

Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide, 2017

April 30 to October 31, 2017

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Mesa Verde National Park



Exploring Wetherill Mesa



Kodak House Overlook

Wetherill Mesa: A Different Experience

Welcome to the “quieter side” of Mesa Verde. Wetherill Mesa offers a number of opportunities, depending on the season. Use this visitor guide to discover what is available at the time of your visit. Wetherill Mesa has easy bicycle rides and a variety of hiking trails to archeological sites, as well as expansive views and scenic overlooks. Some trails are open for bicycles, while others are for pedestrians only. Please check signs at trailheads before taking your bike or pet on any trail. Between May 13 to October 22, consider visiting Step House or taking a ranger-guided tour of Long House. This is an ideal area for families who want to get out of the car to explore Mesa Verde!

Getting There - The Wetherill Mesa Road



Overlook along the Wetherill Mesa Road

The Wetherill Mesa Road begins at milepost 15 along the main park road in the Far View Area. The 12-mile (19 km) road is narrow, steep, and winding, 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 about 45 minutes to drive the Wetherill Mesa Road. There are several over-looks and pullouts available for slower traffic to use so others may pass.

Open April 30 (or when road conditions permit) to October 31 (or when closed by weather/road conditions).

April 30 to May 19 and September 17 to October 31	8:00 am to 6:00 pm
May 20 to September 16	8:00 am to 7:00 pm

Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk (Open May 13 to October 22)



Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk

The Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk is located near the parking area at the end of the Wetherill Mesa Road. Rangers are available to help you plan your visit. The paved Long House Loop begins at the kiosk and leads to several paved and unpaved trails you can hike or bicycle. See inside for details.

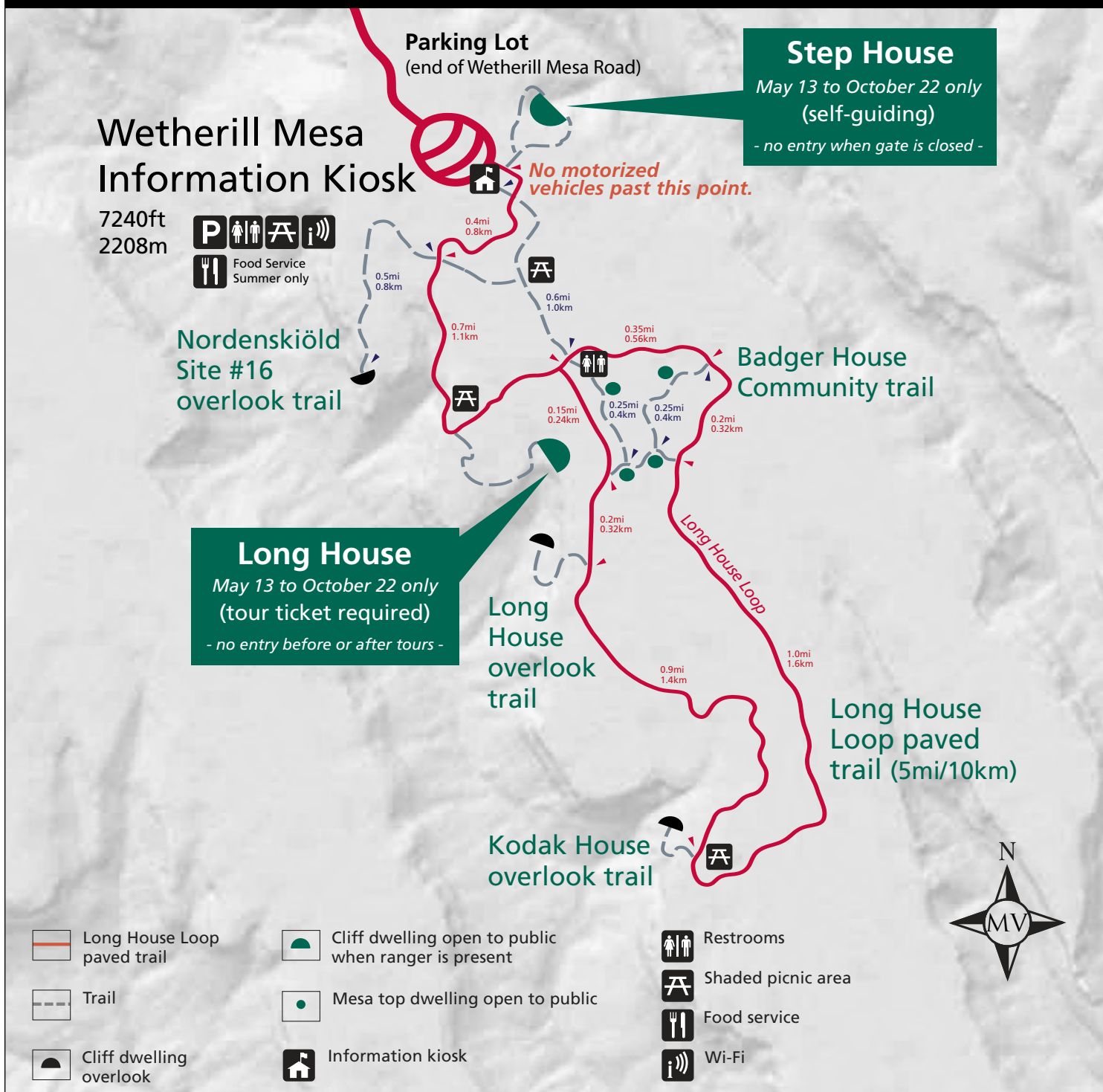
May 13 to May 19 and September 17 to October 22

The kiosk is open daily, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Picnic tables, restrooms, and sales area are all located nearby.

May 20 to September 16

The kiosk is open daily, 9:00 am to 6:30 pm. Picnic tables, restrooms, and sales area are located nearby. A snack service is available 9:00 am to 4:00 pm through September 6.

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Mileages

Long House Loop paved trail	5 mile loop
Badger House Community trail	
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
Step House	1 mile round-trip loop
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



- The 5-mile (8 km) **Long House Loop** (paved) is great for hiking or bicycle riding, as well as leashed pets, and is wheelchair accessible. Bike racks are provided at trailheads; we recommend you wear helmets and lock your bikes.



- Hike or ride your bicycle to the trailhead for the **Kodak House overlook** (about 2.25 miles [3.6 km] from kiosk on the Long House Loop) or **Long House overlook** (about 1.5 miles [2.4 km] from kiosk on the Long House Loop). Park your bikes at the trailheads, then take short 0.15 mile (0.24 km) walks to the overlooks.



- 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.



- The **Badger House Community 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, with signs explaining each site. Round-trip from kiosk via trail is about 2.25 miles (3.6 km).



- The **Nordenskiöld Site #16 Trail** leads to an overlook of the Nordenskiöld Site #16 cliff dwelling. Guided by members of the Wetherill family, Gustav Nordenskiöld 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 two miles (3.2 km); elevation change is about 87 feet (27 m).

Step House - Self Guided



Take a hike and explore Step House. In this unusual site, you will see two separate construction periods in the same alcove: early Basketmaker pithouses built in the AD 620s, and a masonry pueblo dating to AD 1226.

Allow 45 minutes to 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). The loop trail begins near the kiosk. A ranger is available for questions.

May 13 to May 19

9:15 am to 4:00 pm

May 20 to September 16

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

September 17 to October 22

9:15 am to 4:00 pm

October 23: Closed for season

Long House - Ranger Guided



You must join a ranger-guided hike to visit Long House. Tickets cost \$5.00 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 steep switchbacks, stairs, and two 15-foot (4.6 m) ladders in the site. 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.

May 13 to May 19

9:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 2:00 pm

May 20 to September 16

9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm

September 17 to October 22

9:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 2:00 pm

October 23: Closed for season

Protect Yourself, Protect the Park

Wetherill Mesa is remote, so be prepared and plan ahead for your safety and comfort. *Services are limited* at Wetherill Mesa and cell service is patchy. You are more likely to get a connection in locations near overlooks. Call 911 or find a ranger in an emergency.

Wetherill Mesa is a day-use only area. The gate across the Wetherill Mesa Road at Far View is open 8:00 am to 6:00 pm from April 30 to May 19 and September 17 to October 31. From May 20 to September 16 it is open until 7:00 pm. Be sure to allow at least 30 minutes of driving time to exit the gate.

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



- *Services are limited at Wetherill Mesa* and vary based on the time of year. Take water, snacks, clothing, bike locks, and bike repair supplies needed for the day. Restrooms and picnic tables are available. Water is available in the late spring, summer, and early fall. A snack shop is open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, May 25 to September 6.



- **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. **Summer weather** can be hot and the climate is dry. Carry and drink plenty of water, and ensure you have extra supplies such as a hat, sunscreen, and raingear. Afternoon thunderstorms are common in the mid to late summer months and 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. *Please walk your bikes when you enter an archeological site shelter; bike racks are also available.* Some trails are open for bicycles, while others are for pedestrians only. 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 and wear helmets.
- 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 Nordenskiöld 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, including pet waste.

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