

City of Boulder Train History

The following is a concise history of the City of Boulder train which includes the locomotive, coach and caboose. The City of Boulder is excited to display these treasured historic assets to the public again in 2012 following extensive restorations. These assets, while currently on display at the Colorado Railroad Museum, are owned by the City of Boulder and will be returned to the city once a suitable location is identified.

(Please note: All locations referenced below are in Colorado unless otherwise noted. Some are historic and many not appear on contemporary maps.)

- 1952 – Residents of Boulder, led by CU professor and Boulder historian, John B. Schoolland, raised funds to purchase Locomotive #30; Rio Grande Southern Caboose #0401; and Denver & Rio Grande Western Coach #280. The two rail cars and engine were purchased and put on display in Boulder's Central Park.
- 1953 – A train dedication ceremony was held on August 6 in Central Park.
- 1979 – A group of volunteers from the Boulder Model Railroad Club (BMRC) began restoration of all three historical train assets.
- 1982 – The train was relocated to a new location in Central Park with the help of the BMRC.
- 1996-1998 – Restoration plans for Boulder's train were adopted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Colorado Historical Society.
- 2012 – All of Boulder's train assets were moved to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden. They will remain in Golden until the City of Boulder can determine the best long-term location for displaying its historic trains.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1982, CU professor and local historian, Dr. Schoolland, helped drive a ceremonial "Golden Spike" into a newly-renovated track for the City of Boulder train display in Central Park (PICTURE). The rail was re-located and donated with the help of the Georgetown Loop Railroad and State Historical Society.

Locomotive # 30

- 1898 – Locomotive #30 (Class 2-8-0) was built by Brooks Locomotive Works of Dunkirk, NY as the first of three similar locomotives (numbered 30, 31 and 32) delivered to Colorado and Northwestern Railroad (C&N). At the time, they were among the heaviest narrow gauge locomotives.
- 1898 – Locomotive #30 was sold to C&N for its mining operation at Climax Mine in Leadville, where it operated from 1898-1909.
- 1901 – Locomotives #30 and #31 were near Francis in April bucking snow when an avalanche swept both locomotives 400 feet down a mountainside, killing four crewmen. Both engines were recovered and sent to a shop in Denver for repairs. #30 received new headlights, smokestacks and wood cabs, and its running boards were raised during restoration.
- 1909 – The C&N line went bankrupt. Locomotive #30 was retained by Denver, Boulder & Western Railroad (DB&W) to serve a mountain tourism line, called the “Switzerland Trail of America.” (see maps)
- 1915 – On a trip in July, Locomotive #30’s tender derailed on a downgrade by Black Swan curve between Salina and Crisman (in Fourmile Canyon, Boulder County), claiming the life of a fireman onboard. Later that year, the engine received additional upgrades with cab, tender, automatic couplers and an electric headlight.
- 1915-1919 – Struggling economically and impacted by a series of floods, DB&W ends service on the Switzerland Trail of America.
- 1920 – Locomotive #30 was sold to the Morse Brothers—the "premier" used locomotive dealer in Denver.
- 1921 – Locomotive #30 was purchased by the Colorado & Southern Railway (C&S) to work on its freight car line and its number was changed to 74 to be in sequence with the railroad’s other equipment.
- 1922 – Locomotive #74 (#30)’s tender received new trucks (wheel assemblies) and the side bunkers were raised to increase its coal capacity to eight tons. The locomotive also received new Westinghouse 11” air pumps, larger air tanks and two pane windows to help it match the other engines operating on the C&S line. In April, one of Locomotive #74 (#30)’s sister engines rolled over by the South Platte River near Estabrook and it was determined that the engines were top heavy. The modifications made to increase the coal capacity were removed.

The slide valves on Locomotive #74 (#30) required constant lubrication, which was challenging for the crew with a C&S cutback on oil in a tough economy.

