

WEST GOLD HILL DINOSAUR TRACK SITE, OURAY, CO



Aerial view of a fossilized dinosaur trackway known as the West Gold Hill Dinosaur Track site.

USDA Forest Service photo. Inset image by Patti Phillips.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD1171521>.

- LEADERS:** Steve Cumella and Rick Trujillo
COORDINATOR: Kim Gerhardt
DATE: Sunday, October 13th
TIME: 8:30am at the Silvershield trailhead in Ouray.
FEE: \$15pp. Covers FCGS field trip insurance. \$13 refunded if cancel.
LIMIT: 10 minimum for trip to go. No maximum.
BRING: Daypack with lunch, water, rain gear and warm layers. Hiking poles **strongly recommended** for the descent back to the cars.
REGISTRATION OPENS: 9 a.m. on September 23rd through the FCGS website > Events tab.

LOGISTICS: Participants must arrange their own transportation to Ouray, as well as lodging if you will be staying overnight before or after the trip. A group email will be sent to participants before the trip so people can arrange carpools. In Ouray we will meet at the Silvershield trail head at 8:30am. Location information will be sent to registrants. **The dinosaur trackway is reached by a 2.1 mile, 1,600' climb uphill to 9,300' on a rough, exposed trail with unsure footing in places. Hiking poles highly recommended for descent as surface is loose in places.**

DESCRIPTION: This is the longest recorded dinosaur trackway in the world (134 consecutive tracks, or 67 strides, extending 160 yards). The tracks were made by a single long-neck sauropod dinosaur. The animal looped in a 270-degree turn making this one of only six known sites where dinosaur tracks changed direction significantly.

The tracks are near the base of the Jurassic, Morrison Formation. Locally called the "Lower Quartzite" by miners, the sandstone has been hardened by hydrothermal alteration within the Uncompahgre Mining District.

At the top of the Lower Quartzite, researchers found two sets of symmetrical ripple marks. These are interpreted as wave ripples created by wind blowing over shallow water. Subsequently the dinosaur walked on this soft, water-saturated surface leaving deep impressions.

See the Forest Service website, the Ouray Geology Facebook page and this reference for more information: *Goodell, Z. et al., 2021, A High-Altitude Sauropod Trackway Site in the Jurassic of Colorado: The Longest Known Consecutive Footprint Sequence Reveals Evidence of Sharp Turning Behavior, in: Lucas, S.G., Hunt, A.P. and Lichtig, A.J., 2021, Fossil Record 7. New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science Bulletin 82.*



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