

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO
— THE LAST GREAT PLACE —




Creede & Mineral
County
Colorado



HELLO TRAVELERS

Whew! You've made it to Creede! Now what?

First, Pause.

Breathe.

Unwind.

Slow Down.

Welcome to 'Creede Time'

Now, embrace our "Insider's Guide" as a sort of real-time, field guide to navigating:

the places (both developed and wild)

the paces (it's slower and kinder here)

and the people (who are varied and remarkable)

Welcome to our little town, and one of the last great places!

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Photo: Willow Creek Winter by Bob Seago

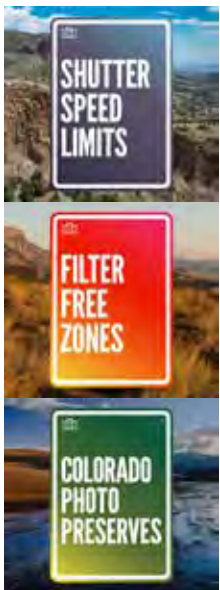


Find Your MILLION DOLLAR SHOT

By Reframing Photography

When you visit the area, it's tempting to snap photos of everything you see, but we're asking you to take a minute and pause. Take a moment to consider: do I really need 25 shots to get the perfect pose, the ideal crop, the magical light? Why is it important to take so many photos of the same thing?

In the rush to take so many photos, are you missing the beauty of the moment?



We Invite You to Enter our

Shutter Speed Limit Zones: where we're asking you to put the camera down and examine the world through your eyes, not a viewfinder. Focus on quality, not quantity, to create your single million dollar shot!

Filter Free Zones: where places are magnificent just the way they are. Don't ruin the authentic beauty of the shot (or the joy of the moment) with manipulating layers, filters, overlays or animations.

Photo Preserve: where we work together to ensure our photo practices leave no trace.



Taking Note

AROUND TOWN

We get a lot of people that come to Creede with a big city mindset pushing them along. They feel the clock urging them to go: fishing-hiking-rafting-theatre-eat-drive-shopping-eat-run – all in a hurry. Hurry to what? You're already here! Slow down. Breathe in the clean air. Take in the sights. You might just find something that you've been missing...

Stroll up and down our historic Main Street, exploring the town of Creede.

Venture into our wide-range of shops and galleries, find time for a little self-pampering, explore a museum, or chat with the locals over a beer. Let your kids run wild-and-free in one of our parks while you sit in the sunshine – we have more than 300 days of it a year!



Creede Donkey Dash by B4 Studio

Your Million \$ Shot

Main Street & the Cliffs of Creede. ProTip: go North of 3rd St to avoid those pesky power lines from slicing through the middle of your photos. Also, be cautious of traffic. The best time of day is early morning or late evening.

Seime Park up above town. ProTip: take a single photo from each direction: North (the cliffs over town), East (downtown Creede), South (the Creede Caldera and Snowshoe Mountain), and West (historic and newly restored Sunnyside Chapel)

Local Tips

- The Kentucky Belle Market is our local grocery store. Best days to shop are Saturday and Wednesday, after 11am, when everything has been unloaded and put out from their latest truck delivery
- Dining out? Arrive 45 minutes prior to 'hangry-o'clock.'** Staff is limited in our small mountain town, so we suggest you plan for a wait!
- Driving s.l.o.w.l.y. down Main Street taking in the sights? Pull over so others can pass (they may be one of our few staff members mentioned above)
- Be sure to buy your Creede Repertory Theatre tickets early. Our nationally-acclaimed theatre is quite popular and sells out often! Their ticket office is on Main Street, or buy online at creederep.org
- Cell phones do work here... *sort of.* During busy weekends or inclement weather, don't count on them. Welcome to the disconnected days of your youth!

A Silver Nugget

Creede started up the canyon on East Willow Creek, following a silver strike by the miner, Nicholas Creede. The narrow canyon did not allow much room for growth, so as the area boomed, people began building homes and businesses down the creek ("Stringtown") until most had settled in the larger canyon where Creede is today.

Tread Lightly

- Charge your electric vehicle at a designated EV charge station (there's one at the Visitor Center!)
- This is an old mining town! Leave historical items as you find them so others experience the joy of discovery
- Trash the Trash! Creede's elementary students clean up town right before summer each year. Help them keep it clean!

