

COLORADO Good Life

LOCAL FOOD, NATURE, AND THE OUTDOORS IN SOUTHERN COLORADO

IN THIS ISSUE
↓

EXPLORE

PUEBLO
ELEVATION
4,692
feet

GET OUTSIDE

**Summer
Hikes**

WORTH THE DRIVE

5

**INTERESTING
PLACES**

to explore Pueblo's
past, present, & future

PALMER LAND CONSERVANCY



FEATURES



4 FROM GOLD TO GRAIN TO CHILES A STORIED HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE

ART, CULTURE & HISTORY

by Devin Flores, El Pueblo History Museum

7 WHERE ART AND WATER COLLIDE

ART, CULTURE & HISTORY

8 THE BEST OF PUEBLO HERITAGE AND MUSEUM SITES

ART, CULTURE & HISTORY

10 PUEBLO HISTORY WRITTEN IN WATER

WATER FOR LIFE

by Joe Stone

16 PUEBLO'S HIDDEN OUTDOOR GEMS

GET OUTSIDE

18 SUMMER HIKES WORTH THE DRIVE

GET OUTSIDE

20 SUMMER GEAR PICKS

GET OUTSIDE

22 DISANTI FARMS

FIND A FARMER

23 MEET PUEBLO CHILE'S SPICY COUSIN: THE PUEBLO PRIMROSE

EXPLORE LOCAL FOOD

24 SLOP IT TO ME THE FAMOUS PUEBLO SLOPPER

EXPLORE LOCAL FOOD

25 GET HOT! WITH THE PUEBLO CHILE

EXPLORE LOCAL FOOD

26 TAKE A RIDE A SELF-GUIDED BIKE TOUR OF PUEBLO FARM STANDS

EXPLORE LOCAL FOOD

28 BOOK NOOK STORIES OF CONSERVATION, NATURE & MORE

PALMER STAFF RECOMMENDS

Colorado Good Life is a biannual publication of Palmer Land Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit accredited land trust serving southern Colorado. Since 1977, Palmer has protected over 137,000 acres including 20 parks and open spaces, working farms and ranches, and iconic scenic views. Our work spans 19 counties and represents over 1 million people.

Comments, questions, and subscription inquiries can be sent to info@palmerland.org

This issue of *Colorado Good Life* is sponsored in part by Fuel & Iron Food Hall.



OFFICERS

Rebecca Jewett
President and CEO
Matthew Niznik
Chairman
John Geary
Vice Chairman
Vanda Dyson
Treasurer
Paula Chostner
Secretary

TRUSTEES

Andrea Aragon
Dawnellen Dotson
General Ed Eberhart
BJ Hybl
Jim Johnson
Mike Jorgensen
Alex Lasater
Michael League

Palmer
LAND CONSERVANCY

CONTACT US

COLORADO SPRINGS OFFICE
102 S. Tejon Street, Suite 360
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719.632.3236

PUEBLO OFFICE
121 W. City Center, Suite 200D
Pueblo, CO 81003
719.941.9909

palmerland.org



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Land & Water are Essential

Summer is nearly upon us, and Palmer Land Conservancy is excited to release *Colorado Good Life - Explore Pueblo*. This edition showcases the region's rich agricultural heritage, hidden community gems, and more. There is plenty to explore in Colorado's most historic and multicultural city, and with nearly 300 days of sunshine, Pueblo is a great place to live, work, and play.

Southern Colorado has been coined the borderlands—the Arkansas River once carving the border between the U.S. Territories and Mexico. It is a unique place full of abundant beauty and natural resources where diverse people and cultures have come together to either collide, or mix, for millennia. Either way, history shows us that the land and water are essential.

Palmer has been honored to work in southeastern Colorado for decades and more recently opened an office in Pueblo. Our focus is to promote and celebrate agriculture, water, and local food with the community, and to work alongside farming families who are interested in conserving their land. We are thrilled to build strong friendships and partnerships in the region.

This season, we invite you to grab your bike and enjoy exploring some of Pueblo's amazing multi-generational farms either with Palmer during our annual Bike the Bessemer event on September 17, or on your own by biking along our self-guided farm stand tour featured inside. Be sure to grab some delicious Pueblo green chiles and experiment with our suggested recipe, or try something new like the famous Pueblo Slopper.

From the hidden outdoor recreational gems of Pueblo to its rich arts and culture scene, this issue of *Colorado Good Life* reminds us of why we are proud to call southern Colorado home.

Yours in conservation,



Rebecca
REBECCA JEWETT
President and CEO

Top Events in Pueblo 2022

JUNE 18TH

Summer Solstice Celebration with Pueblo Friends of the Arkansas River

AUGUST 26TH - SEPTEMBER 5TH

Colorado State Fair

SEPTEMBER 10TH

Bruja Brew Fest with El Pueblo History Museum

SEPTEMBER 17TH

Bike the Bessemer with Palmer Land Conservancy

SEPTEMBER 24TH - 26TH

Pueblo Chile and Frijoles Festival

OCTOBER 1ST

Gravel Locos Bike Race

OCTOBER 1ST

150th Anniversary of the Steel Mill at the Steelworks Center of the West

FOR MORE INFO:
palmerland.org/PuebloEvents



ART, CULTURE & HISTORY
FROM
GOLD
TO
GRAIN
TO
CHILES

**A Storied History of
Agriculture in Pueblo County**

BY DEVIN FLORES, EL PUEBLO HISTORY MUSEUM



Above: Early 20th century irrigated farmland in Pueblo County. Photo courtesy of History Colorado.

Left: Turn of the century farming in southern Pueblo county. Photo courtesy of Pueblo City and County Library District, Special Collections.

