FREE
San Luis Valley
Official Visitors Guide

2021 Summer on the Rio Grande

Southern Colorado

Alamosa County
Conejos County
Costilla County
Mineral County
Rio Grande County
Saguache County

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Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

2021 Summer on the Rio Grande Southern Colorado

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Courtesy Photo

Balloons near Creede
Photo by Keith Cerny

Creede Car Show
Courtesy Photo

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The staff at Valley Publishing bring you the 2021 Summer on the Rio Grande magazine.

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The Monte Vista Journal, The Mineral County Miner, The South Fork Tines, The Del Norte Prospector, The Center Post-Dispatch, The Conejos County Citizen and the SLV Lifestyles

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Events

Photo by Jennifer Alonzo

Art, golf, classic cars and Rodeo

Alamosa County events

Rollin' Deep Car Show, June 20

Head on out to Cole Park on Fathers' Day for the annual Rollin' Deep Lowrider & Custom Carshow — open to all vehicles: all makes, models, and years of cars and motorcycles, along with some custom bicycles. Enjoy live music, vendors and kids activities while checking out the great entries. Info: 719-580-3939, 719-274-5224

Independence Day, July 4

Celebrate our nation's independence in Alamosa, July 4. Begin the day with the Kiwanis pancake breakfast in the San Luis Valley Federal parking lot, then make your way to Main Street for the annual parade. At dusk don't miss the gala fireworks at the fairgrounds. Info: www.alamosa.org

Farmers Market, July 10-Oct. 9 Saturdays

Located in the heart of Alamosa's downtown, the farmer's market includes local growers, certified dairy producers and meat producers. The market has also served as an incubator opportunity for local entrepreneurs who produce baked goods, jams, jellies and a variety of crafts. In addition to the great local produce, the market features cultural events, cooking demos and activities for the whole family. The market runs each Saturday, 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the corner of 6th and State in downtown Alamosa. Info: www.alamosafarmersmarket.org

Bike2Build, July 18-24 virtual

Bike 2 Build is normally a benefit bike ride for Habitat for Humanity designed so riders can experience breathtaking Colorado views and the great expanse of the San Luis Valley, one of the world's largest and highest alpine valleys. This year, the event is going to be a virtual fundraiser with riders making commitments to ride separately on any kind of bike, wherever they are. Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope. Info: www.slvhabitat.org

Beat the Heat BBQ, Brews & Chili, Aug. 6-8

Come check out the San Luis Valley Beat the Heat BBQ, a

Alamosa Live Music Association

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sanctioned Kansas City Barbecue Society and Rocky Mountain Barbecue Association State Championship event, at Alamosa's Cole Park. Enjoy BBQ, beer, and sample a little green chili to wake up your taste buds. Live music all day Saturday with kids' games and family entertainment. Cookers will compete for prizes in chicken, pork, ribs and brisket, all judged by certified Kansas City BBQ Society judges. Events for the public include a kid's Q challenge, steak cook-off, people's choice taste testing, a hogwaller mud run and a cornhole tournament. Info: www.slvbeattheheat.com

Kahler Memorial Golf Tournament, Aug. 14-15

This exciting 36-hole men's stroke play tournament takes place at Cattails Golf Course north of Alamosa on North River Road. Info: www.alamosacattails.com

Alamosa Round UP, Aug. 26-29

The Alamosa Round-UP has been a part of the San Luis Valley Heritage for almost 40 years. With multiple days of exciting events and an Old West Cattle Drive, it is the biggest event in Alamosa.

The 2021 Alamosa Round-UP kicks off Thursday with The High Noon Parade and Cattle Drive, Friday and Saturday Nights bring The Professional PRCA Rodeo, Saturday also includes Cowboy Church. Saturday Night after the Rodeo is the 3rd Annual Round-UP Concert! Sunday Afternoon is The Metal Crashing Demolition Derby!

The Alamosa Round-UP is proud to be a part of such a wonderful community!! The Alamosa Round-UP is supported by The City of Alamosa, The Alamosa Marketing District and over 85 local families and businesses! This truly is Alamosa's Round-UP- Nominated TOP 5 Rodeo of the Year in 2020

Top Cowboys and Cowgirls from around the country as well as future champions don their hats, chap up and put on a show for the fans.

Tickets will be available online for all events and the concert! Combo rodeo/concert packages are also available! Advance Sale Tickets will be available online until Aug. 1- then the prices go up! Info: www.alamosaroundup.com

Early Iron Festival, Labor Day Weekend, Sept. 3-5

The Early Iron Festival is a premier event of Alamosa and the surrounding area, bringing visitors from Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Utah, Kansas and beyond to Cole Park. Alamosa is a true "Hot Rod Town" with the city council setting aside "Early Iron Day" the Saturday before Labor Day. It now draws well over 600 rodders and street car enthusiasts.

This is a three-day event starting on Friday and ending on Sunday, jam-packed with parties, music, vintage nitro, pinstriping, slow cruising and of course, awesome hot rod displays!

On Saturday, the park opens at 7 a.m. with registration lasting until 11 a.m. Show and Shine will run from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. A crowd favorite, the nitro car burn will take place at 10 a.m., followed by a panel jam auction at 11.

Show and Shine winners will be announced from 3 to 4 p.m., then dinner will be served at the Knights of Columbus, with a door prize, drawings and presentation of the Rodder's Choice and Lady's Choice awards

Always popular, vehicles will participate in a slow cruise through downtown Alamosa, "dragging Main" and showing off for spectators, families and people looking for fun.

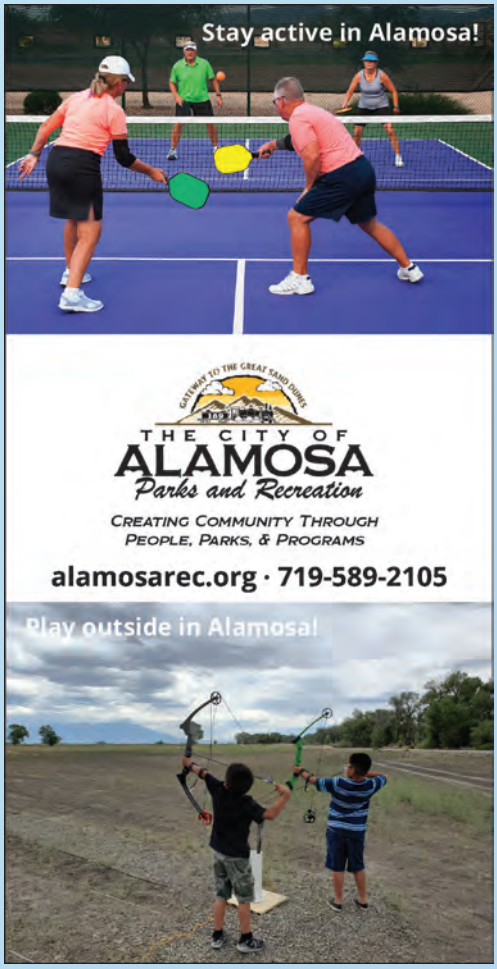
On Sunday, a Rodder Church Service will be at 8:15 a.m., with a poker run planned to follow. Info: www.earlyironclub.com

Alamosa Arts Festival, Sept. 17-18

Take a walk through downtown Alamosa and see artists of various different two and three-dimensional mediums creating one-of-a-kind work, much of which will be displayed for a tour downtown. An annual celebration featuring local musicians and performers will also take place at Society Hall. Info: www.cityofalamosa org/public-art and www.societyhall.org

Sundays at Six

One of the mainstays of the Alamosa Live Music Association is its free summer concert series in Cole Park, known locally as Sundays at Six. Sundays at Six started a number of years back and has grown into a hallmark of the San Luis Valley summertime season. During the most beautiful months in the Valley, the community is exposed to all kinds of music, performed by everyone from the neighbor down the street to nationally recognized touring musicians, with a different genre represented each week. Info: www.almaonline.org



Trains, pioneers and fiesta

Conejos/Costilla County events

Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad opening day, May 29

Antonito celebrates the beginning of the scenic railroad's season at the depot with music, ceremonies and family fun beginning on May 29 — with bells clanging, whistles blowing, and surrounded by clouds of steam. Free refreshments, ceremonial festivities with the traditional blessing of the train, music, statements and introductions of state and local dignitaries before passengers embark on a ride of a lifetime.

The TSA has mandated that all passengers wear masks. Masks will be required regardless of the current State or Local Health Department regulations. If you or someone in your party is unable to wear a mask, we, unfortunately, will not be able to accommodate you because of this regulation.

Info: 1-888-286-2737, www.cumbrestoltec.com

Sanford Pioneer Days, July 24

This small town celebrates its history, rooted deeply in the lives of the pioneers who settled here between 1880 and 1890. Mormon pioneers of Sanford came from Utah in covered wagons, first living in Ephraim and Richfield until Sanford was located. Info: 719-274-4024

Manassa Pioneer Days, July 16-17

The Pioneer Days Celebration started with its namesake—the pioneers. From Spanish explorers in the late 1500s, to Mormon pioneers in the 1800s, Manassa's settlement history rings true to the Southwestern spirit of intellectual innovation, spiritual perseverance and the ceaselessly American trait of discovery. Experience yesterday and today

in this small town. Generations of Manassa's families descend on the town from far and wide for the two-day celebration of history, legacy and family. The town bustles with carnival rides, food, bands, Miss Pioneer and her princesses and a parade so great it runs up and down Main Street twice. At nighttime Saturday, it's the gritty, grinding demolition derby, long-awaited and filled with thrills and excitement. Info: www.manassa.com

Santa Ana y Santiago Fiesta, July 23-25

San Luis, Colorado's oldest town, honors and celebrates the area's faith and culture as it plays host to mariachis, local bands, spectacular parades, traditional singers, fabulous food and more. Info: 719-672-2080

Antonito Labor Day Celebration, Sept. 4-5

Labor Day is always the first Monday in September, but no place welcomes it in like Antonito, with celebrations Saturday and Sunday. The day begins with a pancake next to the mansion town hall, followed by a parade at 10 a.m. on the street in front of the building and grounds, where vendors, information and souvenir booths will be set up. Live entertainment will be included on the mansion porch all day and into the night. Info: 719-376-2355

Mineral County events

Rocks, runoff, donkeys and woodcarvers

Creede Farmers Market, May 28-Sept., Fridays

The Creede Farmers Market runs on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 10 S. Main Street. Other special occasion dates will be added in as well. Browse vendors selling produce, other food items, crafts and antiques and enjoy activities, entertainment and more. Info: www.creedefarmersmarket.com

Taste of Creede, May 28-31

The Annual Taste of Creede on Memorial Day weekend will showcase all the "tastes" around town, where taste includes much more than food. Music lovers will sample melodies all weekend. Art aficionados can tour all the galleries in town and attend the National Small Print Show opening on Saturday. In addition to viewing finished pieces, visitors can watch the "Quick Draw" competition on Sunday. Competitors have one hour to turn a blank canvas into an original creation, all of which are auctioned off.

Pitting local chefs against each other, the Silver Chef Competition is on Saturday. Competitors receive surprise ingredients from Shamrock Foods, and they have 45 minutes to prepare a treat for the judges. Info: www.creede.com

Memorial Day ceremony, May 31

Creede Elks Lodge, BPOE #506 hosts a ceremony celebrating U.S. soldiers and veterans on Memorial Day in Basham Park. Info: www.creede.com

Runoff Runoff, June 5

Throughout the summer, racers can choose to ride ATVs, run alone or run with a donkey. The Runoff Runoff includes three races (6K, half-marathon and marathon) with a festive finish line in the heart of Creede. Following the flow of the Rio Grande, the race raises money to support river preservation projects. Following the races there is a fun celebration for the whole family, complete with live music, local beer and food. Info: www.runoffrunoff.com

Donkey Dash & Gravity Derby, June 12-13

The Annual Creede Donkey Dash races into Main Street on Saturday. The course covers about 10 miles through Creede's Historic Mining District; teams consist of a burro and runner. Also, don't miss the mini donkey

race, street festival and live music.

On Sunday, join the annual free-style soapbox derby down Main Street! The race includes multiple heats, featuring many age groups. Only three rules apply: rides must steer, brake and stop! (well, and no motors or pedal power - let gravity do the work!) Info: www.creede.com

Independence Day celebration, July 3-4

The Fourth of July festival and parade runs Saturday and Sunday in Creede. The parade is at 9 a.m. on July 4. Street vendors will offer food and crafts, and a beer garden will pour brain-softeners throughout the two-day event. Unless it's too dry and dangerous, a fireworks display will wrap up Independence Day. Visitors get to see mining competitions, rodeo events and the Days of '92 Mining Championship. Since the 1970s, the Days of '92 has drawn professional mineworkers from the southwestern United States to battle for the "Best Overall Miner of the Year" award. Info: www.creede.com

Woodcarvers Rendezvous, July 10-16

Woodworkers will congregate in Creede for the 30th Annual Woodcarvers Rendezvous where they can sell their wares or even learn a new skill. Each year offers new demonstrations, classes and contests. Beginners can pick up their first woodworking tools, while those with more experience can find just about anything they're looking for. Info: www.creedewoodcarvers.com

Rock and Mineral Show, Aug. 6-8

Over 40 exhibitors will be showing

and selling a fascinating array of gems, geodes, fossils, silver ore, turquoise nuggets, Australian opals, beads, jewelry and stone carvings at Creede's Underground Mining Museum. Plus all types of rock and mineral specimens from around the world will intrigue viewers, buyers, collectors and rockhounds of all ages. Info: www.creederocks.com

Snowshoe Shuffle, Aug. 6

A benefit for Mineral County Search and Rescue, the Annual Snowshoe Shuffle starts with a 5K run and a 5K walk two minutes later. The course starts and ends in Basham Park with registration beginning at 8 a.m. for race-day signups. Info: www.creede.com

Silver Thread Studio Tour, Aug. 14

The Silver Thread Studio Tour is a self-guided driving tour of artist studios along the beautiful Silver Thread Scenic Byway surrounded by the Rio Grande National Forest. Artists' studios are located from South Fork through historic Creede, and along the route towards The Studios at Bristol. Local artists will welcome participants into their home studios and galleries where they will answer questions, share techniques, perform demonstrations and showcase a variety of works available for purchase. Info: www.creedeartscouncil.com

Headwaters Music Festival, Aug. 28-29

Music lovers head to Creede for the Fifth Annual Headwaters Music Festival, where fans can camp near the concert site, and visitors who plan ahead can make reservations in the RV parks, hotels, motels and other lodging options in town. Musical acts are for all ears. Rivertown Folk, Mito DeSoto, Roderick & Somewhere On the Spectrum, Moors & McCumber and Rayland Baxter all take the stage on Saturday, followed by Camper Special, McLeod Nine, Thom Sheperd & Coley McCabe and The Rifters on Sunday. Info: www.HeadwatersMusicFestival.com

Labor Day weekend celebrations, Sept. 4-6

Over the Labor Day weekend,

revelers have plenty of options for action or audience participation.

The Creede Mountain Run includes four separate races to continue a summer-ending tradition on Saturday. The two-, 12- and 22-mile and 50k courses offer (or force) breath-taking views of the San Juan Mountains, starting and ending in Creede.

Also on Saturday, from 11

a.m. to 4 p.m., the Salsa Fiesta will feature more than a dozen locations downtown where local chefs create one of four kinds of original salsa: red, green, fruit and freestyle. In addition, children can head to Basham Park to enjoy a bouncy house and carnival games from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be an outdoor movie at the ball field at 8:30 p.m. for families and live music at Tommyknockers at 9 p.m. for adults.

On Sunday, 11 a.m. church services at Community Baptist Church.

The ATV Rodeo at the Mineral County Fairgrounds on Monday starts at noon, where ATVs, OHVs and UTVs are used in events such as barrel racing, pole bending, and flags - testing speed and ATV driving abilities.

