

VHL - Valley Haven Lodge - Area Recreation Opportunities

For liability reasons, VHL does not endorse, so do your own due diligence

Recreation East of Valley Haven Lodge:

Great Sand Dunes National Park: As you plan your schedule, be sure to schedule the Great Sand Dunes National Park for as early in the day as possible. After mid-morning, the sun's reflection on the dunes can burn you, and the sand can get quite warm. Often there is a breeze in the afternoon that blows the sand around. You do not want to get sandblasted! There is a great Visitor Center. If there is enough snow-pack in the Sangre De Cristo (blood of Christ) mountain range, you will have the rare privilege of experiencing the pulsating stream.

<https://www.nps.gov/grsa/index.htm>

Zapata Falls: After visiting the Great Sand Dunes National Park, we recommend that you take in the Zapata Falls. It is about 8 miles south of the sand dunes. Caution: The last 3 miles are over a very rough and pot-holed road. All-wheel drive is not required during dry weather, but it is a 10 mile-per-hour drive.

<https://dayhikesneardenver.com/zapata-falls-hike-colorado/>

Colorado Gators Reptile Park: Yes, several hundred alligators in the hot springs of the San Luis Valley between the Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Valley Haven Lodge.

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

Hot Springs Pool: Toward evening is a great time to swim at the Sand Dunes Recreation Hot Springs pool, AKA Hooper pool. It is 3 miles Northwest of the village Hooper, Colorado, about a 25 minutes drive from Valley Haven Lodge.

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

North Crestone Creek Trail: Beautiful hiking trail, 14,000' peaks in the foreground, alongside a rushing creek, amid tall pine trees, this is quintessential Colorado. Just outside Crestone, Colorado, about 50 minute drive from Valley Haven Lodge.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/riogrande/recreation/recarea/?recid=29390&actid=104>

Recreation West of Valley Haven Lodge:

Penitente Canyon It is a very popular rock-climbing area, but also has a delightful 2 hour loop trail. There is a fine picnic ramada at the trailhead. It is just a 15-minute drive west of Valley Haven Lodge.

Natural Arch (similar on a smaller scale to those found in Arches National Park in Utah), is also called **La Ventana** or **Hole-In -The -Rock**, Del Norte Colorado. It is about 35 minute drive west of Valley Haven Lodge or about 20 minutes west of Penitente Canyon on a gravel road. In dry weather 4 wheel drive is not needed but the last 1-2 miles has some serious ruts.

<https://www.yelp.com/biz/la-ventana-natural-arch-del-norte>

<https://theblondcoyote.com/2012/05/03/la-ventana-arch-penitente-canyon/>

Scenic Railways: There are two Scenic Railway excursions in the San Luis Valley.

Rio Grande Scenic Excursion goes from Alamosa east to the La Veta Pass.

Where the train is boarded in downtown Alamosa, CO is a 40 minute drive from Valley Haven Lodge

<https://www.coloradotrain.com/>

Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway goes from Antonito, Colorado to Chama New Mexico.

Where the train is boarded in Antonito, CO is a one hour drive from Valley Haven Lodge. It advertises "64 miles of Rocky Mountain splendor".

<https://cumbrestoltec.com/>

Creede Silver Mining "Ghost" Town is an hour drive West of Valley Haven Lodge via the **Silver Thread Scenic Highway**. It is very scenic, has a great mine tour, lots of touristy shops, a great *Bachelor's Loop* scenic drive, and the Creede Repertory Theatre. Most of the tourist shops are open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. This is a marvelous day trip from Valley Haven Lodge.

Silver Thread Scenic Highway along the Rio Grande River west of Creede to several scenic and fun forested natural wonders / landmarks.

Headwaters of the Rio Grande River near Highway 149

- <https://www.creede.com/city-of-creede/64-pams-new-stuff/94-head-waters-of-the-rio.html>

North Clear Creek Falls near Highway 149

- <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/riogrande/recarea/?recid=29118>

South Clear Creek Falls near Highway 149

- <https://www.uncovercolorado.com/waterfalls/south-clear-creek-falls/>

Continental Divide: Highway 149 crosses the Continental Divide between Creede, CO and Lake City, CO

- https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g33512-d8522760-i263241843-Lake_City_Cutoff-Lake_City_Colorado.html

White Water Rafting:

Rio Grande River: There is a white water rafting company in South Fork, CO (45 miles).

- <https://8200sports.com/mountain-man-rafting/> Tel: 877-873-1977

Arkansas River: There are several white water rafting companies between Poncha Springs, CO (60 miles) and Buena Vista, CO (90 miles).

- <https://whitewater.net/river-runners-salida/> Tel: 800-723-8987
- <https://www.independentrafting.com/> Tel: 719-539-7737
- <https://whitewater.net/rafting-buena-vista-colorado/> Tel: 800-723-8987
- <https://www.dvorakexpeditions.com/> Tel: 719-539-6851
- <https://www.noahsark.com/> Tel: 719-395-2158 (FYI: Recommended by a close personal friend)