

# A Framework for Wayshowing:

## *UnawEEP Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway*

Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel Counties  
Colorado



June 7, 2018

## Acknowledgments

This plan would not have been possible without the contributions of the Unaweeep Tabeguache Council.

Thanks to who participated in the exit interview:

Juay Pentz, Sharon Johannsen, Alan Clubb, Mark Bunnell, Kathy Cooper, Len Spina, Paul Koski, Deana Sheriff, Lynda Holm, Amanda Tomlinson, Richard Craig, and Paul Brown.

Appreciation is also extended to the participants of the Wayfinding Assessment Team who volunteered their time to spend a day behind the wheel.

Mark Bunnall (CDOT Engineer), Vicky Nash (Tourism Professional, Glenwood Springs), Mary Rose Stachnik, Ilene Cunningham, and Freddy Witarsa (Colorado Mesa University Faculty).

Special thanks to Lenore Bates, Scenic Byways Coordinator, Colorado Department of Transportation, for her guidance throughout the project.

The project was designed using concepts based on the work of David Dahlquist and the America's Byways® Resource Center.

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June 2018

*Cover photo by Jon Schler*

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## Executive Summary: Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic & Historic Byway

Wayshowing is a collection of signs, maps, brochures and electronic media that have been developed to aid travelers in their journey. A system of this kind of information is critical to help guide travelers to first choose a destination, then preplan their itineraries, and finally connect with the places that interest them once they arrive.

The following describes conditions that existed in June 2018 throughout a wayfinding system that was built to guide travelers throughout the 133-mile Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. Seven travelers volunteered to record and evaluate their day-long experience. At day's end, the team met with local Byway stakeholders to report on their success in locating twenty-five traveler attractions, and their satisfaction in understanding the meaning and significance of each place.

The Assessment Team reported considerable difficulty in locating many sites due to highway signage that is degraded, damaged or completely missing. In addition, by the end of the drive, the travelers expressed that they had learned very little about the geology of the Unaweep Canyon, the full scope and international significance of the areas mining history, the dynamics of the ecosystems, or the availability of recreational opportunities.

The team also was uncertain about where they could find gas, food, camping, accommodations, and visitor information. The only way for local businesses to benefit from byway travelers is to provide them with services that all travelers need and expect to purchase—gas, food, accommodations, recreational equipment, and guide services.

Once on this Byway, navigation is easy. What is not easy, however, is the traveler's preplanning process. On the Internet, detailed information about what to see and do on the Tabeguache Byway is slim, as is information regarding travel times, accommodations, and recreational choices.

The following proposed plan takes into account the limited organizational capacity and realistic expectations of an all-volunteer Byway Council, and outlines a three-phases approach for wayfinding improvements.

### Phase One: Tools for Preplanning and Preparing for Travel

- The focus of Phase One is the investment of an expanded Internet presence. Providing more extensive descriptions, history and related information on each of the significant Byway sites will encourage prospective travelers to search for places and experiences that may interest them personally. This roadway is rural in nature. To diminish uncertainties for people new to the area, the byway must provide the precise location of available attractions and visitor services. We recommend that the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic Byway maintain its current dedicated website, adding itineraries to the existing website [www.utbyway.com](http://www.utbyway.com), and to the state's tourism portal [www.coloradocom](http://www.coloradocom). In addition, the byway should participate in the development of a proposed new regional tourism website that will focus on outdoor recreation in the region.

The other priority for Phase One is a good detailed map for distribution in Visitor Centers in Grand Junction, Montrose, Ridgeway, Ouray, and Moab. This portable map does not need to be expensive, but

must meet the traveler’s need for reassurance that they will indeed be able to eat, sleep, gas up and recreate in the territory ahead.

**Phase Two: Rebuilding Signage at both Gateways**

Partner with BLM, USFS, other regional agencies, and with the San Juan Skyway to provide entryway signage that can orient travelers at both Gateways. In this second phase, clarify what makes this byway unique, and feature the “Tier One Attractions” of the byway. Spell out what people can experience and introduce the new target for outdoor recreationists.

Designate an agency or organization to be responsible for the maintenance of each new Gateway sign and kiosk. Make sure that signage for these Tier One locations is easy to find and to read. In addition, work with CDOT Region 3 to redesign navigational signage for Whitewater and Placerville Gateways.

**Phase Three: Signage, Navigation and Interpretation for Tier Two Sites**

The final stage of the refreshing of the Unaweep and Tabeguache wayfinding system is the production of new signs for selected smaller sites to replace damaged signage. These include museums, historical buildings, trailheads, natural areas, mining artifacts, overlooks, etc. Prioritize sites and identify partners who may fund one or more signs.