Info: www.creede.com

Cruisin' the Canyon Car Show, Sept. 17-20

The Cruisin' the Canyon Car Show is an autumn event that inspires car fanatics to motor along the beautiful Upper Rio Grande and enjoy the fall landscapes of red, gold and yellow. Final destination: Creede, where Main Street is lined with a kaleidoscope of colors and the public is welcome to stroll through the variety of vintage vehicles, enjoy the '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s music, and vote on their favorites on Saturday. The day ends with a Rod Run to the famous North Clear Creek Falls Overlook and a burger at Freemon's Ranch. Finish the weekend with Sunday morning breakfast and Fly-In at the Mineral County Airport. Dozens of planes come in and out of the Valley, putting on quite the show. Info: www.creede.com

Thunder, fishing, wagons, music and rodeo

Rio Grande County events

Monte Vista Farmers Market, opens July 9

The Monte Vista Farmers Market, located in the parking lot on U.S. Hwy. 160 at Jefferson Street, across from the Information Center, offers local produce, freshly baked goods and more. The market runs Friday mornings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through Sept. 17. Info: www.facebook.com/MonteVistaFarmersMarket

Memorial Day, May 31

The Veterans Center at Homelake in Monte Vista boasts a proud tradition of honoring our nation's heroes. In addition to being an important place to visit for any tourist, Memorial Day offers an opportunity to remember the fallen with the community, veterans and military members. The center will host its annual Memorial Day event beginning at 10 a.m. The event will include a flyover, color guard, wreath presentation and a special guest speaker. Info: 719-852-5118.

Thunder in the Valley Motorcycle Rally, June 11-12

Brothers Keepers Motorcycle Club, Chapter 19, presents the third annual Thunder in the Valley Motorcycle Rally, this year to be held at Ski Hi Park. With a poker run, silent auction, beer garden, games, live music and dance, it will be an exciting fun-filled day for all. Attending the event is also a very worthwhile cause for those who would like to show patriotism in the summer months. The money raised goes towards the Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley. Info: www.brotherskeepersmc.com/bkmc/event/35

South Fork Kids Fishing Clinic, June 19

Located about 12 miles outside of South Fork, Tucker Ponds hosts the annual Kids Fishing Clinic sponsored by several local businesses, the Colorado Department of Wildlife and the South Fork Visitors Center. Children get a chance to learn the basics of fishing, knot tying, local fish species and Colorado fishing regulations. They are then given the opportunity to be the first to fish in Tucker Ponds right after being stocked for the summer months. The event begins at 8 a.m. and lunch is provided. Info: 719-873-5512, www.southfork.org

Logger Days, July 16-18

South Fork will celebrate the area's culture and history during the 28th Annual Logger Days Festival. Events and competitions taking place throughout the weekend celebrate the time-honored tradition of logging, an initial economic draw for the area. Crowd-favorite competitions include chainsaw carving, the ax throw, the two-man crosscut and a relay-type race with team members pulled from the audience. The parking lot and community center are packed with children activities, various vendors and food trucks. The event is free and open to the public. Info: 719-873-5512, www.southfork.org.

Poor Boy Club Car Show, July 17

Named the Poor Boys Club, because the members do not sink a lot of money into the cars, but do the majority of the work themselves; the group will host the eighth annual classic car show at a new location this year—the South Fork Community Building during South Fork Logger Days. The best of each class receives a handmade trophy. The car show is open to all makes and models of any era or year including motorcycles, trucks, rat rods, tractors or work in progress. Info: 719-580-2673

Ski Hi Stampede, July 23-25

The largest special event in the San Luis Valley is Ski Hi Stampede in Monte Vista. The Ski Hi Stampede is Colorado's oldest professional rodeo.

It was founded in the late 1800s for local cowpoke to compare skills they learned while riding the range. Today, it's an official Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) event, where the pros accumulate points towards competing in the National Pro Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nev.

However, this four-day event is

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2021 DATES & TIMES*

May 22 – September 5th

Tours Hourly 10 am - 4 pm

September 6th – October 3rd

Tours Hourly 11 am - 3 pm

*Schedule and Times Subject to Change

MORE INFO

Heritage, art, pow wow and hollyhocks

Saguache County events

not only a rodeo. There are several other fun, big events to participate in. There are parades on Friday and Saturday, with Saturday being the largest day, a chuck wagon dinner on Thursday night right before the concert which features A-list country western recording artists, dances, concerts and a carnival at Ski Hi Park. New for 2021, the event will be celebrating their first year in a brand-new facility after the Friends of Ski-Hi spent 2019 and 2020 brainstorming, fundraising and planning to replace the dated event center. Info: www.skihistampede.com

Covered Wagon Days, July 30-Aug. 1

Del Norte turns back the clock for some good old-time fun with events harking back to when the West was born. The themed event begins with the kick-off of the quilt show at Kathy's Fabric earlier in the week. "Meet Your Neighbors" Thursday for dinner at the Knights of Columbus; Friday welcomes the traditional pig roast to benefit SLV veterans and a concert. Saturday is packed full of events which include a pancake breakfast, a parade, the popular and traditional firefighters' barbecue lunch, high school mud volleyball tournament, old-fashioned games, a car show, hay wagon tours, donation yard sale and more. Sunday closes the event with a fly-in/cruise-in breakfast, a church service in the park and a community cook-out. There is something fun for everyone to enjoy. Info: www.coveredwagondays.com.

Rhythms on the Rio Musical Festival, Aug. 6-8

The South Fork Music Association presents the Annual Rhythms on the Rio Music Festival at the River Mill Festival Field, 2821 W. Highway 160 in South Fork. Each year this festival offers three days of music in the great outdoors on riverfront property. Peruse the vendors, play horseshoes and dance to more than 10 bands. The bands featured are an eclectic selection and even features Grammy Award winners. On-site camping is part of the whole rhythms experience. There is a fee for parking and camping. Info: www.rhythmsontherio.com.

San Luis Valley Fair, Aug. 7-14

A SLV tradition, come see the 119th fair in Monte Vista. The Fair starts with the Horse Exhibitors events on Saturday and has numerous 4-H events over the week. The culminating event is the junior livestock auction on Friday, Aug. 13. For more information see www.slvfair.com

South Fork Mushroom Foray, August date TBA

For mushroom enthusiasts and wanna-be mushroom enthusiasts. Get quick tips regarding the proper way to identify and collect mushrooms from an expert and then head out for a nearby hike to look for and collect mushroom species. Once all of the mushrooms have been collected, the participants return to the South Fork Visitors Center for identification and discussion of what was discovered. Info: 719-873-5512, www.southfork.org

San Luis Valley Potato Festival, Sept. 11

Celebrating one of the most important crops to the region the San Luis Valley Potato Festival celebrates the potato and kicks off the harvest season. The day is filled with fun for the entire family. Held in Monte Vista's scenic Chapman Park the festival boasts exciting activities including a 5k Tator Trot race, craft and food vendors, guided agricultural tours, chef demonstrations, narrated train tours, a truck and semi show, the famous mashed potato dunk tank and much more! Info: 719-852-3322, www.coloradopotato.org

Memorial Day Celebration, Saguache County Museum Opening, May 29

Memorial Day celebrations in Saguache and the Saguache County Museum's grand opening kick of the summer season in the county and the time to enjoy all the many local fairs and special events in the area. The pancake breakfast kicks off the day in the Otto Mears Park Pavilion (at Highway 285 and Pitkin Avenue) from 7-11 a.m. At 9 a.m., the museum opens for its 61st year. The day of fun also includes a parade, hot dog lunch, craft and food vendors in the park, kiddie events, music and events at the museum. Info: 719-655-2232, www.saguache.org.

Town of Center 4th of July celebration, Fun in the Sun

Enjoy "Fun in the Sun" celebrating the 4th of July in Center with a parade, activities at Casa Blanca Park, live music, vendors, a beer garden and more. Info: 754-3497

Town of Crestone Annual 4th of July Celebration, July 4

The Fourth of July celebration is participatory with events that everyone can join. The central event is a parade through the downtown area, with a "Creation Station" for children to decorate themselves and their bikes prior to the parade. Anyone may enter the parade by reporting to the line-up at 11 am. Other features include a 5K Run, Walk or Crawl Race, festivities in the park, music and entertainment, arts and crafts and games. Info: 719-256-4313.

Hollyhock Festival, July 31

The 10th Annual Hollyhock Festival is July 31. The Chamber is hoping this date will allow for gathering in the Community Building and touring gardens in person. The hours for this event will be 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The hollyhock is the official flower for the town of Saguache. Alcea rosea, Hollyhock, was one of the earliest plants brought to the New World. Originally from Asia, the plant's hardiness, drought tolerance, and soil adaptability supported its cultivation throughout the Middle East, Europe, and North American Continent. Info: 719-849-0240, www.saguachechamber.org

Saguache Arts Walk, Aug. 21

Held in downtown Saguache, local artists will display their work through the downtown area in businesses, as well as in

several galleries for the annual Saguache Arts Walk. Enjoy a stroll around the town to not only see all the different venues and the artists but also to experience all the opportunities offered by the unique shops. Make it a day to remember by viewing artisans at work, including the local pottery shop creating treasures. Info: 719-849-0240, www.saguachechamber.org

Inter-Tribal Pow Wow Celebration, Aug. 28-29

A weekend of Native American celebrations and events in Otto Mears Park, vendors will be selling their wares at the ninth annual pow wow and Indian drummers, singers and dancers will be performing throughout the event. Info:www.facebook.com/SaguachePowwow

Crestone Energy Fair, Aug. 28-29

The Crestone Energy Fair is an annual event highlighting innovative and visionary energy, building, and human relation's technologies while networking the skill sets and resources of local, regional and global communities who practice sustainable, regenerative and whole systems designs. Info: www.crestoneenergyfair.org.

12 Hours of Penitence, Sept. 11

12 Hours of Penitence is an endurance mountain bike race held in the Penitente Canyon Recreation Area from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. It's a family-friendly, festival-type atmosphere all day while racers are racking up miles on the course. Food, beer and merchandise vendors available, as well as live entertainment. Proceeds from the event benefit local youth cycling and outdoor recreation initiatives in the San Luis Valley. Info: www.12hoursofpenitence.com

Saguache Fall Festival & Quilt Show, Sept. 18

The 28th Annual Fall Festival and Quilt Show will take place at Otto Mears Park and the community building in Saguache. Fun starts at 9 a.m. on Sept. 18 and continues until 4 p.m. Vendors from all over come to exhibit their wares, including the Saguache Sagebrush Quilters. These ladies will be showing their efforts for the year along with offering the chance to win a quilt door prize. Come make a bid on silent auction items, offered as the only annual fundraiser for the Saguache Chamber. Artists will be offering treasures for the eye and the body and soul. In conjunction with this year's event, the Seventh Annual Saguache County Photo Contest will culminate with judging of the entries. Have a seat or get some exercise dancing to live music during the day. Info: www.saguachechamber.org

Adventure

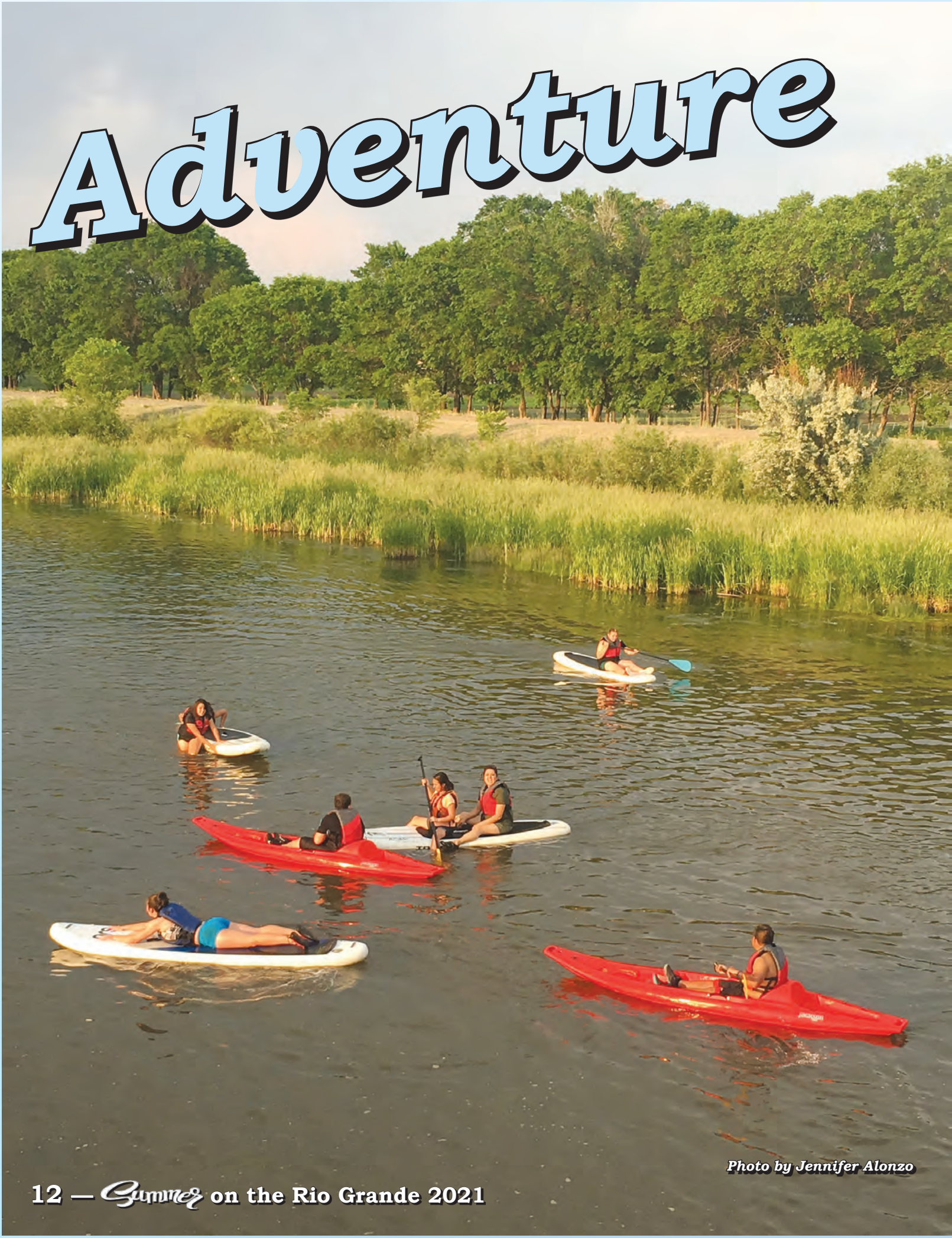


Photo by Jennifer Alonzo

Soothing waters

Hot springs and pools

Visitors looking for relaxation may want to bask in one of the Valley's swimming hot spots. Whether looking for soothing waters or for entertainment, there are a few to choose from.

Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa

Enlighten your senses with rejuvenating waters, relaxing massage therapies and magnificent views of the Sangre De Cristo mountain range at Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa. Geothermally heated waters are offered in three pools. The 98 degrees Fahrenheit cool pool is perfect for those with low tolerance of hot water but still want to get the benefit of the minerals. The 104 degrees Fahrenheit tower pool is a great middle temperature for soaking, and the108 degrees Fahrenheit hot pool is an ideal temperature for those with arthritis, joint and muscle issues – with spectacular views of the mountains. The water is a sodium bicarbonate type with significant levels of boron, calcium, lithium and magnesium along with several other beneficial minerals. A variety of therapies are available, along with many massage options.

A variety of accommodations are available; all lodging prices include soaking in the hot springs, continental breakfast, use of bathhouse, robes and towels.

Available are hotel and conference facilities, along with dry RV accommodations and tent camping, as well as rental of tipis and Mongolian yurts. Laundry and shower facilities are also available as are various massage and facial options. Be sure to walk the new labyrinth.

