

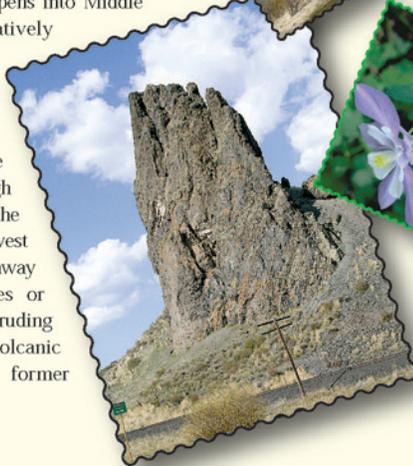
RIDE *the* ROCKIES

Geology Highlights along Ride The Rockies 2004 Route

DAY 4 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 – Steamboat Springs (optional loop ride)

Most of today's ride is through undulating topography of Upper Cretaceous sandstone, shale, and coal of the Mesaverde Group (82 to 72 million years old), which was deposited near the shore of an ancient seaway. The Flat Tops, the aptly named mountains to the southwest, are capped by volcanic lava flows of Tertiary age.

Steamboat Springs

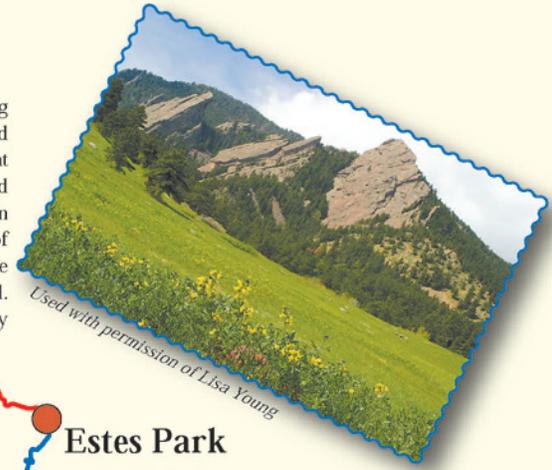


DAY 3 TUESDAY, JUNE 22 – Granby to Steamboat Springs

Leaving Granby, we pedal west down the Colorado River valley into a canyon cut through a variety of rock types sliced by faults. The canyon eventually opens into Middle Park, the middle of three relatively featureless surfaces in the high mountains of Colorado. Remnants of sedimentary rocks that were eroded from the Ancestral Rockies overlie the Precambrian granite of the Gore Range. Our ride takes us through pastoral open valleys as we climb to the top of Gore Pass. Descending the west side of the pass and along the highway north to Steamboat Springs, spires or "fingers" of rock can be seen protruding from the landscape. These are volcanic necks, the hardened remains of former conduits of Tertiary volcanoes.

DAY 2 MONDAY, JUNE 21 – Estes Park to Granby

Today's ride crosses the Continental Divide along Trail Ridge Road, the highest, continuous paved highway in the country. Glaciers carved broad flat valleys, and left behind cirques (semicircular-shaped bowls sculpted by glaciers at the heads of mountain valleys) and moraines (ridges made up of mixtures of rock material of various sizes and shapes) along the valley walls and downvalley where the glaciers ended. Above timberline, the view to the south is dominated by the major glacial valley of Forest Canyon in which ice was 1,000 to 1,500 feet thick and flowed eastward more than 13 miles. West of the Divide, the road drops into the valley of the Colorado River, which held the longest Ice Age glacier (20 miles long) of the Park.



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Estes Park

DAY 1 SUNDAY, JUNE 20 – Boulder to Estes Park

The Flatirons are the most prominent landform on the west edge of Boulder. The 320- to 280-million-year-old rocks of the Flatirons represent alluvial fan deposits of sand and gravel that formed when the Ancestral Rockies were uplifted and eroded. The rocks that form the Flatirons are directly on Precambrian granite that is 1.45 and 1.75 billion years old. Other sediments were laid down on top of the sand and gravel during the Cretaceous Period, the end of which marks the end of the Age of Dinosaurs (about 65 million years ago). The Laramide orogeny (a mountain-building episode 70 to 45 million years ago) and further uplift during the last 10 million years tilted these rocks, and subsequent erosion of softer surrounding rocks exposed the Flatirons.

Boulder START

DAY 5 THURSDAY, JUNE 24 – Steamboat Springs to Frisco

As we leave Steamboat Springs, we climb out of the Yampa River valley up the steep face of the Park Range through Precambrian gneiss and schist and then granitic rocks to Rabbit Ears Pass. North of the pass, you'll see the "rabbit ears" of Rabbit Ears Peak. The peak is made up of volcanic rocks that erupted between 33 and 23 million years ago from the Rabbit Ears Range to the east. Later erosion sculpted the peak into the "rabbit ears" we see today.

Frisco



Idaho Springs FINISH

DAY 6 FRIDAY, JUNE 25 – Frisco to Idaho Springs

Leaving Frisco, we skirt the shores of Lake Dillon, the largest water-storage facility for the Denver metropolitan area. A tunnel moves water from Lake Dillon under the Continental Divide to Denver. Pedaling up to the Divide at Loveland Pass, we'll see more evidence of glaciation in the form of three cirques above Arapahoe Basin ski area. The ride east passes relics of Colorado's mining history; more than \$400 million worth of gold, lead, zinc, and copper were produced from this area in the latter half of the 19th century.