Beginning in the late 1850s, a flood of settlers arrived in the land that would soon be called Colorado. They came in waves, seeking fortune in the Rocky Mountains.

Even though their slogan was “Pikes Peak or Bust,” not all of them could make it in one trip. One group, circa 1859, found themselves a long way from their destination when winter arrived. Instead of attempting the harsh snowy mountain passes, they settled for wintering along the banks of the Arkansas River—and there they found the ruins of El Pueblo.

El Pueblo

El Pueblo had been a trading post along the Santa Fe Trail, but in 1854 it was abandoned after rising conflict with Native Americans led to an attack. The post had been well located, so it was only natural that the travelers found themselves drawn to the same area—and the ruins.

These seekers were also reportedly surprised by the mild winter weather, and many of them who had been farmers back East found their thoughts turning from gold to grain. When the spring thaw came, they remained in the area and began to put down roots. They planted fields, brought in cattle and sheep, and began to build a town.

Even in those early days, Pueblo's agriculture was as diverse as the people who came seeking riches. It included the standard staple crops and livestock—corn and wheat, cows and goats—but it also likely featured the predecessors of the now-famous Pueblo chile.

Nobody knows for certain when the first chile peppers were grown in Colorado, but it could have been as early as the first homesteads in the region. Many of the earliest settlers of the Arkansas River Valley, dating back to the 1840s, were Hispanos. They traveled north from Taos, Santa Fe, Ratón, and the San Luis Valley. They undoubtedly brought with them the crops they had grown for generations, which likely included chiles descended from their ancestors, who immigrated from New Mexico and further south.

Steel City

Through the late 19th century, Pueblo boomed from an agricultural breadbasket into a regional industrial powerhouse. It became known as “Steel City” and the “Pittsburgh of the West,” but even though the smelters, mills, factories, and fabricators stole the spotlight, the farmers of the Arkansas River Valley never faltered. In fact, Pueblo grew up around—and because of—the farms. And as immigrants from all backgrounds came to Pueblo seeking work at the mills, the local chile also inevitably wove its way into their cuisines.

Over the generations, Pueblo's industries have waxed and waned, but through it all, agriculture has remained a focal point for the region. Much of the farmland in the Arkansas River Valley is still owned by multi-generational families who began farming there over a century ago. These names continue to be highly recognizable in the community and represent a wide and diverse background: Italian, Croatian, and Irish names alongside Hispanos, all growing and united by the Pueblo chile.

Mosco Chiles

Despite its long heritage, the most popular strain of Pueblo chile is a more recent development. The majority of the peppers you see in local cuisine are Mosco chiles, a specific variety that has been on the market for just over two decades.

Developed by Dr. Mike Bartolo, the Mosco chile represents a labor of love. It was bred from seed stock gifted by his late uncle, Harry Mosco (for whom the chile is named), a farmer in Pueblo county.

The Mosco chile is unique for several reasons. It tends to grow larger than other strains of the same type and has a significantly thicker outer wall. This makes it ideal for roasting, which is the traditional way Pueblo chiles are prepared. The thick wall allows the chile to be cooked to perfection without risking the fruit splitting open or the juices seeping out and evaporating in the heat. Because of this, it maintains the rich flavor of the chile. So it's little wonder that the Mosco chile is the powerhouse of all peppers.

Puebloans today will happily slather green chile onto just about anything—a tradition going back generations. Their grandparents were just as happy eating chiles with Italian pasta or Croatian kielbasa as their descendants are eating it on pizza and hoagies.

The Pueblo Chile and Pueblo county agriculture are celebrated yearly at the Pueblo Chile & Frijoles Festival. This three-day street festival held in downtown Pueblo is one of the



Top: Dr. Mike Bartolo in one of his chile fields. © Blake Kimmel
Bottom: Roasting Pueblo Chiles. © Amber Shanklin/Palmer Land Conservancy
Background Photo: Photographed by William Henry Jackson. It shows a view of the city from the top of Union Avenue, circa 1891-1900

largest events in southern Colorado and one of the most important dates on many locals' calendars. The celebration grows larger every year, as people come from afar to get their yearly fix of the uniquely delicious Pueblo staple.

The chile can be considered a metaphor for Pueblo itself. Originally an immigrant with strong ties to its ancestral homeland, it has nonetheless been here for generations, adapting to the region and becoming an inseparable part of the local culture. The Pueblo chile is undeniably unique, perhaps a little spicier than some are used to, but it's a cornerstone of Colorado culture. It's certainly not going anywhere, and the people of Pueblo wouldn't have it any other way.



Photo: A new mural featured on the levee with the walkway above

WHERE ART AND WATER COLLIDE

The Pueblo Levee Mural Project

Over a century ago, on June 3, 1921, torrential rains along the tributaries that feed into the Arkansas River sent a wall of water into the narrow channel that once wound through downtown Pueblo. It swept up buildings, train cars and tracks, vehicles, and people. An estimated 1,500 people were killed.

Within a year, the Pueblo Conservancy District was formed to reduce flood risks. It decided to divert the river into a new channel south of downtown and construct the massive levee to protect the city from future floods. Work was completed in 1925. For years, the levee was marked by graffiti until the 1970s when students of nearby Colorado State University—Pueblo began painting over the graffiti, which ultimately led to a 3-mile long continuous mural. It once held the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest painting in the world. The murals were demolished, but they added a new walking trail on top with two pedestrian bridges connecting the trails on both sides of the river. One bridge was completed in

2021, and the second is expected to be completed in fall of 2022. In addition to enhancing some of the riverside amenities, they also added the Pueblo Whitewater Park, which boasts eight drops.

