

Three things to do and see in North Fork

COMPILED BY THE DCI STAFF

Check out the Hotchkiss Fish Hatchery

Located at 8077 Hatchery Road in Hotchkiss, this hatchery was established in 1967 and is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System. At 58 acres, this hatchery is located along the banks of the North Fork of the Gunnison River. The cold, clean water that supplies it is from the Tommy Dowell Spring. The facilities include 24 inside nursery tanks, 40 concrete raceways, and 2 earthen ponds used for effluent treatment and sedimentation.



According to its website, it "has a unique responsibility in helping restore native aquatic populations, mitigate for fisheries lost as a result of federal water projects, pro-

vide fish to benefit Tribes and the National Wildlife Refuges, and to recover species listed under the Endangered Species Act."

At the Hotchkiss Fish Hatchery, visitors can get an up close look at the fish production process. Staff is available to answer questions, and there is a visitor center to explore. There are also educational programs and tours available during business hours. The hatchery also participates in "Outdoor Heritage Days" in Delta by providing fish for the kids fishing derby.

Hatchery hours are 7:30 a.m.

- 4 p.m. Monday - Saturday. Please visit [fws.gov/mountain-prairie/fisheries/hotchkiss.php](https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/fisheries/hotchkiss.php) for the latest on COVID precautions. For more information, call 970-872-3170 or email craig_eaton@fws.gov

Head to a local museum and learn about the area's history

The North Fork Valley features an interesting set of museums: the Hotchkiss-Crawford Historical Museum, and the Paonia Museum.

In these spots, you can see Indian artifacts, collections of old-time photographs, and many more objects and dis-

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An aerial view of the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery. Credit: USFWS.

plays. Learning about history is part of the experience, too. The reference library at the Hotchkiss-Crawford Museum has history transcripts, yearbooks, tapes and photo albums. In addition, you can learn more about the history of Colorado at the museum's bookstore. The Paonia Museum, too, offers a look at some historical displays and photographs.

Hotchkiss-Crawford Historical Museum is located at 180 S. Second St. in Hotchkiss, and Paonia Museum is at 700 Shady Lane. Call ahead to schedule a tour: Hotchkiss-Crawford at

970-872-3780; and Paonia at 970-527-3970.


The North Fork outdoors has something for everyone

The North Fork Valley features a variety of public lands that locals and guests alike can visit and enjoy. Paonia State Park and Crawford State Park are a few areas where water sports are one of the more popular attractions. Fish for some Largemouth Bass and Rainbow Trout, or stay on land and go for a hike to explore the backcountry. There's no limit to the trails in this area, and too many to count, so there's plenty of


options on a warm day.

The Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery is a place to learn how fish are raised and stocked in the rivers of Colorado. In addition, the



Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area is just a short drive away from the area, and is a great location for hiking, fishing, boating and a look at the scenery.



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