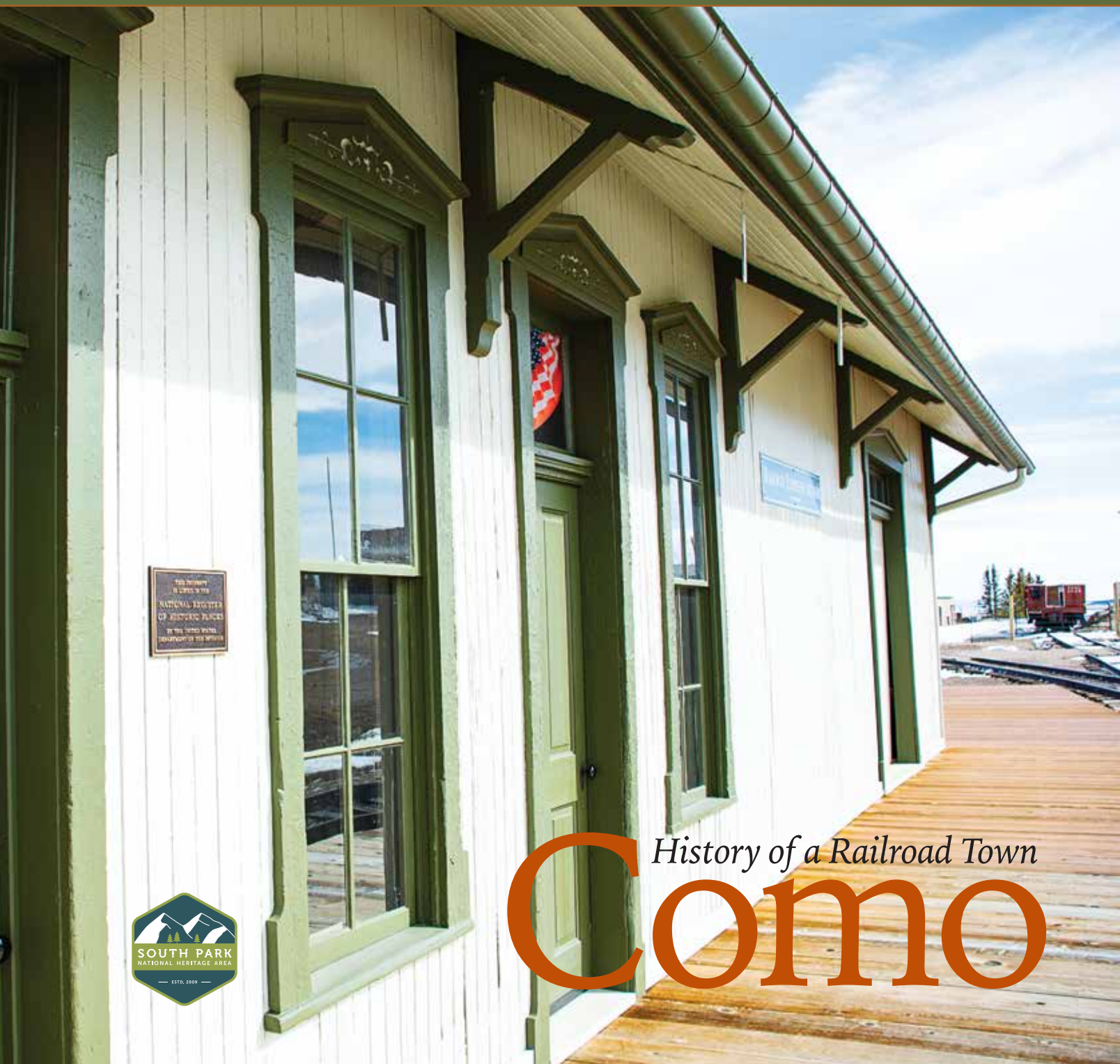
South Park Heritage

Summer 2019



History of a Railroad Town
Como

SOUTH PARK
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
ESTD. 2009

A South Park National Heritage sign now greets visitors while descending into South Park.

Understanding and Preserving

South Park's Archaeology

By Susan J. Bender, South Park Site Steward Consulting Archaeologist

South Park has a deep and extensive archaeological record comprised of the material remains of the activities of human populations that have lived in the Park over millennia. The existence and relatively undisturbed character of this record was a significant component in the South Park's successful bid to become a National Heritage Area. Indigenous peoples' activities account for the longest time span in this archaeological record, but the record of early historic ranching and mining activities in the Park are also central to its character.

