



NORTHERN COLORADO GROUP

NEW MEMBER GUIDE

Revised January 8, 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the Northern Colorado Group of the Colorado Mountain Club! This document has been designed to provide you with insight as to how the group functions as well as what might be expected of you, the new member, when attending club trips or functions. Our goal is to have you prepared to enjoy your first few outings with us. Then as experience and skills mature we hope that you will take advantage of the numerous classes and clinics that we offer which will assist you in expanding your experience in the mountain environment.

We hope you have the opportunity to make many new friends, develop new skills, and mentor others in the ways of mountaineering and most of all gain great enjoyment exploring all that the club has to offer.

Safety

As you venture into the outdoors, your trip leaders and course instructors are instrumental in gaining knowledge and skills. Observe their techniques, ask questions, and follow suggestions. You will have the opportunity to increase your skills through practice. We encourage you to take every opportunity to add a new thought or technique to your repertoire. As you gain experience you will be better off at making sound risk versus reward judgments, which is the key to survival in the mountains and backcountry. Mistakes can be very costly. Use all your resources and be careful and deliberate while making these judgments. Keeping safety first is a key aspect of safe mountain adventures.

The Colorado Mountain Club

Since 1912, the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) has been serving hikers, climbers, skiers, and the public. The CMC headquarters is in Golden Colorado. The heart of CMC is built on Community, Adventure, Education and Conservation and Stewardship. Volunteerism is also a critical part of CMC and our NOCO Group. Serving as a trip leader, as an instructor in one of the many schools or clinics, on a conservation project, and on the group council are just a few of the opportunities to get involved.

TRIPS	FREE access to over thousands of separate mountain adventures annually, ranging from easy to challenging day hikes and snowshoe trips, to peak climbs, cross-country, and downhill ski trips, to long day walks. Carpooling is encouraged to keep travel costs down. Click here for the calendar of activities for Northern Colorado.
SCHOOLS/ CLINICS	Access to many classes and seminars offered by various CMC groups. Training in mountain hiking, mountaineering, backpacking, alpine scrambling, cross-country skiing are examples of the skills members can gain by taking group-sponsored schools. Click here for see the various schools and classes offered.

SOCIAL	Opportunity to socialize with 5000+ like-minded Coloradans interested in outdoor, non-motorized recreation. NOCO hosts a fall Annual Dinner with a guest speaker and a summer Annual Picnic.
HUTS	Access to CMC-maintained back country huts. Hosted and maintained by the Boulder Group, two huts (Brainard Cabin and Arestua Hut) are available for member use on a reservation basis, one on a first-come, first-served basis. Click here for details for each hut.
PUBLICATIONS	Free member newsletters from various groups and sections . The Rucksack is the overall CMC membership newsletter for all members. Other sections such as Bobcats, Rocky Mountain Over The Hill Gang, Ascending Hikes all have regular email newsletter. Our NOCO group has a weekly email that goes out on Sundays for all NOCO members for news, events and trips in the NOCO area. All of these can be selected on your “My Preferences”.
BOOKS	Receive a 20% discount on all CMC Press books. CMC has a growing collection of publications that includes guide books for Colorado and beyond, conservation texts, and children's books. Click here for the CMC Press details.
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL	Travel to a foreign destination through our Adventure Travel program.
PROGRAMS	Discount rates for special events include film festivals, member photography shows, adventure speakers, and much more. NOCO group has a book club that meets bi-monthly as well as regular evening programs with local guest speakers.
CONSERVATION	The Northern Colorado Group partners with the USFS and has adopted the Grey Rock trail for providing trail maintenance to support our local forest service for this trail.
YOUTH PROGRAMS	Established in 1999, the Colorado Mountain Club’s youth programming is designed with one mission in mind: to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders. We provide school visits and field trips, after-school programs, adventure camps and courses, a teen internship, family events, and more. Note that these programs are all held in the Golden/Denver area.

Member Discounts

Member discounts come standard for all members. We hope you’ll take advantage of everything from free trips with the Colorado Mountain Club community as well as up to 70% off some of your favorite outdoor gear brands, guidebooks, and partner experiences. Click [here](#) for a list of all the current

member benefits and discounts.

The Northern Colorado Group of the Colorado Mountain Club

The Northern Colorado Group, one of 13 Statewide CMC Groups, has approximately 380 members. The group offers a variety of outdoor activities, educational opportunities, conservation efforts, and social events. *NOCO CMC UPDATE* is a weekly email for NOCO members sent out on Sundays. Information about trips, activities and events are highlighted. You are automatically added to this weekly email through your registration with the Northern Colorado Group.

Northern Colorado Group Council

Position and Name	E-mail
Chair: Dimitri Poppeliers	dpoppeli@gmail.com
Vice Chair: Wayne Howell	waynehow59@gmail.com
Education and Training: Amy Aschliman	azimmer4@yahoo.com
Membership: Lynn Clay	lynnclayco@gmail.com
Communications: Eric Koop	erickoop@duck.com
Programs: Aryn Baxter	aryn.baxter@gmail.com
Safety & Leadership: Wayne Howell	wjm59@pm.me
Activities: James Kelly	pthread1981@gmail.com
Treasurer: Anita Wright	adwright2001@yahoo.com
Secretary: Melinda Deinert	melinda.deinert@gmail.com
State Liaison: Chris Haugen	echristopher.haugen@yahoo.com

Monthly Programs

The Northern Colorado Group holds monthly programs on various dates of the month, usually on Wednesday evenings. These are announced in the weekly *NOCO CMC Update* email communication to all NOCO members.

Types of Trips

Trips vary from short (3 miles or less) hikes in local parks at an easy pace to climbing a fourteener, one of

Colorado's 14,000 foot mountains both in the summer and up couloirs as a snow climb in the winter. Technical climbing trips are also available. Besides hiking/climbing trips, there are also mountain biking, rock climbing, ice climbing, snowshoeing, ski trips and more.

Trip Classifications

Because CMC offers so many trips, we use several criteria in our trip descriptions to classify the various types of trips, focusing on round-trip mileage and total elevation gain. If after reading the trip description you have any questions about a trip's difficulty, contact the trip leader. Hikes (including some trips that require rock-climbing skills) are normally classified as Easy through Difficult. Full list of different trip classifications can be found [here](#).

Hiking

- **Easy:** Up to 8 miles round trip or 1,200 feet elevation gain. (Prior hiking experience is usually not necessary.)
- **Moderate:** Up to 12 miles round trip or 2,500 feet elevation gain. (Moderate to strenuous physical activity. Some prior experience is beneficial.)
- **Challenging:** Up to 15 miles round trip or 3,500 feet elevation gain. (Strenuous to very strenuous physical activity. Prior experience and training is beneficial.)
- **Difficult:** Over 15 miles round trip or 3,500 feet elevation gain. (Very strenuous physical activity often including exposure or requiring use of technical skills. Knowledge based on prior experience and training is highly beneficial.)

If you also see the letter "E" after the classification (such as Moderate-E or Difficult-E), the trip involves exposure (*i.e.*, risk of falling) and may require advanced climbing skills.

Additional terms used in hike descriptions

The following shorthand descriptions may also be used to describe the difficulty of the terrain on a hike:

On Trail: The trip is mainly on an improved trail in reasonable conditions. Any portion of the trip not on trail is easy "like trail" conditions. (Class 1)

Off Trail: Below Treeline (about 11,600 feet in Colorado), the trip may involve bushwhacking or travel through forested terrain. Above Treeline, the trip may cross open tundra or involve Class 2 hiking under the Yosemite Decimal System: *i.e.*, moving on or around small boulders where the use of hands may be necessary, but only to maintain balance. No special hiking or climbing skills are required. Exposure is usually minimal or nonexistent.

