

# **A Framework for Wayshowing:**

## ***Silver Thread Scenic Byway***

Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mineral  
and Rio Grande Counties, Colorado



October 2015

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*Cover photo by Kat Olance*

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## Executive Summary

The following plan evaluates the current wayshowing system that guides travelers throughout the Silver Thread Scenic Byway, a 75 mile stretch of Hwy 149 that was named to commemorate the silver industry that operated from 1879 – 1893. Although most attractions and scenic pull-offs are themselves well signed, few have pre-notification signs to alert travelers that they are approaching a point of interest. At the north end of the Byway, where the Byway was extended to Blue Mesa Reservoir, there are several pullouts with new interpretive installations. These also need pre-notification signage.

North Clear Creek Falls, the “must see” stop on this Byway, boasts excellent interpretive installations, toilets, and trails leading to a scenic viewpoint. As travelers exit from the falls, however, there are no directional signs to lead travelers back to the Byway. These should be a priority, as visitation is high to this attraction.

Improved directional signage into the three byway towns of Lake City, Creed and South Fork, would increase the opportunities for local businesses to benefit economically from tourism. In Lake City, many travelers drive Hwy 149 through town, completely missing the business district that is located one block off the highway. Entering the Town of Creed from the south, the assessment team was not clear about how to enter town; likewise they were not clear about how to exit town to rejoin the Byway. The entrance to the South Fork Visitor Center was difficult to locate from US 50. In addition, they were not certain if they had arrived at the town of South Fork. The plan recommends that all three towns install in-town wayfinding signage to improve navigation for visitors and capitalize on providing both traveler services and retail opportunities.

The system of interpretive information is excellent. In October 2015 the on-the-road assessment team found a number of important scenic, historic and cultural sites that were missing interpretation (see Appendix); however, by the time the plan was finalized in March 2016, most previously identified gaps were filled with panels produced by the USFS that are installed between North Clear Creek Falls and Spring Creek Pass, Wagon Wheel Gap, Rio Grande Pyramid, Rio Grand Reservoir and Clay Mine. An explanation (perhaps in more than one place) is still needed about why the Byway was named Silver Thread. Geologic interpretive information for two specific areas, Wheeler Geologic Area near South Park, and the Lake City Area should get priority attention. Although the road to Wheeler Geologic Area requires a 4-wheel drive vehicle, it is a spectacular visitor experience. In Lake City, interpretation in or near the Visitor Center would alert travelers to the extraordinary geology that surrounds the town.



Photo by Kat Olance

*South Fork Visitor  
Center*

All three visitor centers are staffed by knowledgeable locals and stocked with quality maps, brochures and CDs. The Lake City Visitor Center, which hosts up to 200 travelers a day in the summer high season, urgently needs expanded restroom facilities.

The Silver Thread Scenic Byway travels through a mix of public and private lands. Although all recreationists seek local maps, the assessment found that people who fish need both print information and navigational signage to help them find locations that allow public access. ATV use is widespread. Internet and print materials that help travelers understand zones of recreational usage is an important element of wayfinding in this area that hosts recreationists with diverse interests.

A more interactive website and a downloadable app for the Byway is needed to meet the expectations of the technology-driven traveler. All three towns maintain a strong Facebook presence. With limited human and financial resources, the three managers can leverage their strength with fresh content provided for Facebook to also feed Instagram and other social media platforms. The Byway can also work with local service providers to identify local hot spots for Internet connectivity, and test the feasibility of identifying these hot spots for travelers.

## 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 Silver Thread Scenic 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 designated 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

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.

### 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.*

## Wayshowing Components

A successful wayshowing system includes multiple components that not only direct the traveler, and also provides interpretive information. Wayshowing does not start and stop on the road, but exists to provide the travelers 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. Identification of 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. 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.



Photo by Kat Olance

### **Silver Thread Scenic Byway**

The start of Silver Thread Scenic Byway on Hwy 149 is located just past the South Fork Visitor Center.

- Repetitive Route Markers. A sequence of visual cues for motorists to follow along a byway or other route.
- Direction Signage to Planned Destinations. Signs that alert and guide motorists to featured stops and attractions along or near a byway or other route.
- A Portable Map. A carry-on map of a byway corridor or travel region and its various attractions and amenities.
- Electronic Information that can be accessed through travelers' mobile devices.

## History of Wayfinding Development on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway

The highway corridor 149 was named to honor the silver mining industry that operated along this road from 1879 to 1893. Rising over 3,181 vertical feet in 55 miles before a dizzying descent into Hinsdale County, the road unveils the mysteries of the mighty Rio Grande, the geologic wonders of the region and the archaeological finds of early man and Native Americans. The Silver Thread offers travelers abundant opportunities for recreation and wildlife viewing.

On October 18, 1990, a 75-mile stretch of this epic highway was chosen to become a Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway by the Colorado Transportation Commission. This route had been designated a National Forest Scenic Byway on December 14, 1989.



Photo by Kat Olance

### **Wagon Wheel Gap Train Station**

Wagon Wheel Gap Railroad Station, listed on the National Register, needs signage to notify the public that access is permitted.

*“Located in the heart of the San Juan Mountains, isolated and exquisite, this road was once a footpath worn into the earth by Ice Age Man. Thousands of years later, the Ute Indians continued using these trails to reach hunting camps, hot springs and their sacred Wheeler Geologic Area. In the 1850’s these native people were overwhelmed by homesteaders and miners, and were relocated to the southwest corner of Colorado. Their ancestral paths were widened and improved and become the Del Norte-Antelope Park Toll Road. This pay-to-ride stage line linked the supply station of Del Norte to mines in Creede, Lake City and Silverton. Today, Highway 149 (the Silver Thread Scenic Byway) acts as a haunting reminder that this road not only winds up toward the sky – it winds back in time” (Byway Corridor Master Plan, 1998).*

A Corridor Management Plan and Business Plan was published by the Silver Thread Scenic Byway Steering Committee in 1998, then updated in 2004. The plan was designed to preserve and enhance the unique qualities of the Byway, and recommended that long range planning policies be developed and adopted to protect critical wildlife habitat along the Silver Thread Byway. Top priority actions included looking for funding for a Visitor Center in Lake City, widening of highway shoulders to accommodate non-motorized travelers, providing improved views at the overlook at mile marker 47, improving signage at Spring Creek pass, working on interpretation at Alferd Packer massacre site and that tourist related entities combine talent and finances to promote the Byway and events along the Byway.



Photo by Kat Olance

#### **Highway Shoulder**

Hwy 149 has little or no formal shoulder

The Byway uses the State Scenic Byway logo (the blue columbine sign) as directional signage to mark the route. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for signage along the state highways in the area, including Colorado State Highways 149 and 160. Ninety percent of the Byway is under the supervision of two National Forests (Rio Grande and Gunnison Districts) and the Bureau of Land Management Gunnison Resource Area.

## **Traveler-Oriented Method of Assessment**

Difficulty in providing effective wayshowing often lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. Maps, signs, brochures and other media from multiple sources can sometimes provide conflicting information. In October 2015 an on-the-road assessment was conducted along the Silver Thread Scenic Byway to identify the following:

- Gaps in navigational clues for travelers by identifying points of certainty, and points of confusion; and
- Points of disconnect between what travelers see through the windshield and what they read on maps, mobile devices, and brochures in their laps.
- Local business districts that provide visitors with essential services.



A list of thirty-six significant historical, cultural, and recreational sites was identified by members of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway Committee. Representatives were asked to list the top ten heritage, cultural, and/or recreational sites in their respective counties.

The following twenty-five attractions were the focus of the on-the-road assessment. Neophytes were given a list of these attractions and sites to locate using any information they could find along the route.

<u>Cultural Heritage Sites</u>	<u>Recreation Sites</u>	<u>Visitor Information Centers and Pull-offs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collier State Wildlife Area</li> <li>• Wagon Wheel Gap Train Station</li> <li>• Wheeler Geologic Natural Area</li> <li>• Pool Table</li> <li>• Creede, Historic town</li> <li>• Creede Underground Mining Museum</li> <li>• Creede Historical Society Museum</li> <li>• Creede Repertory Theatre</li> <li>• Bachelor Loop</li> <li>• Bob Ford burial site and Creede Cemetery</li> <li>• Hinsdale County Museum</li> <li>• Clay Mine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spruce Lodge</li> <li>• Rio Grande Golf Course</li> <li>• Phoenix Park</li> <li>• Lake City, town of</li> <li>• Rio Grande Pyramid</li> <li>• Masonic Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Fork Visitor Center</li> <li>• Creede Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Lake City Visitor Center</li> <li>• South Fork D&amp;RG Railroad Water Tower</li> <li>• North Clear Creek Falls</li> <li>• Rio Grande Headwaters</li> <li>• Slumgullion Pass, Pull-off (Papoose Forest Fire)</li> </ul>

The remaining eleven sites were identified as significant but not included in the formal assessment: Hard Tack Mine and Museum, Alferd Packer burial site and Colonel Pfeiffer’s burial site, Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, Blue Mesa Reservoir, and Nine Mile Hill, Spring Creek Pass, Lake San Cristobal, Slumgullion Pass, Windy Point, and Lake Fork Pull-off.

Transportation and tourism specialists who occupied the backseat observed and 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”

At 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.

## Summary of Key Observations

### Internet Preplanning and On-Site Cellular Coverage

- No preplanning was conducted by the front-seaters prior to the on-the-road assessment. They obtained a personal GPS device assuming that cell phone access and online access would be limited due to the remoteness of the area. The neophytes did find online maps including an animated map on the Colorado Vacation Directory website that focuses on recreation. The CDOT website map had very minimal detail, but did include links to a number of the best known sites.
- Cellular coverage was found to be mostly unavailable on this Byway, and if hot spots or wifi exist, they were not apparent to travelers on the assessment team.
- When searching the Silver Thread Scenic Byway, the CDOT website (<http://www.codot.gov/travel/scenic-byways>) is usually delivered in first or second place by search engines. It lists major attractions and links to Chamber of Commerce websites.
- The three Chambers of Commerce have an excellent Facebook presence.
- South Fork has a downloadable app, available since June 2015. It contains static pages of the Visitor's Guide.
- On TripAdvisor, "Silver Thread Scenic Byway Byway" is listed but does not provide an email contact. It does provide the website link to Colorado.com. The phone number provided on TripAdvisor is for the South Fork Visitor Center. On CDOT and Colorado.com websites the email for the Creede Chamber of Commerce is listed vs South Fork Visitor Center. The Colorado.com website lists the phone number for South Fork Visitor Center.
- Most of the sites identified as significant by the byway committee members were not found on Google Maps.



Photo by Kat Olance

**Recreation Signs**  
Sign east side of Creede.

### Navigational Signs Overview (Directional)

- In South Fork the Byway gateway appeared to have excellent navigational signage with blue columbine signs clearly marking the beginning and the end of the Byway (traveling westbound).
- There is no Byway signage off Hwy 50 coming from the west to direct travelers towards the Byway.
- None of the most significant sites were marked with pre-notification signs.
- Standard large brown directional signs were installed for specific byway attractions including parks, campgrounds and hiking trails. The team did not locate Wagon Wheel Gap, Clay Mine, D&RG Railroad Water Tower.
- Directional signs were adequate for Creede Repertory Theatre, Phoenix Park, North Clear Creek Falls, and Hinsdale County Museum.

- Although signs for entering the town of Creede were sufficient, there was confusion at the stop sign as to whether to continue straight or turn onto Hwy 149. A large welcome sign is painted on the side of a building, but the front-seaters noted that finding directional signage on a historic building is unexpected.



Photo by Kat Olance

Directional sign for Hwy 149 in Creede, CO

- Additional columbine byway signs are needed at intersections along the Byway to ensure the travelers know they are still on the Byway (versus a side road excursion).
- Public access to fishing needs to be signed. Also, other recreational activities including hiking, and biking need trail heads marked.

### Site Specific Navigational Observations

- The beginning of the Byway was clearly marked in South Fork at the intersection of CO 160 and CO 149.
- It was noted that a traveler has to ignore the signs for Hwy 149 in order to access the South Fork Visitor Center as there is no entrance to the Visitor Center from Hwy 149.
- There is no highway directional byway signage at the exit of North Clear Creek Falls.
- Directional sign into Lake City was unclear. The business district is easily bypassed.



Photo by Kat Olance

#### **Water Tower**

No interpretation or public access exists to the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Water Tower on east side of South Fork. Nearest road is an entrance to a private housing community.

- The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Water Tower in South Fork is easily seen but has no directional signage, no interpretation signage or access.
- The Stoney Pass sign needs to be replaced. (San Juan City – Stoney Pass).
- The team strongly recommended that 4-wheel access warning signs should be added at a number of locations along the Bachelor Loop. (The assessment team was almost stranded on the road.)
- Navigating the Byway was managed by the old-fashioned method of acquiring maps, brochures and asking directions of locals. Online resources were not available or accessible due to lack of Internet access.
- No notification signs exist for the Spruce

Lodge, Rio Grande Golf Course, Masonic Park, Collier State Wildlife Area, Pool Table, or Bachelor Loop. In each case, the team had to double back to locate them.

## Interpretive Signs Overview

- The observation team expressed a strong desire for more access to historical information about the sites found along the byway and an explanation of why the Byway is called the Silver Thread.
- There were no interpretive signs at Collier State Wildlife Area, Wagon Wheel Gap Train Station, Bachelor Loop, Phoenix Park, Rio Grande Headwaters, Clay Mine, Rio Grande Scenic Railroad Water Tower, Rio Grande Golf Course, Pool Table, Creede Repertory Theatre, Hinsdale County Museum, or Denver & Rio Grande Water Tower.
- Kudos what is good.
- The far northern end of the Byway along HWY 149 has new interpretive signage installed in eight pullouts that begin at mile marker 104 and end at mile marker 77. Four of those have room for four or more cars, and thus qualified for Point of Interest or Scenic Overlook signs. This brings the northern extension up to the excellent standard set on the rest of the Byway.
- **Remaining sites balance all have adequate interpretive signage.**



Photo by Kat Olance

### **Interpretive Pull-Off**

There is no prenotification for this pull-out.



Photo by Kat Olance

### **Bark Beetle**

Newly installed bark beetle interpretive panel.

## Tourism Business and Byway Communities

The Byway offers an extraordinary opportunity for all three of the communities to operate as a regional tourism destination. No one town has enough tourism infrastructure (lodging, food, retail, activities) to hold touring travelers for multiple days. Taken together, however, the Byway communities and the surrounding area offer rich and varied experiences. The Byway towns are currently investing in joint marketing campaigns both in the region and through Colorado State Tourism marketing programs. These working relationships can now be leveraged to establish a business-to-business marketing program which would engage front-line staff from all three byway communities in connecting travelers with personalized local experiences.

## Recommendations

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

- A. A priority project for the Byway Steering Committee is the construction of a pull-off area to help the traveling public understand the 2013 Papoose forest fire that burned in the area around Slumgullion Pass (elevation 11,530 ft), and the logging activity that followed. This was a massive fire, and the cleanup and restoration activities by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management will be underway for years to come. The Rio Grande website [rweact.org](http://rweact.org) describes the significance of this fire, “situated at the headwaters and along the watershed of the main stem of the Rio Grande and many of its tributaries...These counties boast a high percentage of public lands, and the outdoor recreation industry is heavily influenced by wilderness access, roads and trails, fishing, hunting and scenic values.”
- B. Consider installing “hot spot” location 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.
- C. Consider installing a midpoint orientation kiosk in Creede to provide on-site regional navigation and historical information.
- D. Interpretation signs are needed for: Masonic Park, Wagon Wheel Gap Train Station, Pool Table, Creede Repertory Theatre, Denver & Rio Grande Water Tower, and Hinsdale County Museum.
- E. Directional signs are needed for: Clay Mine, Historic Wagon Wheel Gap Train Station, Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Water Tower, North Clear Creek Falls Campground, San Juan City, Stony Pass (need new one), Phoenix Park, and the entrance to Lake City.
- F. Add directional signage for the Alferd Packer site. Alferd Packer may have the best name recognition of any historic figure in the region. The Lake City Visitor Center manager reports that visitors drive up from Creed to see the site, passing it without locating it.
- G. The town of South Fork has dual navigational challenges. The first is that travelers do not know when they have entered or exited the town itself. The second challenge is that it is unclear where to turn into the Visitor Center. As one team member noted, “The recreational information for travelers inside the Visitor Center is excellent. The problem is getting there from the highway.”

- H. The use of ATVs along all sections of the Byway is widespread. Currently they are banned in the towns of South Fork and Creede, and allowed in Lake City. Internet and print materials that help visitors understand different zones of recreational use is an important element of a wayfinding system.
- I. Address safety concerns on Bachelor’s Loop with signage of “4-wheel drive required” and “seasonal road closing.”
- J. Add “Begin” Scenic Byway Navigational sign to Hwy 50 when traveling west.
- K. Improve navigational signage at each of the following major intersections (Hwy 50/149 and Hwy 160/149) where travelers enter the Byway. There should be signage directing east bound and west bound travelers as well as travelers driving on-to or off-of the byway.
- L. Travelers should be able to distinguish the scenic byway from other roads and be able to navigate the turns necessary to stay on the byway when reentering the byway after side-road excursions. This can be accomplished with blue columbine byway signs.



