Motor vehicles are required to stay on routes identified on this map.
~ Photo courtesy of Ouray County

Welcome to the Alpine Backcountry, one of the finest examples of our nation's Backcountry Byway system. Seventy-five miles of road carve through the breathtaking San Juan Mountains connecting the towns of Lake City, Ouray, Telluride, Ophir, and Silverton. Routes through the mountains follow ancient paths worn by Native Americans traversing the region as they returned to traditional summer camps. In the late 1800s, miners in search of precious metals widened these paths to accommodate horse- and mule-drawn wagons and built additional roads to access mines. Today, the remains of ghost towns, mines, mills, aerial trams, and railroads, are prominent reminders of the region's extensive mining history.

The Alpine Backcountry and some side routes are open for use by unlicensed motor vehicles. Unlicensed motor vehicles are not allowed on State Highways and cannot be driven within the city limits of Ophir, Ouray, or Telluride. Unlicensed motor vehicles are allowed on designated roads within Silverton's Business District and all streets within the town limits of Lake City. (Please check with the Hinsdale County Sheriff Department at www.hinsdalecountysheriff.com, the San Juan County website at www.sanjuancountycolorado.us or email the San Juan County Sheriffs department at sjcsheriff@frontier.net for updates.)

Plan your trip accordingly by bringing an adequate amount of fuel and allowing plenty of time to return to your shuttle vehicles. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) staging areas are provided at a number of locations.

The majority of visitors to the Alpine Backcountry arrive by motor vehicle. Surveys indicate that visitors and locals alike are concerned about vehicle damage to vegetation, increases in erosion, and the overall impacts of vehicles on the fragile tundra environment. In response to these concerns, all motor vehicles including licensed and unlicensed off-highway vehicles (ATVs, UTVs, and motorcycles) are required to stay on designated routes identified on this map. In addition, all unlicensed motor vehicles are required to stay on roads designated for their use. If in doubt, please check with local BLM, Forest Service, Chamber of Commerce, or Sheriff's office for travel information on these routes.

While driving on the Alpine Backcountry, you may see a number of routes that take off from the main road. Many of these historic routes are blocked with rocks, logs, gates, dirt berms, or other barriers. These routes are not open to motorized travel. These barriers are used to protect private property, prevent vehicle damage to fragile meadows or tundra, or prevent vehicle access to Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas as required by law. Please do not attempt to travel on these routes.

Vehicles must stay on designated routes for camping, picnicking, or driving; however, you may park immediately adjacent to a road where such use will not damage the environment. Signs are posted in areas where parking is not permitted.

Colorado state law requires all unlicensed motor vehicles, including those registered in other states, to display a current Colorado OHV registration. Annual registration permits may be purchased at a number of locations including:

- San Juan Services - 315 Greene St., Silverton
- Red Mountain Motel - 664 Greene St., Silverton
- Ridgway State Park - on Hwy 550 north of Ouray
- Lake City Auto - 809 N. Hwy 149, Lake City

For a state-wide list of locations, please go to: www.parks.state.co.us

A valid driver's license and liability insurance is required for all unlicensed motor vehicles in San Juan, Ouray, San Miguel, and Hinsdale counties.

REGULATIONS:

- Colorado state law requires all OHVs (ATVs, UTVs, ROVs, and unlicensed motorcycles), including those registered in other states, to purchase and display a current (annual) Colorado OHV registration permit.
- All operators in San Juan, Ouray, San Miguel, and Hinsdale counties must possess a valid driver's license.
- All motor vehicles must stay on legally designated routes identified on this map.
- All operators must observe barriers, signs, and other features meant to restrict vehicle travel or access.
- Liability insurance is required for unlicensed motor vehicles in all four counties.
- Unlicensed motor vehicles cannot be driven within the city limits of Telluride, Ouray and Ophir. OHVs are permitted on designated streets in Silverton's Business District and all streets within the town limits of Lake City. Please check local ordinances.
- All motor vehicles must comply with Colorado state sound limits.
- All operators must obey posted speed limits and other regulatory signs.
- Please check with the Hinsdale and San Juan County Sherriff departments or Chambers of Commerce's for additional safety requirements.

VEHICLE SAFETY:

- Four-wheel drive and high-clearance vehicles are recommended on most roads.
- Uphill traffic has the right of way — common courtesy works best.
- Loose gravel and rocks can be found on many routes. Please drive slowly and in control at all times.
- Watch for blind turns, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and wildlife.
- Do not park where your vehicle will obstruct the road.

Access to the high country requires drivers to be aware of safety and the need to protect the fragile alpine tundra.
~ Photo courtesy of Jim Lokey, Red Mountain Motel & RV Park

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison National Forest and Bureau of Land Management
Gunnison Office (970) 642-4990
Norwood Office (970) 327-4261
Montrose Office (970) 240-5300
www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gfo.html
www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug

San Juan National Forest/Bureau of Land Management
Durango Office (970) 247-4874
www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/sjplc.html

Ouray Chamber Resort Association
Visitor Information Center
(970) 325-4746 (800) 228-1876
www.ouraycolorado.com

Silver Thread/Alpine Loop Interpretive Center
(970) 944-2527 (800) 569-1874
www.lakecity.com

Silverton Area Chamber of Commerce
Visitor Information Center
(970) 387-5654 (800) 752-4494
www.silvertoncolorado.com

Telluride & Mountain Village Visitor's Bureau
(970) 728-3041
www.visittelluride.com

Silverton Public Lands Office (June - mid-September)
(970) 387-5530
www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gfo.html

Alpine Ranger — San Juan Mountains, Colorado

Stay the Trail — Colorado

The Alpine Ranger program strives to minimize the effects of off-road vehicles and provides assistance to visitors exploring the Alpine Loop. Donations to the Alpine Ranger program can be made to San Juan or Hinsdale counties.

San Miguel County | San Juan County | Ouray County | Hinsdale County

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SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

- Let others know your travel plans.
- Plan your route and carry essential equipment and water.
- Be prepared for changing weather.
- Keep track of your time.
- Stay out of mine buildings, tunnels, and shafts. Buildings and mines are unstable and may collapse at any time. Mines may have unstable explosives on site.
- Watch for nails, spikes, and rusty metal.
- Please respect private property. Most mine and mill sites are privately owned.
- In the event of an emergency, dial 911 or contact the Sheriff's office:

Hinsdale County	970-944-2291
Ouray County	970-325-7272
San Juan County	970-387-5531
San Miguel County	970-728-1911

Cell phones, however, may not work in all areas and do not provide location.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Cultural resources are not renewable. Sites, artifacts, and historical remains are protected by the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979.