**REDESIGN FOR NEW PRIORITIES**

For visitors, this byway offers astonishing beauty, stories of national significance, and a vast and pristine backcountry. For local citizens and public agencies who are stewards of these lands and stories, the wayfinding system will prove to be a very reliable tool to help protect these precious scenic and historic resources.

## Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway



Photo by Jon Schler

The San Miguel River flows through the Unaweep Canyon



Photo by Jon Schler

Byway navigation sign  
outside Placerville



Photo by Jon Schler

The BLM Gateway Interpretive Kiosk near  
Whitewater



Photo by Jon Schler

Section of The Hanging Flume, first built in 1887-91, then  
reconstructed in 2012 by the Interpretive Association of  
Western Colorado with Colorado State Historical Funds

## 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 Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic & 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 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 to form 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?*

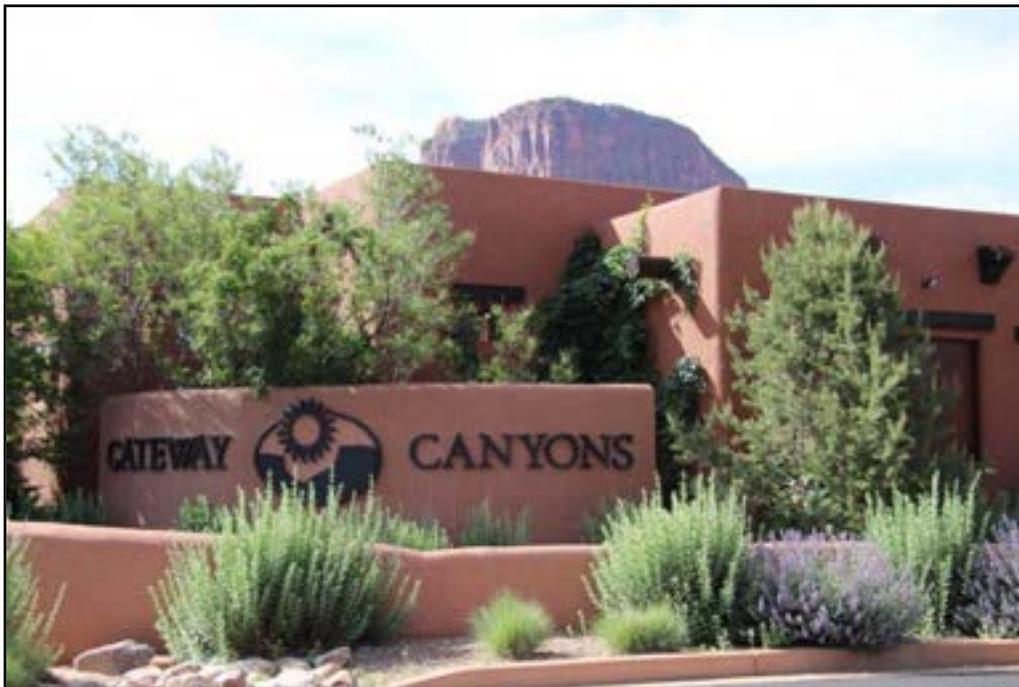
### Do Again

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.*

## The Components of Wayshowing

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. 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.
- 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.



Gateway Canyons

Photo by Jon Schler

## Method of Assessment

“You simply must inform travelers that they have to make preparations before they get here. They can’t count on finding services (gas, food, lodging, information) in the next town.”

- Vicky Nash, Assessment Team Member, 2018

Often the difficulty in providing effective wayshowing lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. In June 2018 an on-the-road experience was conducted along the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic & Historic Byway to answer some of these questions. Specifically, the experience sought to:

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

Detailed “never ever” traveler reactions to specific locations are found in Appendix A.

### Identifying Sites for Evaluation

The twenty-five (25) attractions listed below comprised the targets for assessment. They were assembled in two steps. First, Amanda Tomlinson, Byway Director, was asked to identify a list of historical, cultural, and recreational sites that have attracted the highest number of travelers, or have been especially meaningful for many travelers. Her “Top Ten Locations” provided the framework for the traveler-related assessment. Jon Schler, who worked with the early development of the Byway, completed the list of attractions. The locations he added are in italics.

