

DAY 7 & 8 - COLORADO



Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

Stay at Estes Park, CO



We stayed in Estes Park for two nights at Expedition Lodge.



Across the street from the lodge was Estes Ark, shopping and adventure.



Estes Park, “the Gateway to the Rocky Mt. National Park”



Lots of shops.



View of Estes Lake from our room.



View of the distant Rocky Mountains from our room.



We paid a visit to the historic Stanley Hotel.

<https://www.stanleyhotel.com/>

Discover historic elegance and natural beauty at [The Stanley Hotel](#), founded in 1909 by F.O. Stanley. Nestled in the heart of stunning Estes Park, Colorado, our iconic hotel is just minutes away from the breathtaking Rocky Mountain National Park and conveniently accessible from Denver Airport.

Immerse yourself in the rich history that inspired Stephen King's masterpiece, [The Shining](#), as you explore the corridors and rooms that echo with tales of the past. But The Stanley is more than a literary landmark – it's a destination for unforgettable experiences.











The Shining Miniseries

The Stanley Hotel was the inspiration and home to Author, Stephen King during the creation of his masterpiece thriller, "The Shining".

In 1977, Director Stanley Kubrick adapted King's best seller into the famous movie "The Shining", starring Jack Nicholson and Shelly Duvall. Unfortunately, Director Kubrick did not use The Stanley in his film and rewrote parts of the book to better suit the movie.

This prompted Stephen King to later return to the Stanley and retell the story in his made for television miniseries "The Shining". The Shining was featured on ABC TV on April 27, 28 and May 1st 1997 and starred Steven Weber and Rebecca De Mornay and featured a cameo of Stephen King as the band leader, "Gage Creed".



Stephen King's "The Shining"





Riverside Walk - The Estes Park Riverwalk starts at the Visitor Center and goes beside the Big Thompson & Fall Rivers. These two mountain rivers come out of Rocky Mountain National Park and join in the middle of downtown Estes Park. The Riverwalk winds through plazas and downtown Estes Park shops and restaurants.
<https://estes-park.com/river-walk/>



NEW: Rocky Mountain National Park Timed Entry (important to know)

<https://www.recreation.gov/timed-entry/10086910>





Welcome to a Land of Extremes!

Rocky Mountain National Park's 415 square miles (265,807 acres) encompasses a spectacular range of mountain environments. From meadows found in the montane life zone to glistening alpine lakes and up to the towering mountain peaks, there is something for everyone to discover. Along the way explore over 300 miles of hiking trails and incredible wildlife viewing.

