

Board the Bus in Dallas to Hike with the Dallas Sierra Club in the

Weminuche Wilderness

Rio Grande and San Juan National Forests, Colorado

Labor Day Weekend, 2018

6:30 PM Thursday, August 30 to about 5:45 AM Tuesday, September 4

The Area: The Weminuche Wilderness Area is the largest wilderness area in Colorado. It's been a favorite destination for the Dallas Sierra Club for years, but we've not been there since 2012. Our principal gateway to this area is the Thirty Mile Trailhead, 31 miles west of Creede, Colorado. The Continental Divide is the spine of this high, cool ecozone.

Logistics: The Dallas Sierra Club will provide transportation from Dallas, departing Thursday evening, August 30. After breakfast in Alamosa, CO, we'll arrive at Thirty Mile Trailhead around 9:30 AM Friday. We'll enjoy three and a half days of backpacking and day hiking and three nights of camping before boarding the bus for Dallas by 1:00 PM Monday, arriving in Dallas around 5:45 AM Tuesday.



Hike options: Every hike option includes some backpacking. Trips 1 and 3 backpack two days and day hike two days. Trips 2 and 4 backpack to a new campsite every day. Every option on this outing has capacity limits of either seven or eight hikers, set by the Forest Service. Early registration gives a participant higher trip choice priority than a later registrant. We use a [difficulty rating system](#) that considers altitude, daily distances and daily climbs. Clicking any underlined link will display our rating system. Because all Weminuche trips are at 10,000' and higher, our easiest rating for this outing is [moderately strenuous](#).

Trip 1: Squaw Pass and Squaw Lake, 24 miles

Trip 1 begins at Thirty Mile Campground on the Rio Grande, elevation 9,350', and gradually hikes 6 miles up the long, scenic meadow of the Squaw Creek Valley. Participants will make a three-night camp at 10,450', near the junction of the Squaw Lake Trail. Day hike on the second



day to Squaw Lake, a glacial cirque tucked against the Continental Divide (2.4 miles from camp, 11,600'). The backdrop of the lake is a 12,840' peak on the Divide. On the third day, day hike to Squaw Pass on the Continental Divide (11,210', a round trip of 7.4 miles). Break camp the fourth day for a downhill backpack to Thirty Mile Campground, where the bus will pick up all backpackers. This is our most relaxed trip in the Weminuche Wilderness and a deservedly popular one. We rate it [moderately strenuous](#) because the altitude is high. Good physical condition, a steady pace and drinking plenty

of water are keys to enjoying the adventure. **Leader: Lynn Marple, mlmarple@gmail.com, 972.644.7266**

Trip 2: Weminuche and Continental Divide Trails to Squaw Valley, 24 miles

This loop route is entirely backpacking, unlike Trip 1, on which half the miles are day hikes. We rate it [strenuous](#). The route heads west from Thirty Mile Campground, over Weminuche Pass, then east on the Continental Divide Trail to camp immediately after crossing the Raber Lohr and Fuchs Ditches (10,600'), but before heading up the CD Trail into North Fork Canyon (6.5 miles). The next day, you'll hike the CD Trail up the North Fork of Los Piños River, then cross back to the east side of the Divide, hiking along the Divide for 5 miles. Upon dropping steeply to a saddle on the Divide, you'll spy your camp destination, a tiny unnamed lake east of the CD Trail at about 12,000', not far from Grouse Rincon, 7.5 miles for the day. On the third day, continue a short distance on the CD Trail before turning east on the Squaw Lake Trail to Squaw Lake (about 2 miles). Enjoy the location, then continue downhill on the Squaw Lake Trail to join the Squaw Creek Trail northbound. You'll quickly reach a good campsite on your left at 10,400'. From the night 3 camp, it's 6 miles downhill to Thirty Mile Campground on day 4. **Leader:** Christian Costello, j.christian.costello@gmail.com, 972.591.1547



Trip 3: Weminuche, Skyline, Continental Divide Trails and Los Piños River, 29 miles