### Cultural Heritage Sites

- Driggs Mansion and Thimble Rock
- Charcoal Oven
- Hanging Flume
- *Restoration Site of Hanging Flume*
- Redvale Historical Buildings
- Placerville School
- *Ute Historical marker*
- *Norwood Museum*
- *Sewemup Mesa*
- *Mining Site for Uranium for first atomic bomb*
- *Ball Park Flats in Nucla where Uranium Workers meet annually*
- *Escalante/Dominguez Marker*
- *Naturita Museum*

### Recreation Sites

- Gateway Canyons/Auto Museum
- Paradox Recreation Trail (newly added)
- Nucla Loop spur
- River Sites in the San Miguel Canyon
- *Unawep Seep (wildlife viewing)*
- *West Creek Day Use Area*

### Pull offs

- Lone Cone Geological Feature
- *Grand Valley Overlook*
- *Wild Cat Trailhead (Unawep Divide interpretation)*

### Visitor Information

- *Grand Junction Visitors Center*
- *Montrose Visitor Center*
- *Norwood/Naturita Visitors Center*



Photo by Jon Schler

Hanging Flume Overlook

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 no knowledge of the area. They were given the list of stakeholder-identified 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 encouraged to use any mobile devices available to them. One team of four traveled from Gateway to Nucla. A second team of three (one “never ever” and two tourism professionals) traveled the byway “in reverse”, from the Placerville Gateway to the exit interview in Nucla.

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 tools “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”

On-the-road and again 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 regarding each location is found in Appendix A.

## Recommendations

### **Organizational Development: Findings**

At its inception, the Unaweep and Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway was governed by a council that included representatives from all three counties (Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel), mayors of four communities (Natirita, Nucla, Uravan and Norwood), representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (Grand Junction office) and United States Forest Service (Norwood office). Stakeholder participation was high, and everyone involved got to work on a byway project they were personally passionate about, and that they could share with their own neighbors.

The web of partnerships was very effective in competing for funding from the National Scenic Byways Program (Federal Highway Administration), and in securing funding and technical assistance from other sources. The Interpretive Association of Western Colorado played a key role in administering grants and provided “on loan” staff to the Unaweep Tabeguache projects. The Grand Junction BLM office and

Colorado Center for Community Development (CCCD), University of Colorado, both provided ongoing technical assistance for byway projects.

This strong organization began experiencing challenges in both funding and in human capacity. By 2010, the Corridor Management Plan noted that the organization may no longer have the capacity to accomplish the work that needed to be accomplished. Then in 2012, the National Scenic Byway Program was defunded by Congress, and the annual grants that had been awarded through the Colorado Scenic Byway Program dried up. No one was responsible for the upkeep of the established interpretive and directional signs, and funds were not found to reprint the four-color brochure and map.

This decline in the byway's ability to function seemed tied to a larger regional decline that came with the 2016 decommissioning of the Tri-state Generation and Transmission power station and the New Horizons coal mine. Limited human capacity was the other factor that limited the organizations' ability to produce the core work of the organization—delivering services that balance the protection and promotion of the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway.

Leaders in the region came together to begin planning how to diversify the economy, and commissioned a series of planning documents (See Appendix B). For the West End, they received a Wayfinding Master Plan (August 2017) and a Business Development and Diversification Action Plan (Feb 2018). Naturita Parks and Recreation received a Master Plan, and the towns of Naturita and Nucla each received a Beautification Plan.

#### **Organizational Development: Recommendations**

- The Byway Council must first understand where the Byway fits into the new regional vision for tourism that is swinging strongly to outdoor recreation. Next, they must clearly articulate their operational boundaries both to long-established partners (public land agencies and nonprofits) to the many new partners (trails and tourism groups). In this new landscape of expanded interest in types of recreation, the Council should deeply reexamine its dual role of protection and promotion of the byway corridor, and review the condition of the intrinsic assets that originally qualified it to be designated a state Scenic and Historic Byway twenty-five years ago.
- The Council members should ask themselves if they wish to serve current byway travelers who are primarily Cultural Heritage Travelers, and if so, if the organization has the capacity to take care of infrastructure required to give these travelers a high quality experience.

#### **Navigation: Findings**

*Lack of signing for Points of Interest created safety issues for us. Our driver was spending too much time focused on locating Points of Interest instead of driving. Many times, we passed an attraction before we realized it, then had to make a U-turn and go back.*

-Mark Burnell, CDOT  
2018 Assessment Team

Both teams noted that navigation is pretty straightforward once a traveler has entered the Byway. Although navigation and the route itself were clear from maps, the Points of Interest were difficult to find. Adequate signage for each should include pre-notification, signage at the turnout, and access information.

