

FLATTOPS TRAIL SCENIC AND HISTORIC BYWAY

CORRIDOR MANAGMENT PLAN

COMPILED AND AUTHORED BY THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MARCH 1994

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INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program was established by executive order of Governor Roy Romer on March 31, 1989. This program is "a statewide partnership intended to provide recreational, educational, and economic benefits to Coloradans and visitors through designation, interpretation, protection, promotion, and infrastructure development of outstanding tourist routes in Colorado".

During the years since this program was established, efforts have been focused on designating Byways, and from a statewide response of 43 Byways proposals, 17 Byways were selected for designation. The Flat Tops Trails Scenic and Historic Byway was one of the 17 designated by the State. The Flat Tops Trail Byway also became the 101st National Scenic and Historic Byway on October 16, 1991.

Designation is the first of five elements of the overall program and the implementation of the four other elements of enhancement and protection, interpretation, infrastructure, and promotion and marketing are ongoing.

HISTORY

The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway area has provided residents and visitors hundreds of years of exceptional lifestyle and recreational enjoyment. The Ute peoples utilized portions of this route as a major trail system to access hunting and fishing grounds. Euro-Americans came into the area in the 1800's for hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities.

This area became part of the White River Plateau Timber Reserve on October 16, 1891. In 1901 the Reserve was renamed as the White River Forest Reserve by Teddy Roosevelt, who frequented the area on hunting excursions.

The road that now travels over the trails of the Ute peoples and fur trappers was developed in parcels. The movement west brought increased development of the trail with wagons and livestock. Ranchers accessing their homesteads and summer range also helped in the advancement of the trail. Outfitter-guides needed access to their lodges and fishing areas. From 1929 to 1933 additional roads were constructed, further improving access to the area for the growing population in the region. The existing road from Phippsburg to Marvine was completed and graveled in 1961. In 1990 the towns of Meeker and Yampa and the counties of Rio Blanco and Routt, along with many other partners, proposed a Scenic and Historic Byway designation by the State of Colorado. Over a period of 18 months, partners worked closely with the Forest Service in preparation of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway proposal which emphasized a "working byway" and promoted the theme "Walk in the Footsteps" of the Ute Indians, Nathan Meeker, Teddy Roosevelt and Arthur Carhart. All these historical people helped shape the history of northwestern Colorado and had a tremendous impact on the growth of the state.

The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Committee was formed by representatives from the various partners to create a master plan for the development of the byway. The committee members meet regularly and have spent many hours completing this "Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Management Plan". The plan will be used as the guideline for planning, design, funding, project implementation, maintenance, operations and marketing. The planning process is ongoing and the development plan will naturally undergo changes and updates over the years of implementation.

The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway travels along Routt County, Rio Blanco County and Forest Service roads between the towns of Meeker and Yampa for 81 miles. Forty-six (46) miles of these roads are gravel and the road is not open in the winter to wheeled vehicles but becomes a popular snowmobile route. Some road improvements and dust abatement projects will be required in this plan.

EXPERIENCE ZONES

Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Interpretation Themes

The Flat Tops Trail showcases five (5) different "Experience Zones" identified as follows:

1. Ute Indian Experience Zone (1)
"A Way of Life" - Interpreting the Indian's way of life.
2. Ranching Experience Zone (2)
"Ranching, A Lifestyle" - Interpreting influences of Ranching and Agriculture.
3. Roosevelt Experience Zone (3)
"Land of Many Uses" - Interpreting multiple-use and conservation.
4. Carhart Experience Zone (4)
"Cradle of Wilderness" - Interpreting wilderness and the development of wilderness philosophy.
5. Meeker Experience Zone (5)
"Civilized-Western Culture Agriculture" - interpreting the influences of Nathan C. Meeker.

