



## **Intrinsic Paths Walking Route:**

### **Fort Collins to Pueblo, Colorado**

(200-230 Miles)

*...routes made to inspire engaged contemplation*

Drafting (Updated 12/16/2019)

A unique urban, suburban, rural, open space, foothill and creek side walking experience along much of Colorado's front range. Colorado's front range is home to 80% of the state's population, ranging in incomes, races, classes, religion, politics, and so much.

#### **Why this route?**

To inspire personal mental and emotional healing, nature connection, and body-based learning related to all that moves outside of walls, screens, and cars. This route is intentionally designed to be taken by foot and to integrate day-to-day urban, suburban, and rural life. Walking through open space trail, in residential neighborhoods, on urban commercial corridors, across hills and valleys, and along historic main streets threads a story of life and people that few activities can. In its best, this will be an inner and outer journey drawing you to become a more contemplative, available, unhurried, and open human being in this world. I know because I've walked through it, because I've walked with it.

#### **A Way of Walking Culture & Intrinsic Paths:**

A Way of Walking routes are created to help people fall more in love with who they are, with one another, and with the world around them. Each route is scouted and developed by Jonathon Stalls of Intrinsic Paths. Intrinsic Paths, much like the hope living in each of these routes, is to inspire a 'way of being' more than checking a box, completing a new goal, or reaching any one geographic destination. There is a subtle and consistent stream of hope underneath every word and route in this series centered on bringing your unique journey closer and closer to a more profound connection with all that is – both within and in outside world. You are made to move this way. You are made to be in the outside world. You are made to be moving. You are made to be more in touch with all that deeply connects you to the Universe, to nature, and to fellow being.

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## Part 1: Invitation & Intention

### Honor & Humility

Each morning and whenever possible, I encourage you **to honor the Ute, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, Jicarilla Apache, Anasazi, and Cheyenne tribes** that walked and revered the land on which this route was created. Their lives, traditions, and ways of being live in the soil, the trees, the wind, the sun, the eagle, and the water. Invite their wisdom to ground your steps and humble your ways. Invite their wisdom to bring all of us to our knees around the harm, violence and injustice living in our country's relationship to tribal communities and to Mother Earth. Rise in humility with the day. Rest in humility with the night.

### Engaged Contemplation:

Like calm streams and rushing rivers, engaged contemplation invites us to deepen our inner journey while also deepening our engagement in the world around us. Engaged contemplation encourages us to live a life that is committed to helping make our world (people and planet) a healthier and more loving place while also investing in one's inner peace, healing, and wellbeing. Engaged contemplation is a practice, a stance, a way of being. It asks us to move quietly and patiently (perhaps for miles and miles) with our deepest thoughts and emotions. Moving in this way recognizes discomfort as a vital part of the human journey; therefore, it is imperative that any notion of control fixation on entertainment is laid to rest in preparation. This practice embodies a stance of being deeply open and available to our planet and and those we share it with, as they are and as it is. Engaged contemplation asks us to move through the world with less fear, less disconnection, less escaping, less locking doors, less judgment, less superiority, less bypassing, and less separation. We belong to one another, we belong to our deep truths, and we belong to the Earth that sustains life as we know it.

### Exposure:

Intrinsic Paths walking invitations encourage movement with more exposure. Exposure to people and the elements - both internal (sweat, skin, fluids, soreness, callus) and external (rain, heat, storms, night). Exposure to all that moves and swirls within. Exposure to the unknown, to instinct, and to not needing an overly detailed plan. Human scale exposure to car-centric culture, high-speed roadways, and to the design of our neighborhoods, communities, streets, and villages. These invitations are designed to allow the spaces between your heart, gut, past, present, pain, memories, and even trauma to move with you in healing and restorative ways - between your walls, screens, and automobiles - between the

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differences that live with those around you (class, age, ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, politics) – between all the mysteries and blessings of the natural world. These walking invitations will cost you. Growing and shedding old skins will cost us. Radical love, caring for our planet, and healing our wounds will cost us. Let's boldly move into the costs, together.

### **Pedestrian Dignity:**

Honoring the experience of those who have no choice but to be walking or using a wheelchair is an anchor to each Intrinsic Paths walking invitation. The violence, chaos, planet devastation, and deeply inequitable system of car-first transportation is hurting all of us, especially those in our midst who live caught in the spray of speed, pollution, and human separation. Everyday people who depend on walking are facing the tireless challenges of concrete jungles that consider the pedestrian experience an afterthought (or no thought at all). As you walk, be mindful of your experience and ask yourself, “what would this be like if I had to walk it every day to get to the store, to school, to the library, to work, to the bus?” Imagine rain, snow, thunderstorm, hail, flooding, nighttime, with children, with elders, with any number of disabilities... Imagine what it would feel like to share steps with strangers, to have more vendors, markets, plazas, public restrooms, benches, areas with shade, public art, and space to breathe outside of large paved streets with cars zooming by. It is extremely intentional that each Intrinsic Paths walking invitation incorporates significant walking time along, on and through challenging pedestrian corridors. While trails, parks, and nature paths bring us needed peace, healing and connection, the higher traffic streets bring us awareness, wisdom and solidarity with one of our most complex shadows in this time. Consider Pedestrian Dignity in each step. Take photos, tell stories, and be an advocate for this sacred, human way of Being with oneself, with one another, and with the world around us.

### **Healing Movement:**

Many of these segments have long stretches without towns, running water, benches, food, or intentional resting areas. Moving for miles and miles on stretches like this has the capacity to open up your inner landscape like no other. While there might be strong physical challenges (heat, exhaustion, aches), there are profound opportunities to move deeper and deeper within. Consider and be open to the healing nature of unhurried movement. Take plenty of breaks, rest under the shade of trees, sit in the dirt, and allow your inner journey to take a more prominent place in your awareness and presence throughout your walk. Hold your inner journey with care and with grace. Write, sing, shout, and express in whatever way feels natural and freeing. We are made to move and process emotion, stress, passion, dreams, and so much more in this way. Trust, trust, trust.

