



Zapata Falls

Colorado State Natural Area

What to Expect

Zapata Falls is a spectacular waterfall carved by an enormous glacier during the last ice age. As the glacier receded, the powerful force of the meltwater cut a notch in the rock, resulting in the formation of a dramatically carved gorge. The 25-foot falls are also prime habitat for the declining black swift, an elusive bird that exclusively nests behind waterfalls on the sheltered, near vertical cliffs.



Zapata Falls



Visitors hiking at Zapata Falls

About the Natural Area

Location: Alamosa County, 20 miles northeast of Alamosa

Landowner: State Land Board, managed by Colorado Parks & Wildlife

Natural Area Size: 628 acres

Address: Colorado 81146. [Google maps link to Zapata Falls Trail.](#)

Know Before You Go

Visitors can embark on a short, ½ mile, scenic hike to view the falls. Wade across the cold Zapata Creek to get up close to the waterfall. Exercise caution on the slippery rocks and in the creek, as water may be deep and swift. This is a very popular trail, so come early to get parking and expect to share the falls with other people! The falls freeze over in the winter to form a giant ice sculpture. The nearby Zapata Falls Campground (managed by the BLM) provides first come, first serve camping. Please pack out all trash and stay on trail.



Zapata Creek

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