Scrambling: The trip involves Class 3 climbing: *i.e.*, climbing that is relatively easy with plenty of handholds. Although a rope is rarely required, Class 3 climbing may be intimidating for less experienced mountaineers. Always consider bringing and wearing a climbing helmet to ensure your own safety.

Semi-technical: The trip involves Class 4 climbing: *i.e.*, within the realm of technical rock climbing, but with plenty of handholds. Some people will desire a rope, but usually just for protection on the descent. Participants must wear climbing helmets.

Technical Climbing Classifications

CMC trip leaders usually classify the difficulty of technical climbing trips according to the standard Yosemite Decimal System (e.g., a "5.9 Climb").

Backpacking Trip Classifications

- **Easy:** Up to 5 miles or 1,000 feet elevation gain per day. The trip is on trail.
- **Moderate:** Up to 5 - 10 miles or 1,000 - 2,000 feet elevation gain per day. May have some off trail.
- **Challenging:** 10-15 miles or more than 2,000 feet elevation gain per day. May have some off trail.
- **Difficult:** Over 15 miles or over 2,500 feet elevation gain per day. The trip is physically demanding and may involve off trail travel and/or steep slopes or rock.

Snowshoe Trip Classifications

- **Easy:** Up to 5 miles round trip and 600 feet elevation gain.
- **Moderate:** Up to 8 miles round trip or 600 - 1,200 feet elevation gain.
- **Challenging:** Over 8 miles round trip or 1,200 feet elevation gain.

Nordic Ski Tour Classifications

Ski tours typically use the following classifications. If you are unsure whether your skiing abilities (especially turning and stopping skills) are suitable for a trip, please contact the trip leader.

- **Easy:** 1 to 8 miles round trip or 600 - 800 feet elevation gain.
- **Moderate:** 8 to 12 miles round trip or 800 - 1,500 feet elevation gain.
- **Challenging:** 12 to 15 miles round trip or 1,500 – 1,800 feet elevation gain.
- **Difficult:** 15 to 20 miles round trip or 1,800 – 2,500 feet elevation gain.

Downhill Skiing Classifications

- **Easy:** Skier should be able to ski proficiently on beginner slopes at downhill ski areas. Skier can make a solid stem turn and traverse via kick turns off-trail on untracked slopes.
- **Moderate:** Meet Easy requirements and be able to ski moderate terrain (slopes of up to 25 degrees with trees and other obstacles) at a reasonable speed without frequent falls.
- **Challenging:** Meet Moderate requirements and be able to ski difficult terrain (slopes steeper than 25 degrees) , make linked turns in difficult terrain and ski treed slopes, gullies and couloirs.
- **Difficult:** Meet Challenging requirements and have considerable experience in route finding and trail breaking. Experience with winter camping, completed Basic Mountaineering School and avalanche training.

Signing Up For Trips

Trips can all be found online at cmc.org by logging into your account. For NOCO Group specific trips/events/activities, on the cmc.org home page click on “More” on the right in the menu bar at the

top of the page next to Members & Volunteers. Then click on the “+” for Groups and Sections -> Front Range Groups. Next on the left navigation select “Northern Colorado” -> Calendar of Events, Trips and Courses. Click on the title of the trip/event you are interested in.

For a list of all trips available for CMC members, on the home page click on “Education & Adventure” in the top navigation. Select “Find Trips” in the dropdown. This will provide a list of all scheduled trips/schools/events. You can narrow down your selection by using the various filters in the left navigation or by typing in your inquiry in the Search box.

To get a calendar view of all CMC trips, events and courses, on the home page click on “Education & Adventure” in the top navigation. Select “CMC Event and Activity Calendar” in the dropdown. This will display a monthly calendar of all trips, events, activities throughout the state.

The trip descriptions usually describe something about the hike, the meeting time and place, difficulty, distance, elevation and the route. If you have questions, please contact the trip leader.

NOTE: Trips rosters fill up fast. Don’t get discouraged. Go ahead and sign up for the trip to get on the waitlist anyway. Most often there are cancellations and you will be notified if you are added to the active roster.