The Medicine Bow-Routt and White River National Forests have completed a design study entitled "The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Design Narrative" for funding and implementation of a major federally funded Capital Investment Project (CIP) for the Flat Tops Trail Byway. This document is referenced and supported in this Management Plan and provides detailed data for the projects to be completed on the two National Forests on this Scenic and Historic Byway. Many projects identified in this Management Plan are also identified in the Forest Service Plan and will be implemented through cooperative efforts using the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Committee as the central organizational group.

The Federal government approved the CIP for the Flat Tops Trail for nearly \$10,000,000. These funds were originally planned to be available in 1994, 1995, and 1996. 1994 funds were used primarily for interpretive sign planning. Fiscal Year 95 funds in the amount of \$170,000 will be utilized for fabrication of all interpretive signs and their installation. The major portion of implementation and construction funds will not become available to complete the project until after 2000.

GOALS

- I. The goals established as strategies to ensure a well thought-out and viable program resulting from this plan include:
 - A. Showcase the unique character of northwest Colorado featuring:
 1. Promote an understanding of the interrelationships between land use and land management and the public and private sectors.
 2. The unique and varying ecosystems and associated wildlife communities.
 3. The natural, rural experience.
 4. Management and entrepreneurial activities ongoing along the Byway.
 - B. Demonstrate Stewardship and Sustainability.
(Landscape, Partners and Construction)
 1. Demonstrate "a working byway" and resource sustainability.
 2. Modification should be allowable.
 3. Feature facility improvements along the Byway low in maintenance cost, of durable and natural design, attempting to maintain Visual Quality Objectives (VQO).
 - C. Collaborate (e.g. Partners, Resources and Research)
 1. Utilize partners in all phases of this project including materials, construction, operation and marketing.
 2. Include all resources (coordinate and integrate through all phases).
 3. Utilize research for scoping, design planning, design application and maintenance.
 - D. Provide access for the public throughout the Byway.
 1. Provide facility "Access for All".
 - E. Manage heritage resources of the Flat Tops Trail through Identification, Interpretation and Protection.
 1. Provide visitor interpretation of the Byway's heritage resources.
 2. Allow access to heritage resources (provide the means for them to be visited) .

F. Interpretation will seek to educate visitors in the following areas:

1. Interpret land use ethic and relationships between the public and private lands and uses.
2. Interpret multiple use/sustained yield concepts.
3. Interpret natural features and attractions.
4. Interpret history along the byway.
5. Interpret heritage resources along the byway.

G. Complement the image of local communities and enhance their potential for economic development.

1. Attract and reroute dispersed visitor use through marketing plans.
2. Capitalize on developing use in traditionally low use time frames (target users are driving for pleasure and winter sports).

OBJECTIVES

- I. These objectives serve as tactics to reach the established GOALS:
 - A. Involve public and partners throughout the lifetime of the project - Utilizing funds, labor and ideas to complete phases of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway.
 - B. Quality Facilities - Improve existing sites, plan for quality, durability and low maintenance.
 - C. Maintain existing recreation opportunities and multiple uses occurring along the byway.
 - D. Signage to provide continuity, education, sense of history, and foster an attitude of ownership and responsibility. (Featuring the commitment to "Footsteps", "Multiple-Use" and "Ecosystem Management".)
 - E. Provide and improve road access and public safety by signing, dust abatement, developing turnouts and overlooks and other road improvements.
 - F. Provide access to all users by varying challenge levels of access. Address Americans with Disabilities (ADA) access.
 - G. Along the byway corridor provide for natural settings and protect and display cultural resources.
 - H. Accentuate winter access by providing some year-round facilities to enhance enjoyment while protecting the ecosystem and public safety.
 - I. Utilize historic societies, ethnic and cultural groups to enhance a sense of history and heritage along the Byway.