### **Ways of Walking – Deepening & Widening Your Journey**

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While scouting and creating the route from Fort Collins to Pueblo, CO, I began to put together a 12-week virtual workshop aimed at guiding people into 12 themes that might stir, shake up, and open their hearts and eyes to just how meaningful and critical our most inherent way of getting around really is. Whether it's before you walk, while you walk, or after you walk, consider having this virtual invitation alongside. Each invitation comes with a video or audio invitation, practices that can accompany your walks, a walking assignment, and resources connected to each theme. I use Patreon to host and help hold much of my creative work including all the time and heart that went into scouting, designing and shaping this route for the public. If you are interested in using the Ways of Walking workshop as a part of your planning and preparation to walk the Fort Collins 2 Pueblo route while also being a part of a growing community of Patrons coming alongside this creative work, please consider joining the Intrinsic Paths Patreon community here: [www.patreon.com/intrinsicpaths](http://www.patreon.com/intrinsicpaths). Search #WaysofWalking inside of Patreon and you should find the first "Welcome" post that was launched on July 1, 2019. You can start, visit, and revisit each of the themes however you like. They are structured to be weekly, so you might consider a 12-week preparation process before heading out on the route! If you like, after you sign-up as a Patron, you can me send a private message noting that you are wanting to move through the Ways of Walking workshop. I can then send you a private message with everything organized in a way that will make navigating much easier.

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## Part 2: (Some) Physical Preparation & Route Planning

### Route Options & Segments:

As you browse through the various routes I've outlined below, you can obviously adapt, add, edit, and change any detail you like. Since this is not a popular, recognized, or marked route by any means, there is no exact way to go. I am simply giving you a rough guide to how I chose to navigate this journey within 12-days (mostly direct North to South). You could very easily make this into a 15, 18, or 20 day experience, winding East and West in various directions to take advantage of additional open space trails, nearby towns that didn't make the route I've provided, and other destinations or areas you might want to see. You will notice that for each "Day" marked below that I have not included turn by turn guidance. I wanted to give rough shape while encouraging people to build their intuitive wisdom center. Trust yourself. Trust what you are sensing. Trust what calls to you. Trust what feels threatening or unsafe. It's so important to have more and more people feeling guided by and meaningfully connected to their deep intuition.

- [More on Segment Walking](#): There is NO rule for needing to ever imagine doing the entire route in one go. Break up the route. Break up the days. Consider two-day segments over the weekend. Consider four-day segments that make the most sense for transportation getting you back to your starting point or leaving you close to transit. Consider making this route into a fourteen- or fifteen-day walking experience breaking up a few of the longer days. Consider coordinating with friends or family members to make this a seasonal 12-week or year-long walking adventure (one segment a week or one segment a month). Feel blessed to use this as a starting block for adapting and making it yours. I will say, if you are open to it, doing the full twelve + day route in one go *is magical!*

### (Some) Planning & Preparation:

I find that what goes on in our mind, in our fears, and in our own unique reservoirs of insecurity feed so much of what might block us from (A) ever considering this kind of walking experience and (B) being as present and available as possible, without too many hard boundaries, barriers, or goal posts. Consider these. Allow them to move in you.

1. [Letting go of outcomes](#): Be as open as you can for what shows up along your walking journey. Your body might demand rest. Your mind might need a more patient pace to process what is next or what it is coming up as you walk. Your heart might fall into a conversation, festival, or sunset that you just can't walk away from. While I recommend generally moving (with many beautiful breaks) until you get to your destination, there is so much room to toss things up and rearrange if needed. Make a call. Ask a friend. Engage a stranger for support.

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2. **Where to Start:** North to South made the most sense to me since I wanted the Fountain to Pueblo route (26 + Miles) to be towards the end. I wanted my body to feel ready, open, and with as much capacity as possible. That said, many hikes and walks all over the world start with some of the heaviest and hardest days right at the beginning. I have designed (drawn) the routes to move North to South, so if you feel you will follow these routes closely, then that might be your best option.
3. **Packing & Gear:** I won't get overly detailed here as you can find plenty of good resources, videos, and guides on how to best pack and plan your gear. I will offer some essentials:
  - a. (1) **Comfortable shoes:** Shoes that work well for YOUR feet during longer distance walks. For this route, I recommend a shoe that is a cross between a cross-trainer and hiking boot (see Northface Ultra). Something sturdier than walking shoes, but not as clunky or heavy as boots. If you are unsure of what shoes to get, visit a local shoe place and go through a process of trying them on, working them out, and giving them a solid 1-2 day trial. If there is any rub that feels uncomfortable, drop them and keep looking. Rubs create blisters and pain points over time on long walks.
  - b. (2) **Non-cotton socks:** Cotton holds water and doesn't dry fast. It makes rubbing worse and it can be painful and uncomfortable as your feet sweat. Your feet need to breathe. Any hiking, walking, or athletic sock should be fine. Be sure to have several pairs and consider changing them out halfway throughout the day. Fresh socks halfway through a long day of walking does wonders.
  - c. (3) **Rain jacket and backpack cover:** rain protection is magic when you are walking long routes, plus it can be exhilarating to walk in the rain! A light cover (some packs come with them built in) for your backpack is smart. I don't know that it's necessary, but waterproof (GORETEX) shoes and rain pants are also good options for you to feel dry and free to walk in heavy rain.
  - d. (4) **Shorts & shirts:** Non-cotton shorts, pants, and shirts. Same note as for socks. Don't overdo this. Bring just a few items and get used to washing them and perhaps drying them over night or on your pack as you walk. You don't need to have a full outfit for every single day. You want to keep your backpack as light as possible.
  - e. (5) **First-aid & blisters:** A simple first-aid kit will do. This will help in case you get bitten, scratched up, cut or anything else along the way. They usually run about \$20. I would also get a few extra Band-Aids, an extra safety pin or two with alcohol rubs, and some moleskin for blister care in case blisters make their way along your journey. Everyone has a different approach to blisters. I have developed a pretty good system. You will find yours. Be open.
  - f. (6) **Phone charger:** Portable battery phone chargers have been wonderful as my phone tends to drain more in the heat. I charge them if I have power overnight and then they hold a little more than a full charge for halfway through the day. Totally optional of

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course, especially if you are intending to stay offline and disconnected to tech on your walk.

