

✈️ Wrapping Up Durango!

Colleen Leppert, event host



What a trip! We were fortunate to have spectacular weather all weekend for our Durango Fly-In, which brought together **10 planes and 23 participants** for a fun-filled mountain getaway. The adventure began Friday morning with arrivals at **Animas Airpark**, nestled in the scenic Animas Valley.

After touching down and regrouping, we headed into **downtown Durango** to kick things off. The group split up for the afternoon: half opted for an **e-bike ride and picnic**, while the rest took



time to explore the town's shops, galleries, and restaurants. The e-bike crew enjoyed a scenic ride up to **Fort Lewis College**, perched on a mesa with panoramic views of Durango and the surrounding San Juan Mountains. After a relaxed **picnic lunch**, they cruised back along the **Animas River Trail**, soaking up the sunshine and river views.



Friday evening began with our **traditional happy hour at the hotel**, followed by a picturesque drive out to the **Bar D Chuckwagon Supper Show**. We shared a hearty cowboy dinner and western entertainment under a clear Colorado sky—an all-around hit!

Saturday: Mining, Mountains & Million Dollar Views

On Saturday, we ventured high into the mountains, taking the breathtaking **Million Dollar**



Highway from Durango to Silverton. Along the way, we crossed **Coal Bank Pass (10,640 ft)** and **Molas Pass (10,910 ft)**, marveling at the alpine vistas and springtime snow still clinging to the peaks. This is the same route ridden just a week earlier by thousands of cyclists in the legendary **Iron Horse Bicycle Classic**, where riders race the historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

Once in **Silverton**, we toured the **Old Hundred Gold Mine**, a must-see for anyone interested in Colorado's rich

mining history. After donning hard hats and jackets, we boarded a 1940s-era mine train that carried us **1,500 feet into Galena Mountain**. Our guide—a lifelong miner—offered vivid stories and live demonstrations of **1930s drilling equipment, mucking machines, and how dynamite was used in hard-rock mining.**

The tour was educational, immersive, and left us with a deeper appreciation for the grit of early Colorado miners.

We followed the tour with lunch at **Handlebars Food & Saloon**, known for its Western charm and satisfying fare. Some of the group continued on to explore the nearby **Mayflower Mill**, built in **1929**, which once processed ore to extract gold, silver, lead, zinc, and copper. Our guide there was another mining veteran with an equally colorful personality, adding flavor to the fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the milling process.



🍹 Finishing up in Style

Back in Durango, a few members caught part of the town's festive **River Days celebration**, while others relaxed before our final group gathering. We reunited for a lively **happy hour at Carver Brewing Co.**, followed by a delicious dinner at **Chimayo Stone Fired Kitchen**.

Thanks to everyone who joined us for an unforgettable weekend in the San Juans! Between the scenic flights, rich history, good company, and perfect weather, it was a fly-in to remember. Looking forward to the next adventure!

