

Points of Interest

The Sierra Madre Scenic Loop Tour, which begins in Encampment, includes several stops along the way of historical and natural interest. The tour ultimately ends in Riverside and can be done in reverse order, if preferred. *The majority of this self-guided tour is traveled on well-maintained gravel roads.*

- 1 Bottle Creek Campground is nestled beside the Hog Park Road (FS 550). Originally, it was the site of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. The CCC helped build the Battle Highway (Highway 70). Bottle Creek has twelve camping sites and a large picnic area.
- 2 The Halfway House was built in 1902 as a stopping place halfway between Encampment and the mining camps in the Hog Park area. Several tie cutter (or tie hack) cabin remnants are located behind the Halfway House.
- 3 The Green Mountain Trail ties into the Continental Divide Trail here in the Huston Park Wilderness. At 10,000 feet in elevation, it is approximately five miles one way amid lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir trees.
- 4 During the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad, tie hacks cut railroad ties from trees in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range. As tie hack camps were often raided by Native American tribes, the soldiers from Fort Fred Steele were summoned to protect the area. Soldier Summit, an open area named for these soldiers, offers a scenic view across the Encampment River canyon, Blackhall Mountain and its fire lookout tower.
- 5 Hog Park Reservoir was formed in the 1960's when a earthen dam was constructed to store water for municipal use in Cheyenne. In the 1980's, the project was expanded and soon after became a favorite spot for fishing and boating. Hog Park has two picnic areas, a 50-unit campground and a boat dock. *Note: The campground is temporarily closed.*
- 6 This is the main southern access point for the 15-mile Encampment River Trail. *At the junction with FS 80, turn left to proceed to Riverside.*
- 7 The East Fork Trail follows the east fork of the Encampment River and is dotted with remnant tie hack camps. This is the original trail that connected the Blackhall Lookout and Commissary Park in Colorado. Commissary Park was a major supply point for tie hacks and a social center for timber and railroad executives.
- 8 The Billie Creek Junction joins FS 496 with FS 409 (the Blackhall Road). The road forks here with a branch to the right providing access to a fire lookout tower on Blackhall Mountain; left proceeds to Riverside. *The road to the lookout tower is a low maintenance gravel road--4WD vehicles recommended.* The road, mountain and tower are named after the first Forest Supervisor in the area, James Blackhall. Although the tower is no longer in use, it offers impressive views of the Continental Divide (west) and the northern mountains of Colorado.
- 9 Dunkard Creek was a prime mining area during the Grand Encampment Copper Boom from 1897-1908. This steep portion of the tour offers spectacular views of the Encampment River canyon and Bridger Peak, which is the highest peak in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range at 11,004 ft.
- 10 Located about 5 minutes SE of Riverside and a short 3/4-mile hike from County Road 211, you'll find the famed Indian Bathtubs. This natural rock formation on BLM land is said to have been used by Native Americans for summertime bathing.