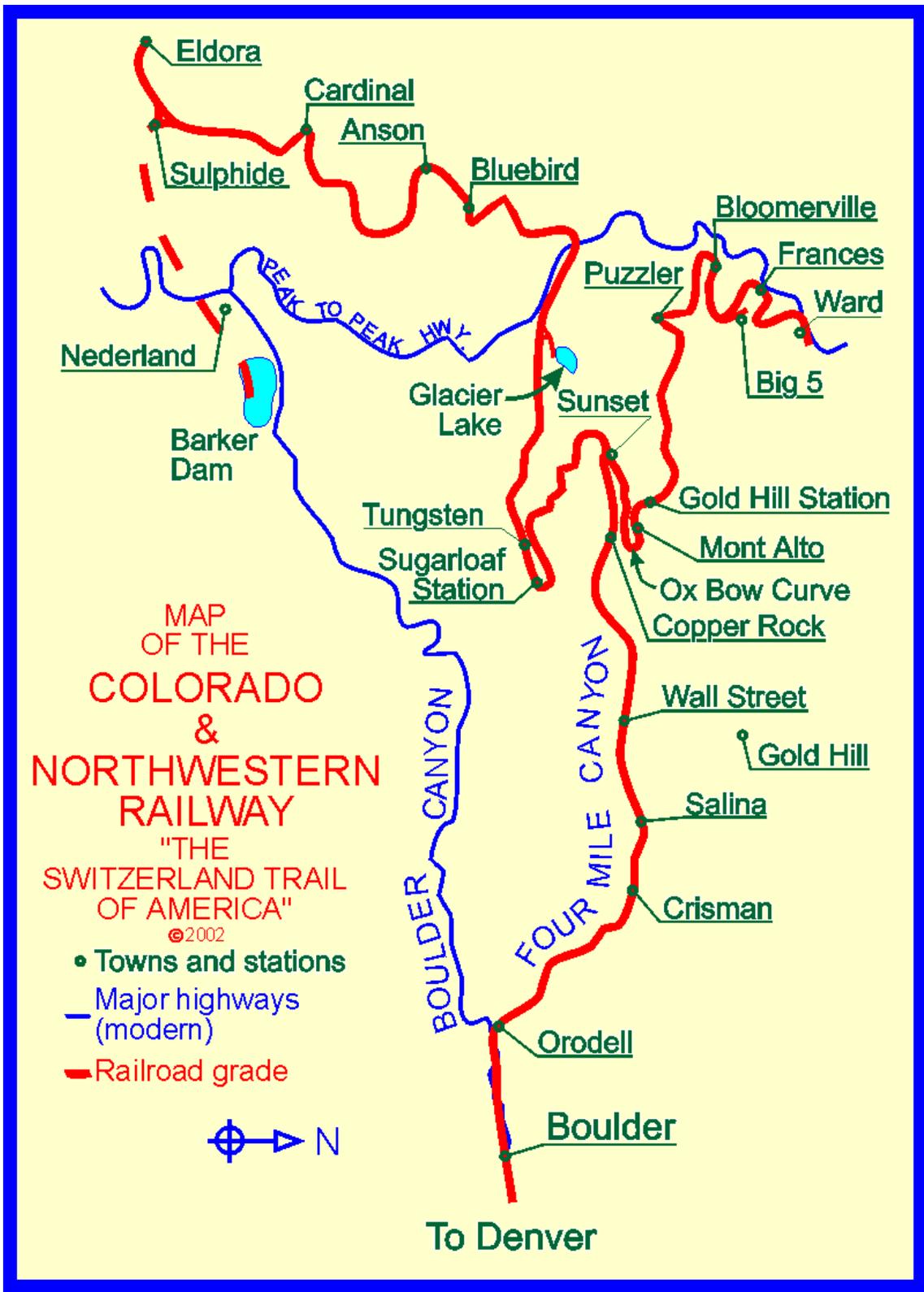
- 1926 – George Lundberg, who worked in the mechanical department at C&S, installed customized Walschaerts valve gears in Locomotive #74 (#30). In order to install the valve gears, the locomotive had to be completely dismantled and rebuilt.
- 1931 – Locomotive #74 (#30) received more upgrades, including a new steel cab and a Pyle National headlight. Once the upgrades were completed, the locomotive was considered to be the “ultimate” in modern motive power on the C&S narrow gauge.
- 1935 – Locomotive #74 (#30)’s tender was rebuilt with a new coal bunker, which removed the remnant of the Brooks flared top.
- 1935-1940 – Locomotive #74 (#30) operated between Leadville and Climax. Early in 1940, it was bucking snow on the line when its frame broke. Equipment was transported to the site and the frame repaired to return the engine to service again.
- 1943 – C&S converted to standard gauge and the narrow gauge line was abandoned. Locomotive #74 (#30) was loaded on to a flat car to be moved to Denver.
- 1945 – Morse Brothers purchased Locomotive #74 (#30) from C&S.
- 1948 – Rio Grande Southern (RGS) purchased Locomotive #74 (#30) (the last locomotive acquired by RGS). It was updated in their Ridgway shop for operation on a passenger line from Ridgway to Durango.
- 1949 – #74 (#30) was requested into service by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club for their trip from Ridgway to Durango.
- 1951 – In September, Locomotive #74 (#30) was commissioned again by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club to pull the last steam passenger train from Telluride to Ridgway (along the fabled route called the “Silver San Juan”). Locomotive #74 (#30) then returned to its regular duties for RGS until 1952.
- 1952 – Locomotive #74 (#30) was retired by RGS, purchased by Boulder residents and displayed in Central Park in Boulder.
- 1978 – Locomotive #30 received a new paint job.
- 2002 – Boulder received a grant to restore the tender of Locomotive #74 (#30) to operational status.
- 2003 – Operational restoration work was completed on Locomotive #74 (#30)’s tender and it was returned to Central Park. The City of Boulder also decided to apply for a grant to restore the engine.