Signs Currently “Completely Unmarked”:

- Restoration site for the Hanging Flume (turn at the UMETCO sign)
- Placerville Park, Placerville School, Ute Historic Marker
- Norwood Museum
- Redvale Historical buildings
- Miguel Canyon, river access locations
- Charcoal Oven before the Hanging Flume
- Divide Road

Signs Weathered or Damaged:

- Sewemup Mesa sign is fully bleached out by the sun
- Uranium signs are starting to deteriorate
- Plexiglas needs replacing on the Uravan panels
- BLM Unawep Seep site sign is completely bleached out



Photo by Jon Schler

Sewemup Mesa sign is fully bleached out by the sun

Signs Hidden by Foliage or Installed Out of Drivers’

Sight-line:

- BLM sign of US 50 that introduces the Byway before Whitewater
- Grand Valley Overlook (sign reads Divide Road, but makes no mention of Overlook)
- Wildcat Trailhead MM 13 (behind a gate)
- Unawep Seep. There is a sign for Wildlife Viewing in front of a viewing platform
- Paradox Recreation Trailhead
- West Creek Day Use Area (with a pit toilet)
- Nature Conservancy site (with restroom)



Photo by Jon Schler

Wildcat Trailhead MM13 is behind a gate

Pre-notification Signage Needed:

- Lone Cone. Team wished we had earlier notification of coming turn, and interpretive information about the geological feature itself)
- Thimble Rock at Driggs Mansion needed advance highway sign
- Ute Historical Marker needs a Point of Interest sign

Signage too Small, or Lacking in Detail:

- Escalante Dominguez sign is nice, but wished it were larger

### **Navigation: Recommendations**

- After a day on the Byway, several Assessment Team members noted that they had seen few indicators of available recreation. In fact, there is an abundance of opportunity: fishing, kayaking, canoeing, camping, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and roads for Jeeps and off-road vehicles. There are, however, few visual clues (like trailhead signs) that can communicate the possibilities to visitors to create a baseline for decision making. Inventory signage for recreation.

### **Gateways: Findings**

Both assessment teams stopped in the Grand Junction Visitors Center. The staff knew the Unaweep Tabeguache Byway existed, but could find neither maps nor print material to provide byway orientation. The first team that was directed to enter the Northern Gateway at Whitewater completely missed the BLM portal signage on US 50 between Grand Junction and Whitewater that introduces the byway, and noted that signage was inadequate at the turn off from Highway 50 onto Highway 141. The directional signage to the Gateway Resort itself was excellent; however, the front desk personnel did not know about the Byway, and the only print information available to visitors was a map of Grand Junction. The team that entered from the north did not find a printed map until they got to the second to the last stop on the itinerary—The Ballpark Flats.

The second team was directed to enter the byway from the Southern Gateway at Placerville and stopped for information both at the Montrose Visitors Center and Ute Museum (operated by the state of Colorado). There was a rich array of printed resources in the Montrose Visitor Center, and the staff was exceedingly well informed about all aspects of the Unaweep Tabeguache Byway. At a second stop in Montrose, the Ute Museum, the front desk staff was not familiar with the Byway, and there was no printed map or other visitor information.

Upon arrival in Placerville, the team noted that there was no signage to identify Placerville School, Placerville Park, or the Ute Historical Marker. The General store provided a map of highway 141. Gateway information is needed so byway visitors have a sense of arrival—“You are Here!” The team did find a “Byway Begins” sign after they left town. They were struck by the prominent signage in Placerville that points to the San Juan Skyway.

At a minimum, the gateways need a detailed map that indicates towns, attractions, and the unique features of the byway. Because the route has limited services, the map should also indicate (using universal symbols) those locations where travelers can get information and visitor services.

### **Gateway: Recommendations**

- This travel region has unusually dense concentration of Visitor Centers, all operated by knowledgeable staff and volunteers: Grand Junction, Montrose, Ouray, Ridgeway, and Moab. Make sure the byway establishes a relationship and stays “top of mind” for these influencers who come face-to-face with travelers seeking advice about how to spend their time and money in western Colorado. Whitewater and Placerville are the gateways for this byway, and one could argue that at the northern end of the byway, Gateways Resort also serves as a natural portal. (The resort’s very name suggests that function.)
- At a minimum, produce a printed map that indicates towns, attractions and the unique features of the byway. Because the byway has limited visitor services, it is critical that it spells out precise locations for gas, food, lodging and information. The map need not be expensive, but designed to

help local influencers get travelers to a starting point and identify precise places that they can find gas, food, lodging, and information.

- Strengthen the navigational signage to the Whitewater gateway by working with the CDOT Regional Engineer. Work with BLM to refresh their orientation kiosk at the Whitewater Gateway.
- Redesign gateway signage at Placerville to consolidate information about two byways that come together at this junction—the Unaweep Tabeguache and the San Juan Skyway. Work with the San Juan Skyway on redesign of Orientation kiosk, and with CDOT Regional Engineer for placement of navigational signs.

**Interpretation: Findings**

*“In brochures, there were some brief descriptions of places, but there was no signage to inform visitors about the importance or significance of either the area or any of the specific places we searched for ... Unfortunately, I didn’t learn much about these topics”*

-Freddy Witarasa, MSU professor

Interpretation is a communication process, a method of revealing meanings and relationships of natural and cultural heritage to the public. It is also a means of providing first-hand experiences through objects, artifacts, landscapes or sites. The Unaweep Tabeguache Byway has made regular investments in interpretation, most easily tracked through the series of grants that were awarded to the Unaweep Tabeguache Byway over a seventeen year period through the National Scenic Byways Grant Program.

1993	UT Interpretive Plan	SB1993CO-09	\$15,000
1993	UT San Miguel River Facilities	SB-1993-CO-10	\$20,750
1999	UT Interpretive Project	SB-1999-CO-09	\$42,940
2001	UT Interpretive Center	SB-2001-CO-11	\$75,000
2005	UT Marketing Plan	SB-2005-CO-08	\$64,800
2006	UT Hanging Flume Interpretive	SB-2006-CO-13	\$53,100
2010	UT Corridor Management Plan	SB-2010-CO-02	\$72,000

Although our 2018 “never-ever” Assessment Team member (box above) was disappointed about not finding information on historic sites and on the cultures of the past and present, the Council and its partners have used many methods throughout the years to provide ways to connect travelers to place in a meaningful way. Methods used most frequently are interpretive panels and kiosks, museums exhibits, or a conversation with a local. An excellent example is the Rimrocker Historical Society, a Society formed fifty-three years ago to preserve the stories of Nucla, the place where uranium and vanadium were milled. The Society offers a museum, and has also built the campground where miners come for their annual reunion.

The most recent example of an interpretive opportunity is the reconstruction of the Hanging Flume which carried water to the hydraulic mining operations of the Montrose Placer Mining Company. It was constructed from 1888-91 at a cost of \$173,000. In 2012, a 48-foot long section of the flume was

reconstructed, and is now visible high up on a canyon wall to give travelers an awe-inspiring look at the mining technology of the 1800s.

Another of our Assessment Team members commented at the end of the day, “If someone just drove this byway with no preparation, they might think the only two worthwhile things to stop for are the Gateways Resort and the Hanging Flume!” Clearly, both missed the feeling of this extraordinary place, an understanding of the powerful geology, and the layers of human habitation that have followed.

### **Interpretation: Recommendations**

- Outline what makes this place unique and what stories you want to share with travelers. Refresh the museum and rebuild interpretive panels that communicate the core of your story, keep informed of (ever-changing) travel trends, study the ways today’s travelers like to receive information. Consider building an APP for mobile devices, and consider whether the organization can support (with time) a social media strategy. Consider new ways to connect travelers with locals.

## **Action Plan**

The following proposed plan takes into account the limited organizational capacity of an all-volunteer Byway Council.

- It assumes that the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic Byway will maintain its own dedicated Website, and will also be one of many partners that will submit information to a regional agency that has the capacity to consolidate regional information in a high-performing website that will serve multiple organizations throughout the region.
- It assumes that it will consider the West End Wayfinding Master Plan (8-17-17) for basic design guidelines and placement, and produce panel content that meets byway goals.
- It assumes continuing partnerships with public land agencies and nonprofit organizations that share the stewardship responsibility for the land, water, and wildlife on the wildlife corridor.

### **Phase One: Provide Planning Information for Travelers**

The focus of Phase One is the investment in a powerful Internet presence. Provide in depth history and related information on each of the significant byway sites. To diminish uncertainties, provide precise locations of available attractions/experiences and visitor services.

Publish and distribute a good detailed byway map for distribution in Visitor Centers in Grand Junction, Montrose, Ridgeway, Ouray, and Moab. This portable map does not need to be expensive, but must meet the byway traveler’s need for reassurance that they will indeed be able to eat, sleep, gas up and recreate in the territory ahead.

### **Phase Two: Rebuild Signage at both Gateways**

Create and construct orientation signage at both Gateways. In this second phase, clarify what makes this byway unique, and feature the Tier One Attractions of the byway. Spell out the range of what people can experience, and information for outdoor recreationists.

Designate an agency or organization to be responsible for the maintenance of each new Gateway sign and kiosk. Work with CDOT Region 4 on navigational signage for Whitewater and Placerville Gateways.

