



Accommodates BROODIES

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DESTINATIONS WEST OF 105 TO GET WET

Western Colorado may be hundreds of miles from an ocean, but that doesn't mean there aren't thousands of miles of shoreline and millions of acres of water to enjoy. The hundreds of lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and ponds are perfect for everything from cruising around in a kayak, jetting around on water skis or just lounging shore side. Here is just a sample of the smorgasbord of aquatic offerings in Western Colorado.

#DISCOVERWESTOF105



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Ridgway Reservoir

Close to Ridgway, Ouray and Montrose, the centerpiece of Ridgway State Park is Ridgway Reservoir. Fed by the Uncompahgre River, the reservoir is incredibly popular with boaters of all kinds as well as those who want to swim or just lounge along the shore or on the swim beach. The water level at the reservoir rises and falls dramatically throughout the year, so it is a good idea to check the status of the reservoir before you visit. The park also has hiking and biking trails as well as plenty of campsites and even yurts. With jaw-dropping views of the San Juan Mountains, Ridgway State Park is a great place to spend a day or a week.

cpw.state.co.us



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Trout Lake

A pristine alpine lake just outside of Telluride on Highway 145, Trout Lake is great for all manner of aquatic activities including fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and SUP boarding. As with many lakes and reservoirs in Colorado, Trout Lake is always going to be a little frigid, but after a hike up to Hope Lake (the trail starts nearby) you will look forward to a dip. Nearby is Priest Lake Dispersed Camping Area. There are no designated camping sites but the terrain limits the number of campers. Limited fishing is also available at Priest Lake, while the nearby Galloping Goose Trail offers hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking opportunities.

fs.fed.us

Twin Lakes

Just over 20 miles from Leadville, the two glacial lakes that give this town of around 200 people its name are surrounded by mountains, including Mount Elbert, the highest point in the state at 14,440 feet (the lakes themselves are at 9,200 feet). Naturally, the lakes are a huge attraction for everyone from fisherman to SUP boarders and boaters. As with other areas at altitude, water temperatures can be a little bit frigid, but bring a wet suit and you'll be fine. Make a weekend or more of it by staying at one of the several National Forest Service campgrounds or at a local lodge or cabin.

visittwinlakes.com



Grand Lake

The largest and deepest natural lake in the state, Grand Lake is adjacent to the western entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park, which wraps around the town on three sides. Fed by the headwaters of the Colorado River and snowmelt coming off the Continental Divide, the lake is very popular year round for sailing (one of the oldest yacht clubs in the West and the world's highest is here), fishing as well as other watersports. The town of Grand Lake has a tiny beach in Lakefront Park that is popular with locals and visitors during the summer. With over a hundred years of history, Grand Lake has long been a favourite summer getaway spot.

visitgrandcounty.com



Steamboat Lake

Almost equidistant from Steamboat Springs and the Wyoming border, Steamboat Lake State Park sits pretty at 8,100 feet. The 1,053-acre lake is surrounded by mountains and is largely zoned for wake boating so is popular with water-skiers and jet-skiers. SUP boarding is also popular (you can rent them from the marina). There is a swim beach at the Dutch Hill area of the park, but with water temperatures in the low 70s in late summer (it is 8,100 feet after all), it will take a brave soul to take a dip. There are plenty of camping and RV hookups as well as ten cozy camper cabins (try and get one with a view of the lake).

cpw.state.co.us



Guffey Gorge

Also known as Paradise Cove, this hidden gem is near the hamlet of Guffey between Salida and Colorado Springs. Once a spot only known to locals, it became popular thanks, at least in part, to social media. Located on an 80-acre parcel of BLM land, the waterfall is a short hike along West Fourmile Creek through impressive rock formations, wildflower meadows, and a ponderosa pine forest. A steep descent leads to the small swimming hole which is fed by a cascading waterfall. A day-use fee funds a parking area, information kiosk, vault toilets, and trash service during the summer. Alcohol (and glass in general), amplified music, overnight camping, and campfires are prohibited.

blm.gov



Montrose Water Sports Park

Sandwiched between several mountain ranges, Montrose is perfectly located for all kinds of outdoor pursuits, but right downtown is something of a local secret. Riverbottom Park is home to the Montrose Water Sports Park, a 1,000-foot stretch of the Uncompahgre River that has been specifically designed for everyone from kayakers and SUP boarders to waders. There are also ADA-accessible put-in and take-out ramps, while a gradient of 11 feet over 1.5 miles offers a relaxing run. Around the sports park there are plenty of areas to sit, picnic tables and grills, playgrounds, a disc-golf course, the Montrose Skate Park, and plenty of on-site parking.