Native American Indians visited South Park seasonally for at least 10,000 years prior to the arrival of the first White explorers, trappers, traders and settlers. These Indigenous people, who practiced a nomadic, hunting and gathering subsistence economy, moved their base camps seasonally according to the availability of wild food resources, and visited South Park regularly in their annual rounds. Although archaeologists have yet to recover direct evidence of the seasons when Native people were in South Park, they assume that Indigenous people were not here during times when the weather was challenging and food resources limited.

While the Ute were in South Park at the time of early contact with White populations, we know from a series of archaeological studies that their history here is limited to the last 1,000 years. Thus the traces of Ute culture that can be found in the Park, such as peeled trees and stone enclosures, as well as the chronicles of early settlers and explorers, record only the most recent part of Indigenous history in South Park. The prior 9,000 years of that history is recorded only in the archaeological remains that can be discovered throughout the Park.

Given their transient lifestyle, hunters and gatherers had limited material possessions and few (if any) of the tools that were made from perishable materials could survive the rigors of exposure in South Park's environment. Thus the archaeological remains of early Indigenous activities in South Park are limited. Lost or discarded stone tools and the remains of their manufacturing process are the primary archaeological traces of this history, along with a variety of stone constructions including cairns, enclosures and alignments.

To date, archaeologists have studied less than 5% of South Park's landscape, but they have been able to identify and document over 1,700 sites that record 10,000 years of Native American history. Stone tools (principally projectile points) found in the Park were made in styles characteristic of specific time periods and bear witness to this deep historic time span. In addition, South Park Archaeology Project archaeologists have recovered charcoal from two separate excavations and dated these samples to 3,000 and 6,000 years ago.

Every time we can associate traces of past human activity with a place and a time we come closer to being able to map out what type of Indigenous activities occurred within the Park at particular places and times. The data then start to build a picture of dynamic human interactions in the past. We are beginning to understand that certain areas of the park were favored for different types of settlements, that certain ritual activities were undertaken to map this landscape, and that likely more than one cultural group occupied the Park at any given time.

Our ability to expand upon this emerging story depends on the preservation of a fragile database. Taking artifacts from sites and destroying sites altogether removes vital information from an already restricted database. Volunteers who have helped archaeologists gather the information we have understand this principle well, and as a result they have formed the South Park Site Stewardship Program. The Program's purpose is to promote the preservation and protection of prehistoric, historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources within the South Park National Heritage Area.

Should you come across important evidence in your travels through the Park, please contact our Site Stewards at www.southparksitestewards.org

First Impressions

Meet Jon Grams

While new to Park County, I have either visited or passed through the area many times over the last 15 years. I never cease to be impressed by the amazing vistas of which the historic towns, ranches and abandoned mines are an integral part. I have always thought it a highly unique and very special Colorado landscape. Now as I've begun to delve more deeply into the history of Park County, I am beginning to see the significant role that local preservation efforts have played in making it the place it is today.

In my first week in Park County I had the opportunity to visit Como and the Cline Ranch site. Coming from a long line of rail transport enthusiasts, I was duly impressed by Como's roundhouse with intact turntable, magnificently restored depot and the hotel in progress. The future plans for the site are impressive, exciting and I want to do everything I can to aid in their completion.

The Cline Ranch property is another very special site in a similarly beautiful setting. The main residence has a number of quirky and unique features, which leave no question as to why so many people have volunteered to help in its restoration. The opportunity for heritage tourism provided by these two places alone is substantial to say the least.

Already I see a great deal of potential, not just in the Como and Cline ranch projects but also in the many other county-wide restoration and reuse projects either underway or in the planning stages. I have met highly knowledgeable and motivated local individuals who are serious about preserving, restoring and retelling the history of this place. The people here clearly take their heritage seriously, which can be seen in the success of the many projects both underway and completed. I know personally of many people including former coworkers and friends on the Front Range who either have or would like to volunteer their time to aid in the restoration of these historic sites.

As I have begun to look more closely at the deep connection linking Park County's agricultural and extractive industries and the natural environment, I have personally found that the County's historic ranching and mining sites in many ways contribute positively to the regions natural scenic landscapes. This deep connection brings with it a unique set of challenges, and in my short time here I can already see that balancing the preservation of that integrated industry-and-landscape history with future development will be one of the greater challenges of this position. That being said, I am eager to jump into the mix and do my best to find solutions that won't compromise or diminish the rich heritage of this County.