- g. (7) Backpack: A backpack that has a solid waist clip and chest clip. The waist band is critical as it helps to hold the majority of the weight on your hips and not on your high back, neck and shoulders. The smaller chest clip is a good feature as well as it balances out weight distribution. If you are unsure about your backpack and you want to invest in one that fits you well, go to an outdoor store and ask for help with backpack fitting. If you are carrying camping equipment, you want to make sure you feel great about backpack comfort.
  - h. (8) Water & sun care: water containers/bottles, sunscreen, sunglasses, sun hat, and maybe an umbrella are very important to keep yourself hydrated and safe from sun. (9) Having a walking stick (or poles), compass, whistle, binoculars, small butane cookstove with instant coffee/soup/foods, and a quick dry towel are all things you might want to consider as well.
4. Where will I stay? I find that this is one of the most complex barriers, and for good reason, that keeps people from intuiting journeys like this more often. We marked, fenced, and blocked off almost all of our land as either Private or Public with zero camping/staying of any kind. This tension is an important one to move with and face as you consider your walk. I've outlined four different frames for how you might plan or prepare yourself:
- a. (Full Tent Set-up) Spot Camping & Full Flow: Bring a lightweight tent, a tarp, a sleeping bag, an air pad, and see what happens. You could find yourself under trees in parks, nestled in highway underpasses, along ditches and areas that get lost in sight throughout the night. You might also meet folks along your path where you are invited to stay or camp on their property. Be mindful of all the risks and possible outcomes. In most areas along this route, Spot Camping would be illegal. You might get woken up. You might get ticketed. That said, this kind of exhilaration and connection to our true ceiling might be exactly what your deep spirit needs. I have done this more than I can count. I have never gotten a ticket; however, I have been woken up and asked to move several times. Experiencing life this way has given me a deep heart for those who have no choice but to sleep outside OR they choose to sleep outside because the shelters that are available to them feel unsafe and unhealthy.
  - b. (Full Tent Set-up) Engaging Strangers & The Community: While carrying your tent, sleeping bag, and pad, source your deep inner courage to break through social norms to engage people in the public with options and questions around where you might rest for the night. Go into the conversation with confidence, humility and curiosity for connection and guidance. Share with who are speaking to (people sitting outside of a care, someone watering their garden, a bank teller, gas station employee) what you are doing and why. You might ask them directly, "Would you at all be open to having me pitch my tent on your property?". Another path would be to call or stop into the local

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dispatch (not 911) or a local firehouse and ask them for guidance. You will be surprised what options might turn up!

- c. (Optional Tent Set-up) Pre-planning with Friends, Friends of Friends, and Community: This option takes a little more time on the front end. Reaching out to your inner circle of friends and letting them know what areas you are walking to and seeing if they can host you or if they know anyone in the area who they could make a call to. You can also make phone calls to local organizations, churches, and other charitable groups to see if they have any way to support you while you are on your journey.
  - d. (No Tent Needed) Airbnb, Hostels, Hotels: Most of this route has hotel, B&B, and AirBnB options at each finishing location. That said, if you are ending the route early or breaking your days up, you want to be sure you have options for getting to and from your destinations. When I scouted the route, I chose not to tent as I wanted to write each day's experience afterward. I pre-booked on Airbnb 8 out of 12 days. The other four days I stayed with friends. On Day 11 (long walk into N Pueblo) I had a friend who lives in Pueblo drive and pick me up at mile 24 and my final walk into downtown Pueblo was 10 miles. Get creative and be open!
5. What to eat? If you are doing this route in segments, you should be just fine pre-packing all that you will need. If you are doing the full route as one walking experience, and especially if you have specific dietary restrictions, you will have to get clever for what you pick up, how much, and where you might have to go to restock. The drawn routes provided are very simple and have little location-specific detail. That's intentional. I crave for walkers to have their own intuitive experiences – seeing, discovering, and opening possibilities on their own. That said, I have imperfectly marked general commercial areas (stores, cafes, gas stations) with the pencil cross marks. If you can, feel free to zoom in and mark your route with specific grocery locations along the way so you know where you might need to turn off to get what you need. You can also have a friend (or if you get creative, do it yourself before the trip) to cache/dig/hide food in unique places along your route. When I was walking across the USA, I asked people who were driving by if they could pick up a few things for me on their way bag and dig a hole at mile marker 126. It was such a gift to unearth my treasure after a long day's walk. Almonds, dried figs, peanut butter, and protein bars are gold. You want to replenish your body with the best of things and a lot of them Get creative. Be open. Invite people in!
6. Water! Drink more water than you think you need. Colorado is very HIGH altitude so be extra attentive to when you're feeling light-headed. It is often because you are dehydrated. Have extra water storage and never pass up an opportunity to fill up. If you are extra sensitive to this, you might consider a few water filtering devices or tablets just in case (running water only as still/standing water, even with filtering can make you very sick).
7. Shuttling, Lyfts, and Transit: As you can imagine, there are many ways you can coordinate getting dropped off, picked up, and shuttled as you move along:

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- a. (1) Bus & Train: If you are doing the full route North to South, you can get a bus from Denver up to Fort Collins (stay in Fort Collins) and then take off early the next morning. When you finish in Pueblo, you can plan to stay in Pueblo and take a bus from Pueblo back to Denver. If you familiarize yourself with transit on Google Maps you can also use your smartphone and or computers at local libraries to help you navigate various options for getting from place to place.
- b. (2) Lyft & Taxis: As you can imagine, this is an option especially in more urban metro areas like Fort Collins, Longmont, all of the Denver Metro, Colorado Springs and even Pueblo. Consider this for those really long days when you need to honor your body, stop, rest, and get to your destination. You can discern getting dropped off back at where you were picked up or being okay with skipping a few miles and starting at the beginning of the next day's route.
- c. (3) Coordinating Friends & Family: Consider asking people you know who live near where you will walking or assigning friends to be your 'support crew' for a specific day or series of days and they can be 'on-call' to come get you and move you to where you might need to go at any given point. It's a great dance to ask for help, connect with your people in meaningful ways, and be patient for when/if they are available.
- d. (4) Engaging Community: Similar to camping and sleeping, move into intentional conversations with people in the public realm. Ask people for help. Consider hitching a ride. Be open to breaking all the fear we've been conditioned to carry about strangers.

