

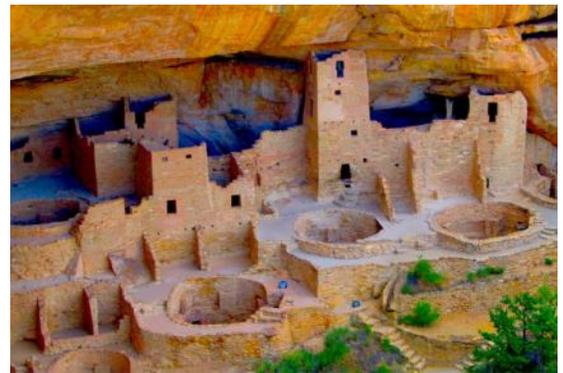


Chimney Rock National Monument (CRIM)

Fact Sheet: Off the Beaten Path in Colorado

Highlighting Colorado's many unique federal lands and activities

- **What is a Fourteener?** Peaks reaching 14,000 feet above sea level or more. Colorado has 54 such peaks.
- Did you know? **Off-trail hiking destroys ancient soils at elevations above 12,000 feet.** Foot traffic across the landscape can remove alpine plants and expose the soil, which then washes away leaving only the bedrock behind. It can take **1,000 years to regenerate just an inch of soil.**
- Central Colorado's [Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument](#) features one of the richest and most diverse fossil deposits in the world— up to 1,700 species. **The monument's Sequoia tree fossils are some of the largest diameter petrified trees in the world** and are massive among the insect and plant fossils in the monument.
- [Mesa Verde National Park](#) was the first US national park established to protect archeological sites. It was designated in 1906, the same year President Theodore Roosevelt signed The Antiquities Act. People around the world were becoming fascinated by the incredibly rich archeological story visible in the southwestern United States. In 1978, Mesa Verde National Park became a World Heritage Site.
- [Blue Mesa Reservoir](#) is the largest body of water in Colorado and offers nearly 100 miles of shoreline and is the largest trout and Kokanee salmon fishery in the United States.
- **Did you know Civil War related events occurred in Colorado?** Discover and commemorate the events of 1861-1865 during the [150th Anniversary of America's Civil War](#). Visit [Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site](#) in eastern Colorado to learn about the **emotionally charged and controversial events of November 1864 and the Sand Creek Massacre** -- a tragedy reflective of its time and place.
- Located just minutes from Denver and open year-round, the [Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge](#) was **once a toxic chemical waste site, but is now a thriving wildlife habitat and birder's paradise.**
- [Colorado National Monument's](#) exposed geology and high desert climate, plus the flora and fauna that flourish here; combine to make the monument a unique experience. [Road bicycling](#) is an increasingly popular activity on **Rim Rock Drive, but it is not for the faint of heart.** The east and west hills are steep, narrow and contain multiple switchbacks and three unlighted tunnels. The narrow road is shared with automobiles, trucks, and



Mesa Verde National Park (Lydia Faller/STE)

buses, so cyclists need to practice safe riding including riding single file, using bike lights and staying alert to traffic.

- **The dirt is alive!** A living crust called "Biological Soil Crust" (also known as cryptogamic, microbiotic, cryptobiotic, and microphytic crust) covers much of [Colorado National Monument](#). Composed of algae, lichens and bacteria, this crust provides a secure foundation for desert plants. By staying on roads and trails you can help us protect this key monument resource!
- **Join [Rocky Mountain National Park](#) to celebrate its 100th anniversary!** From September 4, 2014, through September 4, 2015, Rocky Mountain National Park, along with local and national communities, will host anniversary activities including guest speakers, special activities and community events.
- **A thousand years ago, the vast Chaco civilization was drawn to Chimney Rock's soaring massive pinnacles**, rising hundreds of feet above the valley floor. High atop these ancient sandstone formations, Ancestral Pueblo People built hundreds of stone buildings, including the highest elevation ceremonial "great house" in the Southwest.



Rocky Mountain National Park (Jennifer Stoup/STE)

The pinnacles that give [Chimney Rock National Monument](#) its name align with multiple archaeoastronomical features. The Ancestral Puebloans incorporated their knowledge of astronomy into the design of their community. Today, Chimney Rock is one of the **best-recognized archaeoastronomical resources in North America**, with alignments with the northern lunar standstill, summer solstice, equinoxes and Crab Nebula. Take advantage of Chimney Rock Interpretive Association's (CRIA) programs! The association conducts [daily guided walking tours](#) of the monument with **tour reservations available on www.Recreation.gov**.

- Part of the Historic Hotels of America and the National Register of Historic Places, the [Hotel Boulderado in Boulder, Colorado](#), **opened its doors on New Year's Day 1909**. Over one hundred years later, guests continue to enjoy the elegance, comfort and charm of this historic hotel. The hotel's large blocks of orange-red sandstone came from the old Colorado Red Sandstone Company in Fort Collins, while the thousands of red bricks in the original historic building came from the Thompson Pressed Brickworks, on land that is now part of the University of Colorado campus.
- Covering over 210,000 acres across two states including Colorado, [Dinosaur National Monument](#) provides dramatic scenery and a lifetime of exploration. **Still encased in the rock at the [Quarry Exhibit Hall](#) are 1,500 bones of creatures** like Apatosaurus, Allosaurus and Diplodocus – just to name a few – that roamed this land 149 million years ago.
- The dunes of [Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve](#) in southern Colorado are the **tallest dunes in North America** with five dunes reaching over 700 feet tall. A visit to the park is not complete without trying sandboarding and sand sledding!
- At 12,095 feet/3,696 meters and passing through the White River National Forest and San Isabel National Forest, [Independence Pass](#) is **one of the highest paved roads in North America** and an extremely popular ride with cyclists while the road is open and free of snow. Once the site of an old mining settlement and now part of the White River National Forest, the historic Independence Townsite, located near the top of the pass, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Great Sand Dunes National Park (Kerry Howard/STE)