



Exploring Wetherill Mesa



Long House Loop paved trail

Wetherill Mesa: A Different Experience

Welcome to the “quieter side” of Mesa Verde National Park. Wetherill Mesa offers easy bicycle rides and short hiking trails to archeological sites, as well as expansive views and scenic overlooks. The 5-mile (8 km) Long House Loop is open for hiking and bicycle riding, as well as leashed pets, and is wheelchair accessible. This is an ideal area for families who want to get out of the car to explore Mesa Verde!

Early and late season activities on Wetherill Mesa include hiking most of the trails or riding your bicycle on the Long House Loop paved trail. (*Long House and Step House trails are closed in early and late season.*) Bring your bicycle and bike along the Long House Loop paved trail and the Badger House Community graveled/paved trail. Please use the bike racks available at the site shelters before entering. Bike racks are also available along the Long House Loop near overlooks and trailheads so you can park your bike and hike to locations such as Kodak House and Long House overlooks. Off-trail hiking, riding bicycles on trails not marked for bikes, and entering closed sites are prohibited.

Wetherill Mesa Road

Open May 1 (or when road conditions permit) to October 31 (or when closed by weather/road conditions). Full staffing, services, and access to all sites available May 22 to September 7.



View of Montezuma Valley from Wetherill Mesa Road

The Wetherill Mesa Road begins at milepost 15 along the main park road near the Far View Area. This 12-mile (19 km) drive is narrow, steep, and winding, following the northern and western boundary of the park, offering spectacular views of the surrounding valleys. It is not suitable for large RVs or bicycles. Vehicles must be less than 25 feet long to drive this road. Vehicles over 8,000 lbs GVW are prohibited.

Allow 45 minutes to one hour for this drive round-trip. Pull-outs are located in many locations; please use them to allow faster drivers to pass.

The Wetherill Mesa Road is open at 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide, Fall 2015



Mileages

Long House Loop Paved Trail	5 mile loop
Badger House Community, loop	
From trailhead at restrooms	1 mile round-trip
From kiosk, via trail	2.25 miles round-trip
Nordenskiöld Site #16 trail from trailhead	1 mile round-trip
Long House and Kodak House Overlook trails	0.15 mile round-trip

From Kiosk to:

Badger House Community (trailhead at restrooms)	
via trail	0.6 mile one-way
via road	1.25 miles one-way
Nordenskiöld Site #16 Overlook	2.0 miles round-trip

From Kiosk to:

Long House Overlook trailhead, via road	1.5 miles one-way
Kodak House Overlook trailhead, via road	2.25 miles one-way

From Kodak House Overlook trailhead to:

Badger House Community restrooms	
via road, east side	1.55 miles, one-way



Please follow Leave No Trace principles. Stay on trails, and pack out your trash.

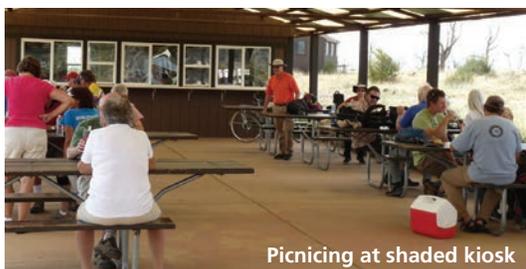


Bicyclists, you are sharing the trails with pedestrians. Please yield to pedestrians.

Things to Do



Bike rack at trailhead



Picnicing at shaded kiosk



Biking the Long House Loop

- With your bicycles, ride the **Long House Loop** (about five miles [8 km] round-trip). Restrooms are located at the mid-point. Bike racks are provided at trailheads; we recommend you lock your bikes.
- Hike or ride your bicycle to the trailhead for **Kodak House overlook** (about 2.25 miles [3.6 km] on the Long House Loop or about two miles [3.2 km] by trail and Long House Loop). Park your bikes at the trailhead, then take a short 0.15 mile (0.24 km) walk to the overlook.
- Have a picnic at one of the shaded tables located near the kiosk, or along the Long House Loop whenever you're ready. Remember: food and drinks other than water are not permitted in any of the archeological sites. Crumbs attract burrowing animals which destroy archeological information. Please pack out all trash.
- Hike or ride your bicycle to the trailhead for **Long House overlook** (about 1.5 miles [2.4 km] on the Long House Loop or about 1.25 miles [2.0 km] by trail and Long House Loop). Park your bikes at the trailhead, then take a short 0.15 mile (0.24 km) walk to the overlook for views of the site.
- From September 8 to 19, take a hike and explore **Step House**, an early pithouse and late masonry pueblo site. Allow about one hour for the 100-foot (30 m) descent and ascent on a winding path. Total walking distance is about one mile (1.6 km). Trail begins near the kiosk. Open 9:45 am to 4:00 pm. *Closes for the season on September 20.*

Trails

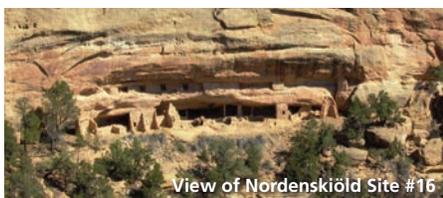


Sheltered archeological site

Badger House Community

This trail begins at the kiosk and heads south, gently dropping in elevation. After passing the junction to Nordenskiöld Site #16 trail and crossing the Long House Loop, the trail winds through four mesa top archeological sites. Your walk through this area is a journey through 600 years of prehistory. Interpretive signs explain the various sites.

Round-trip from kiosk via trail is 2.25 miles (3.6 km); elevation change is about 130 feet (40 m).



View of Nordenskiöld Site #16

Nordenskiöld Site #16

This easy trail leads to an overlook of the Nordenskiöld Site #16 cliff dwelling. Guided by members of the Wetherill family, Gustav Norenskiöld photographed and documented many archeological sites and eventually concluded that the modern Hopi and the ancient Mesa Verde inhabitants were closely related.

Round-trip from kiosk is 2.0 miles (3.2 km); elevation change is about 87 feet (27 m).

Ranger-led Tour



Ranger and visitors on Long House tour

Long House

You must join a ranger-guided hike to visit Long House. Tickets cost \$4.00 per person at the Visitor and Research Center. Long House is a large cliff dwelling that includes 150 rooms and 21 kivas. The two-hour tour involves hiking 2.25 miles (3.6 km) round-trip with ladders, stairs, and a 130 feet (40 m) elevation gain. The tour ends at the Long House trailhead, giving you the option of exploring more of Wetherill Mesa on your own. Tour begins at the kiosk.

September 8 to September 19

Tours offered 9:30 am and 2:00 pm

September 20: Closed for the season

Protect Yourself, Protect the Park

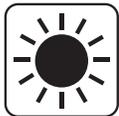
Wetherill Mesa is remote, so be prepared and plan ahead for your safety and comfort. There are *no services* at Wetherill Mesa in the early or late seasons, and cell service is patchy; it is most likely to connect in locations near overlooks. Call 911 in an emergency.

Wetherill Mesa is a day-use only area. The gate across the Wetherill Mesa Road at Far View will generally be opened for the day about 8:00 am and closed at 6:00 pm. Be sure to allow at least 30 minutes of driving time to exit the gate at Far View by 6:00 pm.

To help you have a safe and enjoyable visit, you are responsible for knowing and following park rules.



- There are *no services* at Wetherill Mesa in the early or late seasons. Take all water, snacks, clothing, bike locks, and bike-repair supplies needed for the day. Restrooms or porta-potties will be available at the parking lot.



- Spring weather can change dramatically during the day. Carry extra supplies and pack layers of warm clothing. Strong cold wind is common in spring. Fall weather is often more stable, but cold storms can approach quickly.
- If thunderheads are building, watch the sky. Move away from overlooks and rim rock when lightning threatens. Your car is the safest place on Wetherill Mesa to be in a thunderstorm.



- Bicycles are welcome on the Long House Loop and other marked trails, including the Badger House Community trail. *You must walk (do not ride) your bikes within the archeological site shelters.* Some trails are open for bicycles, while others are for pedestrians only. Please check signs at trailheads before taking your bicycle on any other trail. Bike racks are provided throughout Wetherill Mesa, and at all trailheads; we recommend you lock your bikes.
- Off-trail hiking, riding your bicycle off a permitted trail, and entering closed sites or areas is prohibited.



- Pets must be on a leash at all times. Pet friendly trails will be marked, and include the Long House Loop and Nordenskiold Site #16 trails. Pets are not allowed in the restrooms or in the sales and food service areas of the Wetherill Mesa Information kiosk. Please clean up after your pet. A number of pet-waste stations are available along the trails.



- All archeological sites and artifacts are protected at Mesa Verde. Do not touch, sit, stand, or lean on walls, or disturb or move stones or artifacts. Entering closed sites, collecting artifacts or disturbing archeological sites is illegal. Collecting plants, stones or any natural item is also illegal. Mesa Verde National Park is protected as a legacy for future generations; please do your part.
- Do not eat or smoke in any of the archeological sites.



- Pack out all your trash.

Please report emergencies or illegal activity by contacting a staff member on site, or calling (970) 529-4622.