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## Part 3: Daily Summaries

*Naveed Heydari was the first person to journey from Fort Collins to Pueblo by foot using our guide and maps. You will see some of his notes italicized below each daily summary for additional invitation, tips, and encouragement.*

### Day 1: Fort Collins to Loveland (16-18 Miles)

I love how rivers intersect and connect to towns and cities. For that reason, I've encouraged folks to consider starting in Lee Martinez Community Park. There is a beautiful and mostly tree-covered trail alongside the Poudre la Cache river as you enter the heart of historic downtown Fort Collins. I also have the route going right through the open plaza. Change it up as you need to! You will make your way down and around College avenue, notice the alley just before the oval. There's a great, but often crowded, coffeehouse called Alley Cat open 24 hours. There is a beautiful tree lined walkway in oval park as you enter Colorado State University. From the university, you can continue to walk through campus, cut over to the historic residential neighborhoods just east of the tracks, or as the route guides, along the Mason Trail. It's fun to see how the university and city have worked together to create a corridor for walking, biking, and transit with the number students going in and out of campus.

When you pass the bus station, you will curve around and make your way towards Fountain Creek Park (you can go a little further south and cross under 287 or you can cut up to 287 and cross more directly onto Fossil Creek Parkway / Fossil Creek Trail). As the Fossil Creek Parkway starts to bend west, take the into/towards Fossil Creek Park. I enjoyed the trail that cuts through the middle of Portner Reservoir. You will eventually go south on Lemay Ave. Stay extra attentive to your own safety as you move on Carpenter Rd on your way west to the 287. Stop at the gas station for snacks and restroom. Once you are moving south on 287, look for a nice break from the highway taking an unmarked "path" along the mature cottonwood trees. You will see them on the east side in between the street and a neighborhood. As you move further south, keep an eye on the west side of the street for a sidewalk, food, commercial needs, and restrooms. As you near Loveland, I've marked a more commercial option taking right into downtown Loveland. The route I've suggested takes you through residential streets winding into downtown Loveland. Be sure to visit The Coffee Tree if it's still open. A great place to wind down. If it's not open, try to catch it in the morning for Day 2.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 1: Fort Collins to Boyd Lake*

*I will offer here that the earlier you break off from the route as it has been planned, the more permission you give yourself to be explorative and break away from the route on future days. It is quite a liberating process. On this day, instead of making it into Loveland, I camped at Boyd Lake. The cost is \$30 per night*

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*and making the reservation can be done very easily online. They have shared bathrooms, shower, electrical outlets and it is a wonderful place for the morning sunrise and evening sunset.*

*To arrive at Boyd Lake, you will stay on Lemay Ave (shown on the map). You will continue until County E 30, take a left (note: this road has no sidewalk and cars are moving somewhat fast) and then at a roundabout head right onto N Co Rd 11. There you will see a path that will take you into Boyd Lake. If you choose not to camp, but rather just extend your Day 1 walking trip follow the path past the campsites and down to the south of the lake. There is a trail with signs that will take you right into Downtown Loveland. I rested at the Loveland Public Library- an outstanding, spacious place.*

### **Day 2: Loveland to Longmont (19-21 Miles)**

From the quiet streets of downtown Loveland, I have you going into and through Fairgrounds Park. There are several paths and ways you can navigate the park. If you have a few extra minutes, consider going down to the creek on the west side to ground, take a few deep breaths, and listen to the rushing water. It can be a great way to start your Day 2 journey. Be extra safe and alert walking on S Taft Ave. Remember, if you can, walk against traffic if there is no sidewalk. As you get into Berthoud, consider walking diagonally through the field of flowers and grasses in Waggener Park. There is no marked path (yet) and it is a nice break from a long stretch on busy Taft. You eventually want to walk east on Mountain Avenue which will take you directly into downtown Berthoud.

Be sure to plan for a good break in Berthoud. It might be an early lunch, but you will be glad you did as there are no public places for food or restroom until you reach the outskirts of Longmont. You might even decide to make this a short day and stay here. It has a great main street with cafés and places to relax. Don't miss the sculptures in Fickel Park. If you decide to go on, be sure to fill up all your water, restock snacks, and use the restroom. You will be on rural roads all the way until you get to Main Street Longmont. You will take 1<sup>st</sup> St / 15 south until it makes a T at County Line Rd E. Go west. You should be staring right at Longs Peak. It's a beautiful rural road with a great view of the mountains. Take your time on the dirt road stretch (N 115<sup>th</sup> St.) – peaceful views, little-no cars. You will be on this for awhile and it will eventually turn into a paved road again. You will eventually get to Ute Highway. You are now entering the outskirts of Longmont. If you really need the restroom, water, or food then consider taking a sharp right (west) and head over to Main Street. If you aren't in crisis, I recommend going through the neighborhood and Clark Centennial Park and then over to Main Street at 9<sup>th</sup> St. Main Street is also the 287. If you can, plan to have dinner in Longmont's historic Main Street district. It's beautiful. Also, notice the pedestrian crossing signal and repurposed alleyways.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 2: Longmont to Berthoud*

*Like my offering above, I offer another way to break free from the route as planned, or from the way I (you) thought I (you) would be doing this. Since I didn't have anywhere to stay in Loveland, I took a bus*

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*using the FLEX line for \$1.25 into Longmont. Rather than take the bus back north to walk south, I just decided I would walk north to Berthoud. I followed the route as described in the guide. It was a magical path. I took my time, I stopped to take in the views, and the smells.*