Now, artists are convening once again, and they began painting new murals on the levee last fall. Artists need to apply to the Conservancy District, and prior to beginning, paintings must be approved. The Conservancy District asks murals to depict community and cultural history, ethnic heritage, or natural beauty and wildlife. Advertisements are prohibited. It's no easy feat to paint on concrete at a 45-degree angle with the water toiling below. For those more inclined to watch than paint, we suggest taking a stroll on the Arkansas River trail for a chance to observe artists creating the next generation of the Pueblo levee mural.

Vintage Photo: The aftermath of the 1921 flood. Courtesy of Pueblo City and County Library District



THE BEST OF PUEBLO

Heritage & Museum Sites

Pueblo has a rich history inextricably connected to the land, with diverse cultural and economic roots in agriculture, steel, and the railway.



1



EL PUEBLO HISTORY MUSEUM

ADMISSION:
\$5 (DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE)

One of ten museums that are part of History Colorado, the El Pueblo History Museum showcases the region's many cultural and ethnic groups through hands-on history and innovative exhibits. Conveniently located downtown, the museum has been in operation since 1958 and contains a replica of the historic 1842 El Pueblo trading post—one of the first permanent structures in town. The museum opened two new exhibits recently. *Hecho en Colorado* showcases historical and up-and-coming artist collections from Colorado's Chicano/Mexican American community. *Steel City: 1984-2004* explores the evolution and history of a steelmaking community in the late 20th century and shows the power of solidarity among union and community members in Pueblo.

2



THE ROBERT HOAG RAWLINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Named for the WWII veteran, longtime leader of *The Pueblo Chieftain*, and founder of the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation, the architecturally stunning Rawlings Library has welcomed over 8 million visitors since opening its doors in 2003. Monthly programming offered at the library includes everything from author readings to learning resources to Zumba classes in the courtyard. Don't know what book to read next? Library staff will help curate a list just for you based on your interests with their online form system.

3



STEELWORKS CENTER OF THE WEST

ADMISSION:
\$8 (DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE)

It's no secret that industrialized Pueblo's history is deeply rooted in steel production. The Steelworks Center of the West preserves the archives and history of Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I). The main permanent exhibits, *The Story of Steel* and *CF&I Through Time*, look at the company's storied past, while *The Source of Steel* focuses on its vast mining operations across the West. Mark your calendars, they will be celebrating CF&I's 150th anniversary on October 1. Don't skip the outdoor park which contains a variety of historical artifacts.

4



PUEBLO RAILWAY MUSEUM

Since the late 1800s, Pueblo helped build the rail materials used across the American West as a major rail and steel hub. As the Pueblo Railway Museum notes, "Today, all rail manufactured in the western U.S. originates in Pueblo, just as it did in 1881." The museum showcases the city's longstanding history in the rail industry with its varied collection of engines including a steam engine, "rocket cars," and a Pikes Peak snowblower. The museum is free to visit at the railyard behind the Pueblo Union Depot.

CHECK THEIR EVENT CALENDAR AT PUEBLORAILWAY.ORG

5



BUELL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM AT THE SANGRE DE CRISTO ARTS CENTER

ADMISSION:
\$10 ADULTS, \$8 KIDS (DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE)

Known as one of the top children's museums in the United States, the Buell Children's Museum is located inside the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center. Offering a range of sensory and interactive galleries spread across the vibrant museum, younger guests will be delighted with a visit to this special place.

Background Photo: Santa Fe railroad yard, Pueblo, Courtesy of Library of Congress. Photo 1: Courtesy of History Colorado, 2: Courtesy of the Pueblo City and County Library District, 3-4: Lauryn Wachs/Palmer Land Conservancy, 5: Courtesy of the Sangre de Cristo Arts Center

PUEBLO HISTORY *written in*

WATER

—» BY JOE STONE «—



Pueblo's human history began long before the era of westward expansion by Anglo-American settlers in the early 1800s. But the region's modern-day history can be traced back to those days of fur trappers, traders, and gold seekers that found the Arkansas River Valley just as appealing as many indigenous tribes and ancestral Puebloans before them. When an 1848 treaty between the U.S. and Mexico ceded the land south of the Arkansas River to the U.S., the combination of fertile land and access to water attracted Anglo-American settlers.

The Civil War slowed the pace of westward migration, but afterward, people like Union general William Jackson Palmer* looked to Colorado for new opportunities. In civilian life, Palmer worked as a civil engineer and played an important role in extending the Kansas-Pacific Railroad to Denver. He also co-founded the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, and by the time the D&RG reached Pueblo in 1872, the railroad proved essential to Colorado's growing economy.

Bessemer Ditch

That economy needed workers, and workers needed food. Palmer formed the Central Colorado Improvement Co. to support his railroad operations, and in 1874, the

company began digging the Big Ditch to send water from the Arkansas River to family farms south of Pueblo. The Big Ditch became the Bessemer Ditch, and the Central Colorado Co. merged with other companies to form Colorado Coal & Iron Co., which became majority owner of the ditch.

CC&I built the first integrated iron and steel mill west of St. Louis in 1881. The Bessemer Ditch and the St. Charles River supplied water to the mill, which employed the Bessemer process and manufactured rails for the D&RG Railroad. A community that became known as Bessemer began to take shape near the mill, and before long, CC&I looked to extend the Bessemer Ditch to St. Charles Mesa to support larger farming operations. By 1889, the Bessemer Ditch incorporated as a separate company and began selling shares of stock.

An 1890 article in the *Pueblo Chieftain* praised the Bessemer Ditch as "one of the best things the city and county ever witnessed." Two years later, CC&I merged with other businesses to become the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. However, the ditch company

Left: The Arkansas River winds its way through Pueblo County. Courtesy of Russ Schnitzer.