The facility is 50 miles north of Alamosa on Colorado Highway 17. Info: 719-256-4328, www.joyfuljourneyhotsprings.com

Courtesy photo

Joyful Journey Hot Springs

Sand Dunes Recreation

Among the favorite Valley swimming spots is Sand Dunes Recreation, known by many locals as the "Hooper Pool." Created when early oil drillers struck hot water, this pool has offered hot water recreation to generations of swimmers.

The pools are fed by geothermally-heated waters, ranging from 98-100 degrees Fahrenheit in the pool to 107 degrees in the spa. Somewhat cooler, the children's pool is shallow and safe for little ones.

Offering scenic views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, suits and water toys are available for rent. The Mile Deep Grille offers a full menu and is open for lunch and dinner every day, but Thursday.

Opened in 2017 is a one-of-a-kind soaking area built as an adults-only soaking escape in a 10,000 square foot greenhouse. The new

Photo by Theresa L. Benns

Sand Dunes Recreation, known by many locals as the 'Hooper Pool.'

area features three small soaking tubs with varying temperatures, a 10 by 75 foot zero entry pool complete with a water fountain feature, a 10-person sauna, gardens, numerous deck and patio spaces and an on-site libation stop, Steel Box Bar.

Camping, RV and family trailer parking, tent sites and some cabin options are available. Summer pool hours are 10 a.m.-10 p.m., closed Thursdays. Info: 719-378-2807, www.sanddunespool.com

Splashland Hot Springs

Splashland Hot Springs is a family-centered, warm, geothermal-well fed, outdoor swimming pool that has been an important part of Alamosa's history since 1955. Water temperature enters the pool at 104 degrees with the average pool temperatures of 93-96 degrees throughout. It is the largest outdoor swimming pool in the San Luis Valley

The pool complex is newly remodeled with a food court, two 50-foot water slides, picnic areas, barbecue grill and menu, shade cabanas, an ADA accessible pool lift and facilities, warming hut, and four new lap lanes.

They offer swimming lessons, water aerobics and fitness classes; season passes and various punch passes are available. They would love to host family, company or school events, birthday, graduation, reunion or other special occasions.

Group rates are available; call for pricing.

The pool is open seasonally and is located one mile north of Alamosa on Highway 17. Info: 719-589-6258, www.splashlandllc.com

Valley View Hot Springs at the Orient Land Trust

Clothing optional, the pools at this historic facility are heated by geothermal springs gushing out of the terrain high on the Sangre de Cristo Mountain range.

Valley View Hot Springs is a beautiful, historic village that offers a safe and natural place to relax and enjoy low-impact, off-grid enjoyment. Six ponds, a hot tub and a swimming pool are available for guests. Natural rock ponds are filled with warm bubbling water generally range from 93 to 107 degrees. On site are restored, historic mining cabins that are available for rent, along with a sauna and ample hiking opportunities.

The campground is open year-round. Memberships are for sale and ensure admission. Info: 719-256-4315, www.olt.org

Photo by Jennifer Alonzo

Splashland Hot Springs

Swing into action

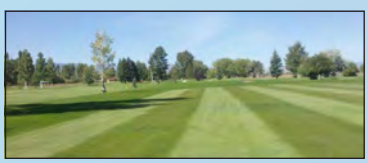
Golf courses

With clean crisp air, 180-degree views of the mountains and no hustle and bustle, those visiting the Valley can truly enjoy teeing off while vacationing or just passing through. Golfing is a great experience, and the Valley boasts four courses all in scenic locations.

Cattails Golf Course

The Cattails Golf Course on the edge of Alamosa offers an 18-hole public course with a 71-par rating. Just north of the Rio Grande, with mountains ranging majestically on either side, the course features fantastic views and challenging play for all skill levels. Well-groomed fairways and greens, the driving range and putting green, cart and club rentals, as well as a full-service, pro line golf shop make the course a terrific golf destination.

Travel north from Main Street on State Avenue, across the bridge, and the Cattails' entrance will be on the left. Info: 719-589-9515, www.alamosacattails.com



Monte Vista Golf Club

The Monte Vista Golf Club is nestled in the heart of Monte Vista on 40 acres.

The nine-hole course was one of the first 15 courses in the state; it opened in 1928 sporting sand greens. In 1948 the club was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation and work started to convert the greens to grass.

The course was originally flood irrigated and many of the old dykes are still recognizable. Though the fairways are relatively straight, they are very narrow for today's standards and are lined with trees of varying maturity.

The greens are quite small and have Penncross Bent grass and a strain of annual blue grass. All of these factors create quite a challenge for the experienced golfer and forgiveness for the beginner.

There is a large driving range, and a quaint pro shop with everything a golfer needs to get on the course is also available.

Tee times are recommended. Membership to the club is easy and affordable.

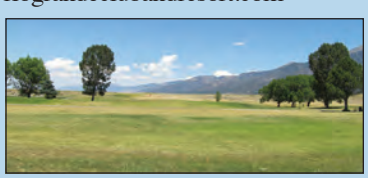
From downtown Monte Vista, go west on Highway 160 to Dunham Street, then north to the course; or from Highway 285, go west on Prospect Avenue past the high school to Dunham Street, then north to the course. Info: 719-852 4906, www.golfmontevista.com

Rio Grande Club

South Fork's Rio Grande Club is a world-class golf course featuring 18 holes, with eye-pleasing rock outcroppings and shots across the Rio Grande.

Players enjoy the award-winning combination of sandstone outcroppings, pine, aspen and cottonwood groves. The back nine consists of dramatic elevations, serene Alder Creek and a truly mountain style nine that will seal-the-deal for a return visit.

The clubhouse offers full-service dining at the Timbers Restaurant, which includes a diverse menu that takes Old World tradition, all-natural ingredients and progressive American culinary inspiration to satisfy a wide array of palates. The Big River Grille is a more casual environment and a great place to enjoy the scenery of the 18th hole and enjoy a drink with friends. Info: 719-873-1995, www.riograndeclubandresort.com



Challenger Golf Course

The 9-hole Challenger Golf Course in Crestone along County Road T is a semi-private course with long holes, laid out at the very foot of the magnificent Sangre de Cristo range, great for golfing with unparalled views. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the course cannot offer Golf Cart rentals this year and will be adhering to state mask requirements. For more information, contact the Baca Grande Property Owners Association: 719-256-4171

Valley curiosities

Colorado Gators Reptile Park

File photo

Gators in the Valley enjoy natural hot springs and lots of sunshine.

At first glance, the desert area of the San Luis Valley might not be thought of as a place to view alligators, turtles, fish, peacocks, ostriches, geese, ducks and snakes. This is surprisingly not the case. Colorado Gators Reptile Park, located 17 miles north of Alamosa in Mosca along Highway 17, offers a unique Valley attraction.

Colorado Gators is in its 34th year, with 100 baby alligators having been purchased in 1987, and the farm being opened to the public in 1990. Erwin and Lynne Young purchased the 80-acre farm in 1977. The first 100 alligators were bought with the purpose to dispose of dead fish and remains of filleted fish.

The baby alligators grew quickly in the warm geothermal water available in the Valley, and the public became interested in seeing them. The rest has become living history.

Colorado Gators has also now become a sanctuary for exotic pets. Individuals with overgrown alligators and other reptiles such as large pythons, tortoises, iguanas and more drop off the creatures on the farm. The organization works hard to take care of the animals and to also educate the public on the dangers of owning such pets.

More than 200 alligators call the farm their home in 2021. More than 200 species of birds have also been spotted on the park. Within the farm is a greenhouse/fish breeding area that also houses mature bamboo, papyrus and other exotic plants for viewing pleasure. As a visitor walks the park and follows painted alligator footprints, they will no doubt bump into huge tortoises walking the grounds. As they step outside, they'll join turkeys, chickens and other domestic birds and critters.

If you are brave and daring enough, you can learn how to wrestle alligators in one of the ponds and earn a commemorative t-shirt and certificate.

Also if you have ever wanted to see a movie-star, Colorado Gators provides this opportunity. One of the residents is retired Hollywood actor 500-pound Morris. He is best known for starring in Adam Sandler's movie "Happy Gilmore."

The park is open daily from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. during the summer months.

Info: 719-378-2612, www.coloradogators.com

UFO Watchtower

Believer, skeptic or just curious, the UFO Watchtower north of Alamosa is a "must see" for seekers of the unusual.

In a valley where a horse who died almost 50 years ago is on TV from time to time and the night sky is nothing short of amazing, the tower seems to fit in. At its base is a gift shop-museum and vortexes at its eastern foot offer healing and, some believe, a gate to a parallel universe.

Owner Judy Messoline first bought the land as a cow pasture and soon learned that it had another purpose. People were stopping nearby to scan the night sky for evidence of beings from outer space. People have claimed such sightings since the first explorers visited the barren lands.

Psychics who have visited the property have pinpointed the vortexes and countless visitors have left items there for good luck. It's bad karma to take anything, so some items have lain there for years.

Messoline is always a fruitful source of information on aliens and UFOs and the watchtower

Visit the rock garden and take a photo with an alien while at the watchtower. Or schedule an out-of-this-world wedding at the site.

Signs along the road embody the stereotypical "little green men, who point the way to the tower, located 17 miles north of Alamosa and two and one-half miles north of the tiny town of Hooper.

Admission is $2 per person or $5 per car and camping is available for $15. Summer hours are 10 a.m. –5 p.m. on weekends or call Judy at 719-378-2296, for other arrangements.

Info: 719-378-2296, www.ufowatchtower.com

Photo by Thersea L. Benns

Visitors will encounter many unusual sights at the UFO Watchtower.

An outdoor paradise

Recreation opportunities

The Valley can't be beat when it comes to breathtaking scenery, wildlife, hiking, camping, climbing and cycling.

Camping, RVing

Abundant campsites have been created in the Rio Grande National Forest and near special attractions in the area. The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve offers sites as well with amenities for RVs, trailers and tents.

To find places to camp in the vast National Rio Grande National Forest call 719-852-5941. For a complete list of campgrounds in the San Luis Valley, visit www.rei.com/campgrounds/area/8012291/san-luis-valley. Directions and other useful information are provided for each site listed.

Hiking

From sheer cliffs to massive piles of boulders and spectacular remnants of Earth's creation, the San Luis Valley is a hiker's paradise.

Among the most spectacular and challenging are the cliffs and formations in Penitente Canyon, the Creede Caldera and Wheeler Geologic Area, both of which are difficult to access. All are popular but come with a cautionary note for even the most experienced climbers.

Penitente Canyon offers numerous hiking routes, ample opportunity for exploration. High on the canyon wall, someone painted a fresco of the Virgin Mary.

An easier, but no less spectacular, climbing area is the La Garita Arch, a wind-carved window in a sheer rock formation. The arch can be accessed via FSR 660. Info: Saguache Ranger District, 719-655-2547. For more hiking trails, check out the San Luis Valley Trail Guide online at www.alamosa.org/san-luis-valley-trail-guide.

Watchable wildlife

Visit the Alamosa and Monte Vista national wildlife refuges, year-round homes to big game, small animals and all sorts of birds, including thousands of Sandhill Cranes, which draw crowds in spring and late summer. Look for Bald Eagles and other raptors. More than 100 species of birds are native to the area. See www.fws.gov/refuge/monte_vista/, also www.fws.gov/refuge/alamosa/ for maps and additional information. Colorado Gators, a private wildlife refuge north of Alamosa, and the Great Sand Dunes preserve also are popular areas for wildlife viewing.

Photo by Tyler Cerny

Photo coutesy of Kristi Mountain Sports

Bicycling

Bike riders of all ages and experience will find adventure in the mountains, with terrain ranging from easy to thigh-burning climbs. The terrain between Del Norte and Summitville is legendary, but so are the bike paths down below. Almost every Valley community has special bicycle lanes along the city streets. Experienced bikers can explore the rough roads and shale surfaces beyond the Old Spanish Trail monument east of Del Norte or traverse Penitente Canyon's challenging trails, pedal to La Garita Arch/Witches Canyon or explore the mining roads above Creede. Info: www.mtbproject.com/directory/8012291/san-luis-valley

ATVs and 4-wheelers

Restrictions for ATV and four-wheeling trails are enforced in many parts of the national forests in the Valley. Look for signs and posted areas when exploring the backcountry. The road to Lake Como, the area around the historic Uracca Cemetery with its 19th century cabins and the mining areas in Creede — where hiking is tedious and normal vehicle travel is all but impossible — are all popular four-wheeling spots. Check out the great jeeping and ATV map at www.coloradodirectory.com/maps/atv-san-luis-valley.html.

Boating

For great boating adventures, try Beaver Creek and Big Meadows reservoirs near South Fork, Platoro Reservoir in Conejos County, Smith Reservoir outside of Blanca or Mountain Home Reservoir near Fort Garland.

Fishing

Cutthroat, browns, rainbows, brooks, bass, pike, and salmon, yellow perch — if you're looking for great catches, the Valley has it all.

Fish close to town or far away, by hiking into one of the backcountry's many remote lakes or streams. Float down the Rio Grande with a rod in hand, fly-fish in local streams or cast in a local reservoir — it doesn't get any better than here. Fly-fishing is best in July.

Those looking for stream and creek fishing will find a host of spots in western Rio Grande County, west of Del Norte and north of South Fork to Creede.

The area also is dotted with 80 lakes and reservoirs, many of them remote, others easily accessible.

Photo by Tyler Cerny

Some 13 lakes and reservoirs are only 20 minutes from the town of South Fork. Among these are:

• Million Reservoir — four acres of water, 8,700 feet elev., rainbow, great sightseeing;

• Big Meadows, — 114 acres of water, 9,200 feet elev., rainbow, brook trout, salmon, German browns, great for kids and seniors, handicap access;

• Beaver Creek Reservoir — 114 acres of water, same 8,850 elev., same amenities as Big Meadows;

• Shaw Lake — 20 acres, 9,850 feet elev., great trolling for cutthroats and brookies, handicap access, boat ramp and restrooms;

• Alberta Park Reservoir — Elevation 10,202, forest and meadows, large trout and brooks;

• Hunters Lake — Eight acres of water, 11,400 elev., fly-fishing good for rainbows, one-half hour hike from car;

• Tucker Ponds — Four acres of water, 9,700 elev., rainbows, great for kids and novices, camping, picnicking, restrooms, handicap access;

• Pass Creek Pond — Good for bait and fly fishing, rainbows, limited parking;

• Three high mountain lakes — Archuleta, Crystal and Crater — are all between 11,300 and 12,700 elevation. Archuleta and Crystal require a four-wheel drive vehicle or involve a difficult hike.

• The Conejos River also is excellent for wild browns and rainbows. Best fishing is in June or July. On the eastern side of the Valley, Sanchez Reservoir and San Luis Lakes have previously experienced extremely low water levels, so it's best to check before making a trek there. (See complete list for all the above at www.southfork.org/fish). For other fishing destinations in the area, visit http://coloradofishing.net/wtf_sw.htm.

Local hardware stores sell fishing licenses, required for those 16 and over. Or purchase online at https://cpw.state.co.us/buyapply/Pages/Fishing.aspx.

Spin fishing — A popular alternative

In the world of trout fishing methods, fly-fishing seems to get all the glory but in reality "Spin Fishing" is a more popular method. Anyone can catch fish with spin tackle without expensive outfits and with just a limited understanding of trout habitat.

Lighter lines in the four- and six-pound range (using a size 25-30-35 size reel), is plenty strong and allows for more distance than heavier lines and if you get hung up, easier to break off without damaging the line.

"Reading the Water" is a normal term in fly-fishing and it is important to know with spin fishing gear. It is simply knowing where fish might be in relation to bottom structures in the river. Trout need resting and ambush spots. Rocks, cobble, undercut banks, and deeper holes all provide these features. A successful cast is aimed to reach ahead of the holding area which allows the lure to sink to an appropriate level, begin working and swing near the fish. Trout will go a distance to attack a bait but the closer the cast, the more likely they will make the effort. Blind casting will work but it wastes valuable fishing time by fishing empty waters.

