



DAY TRIP TO ELKHORN

From Boulder · Jefferson County, Montana



SILVER MINING



Photo: Montanabw, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

STATE PARK; TOWN PRIVATE

Two state-owned halls open to visitors all year; the rest of the town is private, with 12 residents in 2020.

Elkhorn is a short morning from Boulder: two state-owned halls you can walk into, and a lived-in mining town around them that you see from the street. Wikipedia calls the last 11 miles or so graveled county road; we have no dated report on it. FWP lists no water or food, so bring both.

A SAMPLE DAY

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ 9 a.m. | Leave Boulder south on MT 69, then take White Bridge Road, Lower Valley Road and Elkhorn Road up the valley. |
| ☐ 10 a.m. | Park considerably near the halls. Go into Fraternity Hall and up to the second floor. |
| ☐ 10:45 a.m. | Step next door into Gilliam Hall, then read the interpretive signs along the street. |
| ☐ 11:15 a.m. | Walk the public streets past the old houses and cabins and look up to the mine dumps. Don't enter yards or buildings. |
| ☐ Noon | Picnic at the tables by the halls in season, then drive back down to Boulder. |

Coming from Helena? It's about an hour and a half by I-15 and MT 69. Leave by 8:30 a.m. to be there by 10.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **Fraternity Hall.** The false front and balcony face the street. Its 1974 National Register nomination called it "perhaps the most photographed ghost town building in the United States."
- **The two halls together.** Step back across the street to fit Gilliam Hall and Fraternity Hall in one frame.
- **Inside.** The stage and the view down the valley from the upstairs windows. The halls are dim, so expose for the interior.
- **The houses.** Shoot them from the street only. They are private, and some are lived in.
- **Drones.** FWP's page doesn't mention them. Most of the town is private, so ask before you fly.



USGS topographic map, 1950 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	18 mi, about 57 min each way from downtown Boulder. From Helena: 48 mi, about 1 h 30 min.
OPEN	All year, says Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. It lists no daily hours. Fraternity Hall and Gilliam Hall are open to enter; close the doors when you leave.
ADMISSION	Nonresidents pay \$8 per vehicle, or \$4 on foot, by bike or by bus. Montana residents who paid the \$9 parks fee with their vehicle registration pay nothing.
TIME ON SITE	FWP doesn't give one. The park is the two halls and the signs around them.
RESTROOMS	A portable latrine, for seasonal use.
FOOD AND WATER	FWP lists picnic tables for seasonal use and no drinking water. Bring both food and water, and pack out your trash.
PRIVATE LAND	Everything outside the two halls is private, and people live there. Stay on the streets. No camping in or within walking distance of town.
CONTACT	FWP, (406) 577-7894.
WEBSITE	fwp.mt.gov/stateparks/elkhorn

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 46.27472, -111.94583 • 46°16'29"N
111°56'45"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/montana/elkhorn/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.