This trip's another good choice for people who like one base camp for all three nights and long, memorable hikes with only day packs. Starting from Thirty Mile Campground, Trip 3 follows the Weminuche Trail 4.8 miles the first day to a campsite near Weminuche Pass (10,600), one of



the lower and easier passes over the Continental Divide. In the afternoon, explore the Fuchs Ditch, built in 1934 to direct water from across the Continental Divide to Weminuche Creek and the San Luis Valley. The next day's hike will be a loop. Start early to hike west on the Skyline Trail toward the Rio Grande Pyramid, then southwest toward The Window, both prominent landmarks on the Continental Divide. The route turns east on the Continental Divide Trail, eventually descending to Rincon la Vaca and heading north on the Weminuche Trail to camp, about 11 miles in all. With ideal conditions, we could possibly add 3

optional miles to hike into The Window (12,868'). The third day's hike, also with day packs only, moves south on the Weminuche and Pine River Trails to the mouth of Snowslide Canyon before looping back on the west side of Los Piños River, about 8.2 miles for the day. There's plenty of time for a return to Thirty Mile Campground for bus pick-up on the fourth day. This trip is [moderately strenuous](#) on the first and last days, [strenuous](#) on the third day and [very strenuous](#) on the second day due to altitude and distance, although the lack of full packs on the middle days mitigates those ratings. **Leader:** Arthur Kuehne, arthur@akuehne.com, 214.368.3210

Trip 4: Ute Creek, Ute Lake, Rincon La Vaca and the Weminuche Trail, 27 miles

Unlike all other trips, Trip 4 begins with a bus drop at the Ute Creek Trailhead (9,500'), 6 miles west of Thirty Mile Campground. Backpackers immediately ford the Rio Grande on the Ute Creek Trail, hiking up the valley 6.9 miles to a campsite 0.2 mile beyond Black Lake (10,900'). Cross

the West Fork of Ute Creek the next morning, continuing south on the Ute Creek Trail 5.3 miles to a camp in view of Ute Lake (12,000). Within minutes the next morning, you'll cross the



Continental Divide and meet the Continental Divide Trail. Head east on the CD Trail, winding higher, following the trail through an eerily beautiful landscape above treeline. Dip slightly, then make one long ascent from the head of East Ute Creek to a high green meadow atop the Divide at 12,600'. Descend to the drier east side of the Divide and the Window will come into view on your left as you continue east on the CD Trail. Descend to the Rincon la Vaca to find water and a good campsite on an edge of the meadows near the

Weminuche Trail, about 8 miles from Ute Lake. On the next morning, the hike is a relatively easy 7 miles on the Weminuche Trail to Thirty Mile Campground and bus pick-up. This backpacking trip option is [strenuous](#). **Leader:** Clay Morton, claymorton@ymail.com, 214.398.8061

How to Register:

We've tried to make registration easier for this and future trips.

1. Read everything in this document.

2. Complete the medical form and the preference form at [this link](#). You will find instructions at the link. Email the two forms to Trip Registration Coordinator **Ande Johnston**, AAHinds62@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may print the forms and mail them to Ande at:

Ande Johnston
3701 TURTLE CREEK BLVD APT 11G
DALLAS, TX 75219-5534

For inquiries, contact Ande by email or call her at **214.914.3590**.

3. Mail a check or money order for \$325 per person, payable to "**Dallas Sierra Club**" to Ande Johnston. (Same envelope as forms is fine.) The trip price covers transportation from Dallas, driver tips, Forest Service fees, bottled water for the outbound bus trip, beverages for the return trip, leader training and miscellaneous outing expenses. Early registration is strongly encouraged; recent bus trips have filled many weeks before departure. We will sell a maximum of 28 seats on the bus, allowing two seats per person. If we have not sold at least twenty-five places by July 31, the Dallas Sierra Club may cancel the trip, refunding all payments in full.