Spin lures are vast in variety very effective and simple to fish. An oversimplification is to cast it into productive waters and retrieve it back. In more detail, each lure has its own characteristics.

Crankbaits are minnow shaped made of plastic or wood. Spoons are small lures made of metal. They sink readily and have a built-in wobble. Use a split ring in the front of the lure to tie to.

Spinners don't look like food but are likely the most productive and most popular. The blade flashes and throws off vibrations that fish will key on.

Whether a local or a visiting tourist, don't let the opportunity to pass by to sample a true Colorado adventure in trout fishing. Spin fishing is easy, inexpensive and so much fun.

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Conquer the mountain

14ers, mountaineering and rock climbing

The mountains rimming the San Luis Valley have long attracted mountaineers and rock climbers. The mountaineers head to the Sangre de Cristo Range on the east side, to test their mettle on its nine 14ers (peaks more than 14,000 feet high). The rock climbers tend to head west to the foothills of the San Juans, where short but challenging rock routes are accessible with a short hike.

Mountaineering in the Sangres

The 14ers of the Sangres occur in two distinct clusters, in the Crestone Group east of Crestone and in the Blanca Group north of Blanca and Fort Garland. The Crestone Group boasts five 14ers on the divide (Challenger Point-14,087'; Kit Carson Mountain-14,171'; Crestone Peak-14,300'; Crestone Needle-14,203'), with Humboldt Peak just east of the divide (14,064'). The Crestone Group are considered the hardest climbs on Colorado's 14ers and were described by early Colorado mountaineers as "unclimbable." Today the standard routes range from scrambling up to the summits (Challenger Pt., Kit Carson Mtn.), to steeper semi-technical climbs (Crestone Pk., Crestone Needle), to difficult technical rock climbs (the Crestone Peak-to-Needle Traverse, and the Prow route on Kit Carson Mtn.) Challenger Point is the most popular destination, having the shortest approach from Crestone and the easiest route.

Five trailheads provide access to the peaks, all reached by county roads from Crestone. See local maps at the information center south of Crestone or at the museum & welcome center in downtown Crestone.

The Blanca Group forms a huge, circular massif shaped like a crown with four distinct high points (Blanca Peak, 14,351'; Ellingwood Point, 14,048'; Mt. Lindsey, 14,048'; Little Bear Peak, 14,043'). Access to the canyons leading to the high peaks is complicated by private land ownership, so the most popular approach is the jeep road up to Como Lake (11,750') on the west side. The Como Lake Road takes off east from CO 150 (road to the Sand Dunes) three miles north of U.S.160, but is extremely rough so most people park near the bottom and hike up. From a base camp near the lake one can bag multiple peaks in a single, long traverse. The Blanca-Ellingwood traverse is semi-technical but highly exposed. The Little-Bear Blanca traverse is even more difficult, but has been described in 14er guidebooks as "Colorado's most astonishing connecting ridge." Compared to the bare rock slabs of the Crestone Group, on the Blanca Group be prepared for scrambling up loose talus and rock rubble to summits. But don't come too early. In heavy snow years these routes may not open up until July.

If the rugged 14ers seem too daunting, then consider some of the 13ers that form the spine of the Sangres. These peaks offer climbs for beginners and intermediates and can be reached from range-front trailheads along the range from Valley View Hot Springs to Great Sand Dunes NP. For example, in just the 16 mile-long stretch of mountains centered on the Crestone Group there are 35 13ers! These range from the "almost a 14er" Columbia Point (aka Kat Carson) at 13,980', down to 10 unnamed peaks between 13,005' to 13,270' elevation.

Rock climbing in the San Juan foothills

Penitente Canyon, located west of La Garita on BLM land, has become a destination for roped technical climbing on vertical walls of hard, welded volcanic tuff. More than 50 routes have been put up, many protected by bolts. But the easiest routes are 5.8 and most are 5.10 and higher, so be prepared. BLM permits fee camping with individual and group sites, so your crew of free-climbers can set up a base camp there and explore the canyon at leisure. For non-climbers, watching an ascent party can give you a flavor of the mechanics of climbing; the hardware, the rock, and the comradery of the rope.

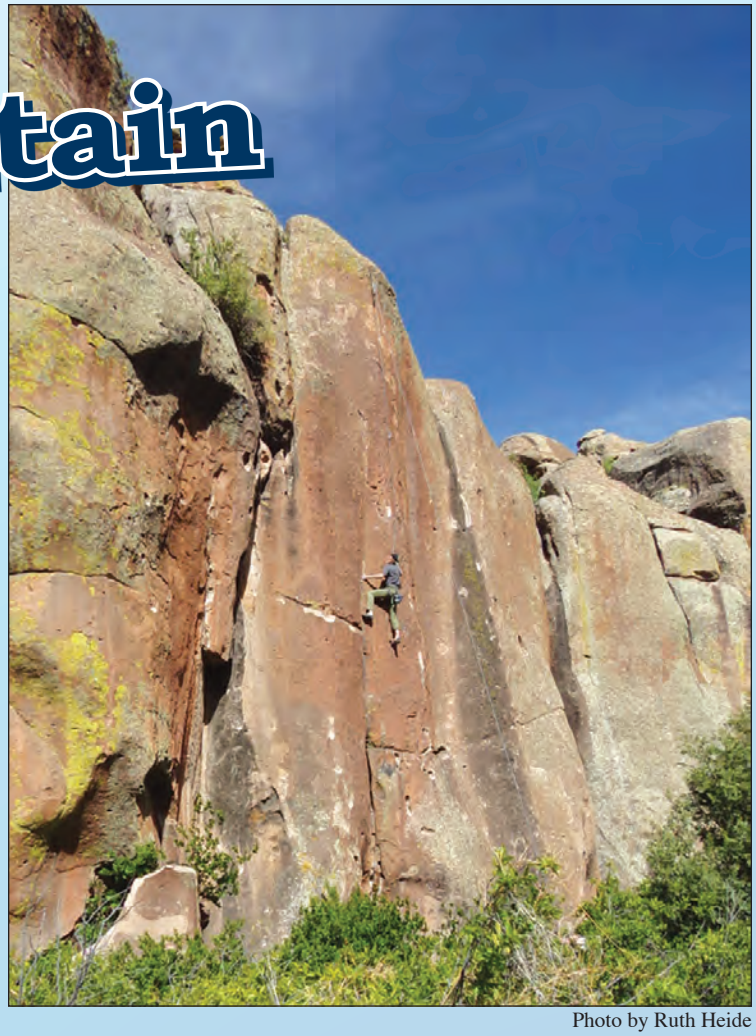

Photo by Ruth Heide

Penitente

Del Norte Trails

Starting with the Lookout Mountain Park Trails project in 2006, the Del Norte Trails Association (DNTA) secured funding to execute carefully designed master plans in surrounding areas. The Lookout Mountain trails snake their way from downtown Del Norte to the top of "D" Mountain at 8,475 feet. The 200-acre park offers eight miles of single-track trails that connect Del Norte High School on the east with the Rio Grande Hospital to the west, U.S. Highway 160 to the north and the Pronghorn Trails System on BLM sections south of the summit.

The Pronghorn Trails System loops south of Del Norte on BLM land between the Valley floor and foothills of Pintada Mountain and Bennett Peak. Hikers and mountain bikers can access the nonmotorized trailhead via Rio Grande County Road 13 (French Street) 1.5 miles south of U.S. Highway 160. Rising from 7,900 to 8,600 feet, the 9.5-mile loop includes easy and difficult sections. The climbs and descents are gradual but long, offering glimpses of mule deer, falcons, snakes, hawks, desert flowers and other species.

Ranging in elevation from 7,900 to 8,200 feet above sea level, the Stone Quarry and Limekiln Trails System includes 9.5 miles of intermediate to difficult terrain. Drive five miles east of Del Norte on U.S. Highway 160, and then head south on Gun Club Road. Slightly lower than the Pronghorn Trails System, Stone Quarry routes are open most of the year.

Heading up, the Middle Frisco Trail below Bennett Peak climbs 6.3 miles and 2,500 feet to San Francisco Lakes. Heading out, the Bishop Rock Area south of Monte Vista offers more than 40 acres of slickrock options.

Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

Del Norte Playwave

Nestled in the Rio Grande river valley, the town of Del Norte is a hidden gem with sweeping landscapes, epic outdoor recreational trails and now a new addition, the Del Norte Playwave.

Just on the outside of town along Highway 112, Del Norte River Park is great location to spend the day. It features a large grassy area equipped with barbeque grills and picnic tables, a quarter mile walking trail that weaves next to the Rio Grande River and now guests can come and enjoy the new playwave.

Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (RGHRP) Executive Director Emma Reesor announced the new Del Norte Playwave is now open to the public. The playwave, located in the Rio Grande river is part of the Del Norte Riverfront project, a grassroots effort to address community needs like access to the river, recreational opportunities, economic diversity, and to improve the environmental condition of the river corridor.

Reesor explained the RGHRP is a local nonprofit organization with the mission to restore the health of the river for all those who use it, including ecosystems and wildlife, agriculture, recreation and community safety. "We accomplish this through partnerships to implement multipurpose projects and the Del Norte Riverfront project is a great example of that."

The project had been identified as a priority in 2008 with the Del Norte Trails masterplan which identified the need for river recreation in the area. "The Del Norte Trails masterplan identified the important need of the community to have river recreational opportunities and the SLVGO masterplan identified that need as well. Those two documents really highlighted that the communities of the Valley wanted to focus on river recreation."

The playwave is only the beginning of the Riverfront Project which will also include improvements to the River Park, a playground area and picnic pavilion which is scheduled to be built in the near future.

The river is home to several types of aquatic life and the park is an excellent place to access the river through the newly built boat ramp which is located on the North side of the Highway 112 bridge.

Rafters, kayakers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts have already been out on the river this summer, eager to enjoy the new playwave.

The playwave is not very deep, but parents should still supervise their children and exercise caution when they are in the area, as this is still part of a fast-moving river. Water levels can vary from day to day, so it is always best to check weather forecasts and be familiar with river recreation responsibilities before heading out on the water.

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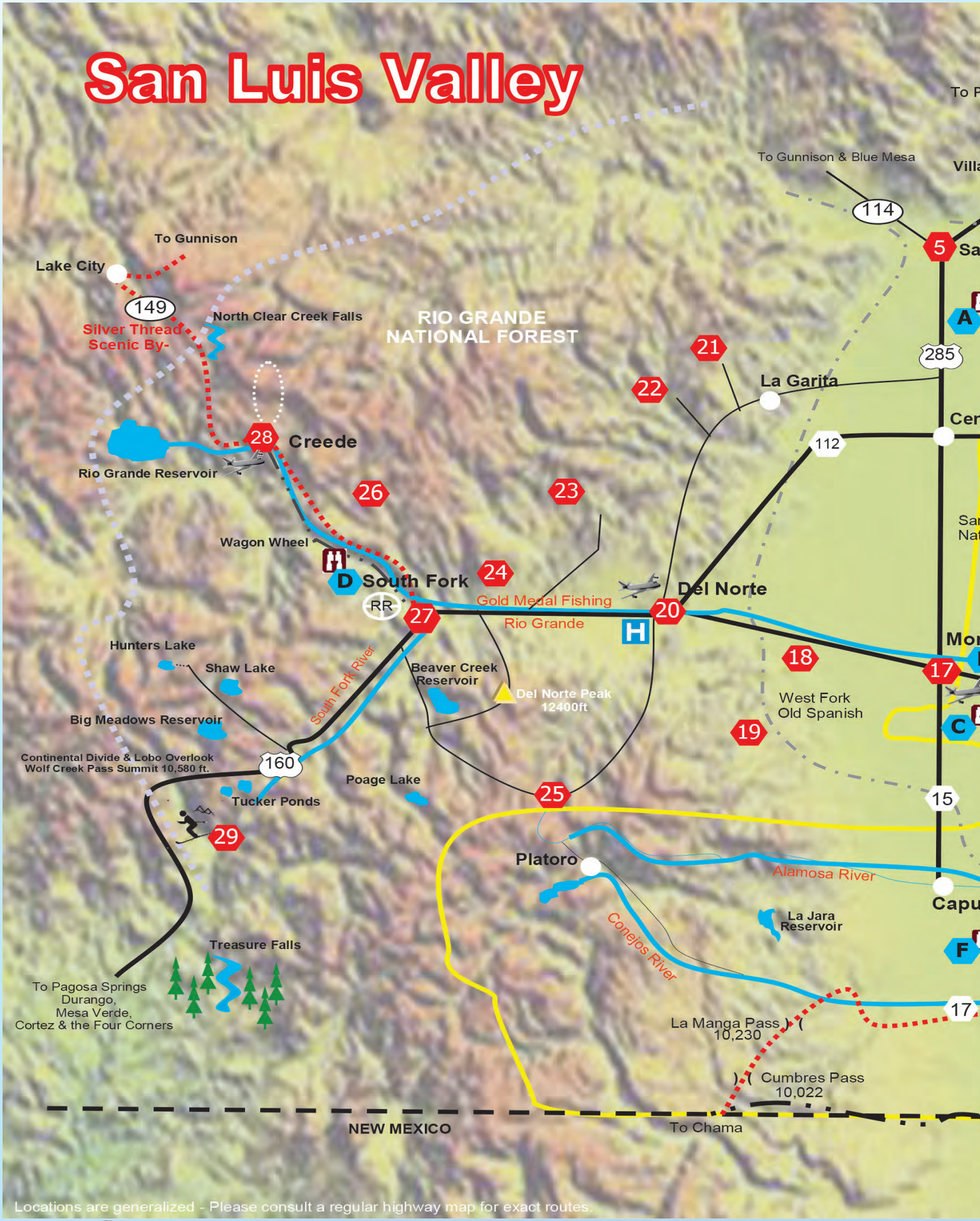
San Luis Valley
To Gunnison & Blue Mesa
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Wolf Creek Pass Summit 10,580 ft.
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La Manga Pass
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NEW MEXICO
To Chama
Locations are generalized - Please consult a regular highway map for exact routes.

Map Key

1 Orient Mine & Bat Cave
2 Joyful Journey Hot Springs
3 **Crestone**
4 UFO Watchtower
5 **Saguache**
6 Sand Dunes Swimming Pool
7 San Luis Lakes State Park
8 Colorado Gators Reptile Park
9 **Alamosa**
10 **Fort Garland**
Fort Garland Museum
11 POW/MIA Memorial
12 Pikes Stockade
13 **Manassa**
Jack Dempsey Museum
14 San Luis
Stations of the Cross & Murals
15 Oldest Church in Colorado
16 **Antonito**
Cumbres & Toltec Railroad
Conejos County Museum
17 **Monte Vista**
Home Lake Veterans Center
Transportation of the West Museum
18 Old Spanish Trail Monument
19 Stone Quarry
20 **Del Norte**
Rio Grande History Museum
Observatory
21 Penitente Canyon
22 Natural Arch
Wagon Tracks
Elephant Rocks
23 Fremonts Christmas Camp
24 Pfeiffer's Grave
25 Summitville Gold Mine
26 Wheeler Geologic Area
27 **South Fork**
Silver Thread Scenic Byway
28 **Creede**
Historical Museum
Underground Mining Museum
Underground Firehouse
Repertory Theatre
Bachelor Loop Historic Tour
29 Wolf Creek Ski Area

A Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area
B Alamosa Wildlife Refuge
C Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge
D Coller State Wildlife Area
E Rio Grande State Wildlife Area
F La Jara & Hot Creek State Wildlife Area

See map for general locations of; Blanca, Center, Capulin, Conejos, Hooper, Moffat, Mosca. La Garita, La Jara, Lake City, Platoro and Romeo.

