

# HORN CREEK OFF-CAMP ADVENTURE DAY

The areas around and near Westcliffe, Colorado are full of opportunities for adventure! Consider exploring some of the following options on your off-camp adventure day. Some options might be worth an extra day in the area before heading home.

## CLOSER ADVENTURES

**Fishing:** Abundant opportunities exist for trout fishing. The Arkansas River is nearby, and many mountain lakes, including Lake Isabel. These are all accessible for your fishing enjoyment. You may purchase a fishing license at Valley Ace Hardware in Westcliffe. Colorado requires all fishers to have a fishing license.

**Historic Beckwith Ranch:** Just outside of town, the Beckwith Ranch is a historic cattle ranch in the Wet Mountain Valley of Custer County. The headquarters spread over eleven buildings, ten of which have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since May 20, 1998.

**Comanche-Venable Loop:** This adventure is close by, on the Sangre de Cristo range. Its trailhead is located just off County Road 140, and it boasts a beautiful, flowery meadow and multiple lakes. The Phantom Terrace is located along the face of Venable Peak—a narrow path that may be a bit of a challenge for an unsteady climber. The views are breathtaking, and although it's not a 14er, it's a worthy climb. Be sure to start early and to plan well if you wish to attempt this feat.

**Lake of the Clouds:** This trail is a 13-mile moderately trafficked, out and back trail located just under an hour from Westcliffe; it features a lake and is rated as difficult. The trail is primarily used for hiking and mountain biking. Be sure to start early and to plan well if you opt for this adventure.\*

\*See our Activity Staff for important tips when taking challenging hikes.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

**Bishop Castle Exploration:** This castle is an elaborate and intricate, one-man project named after its constructor, Jim Bishop. It has become a roadside attraction in central Colorado. There is no admission charge, and the tour is self-guided. It's located about 45 minutes from camp. Bishop Castle is a privately-owned property. It is a well-known tourist site. It is not a state regulated structure; all climbing and touring is at your own risk. Lake Isabel is just down the road from the castle—a beautiful oasis, a picnic area and hiking attraction.

**Mission: Wolf:** This is a peaceful sanctuary for captive wolves and wolf-dog crosses that connects people with nature, using hands-on experiential education. Take a guided tour to witness and learn about wolves; the tours are free, but donations are greatly appreciated. Hours are from 9am-4pm, and children under 6 are not encouraged to attend. Wednesdays and Saturdays are feeding days; arriving before 11am is recommended. The Mission is located about 45 minutes from Sky Ranch Horn Creek, utilizing many dirt roads along the way.

# OFF-CAMP ADVENTURE DAY

**The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve:** The tallest dunes in North America are the centerpiece in a diverse landscape of grasslands, wetlands, conifer and aspen forests, alpine lakes, and tundra. Experience this diversity through hiking, sand sledding, splashing in Medano Creek, wildlife watching, and more! Entrance to the park is \$15 per car, and the location is about two and a half hours from Sky Ranch Horn Creek. Joyful Journey Hot Springs is another possibility you may wish to check out if you are headed in this direction. Also close to the Sand Dunes is Zapata Falls; the short ½ mile hike up to Zapata Falls is a beautiful and refreshing mini adventure. You can hike right up across the creek to play in the falls, but the rocks can be slippery—be sure to wear appropriate footwear. The falls are located about 8 miles south of the Great Sand Dunes National Park entrance and a beautiful 3.5 mile drive up to the trailhead provides excellent views of the San Luis Valley. The drive and hike are free.

**White Water Rafting:** We recommend Noah's Ark near Buena Vista for your adventure down the Arkansas, and we have their brochures (they offer our guests a discount). Let us know before Wednesday, and we'll schedule a time for you, your friends, and your family. It's about an hour and a half drive from camp.

**Salida:** If you are looking for an artsy community with quite a few more shops than what are found in Westcliffe, Salida may be an option for you. Its historic district is located along the Arkansas River, about an hour and fifteen minutes away, with quaint shops for every taste. They also have a river walk, kayak rentals, and a park for kids that includes a bouldering wall. You may also want to check out Rocky Mountain Jeep Rentals for an off-road adventure. Sweeties is a favorite lunch spot for sandwiches and baked goods, as well as a lunch or dinner at Amicas Pizza, Moonlight Pizza, the Boathouse Cantina (Mexican-American), the Fritz (coffee-house quick bite) and Currents Restaurant (a steak house).

**Mt. Princeton Hot Springs:** About an hour and forty minutes away, the Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort is a unique resort nestled between Salida and Buena Vista that includes riverside hot beds for soaking. They have a variety of hot spring pools and a water slide that drops into a lazy river pool. Mt. Princeton is part of the Collegiate Mountain range, a beautiful sight to behold. (Salida could be a stop along the way to this resort.) The Hot Springs are open from 9am-10pm.

**St. Elmo's Ghost Town:** Beyond Salida, two hours from camp is a somewhat abandoned ghost town, and is a popular destination for four wheeling and exploring. The town is known for its chipmunk attraction (they eat out of your hands), and its overwhelming number of hummingbirds outside of the General Store. It's a beautiful drive.

**Cañon City:** This is the nearest city to Westcliffe, just over an hour away. It is located along the Arkansas River and holds a unique beauty that is worthy to behold.

**Royal Gorge Bridge:** Just west of Cañon City you will find the Royal Gorge. There are many things to do in this area. The Royal Gorge Route Tourist Train along the cliffs and valleys is a popular destination. It is also home to a host of attractions such as ziplines, gondola rides, and a skycoaster. Jeep tours are also available (Colorado Jeep Tours). Le Petit Chablis and MUGS coffee house are two restaurants in the area that won't disappoint.

**Antiquing:** The antiquing capital of Colorado is located just 45 minutes away in the town of Florence. If this is your passion, you'll find many treasures as you explore this little town. See a staff member if you want more information.