- M. Consider adding signage to clarify road conditions on side-road excursions off Hwy 149 during snow season. Bachelor’s Loop should be given priority.
- N. Make sure that ALL sites and destinations are added as a Google Map pointer; ensure the GPS accuracy for the location of the pointer.
- O. Update website to make it more interactive.

## Partnerships and Funding Resources

Projects to be developed through consultation with regional office of Colorado Department of Transportation

- Consider TAP (Transportation Alternative Plan) funding for development at Slumgullion Pass pull-off
- Prenotification signs for major attractions (Alferd Packer should be #1)
- Prioritize navigational signs on Hwy 50 directing travelers to the entrance of Scenic Byway
- On Hwy 50, Hwy 160 and Hwy 149 add mileage to key attractions on signs where possible

Projects to be developed in partnership with counties

- Placement of blue columbine byway markers on county roads near intersections where travelers need to distinguish between the Byway and side roads

Projects to be undertaken in partnership with byway communities

- Develop a wayfinding signage system within each of the three towns (Creed has started planning)
- Improve directional signage into all three towns from the Byway
- Improve the Alferd Packer Site, and consider expanding interpretive opportunities (Lake City)
- In South Park, partner with city and CDOT to make entry to the Visitor Center clearer. Also work with town to mark “entering South Fork” on US 50 from both east and west

Projects to be undertaken by the Byway organization

- Update website
- Develop a mobile app
- Develop a tear-off map that can be used for navigational purposes. This should include major trailheads, and a map that shows recreational areas managed by USFS, BLM, and private entities.
- Expand social media from Facebook to Instagram, and additional platforms when possible
- Participate with CTO in the media leads program HotSheet

## APPENDIX

Byway observations recorded by assessment team members during their tour on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway on Oct 27, 2015.

### FRONT SEAT OBSERVATIONS

#### *Volunteer, Barbara Howard (passenger)*

- Excellent directional sign to South Fork Visitor Center, Hwy 149 turn in South Fork, Spruce Lodge, Rio Grande Golf Course, Masonic Park, Collier State Wildlife Area, Pool Table, and Bachelor Loop
- Directional signs were adequate for Creede Repertory Theatre, Phoenix Park, North Clear Creek Falls, and Hinsdale County Museum
- No directional signs were found for Wagon Wheel Gap and Clay Mine
- There were interpretive signs for South Fork Visitor Center, Hwy 149 turn in South Fork, Collier State Wildlife Area, Bachelor Loop, Phoenix Park, and Clay Mine
- There were no interpretive signs for Rio Grande Golf Course, Masonic Park, Wagon Wheel Gap, Pool Table, Creede Repertory Theatre, North Clear Creek Falls, and Hinsdale County Museum
- Antlers – drove by the “Antlers” 3 times and still didn’t know what services they were offering (didn’t indicate option to fish, camp, dine, etc).
- Had to go past Hwy 149 turn in South Fork to get to South Fork Visitor Center
- There was no signage for South Fork RR water tower, but we saw the tower
- Would like to stop to fish at a bridge in Collier State Wildlife Area
- No sign on one side heading north to North Clear Creek Falls
- Street blocked at Lake City Geology
- Stoney Pass sign needs to be replaced
- Took selfie at Clay Mine
- Some places could use more “scenic byway” markers to clearly indicate the official byway route

#### *Volunteer, Chris Olance (driver)*

- Used a map and route description from resources found online
- Excellent directional sign to Hwy 149 turn in South Fork, South Fork, Collier State Wildlife Area, and Last Chance Mine
- Directional signs were adequate for South Fork Visitor Center, Spruce Lodge, Rio Grande Golf Course, Masonic Park, Wheeler Geologic Natural Area, Pool Table, town of Creede (Historic), Creede Underground Mining Museum, Creede Repertory Theatre, Creede Museum & D&RGR Depot, Bachelor Loop, Rio Grande Headwaters, North Clear Creek Falls, and Hinsdale County Museum
- There were not enough directional signs for Last Chance Mine and Clay Mine
- No directional signs were found for South Fork RR water tower, and Wagon Wheel Gap
- There were interpretive signs for South Fork Visitor Center, Hwy 149 turn in South Fork, Bachelor Loop, and Clay Mine
- South Fork Visitor Center gave us a CD with good information and ecological information
- Good signage at Hwy 149 turn in South Fork
- Did not see sign for South Fork RR water tower
- Collier State Wildlife Area had colorful signs – Road drops off
- No sign at Wagon Wheel Gap