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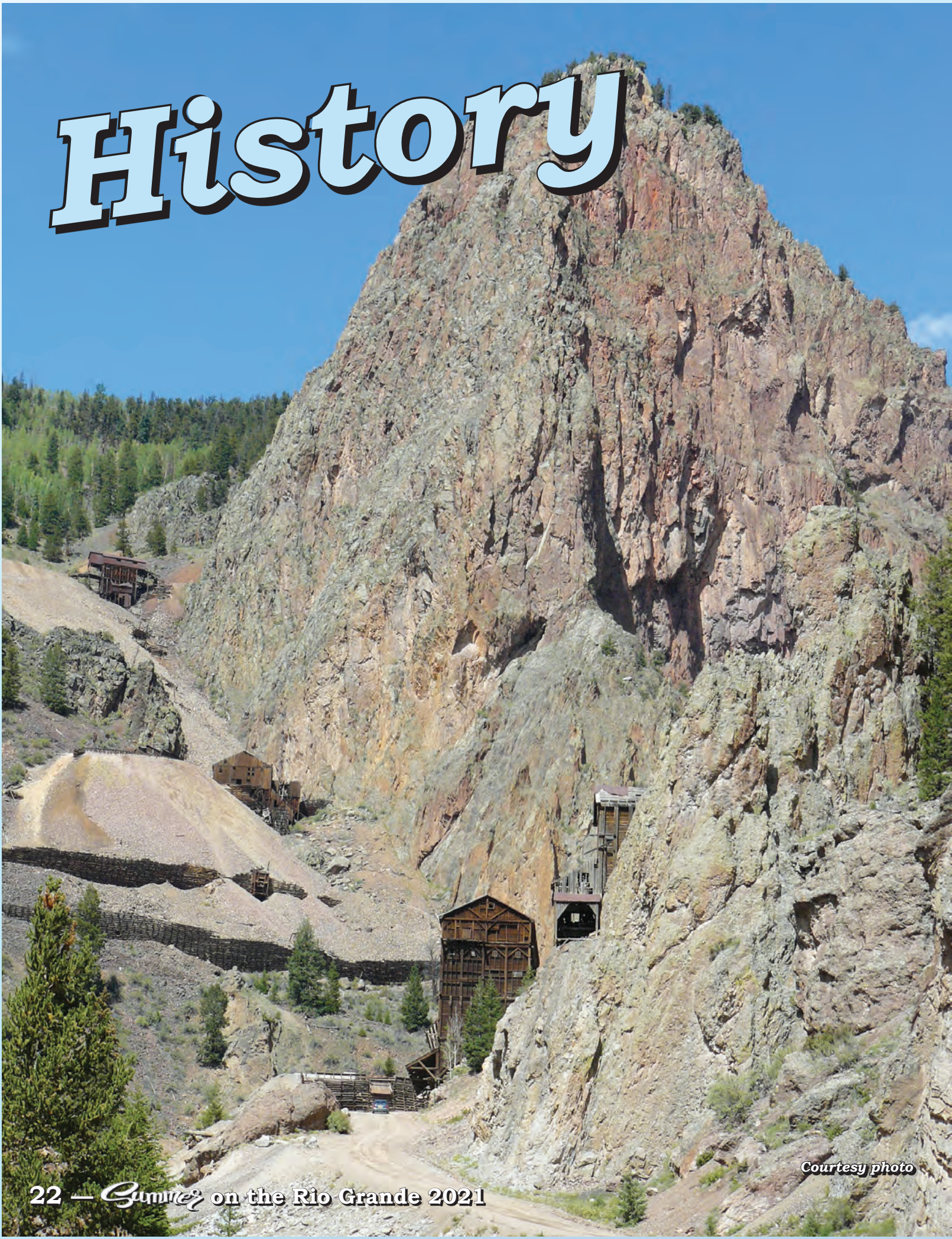
History



Courtesy photo

Our heritage

San Luis Valley history

Rich in beauty and adventure, the San Luis Valley has unique and abundant history, as well. Humans have inhabited and visited the area for more than 12,000 years. Archaeological evidence shows Paleoindians came in near the close of the last Ice Age. Nomads, they hunted large mammals such as bison and mammoths, leaving sites generally located in association with animal kills, butchering sites and small, temporary, camps which were littered with beautiful, deadly, spear points.

These cultures joined the native tribes and lived by hunting and gathering the native plants and animals, while expeditions were sent out from Nueva Hispaña, later administered as part of the province of Nuevo Mexico until the area was ceded to the United States in 1848 by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the Mexican-American war. The Province of New Mexico, established in 1598 later dispatched explorers from its capital city of Santa Fe.

In 1779, Don Juan Bautista de Anza traveled through the San Luis Valley and over Poncha Pass in an attempt to crush the Comanches, who threatened the New Mexican settlements. Other explorers entering the area included Don Juan de Oñate, Juan Maria Rivera, Juan Bautista Silva, Zebulon Montgomery Pike, Jacob Fowler, George Frederick Ruxton, John C. Fremont and John Williams Gunnison.

Farming

Drawn by the San Luis Valley's abundant agricultural promise, settlers finally established communities in the 1850s. Farmers developed irrigation systems, as well as traditional communities. The People's Ditch at San Luis is Colorado's earliest adjudicated water right.

Mexican land grants, aimed at filling the area with settlers, remained virtually empty until the area became U.S. territory after 1848. The Sangre de Cristo Grant was opened in 1851 and residents moved in.

The first permanent settlement in Colorado, San Luis de la Culebra, now known as San Luis, was established in 1851 along the Rio Culebra on the Sangre de Cristo Grant. Garcia would've been the first town, but was never incorporated.

San Luis was established in 1849 and named when it got a post office.

Fort Massachusetts, built north of San Luis in 1852 to protect the early settlements, proved unsuitable, leading to the creation of Fort Garland.

Across the vast valley, Hispanic families who left the Santa Fe area founded La Loma de San Jose, near present Del Norte, in 1859, built irrigation ditches and began farming. More farming began in the 1880s near Hooper and large-scale irrigation systems were built near Monte Vista.

Center, believed to be the middle of the Valley, was established in the 1890s, and has continually been a farming community, even today.

Mining

The mining boom began when gold and silver were discovered near Summitville in 1870. Del Norte, one of Colorado's first cities, was established in 1872 as a supply point and gateway to the San Juan mining camps, as well as a busy, wide-open frontier town. The first strike at Creede was in 1889, and the town's rowdy history was memorialized in prose, "It's day all day in the daytime, and there is no night in Creede." Other mining settlements followed.

The Iron Horse

The railroad awakened the sleepy economy, its trains smoking, whistling and belching through the Valley to serve the farmers, ranchers and miners. The native tribes called them "iron horses," while the settlers called them "progress."

Railroads gave birth to Alamosa, Monte Vista, Antonito and San Acacio, which needed a way to haul their abundance out of the Valley to the cities for sale and the area needed a way to attract more people, as well as new industry.

The area's history is evident in nearly every location. Museums celebrate the unique identity of each community, with historic artifacts and displays showing the art, agriculture and religious traditions that have blended to become the unique, welcoming, place that is the San Luis Valley.

Protecting the Valley

Fort Garland

Fort Garland was established in 1858 to protect San Luis Valley settlers from Indian raids. At that time Colorado was still part of New Mexico Territory.

Fort Garland was built to replace Fort Massachusetts, just six miles to the north, because the other fort was vulnerable to attack and the land around it was too swamp-like. Fort Garland was named in honor of Brevet Brigadier General John Garland, who then was the commander for the Dept. of New Mexico.

The fort's 20 adobe buildings could accommodate two companies of 100 men and officers. Various companies of infantrymen, mounted riflemen and volunteers would eventually call the fort home. The fort even sported its own laundry and laundresses.

Only two forts existed in Colorado when the Civil War broke out in 1861, because at that time the Indians were behaving peaceably. Once the war broke out, the 200 men stationed at Fort Garland were put on alert and eventually were called into service in 1862 to assist Texas Confederates in fighting the battle at Glorieta Pass.

The pass is located at the southern tip of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains southeast of Santa Fe. This battle proved to be the turning point of the Civil War, fought in New Mexico Territory.

Following the war, Kit Carson took command of the post as a Brigadier General, in recognition of his valor at the Battle of Valverde, also in New Mexico Territory, Carson was well known for his successful work with the Indians and while at Fort Garland was asked to negotiate with the Ute Indians. For a time, Carson's efforts were successful and the Indians lived in peace with Colorado settlers. He retired for health reasons in 1867.

The Ninth Cavalry was brought to the fort during the gold and silver rush days because the Indians were rebelling against the arrival of so many prospectors searching for their fortunes in the state. In 1876, the fort became home to the Buffalo Soldiers.

The Indian threat was curtailed in 1880, when the Utes were forced by the Army to retire to reservations created for them in southwestern Colorado. Troops at the fort were then reassigned, and by 1883 the fort was abandoned. It was purchased in 1930 by the Colorado Historical Society and since that time it has operated as a military museum.

The fort is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Info: 719-379-3512, www.museumtrail.org/fort-garland-museum

Pike's Stockade

Located along the north bank of the Conejos River, the site marks the spot where, in 1807, Zebulon Pike raised the American flag over what was then Spanish territory. The site is now owned by History Colorado and a replica of the stockade exists near the location of the original structure. To learn more about Zebulon Pike and Pike's Stockade go to the Pike National Historic Trail Association's website, www.zebulonpike.org/ or www.historycolorado.org/location/pikes-stockade-site.

Cumbres & Toltec simplifies offerings for 51st season

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad will begin its 51st season on June 5, running coal-fired steam locomotives from Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico through Oct. 24.

The historic steam railroad, owned by the states of Colorado and New Mexico, will offer all new route schedules. New this year are simplified all-day trips, shorter options and a thrilling, new, once a month special historic consist, the San Juan & New Mexico Express, pulled by the newly refurbished 1883 engine No. 168.

"Because of the pandemic, we simplified our offerings so riders will return to the same station they originated from," said Eric Mason, Interim CEO of the C&TSRR. "The new schedule makes it easier for passengers on our full-day trains who will now park at either Antonito or Chama, ride the train to Osier, have a delicious lunch stop with panoramic views, and return back to the station where their car is parked. We're also adding shorter rides, special Friday noon trains and the highly anticipated San Juan & New Mexico Express pulled by historic engine No. 168 and sure to thrill railfans and history buffs."

NEW IN 2021: SIX NEW CONVENIENT TICKET OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR FULL-DAY, HALF-DAY AND SPECIAL HISTORIC RIDES

FULL- DAY: The standard, full-day trips are the Chama All-Aboard and Antonito All-Aboard. Both trains pass through forests of aspens and conifers with breathtaking Rocky Mountain scenery on a full day of steam railroading adventure that includes a delicious lunch at Osier Station.

Chama All-Aboard! From June 5-Sept. 12, round-trip trains will depart five days a week from Chama at 10 a.m. to Osier, then return to Chama at 4:05 p.m. Starting on Sept. 13, an additional trip will be added for six departures a week. All full day round-trip trains will climb the steep grade to the summit of Cumbres Pass at 10,015 feet, steam over Cascade Trestle and include a full lunch stop at beautiful Osier Station.

Antonito All-Aboard! From June 8- Sept. 12, round-trip trains will depart five days a week from

Antonito at 10 a.m. to Osier, then return to Antonito by 4:40 p.m. Starting Sept. 13-Oct. 24, the roundtrip train from Antonito will operate daily, seven days a week. All full day round trips will steam through two tunnels, pass through Phantom Canyon and along the lip of Toltec Gorge and include a full lunch stop at beautiful Osier Station.

SHORTER TRIPS: The C&TSRR is introducing three new shorter trip options, perfect for day-trippers, families and those who want more time to explore the beauty and attractions along the New Mexico and Colorado border. These are:

Cumbres Express — This shorter new route will depart from the top of Cumbres Pass at 11:10 a.m., steam to Osier Station for a full lunch and return to Cumbres Depot at 2:45 p.m. Trains will operate five days a week from June 5-Sept. 12 and six days a week from Sept

See ***CUMBRES*** on Page 27

Take a spiritual journey

Historic churches

When the first settlers arrived in the often-inhospitable San Luis Valley, their commitment to remaining likely wavered. Some moved away, while those who remained seem to have agreed that prayer was one answer.

Spaniards arrived with land grants in hand. Most were Catholic and each small community had its own patron saint, but the Presbyterians weren't far behind. Mormons, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, were ordered to settle here in 1879 and Seventh Day Adventists sunk their roots in Jaroso.

The old Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) building at Richfield still stands, but has long been unused, while the church at Jaroso has been turned into a home.

Many are gone, but not forgotten. A burned-out church along the highway west of Antonito still hosts wedding ceremonies and masses in the summer despite its devastation in 1975.

While San Luis is the oldest incorporated settlement in Colorado, the oldest Catholic Parish is in Conejos and the oldest church structure still in use is in San Acacio, southwest of San Luis.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church was the first church, built in 1863, but it burned in 1926 and a new church was dedicated two years later. It included some parts of the first church, but La Capilla de Viejo San Acacio mission was declared the oldest, built by Hispanic settlers between 1853 and 1856.

Parish documents from Our Lady of Guadalupe are stored at St. Augustine Catholic Church at Antonito and the San Acacio mission is part of the same parish.

The second oldest church in Conejos County is San Rafael Presbyterian Church at Mogote west of Antonito. The church was probably built in 1895–97 and is one of the few earliest Spanish-speaking Presbyterian churches in Colorado.

English-speaking believers joined them. Among all the historic places of worship, the Community Church at Blanca was founded in 1902 and met above a community business before becoming able to afford its own building, which is now is more than 100 years old.

In San Rafael at the northeastern edge of Mogote, the Catholic Church is dedicated to San Pedro and San Rafael and parishioners have graced the cross with straps and items of bondage signifying the crucifixion of Christ.

In San Francisco southeast of San Luis, a Penitente morada built around 1908 reflects the religious and governmental support in poor rural areas of predominately Hispanic populations and the aid societies that formed as a result. Los Hermanos Penitentes, a lay religious and fraternal organization, constructed and used the building as a chapel and meeting hall.

Stations of the Cross Shrine

Strikingly life-like bronze sculptures created by renowned artist Huberto Maestas guide visitors along a recreation of the path trod by Christ during the last journey of His life. The site is an especially popular tourist attraction just before Easter. The shrine was constructed in 1986 and dedicated in 1990. The sculptures were created as an act of love and devotion by the faithful of Sangre de Cristo Catholic Parish at San Luis.

The shrine embodies the vital role of religion in southern communities. Locals come to the shrine throughout the year for prayer, reflection and celebration. Visitors can find the stations along a one-mile walking trail that begins just off Highway 159, 19 miles south of Fort Garland and just west of San Luis. The stations are situated on a bluff above San Luis.

Fifteen art pieces can be found along the trail depicting the 12 stations of His journey, Calvary and Crucifixion. At the top is the shrine known as La Mesa de la Piedad y de la Misercordio

(The Mesa of Piety and Mercy); the grotto features pink sandstone statues of the Virgin Mary and Saint Juan Diego. The mesa top pathway is also lined with many statues of the saints.

As visitors walk up the trail, they are afforded spectacular views of several of Colorado's mountain peaks that tower over 14,000 feet above sea level, while San Luis and the San Luis Valley are spread at their feet. Complete the journey with a visit to the Memorial de los Martires Mexicanos, at the top of journey.

Access to the shrine can be found at the northern portion of San Luis.

Info: 719-992-0122, www.sdcparish.org.

Crestone temples

When miners first built their tent city in the town of Crestone in 1879-80, they would have been thunderstruck to learn that 100 years later, gold fever would be replaced by a rush to spirituality, with Buddhist and Hindu temples dotting the landscape.

In the 1970s-80s, international figures Maurice and Hannah Strong provided land grants to monasteries and religious institutes to build retreat centers and monasteries in the northeastern Saguache County town.

The resulting interfaith mix of groups that congregated in and around Crestone, and continue to flock there, has drawn many followers of different religious traditions to the area. Some have described the scenic atmosphere there as a Shangri-La type ambiance reminiscent of that portrayed in British author James Hilton's classic work Lost Horizon. Some of the religious centers in Crestone open to the public include the Spiritual Life Institute and the Nada Hermitage Retreat Center, a Catholic Carmelite Monastery; the Crestone Mountain Zen; the Haidakhandi Universal Ashram; a replica of the Chartres Cathedral dromenon and the Shumei International Institute.

