

## THE PARADOX TRAIL

Established in 1995 by the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA) in collaboration with Montrose West Recreation, the US Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, the 110 mile long Paradox Trail traverses the unique landscape of western Montrose County, utilizing some of the hundreds of miles of backcountry jeep roads and trails that exist here. The route links two other long distant trails in the region, the Tabeguache Trail to the east on the Uncompahgre Plateau and the Kokopelli Trail to the west in the La Sal Mountains of Utah. Together, the three trails form the "Grand Loop", a grueling 360 mile backcountry system sure to challenge the strongest mountain bikers. The Paradox Trail forms the southern leg of the Grand Loop and even though no singletrack was created (as of 2011) for the trail, the area offers trail users some of the most rugged and remote backcountry terrain in the lower 48. There are six large tracks of public lands being administered as wilderness or wilderness study areas in the region, and while the trail is predominantly on two-track, don't be fooled thinking this is an easy or fast ride. Riders continually underestimate the trail's ungroomed and ever changing conditions at altitudes that range from 9,500 feet on the Uncompahgre Plateau to the warmer lower elevations (4,800 ft.) along the Dolores River. Many of the old jeep trails used for the Paradox Trail were long abandoned and overgrown when designated for the trail. Some areas qualify as singletrack because of the trail width and there are a least five "hike-a-bike" sections to be negotiated. While there are trail sections that utilize some seasonally graded county roads, much of the Paradox Trail is inaccessible to motorized vehicles, although vehicle access points exist at many places. Caution should be used during wet weather conditions as all backcountry roads can become slick, soft and impassable. The trail is marked at key intersections and throughout the route with brown carsonite signs.

Riders need to be cautious and personally responsible when in the backcountry. The use of topographical maps and/or a GPS is strongly recommended. Wildlife abounds with elk, mountain lion, coyotes and rattlesnakes. It is not uncommon to encounter bears in some sections. There is world class hunting in the West End so riders should familiarize themselves with the various seasons and wear orange during rifle seasons. Water is found in many drainages and should always be treated. With the new rerouting of the trail scheduled for 2012, riders will have access to services in Nucla, the only source of supplies along the entire Grand Loop. Trail users can find the Paradox Trail on the BLM Nucla, La Sal and Moab Section maps.

Undeveloped campsites exist at Pinto Mesa, Tabeguache Creek, Upper Spring Creek Mesa, Mesa Creek and Biscuit Rock. There are established National Forest campgrounds at Buckeye Reservoir in the La Sal Mountains, Columbine and Antone Springs Campgrounds on the Uncompahgre Plateau and the BLM Dolores River takeout upstream from Bedrock. All camps are accessible by two wheel drive vehicles.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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United States Forest Service  
Norwood Ranger District  
P.O. Box 388 — 1150 Forest  
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United States Forest Service  
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Brochure designed by Sparrow Consulting (www.sparroweco.com)  
Content from MWR

### Montrose West Recreation www.montrosewest.com

As a non-profit entity incorporated in 1979, Montrose West Recreation, Inc. has been instrumental with improving and expanding recreational opportunities and facilities in the West End of Montrose County, CO. Our mission is to assist with and coordinate for all citizens of West Montrose County a variety of recreational opportunities.