Jon Grams is originally from Minnesota but has lived in Colorado for the last 15 years. Jon graduated from the CU Denver's School of Architecture and Planning with a Masters Degree in Historic Preservation. He has a Masters Degree in History and an undergraduate degree in History. Jon has worked most recently with CU Denver's Center of Preservation Research, Rocky Mountain National Park and Pinyon Environmental. Prior to this he worked for many years as an arborist. Jon is enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to the preservation of Park Counties' mining, railroad and ranching history as well as its unique landscape. When not working, Jon enjoys climbing, running and hiking.

South Park
Heritage
Summer 2019

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On the cover: Town of Como's historic railroad station.

Tarryall Road

In the heart of the South Park National Heritage Area is a landscape that can take you 150 years back in time.

The Tarryall Road was once a much-used trail for the mountain Paleo-Indians and more recently for the Ute tribes that held this landscape in high regard. With Westward Expansion came the gold-diggers, the miners and the ranchers. Yet despite its centuries of use the Tarryall Road is a treasured secret, lined with historic ranches, miner's cabins, cemeteries, and archaeological sites and ruins.

The drive to protect this treasured landscape was energized by preservationists, historians and property owners who worked together to save – not just the buildings and cemeteries – but the landscape as a whole. It is a landscape in which nature's bounty and the historic remains of yesterday blend seamlessly together.

The Tarryall Rural Historic District was officially listed in the National Register on November 1, 2017, after nearly ten years of advocacy and project management by the Park County Department of Heritage, Tourism & Community Development (DHTCD). The District is one of the largest National Register historic districts in Colorado, extending 39 miles along the Tarryall Road (Highway 77) and encompassing nearly 29,000 acres under private, county, state and federal ownership. The twenty-five historic ranch headquarters and numerous other historic buildings, structures and sites within the district tell the story of the Tarryall's historic use and development as a transportation corridor, agricultural valley and recreational attraction in an unparalleled way.

Park County Receives Top Preservation Award

On February 4, 2019, Park County and the team responsible for listing the Tarryall Rural Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places received Colorado's premier preservation honor, a Stephen H. Hart Award.

History Colorado began presenting the Stephen H. Hart Awards in 1986 to recognize outstanding projects and individual achievements in archaeology and historic preservation throughout Colorado. Stephen H. Hart was Colorado's first State Historic Preservation Officer.

A groundbreaking project of this size would not have been possible without vision, perseverance and a strong, collaborative team. Honored at the awards ceremony were Jon Horn, whose 1996 fieldwork and research identified important historic resources and recognized the potential for a National Register district along the Tarryall Road; Park County, which understood the benefits of designation for its residents and supported the nomination; former SPNHA Executive Director Linda Balough who lead the effort and secured the necessary grant funding; and historians Tom and Laurie Simmons and archaeologist Marilyn Martorano, who spent countless hours researching, writing and revising the nomination. None of this could have happened without the support of the property owners along the Tarryall and Park County extends its gratitude to them all.

So if you find yourself wandering in South Park and come across an idyllic landscape of unmatched natural beauty and preserved remainders of a past long gone, tip your hat to the grassroots partnerships that preserve our amazing heritage.

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a nationwide program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historic and archaeological resources. The National Register is administered on the national level by the National Park Service. In Colorado, the program is administered by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, part of History Colorado. More than 80,000 listings from across the county make up the National Register.

Anyone may prepare a nomination to the National Register; however, a property will not be listed if, for individual properties, the owner objects, or for districts, a majority of property owners object.

Under federal law, owners of private properties listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose, provided there is no federal involvement in those decisions. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them, or even to maintain them. There are no restrictions imposed by History Colorado as to what private property owners may or may not do with their property. Private property owners may alter or demolish a National Register-listed property subject only to Park County regulations and permitting procedures.

What are the benefits of National Register listing?
Listing in the National Register places no obligations or restrictions whatsoever on private property owners, but does provide a number of benefits and preservation incentives, including:

- Formal recognition of the significance and history of the property by the state and the nation.
- Eligibility for local preservation grants available through the County's office of Department of Heritage, Tourism & Community Development.
- Eligibility to apply for state tax credits for restoration, rehabilitation, or preservation.
- Eligibility to obtain federal rehabilitation tax credits for income-producing properties that meet specific standards for work.
- Eligibility to compete for grants from the History Colorado State Historical State Historical Fund.
- Ability to purchase and display a plaque that commemorates designation.
- Increased property value; nationwide studies show that designated historic districts outpace undesignated neighborhoods in market value.
- Limited protection from federal agency actions that would affect the property, such as federal highway projects.
- Access to federal tax deductions for charitable contributions of partial interests (easements) for conservation purposes.