Explore More

- Pick up the "Historic Creede: A Walking Tour" brochure from the Visitor Center or Historical Museum.



Creede Fall by Brandon Jennings

DRIVING & TOURING

Get in your car and drive in any direction: the sights will wow you no matter the road or season.

Survey untamed wilderness, uncover mining history, and pursue some of Colorado's most scenic waterfalls. Summer wildflowers, fall colors and winter wonderlands will leave you breathless.

Local Tips

Driving in Mineral County will take you longer, so plan for it. Here are a few things that will slow you down:

- Hwy 149 will be resurfaced in 2022 - plan for short traffic delays
- Our traffic jams are caused by our beloved Bighorn Sheep - especially watch for them at Wagon Wheel Gap
- Bumpy dirt roads - go slow so you don't dust people, animals, or nearby homes
- Curvy mountain roads will keep you honest. SLOW DOWN or you'll likely meet our awesome, but busy, volunteer EMTs and Firemen

Your Million \$ Shot

- The Pitch / Commodore Mines** along the Bachelor Loop Tour. Photos of the old mines climbing up the steep cliffs above Creede are always show-stoppers - in every season!
- Silver Thread National Byway** This scenic and historic drive is one of the state's hidden gems. All of it's 30+ stops are worth photographing, but North Clear Creek Falls is stunning!

Know Before Ya Go

Winter Driving in Colorado:

- Check road conditions
- Drive much slower - four-wheel drive does not mean four-wheel stop
- Don't crowd the plow!
- Ready your vehicle - always have a full tank of fuel, emergency kit, jumper cables, sand, shovel, blankets, clothes...

Explore More

Pick up a Guidebook at the Visitor Center:

- The Silver Thread Byway Milepost Guidebook details each of the 30+ stops
- The Bachelor Loop Historic Tour Booklet includes historic photos and info



Jeep on the Bachelor Loop by B4 Studio

Taking Note

HIKING

94% of Mineral County is publicly lands: a vast recreation area with extraordinary public access.

Roughly 900 square miles of mountains, forests, valleys, and canyons. There are just as many miles of hiking and biking trails in Mineral County as there are streams and creeks. It's virtually impossible to see everything in one lifetime.

Tread Lightly

- Stick to the trails - please don't trample our beautiful scenery
- Leave gates the way you find them (open or closed)
- Take only photos - leave the wildflowers and historical artifacts for others to see!
- Trash the Trash - pack it in, pack it out, and maybe pick it up if you come across it! Leave the land more pristine than you found it
- Scoop your pet's Poop. Yes, even in the backcountry! (feces poses the risk of introducing foreign bacteria/germs to wildlife)
- Bury human waste and toilet paper at least 2ft deep, and 200ft from water; better yet, pack it out!

Gear Up

Layers Layers Layers

- Did we mention layers?
short and long sleeves, vest, jacket, shorts, pants, socks...
- Water bottle
- The sun is HOT and CLOSE:
sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, long sleeves, hat, and SPF lipbalm
- Maps - don't rely on cell service.
Either have them printed or downloaded
- First aid kit
- Buy a Search & Rescue Card (\$3 online). The card helps reimburse local SAR team's expenses for missions.

Know Before Ya Go

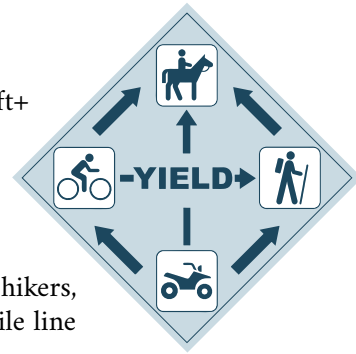
- Tell Someone:
 1. Where you're going
 2. When you'll be back (don't count on cell phone service to communicate)
- Check the Weather. And then be prepared for snow, rain, hail, sunshine, or wind anyway!