- 2004 – The City of Boulder applied for a grant through the State Historical Fund to cosmetically restore the engine. During this year, the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) approached the city to make the locomotive operational to run on the Georgetown Loop. The city and CHS entered into an agreement to make the locomotive operational.
- 2006 – The city and CHS determined that restoring the locomotive to operational status was not going to be feasible. The project was then refocused on cosmetic restoration.
- 2007-2011 –West Side Locomotive (of Denver) was hired to complete cosmetic restoration of Locomotive #30.
- 2012 – Cosmetic restoration work on the engine was completed and the engine was moved to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1952, CU professor and local historian, Dr. Schoolland, organized a community effort to raise money to purchase Locomotive #30 after learning it would be sold for scrap. Empty mayonnaise and fruit jars were used to collect donations in banks and businesses while Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts also raised money. Within a month, more than \$6,000 was raised to purchase Locomotive #30 and Caboose #0401. After the purchase, Schoolland drove home with Locomotive #30's bell in his trunk while the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad agreed to deliver the train to Boulder.

On its journey home, Locomotive #30 traveled through the Moffat Tunnel, its stack clearing the tunnel by inches! It arrived in Boulder in August 1952 and was given to the city by the procurement committee during a dedication ceremony in Central Park on August 6, 1953. City Manager, Bert Johnson, accepted the train as a “monument to Colorado railroad and mining pioneers.”



Coach #280

- 1880 – Coach #280 was built by Jackson and Sharp of Wilmington, DE for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW). The original cost was \$4,028.
- 1880-1952 – Coach #280 served the D&RGW line until it was purchased by Boulder residents.
- 1950 – Coach #280 was painted yellow and silver for use in the movie *A Ticket to Tomahawk*.
- 1952 – Coach #280 was sold to Boulder residents for \$1400. Passengers who were already loaded on the coach for a trip to Silverton had to be unloaded when the purchase was announced!
- 1999 – Boulder's Parks and Recreation Department received a matching grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund to restore the coach.
- 2001 – The coach was fully restored and put into operation on the Georgetown Loop line.
- 2001 – The coach was placed on display at the Colorado Railroad Museum (CRRM) in Golden at the end of the Georgetown Loop operating season.
- 2009 – The City of Boulder assisted the CRRM with funding to restore some of the wood siding on the coach.
- 2012 – The coach is currently on display at the CRRM.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1952, a subsequent fundraising effort provided \$1,500 for the purchased Coach #280. When the purchase was announced, the coach was loaded with passengers in Durango for a trip to Silverton! The passengers had to be unloaded and the coach arrived in Boulder soon after Locomotive #30 and Caboose #0401 were delivered.

Coach #280 was among several rail coaches painted in a "Grande Gold" paint scheme and used for the 1951 movie *Denver & Rio Grande*.

Caboose #04990

- 1895 – Caboose #04990 was built by the Ohio Falls Car Manufacturing Company of Jeffersonville, IN. It began service as a 30’ long boxcar for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW).
- 1906 – Caboose #04990 appeared on the D&RGW equipment roster as a “working” caboose.
- 1919 – Caboose #04990 was rebuilt into a standard caboose.
- 1951 – Caboose #04990 was retired and dismantled in Alamosa, Colorado. The caboose body was sold to a rancher for a shed.
- 1975 – Caboose #04990’s body was discovered in a field near Alamosa. It was purchased by the City of Boulder and displayed in Central Park in Boulder.
- 2007 – An arsonist set fire to the caboose while it was on display in Central Park.
- 2007 – Boulder County Railway Historical Society (BCRHS) volunteers perform restoration work on the caboose with funding from the City of Boulder for materials.
- 2009 – BCRHS completed post-fire restoration work on Caboose #04990.
- 2010-12 – The restored Caboose #04990 was stored at a Boulder Parks and Recreation facility pending completion of all train restorations.
- 2012 – Caboose #04990 was moved to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden for public viewing and enjoyment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Caboose #04990 is distinct from other cabooses with its peaked roof over the body of the car and rounded roof over the cupola.

Caboose #0401

- 1890 – Caboose #0401 was built by Burnham Shops of Denver and began work on the Rio Grande Southern (RGS) railroad. This style of caboose was referred to as a “bogie caboose” (a caboose with two trucks and eight wheels).
- 1949 – Caboose #0401 was parked in the Ridgway yard for RGS and used for storage.
- 1952 - Caboose #0401 is purchased by Boulder citizens and put on display.
- 1958 – Caboose #0401 was destroyed when vandals threw a stick of dynamite into it (while on display in Boulder’s Central Park).
- 1975 – Caboose #0401’s trucks were tasked to hold Caboose #04990’s body (see above).
- 2012 – Caboose #0401’s trucks (with Caboose #04990’s body) were moved to the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden.