

# NPCA TRAVEL



The Travel Program of the National Parks Conservation Association

SEPT. 25 - OCT. 1, 2022

NATURAL FORTUNES  
OF  
THE **Four  
Corners**

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## DISCOVER

THE DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTIONS  
BETWEEN THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF  
ANCESTRAL PUEBLOANS AND LOCAL  
MODERN-DAY TRIBES

## LEARN

HOW NPCA AND LOCAL TRIBES  
ADDRESS ONGOING ISSUES OF  
OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

PUEBLO INDIANS' BUILDINGS  
*Chaco Culture National Historical Park, NM*

HIGHLIGHTS

- Spend two full days exploring cliff dwellings and receiving expert knowledge of archaeological sites with brilliant guides at Mesa Verde National Park
- Wander through the Puebloan “great houses” at Chaco Culture National Historical Park as you learn about the compelling history of these storied places from a local expert
- Enjoy an enlightening journey with NPCA experts through the cultural landscape of southwestern Utah at Hovenweep National Monument while you celebrate recent park protection victories
- Experience the true wonders of some of the darkest skies in the country as you stargaze in a newly designated Dark Sky Park

CALL FOR INQUIRIES OR TO BOOK: 800.628.7275



# Natural Fortunes of the Four Corners

AVAILABLE DATES: September 25 - October 1, 2022 | Min/Max: 12/16

Length of Tour: 7 days/6 nights

NPCA Member Price: \$4,650.00 per person double occupancy; \$565.00 single supplement

Deposit: \$980 per person due at registration

Arrive/Depart: Durango, Colorado

Reservations: Please contact Jared Dial, NPCA's Associate Director of the Educational Travel Program, at 1.800.628.7275 or email the Travel Program at [travel@npca.org](mailto:travel@npca.org).

**Activity Level:** Travelers should be prepared for full-day adventures of walking, standing and sitting. This tour includes hikes, climbing ladders in cliff dwellings and ducking through doorways in archaeological sites. Hikes during our journey are typically 1-2 miles in length, with our longest hike being 2.6 miles. There is significant elevation descent and gain, and our hikes in Mesa Verde NP are at an elevation of around 7,000 feet. We recommend travelers bring hiking poles when visiting cliff dwelling sites. All hikes are optional and, whenever possible, your guides will provide alternative options for either a shorter or less demanding route. Hikes, walks and vehicle transportation may be on rough terrain and take multiple hours.

**Inclusions:** Lodging, meals as noted in the itinerary (B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner), ground transportation throughout the itinerary, all activities, tips, entry fees and carbon offsets for each trip day.

**Exclusions:** Airfare to trip start and back from trip end, luggage charges, alcoholic drinks, travel insurance, items of a purely personal nature and any items not listed in Inclusions.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate



Welcome to the Four Corners region, known for sweeping vistas, Ancestral Puebloan settlements and rich cultural traditions, internationally recognized dark skies and diverse plant and animal species.

It is also an area increasingly at risk of oil and gas development, which threatens priceless cultural resources.

On this trip, journey alongside NPCA experts and partners to experience these unique places firsthand and get a behind-the-scenes look at how NPCA and our valuable partners are fighting to protect them. As we explore the extraordinary ancient structures of the region, we'll gain a richer understanding of the modern-day cultural ties of this deeply storied area and find a greater appreciation for the

preservation of priceless ancestral and cultural resources. Crafted to give you the most in depth, exclusive experiences within unforgettable Ancestral Puebloan historic sites, including the massive pueblo structures at Chaco Culture National Historical Park and the mystifying landscapes of Mesa Verde National Park, this NPCA small-group tour will take you on a fascinating adventure through time.



Balcony House at the ancient Anasazi ruins of Mesa Verde National Park

Fajada Butte in Chaco Culture National Historical Park, NM

## ITINERARY

### DAY SEPT 25: Arrivals into Durango, CO

1 Welcome to the Southwest! After flying into **Durango**, meet your Iconic Trip Leader at baggage claim and take a private shuttle downtown to check into your room at **Strater Hotel**. We kick off the trip with a welcome dinner and a chance to get to know your fellow travelers. Our NPCA host will give an overview of the themes we'll explore in the days ahead. We'll enjoy a group dinner before settling in for the night at **Strater Hotel**. *Strater Hotel (D)*

### DAY SEPT 26: Chaco Culture National Historic Park

2 After breakfast, we'll drive 2.5 hours south toward **Chaco Canyon**.\* We arrive at **Chaco Culture National Historical Park**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, in time for a picnic lunch and an introduction to the park from park staff. A thousand years ago, people used the five Chacoan "great houses" to trade, exchange information and celebrate important events. Today, **Chaco Culture National Historical Park** faces threats from increasing oil and gas development, which would destroy lands of paramount importance to surrounding tribes. We'll learn how NPCA and partners are challenging these pressures to protect stories of American heritage while we explore the park's sophisticated structures alongside local experts. In the late afternoon, we'll make our way to **Farmington** where we'll spend the night at **Home2 Suites**. Dinner tonight is in Downtown **Farmington**. *Home2 Suites (B, L, D)*