Explore More

- Pick up various Hiking Brochures and Maps at the Visitor Center
- CoTrex: Download the Colorado Trail Explorer App for trail details

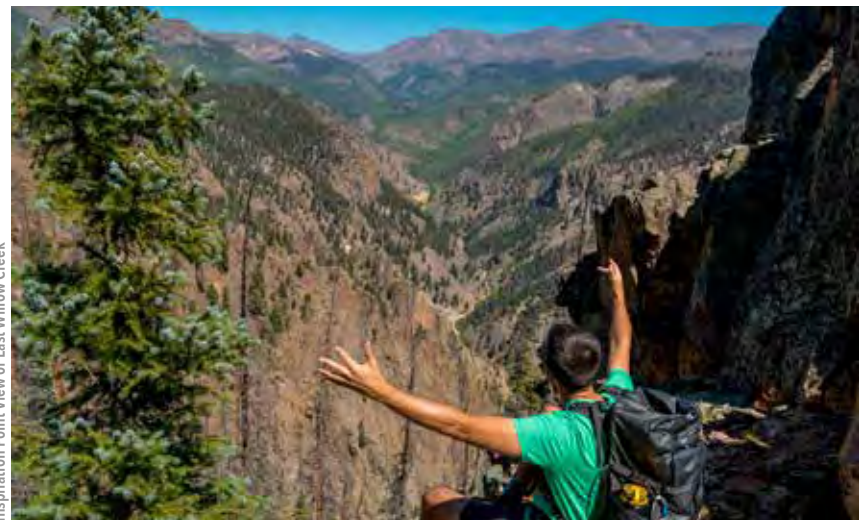
Local Tips

- Altitude WILL effect you! You are at 8,800ft+ elevation - we have more beauty, but less oxygen! Double your water intake, avoid caffeine and alcohol, and lay low the first day or two before hiking very far
- Uphill has the right-of-way. Bikers yield to hikers, all yield to horses. Group hike in a single-file line
- Leash your pet. We get it - you want to let them run wild and free! But there are SERIOUS risks you'd be taking: interactions with predators (our mountain lions and moose are not big fans of dogs); trail hazards (like open mine shafts and sheer-drop cliffs); other pets (that may be excited or aggressive)



Your Million \$ Shot

- 'Up and Over' - Up & Back or Up & Around (3mi); significant climb to top. Get an early start! Beautiful views of town and amazing vistas of the Rio Grande valley. Trailhead is across from gas station. Continue on to **Inspiration Point** - Up & Back (3.5 mi one-way)
- South Clear Creek Falls** @ Silver Thread Campground - Down & Back (1/4 mi); Keep to the well-maintained trail down to a dramatic waterfall. 23 mi from Creede.
- San Luis Peak** - Full Day, Up & Back (11 mi round-trip to peak) Summit a Colorado 14er! 9mi from Creede.
- Wheeler Geologic Site** via East Bellows Trail, Full/Multi Day - Up & Back (about 7 mi one-way) Wilderness, beautiful views and unique geologic features. 18mi from Creede.



Inspiration Point View of East Willow Creek

CAMPING

There's nothing like sleeping under the stars – and you'll see more stars above Mineral County than you probably thought existed.

There are designated campgrounds throughout the county, both for RVs and for tents. Most of the campgrounds are run by the National Forest Service, but some are simply spots that hikers have been using for hundreds of years.



Photo courtesy of San Juan Sports

Tread Lightly

- Keep our land as pristine as you found it: Dispersed campers should choose spots that are previously used sites, 200ft from water source, and that keep vehicles within 300ft of a road
- Trash the Trash - pack it in, pack it out. Creede offers a paid trash drop at the gas station (\$5/bag). Bury human waste/tp 2ft deep, and 200ft from water; or pack it out!
- Pets: Scoop their poop and keep them leashed

Local Tips

- Plan to find and claim your site mid-week for best options
- Check local **fire conditions**. After the forest fire in 2013 that ravaged our economy and our national forest, we take fire bans SERIOUSLY. If you do have a campfire, extinguish it fully!!!

Know Before Ya Go

- Tell Someone:
 1. Where you're going
 2. When you'll be back (don't count on cell phone service to communicate)
- We don't usually recommend camping during the winters (the locals will think you've lost your mind!) It's COLD... and believe us, your "minus 30° sleeping bag" won't cut it!

