

A Framework for Wayshowing:

The Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway

Jackson and Larimer Counties
Colorado



July 2014

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary: Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway

Utilizing a “front-seat back-seat” approach, travelers unfamiliar with the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway area took to the road with a list of significant historical, cultural and recreational sites to locate. Neophytes in the front seat searched for signs, used digital devices, studied maps and ask for directions. Meanwhile, transportation and tourism specialists in the back seat recorded the navigational challenges of those “new to the Byway” travelers in the front. The front seaters were in search of historical, recreational and cultural attractions that had been identified by the local Byway organization as key attractions for travelers.

An analysis of this formal assessment exercise combined with the input of local officials, transportation, and tourism specialists resulted in recommendations that can improve the ease of navigation for visitors and better capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the communities along the Byway.

Recommendations include:

- A. Add pre-notification roadway signage for existing interpretive kiosks and replace damaged panels.
- B. Use icons to notify drivers of attractions with limited notification opportunities (i.e. blind turns and limited visibility). The iconography program should be expanded to include icons for interpretive information and to improve pre-notification of interpretive sites. Consider icons for groceries, gasoline, dining and lodging to help visitors find local businesses. Icons should be explained at gateway kiosk signage and on the Byway website with a map of all sites corresponding to icons.
- C. Add a blue columbine directional sign between Ted’s Place and Poudre Canyon so drivers know they made the correct turn off Highway 287 to stay on the Byway.
- D. Improve directional signage to Arrowhead Lodge Visitor Center. The observation team was not able to immediately identify the Lodge as a Visitor Center. These places are key information resources for travelers and need to be easily identifiable to visitors unfamiliar to the area. Conduct a signage inventory to determine where additional Visitor Center signs are needed. If and when Visitor Centers are identified by a symbolic icon make sure the meaning of that icon is being successfully conveyed to the visitors (i.e., define the icon on maps, brochures, and online)
- E. Consider adding “TO Scenic Byway” signs to direct travelers on Interstate 25 and areas around Walden towards the Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway.
- F. Build a system of turnouts at Byway gateways that provide a coordinated regional system of wayshowing for travelers. Include a comprehensive regional map, navigational directions and interpretive information. Work in conjunction with all four Scenic and Historic Byways in CDOT Traffic Region 4: Pawnee Pioneer Trail (Weld, Morgan and Logan Counties), South Platte River Trail (Sedgwick County), Cache la Poudre-North Park (Jackson and Larimer Counties), and Trail Ridge Road

(Grand and Larimer Counties). A model wayshowing system is currently being installed in eleven counties of CDOT Traffic Region 2 in Southeast Colorado.

- G. There is little scenic value in the LaPorte and Fort Collins Region of this Byway (Ted's Place to I-25) and this section of the Byway threatens the integrity of the Scenic and Historic Byway designation. Consider moving the eastern terminus of the Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway to Ted's Place to ensure a more meaningful experience and more robust eastern gateway for visitors to the Byway. Current Byway signs from I-25 to Ted's Place could be modified to say "TO Scenic Byway" so visitors to Fort Collins are aware of the Byways close proximity to Fort Collins.
- H. Orient visitors to the scenic Byway at the gateway in Walden. The pull off for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is one potential location for this kiosk. Currently there is excellent interpretive signage at the Refuge but there are none that reference the Scenic Byway. Other potential locations for western gateway signage are on Main Street in Walden (this could be a pedestrian scale sign located inconspicuously off the main sidewalk) or in front of the Pioneer Museum in Walden.
- I. Actively develop ways that the Byway (and its wayfinding system) can benefit the existing businesses in the town of Walden and in the Poudre Canyon.
- J. Create a "home page" website specific to the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway to provide navigational, historical, and interpretive information about the Byway. The website should assist visitors in planning a trip to the Byway as well as for on-site interpretation. Due to the limited internet coverage along this route, the website should provide a downloadable brochure that visitors can save to their mobile devices and reference without cellular service. The website needs to be optimized to function on mobile devices in order to be useful to most travelers. This website should tie in directly to local businesses that can enhance traveler experiences along the Byway.
- K. Consider installing low connectivity warning signs and hot spot indicator signs to inform visitors of variable wireless availability. These could be clustered with informational kiosks that direct visitors to the Byway website to download interpretive information while in areas of connectivity. This would be especially helpful at Ted's Place just before cell coverage drops off in Poudre Canyon.
- L. At Ted's Place, Arrowhead Lodge, and Moose Visitor Center two of the three panels at each location are the same. Consider updating kiosk information so that it does not repeat and instead works together to tell a larger story, like a self-guided tour with new discoveries at every stop. Kiosks should explain the national significance of the Byway and its accompanying waterways.
- M. Reevaluate the wayfinding system after the US Forest Service installs 60 new interpretive panels in Poudre Canyon (scheduled for summer 2014).

