

# Denver, Leadville & Gunnison Railway Rotary Snowplow Park



In the years before there were snowplows as we know them, there were rotary snowplows, huge machines whose giant, snow-blowing and -cutting fans or blades cleared narrow-gauge railroad tracks, throwing snow 30 feet away on both sides of the rails. These behemoths relied on as many as four to six steam-driven locomotives to push them up the steep grades of Boreas and Fremont passes, for the rotaries' boilers were used solely to turn their circular blades.

The rotary snowplow you see in the Breckenridge Rotary Snowplow Park is not the one used by the Colorado & Southern Railway to get from Como to Breckenridge via Boreas Pass; the track, however, runs on the original right-of-way. This 108-ton snowplow, built in 1901 for the White Pass and Yukon Route in Alaska, is the 61st such machine made by the Cook Locomotive and Machine Company of Patterson, N.J. It operated in Alaska as the White Pass Rotary #2 until 1963, when it was replaced by bulldozers. It sat in the White Pass Yards in Skagway, Alaska, until 1977 when it was purchased and moved to Baker, Oregon, by Sumpter Valley Railroad Restoration, Inc. The present-day Denver, Leadville & Gunnison Railway bought the snowplow in 1988 and moved it to Denver where it underwent repairs at the Regional Transportation District's Burkhardt Shops. Six months later, the restored rotary was moved from Denver via Hoosier Pass to Breckenridge. This snowplow is one of only five known narrow-gauge rotaries in existence. The car behind it is the coal tender. Behind the tender are two Colorado & Southern boxcars. Also in the park are interpretive signs and a historic cabin in which videos and exhibits are available.

The Denver, South Park & Pacific, nicknamed the South Park Line, started in 1873; it brought rail service to Breckenridge in 1882. Reorganized into the Denver, Leadville & Gunnison in 1889, the company later merged into the Colorado & Southern Railway. That line operated until 1937. The tracks were dismantled in 1938.



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**Directions:** The Rotary Snow Plow is located near the intersection of Colorado Highway 9 (Main Street, Breckenridge) and Boreas Pass Road. From Blue River Plaza in the center of Breckenridge, proceed south on Main Street (toward Hoosier Pass and Fairplay) approximately one-half mile to the stoplight at Boreas Pass Road. A Conoco gas station is on the right (west) side of the road. Turn left onto Boreas Pass Road and make an immediate right turn into the Rotary Plow Park parking lot.