## BACK SEAT OBSERVATIONS

Observer, Anita McDaniel, director, Fort Garland Museum

- Directional signs were excellent for Hwy 149 turn in South Fork, Rio Grande Golf Course, South Fork, Masonic Park, Collier State Wildlife Area, Pool Table, Bachelor Loop
- Directional signs were adequate for South Fork Visitor Center, Creede Underground Mining Museum, Rio Grande headwaters, and Hinsdale County Museum
- There were not enough directional signs for Creede Museum & D&RGR Depot, and North Clear Creek Falls and Campground
- No directional signs were found for Wagon Wheel Gap, Phoenix Park, North Clear Creek Falls and Campground, and Clay Mine
- There were interpretive signs for South Fork Visitor Center, Wagon Wheel Gap, Bachelor Loop, Phoenix Park, Rio Grande headwaters, and Clay Mine
- There were no interpretive signs for South Fork RR water tower, Rio Grande Golf Course, and Pool Table
- South Fork Visitor Center directional sign is behind trees (After turn-off confusion on finding it)
- Is the South Fork Visitor Center at the town hall?
- Is the South Fork RR Water Tower along side of road?
- Missed the Spruce Lodge
- South Fork "T-Town" bit confusing – who's to go?
- Wagon Wheel Gap – RR sign only
- Where is the Wheeler Geologic Natural Area?
- What is the Pool Table?
- Historic town of Creede – Where to turn? Some confusion – not signs fault
- Creede Museum and D&RGR Depot – Passed it 1<sup>st</sup> time
- Bachelor Loop – Needs better sign access – 4 wheel drive directions
- Rio Grande headwaters – New sign "Scenic Overlook" not at headwaters (Left or Right? No sign)
- North Clear Creek Falls and Campground – Had to U-turn on road going to falls; U-turn again coming from falls (no sign); 2<sup>nd</sup> entrance is better
- Didn't find Lake City Geology
- San Juan City – Stony Pass needs new sign

## Compilation of Post-tour Team Input

**Navigation concerns** (points where the route was unclear, or navigation became difficult)

- No signage coming away from North Clear Creek Falls
- Hwy 149 turn toward Lake City was unclear, we went the wrong way

**Safety concerns** (points along the byway that felt dangerous or presented safety concerns)

- Bachelor Loop needs "4-Wheel Drive Required" sign
- Directional sign for Bachelor Loop and sign for other scenic interests
- Inadequate signage caused us to do too many "U" turns

**Gateway Orientation** (*places where you enter onto the byway and where you exit. Was there a sense of arrival/departure? Features that helped orient you to the surrounding area? Anything to announce the presence of the byway or to draw you in to the byway experience?*)

- North Clear Creek Falls exit
- Some additional signage would help with these transitions

**Traveler services** (*availability of food, fuel and lodging along the byway*)

- Feel there were an adequate array of options within expectations
- Food, lodging and fuel were fine

**Recreation** (*list any recreational opportunities that appear on signs, brochures, maps, etc. along the byway*)

- Signage needed for public access for fishing
- More trailhead signage for hiking, fishing, and ATV trails

**Interpretation** (*what themes emerge in the interpretative information found along the byway? Do you have questions about the history, geology, hydrology, or wildlife of particular places?*)

- They were great. They had something for everyone, History, Geology, etc.
- Why was Byway named Silver Thread?
- Where is the explanation of Lake City geology?
- Rocks on mountains in specific area. Were these placed there for erosion?

**Top attractions** (*please list what you would consider to be the top 3 attractions on this Byway*)

1. North Creek Falls
2. Rio Grande Headwaters
3. Creede
4. Collier Wildlife Area

**Unique Qualities** (*what do you believe makes this Byway special?*)

- Geology
- Mining history
- I love the twisty roads, the incredible scenery, and would love to take my motorcycle on it. Are you promoting motorcycling? ATV rides?

## Silver Thread Scenic Byway (117 miles)

Byway communities include South Fork, Creede, Lake City and Powderhorn



<https://www.codot.gov/travel/scenic-byways/south-central/silver-thread>