If you own a historic property and have questions about the National Register and/or the preservation incentives that may be available to you, contact Jon Grams, Park County Preservation Planner at 719-836-4292.

Passengers waiting at Como's railroad station in 1913 and the station today.

Como

History of a Railroad Town

Prior to the initial Colorado gold rush with the discovery in Idaho Springs in 1858, the area that would become Como was pretty quiet. Just to the north, the Tarryall and Hamilton gold camps took rise in 1859 and the Stubbs Ranch was established around the same time to meet the needs of the local prospectors. In the 1860's Dan McLaughlin bought the Stubbs Ranch and discovered coal near what is today the entrance to Camp Como. He then freighted the coal to the nearby towns by wagon.

One of the true pioneers of Colorado, George Lechner, acquired the Ranch when he arrived in the area in 1872 and welcomed the arrival of the Denver South Park & Pacific Railroad (DSP&P) in June of 1879. He had discovered a larger coal deposit just to the south, which caught the attention of the railroad as it was building across South Park toward the Gunnison Valley. The DSP&P was built as a "narrow-gauge" railroad, being three feet between the rails. This was easier and cheaper to build, and was more conducive to the rigors of mountain railroading. "Standard gauge" was four feet, eight and a half inches between the rails and narrow gauge was anything less than that. In Colorado the vast majority of narrow gauge operations were three-foot gauge.

Soon after the railroad arrived, Italian coal miners working the coal deposits renamed the area "Como" for Lake Como in Ital. By the end of that year, the DSP&P built a spur south to what became known as King Park. In 1880 Lechner helped organize the South Park Coal Co. and oversaw eight teams of men cutting ice from Lake Como and shipping it to Denver for the Denver Ice Co. In 1883 Lechner was appointed Special Agent to the General Land Office for the State of Colorado.

By 1880 the Union Pacific Railroad had acquired control of the DSP&P, as well as the King Park Coalmines. Over time, no less than 7 coalmines were developed in King Park, just 3.3 track miles south of Como. A mining explosion on January 10, 1893 killed 23 miners and subsequently ended large-scale activity there. Small private efforts were made to extract more coal into the early 1900's but the heyday of coal mining in King Park came to an abrupt end on that fateful day. The mines and community at King Park had a significant impact on the activity of early Como. Later when King Park was abandoned many of the area dwellings were transported to Como by train.

In that first summer of 1879, Como was a crowded and incredibly busy place. Many people were in a rush to get to Leadville and would take the DSP&P train from Denver to Como and then the Spotswood and McClellan stagecoach over Mosquito Pass. The demand was so high that freight destined for Leadville began to pile up in Como waiting for the freighters to transport it.

Like all new mountain towns, Como was a very busy place and was mostly comprised of tents. Numerous proprietors provided goods, services and modest accommodations offering travelers a place to eat and sleep. As the town rapidly grew, wood and even a few brick buildings quickly replaced the early tents. One of the earliest prominent buildings was the Gilman Hotel that opened to much fanfare on New Year's Day, 1881. This was a substantial two-story building of brick construction. Soon after it opened the railroad built an even larger addition that joined the Gilman and the railroad depot into one building. In 1885 the Union Pacific Railroad, which controlled the South Park Line, contracted with the Pacific Hotel Company to run their hotels and eating-houses, much like the Santa Fe's arrangement with Fred Harvey. The hotel addition got a new roof and the entire building received a handsome full-length porch. At this time the depot was moved about 15 feet south and was no longer connected to the hotel. We can only guess at the reason for this, but fire mitigation is a logical assumption as the hotel was of brick construction and the depot was wood. Ironically, in November of 1896 the hotel burned to the ground and somehow the nearby depot survived (and it does to this day, along with the replacement hotel and the roundhouse).

Freight destined for Leadville began to pile up in Como waiting for the freighters to transport it.

In the early years, the Denver South Park & Pacific Railroad was very profitable. But as time went on its fortunes were reversed, and in 1889 it was reorganized into the Denver Leadville and Gunnison Railroad. In December of 1898 it was reorganized once again into the Colorado and Southern Railroad.