Let Faith Be Your Guide

Walking by Faith

These area houses of worship invite you to join them. It could be the start of a beautiful relationship.

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(719)256-5284
www.shumeicrestone.org

Alamosa Christian Reformed Church
Sunday Worship 10:15a.m.
1861 County Road 10 S, Alamosa
(719)589-3493
www.alamosacrc.org

Calvary Baptist Church
Southern Baptist
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m.
2160 Sherman Ave., Monte Vista
(719)852-5090

Center Christian Fellowship
English Service at 9 a.m.
Spanish Bible Study at 11 a.m.
Spanish Service at 12 p.m.
325 S Warden St. • Center
(719) 754-2290

Photography

The San Luis Valley offers no end of amazing scenic backdrops and activities worth photographing. But, it pays to be prepared before heading out to capture those fantastic memories. Backup batteries or a charger and a spare memory card should be packed along. Once you reach your destination be sure to experiment with different kinds of light and snap pictures throughout the day. Shooting with the sun directly behind you has been the rule of thumb for years, but taking photos from different angles can help to create texture and shadows.

Amateur photographers can also find a bit of adventure in taking pictures with unique compositions. Many candid shots feature a family member standing directly in the middle of the picture.

The most important thing to remember in collecting those outdoor moments is to enjoy the experience.

CUMBRES

Continued from Page 25

13-Oct 24. Located at an elevation of 10,015 feet, the Cumbres Depot is the highest point reached by any steam train in North America and this shorter version ride will give you a wonderful taste of steam railroading in the Rockies, along with a delicious lunch.

Chama High Noon — What could be more exciting than listening for the train whistle at High Noon in Chama and catching a thrilling ride to the top of Cumbres Pass and back? This quick excursion train will operate on Fridays from June 11-Oct 22, departing Chama Station at 12 p.m. and returning at 2:30 p.m., steaming across meadows, through forests and over rivers to Cumbres Pass and back. Lunch is not included on this ride.

Antonito Express — This shorter, family friendly ride chugs along the high mountain desert and offers views of a shield volcano just miles away. This trip departs Antonito at 11 a.m. and travels to Big Horn, returning back to Antonito at 2:30 p.m. Lunch is not provided on this trip but there are snacks, beverages, and a full bar available in the concession car. The Antonito Express will depart daily from May 29-June 4 and then will run three Sundays per month through mid-September. (June 6, 13, 20; July 4, 11, 18; Aug. 1, 8, 22, 29 and Sept. 5, 12).

SPECIAL TRIPS: Rail fans and history buffs will want to reserve a spot soon for a ride on the San Juan & New Mexico Express, which will run once a month and offer the most authentic experience of 19th Century Railroading.

San Juan & New Mexico Express For train buffs around the world, this is an unprecedented historic railroading experience. Historic 1883 steam locomotive No. 168 will pull a train of all authentic 19th century Denver & Rio Grande cars on the exact same tracks across the

Rocky Mountains that it originally did from 1883-1938. What is truly remarkable is that engine No. 168 sat outside in Antlers Park, Colorado Springs for 75 years. The engine was completely exposed to the elements of snow, hail and rain. It has been completely restored to its original 1883 brilliant appearance and is one of only two locomotives of its class left in the world. These special excursions from Antonito will be "bucket list" trips with an historic locomotive and historic cars and are limited to just 60 people. Departures are scheduled for one Sunday each month — June 27, July 25, Aug. 15, Sept. 19, Oct. 24. The train will depart Antonito at 10 a.m., traveling to Osier Station for a delicious lunch and return to Antonito at 4:40 p.m. This trip will sell out quickly so make reservations!

A RAIL FAN FANTASY – RENT YOUR OWN PRIVATE CAR: Also available in 2021, get together with up to 20 friends and rent your own private rail car. Perfect for family reunions, special birthdays and anniversaries, or for those who want more privacy. By renting a private car, you can save significantly on regular full ticket prices (depending on class of service and number of riders). This year, private cars of any class can be reserved with lunch included.

Info: www.cumbrestoltec.com or call 1-888-286-2737.

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www.shumeicrestone.org

Taste Colorado

Ribeye Ranch

Five miles west of Del Norte on U.S. Highway 160, between mile markers 196 and 197, visitors to the Valley will discover a unique southern Colorado icon. The Ribeye Ranch is home to docile elk and reindeer and the headquarters of the nationally known ElkUSA.com and Grande Natural Meats.

Grande Natural sells prime cuts of farm-raised USDA-inspected elk, buffalo, goat, whitetail deer, red deer and fallow deer, wild boar, rabbit, plus antler sets or mounts and many antler dog chews. ELKUSA actually created the current antler dog chew craze in 2005.

Owner Rich Forrest and his late wife built the business from scratch starting 20 years ago and have become the nation's largest elk meat retailer. Together with a charming ranch store, their key to success is the internet, which gives shoppers across the nation access to healthy, all-natural meat alternatives.

The ranch's quaint log cabin outlet store stocks jerky and sausage, plus various frozen red meat items. Discount meats are always available, as are the nationally distributed game meat dog foods and antler dog chews. Moving meat in large quantities, the inventory of all-natural meats is replenished regularly, guaranteeing customers fresh, recently flash-frozen game products. Their prices are very competitive and some of the lowest in the game meat business.

All meats sold by Grande Natural are derived from grass-fed, USDA-inspected deer and elk free from steroids, antibiotics and animal by-products. The buffalo are grain-finished to ensure juicy, tender steaks. Forrest noted, "Now, everyone can enjoy full-flavored elk or deer meat without the wild gamey taste." The products are shipped via UPS to some of the finest restaurants nationwide, including several local establishments.

Additionally, their select meats sell in hundreds of natural grocery stores and chains in an eight-state region. Products are prepared for sale by numerous independent USDA processors, three located in Colorado. Products can be sold to the public in affordable bulk packages ranging from whole animals down to fifth animal bundles of elk and as whole bundles down to one-eighth bundles of buffalo meat. Gift packages and jerky-sausage combos for holiday and special events are also available.

A number of their products have been highlighted in magazines and books, including ForbesLife and The Complete Venison Cookbook. Maxim Magazine's 2010 jerky competition selected Grande Natural Meat's buffalo pepper jerky to be in the top 10 nationwide. Also, in the winter of 2011 Grande Meats was featured in Cooking Wild Magazine with an article titled "Buying Meat Online." This was a great compliment, as many of the other stories featured are some of the largest and most well-known providers in the nation.

Since game meats are heart-healthy, running 90-95 percent lean, it can be assumed that the business will continue to thrive. "Physicians are recommending buffalo and elk for their cardiac patients much more often, and veterinarians prefer the non-allergenic meat for pets."

A new, rustic shop-freezer building, packed with game meat products seems to substantiate this optimistic claim, well stocked with hundreds of products.

So, stop at Grande Natural Meats for elk steaks, buffalo burgers, all-natural jerky or sausage, some really great frozen dog food or well-acclaimed antler dog chews. Maybe just stop to view the animals and say "hi;" they're betting you want to take something home with you.

Info: 719-657-0942, www.ElkUSA.com

Photos by Staci Turner

GOT ELK!

Grande Natural Meats

www.ElkUSA.com

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- Lettuce Head, Buena Vista
- Simple Foods, Salida
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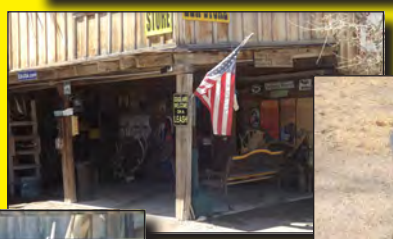
- Old Town Market, Pagosa Springs
- Vitamin Cottage Natural Grocers
- Sprouts Farmers Markets



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Small town, big talent

Creede Repertory Theatre moving outdoors for 56th season

Creede Repertory Theatre (CRT) has announced its 56th Season, which will consist of CRT in the Park, CRT at the Creede Hotel & Restaurant, and robust offerings for young audiences and students. It will also be the company's first entirely outdoor season.

"The past year at CRT has been about reframing the limitations of a pandemic into opportunities for innovation and joyful renewal," says Producing Artistic Director John DiAntonio. "Piloted beautifully by 2020's innovative outdoor KID Show, CRT is taking our whole season to the great outdoors for the very first time."

CRT in the Park will be performed in beautiful Seime Park, overlooking the town of Creede, and will feature three plays in rotating repertory: Ken Ludwig's "Dear Jack, Dear Louise," a romantic comedy about love across great distance during WWII, directed by Michael Perlman, starring Caitlin Wise and Graham Ward; "Red Riding Hood" by Allison Gregory, a family friendly modern spin on a classic fairytale, directed by John DiAntonio; and "An Iliad" by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare, a modern retelling of Homer's classic tale of the Trojan War, directed by Betty Hart, starring Lavour Addison. Performances begin June 25 and run through Sept. 4, with six shows per week — see all three shows in just two days.

CRT will partner with The Creede Hotel & Restaurant to present Cabaret at The Creede Hotel and the 15th season of Boomtown! Improv Comedy from July 1 through Sept. 4 in their newly renovated outdoor venue. Enjoy a meal while serenaded by your CRT favorites Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m., and a belly-laugh with a cocktail in-hand at Boomtown! Friday nights at 9 p.m.

Education at CRT is ready for another amazing season! Every year, The KID Show offers a professional theatrical experience for students ages 10 and older through the creation of an original show; this year CRT will carry on this 19-year tradition with "The Tree Watcher," a magical conservation journey devised and directed by Bethany Eilean Talley, performing July 8-10.

The 38th season of CRT's flagship program, The Young Audience Outreach Tour, will offer "The Guava Tree/El Guayabo," a tale of displacement and resilience with an anti-bullying message performed in English and Spanish. "The Guava Tree" will have two performances at the Virginia Christensen Multi-Use Facility in Creede on Aug. 27-28 before traveling to rural and underserved communities across the Southwest through November.

Day Camps run from July 12-30 exploring design, stage combat, theatre creation, and literacy for students ages 3 and older. If you have a student who wants to join in on the fun, visit our website to learn more about CRT's summer programming and register!

In August, CRT will present its 9th Annual Headwaters New Play Festival in a digital format. Get a front row seat (in your own living room) to the process of bringing new plays to life, including readings of brand-new work and an interactive talk back with festival playwrights and directors. The two festival readings will take place on Aug. 27-28 and will include a stream of the in-person World Premiere of our Young Audience Outreach Tour, "The Guava Tree/El Guayabo."

Info: www.creederep.com and 719-658-2540

Covid-19 Safety

CRT's COVID-19 Safety protocols are crafted in partnership with public health officials with adherence to government recommendations and union requirements to protect the health of staff, artists, students, and patrons. To learn about CRT's response to COVID-19 and what will be required of patrons at performances, visit www.creederep.com/covid19safety.

Tickets

- CRT in the Park – Boxes start at $60 and can seat 1-4 people
- CRT Cabaret at the Creede Hotel – $20
- Boomtown! at the Creede Hotel – $10
- The KID Show – Free
- Headwaters New Play Festival Pass – $25

For tickets, visit www.creederep.org, call the box office at 719-658-2540 opt 1, or email boxoffice@creederep.com.

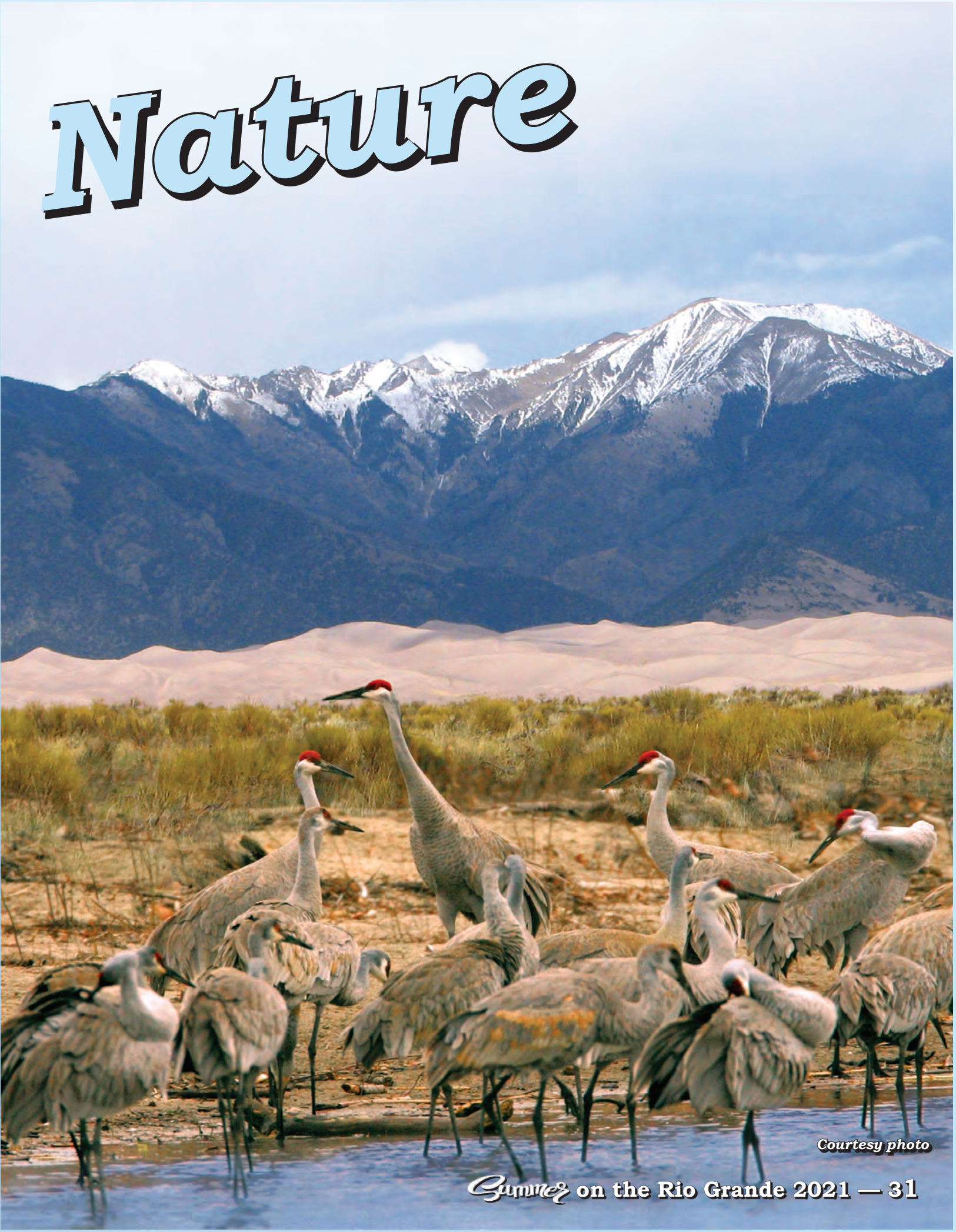
Season Shows & Performances

- "Dear Jack, Dear Louise" by Ken Ludwig's — June 25 through Sept. 4
- "Red Riding Hood" by Allison Gregory — June 25 through Sept. 4
- "An Iliad" by Lisa Petersen and Denis O'Hare — June 26 through Sept. 3
- The KID Show: "The Tree Watcher" — July 8, 9, and 10 (World Premiere)
- Boomtown! at The Creede Hotel: Fridays at 9 p.m., July 2 through Sept. 2
- Cabaret at The Creede Hotel: Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights at 7 p.m., July 1 through Sept. 4
- Headwaters New Play Festival: Virtual Readings on Aug. 27 and 28.
- Young Audience Outreach Tour "El Guayabo/The Guava Tree" — Aug. 27 and 28 (World Premiere)

About Creede Repertory Theatre

Founded in 1966, Creede Repertory Theatre (CRT) is a professional theatre company located at 9,000 feet of elevation in the historic town of Creede, CO, which offers beautiful mountain views, hiking trails, and stunning campsites in a county comprised of 97% public land. From its Rocky Mountain roots, CRT serves as an artistic home to our rural community and beyond, through the creation of repertory seasons, dynamic educational programs, and compelling new works. In a typical season, CRT produces six plays in rotating repertory, hosts numerous musical events and concerts, develops new works through the Headwaters New Play Program, and creates nationally recognized educational programs. With deeply rooted values in diversity, equity, and inclusion, CRT is committed to creating a culture of belonging where everyone can thrive.

