

# VISIT MONTROSE

MOTORSPORT MECCA



*Stay here. Play everywhere.*





# MONTROSE

## HOME TO WORLD-CLASS OHV TRAILS AND ROUTES



The rustic roads and trails that wind their way through the adobe badlands, referred to by locals as the “Adobes,” and canyons of the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) are a playground for off-road sports. There are more than 75 miles of designated trails and primitive roads in the remaining areas of the GGNCA. The 20-mile single-track Sidewinder Trail is the most recent addition to the Gunnison Gorge and is already popular with the locals. It snakes in and out of canyons and is an expert-level, technical trail for those on two wheels. | Photo by Jeremy Matlock

Colorado has many secrets tucked away in its mountains, canyons, and wild areas. One of the best-kept might be the mecca of motorsport that is Montrose with seemingly limitless miles of trail and vast expanses of recreation area in every direction.

Starting just minutes north and east from the city, adobe hills and arroyos give way to red rock cliffs on a towering climb to the rim of the Black Canyon National Park. To Montrose's west, the Uncompahgre Plateau bristles with a network of trail systems in an ascending mix of arid climate and high alpine forest.

These areas, and others accessible from Montrose, are some of the purest backcountry and technical trails available to off-road vehicles, rock crawlers, dirt bikes, side-by-sides, and all manner of off-highway vehicle (OHV).

Off-riders, 4x4, and four-wheel drive recreation seekers can find a superb introductory route, the Wave-Eagle Loop, in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA), a 62,844-acre federally designated recreation area located north of Montrose. The Wave-Eagle Loop is a popular, intermediate difficulty, shared-use trail open to OHV travel.

To access the loop from downtown Montrose, travel north on U.S. Highway 50 4.4 miles to Falcon Road and turn right. Continue on Falcon Road east to reach Peach Valley Road, about 3.6 miles. Signs mark the entrance into the GGNCA, and an OHV staging area on the right side of the road.

Peach Valley Road continues north through the conservation area. To embark on the Wave-Eagle Loop, turn east onto Eagle Road or Wave Road (making the loop beginning on Wave Road is slightly less technical). The loop is 6.5 miles on four-wheel drive roads with moderate hills and very rocky terrain.

On the Wave-Eagle Loop, expect incredible views of the Black Canyon and sweeping views of the Uncompahgre Valley landscape. The Uncompahgre Plateau to the west lights up with a golden glow in the late afternoon and early evening sun, framing the Montrose and Olathe areas below. The trail will keep drivers entertained and excited as they traverse from adobe badlands through pinyon pine and juniper vegetation and up to bare bedrock. The Wave-Eagle Loop exhibits many of the qualities that draw off-road travelers to the area: a compact and relatively accessible route.

The Western Slope 4 Wheelers, a Montrose-based 4x4 club that helps maintain and monitor trails in the area, rated the Wave-Eagle Loop as a 3 of 10 on its scale of difficulty; the road sees frequent use and is impassable in wet conditions. Four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended to navigate ruts, erosion and rock formations.

Exhilaration and excitement await those who choose to venture out from Montrose on ATVs and dirt bikes. While the total trail miles available to riders from the Montrose area are difficult to estimate—many trails are still being designated and added to maps—full-throttled and heart-pounding fun are guaranteed.

A popular area for backcountry motorcyclists, quads, and side-by-side riders (50” or less in width) to begin is quite literally in Montrose's back yard, at the Flat Top-Peach Valley OHV Recreation Site. Located on public lands managed by GGNCA, Flat Top is visible from many areas of the city: it is a large, adobe-colored, flat-top formation adorned with cell phone and radio towers.

Don't be fooled by the infrastructure. Once riders reach the Flat Top staging area, trails through the primitive environment and pristine backcountry extend clear to the City of Delta to the north, with endless designated routes and two open riding areas to explore in between. Off-route, OHV cross-country riding is allowed only for





vehicles 50 inches or less in width in the two open areas. All other travel is limited to designated routes.

The Flat Top staging area is a 12-minute drive from downtown Montrose. From the Visitor Center at 107 South Cascade Avenue, head to East Main Street and turn right. At North San Juan Avenue turn left and continue for a quarter-mile, then head right onto 6530 Road for 2.5 miles. Flat Top Road branches off to the right on dirt road at the top of a hill on 6530 Road. The staging area is marked and has posted information on rules and regulations.

Once rigged up and ready to go, riders are in for an experience that is nothing short of world-class. Flat Top lets out into trails through adobe clay and arroyos with deep walls and blind corners. As the trails lead riders north and east toward the rim of the Gunnison Gorge, the terrain ascends from the clay-heavy soil into red rock and bedrock formations. The single-track trails are technical, steep, and challenging; the views, terrain, and riding are unparalleled.

For all of its challenges and thrilling exploits, the Flat Top-Peach Valley Recreation Area within the GGNCA to the north are family-friendly and

open to enthusiasts of all skill levels. Riders should know their limits and respect the multi-use trails.

Single-track fans can try their luck on the Tabeguache Trail to experience the diverse and boundlessly beautiful Uncompahgre Plateau. The 142-mile trail winds to the west of Montrose and connects at the north end to Grand Junction.