While most Colorado mountain towns were founded on mining, (the nearby coal deposits notwithstanding) Como was a railroad town. Initially a "stop along the way" to the Gunnison valley, Como became a major junction point on the railroad in just two years as the DSP&P decided to build their own line to Leadville in 1881. This line ran from Como, up over Boreas Pass to Breckenridge, down the Blue River to Dillon and through Frisco, up the Ten Mile over Fremont Pass and then down to Leadville.

At its peak, Como was a bustling town with restaurants, hotels, school, churches, fraternal lodges, grocery and clothing stores, a bakery, two Chinese laundries, apothecary, dairy, barber shop, livery stable, physicians, dentist, attorneys, undertaker, volunteer fire department, post office, lumber and coal yards, newspaper and of course ample saloons. The newspaper began in 1883 as the Como Headlight and was later changed to the Como Record. The initial population was around 800 but hovered around 400 between 1890-1910 with about 150 employees on the railroad payroll.

As the mining boom became a distant memory, business declined and the emergence of trucks and better roads led to the closing of Alpine Tunnel in 1910, cutting off Gunnison. That same year the railroad also abandoned Trout Creek pass, which cut off Buena Vista, and finally the closing of Boreas Pass, which isolated Breckenridge, led to a dramatic slowdown of railroad operations in Como. Thus the population dwindled to 132 in 1920. Breckenridge fought the closing of Boreas Pass in the courts and won so that part of the railroad reopened around 1913. This gave Como a shot in the arm but the writing was on the wall.

The railroad's business continued to decline and they finally won court approval to abandon nearly all of the narrow gauge operations in 1937. The last passenger train ran from Leadville to Denver on Sunday, April 10th, 1937 marking the end of an era. The tracks were pulled up from Fremont Pass to South Platte in the Platte Canon in 1938. The track from the Climax Mine to Leadville was still being utilized for the transport of molybdenum ore and was converted to standard gauge in 1942.

Gasoline-fueled lamps provided early street illumination and electricity did not come to Como until 1963. The current population hovers around 15 in winter and 45 in summer. After the railroad left town Como went to sleep and changed very little in the ensuing decades.

But in 2008, things began to change…

Read about Rebuilding Como in the next issue of South Park Heritage.

Como Roundhouse is the only narrow-gauge roundhouse still standing in Colorado. Photo by Jeffrey Beall.

South Park's Historic Passes

By Christie Wright

"This [the South Park] is the more beautiful of the parks... It offers a remarkable combination of the beauties of the Plains and those of the Mountains. They mingle and mix in charming association. Wide areas of rich prairie open out before the level eye; upraise it or turn one side and grand snowy mountains carry the sight up among the clouds, and between these types of natural beauty are plentiful shadings in gently rolling hills."

So wrote sojourner Samuel Bowles, East Coast editor, writer and traveler, who penned this memorable prose in his 1869 book, "The Switzerland of America: A Summer Vacation in the Parks and Mountains of Colorado." He was so taken with the scenery that he listed the "parks" as one of the main "distinctive physical features" in his book's introduction.

Colorado has three "parks" nestled amongst the Continental Divide, named for their location – North, Middle and South Park. But what is a park in the geological sense? According to a 1965 U.S. Geographic Survey Bulletin, it is a high intermontane basin.

North Park in Jackson County, measures approximately 1,200 square miles, located in northwestern Colorado. The small town of Walden is centric. Four highway passes access it – Cameron, Muddy, Buffalo and Willow Creek.

Middle Park in Grand County sits at 1,800 square miles and is also accessed by four passes – Trail Ridge Road (Colorado State Highway 125) in Rocky Mountain National Park, Highway 125, Berthoud Pass and U.S. Highway 40 that connects Steamboat Springs with Grand Lake, Colorado and beyond.

When sightseers enjoy their first glimpse of the vast land before them, it is hard to believe that South Park is the smallest of the parks at 1,000 square miles. Accessed via Kenosha, Trout Creek, Wilkerson and Hoosier Passes, the landscape is both stunning and ever-changing. Technically a grassland basin, the center of the state is also located in South Park.

Long a vital area for Native Americans and subsequent fur trappers, the South Park Basin has provided abundant geographic and cultural resources for mankind for centuries. The basin is crisscrossed by the South Platte River and its many branches, providing life-giving water to flora and fauna. This vast landscape hosts historic ranches, rare wetlands and even some mined minerals (although the surrounding Mosquito Range Mountains yielded the primary source of silver, gold and other precious ores).