**Phase Three: Provide new Signage for Tier Two Sites**

The final stage of the refreshing of the Unawep and Tabeguache wayfinding system is the production of new signs for selected smaller sites to replace damaged signage. These include museums, historical buildings, trailheads, natural areas, mining artifacts, overlooks, etc. Prioritize sites and identify partners who may fund 1 or more signs.

**REDESIGN FOR NEW PRIORITIES**

For visitors, this byway offers astonishing beauty, stories of national significance, and a vast and pristine backcountry. For local citizens and public agencies who are stewards of these lands and stories, the wayfinding system will prove to be a very reliable tool to help protect these precious scenic and historic resources.

## Partnerships

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

- Work with regional engineer to improve navigational signage at gateways in both Whitewater and Placerville
- Work with regional engineer to provide pre-notification for Tier One sites

Projects to be developed in partnership with counties

- Work with county road departments to install directional signage where the Byway intersects with county roads

Projects to be undertaken in partnership with the towns of Nucla, Natarita, and Norwood

- Develop wayfinding signage within each town (economic development tool)
- Promote the rich variety of lodging opportunities all along the byway
- Visitor Center start developing electronic delivery systems for information

Projects to be undertaken by the Byway Organization

- Maintain a top quality website for Unaweeep Tabeguache
- Create a portable Byway map for distribution to all area Visitor Centers
- Develop historical information in electronic format so it can be downloaded by travelers

Projects to be developed with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and USFS and BLM

- Partner with public agency partners to Update and Refresh Interpretive Signs
- Improve watchable wildlife programs along the Byway (great birding!)
- Develop information for public access to fishing along the Byway
- Address how travelers can locate camping
- Integrate watchable wildlife into the expanded interpretive program
- Create birding itinerary and/or Colorado Birding Tour brochure.  
<https://coloradobirdingtrail.com/site/unaweeep-canyon/> Indigo (rare) Buntings and rare butterflies)

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A

Byway notes and observations from the Wayfinding Assessment Teams during their on-the-road tour of the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway on June 7, 2018.

#### Observations by Individual Assessment Team Members

*Volunteer, Freddy Witarsa-- CMU professor*

- Navigation is pretty straightforward once you know what highways you are supposed to be on, but signs, especially entering the Byway, could be installed.
- There was one sign in Placerville to notify us where the byway started
- There are no “attraction, 1 mile ahead” signs
- On brochures, there are some brief descriptions of places, but there were no signs or “points of interest “to inform travelers about the importance or significance of the area or points of interest
- Some cell phone service and internet access was available, but neither were reliable
- For me, the top attractions were the natural views of rock formations, mountain views, river and trees.
- What makes this byway unique is the historical context, I couldn’t learn much about details during the trip (stories, stories, stories!) That’s why I loved lunch at True Grit.
- There are tons of recreational areas, as you can tell from National Forest access points). You can also explore via bicycle and motorcycles.
- I can see myself planning such a trip, but I would need to do extensive research beforehand.
- Unfortunately, I wasn’t paying much attention to how safe it was for bicyclists
- The tour felt safe for me.
- Interpretation? Unfortunately, I didn’t learn much about these topics, other than brief information in brochures. For instance Redvale was so brief in the brochures.
- Asking questions in town from locals can definitely get me information on visitor services, but I would definitely have to plan it out ahead of time. Accommodations information needs to be listed on one of the brochures.
- The Montrose Visitor Center had excellent brochures and Jennifer Lawshouer was very well informed. She gave us a map with an alternative backroad route.
- We stopped by the Ute Indian Museum Information Center. It only had fliers and a brochure on the Hanging Flume. That was it. The front desk person was not informed about the Unaweep Tabeguache Byway
- Going into Placerville, we saw signs for The San Juan Byway, but not the Unaweep Byway!
- In Placerville we found a post office sign, but no signs for Placerville School, Placerville Park, or the Ute Historical Marker
- At the general store, the clerk knew about the byway, and had a free tour booklet on Historic Highway 141
- In Norwood, the Norwood Museum was not marked (nor could we find it on the iphone map), nor was there a Byway sign when we exited town. There was a sign pointing to the road for the Lone Cone Geological Feature, but we wished we had an earlier warning, and there was no information on the formation for travelers
- My iphone mapped Redvale from Norwood, but we only saw one picnic table.
- In Nucla, we saw one sign, but nothing much about it

- In Naturita, I had ATT service, but no internet.
- There was a byway sign leaving Naturita-The Rimrock Hotel had some brochures-The San Miguel River sign should be on the left of the road map(but the river crosses at the bridge)
- National Forest Access mm 96 sign