<https://www.nps.gov/romo/index.htm>

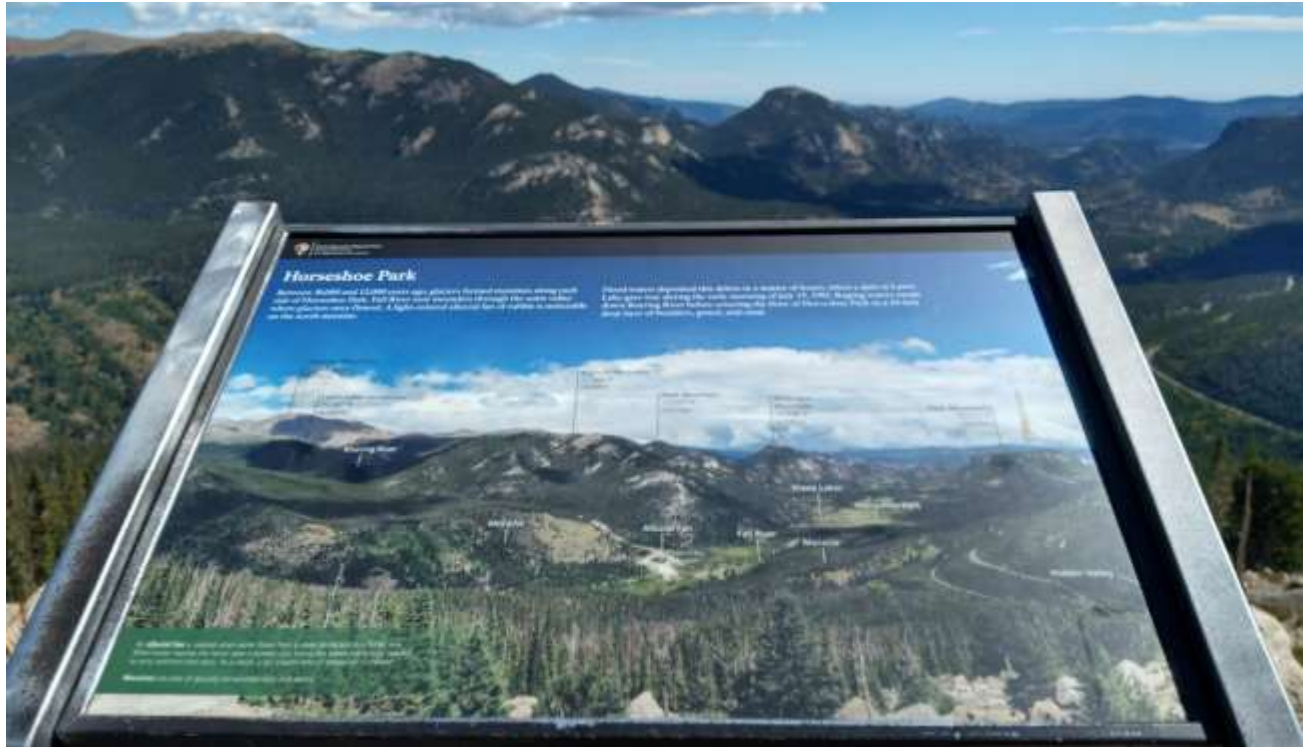




Trail Ridge Road is the highest continuous paved road in the United States. It is 48-miles one-way across Rocky Mountain National Park and climbs to an elevation of 12,183 feet above sea level. During the summer season, Trail Ridge Road connects the towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake.

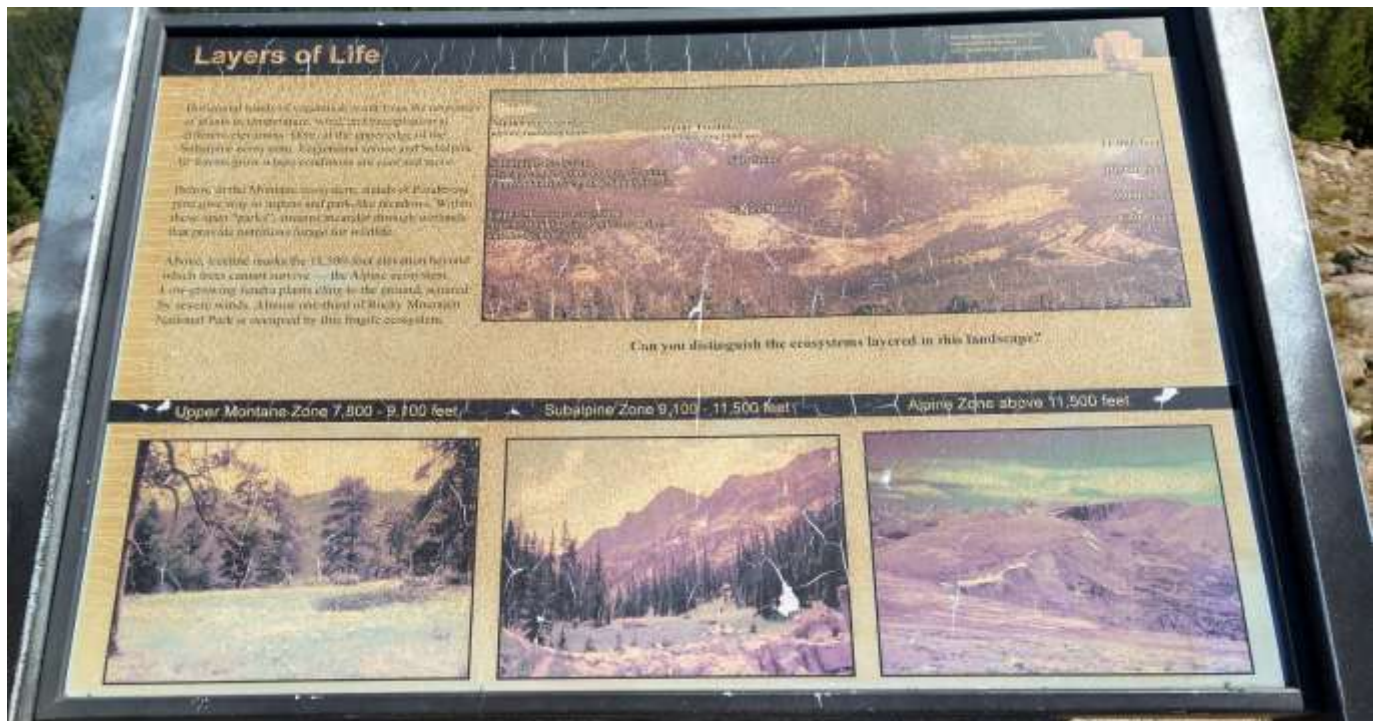
In 1931, Horace Albright, second director of the National Park Service, said "it is hard to describe what a sensation this new road is going to make... you will have the whole sweep of the Rockies before you in all directions."