#1: The Bessemer Ditch, courtesy of Russ Schnitzer | #2: The Bessemer headgate at the turn of the 20th century, courtesy of History Colorado | Pueblo Reservoir, photo by Lauryn Wachs/Palmer Land Conservancy



Photo: History Colorado

defaulted on an interest payment in 1894, and its assets were sold, leading to the formation of the Bessemer Irrigating Ditch Co. The ditch was eventually extended to a length of 40 miles, supporting some of the state's most productive farms. Now designated as Farmlands of National Importance, these fields produce Pueblo's famous chiles as well as corn, watermelons, pinto beans, and more.

With frequent drought conditions and inconsistent flows in the Arkansas River, local leaders looked to the federal government to help plan and develop a project that would improve water-use efficiency, tap West Slope water sources, and provide additional reservoir capacity to store more water in the southern Front Range. After several failed attempts, Congress delivered a bill authorizing the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, and President John F. Kennedy signed it into law on Aug. 16, 1962.

The Bureau of Reclamation completed work on the Boustead Tunnel in 1971, bringing water from the headwaters of the Fryingpan River to an enlarged Turquoise Reservoir in the Upper Arkansas Valley.

Pueblo Dam

By 1975, the bureau enlarged Twin Lakes Reservoir and completed construction of the Pueblo Dam on the Arkansas River. On average, Fry-Ark Project water now provides 15% of Arkansas River flows.

Pueblo Dam includes an outlet for the venerable Bessemer Ditch, which continues to play a significant role in the local economy. Various efforts to purchase Bessemer Ditch shares proved unsuccessful until 2009, when offers from El Paso County water providers prompted the Pueblo Board of Water Works (Pueblo Water) to purchase 28% of Bessemer shares for more than \$10,000 per share. The purchase agreement included provisions to lease most of the water back to local farmers for 20 years and prioritize leased water to Pueblo County lessees.

Looking Ahead

But at some point in the not-so-distant future, Pueblo Water will need its Bessemer Ditch water to support growth, a reality now underscored by the announcement that EVRAZ North America, the company that acquired CF&I, has begun a \$480 million

upgrade of the Pueblo steel mill. But an economic impact study commissioned by Palmer Land Conservancy revealed that the Bessemer water acquired by Pueblo irrigates some of the most productive farmland in the county and drying up fertile farmland would significantly impact local agriculture and the economy.

Over nine years ago, Palmer Land Conservancy began working with the community and Pueblo Water to prevent that outcome and to find win-win-win solutions. A key component of Palmer's efforts involved engaging in the water court process by which Pueblo Water changed the use of the water. The resulting court decree establishes an innovative framework for moving water from less productive farmland to the most productive land. Instead of following some of the county's most fertile land, farmers will be able to dry up less productive acreage and keep the best lands in production.

From the early western explorers along the Arkansas River to William J. Palmer developing the Bessemer Ditch to Congress authorizing the Fry-Ark Project; water has defined Pueblo's status as a hub of agriculture, industry, and transportation. While climate concerns and population growth present new challenges, Pueblo is well-positioned to face those water challenges thanks to a strong tradition of visionary leadership and innovative solutions.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Bessemer Farmland Conservation Project

A Historic Western Water Initiative

For nearly seven years, Palmer Land Conservancy has been working with Pueblo County's farmers, elected officials, community leaders, public water utility, and various conservation stakeholders to mitigate the effects of an impending dry-up of nearly one-third of Pueblo County's irrigated farmland on the Bessemer Ditch.

What started as a small, grassroots community initiative has grown into a nationally recognized historic water conservation project—a project that will not only help to safeguard Pueblo County's agricultural, economic, and ecological future but will serve as a replicable model for other water-starved regions in the West.

Palmer commissioned a cutting-edge Economic Impact Analysis to quantify the economic effects of a large-scale dry-up of this critical farmland. It makes a strong, data-driven case for maintaining the most productive farmland and offers solutions that are a win-win for all stakeholders.

Palmer is utilizing the study to work with the community to ensure local farms, locally grown food, and limited water resources are protected as the community navigates a future that includes municipal growth and strong agriculture.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Palmer is protecting family-owned farms in Pueblo County

WATCH THE VIDEO

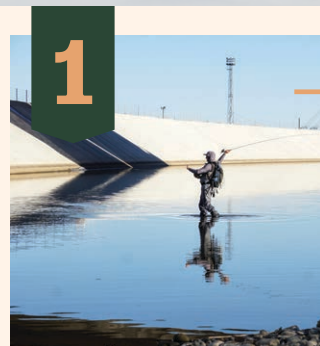


GET OUTSIDE

Hidden Outdoor Gems

PUEBLO, COLORADO

With three hundred days of sunshine, mild winters, and warm springs, Pueblo is a great place to get outside year-round. Whether you've always called Pueblo home or you are visiting, here is a list of hidden outdoor gems for your next adventure.



→ Fly Fishing the Arkansas Tailwaters

The Upper Arkansas River is well known for its gold medal trout waters upstream of Parkdale, but the Arkansas tailwater below the Pueblo Reservoir has fast become one of Colorado's best fisheries. Home to Colorado's only winter fly fishing tournament, the tailwaters remain ice-free in the winter, making them especially

popular during Pueblo's mild winter and shoulder seasons. The upper four miles of this tailwater, which flows through the town, is the most popular, and the fish population is healthy, both in size and numbers, with brown and rainbow trout being your usual suspects.



Photo: Alex Kerney

→ Pueblo Whitewater Park

With world-class whitewater in the gorges and canyons of the mighty Arkansas River, you might not even know you can practice your paddling skills a little closer to home. Within walking distance to shops and restaurants, Pueblo's whitewater park can pack a thrill, but it is a good confidence-builder for those still learning their

skills. The park is a half-mile long, with a put-in near Chapa Place and Pearl Street and take out at Union Avenue. Early spring and fall can be quite tame, but there's plenty of wave action for kayakers, boogie boarders, and surfers during spring runoff and the summer months.