Gear Up

- Plan for cold nights, even in July! At high elevations, temperatures drop significantly once the sun goes down
- Bring plenty of water. There are only a few places to fill up: the RV Dump Station, at the Visitor Center for a donation; or at the gas station
- Maps - don't rely on cell service. Either have them printed or downloaded
- First aid kit - you're a long way from medical assistance. If you need help, call 911, visit the Creede Clinic at 802 Rio Grande Ave, or drive to the Rio Grande Hospital in Del Norte (about 45 miles)

Explore More

- Reserve your camping spot at www.recreation.gov
- Stop by our local National Forest Ranger Station on Main Street with questions

I Camped At:	Fee (single/double)	Reservation Req'd?	Miles to Creede	Amenities
<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol Head / South Clear Creek	\$23	No	22.6	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Scenic, Trailhead, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Ivy Creek	FREE	No	16	Restroom, NO WATER, Fire Grate, Trailhead, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Lost Trail	FREE	No	38.2	Restroom, NO WATER, Fire Grate, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshall Park	\$23/46	Yes	6.2	Restroom, NO WATER, Fishing, Easy Access to Hwy 149
<input type="checkbox"/> North Clear Creek	\$23/46	No	24.5	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Palisade	\$26	No	12.1	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Fishing, Hndcp, On Hwy 149
<input type="checkbox"/> Rio Grande	FREE	No	8.4	Restroom, NO WATER, Fire Grate, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> River Hill	\$26/52	Yes	29.6	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Road Canyon Rsvr	FREE	No	26	Restroom, Water, Fire Ring, Fishing, Wakes Not Allowed, Trolling Motors OK
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Thread / South Clear Crk Falls	\$23	No	23	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Scenic, Trailhead, Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Thirty Mile	\$26/52	Yes	31.1	Restroom, Water, Fire Grate, Trailhead, Fishing, Handicap

WILDLIFE

Help us keep our wildlife wild!

For those who would prefer to watch the native animals in their natural habitat, Mineral County offers a wonderful assortment of possibilities. There is nothing more majestic than a bald eagle flying across the sky with a distant, snow-capped peak as the backdrop...

Tread Lightly

- Keep your dog leashed so he can't endanger himself, you, or local wildlife by chasing those you encounter. When leashed, you can calmly move away from the animal, taking care to avoid any negative reaction.
- Keep your drone far away from wildlife. While your shot might be AH.MA.ZING, drones create stress that may cause significant harm or death to our favorite locals



Elk outside of Creede by Ken Wyley • Big Horn Sheep by Bob Seago



Taking Note

Your Million \$ Shot Which have you spotted?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hummingbird | <input type="checkbox"/> Lynx | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chipmunk | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Lion | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bald Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Bear | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trout | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



Abert's Squirrel



Cottontail Rabbit



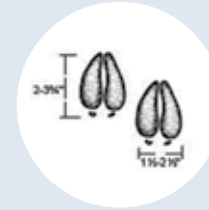
Beaver



Black Bear



Bighorn Sheep
Best chance to spot one?
Wagon Wheel Gap in the
late fall and winter!



Deer



Moose
Best chance to spot one?
On the Bachelor Loop near
Rat Creek in the summer!



Elk

FISHING

Year-round fishing will lure you in

The headwaters of the Rio Grande are just above Creede. The world-class gold-medal water of the meandering river provides fly-fishing opportunities for every skill level. Besides river fishing, Mineral County has literally hundreds of miles of streams and creeks that are excellent spots to drop your line. If you're into lake fishing (summer or winter), there are plenty of stocked and wild lakes/reservoirs in the area.



Your Million \$ Shot

Your grinning face with a fish of any size!

Know Before Ya Go

- Everyone over 16 must buy a fishing license (get one at the Ramble House on Main Street)
- Check fishing reports and local shops for best water. Particularly during springtime, the runoff can change the creeks and river on a daily basis
- Check for restrictions and bag limits for each location
- Private property is a big deal here. Always observe posted markers, and understand which parts of the river are private



East Willow Creek and Kids Fishing by B4 Studio

Tread Lightly

Help preserve our Gold Medal Waters by keeping our fish healthy! NEVER fish the Rio Grande during the heat of the day in the later parts of summer - the water is warm and low, and the fish get easily stressed

Explore More

- The local fishing shops are a great resource; friendly staff are always willing to help our visitors make the most out of a day of fishing (and these aren't big corporations - we're friendly even if you don't buy something)
- www.fishtheupperrio.com offers a complete directory of fishing spots in the area

RAFTING & BOATING

and Kayaking • Canoeing • Paddle Boarding

The headwaters of the Rio Grande is a very family-friendly stretch of river as it flows past Creede. The solitude and breathtaking scenery are matched with plenty of relaxing stretches of water - great for the cruising family or focused fly fisherman. (For the more adventurous rafter, class II-III rapids are available in the early parts of summer, too!) Many of the area lakes and reservoirs are nestled between some of the most incredible mountain scenery you'll ever lay eyes on...