The Cache la Poudre-North Park main route Byway signage is in decent shape. There were no intersections that presented navigational difficulties. However, while driving this Byway, many questions about historical significance go unanswered. The interpretive program of the Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway has ample room for improvement, as does the quality of online resources for

the Byway. Maps and interpretive information should be only one or two clicks away from anyone with an internet connection.

Enhancing the existing wayshowing system can help to guide visitors along the Byway in a meaningful and memorable way. A strong wayshowing system can result in greater safety and a deeper understanding of the historic and recreational assets that make the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic Byway special.



Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge in North Park

It is highly recommended that the Byway design and build gateway turnoffs at both Ted's Place and in the Town of Walden. Navigational signage to key sites on the Byway should continue to be refined to help foster the economic vitality of businesses along the Byway.

Introduction

The deployment of an effective system of wayshowing is an essential component of successful regional tourism strategies. Wayfinding and wayshowing are related but distinct concepts. **Wayfinding** is the mental process performed by travelers in identifying and locating their travel destinations. **Wayshowing**, on the other hand, is the communication in the form of maps, signs, and other media intended to aid the traveler in their wayfinding.

The purpose of this document is to provide a preliminary plan for an enhanced wayshowing system along the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway. In achieving this purpose, the plan aims to:

- Provide an outline of key concepts of wayshowing and wayfinding
- Assess the inventory of existing directional signage to key sites along Cache la Poudre-North Park Pathway and designation signage along the same routes
- Provide recommendations for enhancing directional signage to key sites
- Provide an outline for subsequent action

Keys to Effective Wayshowing

An effective system of wayshowing responds to the needs of travelers at all stages in their journey. At a minimum, effective wayshowing for the traveler must:

- Support how people find their way in unfamiliar travel environments
- Provide a guidance system of reliable and consistent components on the Byway
- Respond to the unique characteristics of the Byway
- Integrate pre-visit, visit, and post-visit stages of the Byway experience
- Contribute to a safe roadway and travel environment
- Become a widely practiced body of knowledge among Byway providers

Stages of Wayshowing

Effective wayshowing is essential not only to ensuring good experiences for the visitor, but also in attracting that visitor in the first place. While wayshowing may seem to begin and end with the traveler on the road, it also plays an important role in attracting visitors, assisting in their trip planning, and in enhancing their recollections with others after their trip is complete. Consider the travel experience as five distinct stages:

Choose

The point at which the traveler decides his or her travel destination or destinations. *Wayfinding Needs: What are the travel routes? What is there to see and do and where are these activities located? How much time is required for the trip?*

Prepare

This is the stage in which the prospective traveler plans and prepares for their trip, including making reservations or other advance travel arrangements. *Wayfinding Needs: How will we get there? Where will we stay, eat and stop? How much time should we allot to travel to and on the travel route? Where are the heritage, recreational, and cultural attractions of the area?*

Go/Do

This stage is the event itself as the visitor makes his or her way to or around their destination. *Wayfinding Needs: Where are the entry points to the route? How do we get back on track if we get off the route? Where are the attractions along the route? Where can we get information along the route? Where do we get gas, food, or lodging?*

Recall

This is the stage in which the memories of the trip extend its enjoyment beyond the time spent away from home. With travel completed, visitors typically want pictures, maps, souvenirs or other items to assist their recollection of a memorable trip. *Wayfinding Needs: What will help us recall the good times we had on the trip? Where were the sites we really enjoyed?*

Do Again

It is hoped that with an enjoyable and memorable trip, many visitors will return. *Wayfinding Needs: Where are those good maps from our last trip? We need to show our friends and family what they might like.*

With the assistance of an effective wayshowing system, successful travelers should be able to:

1. Identify origin and destination
2. Determine turn angles
3. Identify segment links and directions of movement
4. Recognize on-route and distant landmarks
5. Mentally embed or visualize the route in a larger reference frame: a cognitive map

Wayshowing Components

A successful wayshowing system includes multiple components that not only direct the traveler, but also provide interpretive information. Wayshowing does not start and stop on the road, but exists to provide the traveler with information to plan their trip and assist in the recollection of it afterwards through maps, websites and other media that can be accessed away from the physical roadway. Essential elements of a wayshowing system include the following:

- Entrances, exit and gateway signage identify where to enter and exit a route or Byway so that travelers know their position relative to accessing and leaving a Byway or other route.
- Orientation stops are pull-offs, turn-outs and other places for motorists to stop and help them create, refresh, and expand their mental maps of a Byway or other route, its intrinsic qualities, and overarching interpretive theme with exhibits, maps, and other means of communication.
- Repetitive route markers provide sequence of visual cues for motorists to follow along a Byway or other route.
- Directional signage to planned destinations alert and guide motorists to featured stops and attractions along or near a Byway or other route.
- A portable map is a carry-on map of a Byway corridor or travel region and its various attractions and amenities.

History of Wayfinding Development on the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway

The 101 mile segment of Colorado Highway 14 between Fort Collins and Walden was designated by the State of Colorado as the *Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway* in 1991. The route received a National Forest Scenic Byway designation in 1993. It connects the high plains at the edge of the Rocky Mountains in the east to a large high elevation mountain valley in the west. When traveled in a westerly direction the landscape transitions from a prairie scene to one of craggy cliffs in the Cache la Poudre Canyon to a subalpine forest near Cameron Pass (10,276 foot) and then into the wide open grasslands of North Park. The Byway uses the State scenic Byway logo (the blue Columbine sign) as directional signage to mark the route.

French fur trappers began utilizing the area around the Cache la Poudre River to access beaver streams in the 1820s. Prior to that Native Americans utilized North Park to hunt bison, elk, moose, deer, antelope, and big horn sheep and occasionally made camp in Poudre Canyon.

In 1879 a toll road over Cameron Pass opened between the towns of Rustic and Walden but the connecting route bypassed the lower reaches of the Cache la Poudre Canyon in favor of less hazardous routes to the north and south of the canyon. Until 1916 the road up Poudre Canyon ended at The Mishawaka. Baldwin tunnel was built in 1916 and the road was stretched up the canyon to the Big Narrows. In 1926 the road through Poudre Canyon reached all the way to Cameron Pass and created a direct link between Fort Collins and Walden in North Park. Fort Collins residences championed the construction of the road through the canyon to provide easier access to the mountains west of Fort Collins.

Today the entire route of the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway is paved and much of the adjacent landscape is public land including the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, the Colorado State Forest, Rocky Mountain National Park, National Forest lands, and several wilderness areas. For about two-thirds of its total length the Byway follows the nationally significant Cache la Poudre River. The upper reaches of the river are designated as a *National Wild and Scenic River* to protect its free-flowing waters from dams and diversions and the basin as whole is designated as a *National Water Heritage Area* to celebrate its role in water development in the west and irrigation of the northern plains.

With abundant public lands along the Byway corridor and access to the Cache la Poudre River there is a plethora of recreational opportunities in the area. There are many designated camping and picnicking locations along the Byway as well as many hiking trails including two National Recreation Trails. Visitors enjoy a wide variety of activities that include camping, hiking, picnicking, fishing, hunting, kayaking, rafting, and mountain biking. During the winter months there are opportunities for cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, and snowmobiling.

The Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway Council was formed as a nonprofit in 1993 to conserve the resources intrinsic to the Byway's appeal as a scenic and historic feature. In 1998 the Byway Council produced a Corridor Management Plan to help guide Byway planning. That same year the group also produced an Interpretive Addendum to the Corridor Management Plan to articulate how interpretation can be used to help manage Byway resources.

The 1998 Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway Corridor Management Plan discussed the Byway corridor as four distinct regions (from west to east); the Walden and North Park Region, the Cameron Pass Region, the Poudre Canyon Region, and the La Porte and Fort Collins Region. The plan also claims that five wooden informational kiosks have been installed along the Byway. Locations are identified as, "one on Colorado State Forest land near Gould, one at Lions Park in Walden, one at Picnic Rock, one at Ted's Place, and another at Arrowhead Lodge."

