



Aiken Canyon

Colorado State Natural Area

What to Expect

Aiken Canyon is named after Charles Aiken, one of the first ornithologists to survey Colorado in the early 1870s. The canyon supports a diversity of intact vegetation communities nestled between red-rock spires and outcrops. Pinyon pine, juniper, and gambel oaks surround lush meadows of native grasses. Cool, moist forests of Douglas fir shade riparian areas which provide a home to a host of wildlife, including over 100 documented species of birds and the rare Colorado checkered whiptail. Several sensitive bird species can be observed here including golden eagle and prairie falcon. The site is an [Audubon-designated Important Bird Area](#), as well as a [Colorado Watchable Wildlife Site](#).



Hikers within Aiken Canyon.



View from the Overlook Trail.

About the Natural Area

Location: El Paso County, 16 miles south of Colorado Springs

Landowner: Colorado State Land Board, managed by The Nature Conservancy

Size: 1080 acres

Address: 32610 Colorado 12, Trinidad, CO 81082. [Google maps link to Aiken Canyon.](#)

Know Before You Go

There is a moderate four-mile loop nature trail meandering through creeks and sandstone formations with interpretive signage that makes the natural area come to life. The Nature Conservancy asks that you leave pets at home. This natural area has a picnic shelter, beautiful trails, and restrooms. The preserve is open year-round, dawn to dusk daily. You may encounter rocky areas with cactus and rattlesnakes. Check [TNC's website on the Aiken Canyon Preserve](#) for up to date regulations before you visit.



Colorado checkered whiptail.

For more information about the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) visit [CNAP's website.](#)