*\*Because the dirt roads going into and out of Chaco Culture National Historical Park are prone to flooding during rain, this visit is weather dependent. In case of inclement weather, we will visit alternate sites selected by NPCA staff.*



Cliff dwellings, Mesa Verde National Park, CO

### DAY SEPT 27: Aztec Ruins National Monument & Mesa Verde National Park

3 After breakfast at the hotel, we set off toward Colorado, stopping along the way at **Aztec Ruins National Monument**. Here, we'll tour the **ceremonial Great Kiva**, a one-of-kind reconstruction with an impressive 40-foot diameter. Take note of the oil well that sits adjacent to these ancient structures; it's a sign of the competing pressures on this land. From **Aztec Ruins**, we drive about 1.5-hours to **Mesa Verde National Park**, stopping for lunch along the way. **Mesa Verde National Park** is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and home to over 600 protected cliff dwellings typical of **Ancestral Puebloan** culture. We'll begin by meeting with park staff for an introduction to the park and the archaeological importance of its sites. This afternoon we'll have a chance to stretch our legs on one of the park's many scenic hikes before checking into our lodging for the next three nights. Dinner tonight is in **Far View Lodge's Metate Dining Room**. Weather permitting, after dinner we'll have the option to head back outside for a **night sky program**. In 2021, the National Park Service and **International Dark-Sky Association** designated Mesa Verde an **International Dark Sky Park** — if conditions are right, we'll get to see why! *Far View Lodge (B, L, D)*

### DAYS SEPT 28-29: Mesa Verde National Park

4-5 Days 4 and 5 are dedicated to **Mesa Verde National Park**. With expert guides, witness the archaeological marvels of **Chapin Mesa** and meet the park's superintendent, **Kayci Cook**. There will be an option to hike the moderately strenuous **Petroglyph Trail** before lunch as well as the option to visit various other **Puebloan** sites before heading back to our accommodations and dinner as a group.

On Day 5, we delve deeper into the park and NPCA's role in its conservation. After breakfast, we'll go off the beaten path and explore **Wetherill Mesa**, known as "the quieter side" of **Mesa Verde** and tour **Long House**, the park's second largest cliff dwelling. Journey through **Badger House Community**, a series of four mesa top sites that span 600 years of prehistory, and **Step House**, home to two separate construction periods in one site (early Basketmaker pithouses built about 620 CE, and a masonry pueblo dating to 1226 CE). In the afternoon, we'll meet with NPCA experts and partners for a discussion about the challenges the park faces from proposed oil and gas drilling in the surrounding area. Dinner tonight is in the **Metate Dining Room**. *Far View Lodge (B, L, D)*



Coyote, Mesa Verde National Park

**DAY 6 SEPT 30: Hovenweep National Monument**

The next morning, we head west toward the renowned **Hovenweep National Monument**, just over the border in **Utah**, approximately a 1 hour and 45-minute drive. Along the way, we stop at **Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center & Museum** for an overview of the structures and cultural legacies we'll see throughout the day. Once in Hovenweep, we're met by NPCA partners who guide us through the landscape, beginning with the **Square Tower Group**, where the largest collection of structures in Hovenweep can be found. We'll learn about the



Hovenweep National Monument

challenges posed by the Trump administration's decision to reduce the size of nearby **Bears Ears National Monument** by nearly 85%, opening the previously protected lands to mineral, oil and gas development. However, the tireless collaborative work of NPCA, tribes, archeologists, nearby communities and conservation groups resulted in a thrilling victory of the Biden Administration in 2021, restoring protections to **Bears Ears National Monument**, along with other monuments that protect the stories of America. We'll spend our final night in **Durango, Colorado**. Tonight, we'll meet with NPCA staff and partners to reflect on the week and conclude the evening with a joyous farewell dinner. **The General Palmer Hotel (B, L, D)**

**DAY 7 OCT 1: Departures**

On our final morning, enjoy breakfast before your transfer to Durango Airport for your flight home. For those choosing to extend your stay in Durango, we can provide recommendations for the many cultural activities and outdoor adventures the area has to offer.

***Please note:** This itinerary is subject to change based on weather conditions and park closures related to COVID-19.*

**Travel Insurance:** To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. If you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services through USI Affinity at 1-800-937-1387 or at <http://my.travelinsure.com/npc>; email confirmation packets will include additional details.

**Activity Level:** Our trips are appropriate for people in good health with overall good mobility. Travelers should be comfortable participating in at least three hours of physical activity per day, which include walking or standing for extended periods (sometimes on uneven terrain) and climbing stairs. Any physical conditions requiring special attention, diet, or treatment should be reported when booking to determine what accommodations can be made.

