



# What to do in the San Luis Valley

**Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve:**  
<http://www.nps.gov/grsa/faqs.htm>

Why is the Great Sand Dunes National Park special?

- It contains the tallest dunes in North America and one of the most fragile and complex dune systems in the world
- protects a globally significant, water- and wind-driven system, which includes creeks that demonstrate surge flow, a rare hydrologic phenomenon
- provides tremendous scenic settings that, for many, provoke strong emotional responses. These settings (including massive dunes surrounded by alpine peaks, a desert valley, creeks flowing on the surface of the sand, pristine mountains, and rural range land) offer spacious relief from urban America, exceptional solitude and quiet, and a remarkably unspoiled day and night sky
- hosts a great diversity of plants and animals, including insect species found nowhere else on earth. The system, which spans high desert to alpine life zones, supports rare biological communities that are mostly intact and functional
- contains some of the oldest (9,000+ years before present) known archeological sites in America. The dunes have been identified as having special importance by people of various cultures, and the area is recognized for the culturally diverse nature of human use
- provides special opportunities for recreation, exploration, and education in the highly resilient dune mass and adjoining creek environments.

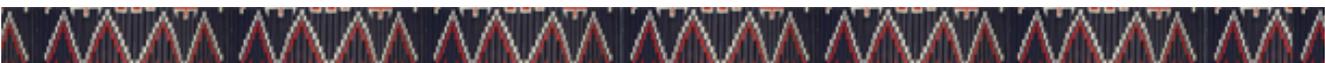


## **Hot Springs**

**Joyful Journey** - Mineral hot spring. This is an exclusive spa setting with beautiful views of the San Juan Mountain for adults, offering a tranquil spot that truly feels like a retreat experience. Now offering spa treatments from therapeutic massage, hot stone therapy and herbal wraps with sauna on sight.

**Valley View** - where Highways 285 and 17 join, you can take the dirt road heading to the east to visit the bathing suit optional

**Great Sand Dunes (Hooper Pool)** – Great for kids! Nice views of the Sangre De Cristo Mountains.





## **Historical Tours**

### **Historical Museum in Del Norte**

<http://www.delnortehistory.org/museum/>

The Main Museum is located on the corners of 6th and H Streets in Crescent City, California. The Main Museum has a wealth of interesting displays. One room is devoted to artifacts of the local Tolowa and Yurok Native Americans. It includes one of the finest Native American basket collections in Northern California. Musical instruments, old radio, phonographic and photographic equipment, excellent needlework, early logging and mining tools and equipment, and many fashions and furniture from yesteryear are just some of the objects and subjects represented and on display in the Main Museum.

### **Bonanza**

Bonanza is a largely abandoned former silver mining town. The name bonanza is Spanish for a rich mineral deposit.

At one time this town boasted - four smelters, nineteen mills, four hotels, forty saloons, a motion picture theater, two schools, a post office, a 1,200 foot tunnel, a baseball team and of course one house of ill repute on the top of a hill.

### **Creede**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creede,\\_Colorado](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creede,_Colorado)

Travelers to this area appeared in the early 1800s. Tom Boggs, a brother-in-law of [Kit Carson](#), farmed at Wagon Wheel Gap in the summer of 1840. The first silver discovery was made at the Alpha mine in 1869, but the silver could not be extracted at a profit from the complex ores. Ranchers and homesteaders moved in when stagecoach stations (linking the mining operations over the Divide with the east) were built in the 1870s, but the great "Boom Days" started with the discovery of rich minerals in Willow Creek Canyon in 1889.

Creede was the last silver boom town in Colorado in the 1800s. The town leapt from a population of 600 in 1889 to more than 10,000 people in December 1891. The Creede mines operated continuously from 1890 until 1985.

### **Historical San Luis Express Train**

<http://www.coloradodirectory.com/sanluisrailroad2/>

The historic railroad route through the San Luis Valley, over the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains and into La Veta has been carrying freight for over a century. These rail lines opened the San Luis Valley to the world, bringing building supplies in and taking agricultural and mineral products out. The San Luis Valley has always held a special place in the heart of railroaders as one of the few North American connections between standard gauge and narrow gauge railroads, with narrow gauge lines in continuous operation since the late 1870's.

RESERVATIONS can be made by calling 1-877-7CO-RAIL.





# Los Caminos Antiguos

## A Colorado Scenic & Historic Byway

<http://www.loscaminos.com/>

*Los Caminos Antiguos* ("The Ancient Roads") is the best route to follow through the region of the upper Rio Grande - the northern outpost of sixteenth century Spanish territorial expansion.

Explore the rich culture and traditions of some of Colorado's oldest communities and the panoramic views of the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountain ranges, the high, fertile San Luis Valley, The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, the Rio Grande National Forest, state parks and federal wildlife areas.

### **Hiking**

There are too many hikes to list them here.

Many trailheads to the Sangre De Cristose are S and N and in Crestone.

Also across the valley beautiful hiking trails exist.

### **Biking**

Nice easy biking around the Baca and also around Penitente Canyon, Bonanza and Zapata Falls

### **Horseback Riding**

The Baca Grande Stables are open year round and offer a variety of trail rides in both English and Western riding, by appointment.

Call Joanna Dokson at the Baca Grande Stables for more information about programs and services and to schedule trail rides and lessons: 719.256.4756.



### **Rock Climbing**

#### **Penitente Canyon**

Years ago, Penitente Canyon served as a place of worship for a small sect of the Catholic Church known as Los Hermanos Penitente. The Brothers Penitente, mostly Spanish men of deep faith and commitment, lived secluded from outside influences in the foothills and canyons of the Sangre de Cristo and San Juan Mountains. Living simply, they practiced their religion with a fervor few other sects could match.

Penitente Canyon is a very nice, family-friendly sport climbing area. The area,





which includes Penitente Canyon and the adjacent Rock Garden, Sidewinder and Witches Canyons have yielded as fine a concentration of high quality routes as any area in the region.

## **Golfing**

The 9-hole "Los Cumbres" course at the Challenger Golf Club facility in Crestone, Colorado features 1,881 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 31. The course rating is 28.4 and it has a slope rating of 89. Designed by Jim Barnes, the Los Cumbres golf course opened in 1974. Scott Johnson manages the course as the Superintendent.

67581 County Road T  
Crestone, CO 81131  
United States  
P: (719) 256-4856

## **UFO Watch Tower**

Strange things fly around in the San Luis Valley and this is the best place to get a peek. Isolated from distracting lights, the watchtower is ideal for scanning the skies and perhaps seeing a UFO!

*Located 2 1/2 miles N. of Hooper, CO on HWY 17. Watch for the ALIEN signs and primitive camping is available.*

## **Alligator Farm & Reptile Park**

The Alligator Farm with over 400 alligators is possible because the farm's ponds are naturally heated to 87° fahrenheit by water from a 2000 ft. deep geothermal well. The farm is also a fish farm, specializing in raising 'Rocky Mountain White Tilapia' fish for the dinner tables.

Address: 9162 County Road 9 North, Mosca, CO

Directions: 17 miles north of Alamosa CO on Highway 17.

Admission: \$10 adults, \$5 kids 6 to 12 and seniors (65 to 80), 5 and under free.

Hours: 9 am - 5 pm. Labor Day- Memorial Day (longer hours in the summer). (Call to verify)

Phone: 719-378-2612