*Observer, Lenore Bates, CDOT Program Director, Colorado Scenic Byways Program*

- The junction of 145/62 a San Juan Scenic Byway Signage, but needs one for Unaweep Tabeguache
- Remove sign that reads "Begin Unaweep Tabeguache" and consolidate with San Juan Skyway sign. That two byways come together in this place is important information for travelers Americas Byway sign that needs to be removed—it is not designated a national byway
- MM659 has a
- Ute Historical Marker could get Point of Interest signage
- MM98. Map is wrong. Move the river to the other side of the road
- Hwy 145 needs a byway sign
- There was a brochure on Lone Cone at one time
- Amanda notes there is no byway sign at Hwy 97

*Volunteer, Mark Burnell—CDOT Engineer*

- The route was easy to follow, but finding Points of Interest was difficult. Most sites lacked adequate signing (advance, at turn-out/access)
- Interpretive signage at the points of interest had good information. Some of the information signs are weathered, and/or damaged
- The "never-ers" in the front seat did not use any of the following to help with navigation: a webpage specific to this Byway, a map, a route description of travel times between sites
- Team didn't find either cell phone service or internet access anywhere along the byway
- Leaving Grand Junction, there is a BLM sign located ¼ mile before the turn that has interpretive signage about the byway. Junction 141 is ½ mile away, too far out. Travelers in the front seat did not see it.
- In Whitewater, Front-seaters saw a Divide Road sign, but there was nothing for the Grand Valley Overlook which has a byway sign (hidden).
- Front-seaters missed the Wild Cat Trailhead around MM 133. Small easy-to miss sign on the left hand side of the road.
- Group found the Interpretive sign for Thimble Rock at the Driggs Mansion. There were no advance highway sign
- They missed the Unaweep Seep wetland meadow. The advanced sign is for Wildlife Viewing, not the Seep
- Limited highway signage for West Creek Day Use Area (with good pit toilet) caused them to miss this important restroom stop
- Found Gateway Resort. There is no byway information at the resort We missed the
- Sewemup Mesa on Z6 Road has no advance signing to find from the highway. no attraction signs. There is something after Z6 road, but the information displayed is very weathered
- Charcoal Oven before the Hanging Flume. They missed the turnoff
- There are two Point of Interest Signs for the Hanging Flume: 1 at the 1-mile sign, and 1 at the pull-out
- Uranium Site signs(2)less than a mile up the road. They found the first sign, missed the second.
- UMETCO sign that takes visitors to see the restoration of the Hanging Flume. No highway signs present. They missed it.

- No highway signs for the Uranium mine that supplied uranium for the first atomic bombs. Information signs were weathered and difficult to read.
- Missed the signage for the Paradox Recreation Trail. No one in the car saw the sign
- Ball Park Flats built by the Rimrocker Historical Society. No highway signs, nothing visible from the highway. Campground marks where the uranium workers still meet every year. The team did find a physical map here at the campground
- Missed the Nature Conservancy restroom. Saw no markings
- Almost missed the Dominguez-Escalante Historical Marker on highway 90, just before Naturita
- Good visibility for the Naturita Visitor Center, and they located it
- Naturita Museum was not easy to find from the highway
- Nucla. Did not see access points to the river in the San Miguel Canyon
- Top three attractions were Gateway car museum, Hanging Flume and Charcoal Oven
- Unique assets of this Byway are the mining history, especially the Hanging Flume
- The interpretive information found along the byway is primarily on the theme of mining history
- For the development of recreation, the byway should consider hiking and off-road vehicle routes
- Visitor services were easy to find in Gateway (gas station, general store, food trailer) and in Naturita (lots of commercial businesses)
- Lodging in Gateway is very expensive. I think the Byway target audience would be priced out inn Gateway
- Navigation and the route itself was clear from maps; the points of interest were hard to find
- Lack of signing for points of interest created safety issues. Driver was spending too much time focused on locating points of interest instead of driving. Many times we passed the point before we realized it, then had to make a U-turn and go back.