→ City Park Disc Golf Course

As the country's third oldest disc golf course, the Pueblo City Park course is excellent for all skill levels. The 18-hole course is easy to get to, relatively flat, and well maintained with concrete tee pads and good grass.

Some holes are wide open, while others have tight tree gaps. The first hole is located near the swimming pool, and the course is free to play. Check the UDisc app for current course conditions and basket placements.



→ Fountain Creek Trail to Arkansas Multi-Use Path

For those who prefer pedaling to paddling, take a ride down the Fountain Creek Trail. Start at the north end of the trail off Jerry Murphy Road near CSU-Pueblo for a 5-mile mildly downhill ride along the trail's namesake creek. Just before you hit the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River, you'll divert over to Runyon Lake.

From there, you can call it quits, but the parking area at Runyon Lake off Locust Street has links to lots of other trails in the city. You can bike the short Phelps Creek Path, which takes you over to the Riverwalk district's shops and restaurants, or for those looking for a longer ride, you can take the Arkansas River Trail to Lake Pueblo.



→ 4th Saturday Bird Walks AT THE NATURE & WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CENTER

If you're interested in local wildlife viewing, you might enjoy the Saturday bird walks at the Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center. Starting at 9:00 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of every month, bring your binoculars and take a walk with the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society along the Arkansas River for a birding experience that's suitable for all

levels. While the program is free, donations are highly encouraged. There is a \$5 parking fee. The Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center also hosts weekend raptor tours at the raptor rehabilitation center (check their website hikeandlearn.org for the schedule).



→ Mountain Biking at Lake Pueblo State Park

Head over to Lake Pueblo State Park, "the Fruita of the Front Range," for over 45 miles of singletrack. While the park is known for water recreation, many of its trails are built for mountain biking. If you're still building your confidence, the Rodeo, Waterfall, Stonehenge, and Rock Canyon trails are

among the easiest, with only short drops and mellow technical features. Because of Pueblo's mild winter climate, you can enjoy these trails year-round but avoid them when they're wet and muddy. A state park pass is required for entry (\$10 for a day pass).



5

Southern Colorado Hikes

totally worth the drive

Dust off your hiking shoes – the summer hiking season is here.

From gentle prairie walks to summiting your next 14er, southern Colorado offers something for everyone. Here are five hikes across southern Colorado that are worth the drive.



Photo: Lauryn Wachs/The Nature Conservancy

Challenge Trail at Fishers Peak

DISTANCE
1.5 MILES



One of Colorado's newest state parks is still working on its trails system and infrastructure, but Colorado Parks & Wildlife has opened up a couple of short trails to give you a taste of what's to come for this park just south of Trinidad. While only 1.5 miles, the Challenge Trail is an old ranch road that contains stretches that exceed 30% grade. The burn is worth it as you'll enjoy spectacular views of Fishers Peak and the valley below. State Park pass required at entry, no pets allowed.



Photo: Raisa Nastukova

San Carlos Trail

DISTANCE
4.3 MILES



This roughly 4.3-mile roundtrip shaded trail near Beulah Valley boasts scenic views of nearby Greenhorn Mountain with great opportunities for wildlife viewing. While there are two trailheads for this hike (one at either end), the more easily accessible one is off CO-78. You'll enjoy some water features on this moderate hike, including the beginnings of the Saint Charles River. Leashed dogs are allowed.

3



Photo: Creative Commons/Flowercat

Vindicator Valley Trail

DISTANCE
2 MILES



For a scenic hike with some mining history along the way, check out the 2-mile Vindicator Valley Trail outside of Victor. This relatively easy kid-friendly hike loops around several old closed gold mines with interpretive signage along the way. While mostly unshaded and with little elevation change, this trail boasts wide-open mountain views. Leashed dogs are allowed.

4



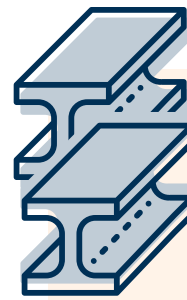
Photo: Florence Chamber of Commerce

Newlin Creek Trail

DISTANCE
5 MILES

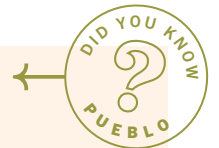


Located only a few miles south of Florence, this trail clocks in at a little over five miles roundtrip and includes a few water crossings. If you time it right, you can enjoy wildflowers galore on this partially shaded trail. With over 1,300 feet of elevation change, this one is sure to get your blood pumping as you make your way up to the old abandoned Herrick Sawmill. Leashed dogs are allowed.



THE STEEL CITY

Pueblo is one of the largest steel-producing cities in the United States.



5



Photo: Creative Commons/jb10okie

Vogel Canyon Trail Group

DISTANCE
1+ MILES



Stretch your legs in the canyonlands near the Purgatoire River within this trail system located 25 minutes outside of La Junta. The Canyon, Mesa, Overlook, and Prairie trails are interconnected, offering miles of trail you can explore. Hike in the spring to see the wildflowers bloom and keep an eye out for the petroglyphs located along this trail network that is part of the Santa Fe Trail Historic and Scenic Byway in the Comanche National Grassland area. Hike early in the day and bring plenty of water, as this area can get hot in a hurry. There is a picnic area at the trailhead for a great lunch spot when you're finished. Leashed dogs are allowed, but keep a watchful eye for rattlesnakes.

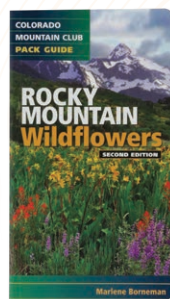
Palmer Picks

SUMMER HIKING GEAR

Must-have food, gear, and supplies for your next hike.