<https://wigowsky.com/travels/RoadTour25/HorseshoePark.jpg>
Click on link to see a closer look at the map.





Sign: Horizontal bands of vegetation result from the response of plants to temperature, wind, and precipitation at different elevations. Here, at the upper edge of the Subalpine ecosystem, Englemann spruce and Subalpine fir forests grow where conditions are cool and moist.

Below, in the Montane ecosystem, stands of Ponderosa pine give way to aspens and park-like meadows. Within these open “parks”, streams meander through wetlands that provide nutritious forage for wildlife.

Above, treeline marks the 11,500-foot elevation beyond which trees cannot survive – the Alpine ecosystem. Low-growing tundra plants cling to the ground, scoured by severe winds. Almost one-third of Rocky Mountain NP is occupied by this fragile ecosystem.



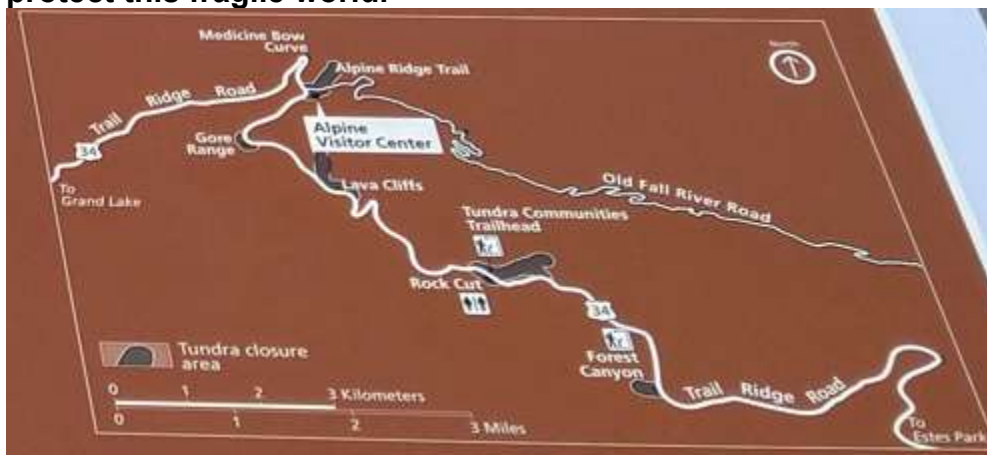
Rocky Mountain National Park is one of the highest national parks in the nation, with elevations from 7,860 to 14,259 feet (2,396 to 4,346 m),^[30] the highest point of which is Longs Peak.^[31] Sixty mountain peaks over 12,000 feet (3,658 m) high provide scenic vistas.