I. Identification and Evaluation of Byway Resources

A. Natural Resources

1. Geologic

The dominant geological features visible from the Flat Tops Trail are the White River Plateau climaxing in the Flat Tops Wilderness and subsiding into the three river drainages the "Trail" traverses. The Flat Tops themselves range in elevation from 9,000 to 12,000 and are mainly the result of tertiary age basalt flows. The area has been modified by subsequent glaciation in the higher regions and contains almost no faulting or other significant geologic structures. Soil types are largely decomposed basaltic soils, silt, gravel and sands. Rocks and boulders of various morainal deposits also occur. The valley bottoms near Yampa contain visible volcanic plugs and are relatively broad. In the Meeker area the Grand Hogback juts up and is visible to the south of the byway. The area west of the Flat Tops is relatively flat because of the horizontal nature of the sedimentary units underlying it. Soils in the lower areas vary considerably because of variety in the underlying units but contain high contents of clay and sand. The area is marked by numerous surficial materials such as landslide and alluvial deposits. The elevation at Yampa is 7900 feet and the Flat Tops Trail rises to the top of Dunkley Pass to an elevation of 9763 feet. It then drops into the Williams Fork River Valley to 7979 feet and climbs to the summit of Ripple Creek Pass at 10,343 feet. It then drops down the White River Valley to the Town of Meeker to end at an elevation of 6289 feet.

2. Rivers/Streams/Lakes/Wetlands

The Flat Tops Trail travels across three major drainages, the Yampa River, the Williams Fork River and the White River. There are numerous streams and tributaries to these rivers along with many lakes and reservoirs. These river valleys and tributaries are developed for irrigation with numerous ditches and reservoirs having been constructed. The stream and river banks are rich in riparian and wetland habitat. The major lakes and reservoirs along the byway route are: Crosho Lake, Chapman Reservoir, Sheriff Reservoir, Vaughn Lake, Trappers Lake, and Lake Avery. Many other lakes are accessible by trail along the byway.

3. Wildlife

The variety of habitats along the Flat Tops Trail support a great diversity of wildlife and fish species. The White River Plateau is home to the largest elk herd in Colorado, healthy populations of mule deer, black bear, mountain lion and a reintroduced herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Beaver are responsible for many

of the wetland complexes in most drainages along the Byway. These wetland complexes and associated riparian corridors, in addition to the many lakes, reservoirs and glacial potholes, provide habitat for a variety of wetland dependent species including several species of waterfowl, amphibians, and passerines (including many neotropical migratory bird species). The cold water streams and lakes are home to the native Colorado River cutthroat trout as well as other non-native species of trout including the rainbow and brook trout. Other wildlife found along the Flat Tops Trail include small mammals such as the snowshoe hare, long-tailed weasel and porcupine in addition to many species of bats which inhabit crevices and caves, most abundant in the pinyon/juniper habitat type.

The White River provides winter range for numerous Federally Endangered bald eagles. In addition, many USFS Region 2 designated Sensitive Species and Federal Candidate Category 2 Species including, but not limited to, the northern goshawk, greater sandhill crane and white-faced ibis occur or may occur at certain times of the year along the Flat Tops Trail, based on available habitat.

4. Vegetation

The vegetation along the byway consists of hundreds of individual plant species which may be classified into a relatively few vegetation types. Each type lends a unique character to the landscape and has an associated value. These major vegetation types visible from the byway include:

- a. Alpine Tundra
- b. Aspen
- c. Douglas-fir
- d. Gamble Oak
- e. Grasslands and Meadows
- f. Lodgepole Pine
- g. Mountain Brush
- h. Pinyon/Juniper
- i. Riparian/Wetlands
- j. Sagebrush
- k. Engelmann Spruce/Subalpine Fir

Some vegetation management activities have taken place along the byway which include: Prescribed fire, timber sales and grazing. Some chemical spraying and natural control measures have been applied to various noxious weeds including houndstounge, toadflax, several types of thistle, henbane and leafy spurge.

B. Cultural Resources

1. Prehistoric

I. Identification and Evaluation of Byway Resources

A. Natural Resources

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B. Cultural Resources

1. Prehistoric

- a. The Flat Tops Trail area was a land that Indian people began inhabiting more than 10,000 years ago. Little is known of the Ute people prior to the year 1650. However, by 1650, it is known that they had acquired horses. They used horses for travel from winter to summer range, passing through and also living in this majestic country. No other tribes spent as much time in such elevated and awesome places. Game was plentiful and the mountain provided a safe refuge.