Nature



Courtesy photo

An ancient treasure

Great Sand Dunes National Park

A place sacred to the Ute and Navajo tribes, first explored 400 years ago by the Spanish, the Great Sand Dunes National Park still radiates that aura of otherworldliness, whether standing atop of a dune, scanning the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the distance, or hiking its picturesque trails dotted with dainty wildflowers and local fauna.

Grasslands, shrublands and wetlands surround the tallest dunes in North America on three sides, providing countless opportunities for nature lovers and explorers. Set at the base of the magnificent Sangre de Cristo Mountain range, the Great Sand Dunes are home to a wide variety of plants and wildlife, existing in a unique ecosystem preserved for all to enjoy.

The park and preserve encompasses 150,000 acres, including Medano Creek wetlands, Medano Ranch, San Luis Lake State Park and San Luis Lakes State Wildlife Area. Add to this the sand dunes themselves and the possibilities for enjoying the park are endless.

Sandboarding in the dunes

Visitors are permitted to slide, ski, or sled on the tallest dunes in North America wherever vegetation is not visible. Cardboard won't work, but sandboards or snowboards will. Anything slick and flat on the bottom will do the trick, but wait till the dunes have had some moisture before trying to ski or sled. Visitors may ski and sled on the snow-covered Dunes in winter as well.

Go 4-wheelin'

High clearance four-wheel drive vehicles can use the Medano Pass four-wheel-drive road, although the road is not suited to small sport utility vehicles. The road is a special treat for visitors during the fall. Caution is urged during the spring when water is high and creek crossing can be hazardous. The road is closed during the winter.

The Oasis store near the park boundary offers four-wheel-drive tours for those without a four-wheel drive vehicle, offered May through October at Alpine Trails.

Medano Lake and Mount Herard trailhead also can be accessed from the Medano Pass four-wheel drive road. Starting at 10,000-foot elevation, the trail ascends upward 2,000 feet, winding through lush meadows and forests, ending at an alpine lake at timberline. Advanced hikers can continue climbing to the Mount Herard summit at 13,297 feet, which affords a spectacular aerial view of the dunes.

General park info

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Great Sand Dunes will be reopening operations on a limited basis. The following facilities and areas are currently OPEN:

Dunes parking area and dunefield access

Medano Pass Primitive Road, including established campsites on a first-come, first-served basis

All trails: Mosca Pass, Montville Nature, Sand Sheet Loop, Wellington Ditch, Dunes Overlook, Sand Ramp, Medano Lake, and Music Pass

All picnic areas: Mosca Creek, Sand Pit, and Castle Creek

Entrance Station, including the collection of entrance fees

Pinon Flats Campground Loop 1 and Loop 2, including restroom facilities

Overnight backcountry access in the National Park, including the dune field and sites along the Sand Ramp Trail

See the stars at the Great Sand Dunes

In May of 2019 the Great Sand Dunes National Park was designated an International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). The following is from an IDA Press Release.

Great Sand Dunes joins three other national park sites in Colorado and approximately two dozen national parks around the country that have been designated as International Dark Sky Parks. "It's no surprise that Great Sand Dunes has been building a reputation for good night sky viewing," says Great Sand Dunes Superintendent Pamela Rice, "The dry air, high elevation, and lack of light pollution all make the park an ideal dark-sky destination. We are thrilled with receiving this recognition as an International Dark Sky Park."

The Great Sand Dunes has served as an astronomy destination for decades. "A starlit night at Great Sand Dunes can bring opportunities for wonder, perspective, and a more intimate connection with the natural world than we have in the daytime," says Park Ranger Patrick Myers. "Besides seeing countless stars, our other senses open up and we become aware of the unique sounds of owls and toads, the scent of piñon pines, and the soft feel of polished grains of sand."

For more information on the IDA, visit www.DarkSky.org and for more information about the Great Sand Dunes visit www.nps.gov/grsa

Remnants of the past

Rock formations

Creede Caldera/Wheeler Geologic Area

Magma (liquid rock) seeping up into the Creede Caldera (crater) actually pushed it upward creating a dome, one of nature's many rock wonders in the area.

Creede Caldera is one of several smaller calderas (including Bachelors and San Luis), comprising the huge La Garita Caldera, created by an ancient super volcano that spewed 5,000 cubic kilometers of ash some 30 million years ago, scientists estimate. This can be compared to the 1.2 cubic kilometers deposited by Mt. St. Helen's in 1980. It is the largest known eruption of its kind.

Wheeler Geologic Monument or Wheeler Geologic Area lies just outside Creede. The 640 acres of volcanic spires reaching for the sky have inspired many to return again and again to this amazing cumulative mound of solidified, layered and weathered volcanic ash.

Both the Creede Caldera and the Wheeler area are difficult to access so are lightly traveled. The awesome immensity and antiquity of the area is a consistent draw to visitors looking for a day trip. The Creede Visitors Center can direct tourists to the area. Info: 719-658-2374, www.creede.com

Penitente Canyon

Penitente Canyon was historically a gathering place for the Penitentes of northern New Mexico, a Catholic religious sect.

"Welded tuff rock" found in Penitente is the same type of solidified rock deposits found in the Creede area and issue from the same source — the La Garita super volcano. Penitente's craggy mini-peaks draw climbers from all over the world. Some 60-70 different climbing routes are available and south-facing routes can be accessed year-round. No rock bolting is allowed at the recreation area.

To reach Penitente, take County Road G (La Garita turnoff) off Highway 285 and go eight miles to the La Garita store. Just past the store, go left (after the pavement ends) on County Road 38. At the one-mile mark, turn right where the main road turns south and take the middle of the three roads. Follow the signs.

La Garita Natural Arch

On the way to Penitente, visitors will find Forest Road 660, just past Old Woman Creek/Canyon, a dirt/gravel road turns north for several miles to the La Garita Natural Arch, another of the area's volcanic wonders. Info: 719-657-3321

Scenic byways

Los Caminos Antiguos

Los Caminos Antiguos ("The Ancient Roads") is the best route to follow through the Valley floor — the northern outpost of 16th century Spanish territorial expansion. Begin the tour in the hub of the San Luis Valley, Alamosa; then to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. The sand resting at the base of the Sangre de Cristo mountains is a beautiful, but perplexing site.

Driving time: 129 miles; 3-4 hours; Info: www.loscaminos.com

Silver Thread Scenic Byway and Bachelor's Loop

For a scenic 75-mile tour of the Valley's San Juan Mountain range, travelers can course the paved byway year-round that winds through both the Rio Grande and Gunnison national forests. Once a toll road and the Barlow and Sanderson stage route, visitors can take advantage of breathtaking overlooks that offer insight into geology and local history.

Driving time: 2-4 hours; Info: 719-873-5512, www.southfork.org/silver-thread-scenic-byway.

Old Spanish Trail

Visitors who travel west on Highway 160 between Monte Vista and Del Norte will see an ancient, historic route — the Old Spanish Trail.

The trail was used as a trade route between Sante Fe, N.M. and Los Angeles from 1829 to 1848. Items that were exchanged were woolen textiles from New Mexico for strong mules and horses from California. These items are still a strong part of the culture of the states which trail runs through. There are three branches of the trail: the Armijo Route, the Main Route and the North Branch.

Info: 805-729-6588, www.oldspanishtrail.org

(719)852-2731
947 1st Ave. • Monte Vista

MONTE VISTA Chamber of Commerce
The Heart of the Valley

Ski-Hi Stampede Rodeo
Potato Fest
Mountain Film on Tour
Moonlight Madness
Rotary Outdoor Gun Show
Holiday Bazaar
Thunder in the Valley
Brother's Keepers Nationals

For more events information please check
www.montevistachamber.org

Beauty in the backcountry

National forests & wildlife refuges

Those who travel to the Valley to photograph or view wildlife and native plant species have come to the right place. Bring on the cameras and binoculars and enjoy.

Alamosa, Monte Vista and Baca national wildlife refuges

Visitors to the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge will discover a wide variety of water birds, raptors, songbirds including the endangered Southwest Willow Flycatcher, mule deer, beaver and coyotes. The Rio Grande Nature Trail begins at the visitor center and takes visitors along the river. There is an auto tour route around a wetland. Travel east and south about nine miles to the Bluff Overlook where there is a picnic table, interpretive site, a second hiking trail and excellent views into the Rio Grande valley. The Alamosa Refuge's Visitor Center, open intermittently, is located four miles east of Alamosa on Highway 160 and two miles south on El Rancho Lane. An information kiosk with maps are available there. Info: 719-589-4021

The Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge boasts many species of waterfowl, American Avocets, White-faced Ibis and Killdeer, plus songbirds, mule deer and muskrats. During spring and fall migrations, 20,000 Sandhill Cranes come thru the San Luis Valley and most of them spend their time on the refuge roosting in the safety of the wetlands at night and foraging in the grain fields during the day. Viewing of cranes and other wildlife can be done safely by using the pullouts along the refuge on Highway 15. To reach the Monte Vista main office travel six miles south of the town of Monte Vista on Highway 15. There is an information kiosk and the start of an auto tour route through the wetlands at the office. Info: www.fws.gov/refuge/monte_vista/

At this time, visitor opportunities on the Baca National Wildlife Refuge are limited to the Visitor Contact Station at the office. From Highway 17 in Moffat, take CR T east for 10.5 miles to the turn right into the office. Info: 719-256-5527

Blanca Wetlands

There are 158 species of shorebirds take refuge at the Blanca Wetlands, birds one would normally expect to find along the seashore. In addition to the birds, visitors also will find amphibians, mammals, fish and insects. Trails are wheelchair accessible so that handicapped individuals also can enjoy birdwatching at the salty marshlands.

The Blanca Wetlands are located 11 miles northeast of Alamosa on County Road 2S. Info: 719-274-8971

Zapata Ranch/Refuge

The 100,000-acre Zapata Ranch next door to the Great Sand Dunes National Park is home to buffalo, bobcats, coyotes and a plethora of bird species, mule deer, elk and horned lizards. Those staying as guests at the ranch can also take advantage of guided horseback tours of the sand dunes. Rare plants and insects native to the area will be of interest and nature lovers will delight in the cactus varieties and wildflowers abundant in the spring.

The ranch is located just off Highway 150 near the Great Sand Dunes National Park in Mosca. Info: 719-378-2356, www.zranch.org

Russell Lakes

To reach Russell Lakes from Saguache, go nine miles south on U.S. 285 to CR R, then 1.5 miles east to the property, spread across 793 luscious acres. The lakes are open from July 16 to Feb. 14. Hunting is permitted for rabbit, dove and waterfowl. The lakes are an excellent choice for wildlife observation.

Restrictions:

- Camping is prohibited except in self-contained units in designated areas.
- Field trials may be authorized in February, March, August and September only.
- Visitors may park only in established parking areas.
- The lakes are closed except as posted and are closed after 1 p.m. during the first waterfowl season. Section 29 is closed during waterfowl season.

National forests

The Rio Grande National Forest on the Valley's west side encompasses 1.86 million acres and is one of the primo wilderness treasures in the state. High up in the San Juan Mountains, the Rio Grande begins its 1,800 mile trek to the Gulf of Mexico, located in the far western part of the forest. The Continental Divide runs for 236 miles along most of the western border of the forest and the 14-ers and lower peaks topping the Sangre de Cristo Mountain range forms the eastern border. The San Luis Valley, one of the largest agricultural alpine valleys in the world, lies between these two ranges.

The Rio Grande National Forest is open, free of charge, for visitor use and enjoyment, although fees may be charged and permits required for some activities and locations. Info: 719-852-5941

BLM land

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) purpose is to preserve wildlife and riparian areas, protect ecosystems, manage river resources, supervise permitted grazing and allow for recreational activities on its lands. It encompasses 33 miles of the Rio Grande River banks, from the southern border of the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge to the Colorado/New Mexico border. The natural area extends out 1/4 mile on either side of the river, totaling over 10,000 acres. Approximately 35 percent is BLM and the remainder is private land.

The BLM prepares public participation plans and involves citizens in implementing these plans for use of the lands. The Rio Grande Natural Area, signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2006, consists of nine members with an interest or responsibility in public land management, including such individuals as conservationists, ranchers, outdoor recreationists, state and local government officials, Tribal officials and academics.

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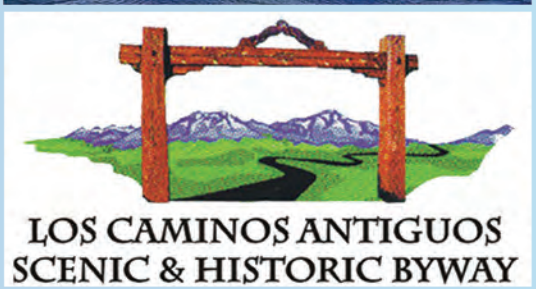
For infomation on both, visit: sangreheritage.org



Valley grown Agriculture and ranching

The most important contribution of the early Hispanic families migrating from Mexico and New Mexico in the 1700s and 1800s was the agricultural and ranching skills they carefully honed over two centuries just to survive. While Hispanics were the first settlers to farm in the Valley, they were soon followed by European and Japanese immigrants who helped make the Valley what it is today.

Eventually the San Luis Valley become a major grain and vegetable producing region, and farmers now export agricultural products nationwide. Among these exports are the Valley's main crops — potatoes, alfalfa, barley and lettuce. Many local products find their way to the tables of area restaurants in the Valley, and the Valley is now one of the primary producers of the ancient grain quinoa.

The first potato crops were grown here in 1882. Ninety percent of Colorado's potatoes are grown in the San Luis Valley; the Valley is the fourth largest potato producer in the U.S. Some of the most popular varieties grown locally include: Centennial Russet, Russet Norkotah, Russet Nugget and one red variety, Sangre.

A major hay-producing region, the San Luis Valley hay crop rakes in millions of dollars each year for growers. Alfalfa is not far behind potatoes as the Valley's second most valuable crop. Because of its high nutritional qualities, alfalfa from the Valley is purchased by dairies in northern Colorado and New Mexico.

To discourage weed growth and for disease control purposes, small grains are rotated every two years with potatoes. Barley and wheat are the main crops. The Valley is said to be the world's primary producer of the ancient grain quinoa, a tiny millet-sized grain with many nutritional advantages.

While machinery is used to plant and cultivate crops of head and Romaine lettuce, migrant laborers weed, thin, then harvest the crops. Planting takes place around May 1 and the crop is harvested in stages from mid-July to October.

Carrots also are grown in the Valley and shipped to Western markets.

Newer to the San Luis Valley, hemp, the impotent cousin of the marijuana plant, does not require the acres of pesticides and herbicides farmers traditionally have to pay for. There are benefits to field conditions when potato farmers use hemp as a rotation crop. Another cost savings is the limited water needed to grow hemp.

Cattle empires flourished from 1865 to 1889 in southern Colorado but sheep also were raised throughout the region. Historic cattle operations such as the Zapata and Salazar ranches are reminders of how the early settlers ran working ranches.

Today many ranchers still raise cattle in the Valley, mostly on a small-scale basis. Some cattle producers, however, have recently retired their acreages, owing to production costs and water issues.

Preserving the past

San Luis Valley Museums

Alamosa

Luther Bean Museum

The main gallery features a collection donated by Charles and Beryl Woodard. Two galleries contain artwork by Stephen Quiller, William Moyers and Joseph Henry Sharp.

