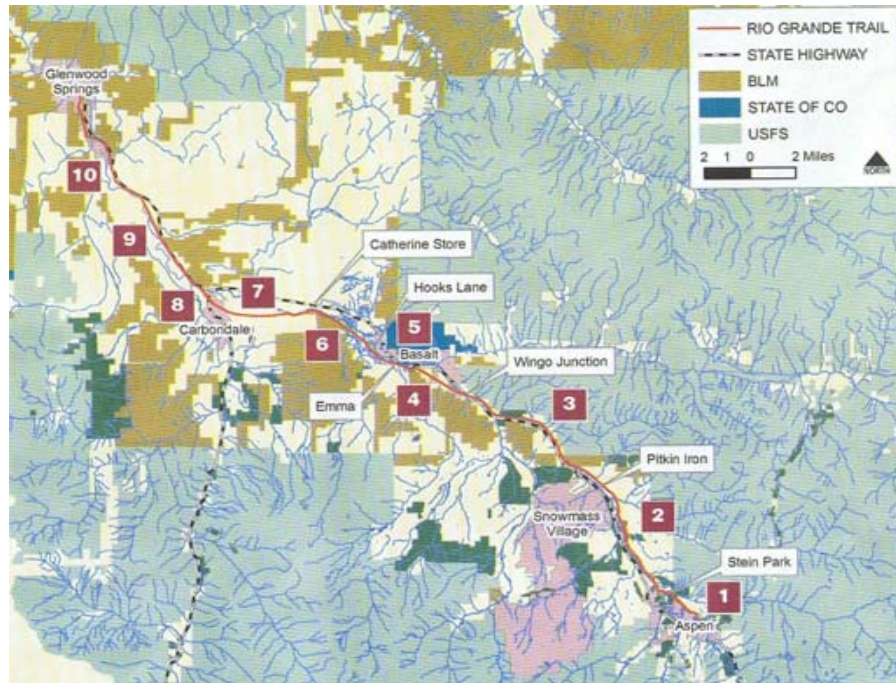


RIO GRANDE TRAIL



1. ASPEN TO STEIN PARK

Distance: 2 miles

Surface: Paved plus soft surface

Elevation change: 152 feet

Trail description: This scenic path starts behind the Aspen post office, crossing over both the Roaring Fork River and Hunter Creek before closely paralleling the river most of the way down to Stein Park. Mature trees on both sides offer plenty of shade. Soft surface for joggers alongside pavement occasionally splits off from the main trail, giving joggers a path on their own. This stretch sees heavy use by walkers, joggers, bicyclists and people walking their dogs (which are supposed to be leashed). Advice is recommended in the hilly, curvy section midway along this stretch because of the oncoming traffic. Trail crosses beneath Slaughterhouse Bridge at bottom end and turns to gravel at Stein Park.

2. STEIN PARK TO WOODY CREEK/PITKIN IRON

Distance: 6 miles

Surface: Gravel

Elevation change: 376 feet

Trail description: The entire stretch sees heavy use by bicyclists, walkers, joggers and some equestrians; the ride from Aspen to the Woody Creek Tavern makes it especially popular. Watch out for plenty of traffic traveling in both directions. This segment offers some of the most varied terrain of any segment of the Rio Grande, climbing out of Woody Creek onto a sunny mesa of sagebrush and other scrub vegetation, with the Roaring Fork River occasionally in view in the gorge far below. Higher up, the trail passes an eye-catching, intermittent waterfall that tumbles off a shale cliff into a clear pool alongside the trail. The upper stretch is far from Highway 82, and highway traffic is inaudible. It's lush, with plenty of trees and shade, and the river here is in almost constant view and accessible. There are views of the Roaring Fork's confluence with Maroon Creek, as well as Slaughterhouse Falls, popular with rafters and kayakers in spring and early summer. Use caution at the road crossings (marked with stop signs) on the lower end, where motorized traffic is often fast, and can approach the trail from a blind curve.

3. WOODY CREEK/PITKIN IRON TO WINGO JUNCTION

Distance: 8.5 miles

Surface: Paved with soft shoulder

Elevation change: 575 feet

Trail description: Offers views of everything from large homes, big barns and horse pastures to open space and the Roaring Fork River. Watch for a pair of old rail cars alongside the trail that have served as housing off and on. Blind corners and hills on this stretch of the trail make it important to stay on the correct side of the center line. This segment follows Upper and Lower River roads; use caution at road crossings, where trail users will encounter stop signs. The trail also crosses numerous driveways, where motorists are supposed to stop. Some shady stretches, but much of it is sunny. Watch for pieces of the old railroad, where the trail has been constructed alongside the former rail line and the tracks and ties remain in place. Near the Wingo Junction end, the Rio Grande connects with Basalt-Old Snowmass Trail, which offers a hilly ride through Holland Hills and into downtown Basalt.

