

= Colorado State Highway 74 =

State Highway 74 (SH 74) is a state highway in the U.S. state of Colorado . Running 18 miles (29 km) from Interstate 70 (I @-@ 70) in El Rancho to SH 8 in Morrison , the highway roughly follows a hook @-@ shaped path running northwest ? southeast . The section of the route north of the town of Evergreen is known as Evergreen Parkway and is a segment with a four- to six @-@ lane roadway , with the section east of Evergreen mostly two lanes . The other section is known as the Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive , or just Bear Creek Road , and primarily parallels Bear Creek , passing through the towns of Kittredge and Idledale . The route , which is on the outskirts of Denver , passes through several of the city 's mountain parks , including Bergen , Dedisse and Red Rocks parks .

An early road following the current path was established in the late 19th century for miners and loggers . As floods ravaged the road along Bear Creek through the early 20th century , measures were taken to prevent further damage . Other sites along Bear Creek , such as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in Red Rocks Park and the Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive , as the section between Idledale and Morrison is called , have given the route a listing on the National Register of Historic Places . An early designation of the route number went further west than its current @-@ day designation ; that section was truncated by the late 1930s . Another eastern segment was added from Morrison east toward Denver in the 1940s , but that section too was removed . Newer improvements to the road include widening the Evergreen Parkway segment to four lanes and constructing an interchange with I @-@ 70 .

= = Route description = =

SH 74 begins at an interchange with I @-@ 70 in El Rancho . Ramps from I @-@ 70 westbound branch off the freeway 's exit 252 from the north side and cross the highway southwestward . Access to SH 74 from I @-@ 70 eastbound is provided via U.S. Highway 40 (US 40) a slight distance to the west . From I @-@ 70 , the roadway heads southwesterly through El Rancho , meeting an intersection with US 40 (Swede Gulch Road) . The route heads westward before turning southwestward into a coniferous forest setting as a four @-@ lane divided highway . The roadway turns westward where it meets County Road 23 (CR 23 , Kerr Gulch Road) . Evergreen Parkway passes Fillius Park to the north in the community of Hidden Valley , where the terrain is mountainous . After intersecting Bergen Parkway , which heads southwesterly toward Bergen Park , SH 74 turns to the south . The parkway meets Squaw Pass Road and crosses the Troublesome Creek before traveling along the west side of Buchanan Park . SH 74 follows the east side of Elk Meadow Open Space Park , where open grassland is dotted with occasional trees . The road narrows to two lanes and climbs steeply at milepost five . While passing Wah Keeney Park , the road turns southeastward and continues to the community of Hiwan . SH 74 enters the town of Evergreen , passing by a lake of the same name along Bear Creek in Dedisse Park . Here , the route intersects CR 74 , which heads west along the Upper Bear Creek .

SH 74 , now known as Bear Creek Road , curves east- and northward as it winds out of town . Narrowing to two lanes , the route follows the path of Bear Creek , curving northeasterly toward Kittredge with Pence Park on the east side . In Kittredge , the route meets CR 120 (Myers Gulch Road) , which heads southeast toward Indian Hills . The route again meets Kerr Gulch Road , which bypasses the large curve which SH 74 took . From Kittredge , SH 74 winds eastward on the north side of Bear Creek . The roadway passes Idledale north of the Lair O the Bear Park , where it intersects Grapevine Road . East of the town , an abandoned section of SH 74 exists , which now serves as a path to private areas . The route heads into Bear Creek Canyon Park , where it curves along the creek in a more rocky terrain . SH 74 also passes through Red Rocks Park along the stream . Exiting the park , SH 74 enters Morrison , where Bear Creek Road meets SH 8 at an intersection . From here , SH 8 (Morrison Road) serves as the continuation of the road toward Denver .