4. Every participant will be required--when boarding the bus on August 30--to sign the waiver that appears at the end of this trip description. Please read the waiver in advance.

The Trip Registration Coordinator will send an email to confirm receipt of your forms and check. The Coordinator or a trip leader may contact you to discuss suitability of your preferred trip. Each trip is restricted by our U.S. Forest Service permit to either seven or eight people, including the leader. Trip option assignment rosters may not be available until mid-August, but you may contact the Coordinator or trip leaders with any questions or requests. Assignment to hike options and to seats on the bus will be based on the order in which complete forms and payments are received.

Cancellation Policy: Notify Trip Registration Coordinator Ande Johnston if you must cancel. For cancellations received through July 31, we will refund all but a \$60 cancellation fee. After that date, there will be no refunds unless the Dallas Sierra Club or the Forest Service cancels

the outing, in which case payments to the Dallas Sierra Club will be 100% refunded. See “Travel Insurance” below. The Dallas Sierra Club is not responsible for airfares or any other costs you incur do to a trip cancellation.

Travel Insurance: We suggest travel insurance to cover non-refundable expenses. Travel insurance may also cover trip-related evacuation and medical expenses. The national Sierra Club recommends Travelex for travel insurance: <http://www.travelexinsurance.com/>. Optional coverage for this trip should cost less than \$50, depending on age.

Wait List: If places on the trip are unavailable when a complete registration, including payment, is received, the Trip Registration Coordinator will advise you. At your option, we will retain your check, depositing it only when a place becomes available or shred your check and forms. Priority for places will go to wait list registrants with earliest registrations.

Departure and Parking: Our bus from Red Carpet Charters should be ready for boarding between the new Walmart and Sam’s Club at the southwest quadrant of Midway Road and LBJ Freeway (IH 635) by 5:45 PM, August 30. Departure time is 6:30 PM. You may park your vehicle near the bus, between the two stores. Neither the Sierra Club nor Walmart are responsible for the security of your car or its contents, but we have left vehicles at Walmart for multiple days on many occasions and never experienced theft or vandalism.

Bus Comfort and Safety: Our motor coach has 28 pairs of seats and a toilet. Each passenger will have two adjacent seats. The seats recline slightly, but by no means completely. We recommend bringing a pillow and blanket onto the bus. Some people bring foam pads for sleeping on the floor. Inflatable pads are discouraged for bus use. Consider bringing a sleep mask and earplugs. Keep a sweater, light jacket and/or rain jacket accessible on the bus, no matter what the weather as we leave Dallas, staying prepared for any conditions at arrival.

You may stash small items (8” high x 12” deep) in the rack above your seat. Larger items may be stashed on the floor in front of your seats or in exterior cargo bins below the bus interior. You may leave gear on the bus while hiking. Be cautious about leaving electronic devices, as a parked bus can get hot. Most people leave a change of clothes on the bus for the return trip.

These rules are important for safety and courtesy to your fellow passengers:

- Glass containers are not allowed on the bus. Breakage is a hazard and a mess.
- No perfume or cologne, please. Some people are sensitive to scents.
- Smoking isn’t allowed.
- Music or electronic devices are okay with earphones that don’t leak sound.
- Please limit phone calls. Turn off phones during quiet hours.

Experience and Conditioning: Participants should be in good physical condition. If you can walk around White Rock Lake (9 miles) with a pack in under three and a half hours without being overly taxed (preferably two days in a row), you’re probably in shape for at least the easier trips. We encourage you to discuss your experience with the Trip Registration Coordinator or one of the trip leaders if you have any doubt about the suitability of the outing for you.

Weather: Typical high temperatures for early September in the Weminuche are near seventy degrees. Expect overnight lows in the mid-thirties. The afternoon monsoon that prevails in July and August (rain in the afternoon for a few minutes to an hour) generally ends with August, but could persist into September.

Gear: Each person is responsible for bringing personal food and equipment. Sharing with a friend is fine. Contact trip leaders if you’d like advice about gear. If your loaded pack weighs more than 25 to 30 pounds before water, you should probably lighten your load. Novice backpackers usually discover they’ve packed excess weight.