4. WINGO JUNCTION TO EMMA

Distance: 3.5 miles

Surface: Paved with soft shoulder

Elevation change: 167 feet

Trail description: This sunny section crosses over Highway 82 on a bike-pedestrian bridge at Wingo Junction and over the Roaring Fork River on a second bridge, an original railroad bridge from the late 1800's. The trail bisects with the Roaring Fork Club golf course at its upper end (watch for errant balls). Below the golf course, this segment of the Rio Grande boasts some of the most agrarian, undeveloped views along its route, passing through agricultural fields on both sides, except for a short section when it passes by Basalt High School and homes on the south side of Basalt. On its lower end, the route offers a peek at the collection of old vehicles and farm equipment in a fenced salvage yard not visible from the highway. This section of the Rio Grande is straight and wide, with plenty of room for two bikers to ride abreast and move to single file at the sight of an approaching bicyclist or pedestrian. Soft shoulder is used by equestrians and joggers; gravel likely spread across pavement unless it's been swept recently. Watch out for horse apples.

5. EMMA TO HOOKS LANE

Distance: 1.2 miles

Surface: Paved with soft shoulder

Elevation change: 100 feet

Trail description: This short stretch passes by a few homes on its lower end, but offers mostly a pleasant, sunny, flat ride past horse pastures. Highway 82 noise is noticeable. A spur trail underpass to reach downtown Basalt goes beneath the highway at the Emma end. The underpass is very narrow with abrupt turns and is subject to flooding during high water season. Use care or walk your bike.

6. HOOKS LANE TO CATHERINE BRIDGE

Distance: 4.25 miles

Surface: Paved

Elevation change: 125 feet

Trail description: The lower half of it, between Catherine Bridge and Rock Bottom Ranch, is closed from December 1 through April 30, and dogs aren't allowed in this stretch at anytime — both measures are to protect wildlife. There are no houses and the highway is well out of earshot. The trail passes beaver ponds near Rock Bottom Ranch; above the ranch, horse pastures and the occasional house maintain the area's rural feel. There's plenty of sun on the upper half. When the trail is closed, bicyclists must take a detour involving Willits Lane, the frontage road in front of the El Jebel City Market complex and the frontage road (Valley Road) that parallels Highway 82 below El Jebel, linking up with County Road 100 at Catherine Store.

7. CATHERINE BRIDGE TO CARBONDALE

Distance: 2.8 miles

Surface: Paved

Elevation change: 222 feet (from Catherine Bridge to Highway 133)

Trail description: Pastures, cows, horses and a rodeo arena dominate this bucolic straight stretch outside of Carbondale. Likely encounters include inline skaters, parents pushing strollers, joggers, dog walkers and young bicyclists along this segment, which hooks into Carbondale's quaint Main Street on its lower end. This section is groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing from late November to early March, conditions permitting.

8. CARBONDALE MILE

Distance: 1 mile

Surface: Paved

Elevation change: 222 feet (from Catherine Bridge to Highway 133)

Trail description: A quick link from the upper end of Carbondale's Main Street, where it intersects with County Road 100, to busy Highway 133. Heavily used by families, children, young bicyclists, joggers, and dog walkers, among others. Trail passes behind a not-too-scenic commercial and industrial area near Highway 133, but offers views of Mount Sopris to upvalley riders. To cross the Highway 133, use the new traffic light at Village Road.

9. CARBONDALE TO COUNTY ROAD 154 (CMC turnoff from Highway 82)

Distance: approximately 5 miles

Surface: Paved (when completed in 2008)

Elevation change: 331 feet (from Highway 133 to Glenwood Springs)

Trail description: This stretch of the Rio Grande Trail will be under construction much of 2008. Users are encourage using an alternate route from Carbondale Main Street west of Highway 133 which connects to County Road 106, just past Colorado Rocky Mountain School (CRMS), and continue along the south edge of the valley for several miles. After crossing the Roaring Fork River next to the black iron bridge, this road merges to the left with County Road 154. The trail can be rejoined from County Road 154 adjacent to Rocky Mountain Disposal and near Orrison Distributing. Users should obey all trail closures, respect construction machinery and its operators, and use the alternative route until the completed trail is opened. RFTA discourages the use of this segment for everyone's safety until construction is completed.

10. CMC/COUNTY ROAD 114 TO 23RD STREET, GLENWOOD SPRINGS

Distance: 5.2 miles

Surface: Paved

Elevation change: 331 feet (from Highway 133 to Glenwood Springs)

Trail description: This is a surprisingly wild and diverse stretch passing through big sage and scrub oak woodlands high above the Roaring Fork River and adjacent to some of the few remaining preserved agrarian lands in the lower Roaring Fork Valley. Just follow the bike path and at 23rd Street (the turnoff to the Midland Avenue bypass in Glenwood Springs) the Rio Grande Trail will connect with the city's existing concrete River Trail, which leads to Two Rivers Park. From there, riders can make their way to the Glenwood Canyon bike path.

KEEP IN MIND:

- The trail is designed for a 20 MPH speed limit.
- Pets must be leashed ALL the time.
- Bicyclists must alert other parties when overtaking from behind (a bell is preferred).
- Open fires are prohibited.
- Pet owners are requested to use waste bags and dispose the waste in trash cans after use.
- Hunting is prohibited along the entire Rio Grande Trail corridor.
- Adjacent property is mostly private. Avoid trespassing by using the access points clearly indicated.
- Questions about conditions, closures, and other information should be directed to the Rio Grande Trail and Corridor Manager at (970)384-4975.