2. Historic

- a. The historic occupants of the Byway area were a band of the Northern Ute Indian tribe, later known as the White River Utes. Although little physical evidence of their presence remains, the reasons for their habitation of the area still attract visitors today. A "Way of Life" Zone for the Utes as a part of history will be interpreted at various locations along the Flat Tops Trail Byway.

- b. Other historic occupants of the Byway were the early settlers and ranchers. Remnants of their way of life still exist and will be identified, interpreted, and preserved in the "Ranching, a Lifestyle" Zone. The town of Yampa prospered as a supply center for the surrounding lettuce growers, timber industry and local ranchers, and was incorporated in 1906. Yampa has maintained much of its historical ambience with its broad unpaved streets, and old fashioned general store and many historical buildings. A Visitor Center is located at the Yampa Ranger District office that provides interpretive, historical, cultural and practical byway information to visitors of the byway.

Another "Visitor Center" in Meeker will service visitors on the Rio Blanco County end of the byway providing similar interpretive and informational services highlighting the "Civilized Agricultural" theme.

- c. Teddy Roosevelt visited the byway area on various hunting expeditions and his administration's emphasis on multiple-use and conservation will be interpreted in the "Roosevelt" zone.

Specific sites for interpretation/development in this Zone are:

- 1) Ripple Creek Overlook
- 2) Bear Creek sawmill
- 3) Lake Avery/Bel Aire Rearing Station
- 4) Lost Creek Ranger Station
- 5) Miller Creek Ranger Station
- 6) Various Campgrounds/Trailheads

- d. Arthur H. Carhart, a Forest Service landscape architect, urged the government to stop development of roads and homes around Trappers Lake. His efforts to protect areas such as Trappers Lake from development were the beginnings of the movement to establish Primitive Areas. This movement led to the Wilderness Act in 1964, which established congressionally mandated wilderness around the country. The Carhart Experience Zone, or "Cradle of Wilderness" will be interpreted with specific emphasis on the Trappers Lake area.

There is much Forest Service history associated with this byway which will be interpreted in the Carhart Zone. Specific sites to interpret this aspect are:

- 1) Trappers Lake
- 2) Ripple Creek Overlook
- 3) various trails & trailheads

- e. The Meeker incident occurred on September 29, 1879, when the Ute Indians at the White River Indian Agency upset over various mistreatment and continued unfulfilled promises of food and better circumstances, rebelled and killed the Indian Agent, Nathan Meeker and ten civilians employed or living at the agency. Major Thornburg and his troops who had been called in to assist and protect the Indian agency engaged the Utes in the battle of Milk Creek at approximately the same time.

The U.S. soldiers called in to assist after the incident established their military camp on the White River at the current site of the Town of Meeker. This was the last major Indian battle in Colorado and was a turning point for Colorado history. After the battle, the Utes were removed and taken to the hot, dry desert of Utah. The Indians would never again walk the various Ute trails through the Flat Tops as they once had.

This Civilized/Agricultural zone will be interpret through the development of "civilized" agriculture, towns, the historic events of the area and the interrelationships between the public and private lands. Specific sites for interpretation in this Zone are:

- 1) Ripple Creek Overlook
- 2) Snell Creek Corrals
- 3) Agency Park Overlook
- 4) White River Indian Agency Overlook
- 5) Towns of Meeker and Yampa
- 6) Lost Creek Ranger Station

- f. Current History

Current lifestyles and land use will be interpreted along the byway with emphasis on multiple-use. Interpretation of various recreational, agricultural, commercial, cultural, etc. activities along the byway. Information and education about the Scenic and Historic Byway program and vision for the byway will be interpreted.

g. Traditional Land Uses

Interpretation of traditional land uses focusing on the historical and current multiple-use philosophy in practice along the byway. Traditional land uses to be viewed and interpreted are:

- 1) Ranching/agricultural
- 2) Logging/sawmills/mining/oil and gas
- 3) Recreation (hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, etc)
- 4) Forest Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife activities

C. Recreational Opportunities

Recreational opportunities abound throughout the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway. These opportunities are identified below and development, preservation, interpreting, and marketing is explained in detail later in this plan.

1. Activities

- a. Motorized sightseeing (highway vehicles)
- b. Hiking
- c. Camping
- d. Fishing and Hunting
- e. Cross Country Skiing
- f. Snowmobiling
- g. Mountain Biking
- h. Horseback riding
- i. ATV & Motorcycle riding
- i. Heritage (cultural) activities

2. Settings and Opportunities

The entire byway has incredible scenery and the settings and visual opportunities are nearly limitless. However, the following sites are a few of the most scenic and provide enjoyment opportunities.

- a. Flat Tops
- b. Trappers Lake
- c. Chinese Wall(s)
- d. Ripple Creek Overlook

- e. Dunkley Pass Overlook
- f. Various lakes along the byway

3. Experiences

- a. Multiple Use Experience
- b. Historical Experience
- c. Recreation Experience
- d. Heritage (Cultural) Experiences (theater, musuems)
- e. Wilderness Experience

D. Hospitality Resources

There are many facilities at both ends of the byway and within 50 miles in nearly all directions. Along the byway between the towns of Meeker and Yampa there are few commercial facilities available to the traveler.

1. Lodging

There is an abundance and variety of hotel, motel, and condominium accomodations in the towns of Craig, Hayden, Yampa, Meeker, Oak Creek, and Steamboat Springs which are all within easy driving distance of the byway. Along the byway there are numerous Guest Ranches and Lodges that provide a variety of opportunities.

2. Restaurants

There are many restaurants in the towns mentioned above. The town of Yampa has one cafe located in the historic Royal Hotel. The town of Meeker has several restaurants and cafes. Cafes are also located thirty miles from Meeker at Marvine Creek and at Trappers Lake Lodge.

3. Other Attractions

There are many attractions along the byway including the earlier mentioned recreational and scenic opportunities as well as the following:

- a. Regular Theater performances at the Royal Hotel
- b. Museums in Yampa, Meeker, Craig, Hayden, and Steamboat Springs.
- c. Interpretive talks at Trappers Lake Campground.

E. Access

The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historical Byway is very accessible to the public by road networks as well as air service from several locations.

1. Road Network

The Flat Tops Trail Byway consists of 81 miles, 46 miles of which are gravel, of Routt and Rio Blanco County Roads and Forest Service Roads, between the towns of Meeker and Yampa. The Byway

is linked to State Highway 131 at Yampa and State Highway 13 at Meeker, both of which are approximately 40 miles from Interstate 70. Meeker is 49 miles and Yampa is 27 miles from US Highway 40.

2. Trails

Literally dozens of trails and trailheads are found along the Flat Tops Trail Byway. Identificatin and further development and improvement of these trails are specified in detail in the Forest Service Scenic and Historic Byway Design Narrative. Some of the trails identified are as follows:

- a. Sheriff Reservoir Trailheads
- b. Fish Creek Trail and Trailhead
- c. Baldy Trail Wilderness portal
- d. East Fork Trailhead
- e. Transfer Trailhead
- f. Rough Creek Trailhead
- g. Pagoda Lake/Chinese Wall Trailhead and Trails
- h. Shell Creek Trailhead and Trail
- i. Long-Lost Trailhead/Long Park and Lost Park Trails
- j. Big Ridge Trailhead and Trail
- k. Marvine Trailhead/East Marvine, Marvine and West Marvine Trails
- l. Ute Creek Trailhead and Trail
- m. Papoose Creek Trailhead and Trail
- n. Bailey Lake Trailhead and Oyster Lake Trail
- o. Hill Creek Trailhead/Hill Creek and Fowler Creek Trails
- p. South Fork Trailhead/South Fork Trail, Fowler Bench Trail, Cliff Lake Trail
- q. Lilly Pond Trailhead/Trail
- r. Mirror Lake Trailhead/Trail
- r. Big Fish Trailhead/Trail
- s. Picket Pin Trailhead/Picket Pin and Anderson Reservoir Trails
- t. Lake of the Woods Trailhead and Trail
- u. Skinnyfish Trailhead/Skinnyfish and Duck Lake Trails
- v. Trappers Lake Trailheads and Carhart Trail, Trappers Lake Trail, Stillwater Trail, Wall Lake Trail, Duck Lake Trail and Himes Peak Trail