*By 3pm I was in Berthoud and because this was a day before the Winter Solstice, the sun was leaving shortly. I called it a day (again breaking free from having to finish the route and make it to a destination. Honor the process! There is no getting there. There is no 'there'.) I put my legs up a tree in Fickler Park. And I visited a bakery in Berthoud. They were about to close and gave me 6 bags of the day-old bagels and sourdough bread. Yum!*

*Also, on N 115th street along the dirt road path a long freight train with three locomotives crossed in front of me and came to a stop. All the cars were making U-turns and I had the pleasure (and risk!) of climbing over the stopped train. It is common for there to be at least 2-3 trains and you will see them many times throughout your trip. I walked on the railroad track a few times. I have seen it in movies and have always wanted to try. Just be aware it's technically illegal and there are active trains!*

### **Day 3: Longmont to Louisville (18-20 Miles)**

This route is an almost perfect blend of beautiful greenway trails, village/main street culture, and (somewhat) rural and suburban roadways. Give yourself plenty of time (preferably early morning hours!) to walk and connect with the calming air and feel of the Left Hand Creek Trail (on LoBo Trail) moving from S Pratt Parkway west towards Niwot. Did you know the LoBo Trail is an 18-mile trail going from Longmont to Boulder? You might decide to add an extra day to your trip and go all the way to Boulder. Get creative and forge your path from Boulder to Downtown Louisville on your extra day!

If you stick with the route, be sure to spend some time in the village of Niwot, Colorado. Enjoy nearby parks and stop in the Niwot Market. You have several options as you continue to move south from Niwot. You can take the Dry Creek Trail all the way to Mineral Rd (just be sure to turn left at the Y so you don't go too far west). You can also take 79<sup>th</sup> St south and then take the trail just before reaching Mineral Rd that will take you southwest crossing under Minderal Rd and eventually moving west/southwest along the Boulder and Left Hand Ditch. Look out for the south turn off (Cottontail Trail) crossing the ditch. If you miss it and end up heading due west and eventually on 71<sup>st</sup>, you've gone too far. The Cottonwood Trail eventually runs next to/turns into N 75<sup>th</sup>. You will be on this for awhile. Eventually there is a gas station and a restaurant or two at the intersection of Arapahoe Rd and N 75<sup>th</sup>. Continue going south from Arapahoe on N 75<sup>th</sup> until you get to Baseline. Go east on Baseline (be safe here as traffic is fast and tight with a small shoulder, walk against traffic!). Look for the Callahan Open Space Trail to your right and that will lead you right into (via Centennial Drive) Main Street Louisville. There are several places to rest, eat, and explore once you are in the historic downtown area.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 3: Longmont to Boulder*

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*I veered off the suggested route here as well and continued the Lo-Bo trail into Boulder. It is well marked except when you approach the outskirts of Boulder. It took me through various residential areas. I was able to ask for directions. Also, I asked a friendly neighbor for water, because if you stay on the trail there won't be any places to fill up water (at least in the winter).*

#### **Day 4: Louisville to Olde Town Arvada (16-18 Miles)**

A beautiful route moving through winding streets, residential areas, and alongside big views, spacious open spaces, lakes and regional parks. Enjoy an early morning coffee or tea in downtown Louisville and begin heading out on some busier streets. If you can, notice (and even crawl down into) the street art area under the overpass of Courtesy Rd and the rail tracks. You will have to walk just 1- or 2-minutes left/north on Courtesy Rd to see it all (at the Front St and S 96<sup>th</sup> intersection). Notice the speed of all the people moving around you as you near highway 36. It's an interesting space being a pedestrian where highways, new development, and large open space meet. Feel it. When crossing 36, I prefer the underpass option which is just off of Midway Blvd (you will have to go through the East Flat Iron Circle Park & Ride). There are plenty of places to stop and rest, get food, and use the restroom as you make your way under highway 36 and into the Interlocken / Flat Iron Crossing area. Continue eventually on Interlocken Loop up the hill towards 120<sup>th</sup>/128. Big views start to show up as you scan the front range from the top of where Simms St and 120<sup>th</sup> avenue come together.

Take your time enjoying the view and notice the small airport to the east as you walk down Simms St. Stay on the left side, against traffic as there are no sidewalks on this portion. As you make your way towards the Colorado Hills Open Space, you will see an entrance for a Westminster Off-leash Dog Park area that blends into the open space area. If you like, you can cut into the park area (use the portable restroom if its open!) and use the trails that generally run parallel to Simms St. Once you are on 100<sup>th</sup> going east, look for the entrance to Standley Lake that is further east from the main drive-in entrance. It will be easier for you to navigate the right trails to get yourself on the east side of the lake. They wind down and around into a large flood /detention area just east of the lake. You will notice the trails. Take the trails that bring you down into the flood area, so you make your way south of the lake. You want to avoid the trail spurs that go into the nearby neighborhoods to the east. Once you are past the flood area, the trails will run you right into the lake and you can skirt the edges of the lake as you get closer to 88<sup>th</sup>. Feel free to walk the beach if the water is low and enjoy the view of the lake and Rocky Mountains. As you get to the south side, stay on the newly paved trail cutting the lake. Go under 86<sup>th</sup> Parkway and go up and around to the other side continuing south behind/by the Standley Lake Public Library (if it's open, stop in to fill up water and use restroom!). Continue down Kipling, go east on 72<sup>nd</sup> and enjoy the beautiful views from Majestic View park. Make your way on the residential areas of Garrison and Estes (be extra alert in the small tunnel under the railroad tracks at Oberon. You could also go over to Carr to cross the tracks as well. As you begin to move east towards Olde Town, I recommend winding through Ralston Central Park (following Ralston Creek). Take a right on Old Wadsworth. Enjoy your walk into

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Olde Town Arvada. There are plenty of places to enjoy a meal. There is also a newly open rail train going into Denver.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 4: Louisville to Olde Town Arvada*

*I took a bus from Boulder to Broomfield and walked to my friend's home. As the guide notes above, consider staying and connecting with people you know along the route! From there we found our way west to Standley Lake and then picked up the trail. My friend is in a power stroller and it made me way more attentive of how being in a wheelchair impacts mobility throughout one's day. An extra plug for the public library just south of Standley Lake (restroom, water, rest).*