NOTE: Palmer is not affiliated with any of these brands. Our recommendations are based on our staff's personal experience.

We polled the Palmer staff about some of their favorite pieces of equipment, and here are our top picks for this summer.



COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB'S

Rocky Mountain Wildflowers Guide

If you're the one who always wants to know which wildflower or plant species you found, the Colorado Mountain Club's Rocky Mountain Wildflowers guide is for you. With over 180 of Colorado's most common wildflowers, this book is compact enough to fit in your pack and still provide you with all the information you need to ID plants.



Flexpedition Pants

These durable, water-repellent pants from Duluth Trading Company are an excellent bet for when it's a little too cold to hike in shorts. "With different inseam lengths and roomy pockets even in their women's version, it's hard not to love hiking in these," raved one staff member. Sizes range from 2-30W in women's and 32-48 in men's.



Tenkara Fly Rods

As our avid fly fisherman on staff put it, "It's perfect for small mountain streams since it's super lightweight and easy to pack." With rods ranging from 2.1-5 ounces, Tenkara rods won't weigh you down on your journey.



Hybridlight Headlamp

"After one too many adventures went awry in my 20s where a headlamp saved me, I always pack my headlamp with me," said one of our staff members. The Hybridlight lasts for up to 30 hours on one charge. Its best feature is the mini solar charging panel that comes with it, so you can charge off-the-grid.



SUN BUM

SPF30+ Mineral Face Lotion

Free of all the harsh chemicals in conventional sunscreens, Sun Bum's zinc-based formula is perfect for those who burn easily in higher elevations. With packaging ranging from 1.7-3 ounces, you can keep some in your vehicle/at home and have some with you on the trail to reapply.



REGISTER TODAY!



Sept. 17, 2022
8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Start/Finish: Vineland Methodist Church
1587 36th Lane, Pueblo, CO

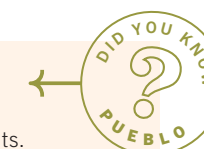
Hit the bike trail with Palmer Land Conservancy for our annual Bike the Bessemer event. This fun-filled and educational ride showcases Pueblo County's premier agricultural lands and important water resources. After your 11-mile ride, grab a beer and enjoy a delicious farm-to-table lunch.

Tickets: \$50/person
palmerland.org/events

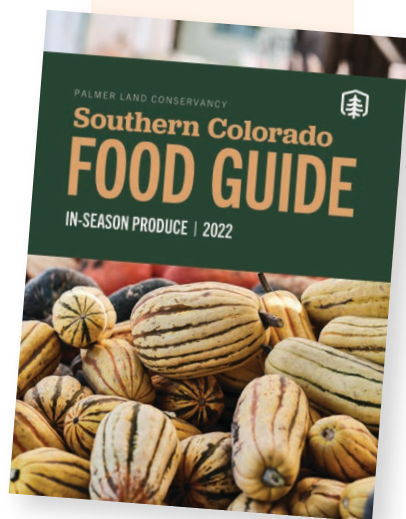


SPICY CHILES

Pueblo chiles range between 5,000 and 20,000 Scoville Heat Units. For reference, the jalapeño ranges between 2,500-8,000 and New Mexico's Hatch chile comes in between 1,000-8,000 SHU.



FIND LOCAL FOOD



Enjoy discovering southern Colorado's locally owned and operated agriculture operations by visiting Palmer's interactive online food guide.



Meet Pueblo Chile's Spicy Cousin

THE PUEBLO PRIMROSE

A new breed of chile pepper is here, and it was developed by the same man who helped bring the modern Pueblo chile to the forefront. Dr. Mike Bartolo, former Palmer Land Conservancy Board Trustee and vegetable crop specialist with Colorado State University, spent 13 years developing this particular breed.

Dr. Bartolo and his team let nature guide the development of this plant, which originated from an open-pollinated ornamental pepper variety called "Holiday Cheer." Standing at 12-16 inches in height, the Pueblo Primrose is a fair bit taller than its predecessor and produces fruits that start in a cream color before

gradually turning red. The "primrose" portion of the name is illustrative of its elegant growth pattern, and adding "Pueblo" pays homage to the region in which it was developed. While the chiles are technically edible, they're extremely spicy.

The Pueblo Primrose debuted in 2021 and became available to the public with a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the peppers going to Palmer Land Conservancy and the Pueblo Food Project. Keep your eye out at local Pueblo farm stands this spring to buy and grow your own Pueblo Primrose.



Photo courtesy of the DiSanti Family

DISANTI FARMS

Pueblo, CO

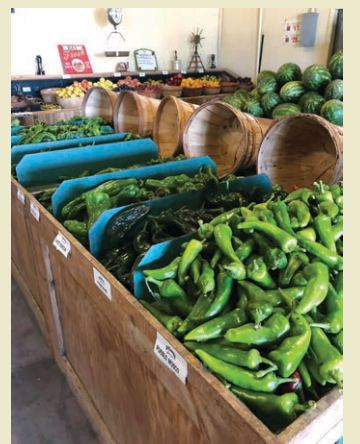
As a fifth generation family-owned farm, the DiSanti's began growing vegetables in Pueblo in 1890, just a few miles from the current headquarters on South Road on the St. Charles Mesa.

With humble beginnings, the DiSanti family has evolved into a successful retail and wholesale grower and shipper that produces twenty-six different crops, which are marketed throughout the state of Colorado. The farm also has an on-site stand that offers a wide variety

of vegetables and fruits, as well as jams, jellies, salsa, flowers, and fresh beef.

Customers have been known to rave about the farm's bountiful flower market in the spring and roasted green chiles in the fall.