Because South Park encompasses the main portion of the South Park National Heritage Area (SPNHA), each pass plays an important role for the Heritage Area. Other historic access points accessing South Park include Guanella, Georgia and Boreas Passes to the north and Weston and Mosquito Passes, connecting Leadville to Park County further south. Note that these are all 4x4 roads, requiring experienced drivers with high clearance vehicles.

The four South Park passes all have a number of common features:

- They were all Native American trails
- All have at least two unique features
- Their elevation is 9,300' or higher and each one is traversed by a paved U.S. or Colorado State Highway
- Railroads were either planned, located near, or actually crossed each one.

Famous 1900's explorers entered into the South Park by at least one of the four main passes including John C. Fremont, Zebulon M. Pike, Ferdinand V. Hayden and John W. Powell, among others.

View of Red Cone Peak from the top of Kenosha Pass, September 2016. Photo by Christie Wright

KENOSHA PASS

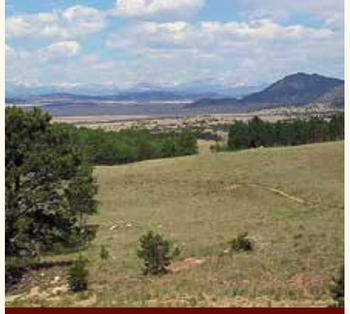
Kenosha Pass, standing a proud 10,001 ft. high according to the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) calculations, is the northernmost pass. It has a 5.3% grade on the eastern approach from Grant, Colorado and is crossed via U.S. Highway 285. According to the book, "A Compendium of Curious Colorado Place Names" by Jim Flynn, it was named for a stagecoach driver from Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Crossing Kenosha in the early days was not without its hazards! Clipped from the Fairplay Flume newspaper of December 20, 1901: "Albert Hooper, while riding on the range near Kenosha, was lost in the blizzard of last Friday. After wandering about for five hours holding onto his horse's tail, he came to the little [train] station at Kenosha Hill. His face and hands were badly frozen."

Kenosha Pass has three unique features:

- The Colorado Trail crosses the summit, a popular hiking spot year-round
- A narrow-gauge train turnaround or a "wye" is still visible at the top on the east side and it sports one of the largest continuous aspen groves in the state
- Pedestrians clog the highway in mid-September to photograph the aspens, often with Red Cone Peak in the background.

Kenosha Pass boasted the highest narrow-gauge railroad track in North America at one time according to a Fairplay Flume article from February 27, 1879. Kenosha's track ran at 10,000 ft. while La Veta Pass, in southern Colorado, measured 9,330 ft. The track was for the Denver South Park & Pacific Railroad, founded in 1872. The railroad continued on over Trout Creek Pass and into Colorado's southern portion until the company went bankrupt and ultimately dissolved.



View from Wilkerson Pass summit looking due west to the distant Mosquito Range Mountains. Photo by Christie Wright, August 2005

WILKERSON PASS

Wilkerson Pass is the second lowest pass at 9,507 ft. on the eastern fringe of the Park, crossed by U.S. Highway 24 on the eastern side. It is a main east-west passageway between the Front Range and the Continental Divide. From the Visitor's Center at the summit, one can see no less than 23 mountain peaks ranging from 10,300 ft. to over 14,000 plus ft. The South Park National Heritage Area manages the Visitor Center, hosting thousands of summertime visitors.

Two unique features include the name itself and a nearby historic fire tower. There has always been some question as to whom the pass was named after. According to the United States Board of Geographic Names, it was formally named in 1963 but was no doubt called Wilkerson by the mid-1870s. A nearby rancher, William Wilkinson, filed a homestead patent on September 2, 1875 and the pass' name may have been a misspelling of his last name.

Secondly, the mountain to the immediate north once hosted a fire tower lookout. Built in 1954, the 40-foot steel structure only stood for 20 years and was removed in the early 1970s.

A logging team owned by Park County's Almgren family crosses Hoosier Pass via sled in this undated vintage postcard. Courtesy of Park County Local History Archives #2153

HOOSIER PASS

Hoosier Pass was presumably named by a traveler longing for his home state of Indiana. It is first mentioned by name in an 1871 issue of the Daily Register Call newspaper (out of Gilpin County). It has long been a connection between the Ten-Mile Range in Summit County and the Mosquito Range in Park County.

Colorado State Highway 9 crosses Hoosier at 11,541 ft. making it the highest pass, 1,540 ft. taller than its northern counterpart, Kenosha.

