland Railroad bed and several Forest Roads. For options and details see the MBT brochure and map. Although the South Loop Trail ends at CR 304, the MBT continues southward on CR 304.
- **Whipple Trail Main Route**
  - Originally a stage road connecting Buena Vista to the Midland RR station above the river, this is the primary, widest and most gradual route in this complex network. The trail gains 300 feet over about 1 mile to CR 304 and has 4 interpretive kiosks with benches. Local cyclists usually ascend Whipple Main Route and descend South Loop Trail – see the first kiosk for more details.
- **Whipple Trail Steep Shortcut**
  - This is a good pedestrian alternative for ascending or descending, but the steep lower section with steps is not suitable for bicycles. It provides quicker access to the North Loop; about 0.7 mile to CR 304.
- **North Loop Trail**
  - An alternative up or down for a longer walk – 0.9 mile if combined with the Whipple Shortcut. A narrow single track, more challenging for cyclists than the Whipple or South Loop Trails.
- **Broken Boyfriend Trail 6032A**
  - This newly accepted 1.5 mile route adds variety to the system. Although open to hikers, horses and intermediate to advanced cyclists, it is not recommended for horses due to difficult footing and possible conflicts with other users.
- **Midland Hill Trail 6032**
  - NOT OPEN to bicycles except near CR 304 and not recommended for horses due to difficult footing. The longest trail in the complex network gains over 1,500 feet elevation in 2.4 miles (one way) from the river and is rated moderately difficult due to steep rocky sections from its mid-section to the summit of Midland Hill. Plan on 2-3 hours round trip and be prepared for weather changes. It has fantastic views of the Upper Arkansas Valley and the Collegiate Peaks 14ers.
- **Arkansas River Trail**
  - This uppermost trail along the west bank of the river makes a good nearly flat walk or bike ride of 0.8 miles, and can easily be combined with the Whitewater Trail for a river-focused loop. The trail has a packed gravel surface 4-5 feet wide.
- **Whitewater Trail**
  - The 0.3 mile Whitewater follows the high-water mark of the Arkansas, with great river views, fishing access, and access to several kayak whitewater play areas. Steps at the northern end require cyclists to carry their bikes up to Arkansas River Trail. It has a packed gravel surface 4-5 feet wide.
- **Rock ‘n Roll Trail**
  - This short (0.15 mile) paved trail north of the pedestrian bridge provides wheelchair access to the riverbank for fishing and to observe the first kayak play area, constructed in 2004.