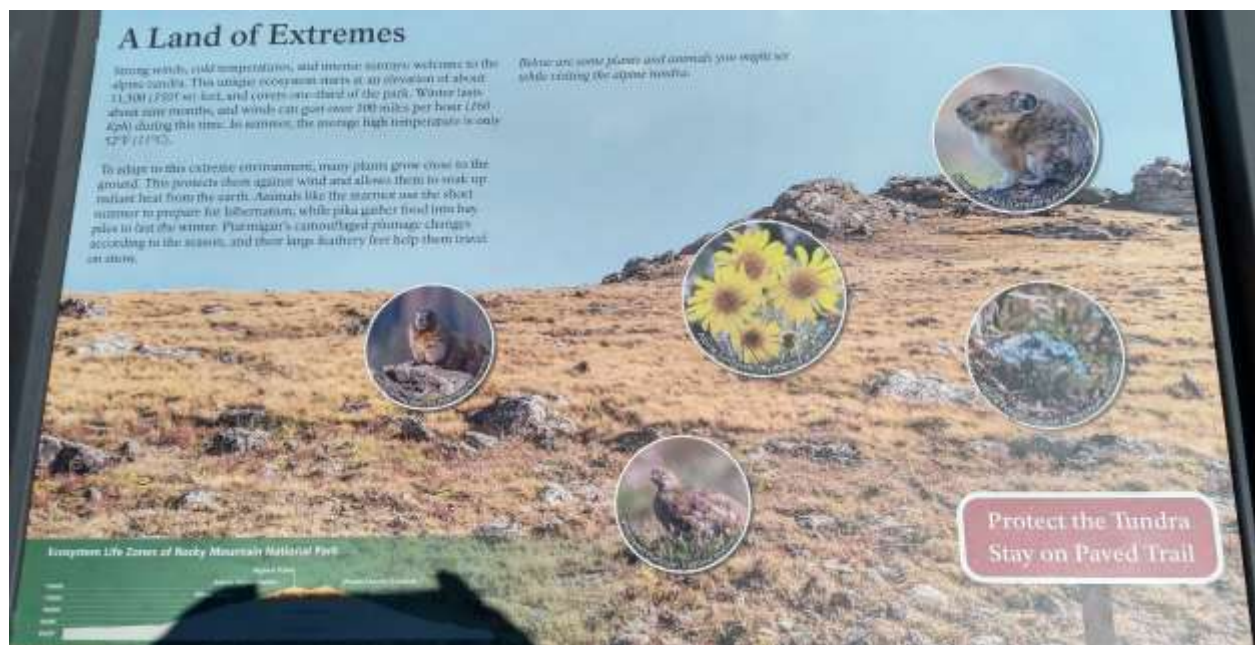
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocky_Mountain_National_Park





Sign: Are You a Tundra Guardian? Alpine tundra plants and animals need your help! The alpine tundra ecosystem is a fragile place. It takes years for plants to grow, but they can be killed in a matter of seconds. How? Human trampling. When vegetation is trampled, many native plants that wildlife depend on are no longer available. It can take hundreds of years for the alpine tundra to recover from seemingly minor actions, like walking off trail to take a photo. Do your part to protect this fragile world.





Sign: A Land of Extremes. Strong winds, cold temperatures, and intense sunrays: welcome to the alpine tundra. This unique ecosystem starts at an elevation of about 11,500 (3505 m) feet, and covers one-third of the park. Winter lasts about nine months, and winds can gust over 100 miles per hour (160 kph) during this time. In summer, the average high temperature is only 54 F (11 C). Animals like the marmot gather food into hay piles to last the winter. Ptarmigan's camouflaged plumage changes according to the season, and their large feathery feet help them travel in snow.