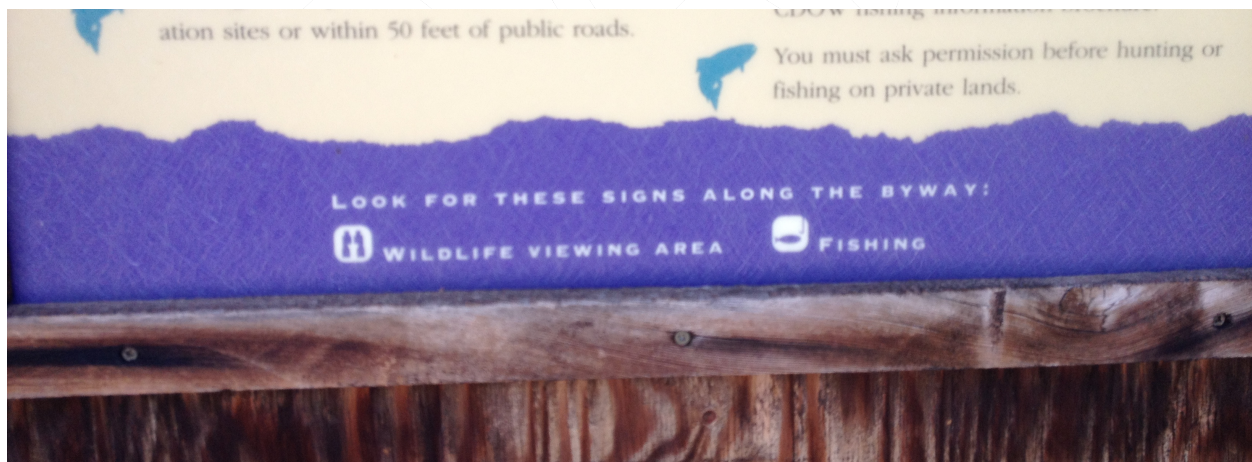
The Interpretive Addendum to the plan provided an inventory and analysis of existing Byway resources, management plans/facilities, and existing interpretation. It also made recommendations for Byway interpretive programming and identified three objectives for using interpretation as a management tool:

1. Reduce the impacts of peak-season recreational use
2. Foster the vitality of existing businesses along the Byway
3. Encourage visitors to use the Byway in the winter season and utilize under-visited areas

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is ultimately responsible for signage along Colorado State Highway Number 14 but it does not operate in isolation. The National Forest Service has made significant contributions to the signage along the corridor.



Recreation icon signage in Poudre Canyon



Only two icons explained at bottom of wooden kiosk signage at Moose Visitor Center near Gould



Business signage in Poudre Canyon



1st Byway sign in Walden, westbound



2nd sign west of intersection with County Rd. 69



3rd Byway sign near Ted's Place, westbound



4th Byway sign west of County Rd 54G



5th sign on Riverside Ave west of Mulberry St



6th and final Byway sign near I-25 in Fort Collins

Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway Wayfinding Assessment

Often the difficulty in providing effective wayshowing lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. Additionally, maps, signs, brochures and other media from multiple sources can often provide conflicting information. In June 2014 an on-the-road experiment was conducted along the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway to answer some of these questions. Specifically, the experiment sought to:

- Identify gaps in navigational clues for travelers by identifying points of certainty, and points of confusion
- Identify points of disconnect between what a traveler sees through the windshield and what they read from maps, brochures, mobile devices, web sites in their laps

A list of significant historical, cultural, and recreational sites along the Byway was developed for use during the Wayfinding Assessment. Many of these sites were identified by several members of the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway Committee at a meeting in Ft. Collins. A signage assessment survey of Committee members was also conducted. Representatives were asked to list the top heritage, cultural, and/or recreational sites in their respective counties and provide an assessment of the existing directional signage. Twenty-eight sites were chosen for the Wayfinding Assessment. The attractions and sites chosen for inclusion in this exercise appear below.

Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic Wayfinding Assessment Route (Fort Collins to Walden)

Cultural Heritage Sites	Recreation Sites	Businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ted's Place• Poudre Park• Mishawaka Inn• Baldwin Tunnel• Dutch George Flats• Old Poudre City• Laramie-Poudre Diversion• Michigan Ditch• Eggers Mtn. School Museum• Prairie Divide School• CTB Water Diversion• Gould• Walden	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greyrock Trailhead• Young Gulch Trailhead• Mountain Park Campground• Profile Rock• Poudre Trout Rearing Unit• Sleeping Elephant Mtn.• Poudre Falls• Chambers Lake• Joe Wright Reservoir• Cameron Pass• East Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indian Meadows Lodge• Rustic Resort• Arrowhead Lodge• Kinikinik Ranch

A four member team was assembled to travel the Byway using a “front seat, back seat” approach. In the front seat were neophytes, new to the region with limited knowledge of the area. They were given the list of attractions and sites to locate using highway signage, verbal directions and printed materials such as brochures and maps available at Visitor Centers and other public outlets. The “front seaters” were also allowed to use any mobile devices available to them.

Transportation and tourism specialists occupied the backseat. The “back seaters” recorded the experience of the “front seaters” in detail. “Back seaters” recorded the exact locations where the “front seaters” encountered confusion or uncertainty in navigating the region. They also recorded any disparities between written information in maps, brochures and other media and actual conditions as observed through the windshield.

While the neophytes in the front seat navigated their way through unfamiliar territory, the specialists in the back seat were given the following assignment:

- Observe the actions and discussions of the “front seaters”
- Record locations where “front seaters” expressed uncertainties and confusion and note apparent reasons
- Quiz “front seaters” on effectiveness of signs, maps and other driving instructions
- Note which wayshowing devices “front seaters” are using most often and which they are not
- Resist giving any travel or driving advice unless an immediate safety issue warrants
- Conduct post-trip discussion with “front seaters”

After the conclusion of the wayfinding exercise, participants were asked to record observations and make recommendations based on their on-the-road experience. A full list of the comments and observations by the two teams is found in the Appendix.

Recommendations and Action Plan

An analysis of this formal assessment exercise combined with the input of local officials, transportation professionals, and tourism specialists resulted in recommendations that can improve the ease of navigation for visitors and better capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the communities along the Byway.

The following recommends are made:

Navigation

- A. Add pre-notification roadway signage for existing interpretive kiosks and replace damaged panels.
- B. Use icons to notify drivers of attractions with limited notification opportunities (i.e., blind turns and limited visibility). The iconography program should be expanded to include icons for interpretive information and to improve pre-notification of interpretive sites. Consider icons for groceries, gasoline, dining and lodging to help visitors find local businesses. Icons should be explained at gateway kiosk signage and on the Byway website with a map of all sites corresponding to icons.

- C. Add a blue columbine directional sign between Ted's Place and Poudre Canyon so drivers know they made the correct turn off Highway 287 to stay on the Byway.
- D. Improve directional signage to Arrowhead Lodge Visitor Center. The observation team was not able to immediately identify the Lodge as a Visitor Center. These places are key information resources for travelers and need to be easily identifiable to visitors unfamiliar to the area. Conduct a signage inventory to determine where additional Visitor Center signs are needed. If and when Visitor Centers are identified by a symbolic icon make sure the meaning of that icon is being successfully conveyed to the visitors (i.e. define the icon on maps, brochures, and online)
- E. Consider adding "TO Scenic Byway" signs to direct travelers on Interstate 25 and areas around Walden towards the Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway.

Gateways

- A. Build a system of turnouts at Byway gateways that provide a coordinated regional system of wayshowing for travelers. Include a comprehensive regional map, navigational directions and interpretive information. Work in conjunction with all four Scenic and Historic Byways in CDOT Traffic Region 4: Pawnee Pioneer Trail (Weld, Morgan and Logan Counties), South Platte River Trail (Sedgwick County), Cache la Poudre-North Park (Jackson and Larimer Counties), and Trail Ridge Road (Grand and Larimer Counties). A model wayshowing system is currently being installed in eleven counties of CDOT Traffic Region 2 in Southeast Colorado.
- B. There is little scenic value in the LaPorte and Fort Collins Region of this Byway (Ted's Place to I-25) and this section of the Byway threatens the integrity of the Scenic and Historic Byway designation. Consider moving the eastern terminus of the Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway to Ted's Place to ensure a more meaningful experience and more robust eastern gateway for visitors to the Byway. Current Byway signs from I-25 to Ted's Place could be modified to say "TO Scenic Byway" so visitors to Fort Collins are aware of the Byways close proximity to Fort Collins.
- C. Orient visitors to the scenic Byway at the gateway in Walden. The pull off for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is one potential location for this kiosk. Currently there is excellent interpretive signage at the Refuge but there are none that reference the Scenic Byway. Other potential locations for western gateway signage are on Main Street in Walden (this could be a pedestrian scale sign located inconspicuously off the main sidewalk) or in front of the Pioneer Museum in Walden.
- D. Actively develop ways that the Byway (and its wayfinding system) can benefit the existing businesses in the town of Walden and in the Poudre Canyon.