Basic equipment: You need a lightweight tent for shelter from rain, a sleeping bag and a sleeping pad to insulate you from cold ground. You need a backpack and either a waterproof pack cover, plastic bag liner or waterproof sacks to protect contents from rain. If your itinerary calls for dropping packs to day hike more than an hour or two from your camp, consider including a rucksack for essentials. Bring water containers (see “Water” paragraph), a headlamp (more satisfactory than a flashlight) and personal first-aid and health items, including a lightweight trowel and toilet paper plus a zip-lock bag for used paper. Bring 20 to 40 feet of cord and a waterproof food sack so you can bear-bag your food, trash and toiletries.

Food: We’ll stop for breakfast at McDonald’s or elsewhere in Alamosa, CO around 6:00 AM Friday and at K-Bob’s in Raton, NM for dinner around 5:30 PM Monday. Pack three breakfasts and three dinners for camping and four no-cook lunches. Bring a small stove and fuel for cooking. We don’t build fires, making leave-no-trace camping easier and avoiding ember burns on clothing.

Clothing: Multiple layers are key to comfort. Include a rain shell and rain pants. Remember that cotton and denim become chilly and heavy when wet. Wear boots or sturdy trail shoes and two layers of socks (thin sock on the inside) to preclude blisters. You’ll need a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen for UV protection.

Cash: Bring cash for Friday breakfast and Monday dinner in restaurants. Paying restaurant checks with cash is sometimes faster than processing credit cards.

Water: Water will be available each day from pumps at Thirty Mile Campground or from streams. Trip leaders will advise participants before departure about how much capacity will be needed for your specific route. Water is safe to drink after proper treatment by tablets, filtration or boiling. **DON’T fill water containers that will be carried in your pack** until arrival at the Thirty Mile Trailhead. A leak could wet gear and ruin the trip for several people.

Maps: Trip leaders will carry a topographic map of the area. For a personal map, consider National Geographic Trails Illustrated map #140, covering the entire Weminuche Wilderness Area.

Minors: Minors (under 18) may participate when accompanied by their legal guardian.

Leave No Trace: Leave-no-trace wilderness ethics are expected of all participants. All trash must be packed out; human waste buried and used toilet paper packed out. (Bring a zip-lock bag.) Pets, firearms and smoking are not allowed.

Bear Bags: Black bears near camps are rare, but possible. Smaller mammals are more likely to find your food, even in bags. Prepare to hang items that smell in a bear bag each night and follow these guidelines:

- Don’t eat in your tent or store food or items with food spills in your tent.
- Prepare meals away from your sleeping area.
- Disperse cooking water over a wide area, away from camp.
- Store trash in your food bag (within a separate plastic bag).
- Pack out all leftover food and trash.

Medical: Our leaders have trained for wilderness first aid, but they aren’t medical professionals. Participants are encouraged to bring first aid supplies for personal use and a basic knowledge of how to deal with emergencies. Inform leaders if you have a medical condition such as controlled diabetes, heart problems or allergic reactions that could require special emergency treatment. Carry medications for these conditions and tell the leader where you store them. If you’re allergic to bee stings, poison ivy or anything else we could encounter, ask your doctor if you should carry an antidote kit. Medical information you provide may be shared with medical professionals who treat you in the event of injury or sickness.

Group = Safety: The Sierra Club prohibits individuals from leaving the led group (the leader and those participants with the leader) to do separate day hiking or other activities. If you leave the group, you do so at your own risk. Participants who leave the led group against leader advice will be asked to sign out of the trip and will no longer be part of the trip. If you take that risk, please don't hike alone. Most deaths in wild areas occur when a solo hiker becomes incapacitated and dies before being found. When leaving camp, especially at night, be careful not to lose your way back. If you get lost, stop on a trail and wait to be found.