Sign: A Glacial Landscape. During the past two million years, frigid climates caused glaciers to form and move down the canyon below. Flowing slowly, these deep “rivers of ice” carved out Forest Canyon. Ahead, Hayden Gorge is the characteristic U-shape of the glacial valley. Glacial cirques also mark the landscape. Lakes, called tarns, often occupy these depressions once the glaciers retreat. <https://wigowsky.com/travels/RoadTour25/Rockies.jpg> (click on link)



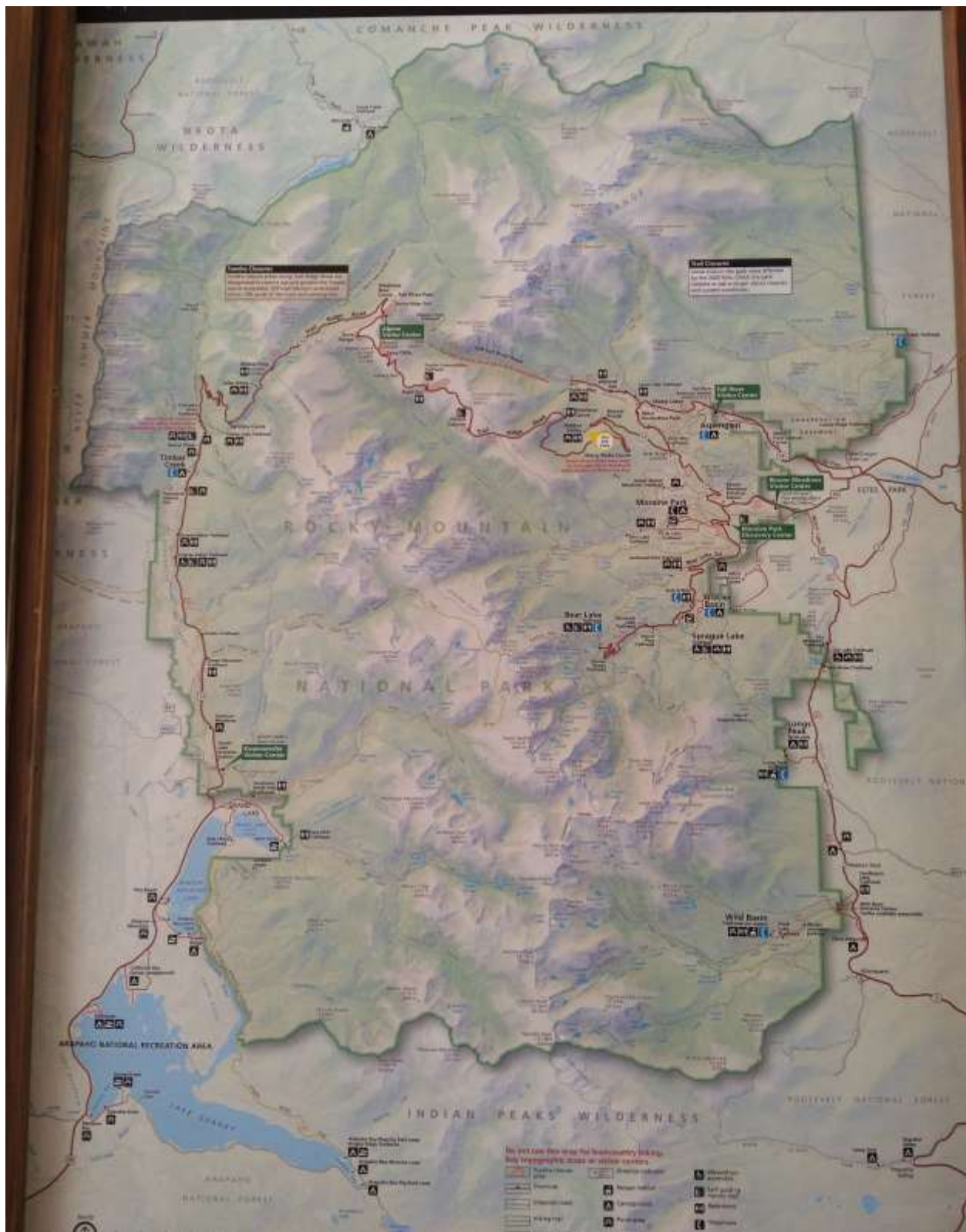
Sign: Forest Canyon.

Biological Diversity

The subalpine forest ecosystem of Forest Canyon is abundant with life. Difficult to access through fallen trees and steep terrain, Forest Canyon furnishes protected habitat for hundreds of plants and animal species – from elk herds to microorganisms.

An extensive research program, including much work done by independent scientists, provides a growing body of knowledge upon which park managers base decisions which best preserve the park's natural richness while allowing you and others to enjoy its beauty.





<https://wigowsky.com/travels/RoadTour25/NPmap.jpg> (click on link to see map)



Early dinner at Mama Roses. We had reservations to enter Bear Lake at 6pm.







Rocky Mountain National Park is home to many species of animals, including nearly seventy mammals and almost three hundred species of birds. This diversity is due to the park's varying topography, which creates a variety of habitats.



The park is home to some 2,000 to 3,000 elk in summer, and between 800 and 1,000 elk spend the winter within its boundaries.

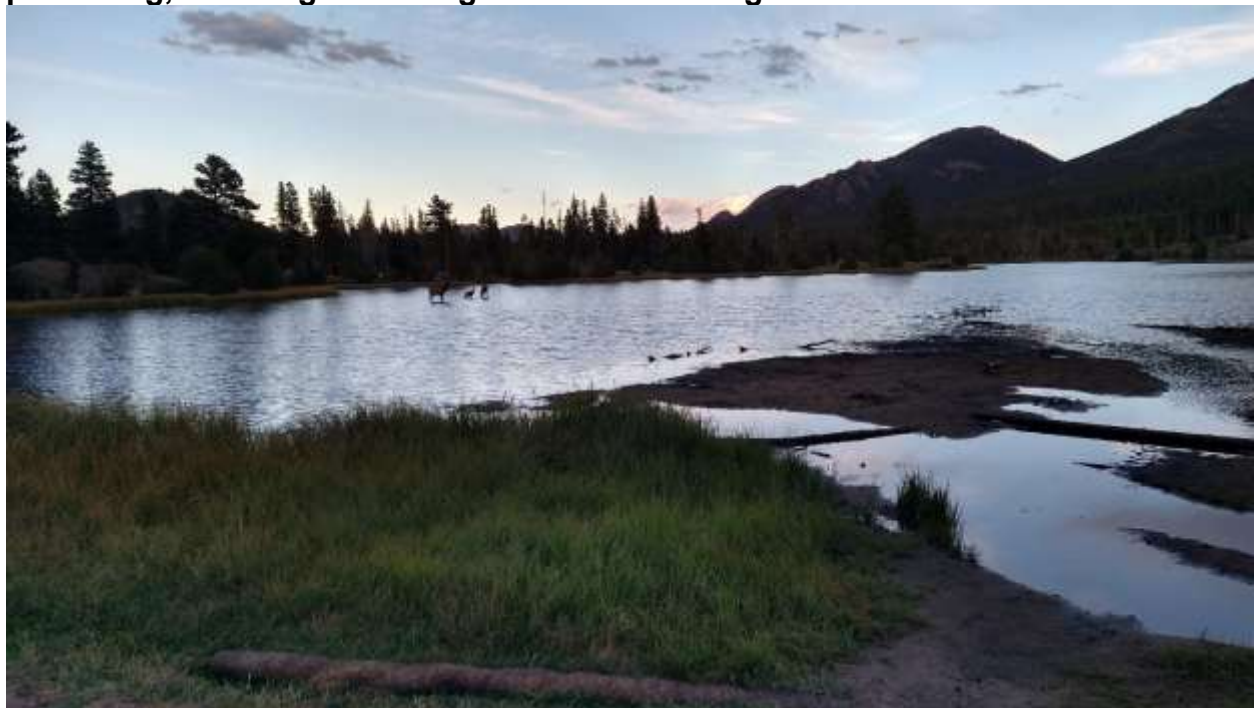








Sign: Sprague Lake Trail. Enjoy a leisurely half-mile walk around Sprague Lake. This shallow, 13-acre lake is a remnant of a resort once owned by Abner Sprague, an expert guide and host. Just before Rocky Mountain NP was established in 1915, Sprague enlarged this lake by damming the far end to create better fishing for his lodge guests. The Spragues introduced their guests to the pleasures of high mountain waters, meadows, and trails. You, too, can refresh yourself by fishing, picnicking, or hiking in this high mountain setting.









Breakfast at the Expedition Lodge



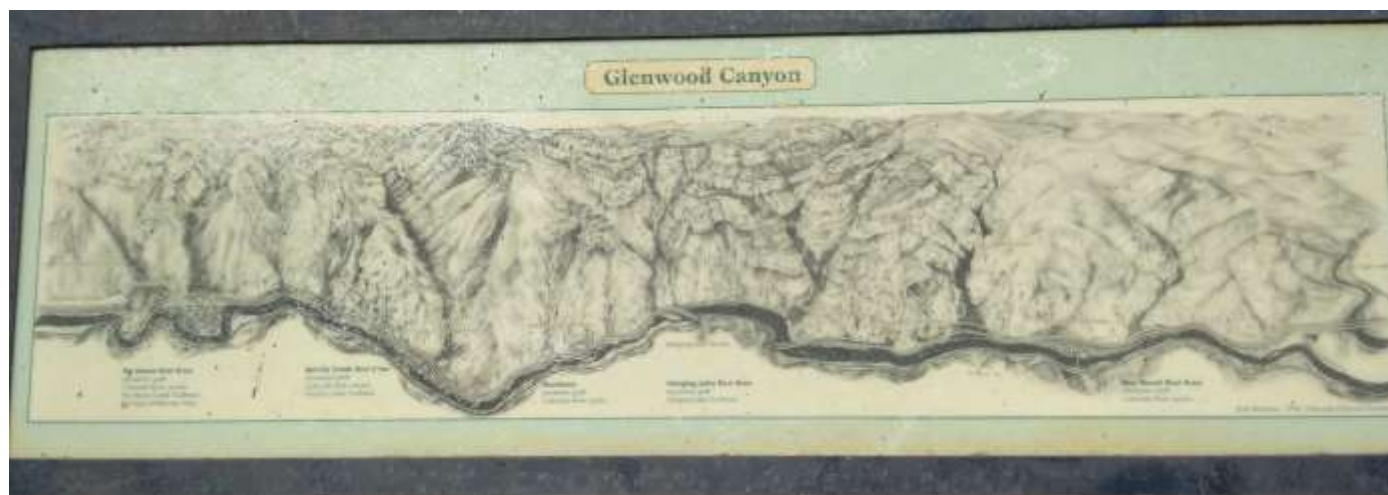
Leaving Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park



On our way to Utah, we drove through the Glenwood Canyon.



Glenwood Canyon is a 12- to 16-mile-long, scenic canyon in western Colorado carved by the Colorado River, known for the [I-70 scenic drive](#), recreational activities like hiking and rafting, and its impressive engineering marvels that blend into the environment. The canyon features a 16.3-mile recreation path for cycling and walking, connects to the town of Glenwood Springs, and is accessible from several rest areas including Bair Ranch, Grizzly Creek, and No Name.





The Colorado River.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenwood_Canyon

The canyon, which has historically provided the routes of railroads and highways through western Colorado, currently furnishes the routes of Interstate 70 and the Union Pacific's Central Corridor between Denver and Grand Junction.



Stop to eat dinner at Suehiro Japanese Restaurant in Grand Junction, CO



Japanese wedding dresses adorn the restaurant.



Colorado National Monument is a [National Park Service](#) unit near the city of [Grand Junction, Colorado](#). Sheer-walled canyons cut deep into sandstone and granite–gneiss–schist rock formations. This is an area of desert land high on the [Colorado Plateau](#), with [pinyon and juniper](#) forests on the plateau.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_National_Monument





There are scenic views from trails, [Rim Rock Drive](#), which winds along the plateau, and the campground.



The park's geologic record preserves three different groups of rock and sediment. The oldest rocks are Early to Middle [Proterozoic gneiss](#) and [schist](#), including the Ute Canyon Stock. Overlying these, and separated by an angular [unconformity](#), are mostly horizontally bedded [Mesozoic sedimentary rocks](#), including the [cliff-forming Wingate Sandstone](#). Overlying these are various types of [Quaternary](#) unconsolidated deposits such as [alluvium](#), [colluvium](#), and [dunes](#). The sedimentary rocks are [folded](#) into [monoclines](#) by several [faults](#), including the Redlands Thrust Fault.



