

## MP 245 – 246: Floral Park

The mile between mileage post 250 and 251 may be one of the best example of how complicated the “widening project” for U. S. Highway 40 was in terms of environmental issues and requirements by both the State and Federal government. To meet these requirements: a stream was moved and a wildlife crossing was added along with a new “wetland”. This mile also includes the location of an old campground, a ski run, and where U. S. Highway 40 crosses over the wagon road.

| Route                         | Mile Marker | X         | Y          | Longitude   | Latitude  |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| <sup>1</sup> U. S. Highway 40 | 245         | 432479.42 | 4404308.42 | -105.788552 | 39.786048 |
|                               | 246         | 432907.07 | 4404304.72 | -105.783557 | 39.786048 |

The curve around Floral Park has sometimes been a challenge. Engelmann Peak is in the background of the photo below. Read more information on [Engelmann Peak](#).



The top photo is of the Steamboat Stage and the date is not known.

The photo on the right is of the Denver-Salt Lake – Pacific Trailways bus in 1939.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Colorado Department of Transportation’s website:  
<http://apps.coloradodot.info/dataaccess/Highways/index.cfm?fuseaction=HighwaysMain>



## Where is Floral Park?

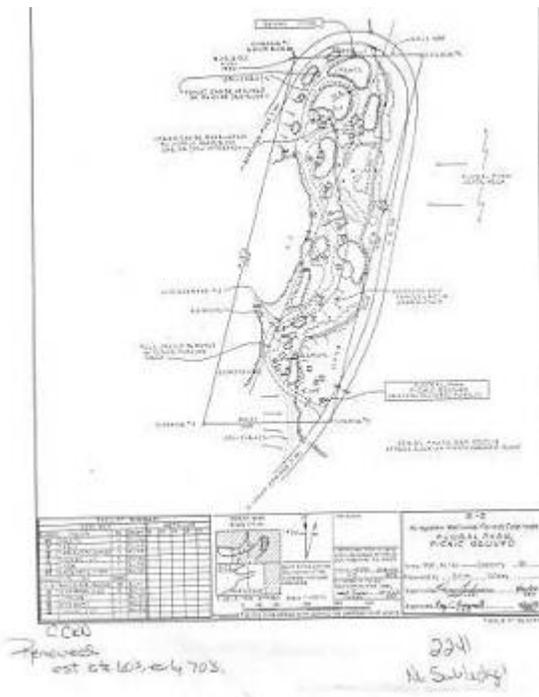
- Floral Park – red arrow
- Hoop Creek Stone Bridge – blue arrow
- Summit of the Pass – green arrow

Photo provided by and used with permission from  
 Gregg Gargan: Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Photographer

A 1948 Denver Parks map lists a campground at Floral Park. Other Forest Service maps of Berthoud Pass show that this campground has been there for a long time. The black and white CDOT aerial photo below shows the campground. The US Forest Service drawing of the campground is dated “1960’s”. The same drawing has a handwritten note that states it was closed in the 1970’s.



B/W Photo provided by and used with permission from CDOT  
 The Floral Park Campground drawing was provided by and used with permission of the Sulphur Ranger District  
 Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest





Both photos are provided by and used with permission from Gregg Gargan: Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Photographer

Floral Park Avalanche Slide – red arrow  
 New Wetland – green arrow  
 Berthoud Pass Shuttle Stop – yellow arrow



The Colorado Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration were committed to replacing any wetland that was impacted during “the widening project of Berthoud Pass”. During the “*widening project*”, the CDOT staff and contractors learned how to avoid or limit the impact to existing wetlands, making much fewer repairs or replacement. A new wetland was created in Floral Park by moving Hoop Creek away from the roadway. This helped remove the negative impact of sediment and salt laden run-off in the creek from winter maintenance. A wildlife underpass was added as well. Important features in its location were that it be placed where wildlife were known to cross U. S. 40, there could be good cover to screen the approach from both sides of the highway and it was not in a pathway for skiing, hiking, or other human activities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Information for this section was taken from US 40 Berthoud Pass: Colorado Rocky Mountain Corridor Project by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

When the ski area was operational on Berthoud Pass, there were several ski runs that went down into Floral Park, where a shuttle bus would pick up the skiers and return them to the Summit. The Blue run was Hoop Creek Gully; Black Diamond runs were Telegraph, Jim's Glades, Floral Park, Floral Meadow and the Double Black Diamond run was called Paul's Powder Stash. Two of the old names for short runs on the mountain were Dunn's Run and the Bell Trail.

Within this mile, U. S. 40 crosses over the Empire-Middle Park Wagon Road. The footprint can be easily seen from the highway and it is not difficult to access it from the highway. The wagon road on the south side of the U. S. 40 is fairly short, but is in good condition.



*Again: if you chose to hike the road, please leave the historic artifacts in place, so others can enjoy them as well.*

The wagon road on the north side of U. S. Highway 40 is more difficult to see and reach. When the auto road was built, a section of the wagon road was taken out, therefore destroying the alignment. The wagon road can be seen by going up the mountain along the side of the highway. To find it, look for a long flat area slanted uphill, in among the trees. This is one of the longest sections in Clear Creek County, and once on it, the footprint of the road is wide with few trees growing in it.



For locals that make the trip over Berthoud Pass often and a few surprised visitors, a special joy is the discovery of a much loved pair of pink plastic flamingos that have come to reside in the wetlands created at Floral Park. They came soon after the wetland project was completed and stayed through several summers and then they disappeared. A certain sadness settled in on local travelers who would check to see if by any chance they had returned. Then...the locals in Grand County spread the word, they had returned...and life is good again in Floral Park!



**Avalanche Path:  
Floral Park**

**Location: 245.7**

**Terrain Specifications:**

Starting Zone elevation: **11,600 ft.**      Vertical fall to roadway: **940 ft.**  
Runout Zone elevation: **10,660 ft.**      Maximum vertical fall: **940 ft.**  
Length of path:

**Avalanche Data:**

Length of road affected: **1,000 ft.**  
Average avalanche activity/year: **N/A**  
Average avalanche activity affecting road/year: 0.60

**Control Methods:**

Static Control:  
Mobile control: **Avalauncher and Helicopter bombing**

**Comments:** This area was a popular campground when the automobile highway was first built and the name Floral Park was given the area. The avalanche area named Floral Park is very popular with backcountry users. The skiers and boarders start at the top of the pass and ski to the highway, then hitchhike back to the summit of the pass. In February, 1960 two backcountry skiers triggered an avalanche in Floral Park killing one and injuring the other while their wives witnessed the avalanche, waiting in their car to pick them up. The most recent avalanche injury in Floral Park occurred in 2010 when a member of a search and rescue team searching for a missing hiker triggered an avalanche and was buried. He was immediately rescued but suffered a broken leg in the avalanche. Avalanches rarely reach the highway, but on occasion an avalanche is triggered by backcountry users and reaches the highway. In February 1994 an avalanche triggered by a skier deposited snow on the highway 8 ft. deep and 150 ft. wide. Because the skier did not report the avalanche it was feared that he was still buried. This kept the highway from being cleared until a thorough search of the debris was conducted. In March 1960 highway crews conducted control work on Floral Park and released an avalanche over one half mile wide.

**(Photo on following page)**



Floral Park Avalanche taken from the highway above the run out zone.  
Photo by Ray Mumford