Hoosier had quite a bit of mining in its heyday primarily on the flanking mountains – North Star and Mount Lincoln, the latter boasting the highest mine in the U.S. (the Present Help). Mining was not without its hazards however; Mr. E.C. Aplington was killed in a mine on the pass in November of 1897 when he and mine owner Chauncy Gumaer were timbering a shaft and there was a cave-in. Both men were thrown to the bottom of the mine where Gumaer was knocked unconscious but Aplington died immediately from a broken neck. Another little-known fact is that there were plans to build a railroad across. The Fairplay Flume, March 5, 1897 issue reported the following but the project never got off the ground:

The Rocky Mountain News is authority for the statement that a new electric railroad is to be built, connecting the great mining regions of Breckenridge with the great mining territory on this side of the range at Alma. The road is to run via Hoosier pass and the Plate and Blue River are to furnish… the power. The scheme is feasible and will mean a great deal for Park and Summit Counties.

View of South Park from Trout Creek Pass' summit, looking northeast. Photo by Christie Wright, October 2011

TROUT CREEK PASS

Trout Creek Pass is 45 miles south of Kenosha Pass, also along U.S. Highway 285. Its 9,346 foot-elevation makes it the lowest pass; however, the summit still offers stunning panoramic views of the park.

This access is unique in that it is the only location where the Colorado Midland and the Denver South Park & Pacific railroads crossed. However, there are no known photos of the two trains passing each other. Artist Howard Fogg created a painting of the scenario for the book, "The Colorado Midland," by Morris Cafky (1965).

Trout Creek sports the Midland Bike Trail Route System, an extensive trail system for mountain biking. Trail names such as "Gentleman's Loop" and "Half Gentleman's Loop" reflect on an earlier time when gentlemen would ride in the train's plush Cushman coach cars.

Today, the South Park National Heritage Area hosts a number of programs in the South Park area that benefits the land, land owners, waterways and visitors. Visitors and residents alike can "Plan Your Visit" at **www.southparkheritage.org** to venture into this beautiful area "gemmed with lakes and studded with groves and belts of timber. Fringes of trees mark the course of the streams while all between is green and verdant meadow, waving in the sunlight," (*Denver Daily News*, undated).

Founder Frost

The ice entrepreneur who created Lake George

Lake George's namesake, George Frost, was an entrepreneur and visionary who brought many jobs—as well as the lake itself—to Park County in the nineteenth century.

Shortly after returning home from the Civil War, Frost sold the box factories he owned on the East Coast and moved to Colorado with his wife Sarah and their two daughters. He bought what was known as the Antelope Park Ranch, a property about seven miles south of Lake George. Frost and his family lived in an elegantly furnished two-story, 10-room luxury home.

Despite his comfortable homelife, Frost never strayed away from a hard day's work. He managed 1,000 head of fine Galloway cattle, bred horses, and continued to look for opportunities to invest in his new community.

Frost bought and ran four hay farms and four sawmills located throughout the Lake George-Florissant area, shipping 60-75,000 feet of lumber across the state and country on a daily basis. His operations provided jobs for 150-200 men throughout the year, boosting the local economy and earning him the reputation as a well-respected and admired businessman.

Always the visionary, when the first Midland train passed through Lake George, Frost saw opportunity. The combination of the South Platte River and frigid winter temperatures were the perfect setup for an icehouse—where large sheets of ice were cut, stored and shipped. The ice business was booming, as Americans had developed a taste for fresh meats, milks, fruit and cold beverages year-round, but did not yet have electric appliances to keep them cool.

Frost envisioned a large reservoir for "harvesting" the ice in the wintertime and recreational destination in the summer, complete with a luxury steam yacht, small pleasure boats and an elegant hotel. By December of 1891, the lake was finished, filled and fit to freeze.

That same month brought tragedy to the Frost household. While George Frost was on a trip to his hometown of Beverly, Massachusetts, his wife fell down the steps in their home, suffering serious injuries. She died at the age of 39 while he was en route to Lake George.

Despite the devastating loss, Frost continued to move his vision forward. Just a few weeks after his wife's death, he incorporated the Lake George Town Land and Ice Company, and a large icehouse was constructed on the east edge of the water. The water quality and purity soon made Lake George ice some of the most popular across the state.