DiSanti Farms maintains a strong commitment to family values, a rural lifestyle, and to providing the freshest and highest quality produce to their local communities. Be sure to stop by this summer for a visit.



WHERE TO FIND DISANTI FARMS

29114 South Rd, Pueblo, CO 81006

AVERAGE FARM STAND OPENING:

JULY 1-OCT 30

Open earlier for flowers and plants

HOURS:

Friday–Wednesday: 9 AM–5 PM

Thursdays: 9 AM–6 PM

DiSantiFarms

(719) 948-2526

THE FAMOUS PUEBLO SLOPPER



SLOP it to me

Pueblo has given the world one of its most important foods: The Pueblo Slopper. Even a hamburger purist will be hard-pressed to disagree with our assessment. At its basic, it is two open-faced cheeseburgers smothered in Pueblo green chili and topped with raw onions. It's the kind of meal that must be served in a bowl. The Slopper is so ingrained in Pueblo's food culture that one of the first questions visitors are asked is whether or not they've had a Slopper yet. The second question that follows is inevitably, "Well, where did you get it?"

Sloppers can be found all over town, but the original Slopper was first created at Gray's Coors Tavern more than 40 years ago. The real heated dispute concerns only who does it best. Competitions and polls over the years yielded mixed results. Today, we think two restaurants reign supreme: Gray's Coors Tavern and The Sunset Inn Bar & Grill. They are both worth a try. Then you can decide for yourself: Who has the best Slopper in town?



STATE LEGISLATOR
CARRIE CLYDE HOLLY
ELECTED 1894

One of the first women elected to the Colorado legislature was Pueblo resident Carrie Clyde Holly, who became the first woman to sponsor and pass a bill in the country.



PIKES PEAK SUMMIT

ELEVATION: 14,115 FT

Nothing in the U.S. east of Pikes Peak is higher than its summit.



SOLAR-POWERED STEEL

A new on-site solar project is set to make the 150-year old Pueblo Steel Mill to be the first in the world to get the majority of its energy from solar energy.

Recipe Spotlight

Get Hot with Pueblo Green Chili

A SOUTHERN TRANSPLANT'S TAKE ON A PUEBLO CLASSIC

This recipe has been respectfully adapted from various sources in Pueblo, from abuelitas to restaurateurs. All quantities are approximate, so please use what feels right to you. This dish takes time, so slow down and have some fun!

INGREDIENTS FOR SHREDDED PORK

- 2-4 lb pork shoulder
- Braising liquid (water, stock, broth, cider)
- 1 yellow onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp lard or avocado oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

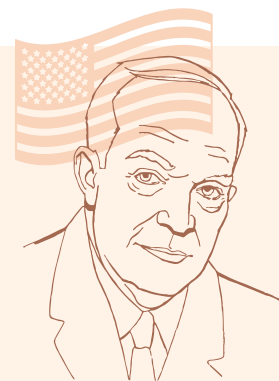
INGREDIENTS FOR GREEN CHILI

- 3 cups roasted and chopped Pueblo chile
- 1 yellow onion, diced and sauteed
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped and sauteed
- 1-14.5 oz can chopped tomatoes (roasted if possible)
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp white pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste



GET THE RECIPE

Scan this QR code to view the complete recipe on our website.



HOME OF HEROES

"What is it... something in the water out there in Pueblo? All you guys turn out to be heroes!"

President Dwight D. Eisenhower upon presenting Raymond G. "Jerry" Murphy with his Medal in 1953

Pueblo is the hometown of four Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, more than any other municipality in the United States.



WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD
ARMY: WWII



CARL L. SITTER
MARINES: KOREA



RAYMOND G. "JERRY" MURPHY
MARINES: KOREA



DREW D. DIX
ARMY: VIETNAM





SELF-GUIDED

Pueblo Farm BIKE TOUR

While the chile reigns king, Pueblo County grows some of the best produce in the state. Delicious melons, sweet corn, tomatoes, beans, zucchini, squash, and pumpkins are just some of the many fruits and vegetables you can buy directly from the farm or farm stand. The great weather and bountiful produce combined with miles of flat, paved, and gravel roads make biking a perfect alternative to exploring Pueblo's breadbasket during the harvest season.

Here is Palmer's self-guided bike tour through St. Charles Mesa and Vineland in eastern Pueblo County—two of the county's premier

agricultural communities. Stop in at the Great Divide Bike Shop to get squared away with your bike needs before venturing out. You can visit the six highlighted farm stands on this map in under 17 miles round-trip, but you can extend your ride to over 22 miles by riding Cortner Road. Most of the highlighted roads here are paved, but a couple are well-maintained gravel (Cortner and Jersey Roads).

Remember to be respectful and use standard road and cycling safety equipment and practices. Always wear a helmet and proper clothing, and obey traffic rules.



1 MILBERGER FARMS

28570 US-50 BUS, Pueblo, CO 81006

milbergerfarms.com

With crops ranging from asparagus to zucchini, Milberger Farms has something for anyone. Grab lunch at their deli with a cup of homemade Green Chili.

2 MUSSO FARMS

35779 Hillside Rd, Pueblo, CO 81006

mussofarmschileroom.com

This fifth-generation family farm sells a wide variety of produce, but it also boasts a "Chile Room" that's packed with chile-infused products, including everything from pasta to pickles.

3 MAURO FARMS & BAKERY

936 36th Lane Pueblo, CO 81006

maurofarms.com

In addition to a bounty of produce, this fourth-generation family of bakers sells a wide variety of from-scratch baked goods, including their delicious potica.

4 DITOMASO FARMS

37137 US-50 BUS, Pueblo, CO 81006

[ditomasofarms1](https://www.facebook.com/ditomasofarms1)

Operating for over 100 years, DiTomaso Farms carries a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables for you to take home, including a cornucopia of chile varieties to meet any taste bud requirements.

