

Sports and Recreation



Sports enthusiasts revel in the quality of the experience offered throughout the region. A generous 67% of the land in Conejos County is designated as Public Land making recreation possibilities endless. The Rio Grande National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offer hundreds of miles of accessible hiking trails and primitive motorized trails for all levels of enthusiasts, as well as wide open spaces for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, trail riding, and mountain biking. The Continental Divide trail, the San Juan Wilderness Area and Conejos Peak (our own 13er) will have seasoned adventure seekers boasting to their peers. More info: www.fs.fed.us/r2/riogrande/



The pristine waters and Gold Medal ranking of the Conejos River along with hundreds of miles of streams and creeks that flow into it make the Conejos Canyon one of the most desirable areas for fishing in the state. Many high mountain lakes and reservoirs with easy access abound, including Platoro Reservoir, the highest man-made lake in the United States. Fishing could easily be the #1 sport of choice with the region offering beginning and professional levels of fly fishing or a lazy afternoon dropping anchor to await a tasty trout.



Wildlife is abundant with vast varieties and numbers of animals that occupy this region. Our untouched forests and open country offer choices of Bird Watching, Wildlife Viewing and Big Game Hunting. The thrill of spotting a Williamson Sap Sucker or hearing the bugle of a bull elk on a September morning will get your blood pumping! More info: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/>

In the fall, the aspens and forests explode with brilliant colors beckoning "Road Trip"! Even the most experienced artist and photographer will be challenged to capture all this beauty at one time.



Winter sports like snowmobiling and cross country skiing can take you through snow laden pine trees and serene meadows then along the Continental Divide where you'll think you're at the top of the world. Yurts are available for overnight trips. In the San Juan Wilderness Area, where no motorized vehicles are allowed, marked trails offer cross country skiers solitude, and the only sound you hear is that of your own breath and beating heart.

Guided and outfitted services are available for horseback riding, fishing, hunting, and snowmobiling outdoor adventures.

History and Heritage



If history, sight seeing and exploring is on your agenda there is plenty waiting for you to discover. The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad is America's longest and highest narrow gauge steam railroad. Climb aboard and drift back in time to the days of train travel as America opened the West. Now a scenic railroad, the Cumbres and Toltec once was a working railroad bringing lumber, livestock, and passengers to destinations both west and east. Your trip will take you through 64 miles of breathtaking vistas, tunnels, and gorges.

Scenic drives along our back roads, hills, mountains and valleys will give you a sense of the cultures that inhabit the Conejos. Early Hispano settlers from New Mexico struggled to tame areas that are now towns and villages. Soon followed settlers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the "Mormons", who came from the east, and more recently the Amish community have chosen to make Conejos County home. Long held traditions are respected and practiced among many of the cultures that settled the area before Colorado became a state.



Mission churches dot the landscape east, west, north and south with the crown jewel, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, visible from Hwy 285. Rebuilt twice after fire destroyed her, the church holds the honor of being the oldest parish in Colorado. The small mission churches still hold services on a rotating basis throughout the year. If you are lucky enough to attend one of the services, you will be treated to folk art adorned interiors with murals, antique stoves, beautiful stained glass windows and hand carved bultos (images of saints). The Presbyterian mission church in San Rafael has been lovingly restored by the community.

Museums are sprinkled among the towns, each depicting early life on the frontier. The Jack Dempsey Museum, in Manassa, honors the home-town champ with memorabilia from his career and a look at his early life before he was known as the Manassa Mauler. A fine bronze statue of the boxer sits in Jack Dempsey Park outside of the museum. The Sanford Museum traces family roots, in the Mormon tradition, and has many interesting examples of early pioneer household items, clothing, and everyday life. Antonito hosts a museum with a number of items from bygone days.

An open air rebuilt replica of Zebulon Pike's Stockade stands as testament to the exploratory nature of the American people. The original was built in 1807 when this land was still under Spanish rule. Dragoons from Santa Fe captured Pike and his men in 1807 and took them to Santa Fe and Chihuahua before being released. This site is under the protection of the Colorado Historical Society and is open seasonally Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Murals, abundant throughout the county, depict historic events, everyday life, religious beliefs and beautiful scenery. How many can you spot? Winding its way through the Conejos is one of Colorado's gems, Los Caminos Antiguos (the Ancient Roads) Scenic and Historic Byway. This 129 mile route will lead you through much of the county and to neighboring communities where you can enjoy daytrips to The Stations of the Cross Shrine, Historic San Luis, the Fort Garland Museum, The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, San Luis Lakes State Park, the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, and the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad.



Steeped in History

Steeped in history and grounded in adventure, Conejos County is a "must" in your Colorado discovery. Nestled in the southern reach of the San Luis Valley, Colorado's Cradle, you'll find some of Colorado's earliest towns and remnants of America's early days of discovery and exploration. From mountain tops to hidden valleys and the valley floor, outdoor adventures feature a multitude of choices from the great San Juan Wilderness Area and 8 State Wildlife Areas peppered throughout the region, to the Rio Grande National Forest and the Rio Grande National Natural Area located along the Rio Grande (river).



Lodging and Restaurants

There is something to suit everyone's taste with many family-friendly lodging choices available. Cabins, Lodges, Bed & Breakfasts, Campgrounds, RV Parks, Dude Ranches, a Motel and a Hotel are all available in the Southern reach of the county. With so much to do in the area and our friendly atmosphere, it's little wonder why we're host to many family reunions year after year. See our insert for more information.

Restaurants and small fast food choices throughout the region offer American and Southwest style cooking at affordable prices. When we ask, "Red or Green?", think CHILI!

Gather your family and friends and treat yourself to one of Colorado's Best Kept Secrets, the unmatched and unforgettable, CONEJOS COUNTY.

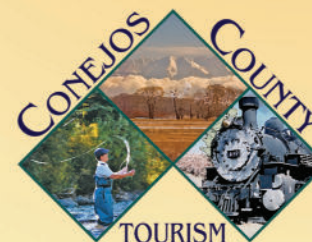
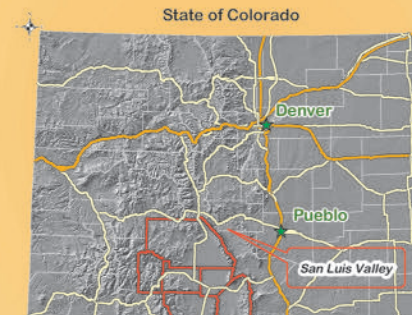
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Cumbres & Toltec

SCENIC RAILROAD

www.cumbrestoltec.com



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Leave the race behind and
enjoy the adventures,
serenity and splendor of
the Conejos.