**Day 5: Olde Town Arvada to Downtown Denver (7-8 Miles) to Littleton (18-20 Miles)**

This route is so full of options, detours, and winding around. Feel complete freedom to go as the wind takes you. I have you starting along Ralston Rd and/or the Ralston Creek Path going east. This path eventually goes over a large white bridge just north of the highway. You will continue east on the Clear Creek (veer left at the Y) and on to Tennyson St. Go right/south on Tennyson which will take you through a great historic main street. You will eventually land on W 32<sup>nd</sup> taking you onto another historic main street and eventually further into the historic Northside (and Highland Park, Potter Highlands, Highland) area of Denver. Walk the alleys if you can and you will notice the 'pocket parks' in the Potter Highlands area. Eventually find your way past Little Man Ice Cream and onto the beautiful pedestrian bridge network in the heart of downtown Denver taking you across I-25, the S Platte River, and eventually the train tracks landing you on Denver's famous 16<sup>th</sup> Pedestrian Mall. Rest and enjoy Commons Park and the river if you can and be sure to stop and see Union Station if you have time. You might decide to break this day up and stay all day in the city.

If you go on toward Littleton, you have several options. (A) Stay along diverse and colorful business districts via the Pedestrian Mall, Civic Center Park and State Capitol and Broadway. (B) Cut some of it out via Cherry Creek trail (which has some great street art/murals). (C) Skip the buzz of the city and move along the South Platte River. Be mindful, sometimes this path is closed with all the construction going on in the city. You will eventually end up on a long, winding journey along the South Platte River. Keep an extra ear for bikes as they can fly down this path. Stop and exit as you need to. You will eventually find yourself in Littleton's historic district with plenty of places to rest, eat, and stay. There is rail moving up and down from Littleton to Denver if you need it.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 5: Olde Town Arvada to Downtown Denver*

*Love the options, the flexibility, the openness to make this day long or short, quiet or loud. Again, my trip was unique because of wanting to walk home (in Lakewood) on Christmas day.*

*The part that confused me the most was towards the beginning, coming in from Ralston creek to meet with Clear Creek trail. You cross over a beautiful white bridge and there are many options after the bridge. Go left at the Y and stay on Clear Creek going east.*

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### Day 6: Littleton to Downtown Castle Rock (24-26 Miles)

If you are up early enough, consider a good breakfast at Toast (opens at 6:30 am!) before heading out on your route. You will hop onto the Mary Carter Greenway Trail along the S Platte River for small bit until you get the Lee Gulch Trail connection. This will go under highway 85 and will wind around a network of parks until you S Broadway. Take S Broadway into the winding roads of the largely suburban community of Highlands Ranch. Go left/east on W Highlands Ranch Parkway. Be sure to take a right on Fairview. There are places to stop, rest, and eat here and just a little further south at Fairview Pkwy and E Wildcat Reserve Pkwy. Be sure to get on Grigs Rd going south from the King Soopers shopping center. This will be your last place to get food, rest, and restrooms for awhile. Keep in mind after E Wildcat Reserve Pkwy, Fairview turns into MacArthur Ranch Rd. You can take a right on Grigs shortly after the intersection from MacArthur Rd.

You will break away from the suburbs once on Grigs, then you will veer right onto Daniels Park Rd. This is a beautiful stretch of road with scenic views and rolling green hills. Be sure to take some time to check out the scenic overlooks once you reach Daniels Park and don't miss the bison that roam all over the park, especially on the east side. You will make your way south (downhill) from Daniels Park (be sure to veer/turn right downhill at the Castle Pins Pkwy intersection). You will eventually land on the 85 Can Am Highway. There is food, restrooms, and a market here. This is a particularly dangerous section for walking. Be extra alert as there are next to no safe places to walk. Notice this tension and do your best to stay clear of traffic while walking on **the left side** (against it). You will eventually make your way under an overpass (N Meadows Drive). From there, continue south on hwy and eventually head up the top of the overpass/ramp (Meadows Parkway) to then cross the 85. You will briefly continue southwest until you connect with the greenway path (down steep hill/ramp) which moves south/southeast along East Plum Creek into Castle Rock. You will take this path all the way into town. Exit the path and use Wilcox to cross I-25 heading into the historic downtown of Castle Rock.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 6: Littleton to Downtown Castle Rock*

*This day was different for me as the previous day I walked by home (Lakewood) and made it to the Bear Creek Trail. Then after a rest day, I took a bus to Wadsworth and Yale and continued my journey on Bear Creek Trail to where it met the South Platte trail. I kept going south all the way on South Platte until right before Chatfield Reservoir (I made it right to C-470 but did not cross). This was the way my body wanted to walk this day. I found it so beautiful and an amazing option for walkers that may have a place to stay in Denver, but not Littleton. I took the Mineral Light rail (C/D lines I believe) back to Denver and the next day I started there. The light rail experience added to my walk and made it a part of my closing and opening rituals of walking.*

*I love the simplicity of the maps, and I find it fascinating that there is always more to add, more to explore. It may have made it better that it was not on the map, and that I got to act like it was my own discovery.*

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*Day "6" Continued: By now this was my true day 8 or 9, and it was at this point that I followed the maps very closely to how they were drawn, so my feedback starts to feel more relevant.*

*Broadway was a bit much for my nervous system and to go from there to Highlands Ranch parkway kept me stimulated even though the latter had fewer cars, they were still whizzing by. There is a wonderful trail right to the south of that road called the Diamond K Trail taking you through Diamond K park. This was an important break from the cars and I am glad I found it.*

*The second half of Grigs road is a dirt road, and the map shows it as black instead of brown. Give an option for trail that moves alongside Daniel Parks Road, but it is separated by barbed wire. So, if you choose to walk the road as I did, you cannot change your mind until another break in the fence, which are not so frequent as you'd think.*