We encourage you to sign up to get email notifications for when a new trip is added. This way you will have a chance to sign up when the trip is scheduled. You can select to get notified as soon as the trip is added (note this will send you a lot of emails to manage depending on the type of trips you select you are interested in seeing) or to get a daily or weekly digest of all the trips added. We suggest you start with the daily digest to see how the process works. You can update and change your selection any time. Click [here](#) to get to the Member Resources page and then click on the “Set up Email and Notification Preferences” link in the box on the right to get a step by step tutorial for how to set up your notification preference.

Member Responsibilities

Please be sure that you are physically and mentally prepared for your trip. Review trip description carefully, paying attention to anticipated trip distances, elevation gain, and necessary skills. If you have any questions, contact the trip leader. We understand things come up so be sure to cancel yourself off the trip as many trips have waitlists so that others can join. If you need to cancel the night before or the morning of the trip be sure to contact the trip leader to let them know.

If you have a medical condition that could cause problems during a trip (for example, allergic reaction to bee stings or epilepsy, etc.), please advise the trip leader so that he or she will be better able to help if trouble arises. If you need special first aid care for a possible personal medical condition (such as special medications), please take them along in your personal first aid gear and advise your trip leader.

VERY IMPORTANT!: Keep your personal and emergency information up to date on the CMC website. Trip leaders can and do use this information.

Prohibited Items

Firearms, radios, personal receivers; not including two-way transmitters used only for emergencies, and alcoholic beverages are prohibited on all CMC trips. Please limit cell phone use other than as your navigation device out of consideration for your fellow hikers. Campfires are strongly discouraged except in emergency situations. Dogs are usually not allowed on trips unless it's a dog-friendly trip; check with the leader.

What to Take On A CMC Trip

In the most basic terms, you take with you what will keep you **SAFE** and comfortable. Specifics depend on the type of trip – if in doubt of required gear, contact the trip leader. The "10 Essentials" are always recommended. Key clothing layers include:

- *Base or Wicking* – transports moisture away from skin (silk, wool, polyester)
- *Insulating* – traps and holds warmer air near skin (poly, wool, down)
- *Shell* – protects against wind, snow, rain (Gore Tex, etc.)

Applies to hands, feet, and head too, and doubling up layers is fine, but something from each of these groups is necessary; and **no cotton** (except for the invaluable bandanna) for Mountain activities. Cotton is very appropriate for outings in a desert environment.

Ten Essentials

- **Navigation systems** (map and compass)
- **Sun protection** (sunscreen, hat, sunglasses or goggles, lip balm, etc.)
- **Insulation** (extra layers for body core, head, hands, feet, sit pad – warm and dry)
- **Illumination** (headlamp with extra batteries or charger)
- **First Aid** (basic personal kit)
- **Fire** (storm proof matches, lighter, fire starter)
- **Repair kit & tools** (duct tape, knife, multipurpose tool – trip specific)
- **Nutrition** (food, snacks - beyond what is planned for trip)
- **Hydration** (water – 2 liters/day plus extra or method of obtaining/purifying more)
- **Emergency shelter** (bivy sack, reflective tarp, etc – warm and dry)

Extra Items: Signaling device, cell phone, emergency transmitter (i.e. InReach), whistle, mirror, tissue, toilet paper, hand wipes, plastic bag for trash, avalanche probe, beacon, shovel if going into avalanche terrain – and training!!

