

Travel

Miscommunication in the era of coronavirus. K3



Family-friendly Winter Park has more than 3,000 acres of skiable terrain, 3,000 feet of vertical rise and seven territories “for every skill level.” Photos by Laura DeMarco, The Plain Dealer

The twists and turns of a Colorado ski vacation

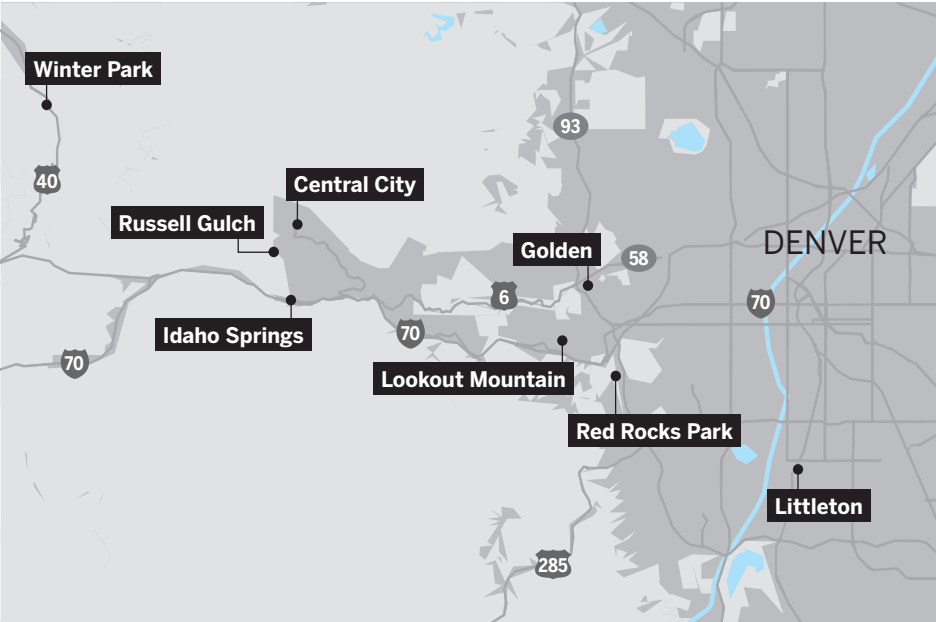
Laura DeMarco ldemarco@plaind.com

IDAHO SPRINGS, COLORADO — Getting stuck on top of a mountain is not where I expected to be on my recent weekend trip to Colorado. But that’s exactly where I, my daughter, brother, aunt and cousin found ourselves, surrounded by 4 feet of snow on either side of the Toyota 4Runner.

Technically, we were not stuck. It was the Jeep and Jeep Cherokee blocking our path that were stuck. My brother, who moved to the Denver area six years ago would not have let that happen: this former Clevelanders has acclimated to the area, and knew better to drive up a mountain ill-prepared. We were traveling from the boutique-and-bakery-lined bohemian mining town of Idaho Springs to the ghost town of Russell Gulch, on a one-lane “partially maintained” mountain road, the day after the area got 18 inches of snow. He had chains on his tires, a car built for off-roading and an emergency kit that included a heavy-duty winch. The well-coiffed tourist from Portland in front of us in the half-buried jeep had none of that — he wasn’t even wearing a winter coat. The father-and-son tourists behind them were equally ill prepared. They, too, had been told that Russell Gulch, one of many ghost towns in the Colorado hills popular with tourists, was worth a visit. Perhaps not on one of the Denver areas’ snowi-

est days of the year, however. We made it to the outskirts of Russell Gulch, at an altitude of 9,000 feet, before deciding go back down the way we came instead of crossing the summit and heading toward our next destination, Central City. Seeing the ruins of the old mine was a fascinating glimpse of American history. And the views of the snow-covered trees and hills as the winter sun began to set were absolutely stunning. It was nice to have something to look at while we tried to figure out our way back. After an hour and a half of trying to dislodge the Jeep, we were at a loss on how to proceed. Enter our savior, in the form of a pajama-pants-and-Monster Energy-hat-wearing mountain man driving a monster truck with a winch that could tow 12,000 bands. After causally setting down his 2-liter Mountain Dew, he made short order our of hauling both Jeeps out of the snow and setting

SEE COLORADO, K2



Advance Local

On the web

For more on Colorado ghost towns: <https://www.uncovercolorado.com/ghost-towns/>
For more on Colorado tourism: <https://www.colorado.com/>



Stuck on our way to Russell Gulch — temporarily.



The Buffalo Bill Museum has a viewfinder to take in the stunning vistas of Lookout Mountain.