*Also, leaving the park prior to 85 felt more dangerous than the amount of time shown on the map. The downhill in addition to blind corners, with no sidewalk contributed to my experience. I felt a bit safer on 85, even though the cars are louder I was able to have a bit of distance between us compared to the downhill portion before. Instead of heading to the top of the overpass, you can stay all the way left and avoid it all-together. This is a wonderful quiet stretch and little break.*

### **Day 7: Castle Rock to Palmer Lake (19-21 Miles)**

Be sure to fill up with plenty of water and snacks as the first 8-10 miles will be alongside highway I-25 on/near the frontage road. If coming from downtown Castle Rock, take Perry St to Plum Creek Parkway. Go right on Plum Creek Parkway. Before you walk under I-25, I would make your way down to the East Plum Creek and take some nourishing deep breaths by the running water to ground and calm before moving alongside 60-80 mph traffic. This will be a trying stretch. When you pass I-25, you will notice the frontage road that goes south in between I-25 and the railroad tracks. Take this and consider walking as much as you are comfortable on the grassy medians in between the frontage road and railroad tracks. The culverts (metal and concrete tunnels under the highway and the railroad tracks) are great places to take a break from the noise and to rest. They are especially helpful if there is rain or really high temperatures. You will notice most of them down in the ditches. They might look sketchy and unsafe, but you will be surprised how clean and refreshing they can be.

If you want to get off the frontage road for a small bit, consider jumping west/going right at Tomah Rd, shortly after, take a quick left going south on Bear Dance Rd. Be sure to watch for Jellystone Camp and Skyview Lane. Bear Dance Rd will wind to the right and take you through a golf course and add extra miles. To take the short cut, go left onto a smaller road (Skyview Lane) back towards highway. When you get to Skyview road you will pass Jellystone Camp on your right. There is a campground and cabins that you can rent if you choose to cut things short. From Skyview lane and the frontage road you will see a dirt road that continues south. It isn't clear that it goes all the way into Larkspur... and it isn't clear that

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it's the frontage road (in fact, it might still have a Dead-End sign). It (for the most part) does go through. Take that dirt road. You will have small hike up at the end going up near the tracks to connect you with Spruce Mountain Rd and the Larkspur exit off the I-25 interstate. Make your way into Larkspur for rest, food, restroom, and potential lodging. There is also a great town park in case you brought your own food. Continue down Spruce Mountain Road. You will move through large ranch/farm properties and keep an eye for the beautiful horses (some of them will be excited to see you and may run up to the fence to say hi). You will be on this for awhile (longer than what the map is showing). If you're breaking this day up into two or if you are open to a few more miles and wanting more green space, consider the Noe Rd (Greenland Open Space Trail) option. Take it all the way east. You will pass the Spruce Meadows Trailhead. You want to go all the way to Greenland. The trail that is just east of the railroad tracks will take you all the way into Palmer Lake. The faster route, suggested on map, keeps you on Spruce Mountain Rd (which is still beautiful!) all the way into Palmer Lake. If you want some extra miles and a breathtaking view (especially if you're breaking this day up, hike up to Spruce Mountain through the parking lot area when you pass it... it's about 20-30 minutes or less to the top). Also, keep an eye for a great break/rest area under the tracks in an old rock tunnel to the east. Enjoy the restaurants and park as you arrive and rest.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 7: Castle Rock to Palmer Lake*

*It's important to name how challenging it is to walk near a railroad. The rocks are brutal and then the grass below is so steep. This was super challenging in the snow, and without the snow too. I love how you named the underpass retreat areas. So important!*

*Even with the warning to go left at Jellystone Camp, which I never saw, and avoid the golf course, I still went off course a full mile, probably because of blizzard conditions. The left turn really looks like someone's driveway.*

### **Day 8: Palmer Lake to Northern Colorado Springs (17-19 Miles)**

This is a beautiful day full of greenway trail. I would highly suggest getting an early start as the (often) misty morning off of Palmer Lake and the New Sante Fe Regional Trail are stunning and inspiring. You will need to go to (or around) the lake to access the trail. You can essentially take this trail all the way into Colorado Springs from here. As you make your way into Monument, you can quickly pull off on the 105 heading east for coffee, breakfast, water, restrooms and more. You can then join the trail again the same place you left or just a short walk south on Beacon Lane.

You will continue on this trail as long as you want to or need to. I included a more commercial option leaving the trail at North Gate. If you pack plenty of water and food, you might really enjoy all the trail has to offer as it makes its way around the US Air Force Academy Airfield. There are beautiful views throughout the walk. Keep in mind, once you go south of Baptist Road you are essentially moving in/through US Air Force property and they seem strict about staying on the greenway. There is a nice small pond/lake path at Ice Lake with a portable restroom. You will eventually finish the route as the

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trail and Monument Creek cross Woodmen Rd. There are a few restaurants, hotels, and places to rest nearby to the east.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 8: Palmer Lake to No. Colorado Springs*

*The microclimate once you enter in and around Ice Lake area is remarkably different that the start of the day. This was one of my latest nights of walking and I all my fingers and toes were completely frozen. I was a bit scared because there really was not much activity around. I had to push hard to Woodmen road, which was a good build of character.*

### **Day 9: Northern Colorado Springs to Old Colorado City to Southeastern Colorado Springs (14-16 Miles)**

You will continue your journey south on the New Sante Fe Regional Trail (also Pikes Peak Greenway Trail) winding and moving through various neighborhoods and commercial districts of northern Colorado Springs. There are some wonderful park networks that will share the trail corridor after you pass E Filmore St. You will move off the trail going west and uphill on Uintah St (disregard the random black line going south on the map, small error!) to make your way into the historic town of Old Colorado City. Plan to spend some time walking up and down the commercial streets and rows of historic homes nearby. If you have some extra time, you might consider breaking this day up to go a little further west into the historic town of Manitou Springs. You could also catch a bus or Lyft to go up and see it.