3. Air/Rail/Bus

Regularly scheduled commercial air service is available at the Yampa Valley Regional Airport in Hayden through sseveral airlines.

General aviation airports exist in Craig, Meeker, Hayden, and Steamboat Springs.

Bus service is available to the towns of Craig, Hayden, Rifle, and Steamboat Springs. Charter taxi, van and bus service is available in Steamboat Springs.

F. Human Resources

The local community support for the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway is significant. There are nearly 30 partners supporting/cooperating on various aspects of the byway from designation through implementation.

1. Arts and Culture

There are many arts and culture groups assisting in various projects on the byway. The important historical figures and events associated with the byway will heavily involve the arts and cultural community. The main representatives include:

- a. Historical Societies and Museums in Hayden, Meeker, Oak Creek, Steamboat Springs, and Yampa.
- b. Community Arts Councils in Craig, Meeker, and Steamboat Springs.
- c. Many local private sector art galleries.
- d. Local historical and cultural collections and information at the community libraries of Craig, Hayden, Meeker, Oak Creek, Steamboat Springs, and Yampa.

2. Recreation

Recreational opportunities abound and are dealt with in all sections of this plan. Resources at local community's Chamber of Commerce, Resort Associations, Scenic and Historic Byway Visitor Centers, Forest Service, BLM, State Parks, and private clubs provide expertise and assistance with planning, implementation, and marketing of the many recreational opportunities on the byway.

3. Other Attractions

Dozens of other attractions are found in Northwest Colorado and coordination with these attractions is important. Information will be available through the resources listed above. A small example of the other attractions of the area are:

- a. Dinosaur National Monument
- b. State Parks and Reservoir facilities
- c. World Class Alpine and Nordic Skiing

4. Management

Management of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway is truly a vast joint effort. Much of the byway travels through Forest Service lands in the Medicine Bow-Routt and White River National Forests. Management of those portions will fall to the Forest Service. Road maintenance and safety issues on the county roads within the byway will fall to the Rio Blanco and Routt County Road Departments.

Planning, funding, implementation, and marketing will work through the byway committee. The major organizations represented on this committee are:

- a. Routt and White River National Forests
- b. Rio Blanco County Commissioners

- c. Routt County Commissioners
- d. Towns of Meeker and Yampa
- e. Historical Societies of Meeker and Yampa
- f. Chamber of Commerce--Meeker, Steamboat Springs
- g. Towns of Craig, Oak Creek, Hayden, and Steamboat Springs
- h. BLM, State Parks, DOW

5. Sales

Marketing and promotion resources are impressive and well organized. The Chamber of Commerce or Chamber Resort Associations in the various towns in the byway area have professional marketing staff working on brochures, maps, tours, etc. The Forest Service and Visitor Centers have written information and knowledgeable staff to assist with marketing. Cooperative efforts are underway with the Northwest Travel Region and the Northwest Colorado Enterprise Zone for marketing and promotion which includes funding of marketing projects.

G. Entertainment

Entertainment opportunities along the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway are diverse and unique. Because of the large number of current recreation and tourist visitors in the area, entertainment, special events and unique cultural opportunities already exist.