Electronic Visitor Information

- A. Create a "home page" website specific to the Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway to provide navigational, historical, and interpretive information about the Byway. The website should assist visitors in planning a trip to the Byway as well as for on-site interpretation. Due to the limited internet coverage along this route, the website should provide a downloadable brochure that visitors can save to their mobile devices and reference without cellular service. The website

needs to be optimized to function on mobile devices in order to be useful to most travelers. This website should tie in directly to local businesses that can enhance traveler experiences along the Byway.

- B. Consider installing low connectivity warning signs and hot spot indicator signs to inform visitors of variable wireless availability. These could be clustered with informational kiosks that direct visitors to the Byway website to download interpretive information while in areas of connectivity. This would be especially helpful at Ted's Place just before cell coverage drops off in Poudre Canyon.

Interpretation

- A. At Ted's Place, Arrowhead Lodge, and Moose Visitor Center two of the three panels at each location are the same. Consider updating kiosk information so that it does not repeat and instead works together to tell a larger story, like a self-guided tour with new discoveries at every stop. Kiosks should explain the national significance of the Byway and its accompanying waterways.
- B. Reevaluate the wayfinding system after the US Forest Service installs 60 new interpretive panels in Poudre Canyon (scheduled for summer 2014).

Partnerships

Projects to be developed in partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

- Consider a cooperative project with CDOT to test more explicit alternative signage to "Share the Road" in Poudre Canyon
- Add additional Byway sign between Ted's Place and Poudre Canyon so drivers know they made the correct turn off Hwy 287

Projects to be developed in partnership with Counties

- Mark wireless hot spots on the Byway
- Improve prenotification and directional signage to all visitor centers: "Just missed another one" was a frequent statement from the assessment team

Projects to be developed in partnership with Byway Communities

- Replace damaged interpretive panels
- Consider moving the eastern terminus of the Byway to Ted's Place to make navigation easier for travelers
- Identify possible locations for a Gateway turnout in Walden
- Develop wayfinding signage within each town
- Support the business owner/operators in Poudre Canyon and the Town of Walden to identify ways the Byway can stimulate more economic activity

Projects to be developed in partnership with Individual Attractions

- Work with Ted's Place to evaluate the possibilities of using Ted's as an official Gateway turnout

Projects to be undertaken by the Byway Organization

- Create a website that serves travelers in both pre-planning and through mobile devices. Provide a downloadable brochure that can be stored on their mobile devices to be used when cellular service is not available.
- Redevelop the Byway brochure
- Cross check nomenclature on publications and websites to ensure consistency
- Develop mobile apps and e-books
- Develop a tear-off map that can be used for navigational purposes

The recommendations included in this document represent only the first steps in the process of developing a more effective system of wayshowing. Recommendations concerning directional signage can be acted upon in the short term by bringing together relevant stakeholders and CDOT officials. Recommendations concerning orientation and interpretive kiosks, clustered signage, and training programs will require additional effort to secure funding and achieve consensus on placement. The US Forest Service has scheduled the installation of 60 new interpretive panels within the Poudre Canyon. This offers an extraordinary occasion for all stakeholders to evaluate the whole wayfinding system and understand how it affects both travelers and locals who travel the Byway.

The next step in this process will involve working with city and county officials and representatives from the Byway to determine final site locations and establish site priorities for interpretive kiosks. Lariat Pawnee Pioneer Trails representatives may also wish to meet with local officials to determine the possibilities for clustered signage highlighting local attractions and amenities.

Cache la Poudre-North Park Scenic and Historic Byway kiosk photos:



Ted's Place Kiosk



Arrowhead Lodge Kiosk



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ERROR: IOError
OFFENDING COMMAND: image

STACK:
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