The route is maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) , who is

responsible for maintaining and constructing transportation infrastructure in Colorado , including highways . As part of this role , CDOT periodically conducts surveys on their highways to measure traffic volume . This is expressed in terms of average annual daily traffic (AADT) , which is a measure of the average daily traffic volume on a particular road . In 2009 , CDOT calculated that as few as 3 @, @ 200 vehicles used SH 74 daily near Idledale , and as many as 23 @, @ 000 vehicles used SH 74 near the interchange with I @-@ 70 as well in Evergreen .

= = History = =

In 1873 , John Evans , then a former governor of the Colorado Territory , constructed a toll road from Evergreen to Morrison via Bear Creek canyon . The early road offered access to various mining and logging resources along the creek . This road had over twenty bridges over Bear Creek , most of which were made of wood from the surrounding region . By the late 1870s , toll roads were no longer common , and the path 's maintenance responsibilities were passed to Jefferson County .

SH 74 passes through many of Denver 's mountain parks , including Bergen Park and Dedisse Park . Established in 1909 by Colorado governor Robert W. Speer , the system encompassed several areas west of the city , comprising the first city @-@ owned park system in the world . SH 27 , as the Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive was designated at the time , ran past the Denver Motor Club in Idledale in addition to newly purchased parks . During the 1910s , Denver was granted the ability to enforce laws pertaining to these parks ; a speed limit of 20 miles per hour (32 km / h) was set along the roadway uphill and 15 miles per hour (24 km / h) downhill . In one of the parks , Red Rocks Park near Morrison , a CCC camp was established in 1935 as part of a New Deal work relief program . The enlistees here built a large amphitheater in the park . Numbered camp SP @-@ 13 @-@ C , it is the only CCC camp left in the state . Both the camp and the section of SH 74 between Idledale and Morrison , known as the Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive , are listed on the National Register of Historic Places .

Bear Creek was especially prone to flooding , as was seen in 1896 when Morrison was almost destroyed . On occasion , sightseers along the road were threatened by floods , such as one in 1925 where cars on the road were carried into the river . To control flooding along the creek and therefore preserve safety along the road , the Denver manager of parks sought to build a dam near Evergreen . The dam , finished three years after the flood , created Evergreen Lake . Following a September 1938 flood , crews from a federal work program built walls along the side of the creek , measuring from 7 to 34 feet (2 @. @ 1 to 10 @. @ 4 m) high . The Works Progress Administration (WPA) , as this program was called , installed over 4 @, @ 500 feet (1 @, @ 400 m) of masonry from Morrison to Idledale at points where previous floods had damaged the roadway .

From 1923 through the early 1930s , the SH 74 designation was from Echo Lake at what is now an intersection between SH 103 and SH 5 east along Squaw Pass Road to Bergen Park . From here , it followed its current designation to Morrison . SH 74 was paved from Morrison to Evergreen using an oil surface resembling asphalt in late 1928 . This oil surface , which was approximately 1 inch (25 mm) deep , prevented erosion along the roadway in the Bear Creek canyon during floods . By 1938 , the section west of Bergen Park was redesignated as SH 68 , and SH 74 was turned northward to US 40 . The east end was extended into Denver along Alameda Avenue by 1947 . This section terminated at what was then SH 87 in Denver . In 1956 , the Colorado State Highway Department opted to realign sections of SH 74 away from Bear Creek . A section of the road between Evergreen and Kittredge was resurfaced and widened the next year . By then , US 285 replaced the eastern segment , and the terminus of the route was cut back to its original and current terminus in Morrison . Construction on I @-@ 70 through the region was completed in 1972 and included an interchange at El Rancho at the northwest end of SH 74 . During the 1990s , CDOT sought to further upgrade SH 74 from I @-@ 70 to Evergreen to an expressway . Work on this project began in 1993 to improve the interchange between Evergreen Parkway and I @-@ 70 and widen the roadway to its current state , costing CDOT \$ 8 million .

= = Major intersections = =

The entire route is in Jefferson County .