cityofmontrose.org



Photos: (opposite page above) Colorado Tourism Board / Matt Inden Miles; (opposite page middle) Grand Lakes County Colorado Tourism Board; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; (opposite page below) Colorado Parks and Wildlife; (this page above) Jguff330 at English Wikipedia; (this page below) Montrose Office of Business and Tourism / Philip Sheetz

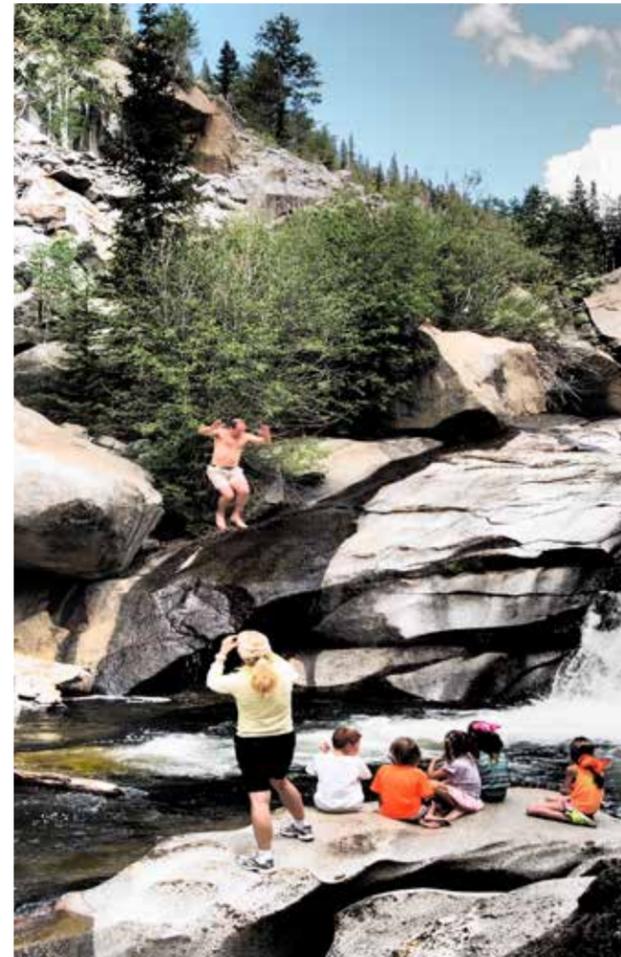


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Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

One of the larger state parks, the AHRA offers world-class whitewater rafting, fishing, cycling, and hiking along 152 miles of the Arkansas River. Literally minutes outside the town of Salida and in the shadow of the Saguache and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the AHRA has over 100 campsites dotted along the river. There are plenty of spots for a swim when it gets too hot as well as places to put a boat or raft in (24 to be precise). During colder months or after a hard day, a soak in one of the several hot springs nearby is a must.

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The Devil's Punchbowl

The swirling bowl of appealing jade-hued water near Aspen is a magnet for thrill seekers in summer who come to jump from the 20-foot cliffs that surround the Devil's Punchbowl. Filled with often chilly water that flows in from the Roaring Fork River, this beautiful natural feature is located off mile marker 51 of Highway 82 southeast of Aspen in White River National Forest. As appealing as it is, the name should be enough to tell you that the Punchbowl can be dangerous and lives have been lost here in the past, so take care.



Pencil it in

FIBArk Festival, Salida

June 14-17, 2018

A four-day event that focuses on competitive whitewater boating as well as all kinds of other things including bike races, dog lunging, parades, disc golf, and live music.

FUNC Festival, Montrose

July 14, 2018

This annual summer event draws in visitors from across the region to enjoy a range of water activities on the Montrose stretch of Uncompahgre River. There will also be food, music, and plenty of other fun on offer.

Big Blue Festival

August 24 - 25, 2018

The Big Blue Festival is a weekend of SUPing, music, and camping at Blue Mesa and I-Bar Ranch. There will SUP races, clinics, and games as well as shuttle buses between the locations.