The ice business was not for the faint of heart. The harvest area first had to be cleared of all snow using horse-pulled scrapers to get right down to the ice. When clear, a set of grid lines were laid out, which were then grooved by a horse-drawn scorer, followed by men with handsaws. Frost's company employed between 75 and 200 men who cut and moved enough ice everyday to fill up to 50 cars capable of holding 23 tons of ice to be shipped across the state.

Lake George supplied ice to several railroads for refrigerating produce cars, as well as the cities of Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver and all over the Front Range and eastern plains. Lake George ice was even used for packing Rocky Ford's famous melons.

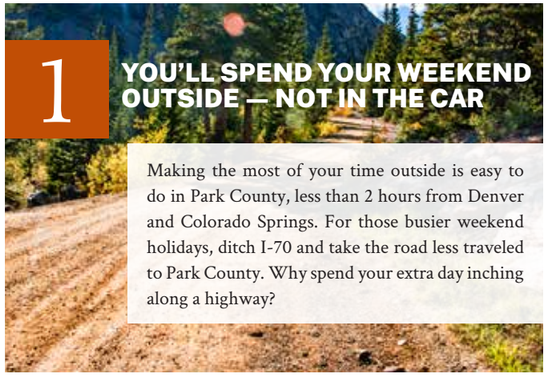
Without the Colorado Midland Railroad and Frost's ice company, there would have been no town of Lake George. The job security these businesses provided spurred growth that led to three blacksmith shops, a hotel, dance hall, multiple stores, residences and saloons. It even had its own newspaper at one point, The Lake George Echo.

Frost eventually remarried, and while his dreams to build a luxury resort around Lake George never came to fruition, he did construct a large house in the area for his family, which eventually became known as the Frost Mansion. It was built for a whopping $15,000.

George Frost died on July 30, 1906 and is buried in Colorado Springs without a headstone.

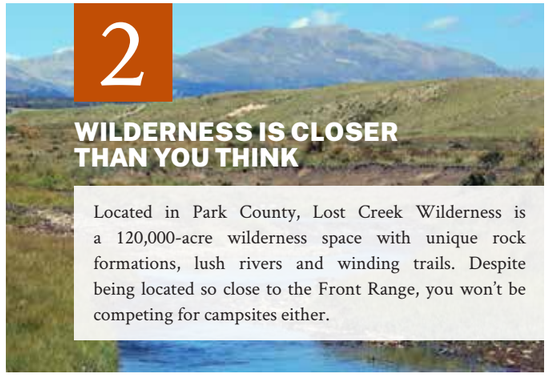
5 Reasons to Enjoy a 3-Day Weekend in Park County

Along with the historical significance of Park County, it's also one of Colorado's best-kept secrets for recreation. Instead of hopping in line on I-70, check out destinations of all kinds in Park County.



1 YOU'LL SPEND YOUR WEEKEND OUTSIDE — NOT IN THE CAR

Making the most of your time outside is easy to do in Park County, less than 2 hours from Denver and Colorado Springs. For those busier weekend holidays, ditch I-70 and take the road less traveled to Park County. Why spend your extra day inching along a highway?



2 WILDERNESS IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Located in Park County, Lost Creek Wilderness is a 120,000-acre wilderness space with unique rock formations, lush rivers and winding trails. Despite being located so close to the Front Range, you won't be competing for campsites either.

3 YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO HOOK A BIG ONE

Whether you're an expert angler or a family celebrating their first casts — odds are you will catch some great fish and memories in Park County. For families and first timers, try shore fishing at the stocked Montgomery Reservoir. For those looking for instruction or access to trophy-sized trout, book a trip with Boxwood Gulch.

4 PADDLE-WORTHY WATERS ARE WAITING

Park County is home to many reservoirs that are the perfect basecamp for those hot summer days. Pack your Stand Up Paddleboard, kayaks, canoes, motorboats or whatever else you like to float in. Set up camp on shore and spend a peaceful weekend on the water with a mountain backdrop.

5 HITCH A RIDE ON HORSEBACK

With many horse-friendly trails, Park County features great opportunities to see Colorado from a new perspective. Want the feeling of the true west without having to drive too far? Bring the family to Platte Ranch Riding Stables and American Safari Ranch.

However you plan to spend your weekend in Park County, you can be sure you'll spend more time playing than traveling. It's a one-stop show for anyone looking to take advantage of everything Colorado has to offer.

See all there is to do at **exploreparkcounty.com**

SOUTH PARK
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
ESTD. 2009

Visit our website at: southparkheritage.org