Leaders: Our leaders are volunteers who lead because they love backpacking and wild places and they're eager to share their delight and skills. Don't expect them to provide food or gear or to carry yours. Trip leaders may change the planned route due to group capabilities, weather or safety concerns. Following trip leader directions is important for group safety. If you don't obey the leader's instructions, you assume consequent risks. Don't expect leaders to do more than notify public authorities if you become separated from the group. Leaders are not allowed to search for missing people at night and may not put others in the group at risk to search for lost participants.

Have We Unnerved You? The Dallas Sierra Club has conducted outings for more than forty years without major injuries. If you're in good physical condition and select a trip option matching your capabilities, these trips are reasonably safe. The cautions and disclosures of risk are presented to help you make an informed decision about participation. Hopefully, they will encourage participants to act with due care.

California Seller of Travel Law: Because the Sierra Club is a California nonprofit corporation and California has a "Seller of Travel" law, we're required to post this notice: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Don't send this form. Participants will be required to sign an original of this waiver when boarding the bus.

**Acknowledgment of Outing Member Responsibility,
Express Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability**

I understand that during my participation in this Sierra Club Outing, I may be exposed to a variety of hazards and risks, foreseen or unforeseen, which are inherent in each Outing and cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of the Outing. These inherent risks include, but are not limited to, the dangers of serious personal injury, property damage, and death ("Injuries and Damages") from exposure to the hazards of travel and the Sierra Club has not tried to contradict or minimize my understanding of these risks. I know that Injuries and Damages can occur by natural causes or activities of other persons, animals, trip members, trip leaders and assistants or third parties, either as a result of negligence or because of other reasons. I understand that risks of such Injuries and Damages are involved in adventure travel such as Sierra Club Outings and I appreciate that I may have to exercise extra care for my own person and for others around me in the face of such hazards. I further understand that on this Outing there may not be rescue or medical facilities or expertise necessary to deal with the Injuries and Damages to which I may be exposed. In consideration for my acceptance as a participant on this Outing, and the services and amenities to be provided by the Sierra Club in connection with the Outing, I confirm my understanding that:

- I have read any rules and conditions applicable to the Outing made available to me. I acknowledge my participation is at the discretion of the Bus Trip Coordinator and my trip leader.
- The Outing officially begins and ends at the location(s) designated by the Sierra Club. The Outing does not include carpooling, transportation, or transit to and from the Outing, and I am personally responsible for all risks associated with this travel. This does not apply to transportation provided by the Sierra Club during the Outing.
- If I decide to leave early and not to complete the Outing as planned, I assume all risks inherent in my decision to leave and waive all liability against the Sierra Club arising from that decision. Likewise, if the leader has concluded the Outing, and I decide to go forward without the leader, I assume all risks inherent in my decision to go forward and waive all liability against the Sierra Club arising from that decision.
- This Agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by law. If any provision or any part of any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid or legally unenforceable for any reason, the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected thereby and shall remain valid and fully enforceable.
- To the fullest extent allowed by law, I agree to **WAIVE, DISCHARGE CLAIMS, AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY** the Sierra Club, its officers, directors, employees, agents, and leaders from **any and all liability** on account of, or in any way resulting from Injuries and Damages, even if caused by negligence of the Sierra Club its officers, directors, employees, agents, and leaders, in any way connected with this Outing. I further agree to **HOLD HARMLESS** the Sierra Club, its officers, directors, employees, agents, and leaders from any claims, damages, injuries or losses caused by my own negligence while a participant on the outing. I understand and intend that this assumption of risk and release is binding upon my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and includes any minors accompanying me on the Outing.
- I have read this document in its entirety and I freely and voluntarily assume all risks of such Injuries and Damages and notwithstanding such risks, I agree to participate in the Outing.

Printed name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

If you are a minor (under age 18), your parent or legal guardian must sign this Agreement on your behalf.

I hereby agree and consent to the foregoing Agreement on behalf of the minor below.

Print Name and Age of Minor: _____ Age: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____