*Volunteer, Vicki Nash, Resort Trends—Tourism Professional*

- This was an easy drive, and the route does not need a four-wheel drive vehicle
- Our travelers did not use a map, solely using road signs and mile markers until they found the white booklet “Scenic and Historic Highway 141 Tour” at the Ball Park Flat
- If you didn’t know what was along this route, you probably wouldn’t stop many places except Gateway Resort and the Hanging Flume
- Travelers had to physically look for interp signs . They made no attempt to find resources on their mobile devices
- They missed the BLM sign on US 50 between Grand Junction that introduces the Byway
- They missed the Grand Valley Overlook, as they didn’t know what it was. Irene saw the Divide Road sign, but didn’t think it went to the Overlook
- Wildcat Trailhead had a USGS sign behind a gate. Needs better highway signs
- Thimble Rock with Driggs Mansion. Good interp signs, and many people (including 2 motorcycles) pulled off following a “Point of Interest” sign. No cell service
- Everyone in the car missed the Unawep Seep sign. Mark caught a sign in front of a viewing platform on the left. There was a sign for “wildlife viewing”
- West Creek Day Use Area nice sign. Two motorcyclists from Phoenix were using a CTO map and a tear-out from the Official State Vacation Guide. Satisfactory toilet
- Gateway Resort and Auto Museum. Front desk had no information on the Byway, nor on the Hanging Flume. Only a Grand Junction map was available
- Sewemup Mesa on Z6 road. We asked driver to turn in. Back on the road we saw an interpretive sign totally bleached out from the sun.

- Couldn't find the Charcoal Oven, or see the road to get closer. There was a Point of Interest sign a mile away, but no mention of the Oven
- Hanging Flume has a nice big pullout that is well-maintained. Very clean and no trash on the ground, even though there were no trash cans. Very nice interpretive signage. Might be nice to install a viewing scope. Good sign with an arrow "Point of Interest"
- Uranium Site Signs are starting to fail. We like the CO signs best.
- The Uravan Plexiglas needs replacing
- Travelers just need to know they have to look for interpretive sign
- After we left, we realized that we had seen a display on the Paradox Recreation Trail at the Uranium Mine stop
- The Dominguez-Escalante sign is very nice, It could be larger
- Naturita has a pretty entry sign, and a very nice Visitor Center which is stocked with lots of information on the Byway. Very nice restrooms
- Love Blondie's Drive I
- Found a printed map at the Naturita Visitors Center
- Top three attractions were Gateway Canyons Resort, Hanging Flume, and beautiful rock formation
- Unique quality is how much fun it is to drive for car and motorcycle enthusiasts. It's curvy with not much traffic
- Recreation is growing. It seems like there are good mountain biking trails, perhaps to rival Moab and Fruita. Good base camp location.
- Interpretive themes that emerged are mining, ranching and unique geology
- Travelers need to be made aware that there are limited visitor services

*"Never-Ever" Volunteers, Mary Rose Stacknik (Alpine Bank) and Eileen Cunningham*

- It was easy to stay on the byway. Great scenery, nice roads
- Some spots between Gateway to Uravan were boring
- You need a telescope at the Hanging Flume to look closer at the Flume
- Good information on the interpretive signs West Creek Day Use Area sign had a BB Gun Shot hole over the scannable symbol, so unable to scan
- We finally found a printed map at the second to the last stop—Visitors Center and Ball Park Flats
- Top attractions were views in the Unaweep Canyon (fabulous), Gateway Crayons Car Museum, Hanging Flume, Small community charm was very appealing in Naturita and Nucla
- Bathrooms were clean
- Great photo opportunities-Good birding opportunities
- QUIET
- Recreationists as new travelers could include fly fishing, birding, camping
- Road is too narrow for road bikes
- Possible passport program for the Byways (similar to the McInnemans in Oregon)
- Very good explanation of history on signage at stops
- Nice friendly people
- Needs more "people stories and more "mining stories
- Everything is fine if you plan ahead. Not a lot of visitor services are available
- Find camping and lodging only in larger communities
- Need better signs before Whitewater turning from Highway 50 to Highway 141
- Speed limit may be a little fast, and it may be dangerous for bicyclists

## **Appendix B**

*NATURITA Main Street Beautification, Winter 2018-2019, by UTA West Team*

[[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mj\\_JYBFS1ESK4VOOWeioRa0jXZSS8oXn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mj_JYBFS1ESK4VOOWeioRa0jXZSS8oXn/view?usp=sharing)]

*NUCLA Main Street Beautification, Winter 2018-2019, by UTA West Team*

[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ITUWAQfiPiJdhbskX1mdFe0Pk8-AKhWN/view?usp=sharing>]

*Town of Naturita Parks & Recreation Master Plan, December 21, 2018 by DHM Design, Landscape Architecture Land Planning Urban Design, Durango, CO*

*WEST END Business Development & Diversification Action Plan, February 2018, by RPI Consulting LLC, Durango, CO*

*West End Wayfinding Master Plan, 8.17.2017, by DHM Design, Landscape Architecture Land Planning Urban Design, Durango, CO*

[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FNpc-RieNojoAPCX0KIGQttO28pPDm07/view?usp=sharing>]

## Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic Byway (113 miles)

Byway communities include Whitewater, Gateway, Uravan, Naturita, Nacla, and Norwood



<http://www.coloradodot.info/travel/scenic-byways/assets/scenic-byways-maps>