Rio Grande Reservoir by Bob Seago

Your Million \$ Shot

- Your friends and family, soaked, rafting down the Rio Grande with a local guide service
- The tip of your kayak on the glass-like surface of Love Lake, as it meets an unending vista of fall colors

Gear Up

- Always wear a life jacket.** It's hard to float in ice-cold water
- Our weather changes FAST! Be sure to always pack a raincoat and warm clothes
- Paddleboards, rafts and kayaks are available to rent locally. Ask for details at the Visitor Center

Mountain Man Rafting on the Rio Grande



Know Before Ya Go

- Many stretches of the river are on private property. This means you **MUST** stay **IN** your boat while passing through (It surprises many that the rocks and sand on the river-bottom are often privately owned - it's only the **water** that's public!)
- Each of our Lakes and Reservoirs have different restrictions for various boats - check with the Visitor Center before you head out

Local Tips

If you're planning to paddle board, we suggest finding a pond or reservoir for the best experience! Our river is very cold (even in the height of summer - imagine, it's all that melting snow...)

ATV/OHV, JEEP, EBIKE

Many miles of designated 4X4 trails throughout the area are exhilarating no matter what you ride

Find yourself on any of our hundreds of back-country roads. Venture out in your 4x4, ATV, or bike! Check with the Visitor Center for many options for rentals or guided adventures. Have a blast in the back-country!



OHV on the Bachelor Loop by B4 Studio



Know Before Ya Go

- Tell Someone:
 1. Where you're going
 2. When you'll be back
- Buy a Search & Rescue Card (\$3 online). The card helps reimburse local SAR team's expenses for search and rescue missions
- Check the Weather
- Maps - don't rely on cell service. Either have them printed or downloaded before you go



Local Tips

- You can drive and park in town! Just be sure to use designated routes and drive slowly
- Stick to the National Forest (avoid Wilderness)
- Ebikes are allowed on the same trails as motorcycles!



Gear Up

- Dress in layers - the weather here can turn quickly
- Wear a bandana or face mask to filter out the dust
- Helmet - these mountains are rough and rocky



Your Million \$ Shot

- The top of Bristol Head mountain has several directions of stunning views
- The Creede overlook @ Stop#14 on the Bachelor Loop - summer or winter!

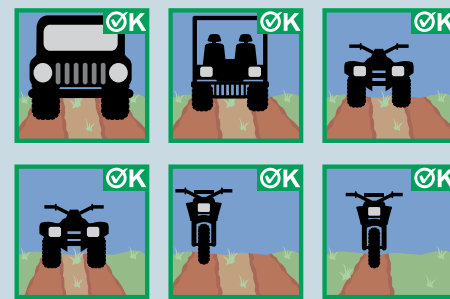


Explore More

Stop in the Visitors Center for your copy of the City of Creede OHV Route & Regulations and a Motor Vehicle Use Map for our National Forest

What is OK:

If the route is wider than the vehicle, you're OK



Tread Lightly

We'd love to keep our beautiful mountains beautiful, so please! Leave no Trace:

- Stay the trail where you won't damage flora and fauna. Nothing will break a local's heart like a bunch of mudboggers spinning circles in our pristine meadows
- Stay on the Trail! Going around obstacles widens trails, and causes erosion. **Challenge** yourself by staying on the trail.

ROCKHOUNDING

What better souvenir than a beautiful rock, pulled directly out of the San Juan Mountains

Mineral County is known for the rich variety of ornamental stones found abundantly in the area. Following the footsteps of early prospectors, modern rockhounds still seek silver ore, soubelly agate (Creede amethyst), galena, opal, agate, jasper, fossils, geodes, calcite and barite in the Creede area.



Local Tips

3 great spots to begin rockhounding:

- Pool Table Road @ 4 ½ mile marker: agate and jasper scattered around
- Creede Airport Corner, just 1 ½ miles from town: fossils
- Junction of East & West Willow Creeks, just ½ mile north of town: amethyst



Rockhounding on the Bachelor Loop by B4 Studio



Gear Up

- Pick ax and bucket
- Hat & Sunscreen
- Patience



Explore More

Pick up 'A Rockhound's Guide to Creede, CO' at the Visitor Center

STARGAZING

With high elevation, low humidity, and very little light pollution, you'll find some of the best stargazing in the world here!

