

SFR Directions from GJ airport over Grand Mesa to SFR

This recommended route from Grand Junction airport is an interesting way to capture the essence of the Western Slope of Colorado, coupled with the alpine beauty of the Grand Mesa, the highest flat top mountain in America (10,839 ft). The North Fork Valley, nestled up against the West Elk Range of the Rockies (where our ranch is located), is Colorado's "Horn of Plenty", an area of organic farms, cattle ranches, orchards and vineyards. It is a beautiful, relaxing 2 ½ - 3 hour drive to the ranch. Only 45 minutes – 1 hour longer than the highway route via Delta, but REALLY worth it.

- Leave airport, following signs to I-70 EAST
- Take I-70 EAST to Exit 42 Palisade
- Go RIGHT 3/10 mile, on Elberta Ave, to First St. (You'll pass 2 or 3 farm stands. Herman's Produce is open on Sundays, and has fruit fresh from the nearby orchards you could see from the highway on the way to Palisade)
- Go left on First St 4/10 mile to Main St.
- Turn RIGHT over RR tracks into center of Palisade

TIME FOR LUNCH ? The Palisade Café, on 3rd St, between Main & Kluge, is open lunch on Sundays

- Leave town by turning LEFT on E 3rd St.
- Drive 2 miles out of town on winding road flanked by RR tracks on left and vineyards and Colorado River on right
- Just after bridge over Colorado River you will have gone 2 miles.
- Continue on a couple hundred yards and get back on I-70 East
- Go 3 miles to exit 49

NOW YOU BEGIN A VERY SCENIC DRIVE

- Follow Rt 65 for 20 miles, as it winds through the river canyon, with it's scenic rock formations, to the village of Mesa, passing Colbran turn-off

TIME FOR LUNCH? BLINK COFFEE SHOP & RESTAURANT serves good sandwiches and pastries.

- Set your odometer to zero and continue up the hill through town, passing farms and ranches as you begin the 38 mile drive over the Grand Mesa. At about 7.5 miles you will pass the entrance to Powderhorn ski area, which is pretty much closed in the summer.
- There are 2 places to pull off the road for spectacular views, at approx 12 miles and 17 miles
- Along the way you will pass a road on the right to "Lands End", If you have another hour or so to spare, it is a beautiful, dramatic detour. Otherwise continue on to the Grand Mesa visitors center (worth a stop)
- As you leave the Grand Mesa National Forest and begin the descent down the East side of Grand Mesa, another "grand" view unfolds, with the fertile North Fork Valley in the foreground, and the West Elk range of the Rocky Mountains in

the distance (where SFR is nestled)

- At 38.5 miles (from Mesa) you come to the traffic light at Main St in the middle of the town of Cedaredge, one of the primary orchard/fruit packing towns in Colorado.
- Go through light a few hundred yards to the Apple Shed (a nice home furnishings store) on right.
- Continue on Grand Mesa Drive about 5 mi to the Eckert crossroads at North Rd. On SW corner is Drost's Chocolate and Surface Creek Winery's tasting room and gallery (both worth a visit)

- Set odometer back to zero and turn left on North Rd.
- Drive through farmland mixed with barren mesas, passing Fruit Growers Reservoir and a treasured wetland on right, full of dozens of bird species.
- At 2.9 miles road forks – bear right
- Road winds down through a gully and climbs back up onto top of Redlands Mesa.
- Road straightens out - through stop sign at Payne. Stay on North Rd as it makes hard left and hard right, and then through lush farms and ranches, past Highwire Buffalo and Elk Ranch, straight east towards the mountains.
- At about 11 miles North Rd curves down off the top of Redlands Mesa and tees into 3100 Rd.
- Go right on 3100 Rd, ½ mile on left is Leroux Creek Inn and vineyards, a charming place with a tasting room and good wines
- At about 2 miles turn left on L Rd, and stay on it as it descends into the North Fork Valley, dead ending into Rt 92.
- Turn left on Rt 92 and drive 1.5 miles down into Hotchkiss
- Go through Hotchkiss bearing right and staying on Rt 92 as it exits the East end of town in the direction of Crawford (about 10 miles)
- Highway 92 will bring you right into Crawford. As you curve right in front of the general store, turn left between the Methodist Church and the post office onto Dogwood Ave. Set odometer to zero and continue past the volunteer fire house and out of town.
- About 2.3 miles out of town turn right onto Needle Rock Road. You're now about 4 miles from the ranch.
- Follow this dirt road as it meanders past a large volcanic outcropping known as Needle Rock into the Smith Fork River Valley, with the river down below to the right.
- After about 3 miles you will cross into the Gunnison National Forest, just past an oversized unfinished log structure on the right.
- 3/10 mile further and you'll cross the cattle guard entrance to SFR.
- Another 6/10 mile and you're at the ranch compound.
WELCOME TO SMITH FORK RANCH! Guest parking is on your left.