

THE RIMROCKER TRAIL



Part 1 – Montrose to Nucla

To access the Rimrocker Trail, head west from Montrose on Highway 90, which initially follows East Main Street and then Spring Creek Road. Continue to follow Highway 90 (several 90 degree turns) to the end of pavement where 90 Road begins. There you will find a nice large flat staging area (GPS N38 25.833 W107 59.116) which is perfect for off-loading OHVs & dirt bikes, airing down 4x4 tires, etc. However, it currently has no facilities. Before leaving the staging area reset your trip meter to zero. When leaving, turn left on 90 Road and you're on your way. You'll shortly see the first Rimrocker Trail signpost, which is fluorescent green – as are all the trail signposts outside of the national forests. The trail begins to travel up and over the Uncompahgre Plateau on a good graded dirt road. The Uncompahgre Plateau is a long narrow flat-topped fault block about 25 miles wide and 100 miles long. The Rimrocker Trail reaches a high point of 9,840' elevation at the crest of the Plateau, by means of a gradual climb.

As you enter the Uncompahgre National Forest (approximately 11.7 miles from the staging area) you're already at 9,000' elevation. Continuing onward, the trail signposts within the national forest are brown. They are a little harder to spot, but keep an eye out - the trail remains well marked. It should also be noted that although you are still on 90 Road it is now signed as Forest Service Road (FSR) 540. Continue to follow FSR 540 through aspen and pine forest with some open meadows. At approximately 14.5 miles FSR 402 (aka Divide Road) joins from the left – continue straight on FSR 540/402. At 15.2 miles FSR 540 (aka 90 Road) diverges to the left – continue straight on FSR 402 toward Columbine Pass.

At various times and in various places we have seen deer, elk, fox and coyote along the route between Montrose and Nucla. A word of caution – during the warm seasons some of the forest is open cattle range and firewood cutting and logging are allowed. Be on the lookout for cattle, woodcutters, and logging trucks.

From there continue northwest on Forest Road 402, and begin a long gradual descent. FSR 402 provides access to several other roads which are well worth taking time to investigate. Some of our favorites include the Roubideau Jeep Road (a loop on Fence Line Road, FSR 544, and Traver Mesa Road) and the Monitor Mesa Loop (on Monitor Mesa Road and 7N Road near Columbine Pass), both of which are shown on the paper and online maps. An important left hand turn is at Columbine Pass (GPS N38 25.025 W108 22.8778), approximately 30.8 miles from the staging area, onto FSR 503 (aka 25 Mesa Road and the Delta-Nucla Road). The descent will become more pronounced as you travel down off the crest of the Uncompahgre Plateau toward Nucla. Your views to the west will begin to open up, with Lone Cone Mountain standing out on the horizon.

At 47.1 miles from the staging area you will leave the national forest and hit pavement on 25 Mesa Road (aka the Delta-Nucla Road), which is an approved OHV route to Nucla. Continue on 25 Mesa Road and turn right on East 4th Avenue (GPS N38 16.204 W108 32.207). At 53.3 miles from the staging area turn left onto Main Street and head south. Driving time from Main Street, Montrose to Main Street, Nucla is about two hours.