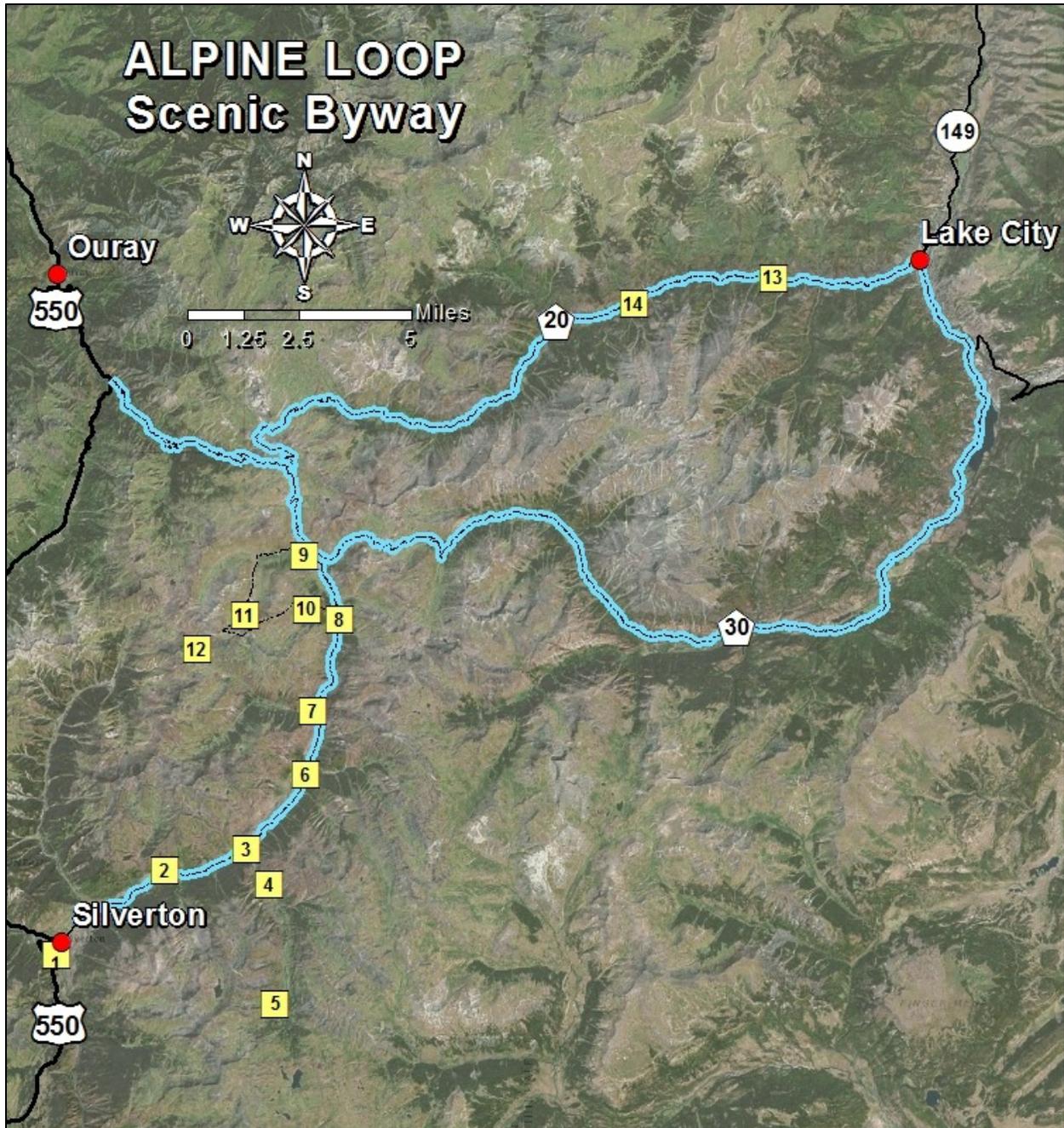


Alpine Loop Scenic Byway

The Alpine Loop Scenic Byway is a 65 mile back country loop which traverses the remote, rugged, spectacular San Juan Mountains between Silverton, Lake City and Ouray, Colorado. Much of the loop requires a high-clearance 4-wheel-drive vehicle.

These rocky roads were first used by 19th-century miners, who carted their ore off to Silverton, Ouray, and Lake City in mule-drawn wagons. One can easily spend an entire day exploring the ghost towns, abandoned mining camps, and mining structures that were built from the mid-1870s to early 1900s.



Silverton

Silverton is a National Historic Landmark, home to Animas Forks and the Alpine Loop, and the summer destination for the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad train ride. Silverton is a recreational paradise in winter for snowmobiling, skiing, sledding, ice skating, ice climbing, and ice fishing, and in the summer for rafting, backcountry touring, jeeping, ATV and OHV riding, fishing, hiking, biking, rafting, horseback riding, hunting, and camping.

1. Lodore Mine

Old abandoned mine just south of Silverton.

2. Mayflower Mill

A National Historic Landmark, this wonderful piece of mining history is open to the public. The Mayflower Mill was the last and the most advanced of the big mills to be built in the San Juan Mountains. Take a tour and learn how the miners were able to extract gold, silver and base metals from the hard rock ores in this complete processing mill.

3. Howardsville

Located at the head of Cunningham Gulch, Howardsville was one of the largest and most prosperous towns in its time. Its first big strike was in 1874 by the Bullion City Company. Later that same year Bullion City was renamed to Howardsville, after its original founder George Howard. Originally established as the county seat of San Juan County until 1875. As mining in the region diminished due to poor returns, most of the people moved to nearby Silverton and in 1939 Howardsville lost its post office. Today there are still a few remnant structures and a handful of residents in the area.

4. Old Hundred Mine Tour

The Old Hundred Mine is a must visit on your trip along the Alpine Loop. This is an hour long tour that takes you 1/3 of a mile into the Galena mountain. Visitors will learn about the history of the mine, mining in the region, and witness how some of the equipment was used to mine for gold and silver.



5. Highland Mary Mill

In 1875, the Ennis brothers paid a "spiritualist" to locate a mine for them. As a mining encampment, it had a post office from 1878 to 1885. In 1985 the Ennis brothers declared bankruptcy as the Highland Mary Mine failed to produce a return. By 1907, and under new ownership the mine paid off immediately and was the second largest mine in the Silverton area.

6. Middleton

This town was named because it was in the middle between Howardsville and Eureka. The first claim was made in 1983 by two men named Gottlieb and Konneker. Over the years, Howardsville and Eureka grew so big it attracted those who lived in Middleton and the town died.



7. Eureka

The town got its start in 1860 when a small group of miners began to dig and pan around the banks of the Animas River south of the mining town of Animas Forks.

By

1875 a post office had been established, train service came in 1896, and Eureka boasted to have "the finest saloons anywhere" the Animas River. However, in 1939 the Sunnyside Mill closed and the town soon became abandoned. Currently one building (the old jail which had been restored) and the remnants of the Sunnyside Mill and tram foundation along the mountainside is all that remains visible. There is a nearby primitive campground and one can hike into Eureka Gulch and see the falls of the South Animas River Fork.



8. Abandoned Mine and Foot Bridge

One of numerous abandoned mines in the San Juan Mountains. This particular location also had a foot bridge which crosses the Animas River.

9. Animas Forks

Near the fork of the Alpine Loop, lies the historic mining town of Animas Forks (originally named Three Forks). First established in 1873, this town boomed from 1876 to 1884. However, due to poor profits from mining ventures, the town declined over the years until 1904 when it rebounded with the construction of the Gold Prince Mill. Only a few of the original buildings remain in Animas Forks. The Gold Prince Mill was disassembled in 1910 and relocated to Eureka. Other town buildings were demolished by heavy snow or vandalism. The buildings that remain were stabilized or reconstructed to preserve the history.



10. Treasure Mountain Mine

Treasure Mountain Mine has a multi-room building and stamp mill, however no equipment is left in the stamp mill.

11. Sound Democrat Mill

The Sound Democrat Mill is a seven stamp, five concentration table, ore-processing mill built in 1905- 1906, and remodeled in 1909. It is a typical amalgamation and concentration stamp mill built to treat gold and silver-lead ores. It is the last standing stamp mill in the productive Eureka district, and one of the most complete stamp mills remaining in Colorado.

12. Sunnyside Mine

At the height of mining activity in the late 1800's and early 1900's, the Sunnyside mine complex was a self-contained community complete with offices, boarding houses, hospital, and commissary. It was one of the most prosperous mines in the region, being owned by various companies and mined off and on until 1999. This mine is most famous for having broken and drained Lake Emma in 1978. Cleanup took nearly two years.

Lake City

Lake City offers something for everyone. Things to do in our area include kid friendly activities, a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, nightlife, music shows, plays, historic tours, shopping, and plenty of winter sports.

13. Henson

Located on Henson Creek west of Lake City, Henson was named for prospector Henry Henson, who, along with three others, filed a claim in 1871 for the Ute-Ulay Mine. However, they could not exploit the claim until the Brunot Treaty of 1873 to open the San Juan Mountains to settlement. There were two major mines, the Ute-Ulay and the Hidden Treasure. The town had a post office in 1883, but only for one year. These and other mines continued to produce for years, but the harsh winters and the growth of Lake City, only a short distance away, spelled the end of Henson. Henson is on private property and so viewing is limited from the roadside. As you enter Henson, south of the road you will see waste dumps, sheds, tanks, assorted mining equipment, a mill, and a mine building with two brick chimneys. Across the road are two log cabins, a two-story building, and other sheds and cabins. On the west end of the site are more mine structures and a breached dam.

14. Capital City

Once named "Galena City", this deserted mining town was founded in 1877 by George T. Lee. Lee's ambition was to become governor and make Capital City the state capital of Colorado. Though there were enough buildings in the city, the population never exceeded 800 people. The town was pretty much abandoned by the late 1890's although some activity continued into the 1900's. The post office, some outbuildings, Lee's smelter stack, and brick kilns are all that remains.

Ouray

Ouray Nicknamed "Switzerland of America," Ouray has been a world-famous destination for more than 100 years. Ouray features a heavenly hot springs, Box Canyon Falls, and a super-popular July 4th celebration.

For more Information
www.aztecnm.com