5 PANTALEO FARMS

39651 S Rd Pueblo, CO 81006

pantaleofarms.com

Well known for its fall pumpkin patch and corn maze, Pantaleo Farms and Pueblo Chili Company have a plethora of products from which to choose, including award-winning chile pepper sausage.

6 DISANTI FARMS

29114 S Rd, Pueblo, CO 81006

[DiSantiFarms](https://www.facebook.com/DiSantiFarms)

The DiSanti family started farming in 1890 and have kept the tradition going. With more than two dozen crops grown on their farm on St. Charles Mesa, DiSanti Farms has a strong background in providing high quality produce to the local and statewide communities.



Book Nook

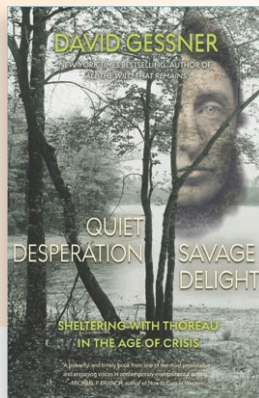
Recommended Reads from the Palmer Team

QUIET DESPERATION, SAVAGE DELIGHT:

SHELTERING WITH THOREAU IN THE AGE OF CRISIS

David Gessner

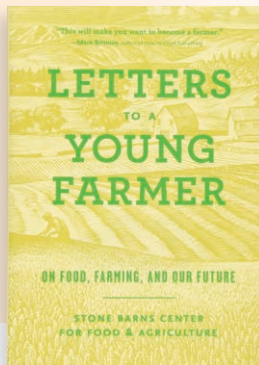
The prolific David Gessner dives deep into the life of one of his most significant literary and personal influences—Henry David Thoreau. Gessner extracts the most valuable ideas from Thoreau’s life and offers them to us, the readers, as tools for dealing with the chaotic world in which we’re living. The book begins in March 2020, just as society began to realize the threat of COVID, and follows Gessner through the rest of the year as he attempts to find his way through the ensuing madness using Henry’s wisdom as a guide. He dives into important Thoreau-ish themes, but he also meanders into many other prescient topics—our overly connected electronic world, climate change, the creative process, and more. A timely, wise, and hilarious book that could not have entered our world at a better time.



LETTERS TO A YOUNG FARMER

Multiple Contributors

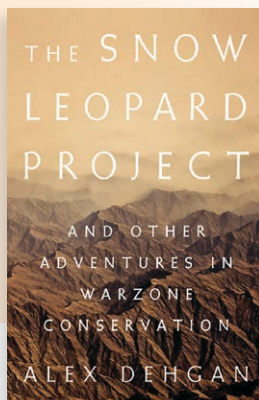
With dozens of contributors ranging from chefs to ranchers, farmers to professors, *Letters to a Young Farmer* addresses the highs and lows of farming life and answers the question, “Where does our food really come from?” This book is for everyone who appreciates healthy food grown with respect for the earth, people, animals, and community. It builds a compelling case for a sustainable and secure food future and vividly details why now, more than ever, we need farmers.



THE SNOW LEOPARD PROJECT

Alex Dehgan

Iranian-American evolutionary biologist Alex Dehgan’s memoir showcases his experience in Afghanistan in the mid-2000s as he and his team set out to create the country’s first national park, conduct vital wildlife surveys, and help a war-torn nation regain its pride in and sense of identity from its natural landscape. In a region where the terrain is just as dangerous as the political situation, Dehgan still shows a love for the Afghani people and their dogged determination to survive, much like the snow leopards they track.



CONSERVATION MAKES IT POSSIBLE

From the delicious local food we eat, to the breathtaking views and wide-open spaces we enjoy while being outdoors, conservation makes it possible. Since 1977, Palmer Land Conservancy has worked with farmers, ranchers, and people like you throughout southern Colorado to protect the land and water we love.

Become a member and help conserve what makes Colorado so special—its natural beauty, locally grown food, and world-class outdoor recreation.

BECOME A MEMBER
palmerland.org



LEARN MORE AT
FuelandIronPueblo.org
COMING FALL 2022

BUSINESS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

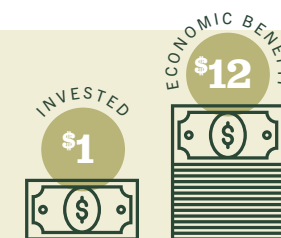
Fuel & Iron Food Hall

Located in the renovated Holmes Hardware building, just a few blocks from the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk, the Fuel & Iron Food Hall is an incubator for the next generation of great Pueblo restaurants.

Opening fall 2022 with concepts like Colorado-style hot chicken, ramen, plant-based meals, and more, their five restaurant spaces will feature local chefs and independent restaurateurs who reflect the city’s diverse population and bountiful agriculture. Fuel & Iron will also offer 28 affordable housing units, a farm, commissary kitchen, performance venue, event center, and more, forging a bridge between Pueblo’s industrial past and its thriving future.

THANK YOU BUSINESS MEMBERS

FOR SUPPORTING CONSERVATION
IN SOUTHERN COLORADO.



WIN-WIN FOR EVERYONE

Economic analysis shows that for every \$1 invested in conservation yields up to \$12 of economic benefits to Coloradans.

THE LAND DOESN'T PROTECT ITSELF.

*It needs a community of
courageous land lovers to
help protect it forever.*

JOIN PALMER LAND CONSERVANCY TODAY

COLO SPRINGS OFFICE
102 S. Tejon Street, Suite 360
Colorado Springs, CO 80903



PUEBLO OFFICE
121 W. City Center, Suite 200D
Pueblo, CO 81003

palmerland.org

info@palmerland.org | 719.632.3236