**Traveler Responsibility:** Travelers are responsible for choosing an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness and overall health. All travelers are required to complete and return their NPCA waiver of liability, personal information form, flight form, and accept Iconic Adventure's Terms and Conditions before being allowed to participate in a trip. Travelers also are responsible for reading and understanding all pre-departure materials and bringing appropriate clothing and gear.

**LODGING**

*Find comfort and relaxation in each of the hotel properties we carefully selected for your NPCA trip.*



**Strater Hotel (Durango, CO):** *The historic Strater Hotel dates back to 1883 and is a living history museum of the old west and Durango's boomtown days. It is home to the world's largest collection of Victorian antique walnut furniture, much of which appoints the 88 unique guest rooms. The hotel has been lovingly restored and is a feature of any trip to Durango.*



**Home2 Suites (Farmington, NM):** *A modern all-suite hotel. All guest rooms are Studio Queen Suites that offer one queen bed, living area with one full size sofa sleeper and kitchenette. The hotel also features a 24 hour fitness center, complimentary full hot/cold breakfast, indoor heated pool and outdoor patio space.*



**Far View Lodge (Mesa Verde National Park, CO):** *Far View Lodge sits on a high shoulder of Mesa Verde and offers panoramic views into three states. Simple and unfussy, this quiet refuge offers guests a chance to soak in the beauty and peacefulness of this special place. Each room has custom handcrafted furniture and a private balcony.*



**The General Palmer Hotel (Durango, CO):** *The prestigious General Palmer Hotel was built in the Victorian era in 1898 in historic downtown Durango. Named after General William Jackson Palmer who established the hotel, this is the only Historical Four Diamond Hotel in Southwest Colorado. Step back in time and experience the unique nostalgia as you enjoy Durango's rich history with modern comforts.*

**Trip Cancellation Policy:** Written cancellations must be received in Iconic's sales office in order for a cancellation to be valid. Iconic strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance.

**Cancellation charges will be as follows:**

July 3, 2022	121+ days prior to departure	120-91 days prior	90-61 days prior	60-0 days prior
<i>Final payment is due</i>	<i>Deposit is refundable</i>	<i>Deposit is 100% transferable to another Iconic-operated NPCA trip OR 50% refundable</i>	<i>75% of trip cost is refunded</i>	<i>No refund</i>

**COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

Each of our travel partners have developed robust safety protocols to protect the health of our guests, staff and the communities we visit. **At this time, proof of vaccination is required to participate in this trip.** All tour staff and partners associated with the trip, including drivers, guides, NPCA staff and speakers will be fully vaccinated. As conditions and guidelines continue to evolve, our travel partners are committed to easing concerns and creating flexible options for those interested in rescheduling or booking new travel. Please contact us for details.



# Why Travel with NPCA?

## EXCELLENT VALUE

Our tours offer NPCA members the opportunity for behind-the-scenes access and unique insights because of our intimate relationship with the national parks. A small portion of your trip cost supports NPCA's mission to protect the parks for present and future generations.

## EXPERT TRIP LEADERS

Every trip will be led by at least one NPCA expert, as well as tour operators who provide professionally managed tours in and around our national parks. Your trip leaders, guest lecturers and savvy NPCA staff will give you insights into the flora, fauna and history of each destination, leading lively discussions, and answering your questions.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS TOURS

NPCA partners with tour operators that support cultural and natural heritage, maximizing the economic benefits in the trip destinations and establishing guidelines for managing environmental impacts. Our goal is to ensure your travel will have a positive impact on the parks so that your children and their children can enjoy them in perpetuity.

## CONVENIENT TRAVEL

Everything is included in your tour, such as meals, accommodations, snacks, expert speakers, transportation at the destination and all activities (unless otherwise stated). With NPCA, you can explore the parks without the hassle of planning or the frustration of crowds.

## SMALL-SIZED GROUPS

Group size on each of our trips is limited to no more than 18 people to maximize your interactions with the experts, enhance wildlife viewing and boost educational opportunities throughout your experience. Enjoy stimulating conversations with other like-minded NPCA members and supporters from around the country.

## SAFETY AND FLEXIBILITY

Your health and safety is our top priority. We have worked with each of our travel partners to develop safety measures for our trips in response to the global pandemic. As conditions and guidelines continue to evolve, our travel partners are committed to easing concerns and creating flexible options for rescheduling travel.

## NPCA EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION

Our custom-designed itineraries are designed to give NPCA members exclusive experiences that highlight NPCA's important contributions to park protection and provide special behind-the-scenes access to National Park Service staff, NPCA partners and other local specialists. Our goal is to offer the best itineraries in adventure and educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks.

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NPCA is the only independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of the National Park System. We are 100% privately funded and we rely on donations from individuals like you. NPCA trips are an exclusive NPCA member benefit. One traveler per group must be an active NPCA member to participate in an NPCA trip. An annual membership starts at \$15 per person. Please make dues payable to NPCA by check or credit card at [npca.org](http://npca.org).