

Roaring Fork Valley Water History

Compiled from Aspen Historical Society, Frontier Historical Museum, and other timelines

- **Pre-1860** Native American Utes inhabit the valley and most of western Colorado and eastern Utah. They number at most 6,000 and are hunter-gatherers, spending summers in the high mountains and winters in the valleys, in places such as the Yampah Hot Springs at Glenwood Springs.



- **July 23, 1860** Captain Richard Sopris “discovers” the (Glenwood) Hot Springs.
- **1879** James Landis first to settle in Glenwood Springs and first owner of the Hot Springs. Around same time, Isaac Cooper comes to the area by way of Aspen. Cooper dreamed of a resort for the Hot Springs.
- **1880** Miners settle Carbonate on the Flat Top Mountains.
- **1881** Fort Defiance set up at Grand Springs, now Glenwood Springs.
- **September 4, 1881** Ute Reservation lands in Western Colorado open to entry and settlement.
- **February 10, 1883** Garfield County established and Carbonate named county seat.
- **August 25, 1885** Glenwood Springs incorporated. Mrs. Isaac Cooper changes the town name from Defiance to Glenwood Springs for her hometown in Glenwood, Iowa.
- **1885** Aspen opens first municipal hydroelectric power plant west of the Mississippi.
- **1886** Aspen city water system turned on for first time.
- **1887** Denver and Rio Grande Railroad comes to Glenwood Springs and Aspen.
- **1887** Coal mining begins in Redstone, marble mining begins in Marble.
- **1887** Weekend laundry trains bring miners from Leadville down to bathe and do laundry in Hot Springs.
- **1887** Cardiff Townsite established (3 miles south of Glenwood) and becomes a coking community.
- **1887** Frying Pan Junction established and name later changed to Basalt in 1901.
- **November 8, 1887** John “Doc” Holiday dies of consumption in Glenwood Hotel.
- **December 12, 1887** Colorado Midland Railroad comes to Glenwood Springs and reaches Aspen in 1888.
- **1888** The Natatorium and Pool, fed by the Hot Springs, completed.
- **January 31, 1888** Carbondale incorporated and named in honor of Carbondale, Pennsylvania, original home of early settlers.
- **1891** Von Rosenberg's bridge across the Colorado River at Glenwood Springs dedicated.
- **1891** Aspen becomes the largest silver production region in the U.S., producing about 1/6th of the nation's silver and 1/16th of the world's silver.
- **1892** An entire passenger train buried in Glenwood Canyon by snow for two days.
- **1893** Hotel Colorado completed. Silver devalued beginning silver mining crash in Aspen.
- **1898** First Strawberry Days celebration to share strawberry crops with neighboring towns.
- **1900** Colorado Telephone Company starts linking Glenwood Springs to Aspen and installs wall telephones within the city of Glenwood Springs.
- **1902** Shoshone hydroelectric power plant files for water rights with the state. Becomes oldest major water right on the Colorado River near Glenwood Springs.

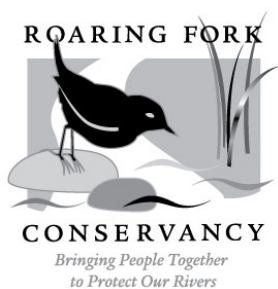




- April 15, **1905** President Theodore Roosevelt begins his bear hunt on the Flat Tops.
- **1909** Colorado attains first rank among states in irrigation area with 2,790,000 acres under irrigation.
- **1912** Gambling banned by state law. Lincoln Transcontinental Highway, including Taylor State Road through the Glenwood Canyon was named.
- **1914** Grand (Colorado) River Canyon officially renamed Glenwood Canyon by Garfield County.
- **1917** Potatoes become the valley's cash crop.
- **1920** Prohibition begins with the Volstead Act and the 18th Amendment. Saloons and houses of prostitution were closed. "Roaring Twenties" brought gangsters such as "Diamond Jack" Alterie to town.
- **1924** Glenwood Springs purchased Hanging Lake and the surrounding 700 acres of White River National Forest for use as a city park.
- **1926** Tom Mix, cast, and film crew arrive in Glenwood Springs to film "The Great K&A Train Robbery".
- **1934** CCC camp set up for 240 boys who worked on the roads and White River

National Forest project building campgrounds and forest roads.

- **1934** Brush cleared for Red Mountain Ski Area.
- **1935** Prohibition repealed; bars open in hotels and restaurants.
- August **1938** Highway 6 & 24 opens after two years of construction to replace the Taylor State Road and Highway 40.
- **1946** Skiing opens officially on Aspen Mountain on December 14th.
- **1948** Holiday Hills ski area near Glenwood becomes popular; later becomes Sunlight Ski Area.
- **1950** Aspen hosts the 1950 FIS World Alpine Championships.
- **1951** New ski lift placed on Red Mountain ski area in Glenwood.
- **1953** Bridge across Colorado River in Glenwood replaced.
- **1962** U.S. Forest Service approves controversial Ruedi Dam project.
- **1967** Snowmass Ski Area opens. First snowmaking on Aspen Mountain.
- **1968** Ruedi Dam completed and reservoir begins to fill.
- **1974** U. S. Department of Interior opens bids for 20-year leases on oil shale in northwestern Colorado ushering in another oil boom.
- May 1, **1982** Black Sunday; Exxon closes its Colony Oil Shale project in western Colorado, leaving 2,200 people without employment, and resulting in an estimated 10,000 lost jobs in the state.
- October 4, **1992** BLM dedication ceremony for the Ute Trail Dotsero Trailhead.
- **1992** Interstate 70 completed through Glenwood Canyon.



- July 6, **1994** Fourteen firefighters killed on Storm King Mountain.
- **1996** Roaring Fork Conservancy established to preserve and protect the Valley's rivers.
- **2001** Roaring Fork Watershed Collaborative formed and begins working towards a comprehensive Watershed Plan for the valley.
- **2002** Low snowpack during the winter translates into a very dry summer. Sections of the Roaring Fork River in Aspen dry up. Legislation over next few years addresses emergency loans to keep water in the rivers.

ROARING FORK CONSERVANCY

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