Leave No Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly (Pack out your toilet paper!!)
- Leave What You Find (Except Trash!!)
- Minimize Campfire Impact (Do not make NEW Fire Rings)

- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Others

Trail Etiquette

- Stay on established trails
- Yield to horses (stay on downhill side) and uphill hikers
- Don't let branches swing back and hit the hiker behind you

Northern Colorado Group Education

The Northern Colorado Group offers a variety of education opportunities, fee based and free, announced in the weekly *NOCO CMC Update* email notification and online. Other CMC groups also offer education available to you. A list of the current Schools and Courses can be found [here](#). Courses offered in Northern Colorado include:

- Anchor Clinic
- AIARE Level 1
- Alpine Scrambling Course
- Avalanche Terrain Avoidance
- Basic Mountaineering School
- Backcountry Incident Management School
- Backcountry Ski, Snowshoe
- Leadership Training
- Mountain Hiking Course
- Navigation Clinic
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA)
- Winter Camping School

MARK YOUR CALENDAR.... MOUNTAIN HIKING COURSE. Mountain Hiking Course is the place to start for new members regardless of your experience. This course is the pre-req to other courses in the program. **This course will be offered in the spring of 2026 on the following dates:**

Lectures - Mondays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6

Field Days - Saturdays, March 14, 21, 28, April 4, 11

Topics include 10 Essentials, Navigation (map and compass), Emergency Situation Process, Routes and Route Finding, Leave No Trace, Trip Planning, Weather, Snow Travel and much more. You will be notified when the registration for this course opens.

Registration will open mid January 2026

Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue Card **Why Buy a Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue (CORSAR) Card?**

Colorado residents and visitors are well served by dedicated volunteer search and rescue teams, but

mission costs are often in the thousands of dollars. By purchasing a CORSAR card you are contributing to the Search and Rescue Fund, which will reimburse these teams for costs incurred in your search and rescue. Funds remaining at the end of the year are used to help pay for training and equipment for these teams. Anyone with a current hunting/fishing license, or boat, snowmobile, ATV registration is already covered by the fund.

The CORSAR Card Is Not Insurance

The card is not insurance and does not reimburse individuals nor does it pay for medical transport. Medical transport includes helicopter flights or ground ambulance. If aircraft are used as a search vehicle, those costs are reimbursed by the fund. If the aircraft becomes a medical transport due to a medical emergency, the medical portion of the transport is not covered.

Purchase the Card

CORSAR cards are available for \$5 for one year and \$20 for five years, and can be purchased at over 300 sports and gear retailers in the state or online at

https://www.cpwshop.com/purchaseprivilege.page?_PageParam.displayCategoryId=251527462

CMC Special Interests Sections and Age Based Opportunities

Age Based Sections

- Bobcats - All ages (challenging hikes)
- Trailblazers - 18 - 40 years
- Rocky Mountain Over The Hill Gang - 55+ years

Interest Based

- BPX Backpacking
- Photography
- Trail Running
- Fly Fishing
- Mountain Biking

Goal Setting

- Ascending Hikes - improve personal hiking speed, strength and stamina
- Colorado High Peaks - goals of summiting 13ers, 14ers and beyond
- Trail Running

Useful Links

NOAA weather <http://www.weather.gov>

CO Avalanche information <http://avalanche.state.co.us>

CDOT travel information <http://www.cotrip.org>

Leave No Trace <http://lnt.org>

CO SNOTEL

<https://wcc.sc.egov.usda.gov/nwcc/yearcount?network=sntl&counttype=statelist&state=co>

CO 14er peaks <http://14ers.com>

10th Mtn. Div. Huts <http://www.huts.org>

Final Thoughts

So, whether you enjoy skiing or rock/ice climbing, hiking/snowshoeing, backpacking or mountain biking in the winter, spring, summer or fall, CMC is a club with which to explore, learn and grow. You can expand your knowledge and learn new skills (via top-notch schools, seminars, and events). Get involved to help to protect Colorado's wild lands as well as explore backcountry recreation experiences. Plus you have the opportunity to attend special events including film festivals, book club, adventure speakers, and much more.

So go out and have some fun! Remember to make time for what matters. Your goal should be to push yourself past the limits of your experiences, yet stay within the limits of your abilities. That's how you get the most enjoyment. Take advantage of the trip opportunities (including education) to increase your abilities. Dare to take risks but be safe and always be prepared!

Notes: