

# Wayfinding and Wayshowing on Colorado Scenic & Historic Byways

*A Statewide Summary (2008 – 2019)  
of accomplishments of twenty-six Byways*



June 2019

## A Statewide Summary of Wayshowing Accomplishments On twenty-six Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways, 2008-2019

When the Colorado Byways Program was first established in 1989, wayshowing involved producing both a good map and a beautiful brochure, and installing enough signage in the landscape to help travelers navigate their way along a scenic roadway. Most byways gave priority attention to developing and maintaining materials that would educate the public about what was available, and convince travelers to explore their treasured stretch of roadway. Over the last ten years, however, widespread dependence on mobile devices has created a sea change in traveler expectations for electronically served destination information.

The human and financial costs of developing and maintaining an effective electronic presence has fallen hard upon byway organizations, virtually all operated by volunteers. One byway director noted that, “We rose to the occasion with each new development, moving from a single page presence on destination websites to dedicated websites for each byway. Social media was the promising new challenge, and now demands considerable time to keep up with. Next came website optimization for mobile devices, and now we are feeling pressure to add a mobile applications (apps).”

The summary report that follows describes wayfinding projects that have been accomplished over the last ten years by both individual byways and by regional groups. This information was collected during the summer of 2019 when byway directors and board members were asked to describe which of the recommendations that were contained in their individual Byway Wayfinding Assessments had been addressed.

Key recommendations are given for inclusion in the work plan for the Colorado Byways Program, and for individual byways to be included in their annual cycle of work. These recommendations address core wayfinding issues, acknowledging the operational and financial hardships that have been experienced through the seven-year hiatus of support triggered by the 2012 defunding of the National Scenic Byway program. Many Colorado byways reported a backlog of wayfinding “wish lists” that local groups have not yet been able to fund.

### Recommendations for the Colorado Byways Program

- Reassert the mission and core values of the scenic byways program -- the preservation of scenic beauty and of those critical assets that instill a sense of place.
- Increase the use of Context Sensitive Design in wayfinding tools as a vehicle to inspire byway managers to cast “fresh eyes” on their own byways. Partner with the National Park Service to conduct technical trainings on Trail Ridge Road, affording byway leaders the opportunity to learn new concepts of planning a design. (Note: Context Sensitive Design is included in the Strategic Plan for the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission.)
- Formalize a program that introduces local byway leaders to regional CDOT planners who can connect local byways with landscape architects, engineers, and other CDOT resources.
- Incentivize byway groups to plan together gateway wayfinding projects that integrate navigational and interpretive information from two or more regional byways.

### Recommendations for Individual Byways

- Conduct a sign inventory every two years and meet with regional CDOT personnel to understand how to integrate byway signage into the region's annual sign maintenance program.
- Upgrade byway wayfinding systems with gateway installations that give travelers an overview of experiences offered on the full length of the byway. Build wayfinding systems with cohesive system-wide design.
- Install signage that warns travelers of dangerous road and weather conditions (i.e. four-wheel drive only).
- Evaluate all wayfinding tools (brochures, maps, websites, signage) for multi-modal content that includes pedestrians, bicyclists, tour buses, ADA / Universal Design. Broaden the target audiences beyond drivers.
- Incorporate public information symbols that include international signage, icons and symbols as wayfinding materials are updated.

## Wayfinding Assessments on Colorado's Scenic and Historic Byways

### 2008

Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

### 2012

Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Frontier Pathways Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Highway of Legends Scenic and Historic Byway

### 2013

Lariat Loop Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

San Juan Skyway -- All American Road\*\*\*

Guanella Pass Scenic and Historic Byway

Mount Evans Scenic and Historic Byway

### 2014

Colorado River Headwaters Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Cache la Poudre North Park Scenic and Historic Byway

Pawnee Pioneer Trails Scenic and Historic Byway

Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway

Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway

South Platte River Trail

### 2015

Dinosaur Diamond Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Top of the Rockies Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

West Elk Loop Scenic and Historic Byway

Flat Tops Scenic and Historic Byway

Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway

Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway

### 2018

Trail of the Ancients Scenic and Historic Byway—National Byway\*\*

Trail Ridge Road—All American Road\*\*\*

Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway

Alpine Loop Scenic and Historic Byway

Tracks Across Borders Scenic and Historic Byway

### 2019 (scheduled)

Summary of Wayfinding Assessments on Colorado's Scenic and Historic Byways

\*\* *Designated as a National Scenic Byway (120 total in U.S., 11 in Colorado)*

\*\*\**Designated as All American Road (31 total in U.S., 2 in Colorado)*