



# Family Bike Ride Recommendations

Take the family out on some of our great nearby biking paths. To make your planning easier, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

## Be sure to bring these necessities along on your ride:

- Helmet
- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Map and route directions
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Tire mini-pump or CO2
- Spare tube or patch kit
- Tire levers

For a complete cycling checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.



## Here Are Four of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Bike Rides

### Bear Creek Lake Park—Mt. Carbon Loop

Terrain: **Paved trail**

Distance: **7-mile loop; 200 feet of elevation gain.**

**Why This Ride:** Great views from the top of Mt. Carbon, and a park filled with fun activities and an array of wildlife, make this a perfect place for the family to spend the whole day.

**Ride Description:** Pick up the cement trail in the beach area and travel east through the campground and then up to the top of Mt. Carbon. From here you'll have a wonderful view of the Foothills and Rocky Mountains. On a clear day, you may even be able to see Pike's Peak to the south. From Mt. Carbon, stay on the bike trail as it meanders through the public golf course. This is followed by a slightly steep climb to the top of the dam. The trail meets up with the road and continues west along Bear Creek to the park entrance. Follow the bike trail over the bridge, southeast back to the beach area.

**Driving Directions:** Take I-70 west to C-470 and then go south to the Morrison Road exit. At the bottom of the ramp, turn left and get in the right hand lane. The park entrance is 500 feet on the right. Continue on to the parking area in the south side of the park, near the beach. There is a \$4 park entrance fee.

**Tips:** Bring your swimsuit and take a post-ride dip to cool off. There are numerous restrooms located throughout the park.

### Sand Creek Regional Greenway

Terrain: **Soft surface/packed dirt**

Distance: **14-mile trail, determine your own trip length. No elevation gain.**

**Why This Ride:** The trail winds through a diverse environment that includes mature neighborhoods, new development and natural habitat. Great birdwatching. Since 2004, REI has partnered with the Sand Creek Regional Greenway to help restore this urban area into a wonderful family recreation area.

**Ride Description:** The Sand Creek Regional Greenway (known as "Wilderness in the City") is a jewel in the necklace of trails that has made the metropolitan Denver area a national model for developing a linked regional trail system. This almost 14-mile public greenway connects the High Line Canal in Aurora with the Platte River Greenway in Commerce City. Along the way, it passes through Denver and the former Stapleton International Airport site, as it runs along beautiful Sand Creek. There are multiple street access points, and there are trailhead parking lots at the following places: Platte River Greenway trailhead, south of the Pepper Riparian Area (at Vazquez and Dahlia), near the Urban Farm (at the west end of Smith Road, just off of Havana), at Sand Creek Park (off Peoria, at the Fitzsimmons Golf Course) and the Morrison Nature Center (off Smith Road, between Chambers Road and Airport Boulevard). Pick a spot that's close to you and ride! Though the trail is 14 miles long, you can create an itinerary and length that works for you.

**Driving Directions:** The trailheads mentioned above are all accessible from I-270, I-70 and I-225. Download a trail map from [www.sandcreekgreenway.org](http://www.sandcreekgreenway.org) to help plan your trip. Parking is free in the trailhead lots.

**Tips:** Check out the Urban Farm, where you can see a real farm—horses, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits, pigs, llamas and more. There are a few portable restrooms along the route.

## Waterton Canyon

Terrain: **Improved gravel road**

Distance: **12 miles roundtrip, out-and-back. Minimal elevation gain.**

**Why This Ride:** The wide gravel trail along the trout-filled South Platte River, and possible wildlife sightings, make this a perfect family ride through scenic Waterton Canyon.

**Ride Description:** The trail leaves the Waterton Canyon Recreation Area and begins a very gentle climb toward the Strontia Dam. You'll be traveling on what is basically a well-maintained unpaved road, so it's broad enough for families to ride side by side. The road hugs the South Platte River (a favorite for local trout fisherman) as it meanders through the steep canyon walls. Look for mountain sheep and deer that call the pine forests along the canyon home. You can go as far as you have the energy for, and decide your own turnaround point; or go all the way to where the road ends (and a singletrack begins) at the 6-mile mark. The ride back slopes gently downhill, so it'll be more of a cruise, if you are a little tired.

**Driving Directions:** Go south on Wadsworth Boulevard past Highway 470. This becomes South Platte Canyon Road. Turn left on Waterton Road and go a half mile to the parking lot on the left hand side. Parking is free.

**Tips:** There are numerous riverside picnic tables along the way, so plan to have your lunch on the trail. There is a restroom at the canyon entrance and one about 3 miles further up the trail.

## Lair O' the Bear Park—Bear Creek Trail

Terrain: **Crushed gravel**

Distance: **4 miles roundtrip, out-and-back; 30 feet of elevation gain.**

**Why This Ride:** This easy off-road ride is nice and shady and follows beautiful Bear Creek for 2 miles up a canyon.

**Ride Description:** Pick up the trail from the parking lot. It begins from the north side of the Ouzel Bridge and parallels Highway 74 for a short stretch before dipping down to the river. You'll notice short offshoot trails as you ride but some of these do not allow bikes, so be sure to stay on the Bear Creek Trail. Notice how the plant and trees you encounter change as you go further up the canyon. If you're there in the morning or evening you may even see a beaver working away in the forest. And definitely look for a small, wren-like bird that the bridge at the trailhead is named after—the water ouzel—which hops and bobs along the stream's rocks, occasionally diving in for some food. Shortly after the trail crosses the creek and runs along the south bank, you will come to the park boundary, which is the turnaround point. Ride back the way you came.

**Driving Directions:** Take I-70 west to C-470 and then get off at the Morrison Road exit. Go west on Colorado Highway 74 through the sleepy town of Morrison. Approximately 4 miles past Morrison, the park will be on your left. There is free parking in the large parking lot at the bottom of the drive.

**Tips:** To get fueled up before your ride, grab breakfast at the Country Road Café, located on the south side of Highway 74, in the heart of Kittredge. There are no restrooms at the park.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit [www.rei.com/PEAK](http://www.rei.com/PEAK) for more information.



**First Saturday in June** The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) for more information.