Stay Safe

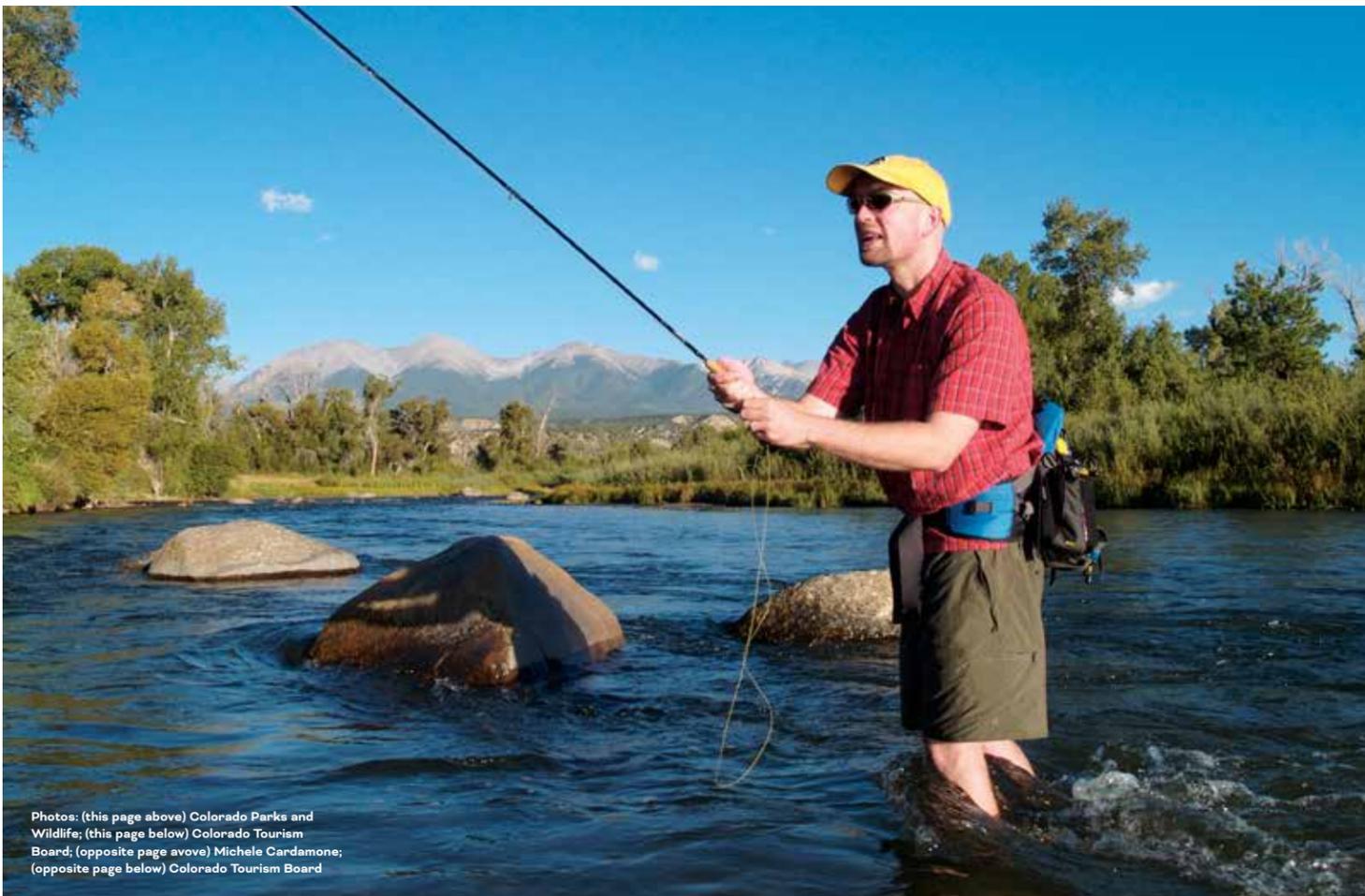
Summer is a time to get out and about and have a great time in the Great Outdoors, but injury (or worse) really puts a damper on all the fun, so follow a few common sense safety tips to ensure a fun and safe summer.

Use a Personal Flotation Device whenever possible. It is the law in most places anyway, but even when it isn't, be sensible.

Speaking of the law, know (and follow) laws wherever you are. Rules are almost always put in place for your safety.

Read up on the area you're visiting. Those information boards at trailheads can be the difference between life and death.

And the best advice of all is to avoid dangerous situations altogether. Trust your instincts and don't take unnecessary risks.



Photos: (this page above) Colorado Parks and Wildlife; (this page below) Colorado Tourism Board; (opposite page above) Michele Cardamone; (opposite page below) Colorado Tourism Board

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Blue Mesa Reservoir

The largest body of water entirely in Colorado, Blue Mesa is a monster. Part of Curecanti National Recreation Area and less than 20 miles from Gunnison, Blue Mesa, with its 96 miles of shoreline offers windsurfing, water skiing, sailing, power boating, and fishing opportunities. Swimming is fine too, and even though there are no designated swimming beaches at Curecanti and the most of the shoreline is steep and rocky, Bay of Chickens, Dry Creek, and Old Highway 50 beach are good places for a dip to cool off in summer when surface temperatures average about 65F. To rest up and enjoy the scenery, grab a table on the lakeside deck at Pappy's Restaurant in Elk Creek Marina.

theblumesa.com