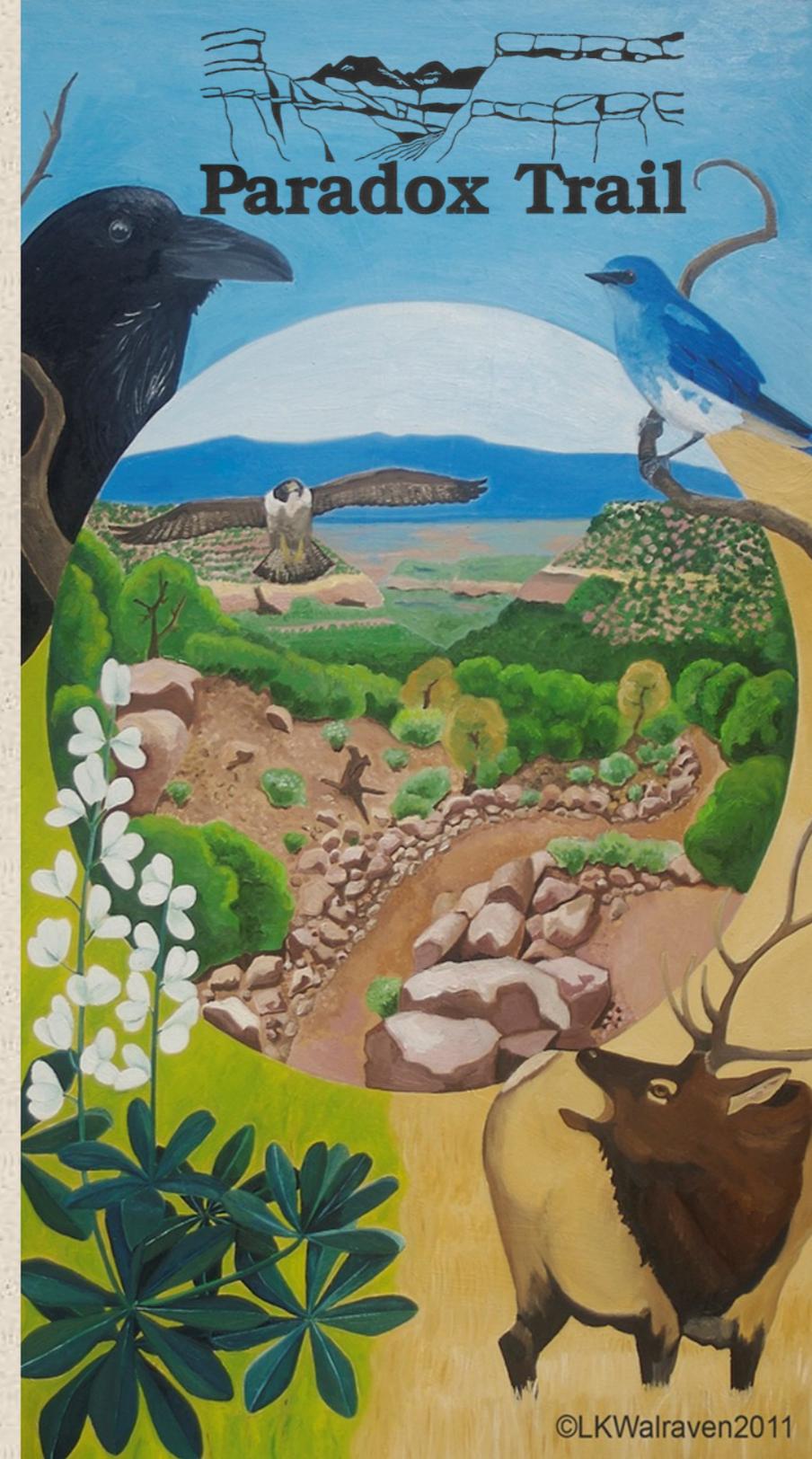


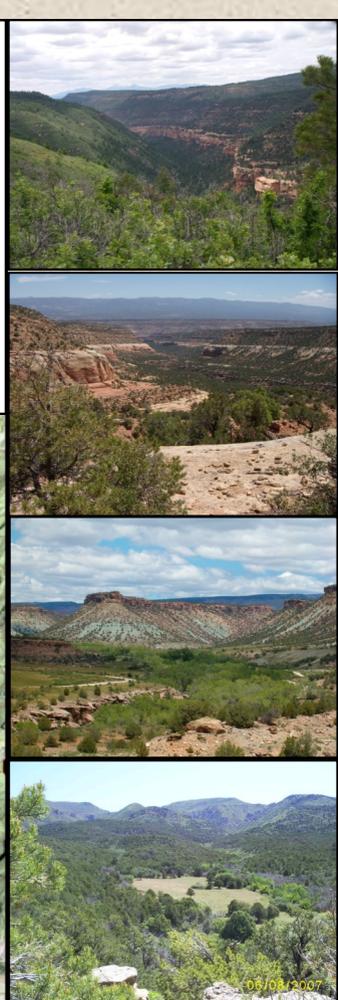
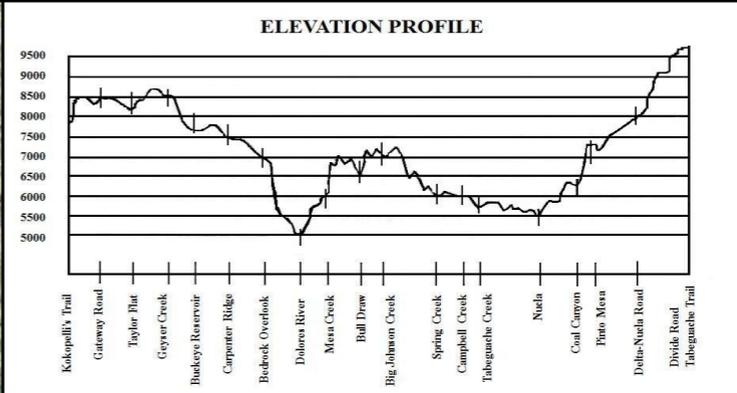
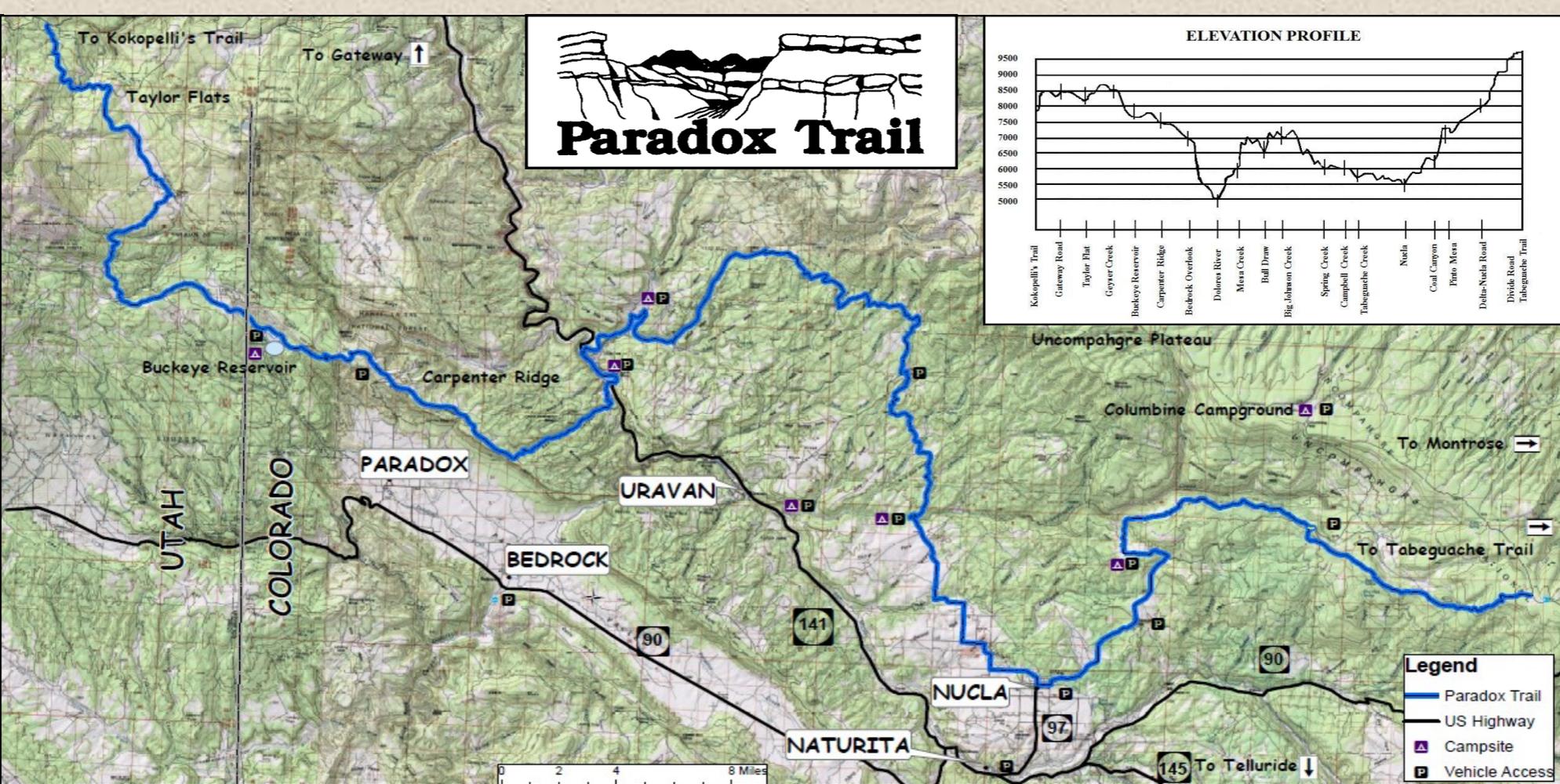
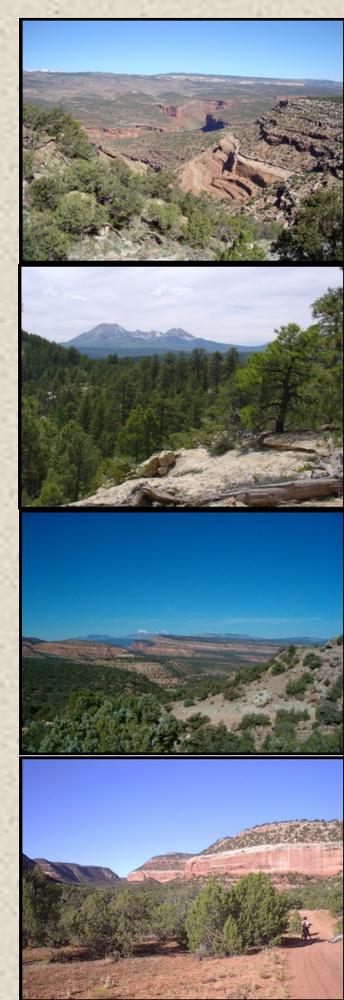
### Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association www.copmoba.org

COPMOBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to building, maintaining and advocating for sustainable single-track trails and developmental features on the Colorado Plateau. COPMOBA's main trails include Kokopelli's, Tabeguache, and Paradox.



Sunset at Sunrise Canyon, Paradox Valley, Colorado  
Photo by Martha Burgess  
www.flordemayoarts.com





**Legend**

- Paradox Trail
- US Highway
- Campsite
- Vehicle Access



The map above shows the layout of the Paradox Trail, campsites, and vehicle access points. Visit [www.paradoxtrail.org](http://www.paradoxtrail.org) for detailed trail descriptions and GPS waypoints for the Paradox Trail, alternate routes, and West End loop rides. The use of a GPS, compass, and topographic map is strongly recommended. The trails can be found on the BLM Nucla map and the La Sal Mountains USFS map.

**IMBA RULES OF THE TRAIL**



- Ride Open Trails:** Respect trail and road closures — ask a land manager for clarification if you are uncertain about the status of a trail. Do not trespass on private land. Obtain permits or other authorization as required. Be aware that bicycles are not permitted in areas protected as state or federal Wilderness.
- Leave No Trace:** Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage than dry ones. When the trail is soft, consider other riding options. This also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don't cut switchbacks. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in.
- Control Your Bicycle:** Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk. Obey all bicycle speed regulations and recommendations, and ride within your limits.
- Yield Appropriately:** Do your utmost to let your fellow trail users know you're coming — a friendly greeting or bell ring are good methods. Try to anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. Bicyclists should yield to other non-motorized trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. In general, strive to make each pass a safe and courteous one.
- Never Scare Animals:** Animals are easily startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. Give animals enough room and time to adjust to you. When passing horses, use special care and follow directions from the horseback riders (ask if uncertain). Running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses.
- Plan Ahead:** Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly. Strive to be self-sufficient: keep your equipment in good repair and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.

**WEST END LOOP RIDES**

The West End of Montrose County has a variety of loop and “out n’ back” rides waiting to be discovered and explored. Years of mining exploration and ranching have created hundreds of miles of backcountry jeep trails through this rugged and unique wilderness landscape. Many of these trails have been long abandoned so caution should always be exercised when traveling on them. Be prepared for hazards of any kind including rough, rocky and overgrown trails. Carry and know how to read a topographical map and pack plenty of food and water for this high desert environment. Always let someone know where you are planning on traveling and stick to your planned route. Riders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the route using maps and be prepared for unexpected delays. Check with the local BLM office for travel restrictions, such as no motorized or mechanized travel in wilderness study areas or the Tabeguache Area.

- Visit [www.paradoxtrail.org](http://www.paradoxtrail.org) for trail descriptions:
- Red Canyon Loop
  - Atkinson Creek Loop
  - Naturita Ridge Loop
  - Glencoe Bench Loop via Pinto Mesa
  - Uravan to Bedrock Out n’ Back
  - Blue Mesa Out n’ Back

Paradox Trail QR Code Reader App Needed

Plan Ahead and Prepare  
 Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces  
 Dispose of Waste Properly  
 Leave What You Find  
 Minimize Campfire Impacts  
 Respect Wildlife  
 Be Considerate of Other Visitors

\*Rules of the Trail carries a 1990 copyright by International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)