ALPINE BACK COUNTRY

OHV & JEEP SUMMER TRAVEL ROUTES

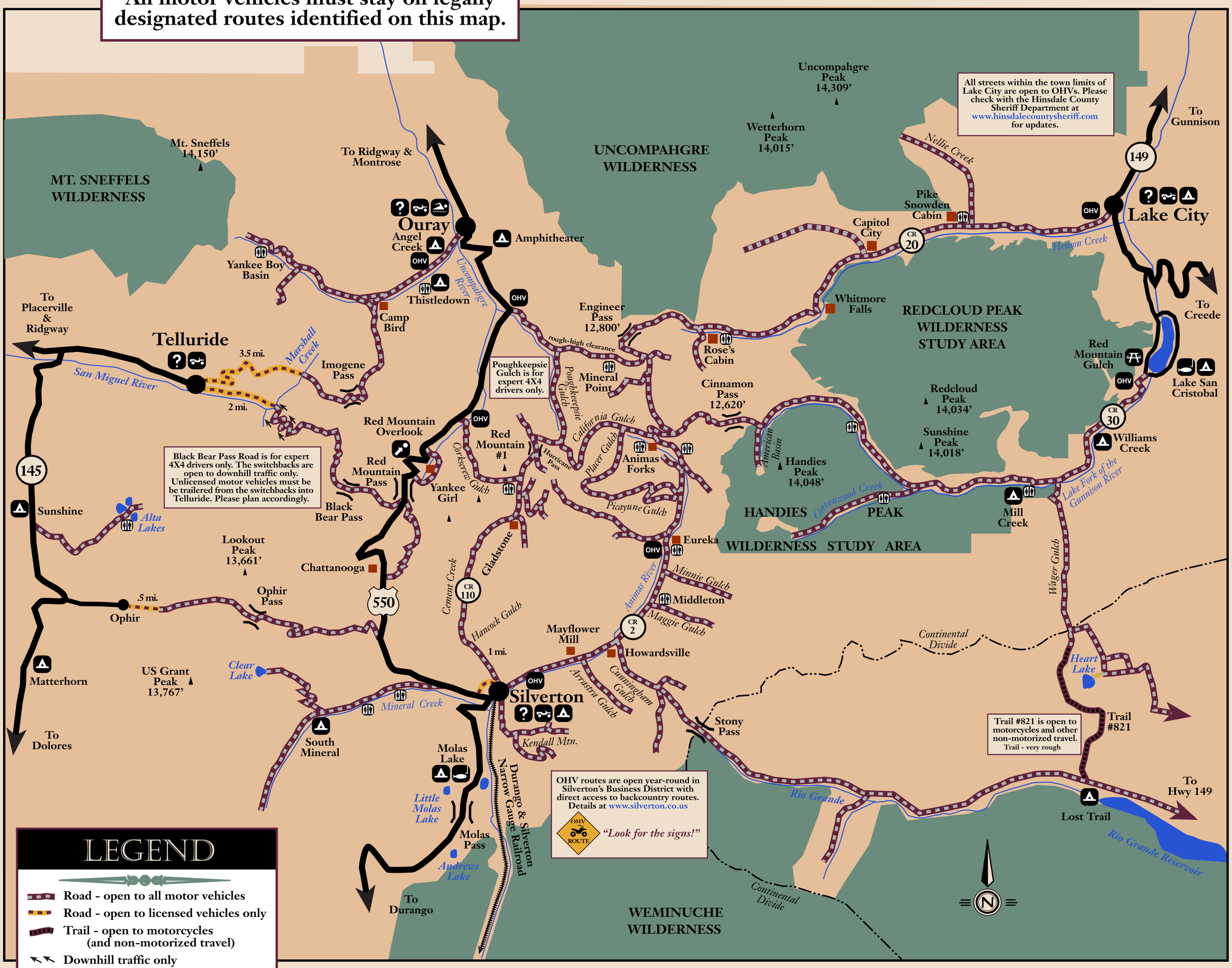
To protect fragile alpine areas, stay on legally designated routes. ~Photo by Scot Jackson, Bureau of Land Management

MAP & REGULATIONS

ALPINE BACKCOUNTRY

OHV, 4x4 HIGH-CLEARANCE & JEEP SUMMER TRAVEL ROUTES

All motor vehicles must stay on legally designated routes identified on this map.



LEGEND

- Road - open to all motor vehicles
- Road - open to licensed vehicles only
- Trail - open to motorcycles (and non-motorized travel)
- Downhill traffic only
- State Highway or County Road - open to licensed vehicles only
- OHV Staging Area
- Point of Interest
- Information & Museum
- Jeep Tours or Jeep Rentals
- Restroom
- Picnic Area
- Campground
- Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas - closed to all motorized or mechanized travel.

Unlicensed motor vehicles cannot be driven within city limits of Telluride, Ouray and Ophir. OHVs are permitted on designated streets in Silverton's Business District and within the town limits of Lake City. Please check local ordinances and plan accordingly.

From	To	Miles	Est. Time
Silverton	Animas Forks	13	.5 hours
Animas Forks	Lake City (via Cinnamon Pass)	28	2.0 hours
Lake City	Animas Forks (via Engineer Pass)	26	2.0 hours
Ouray	Animas Forks (via Mineral Creek)	11	1.5 hours
Silverton	Lake City and Return	78	6.0 hours
Silverton	Ophir	14	2.0 hours
Ouray	Telluride (via Imogene Pass)	18	4.0 hours