Upstairs, cases contain Native American pottery, including pieces by Maria Martinez, San Ildefonso artist; santos and retablos and weavings, including one by Eppie Archuleta.

Info: 719-587-7151

Ryan Geology Museum

In 2004, Mr. Edward M. Ryan donated his collection of more than 5,000 fossils and minerals to Adams State for academic and public use. After exploring several possible homes for his collection, he determined Adams State was "the most perfect place." Over 7,000 visitors have seen this collection.

Hours: By appointment only

Info: 719-587-7921, www.adams.edu/academics/undergraduate/geosciences/ryan-geology-museum/

San Luis Valley Museum

The San Luis Valley Museum at 401 Hunt Ave. features educational displays of artifacts, photographs, antiques and collectibles portraying early ranch and farm life, as well as Native American artifacts, Hispanic settlers, the Japanese-American community, Adams State College, Military regalia and early railroading.

Museum displays show what an early mercantile or general store was like, along with a model historic U.S. Post Office of years' past and a typical country grade school classroom designed around a fictitious Valley town.

Hours: Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Admission: Adults $5, Free admission to - Children under 5yrs old, students (K-12), teachers, retired teachers, active military and veterans.

Info: 719-587-0667, www.museumtrail.org/san-luis-valley-museum.html

Antonito

Conejos County Museum

Located at the intersection of Highways 285 and 17, it features memorabilia from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, Silo Park, the 1913 Warshauer Mansion and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

Info: 719-580-4070, www.museumtrail.org/conejos-county-museum.html

Creede

Creede Historical Museum

Located at 17 Main St., in the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad depot, dating back to 1891-92. View old photographs, history reference books, a hand-drawn fire wagon, horse-drawn hearse and Bob Ford assassination mural.

Info: 719-658-2004, https://creede-historical-society.business.site

Underground Mining Museum

The museum is at the edge of Creede on Forest Service Rd. No. 9. Built by miners in honor of miners, the museum chronicles the history of nearly 100 years of hard-rock mining and shows how real silver mining was done.

Hours: Daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (summer season), guided tours at 10a.m. and 3p.m., audio tours at 9a.m. and 4 p.m. (reservations recommended)

Admission: Adults $7, Seniors $6, Children (ages 6-11) $5, Under age 6 free

Info: 719-658-0811, www.undergroundminingmuseum.com

Crestone

Crestone Historical Museum

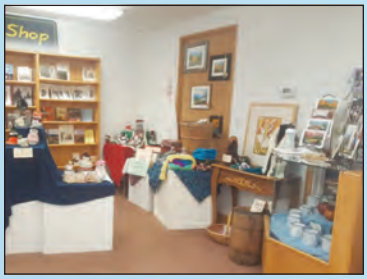
Located near downtown Crestone at 222 Cottonwood Street, the museum exhibits highlight the Gold Rush days (1870-1920) of the Crestone and El Dorado mining districts; 135 years of mountaineering on local 14ers (1877 to present) and the founding and evolution of the 100,000-acre Luis Maria Baca Grant.

Hours: By appointment only

Admission: By donation

Info: 719-588-4279, www.museumtrail.org/crestone-historical-museum.html

Del Norte



Rio Grande County Museum

They came for the adventure and more. Stories from the past of individuals and groups who made Rio Grande County history. Stories of Native Americans, fur trappers, settlers from New Mexico, gold seekers, farmers, ranchers, cowboys and merchants are told in exhibits and displays. Seasonal art shows and traveling exhibits are shown during the summer as well.

Hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Admission: Adults, $2, Children $1

Info: 719-657-2847, www.riograndecounty.org/museum

Lookout Mountain Observatory

Not a museum as such, the Lookout Mountain Observatory Association celebrates astronomy in Del Norte, which was once part of the Presbyterian College of the Southwest.

Star parties are conducted during the year at the Leo Fontenot Memorial Observatory located behind the Rio Grande County Courthouse, which can be used by active amateur astronomers.

Info: 719-852-4971, delnorteobservatory.org

Fort Garland

Fort Garland Museum

Historic Fort Garland is a proud historic landmark in the town that bears its name. Fort Garland was once commanded by the legendary Christopher "Kit" Carson and was home to the 9th

Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center

580 Oak Street
Del Norte, Colorado
(719) 657-2847

Visit us on Facebook

E-mail at rgmusuem@riograndecounty.org

Hours:
Tuesday - Friday 10-4
Saturday 10-3

Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers.

Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (summer season)

Admission: Adults $5, Children (ages 6-16) $3.50, Seniors $4.50, Children (under age six) free. Active military and their families, and History Colorado members are free!

Info: 719-379-3512, www.museumtrail.org/fort-garland-museum.html

Manassa

Jack Dempsey Museum

The Jack Dempsey Museum is at 412 Main St., the birthplace of the legendary "Manassa Mauler," the world's greatest heavyweight boxer of the 20th century. View a wealth of photos and memorabilia of Dempsey's legendary career.

Hours: Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (summer season)

Admission: Free

Info: 719-843-5207, www.museumtrail.org/jack-dempsey-museum.html

Monte Vista

Monte Vista History Museum and Transportation of the West Museum

The history museum, at 110 Jefferson Ave. (next to Carnegie Library), houses more than 4,000 historical photos, and some memorabilia of Monte Vista and the entire San Luis Valley.

To view photos and artifacts regarding transportation and agriculture in the area, visit the Transportation of the West Museum, located at 916 First Ave.

Info: 719-849-9320, www.museumtrail.org/monte-vista-historical-society-museum.html

Homelake Veterans History Museum

Based at the Colorado State Veterans Center (CSVC) at Homelake, the Veterans History Center houses military and veterans organization artifacts dating back to the 1800s.

The center also is home to a growing collection of military records gathered from old CSVC records and military veterans still living who volunteer them.

Founded as the Soldiers and Sailors home to house homeless and elderly Civil war and Spanish American war veterans; 52 of the CSVC structures are listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

An on-site veterans history museum houses memorabilia and artifacts gathered over the years, as well as what has come in since 2002 when the Colorado General Assembly passed a statute to establish the center as a repository for all unclaimed military memorabilia.

Info: www.homelakeveteransmuseum.org

Saguache

Saguache County Museum/Hazard House

Some call it the best little museum in Colorado, the Saguache County Museum takes visitors on a trip to the pioneering era. Check out what's cookin' in the kitchen. Visit the schoolroom, the parlor, or see what an old western jailhouse was like. Which minerals glow the brightest? The Spanish/Indian Room contains artifacts from these two cultures. View arrowheads, saddles and spurs. The museum yard contains antique farm equipment and much more. The gift shop offers a large selection of books, local crafts, t-shirts and caps.

Info: 719-655-2557, www.museumtrail.org/saguache-county-museum.html

Sanford

Sanford Museum

Located at 778 Main St. in Sanford, it was established to preserve and display the heritage of Sanford, Las Sauces and surrounding areas. The collection includes photographs, books and artifacts relating to early Mormon and Hispanic settlement, as well as contemporary materials. Military uniforms and information about veterans are important features of the Museum, as well as Church history, agriculture, school and sports, music and even a doll collection.

Hours: By appointment only

Info: 719-274-4382, 719-580-4114, 719-588-6410, www.museumtrail.org/sanford-museum.html

San Luis

Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center

Housed at 401 Church Pl., the museum features murals and works of art from its own collection and on loan from various artists and collectors, many of whom are local residents. Because much of the original decor has been maintained throughout the building, the original vigas (roof supports) and fireplace still grace the theatre inside.

Info: 719-672-0999, www.museumtrail.org/sangre-de-cristo-heritage-center.html

For more information on all local museums, visit MuseumTrail.org, sponsored by the San Luis Valley Museum Association, "Your pathway to the history of the San Luis Valley." Info: 719-580-4346, Facebook: museumtrail.org, museumtrail@yahoo.com.

Where creativity flows

Art in the San Luis Valley

The San Luis Valley is a prime location for any artist that has a need for solitude, a chance to step away and be inspired every day. Many of the area's cities and towns display artful reminders of the inspiration that can be found all over the Valley.

Amazing mountain views and scenery that varies from the desert-like sand dunes to wetlands and the Rio Grande River have inspired works in paint, sketch, ceramic, sculpture, fiber and more. Nearly every Valley town hosts a gallery or shop that features fine art from more than 500 artists living in the area.

In between the peaks of the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountain ranges are more than a dozen art galleries and hundreds of individual artists.

In Antonito, the town's magnificent Silo Park has murals telling the story of the Conejos County's founding and development; down the road a lone silo is graced with a mural of the sacred cranes of the Valley; a warehouse tells the story of the sheep industry just outside of La Jara, and a family of metal sculpture whooping cranes sit along a field.

San Luis tells a story all its own in murals and public art, the story of the past and present.

Monte Vista is adorned with cranes in schoolyards and parks, which showcase the story of the bird. This year, local artists participated in the "Swoop of the Cranes" project. Light posts around Monte Vista have metal Sandhill Cranes decorated by a variety of local artists both to celebrate the famous bird, which migrates through Monte Vista in the spring and fall. Viewers can scan QR codes on the back of the cranes to vote for your favorites.

Alamosa has several art galleries chock full of masterpieces. Several of the area's artists display their works of art in shop windows along Main Street, inviting curious shoppers inside for a splendid peak.

Nature and history is shown in the public art around Del Norte, including the huge elk that sits atop a bluff just outside of town.

Historic Creede presents numerous opportunities for viewing art and plenty of galleries sure to help you find that piece of art to make your home complete.

Saguache County, the Town of Saguache and the Town of Crestone are also home to numerous unique art galleries, from the abstract to those using the open skies and beautiful mountain views as inspiration.

Restaurant Guide

Presenting a tasty assortment of local restaurants for you to enjoy.

	See our ad on page...	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Children's Menu	Alcohol Served	Fine Dining	Fast Food/To Go	Steak/Chops	Seafood	Homestyle	BBQ	Soups/Salads/Sandwiches	Burgers	Mexican	Pizza/Pasta	Buffet	Vegetarian
ALAMOSA																		
Smoothy's Juice Bar, 504 West Ave., 719-496-7339	9	●	●					●			●		●					●
ANTONITO																		
Dos Hermanas, 435 Main St., 719-376-5589	8		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●
CREEDE																		
MJ's Cafe, 801 La Garita Ave., 719-658-0340	Inside Back Cover	●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●	●				
Pizzeria 8852, 105 N. Main St. 719-658-1233	27		●	●		●							●			●		●
DEL NORTE																		
Colorado Grille & Taphouse, 590 Grand Ave., 719-657-1142	27	●	●	●	●	●			●		●		●	●				●
Los Chavalos Mexican Restaurant, 580 Grand Ave., 719-657-9038	17	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●			●	●	●			●
FORT GARLAND																		
Rendezvous BBQ, 703 4th Ave. (Hwy. 160), 719-379-4380	17		●	●				●				●						
MONTE VISTA																		
Worth the Drive Family Bakery, 5115 Rd. 9 S., 719-852-0967	44	●						●			●							●
SOUTH FORK																		
Rachel's Keep On Keepin' On, 26 Escondia Dr., 719-657-1157		●	●		●			●			●		●	●				●

A few last things...

Altitude sickness

When planning a trip to the San Luis Valley, keep in mind that much of the area sits above 7,800 ft.

Symptoms of high altitude sickness include headache, lightheadedness, weakness, trouble sleeping and an upset stomach. These most often pass as your body adjusts. If you have confusion and difficulty breathing, even while resting, consult a doctor immediately.

Severe high altitude sickness can be treated with doctor prescribed medications.

A simple way to prevent altitude sickness is to take traveling to a higher altitude slowly, rest often and drink plenty of water.

Those with certain lung and heart problems are encouraged to consult their physician before visiting the Valley.

Marijuana quick facts

Purchase

In Colorado, only those 21 and older can purchase marijuana by presenting a valid, government-issued ID. Out-of-state residents can purchase up to one-quarter ounce at a time.

Consumption

Public consumption remains illegal; it is prohibited in national parks, on federal lands, at ski areas or outdoors. A hotel has the right to forbid it, just as they forbid pets and cigarette smoking.

DUID laws

The legal limit in Colorado is 5 nano-grams of active THC to be considered substantially impaired, depending on the concentration of the product smoked or ingested. The levels for most individuals will fall below 5 ng/ml three hours after consumption.

THC concentrations

Watch the THC content of the product being used to avoid over-imbibing; Colorado marijuana is known for its potency.

About edibles

Be careful consuming edibles. Always check the THC content; be aware that edibles may take several hours to register a high. Overindulgence can have severe medical consequences. Always keep edibles out of the reach of children.

Transportation

Marijuana cannot be transported in a vehicle unless it is in the trunk of a car. It cannot be transported across state lines once purchased in Colorado.

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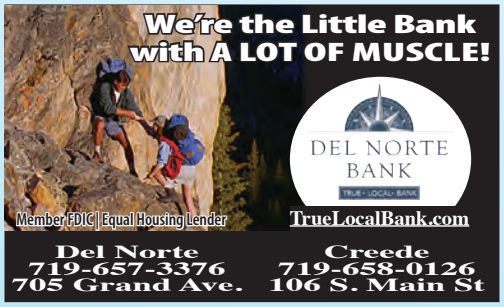

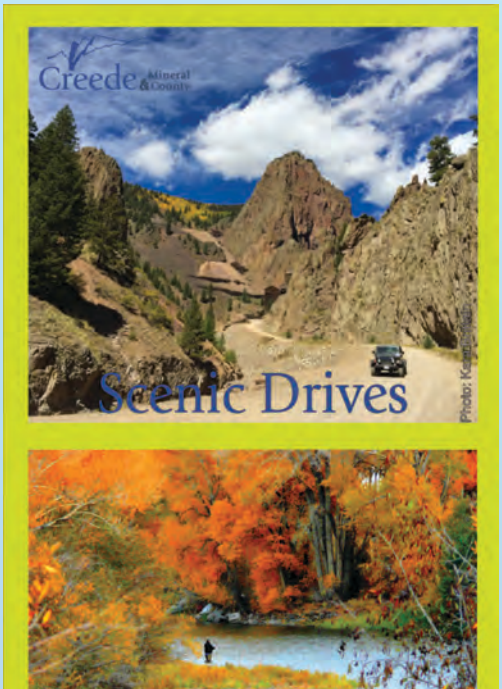

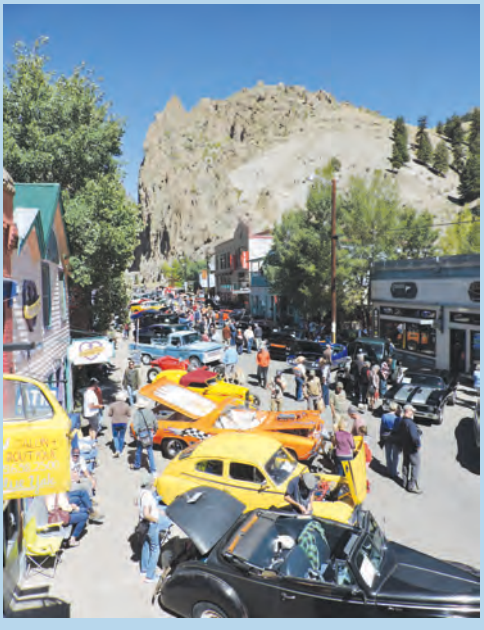

"It's day all day in the day-time, And there is no night in Creede." ~cy warman

Join Our Family at the Bridge at Alamosa

The Place to Be As a Retired Adult

- Families Connect Here
- Enjoy Great Food & Drink
- Regular Activities
- Top Notch Medical Care

Executive Director Khristina Muniz is experienced in working with seniors in many stages of care.

Concerning the ambiance at the Bridge, Khristina says

"We will save a place at the dinner table for ya!!!"

THE BRIDGE
AT ALAMOSA

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