



Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission February 2021 Meeting Minutes

Time: Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 9:30 am-12 pm

Location: Online via Zoom

Attending: Amanda Barker, Jack Placchi, Kelli Hepler, Nathan Boyless, Debra Malone, Chad Schneckenburger, Lenore Bates, Jane Lech, Heidi Pankow, Cherly Glanz, Traci Stoffel, Tony Gurzick, Lindsey Marrow, Andrew Grossmann, Ilana Moir, Rebecca White, Chris Bowles, Cristy Costello, Cassandra Patton

Nathan Boyless called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

November 2020 Commission Minutes

Amanda Barker presented the November 5, 2020, Commission meeting minutes. The motion to approve was from Ilana Moir, seconded by Cheryl Glanz. All in favor, none opposed.

Updates from the Byways on the Road

- **Scenic Highways of Legends:** Debra Malone gave an update they have the first draft of a revised Corridor Management Plan (CMP). The byway applied for National status. They are addressing challenges with retaining board members, realized three elements to focus on: officers working on too much admin, operating funds need to shift from individual memberships, and shift to more significant funds leveraged from counties. Walt Bolton (Executive Director, South Central Council of Governments) joined their committee. The finance committee is exploring sustainable funding options, like a small tax or volunteer tax (example in Chaffee county). Southern Loop for the Front Range will soon be part of a cycling system from Wyoming to New Mexico. Their byway committee built three itineraries up on Colorado.com, CDOT, and local tourism websites.
- **Tracks Across Borders:** Tony shared meetings are starting up again. They need to update their CMP to help apply for grants. They have worked on a storytelling app (OnCell) for the past year, finalizing and launching soon. Their new website is tracksacrossborders.com. COVID is hitting tribes incredibly hard and still on tight lockdown.
- **Top of the Rockies:** Traci shared the group is starting to work on a revised CMP.
- **Flat Tops:** Traci said they are still pursuing funding opportunities and means to get underway with their CMP.
- **Alpine Loop:** Jack gave an update there is increased use on the byway because of COVID. BLM statewide is reporting a 33% increase. An article in 5280 details some of the damage happening. The byway is using messaging from Care for Colorado. They are developing a designated dispersed camping system for the Alpine Loop with campfire rings and designated parking.
- Barb Bowman runs Care for Colorado at the state level, starting to partner with local destinations, a virtual roadshow for partners.

- **Frontier Pathways:** Heidi shared the byways group participated in a CRAFT workshop and will print an updated brochure. They have some funding leftover, plus a generous donation from a byways champion. They are now printing twice as many brochures and focusing on getting the pamphlet into the hands of decision-makers.
- **Peak to Peak:** Cheryl shares the group is not interested in printing materials but haven't heard about TravelStorys, milepost activity, CMP. Cheryl is a board member in Historic Larimer County, hoping to have greater integration for Peak to Peak and Cache la Poudre Byways.
- **Cache la Poudre:** CSU students are going to look at inventories and itineraries. The City is annexing the eastern terminus, and the conversation around billboards is progressing.
- **Dinosaur Diamond:** Kelli let us know a new EV charging station was installed at Dinosaur Journey.
- Chris Bowles shared History Colorado is working with [Factor Earth](#) on a small pilot project about reinvigorating 1990s road markers now in disrepair. They will incorporate a digital experience. Factor Earth already has a pilot project completed at Red Rocks on the Highway of Legends. VR and AR applications can help effectively understand the historic and economic contexts together.

Byways Presentation from the Colorado River Headwaters

- Lindsey Morrow, Director of Grand County Tourism

Lindsey has been with Grand County Tourism as their director for 3.5 years. The byway is looking at the new CMP and Business Plan for the Colorado Rivers Headwaters Byway. In addition, they are in CTO's [CRAFT program](#) to promote the byway and integrate the cultural and heritage backgrounds into the byway's promotion.

Promoting during COVID has helped. There is a "Hidden gems" inventory list that is driving visitor demand. Lindsey also helped the byway get on [Vamonde.com](#) with their own created content about traveling like a local. The website has stickers for businesses included in these itineraries and marketing. The byway wants to pivot to online promotion as an excellent alternative to print material.

New messaging for the byway is to "Roam Responsibly," using positive messaging to imagine what's next for the area after the wildfires. Grand County realized they needed to survey how people come through the county. They are working with Diane Butler with Grand County Economics to track aggregate GPS data within the county, including how people travel the byway.