The area was established as Colorado National Monument on May 24, 1911





The monument's feature attraction is *Monument Canyon*, which runs the width of the park and includes rock formations such as [Independence Monument](#), the [Kissing Couple](#), and [Coke Ovens](#). The monument includes 20,500 acres (32.0 sq mi; 83 km²), much of which has been recommended to [Congress](#) for designation as wilderness.

100 ft
100 ft
100 ft

Ute Canyon Trailhead

Ute Canyon Trail (unimproved)

4.3 miles (11.5 km) one-way, 4 hours
Elevation: 6,400 ft to 7,300 ft (1,950 m to 2,225 m)
Difficulty: difficult

During spring and summer, the interior of Ute Canyon offers a striking contrast to the desert landscape above. The path through the high canyon can be hard to follow and no established trail exists, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort.

Ute Canyon Trail (unimproved) to Wildwood Trailhead via the Corkscrew Trail

7.4 miles (11.9 km) one-way, 2.5 hours
Elevation: 6,400 ft to 7,300 ft (1,950 m to 2,225 m)
Difficulty: difficult

For those with a sturdy, determined spirit, the Ute Canyon and Corkscrew Trail is a challenge. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort. The trail is a steep climb, but the views are so good, the challenge is well worth the effort.



Trail Regulations

Trail regulations are provided to protect wilderness resources and protect visitor safety.

Leave No Trace

- **Travel on durable surfaces.** Stay on the trail and avoid trampling vegetation. Avoid stepping on delicate plants and animals. Stay on the trail and avoid trampling vegetation.
- **Pack out all trash.** Pack out all trash, including food scraps, toilet paper, and other waste.
- **Leave what you find.** Do not pick up or move rocks, plants, or other natural objects. Do not cut or break branches or shrubs.

Fire Safety

- **Obey fire restrictions.** Do not start a fire unless you are sure it is safe to do so. Do not burn trash or other materials.

Wildlife Safety

- **Observe wildlife from a distance.** Do not feed or touch wildlife. Do not get too close to wildlife.

Weather Safety

- **Check the weather forecast.** Do not hike in bad weather. Do not hike alone.

Trail Safety

- **Use proper hiking technique.** Do not hike too fast. Do not hike too slow. Do not hike alone.

Trail Etiquette

- **Be courteous to other hikers.** Do not block the trail. Do not litter.

Trail History

- **Learn about the trail's history.** Do not remove historical markers. Do not deface historical markers.

Trail Maintenance

- **Help maintain the trail.** Do not remove trail markers. Do not deface trail markers.

Trail Closure

- **Obey trail closure signs.** Do not hike on closed trails. Do not hike on closed trails.

Trail Access

- **Use proper access.** Do not hike on private property. Do not hike on private property.

Trail Safety

- **Use proper safety.** Do not hike alone. Do not hike alone.

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<https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/colorado-national-monument-fallen-rock>

Detailed Description

This view of Fallen Rock illustrates the geologic processes that are shaping the landscape at Colorado National Monument. Fallen Rock is a block of Wingate Sandstone that split away from the cliff where Ute Creek had undercut the softer shaly sediments of the Chinle Formation along the creek bed. More erosion will eventually break down the great block into sediments to be carried away by water.

Sign: Instead of toppling “face forward” when it separated from the cliff, Fallen Rock did “feet forward” more than 100 feet (30 meters) to rest on the debris slope below, where it has likely stood for thousands of years.









Rocks are always in a state of change. On the surface, they're usually getting broken down into smaller pieces ("weathering"). Sometimes they're carried to new places due to water, wind, ice, and gravity ("erosion"). Eventually they settle in one spot ("deposition"), where they might eventually turn into other rocks ("lithification"). <https://www.nps.gov/colm/learn/nature/geologicactivity.htm>