This trail requires travelers to be self-sufficient and knowledgeable in backcountry survival. The payoff for those who are able to travel the trail, though, is priceless. Tabeguache Trail passes through the plateau's forested highlands, weaves through canyons, and skirts colorful mesas as it crosses the vast public lands between Montrose and Grand Junction. Some sections of the trail are accessible by full sized OHVs and ATVs via maintained roads, though wet conditions can close certain segments.

For more information on off-roading, inquire at the Montrose Public Lands Center at 2505 S Townsend Ave, the Downtown Visitor Center, or [VisitMontrose.com/Offroading](http://VisitMontrose.com/Offroading).



Last Dollar Road is one of the easier trails in the San Juan region for off-roading. The trail is one exciting way to get from Montrose to Telluride. Although some of the trail is accessible in a regular vehicle, much of it requires a vehicle with four-wheel drive, especially when wet. Consider taking this drive in the fall as the changing leaves are especially beautiful in this area. | Photo by Jennifer Loshaw



Extreme off-roading and rock crawling specialists will leave Montrose having found the thrills they were looking for. Just to the west of the city lies some of the most diverse, technically difficult, and challenging terrain in the nation.

For those who have invested the time and resources in a specialized rock crawling vehicle, Montrose is the place to challenge their metal toys on sedan-sized boulders, wheel-dangling ledges, and tight lines.

Calamity, Scratch & Dent, Die Trying, Cactus Ridge, Death Row, and Topless routes are accessed from the Tabeguache staging area. Reach the parking lot with nearby access to trails by traveling west down Highway 90 (also West Main Street) and continuing onto Spring Creek Road for about 4 miles. Turn right and head north onto 5875 Road for another 3 miles before turning left and traveling west on Kiowa Road, which takes you just less than a mile to Shavano Valley Road. There is a parking lot at the intersection of Shavano Valley Road and Rim Road.

Turnoff for Calamity and Scratch & Dent trails are approximately two miles past the staging area under the power line. Topless, Die Trying, Cactus Ridge, and Death Row trails are located less than five miles past the parking lot.

Find out more about these and other trails at the Downtown Visitor Center or at [VisitMontrose.com/RockCrawling](http://VisitMontrose.com/RockCrawling). Recommended equipment for most of the rock crawling trails include a winch, 39" or larger tires, locking differentials, roll over protection, high lift jack, first aid kit, oil absorbent material, and a bucket.

**Montrose, Colorado:**  
*Stay here. Play everywhere.*



### Topless Rating: 7

The first half mile is a tight, rocky wash-bottom that leads to the first obstacle where the trail got its name: the tree that leaned across the ledge you have to climb is now gone. The trail continues up a tight wash filled with boulders and ledges for the next half mile. Then it widens before joining the exit road from Die Trying and Death Row. Turn left to return to Rim Road.



Photo by Kathryn Christensen



### Die Trying Rating: 8

This trail starts with quite a few large boulders, ledges and notches. After a few hundred yards the trail smooths out to smaller boulders and ledges and some tight turns around large rocks. Near the end the trail takes a hard left turn to a long, steep, rough climb out of the canyon. There is a split at the end; to the right is the original exit or to the left is a new exit, which can be much more difficult. At the top follow a two-track about 1.5 miles to return to Rim Road.



### Death Row Rating: 10+

The entrance is a right turn off of Topless, about a half mile in. The first hundred yards are small ledges and boulders that do not live up to the rating. Then the real trail starts, with boulders the size of cars and holes that will swallow one. The trail is very tight and does not offer many options for lines. There is one obstacle after another for about 200 yards while gaining elevation at a rapid rate. Then the trail levels off for a few hundred yards before a small ledge at the exit joins a two-track that will return you to Rim Road in about 1 1/2 miles.

## TOUR/RENTAL OFF ROAD RESOURCES

**Bureau of Land Management**  
970.240.5300  
2465 S Townsend Rd, Montrose, CO  
[blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html](http://blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html)

**Stay the Trail Colorado**  
[staythetrail.org/maps](http://staythetrail.org/maps)

**United States Forest Service**  
970.874.6600  
2250 U.S. Highway 50, Delta, CO 81416  
[fs.usda.gov/goto/gmug/mvum](http://fs.usda.gov/goto/gmug/mvum)

**Western Slope 4 Wheelers**  
970.275.0754  
PO Box 2037, Montrose, CO  
[ws4w.com](http://ws4w.com)

**Wild Bunch Club**  
[wb4x4.com](http://wb4x4.com)

**Davis Service Center**  
ATV Rentals & Repair  
970.249.8161  
2380 E Main St, Montrose, CO  
[daviservicecenter.com](http://daviservicecenter.com)

**Highland Cycles**  
ATV, Motorcycle and Snowmobile Repair and Parts  
5068 N Townsend Ave, Montrose CO  
970.240.2197  
[Highland-cycles.com](http://Highland-cycles.com)

**Maxxed Out 4x4**  
Rock Crawling repairs and parts  
2450 N Townsend Ave, Montrose CO  
970.249.3998



MONTROSE OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND TOURISM

107 S Cascade Ave | Montrose, CO 81401  
970.497.8558 | [VisitMontrose.com](http://VisitMontrose.com)



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