As you make your way back east, you will wind up W Bijou St entering downtown Colorado Springs. Take some time to wander and see the downtown corridor. Continue down Tejon St, cross over Fountain Creek and you will eventually make your way on Lake Avenue in Southeast Colorado Springs. There should be plenty of places to stay, eat, and stock up for the big days ahead. While it's not shown on the map, you can also take the Fountain Creek trail all the way from Tejon to where it continues on Day 10. You might make Day 9 or Day 10 a longer day by cutting your route early at Tejon in CO Springs and taking the Fountain Creek trail all the way or take the Fountain Creek trail as long as you want to go. The route on the map shows you a more commercial option with food, places to stay, etc.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 9: N Co Springs to S Co Springs*

*I love the permission you give here. I went straight to Downtown CO Springs first rather than Old Colorado City. I spent all day walking around, drinking kava, getting my ears pierced, watching people ice skate and then my Airbnb was in Old Colorado City that evening.*

*The next day I bussed to Manitou Springs, drank from all 7 fresh springs and walked back to Colorado Springs via the Intemann trail.*

### **Day 10: Southeastern Colorado Springs to Fountain (13-15 Miles)**

Stock up on plenty of snacks and water for today's route! You will move east on Lake Ave, soon to become S Circle Drive (not the 87, wrong info on map!) *Everyone makes mistakes. ; )* While there are definitely ways to scramble your way down to the trail, you might be better off using the store's parking

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lot which brings you right to the trail. Continue following the Fountain Creek on the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail/Fountain Creek Trail. You will be on this trail for a long time (winding through open spaces, through neighborhoods, moving west close to I-25) with little to no options for food, fresh water, or public restrooms. Be sure to use the restroom and stock up on water and food in the morning. Enjoy the views and the mostly quiet terrain.

There is an optional exit to a couple restaurants and gas station as you make your way to the outskirts of Fountain. See the Carson Blvd exit option. You can take this into the nearby neighborhood, visit the cafes, and then return to the trail via the Crews Gulch trail just a short walk south on the 87 Can Am Hwy. The Can Am Hwy eventually turns into N Sante Fe Ave which is the main thoroughfare through Fountain. You can continue walking the commercial, high traffic highway or take the gulch trail back to the greenway. The greenway will guide you through Fountain Creek Regional Park. Look for the exit into Fountain on the southeastern side of the creek. If you notice that you are going directly west at the end of the regional park, you are going away from Fountain. There are hotels on the west side of the highway, so if you are staying in those, add a few extra miles to your walk as it takes a bit to cross over and access them.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 10: S. Co Springs to Fountain*

*I went from Old Colorado City to Fountain which added a few more miles and made this a great prep day for the big desert day ahead.*

### **Day 11: Fountain to Northern Pueblo / University (26-29 Miles)**

*\*Make sure you have enough water, food, and sun care for the journey. This will be your longest day with zero places to fill up and restock once you leave Fountain. There is little to no shade. Take your time. Pace yourself. Take plenty of breaks.*

I highly recommend stopping at the Last Drop Coffee Shop and Café. They are wonderful. Consider sharing with them what you are doing and why! You will make your way on Ohio Ave and onto the small historic Main Street where you will see a library and a few commercial brick buildings. Continue south on Main Street and if you can, enjoy walking in the small open space trail area just east of the road. Enjoy the rural paved roads as you begin your journey to Pueblo.

Be sure to go right onto S Meridian Rd (soon to become Overton Rd) which is a dirt road moving next to fields of cholla cactus as long as the eye can see. You will be surrounded by the heat and unique beauty of pure semi-arid high desert. You will be on this road for a long time. Be opened by it. Wrestle with it. Honor it. Love who you are. Shed old skin. Walk into your new skin. You have what it takes!

Since the final walk into Pueblo is so short, you might consider having a friend or someone you connect with in the community pick you up at a certain mile marker that makes sense to you. You might also keep an eye out for locals to see if they are open to putting up your tent (if you're carrying one). If none

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of these options work, you more than likely won't be able to get a taxi or a lyft here. It would be best to have someone as a support vehicle check on you between mile 18-22 to see how you're doing!

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 11: Fountain to N. Pueblo*

*I left at 3am and did the full trip into Pueblo (33 + miles). A great way to end the final day is to do the whole thing. It felt like an important part of the rite of passage. To witness how all the previous days led to my body and mind strengthening to be able to move quickly on foot, and be present to all that is around me.*

### **Day 12: Northern Pueblo / University to Downtown Pueblo (6-8 Miles)**

You will continue down Overton Rd and you will notice more ranches and eventually more homes. As you get into neighborhoods and even sidewalks, Overton Rd turns into Jerry Murphy Rd. Keep an eye out for a trail going underneath Jerry Murphy Rd. You can stop at one of the local cafés nearby or you can continue the trail which will move parallel to Fountain Creek all the way into downtown Pueblo. Enjoy this path. It has beautiful viewsheds as you make your way into the city.

You can exit the trail early at Highway 50 and walk through Mineral Palace Park as you make your way south into downtown Pueblo. You can also stay on the trail until 8<sup>th</sup> street or 4<sup>th</sup> street. I suggest getting off on 4<sup>th</sup> street as it will bring right into the heart of downtown Pueblo. Notice the streets and take whatever route calls to you. Referencing the map, I have you moving on Main St and eventually Union Ave. Be sure to not miss Gateway Park at the River Walk! It's beautiful. Take the whole loop if you can around this new, beautiful water/trail park. Continue from here down Union Avenue and enjoy the historic row of cafés and shops (I love the Hanging Tree Café!). Continue down Union Avenue all the way to the overpass over the tracks and the Arkansas River. If you have time and are interested, take the stairs down to the Pueblo River trail moving along the river. This is a beautiful area to walk, connect, and reflect on your journey. When I finished and walked out to one of the rocks in the rushing water and I sat in gratitude and celebration for all that I experienced.

*{Notes from Naveed} Day 12: N Pueblo to Downtown Pueblo*

*As you already know, I finished the whole route from Fountain. I would add that taking the trail along Fountain Creek ALL the way to the Arkansas River is a great option addition for those who want to avoid the city and/or see the city after arriving and celebrating at the river. You simply go right (west) at the river and walk into downtown Pueblo. The murals are amazing!*

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