Surrounded by 900 square miles of wilderness and open skies, Mineral County has unmatched viewing opportunities! Come watch our night skies, and leave civilization behind...



Gear Up

- Comfy camp chairs
- Thick blankets
- Warm shoes and jacket
- Headlamp, lantern, or fully charged phone with a flashlight
- Tripod and wide-angle lens if you plan on taking photos



Your Million \$ Shot

Deep Creek Road at dusk (glittery stars with a view of Creede in the distance - literally breathtaking at any time of year!)



Local Tips

For easy access from town and great viewing, the locals love:

- Pool Table Road, above Wagon Wheel Gap
- Bachelor Loop - there are dozens of locations where you can pull over and gaze away; do avoid private property

Give your eyes about 30 minutes with no light to adjust for best viewing



Taking Note



Creede Night Sky by TN Taddeucci

SNOWMOBILE

Jump on a snowmobile and head into the untouched, unseen wildness surrounding Creede.

Trails for all categories of riders are plentiful. The area's vast expanse of National Forest and state recreation areas support more than 200 miles of groomed trails. Trails connect Creede, Lake City, and South Fork at elevations ranging between 8,500 and 13,000 feet. This area of Colorado is known to have what many consider perfect riding conditions.



Local Tips

- Avoid Wolf Creek Ski Area boundaries (it's a pretty steep fine!)
- Altitude WILL effect your machine AND you! Tune up your sled - ask local shops for advice and take a few test runs. And for your own health, double your water intake, avoid caffeine and alcohol, and lay low the first day or two in Creede
- We really do have a lot of avalanche-prone country here, and you're a long way from Search & Rescue or EMTs. Make sure you have avalanche training and safety equipment



Know Before You Go

- Tell Someone:
 1. Where you're going
 2. When you'll be back (don't count on cell phone service to communicate)
- Check the weather
- Ask at the Visitor Center for grooming reports and conditions on area trails
- Buy a Search & Rescue Card (\$3 online). The card helps reimburse local SAR team's expenses for search and rescue missions

WINTER SPORTS

Snowshoe • XC Ski • Hockey • Skating • Sledding

Creede has several opportunities to get out and enjoy the winter sunshine. Go out cross-country skiing or grab a sled and send the laughing kiddos down a hill! Creede is the perfect place to get a taste of a good old fashioned Colorado experience. Crowds are non-existent this time of year and solitude is handed out in buckets.

Local Tips

- Favorite Sledding spots include Sunnyside off the Bachelor Loop, the top of Spring Creek Pass, or around the intersection of Lime & Ivy Creeks



Gear Up

- Dress in layers - that sun will get HOT, but temperatures can just as easily drop 25° in 10 minutes!
- Skate rentals are FREE at Creede's Silver Ice Park
- Rent Snowshoes and XC Skies at local outdoor shops
- Buy a Sled at the local hardware store

Explore More

- Pick up winter use trail maps at the Visitor Center
- Check backcountry conditions at <https://avalanche.state.co.us>

Wolf Creek Ski Area

Something most people don't know: Wolf Creek is only 45 minutes from Creede and has the most natural snow in all of Colorado. Tickets are affordable, and the terrain varies from gentle beginner slopes to the steep and deep

Silver Ice Park

Creede's Silver Ice Park features two stunning ponds at the base of the cliffs, a great spot for afternoon or evening Skating or Hockey (with lights!), and hanging out around a bonfire

Nordic Trails

Creede's Upper Rio Grande Nordic Club maintains public-use winter trails for XC Skiing and Snowshoeing in the area. Our favorite groomed trails include

- Deep Creek Trail loops
- Sixmile Flats loop
- Lime/Ivy Creek Trail loop



Fill out your field guide, and bring it to the Visitor Center for a FREE reward!



In partnership with the Creede School staff and students, we are offering FREE water tumbler for those who take the time to learn about the places, paces, and people of Creede!



For More Info:



Creede Visitor Center

904 S. Main St. • 719-658-2374

Open 7 days a week, mid-May to mid-Sept
Open Tuesday-Saturday, mid-Sept to mid-May
Area Visitor Guides
Area Maps • Guidebooks • Free WiFi

Rio Grande National Forest Divide Ranger Station

304 South Main St., Creede • 719-658-2556
Open May through September

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