TravelStorys GPS Opportunity for Byways - Nathan Boyless and Andrew Grossmann

The Byways Commission has an offer from TravelStorys for a project that will not exceed a budget of \$100,000, and if we get underway, incurs a \$2500 annual subscription fee. Nathan and Andrew are doing their due diligence on the details. The next step is a short survey of the byways to determine capacity and gauge interest from individual groups. There are concerns this is too big a scope with byways having such limited staff capacity and funds. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are likely groups that could fund each byways contribution to the project. Could you have a conversation with your local tourism board as something they

could support?

Electrifying the Byways

Lenore Bates gave the update that Matt Mines now has Addison Phillips' position at the Colorado Energy Office (CEO). Andrew Grossman shared the [Charge Ahead Colorado](#) program currently funds installing chargers as a grant: 80% of financing for the energy office with a 20% contribution from the partner. CEO is working with local utilities. Andrew is interested in connecting byways with the Energy office and liaising to find the matching. The May round is the next open round to apply for funds. CEO will promote low-impact travel (internal term) focusing on low-emission and no-emission vehicles.

Education Subcommittee

Nathan Boyless led a conversation about the education subcommittee. Cynthia Neib (La Junta) will help guide the discussion for getting content to students. Michelle Pearson, Jane Leche, and Cheryl Glanz are also committee members. High-level themes are stewardship and outdoor recreation. At the strategic level, consider the byways as the strings of pearls that connect the natural, historical, economic sectors.

Resources added by commissioners in the Zoom chat:

- Gold Belt Junior Ranger [program](#). Could this be adapted into a template?
- 4th-grade curriculum [Every Kid Outdoors](#) (free annual pass for all fourth-graders)
- Lindsey is working on an internship program in her tourism department.
- West Elk Loop has a booklet [Elk Mountain Odessey](#) as a children's resource. One thing to consider is schools might not take printed copies, so be sure to check what materials schools will accept.
- <https://www.blm.gov/everykidoutdoors>
- <https://www.blm.gov/documents/colorado/public-room/educational-material/alpine-loop-recreation-area-junior-explorer>
- <https://www.codot.gov/travel/scenic-byways/south-central/gold-belt>

National Scenic Byways

There was no update on the national designations from the US Secretary of Transportation as of the meeting. Federal funding for the byways is in the current omnibus bill. The House passed 5-year legislation last fall that is now waiting in the Senate. If the bill passes, each state receives an annual apportionment of funds, and the commission would play a role in prioritizing the process.

The next National Science Byways Foundation webinar is April 21: Your Best First Impression of Your Byway. Applications for the Community Awards are due March 12. Lenore will see if the photo exhibit would fit or, if not, another project from Colorado to nominate. A good idea for next will be Lindsey and the Colorado Headwaters Byway. Lenore is also on the Byways Foundation board and will present a training for other statewide byways coordinators on February 23-24.

Byways Symposium

The original plan for the Symposium was May 2020 in Ouray. However, the symposium was put on hold until 2021 due to COVID-19. Lenore and Heidi announce May 5-7, 2021, for a hybrid conference in Glenwood springs. Can manage up to 50 people and then offer an online version. Their team is working on a new location and infrastructure. [Check out details, including the schedule and pre-/post-tours here.](#)

2021 Executive Committee Election

Amanda Barker presented a continuation of the 2020 executive committee with Nathan Boyess as Chair, Heidi Plankow as Vice-Chair, Amanda Barker as Secretary, plus Andrew Grossman to join the committee without a specific role. Cheryl Glanz moved to approve the slate of officer. Chris Bowles seconds, all in favor, none opposed.

Final Shared Updates

2021 Commission Goals: Lenore will coordinate with Amanda to revisit previous Commission goals from the current 2017 strategic plan to be presented and discussed at the May 2021 Commission meeting.

Executive Order of the Byways Commission: Nathan and Rebecca to rework and submit to the State.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife: 2022 will be the 125th anniversary year for CPW, reaching out to many partners, including byways generally. Tony is looking for ways to highlight the byways as part of their efforts.

Retirement Announcement: Jack Placchi will retire in May from the Bureau of Land Management. He will handle his replacement to the Commission with Lenore.

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.