



Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park
STEVE AND JEANNE BECKLEY
Co-owners of Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park

Background

Steve and Jeanne Beckley are hikers, skiers, and outdoors adventurers. Steve grew up on the Western Slope in Colorado and graduated from the Colorado School of Mines with a BS in Petroleum Engineering. Jeanne was raised in Minnesota and graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, with a BA in Math and Computer Science. Steve began working in the petroleum industry and Jeanne in the information technology industry.



After 16 years in their respective fields, they decided that they wanted to live in a smaller town, wear jeans and hiking boots to work instead of suits, and raise their children in a more laid-back rural atmosphere.

Steve and Jeanne are committed to Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park and Glenwood Springs. Steve was on the Board of Directors of the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association for six years and has been active in the Glenwood Springs Rotary Club. Both have volunteered for community events to enhance Glenwood Springs as a tourist destination.

The State of Colorado awarded the Beckleys the *2001 Governor's Award for Outstanding Community Tourism Initiative* and they were named *Citizens of the Year* for 2002 by the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association. In 2004, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park was named *Business of the Year* by *ColoradoBiz* magazine. Most recently, the Beckleys received the Bosco 2007 Tourism Business of the Year Award and the 2009 Top Brass Award by the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association.

“We are committed to the concept of sustainable tourism; we live it every day. Without that commitment to the environment, our living caves could become just a big hole in the ground, a destination for only one generation. With our continued stewardship we hope that Glenwood Caverns will remain a living, dripping, growing cave system that our sons, our grandchildren, and their grandchildren will be able to learn from and enjoy.”

How Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park Began

An avid caver since childhood, Steve read about the Fairy Caves, an extensive cave system in the top of the Rocky Mountains near Glenwood Springs, in an out-of-print book, *Caves of Colorado*, while he was in college. The Fairy Caves had been open to the public in the late 1800s but had been closed since 1917. In 1982 Steve contacted the owner of the cave to explore development; however, they were unable to agree.

In 1992, Steve and Jeanne put on kneepads and headlamps and for the first time squeezed through Jam Crack, a tiny vertical passage leading into the huge underground rooms now known to tourists as *The Barn* and *King's Row*. Steve persisted for the next sixteen years and in 1998 reached an agreement with the owner under which he would be allowed to develop the property.

After a deal was made with the owner for development, Steve and Jeanne began the substantial improvement projects necessary to allow the public to view this natural wonder. First they graded and graveled a road up to the cave entrance and cleared the historic Fairy Caves of the debris that had collected there for more than 44 years.

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For more information, to schedule an interview or request high-resolution photographs or b-roll, contact Mandy Gauldin at 970-945-5534.

51000 Two Rivers Plaza Road, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
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Because the purpose of development was to make the living cave accessible to the public, and not harm the cave, Steve and Jeanne decided to carve a new tunnel into the mountain that could control temperature and humidity to preserve the formations. Steve and Jeanne installed two airtight doors in the new tunnel. The doors are 50 feet apart so that when visitors enter the airlock, the door closes behind them. With the help of this airlock, the ideal humidity and temperature of the caverns can be maintained, ensuring the continuing growth of the age-old formations.

They also installed temperature and humidity monitors to ensure that the integrity of the ancient formations is maintained. Glenwood Caverns and Historic Fairy Caves, the leading attraction of Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, is now protected, able to continue to grow naturally and remain accessible to the public. Glenwood Caverns was named one of *The 10 Great Places to Go Underground* by *USA Today* as well as being named *Best Family Cave Tour* by *Denver Westword*.

Development of the Adventure Park

In 2003, Steve and Jeanne added the Iron Mountain Tramway, which carries guests from the floor of the Roaring Fork Valley to the top of Iron Mountain, as well as a mountain-top restaurant and Discovery Rock, which includes gemstone sluice box mining and a sand pit fossil dig. Two years later, they introduced the Canyon Flyer, the first alpine coaster in the U.S.; the Swing Shot, which launches riders out over Glenwood Canyon 1,300 feet above the Colorado River; and Doc's Rock, a 32' climbing wall.

Since then, additions have included Demon the mechanical Bull in 2006; a virtual Conestoga wagon ride and bungee trampoline in 2007; Fort WhereAmI giant maze in 2008; Colorado's first 4D Ride Theater, a Laser Tag Arena, the GiddyUp! Western ride, the Mine Shaft Shootin' Gallery and Speleobox cave simulator in 2009; and a new Giant Canyon Swing in 2010.

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