1. Festivals

There are many festivals which byway visitors may enjoy at the various communities around the byway. The following is a small example of those festivals:

- a. Meeker Range Call Celebration
(Celebrating 108 consecutive years in 1993)
- b. Rio Blanco County Fair
- c. String in the Mountains (summertime public chamber music)
- d. Wild West Days in Craig
- e. Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival (celebrating 78 years in 1993)

2. Special Events

Special events, like festivals, entertain both residents and visitors, and the communities along the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway have many to offer as the following list illustrates:

- a. Fourth of July Celebrations
- b. Professional Rodeos
- c. Arts and Crafts Fairs
- d. Theater and Musical Events
- e. Hot Air Balloon Rodeos
- f. Vintage Car and Motorcycle Races
- g. Wild West Performances
- h. Sheepdog Trials and Championships.

- i. Meeker Massacre Reinactment.
- j. Snowmobile Hill Climbs.
- k. Sled Dog Trials

H. Visual Resources

The visual resources of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway are truly outstanding. The change in scenery from irrigated meadows and ranchlands to river valleys to incredible mountain vistas is spectacular. All development will strive to harmonize with these fabulous visual resources along the byway.

1. Major visual resources of the byway

As stated above the visual resources of the byway are tremendous and cannot be easily named. Listed below are a few of the major visual resources:

- a. Land Forms and Geology
- b. Vegetation Forms and Variety of Ecosystems
- c. Wildlife Viewing Opportunities, Habitat and Ecosystems
- d. Vistas from the byway.
- e. Historic and Heritage Opportunities
- f. Educational/Interpretive Opportunities for Multiple Use and "Working Scenic Byway." (Actually Seeing Work in Progress, ie. Logging, Livestock Grazing or being driven to and from summer pastures, etc.)

2. Major scenic features of the byway

Some of the major scenic features of the byway are listed below:

- a. Trappers Lake and Basin
- b. Chinese Wall(s) and escarpment.
- c. Ranger Stations.
- d. Other Lakes.
- e. Vistas from Ripple Creek and Dunckley Passes.
- f. Historic and Modern Ranches.
- g. "Working" aspects of the Byway.

I. Recommendations

The existing quantity and quality of these various kinds of resources of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway will continue to be evaluated under the direction of the Scenic and Historic Byway Committee. Through the efforts of the Byway Committee and the various partners in the byway, development of the Flat Tops Trail will be realized. This management plan will continue to be updated and revised as necessary and will act as the major guideline for planning and implementation for development of the byway. However, additional plans, design narratives, guidelines may be used in addition to, and in cooperation with this plan.

In all cases the potential for development will be analyzed in relationship to the need to protect or preserve the resource. Proposed development will be measured against the vision/mission statement and goals and objectives to ensure compliance.

II. Development/Interpretation/Protection Plan of Resources and Infrastructure

- A. The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway requires enhancement of the quality of existing infrastructures. Roads, signage, interpretation, recreational facilities, etc. will be considered and developed keeping visual resources in mind and allowing for only minor modification.

1. Improve accessibility:

- a. Accessibility to the byway will be improved through the partners for road improvements, safety enhancements, disabled access development, and pull-outs providing better interpretation opportunities, etc.
- b. Accessibility to other resources will be accomplished through communication, improved signage, road enhancements, cooperative marketing, and efforts with various other agencies (including the State, chambers, partners and other Scenic and Historic Byways).
- c. The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway is not open to vehicle traffic year-round. It is not the intent to create year-round vehicular road access between Meeker and Yampa. However, winter-time enjoyment opportunities can be enhanced for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, snow shoeing, winter wildlife viewing, etc.
- d. Access quality will be improved through road stabilization improvements, better signing, ADA facility development, erosion control, etc.
- e. Safety issues will be addressed to provide better signage, wider road shoulders, road stabilization, road pull-outs, etc.

2. Direct upgrades of facilities and infrastructure along the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway will be made in cooperation with all the partners. Currently identified upgrades are as follows:

- a. Road and Road Safety improvements
- b. Access development for the disabled
- c. Improved and expanded interpretation of byway resources
- d. Improved recreational facilities and infrastructure (ie. campgrounds, trails, pullouts, signage, etc.)

3. Further development and improvement of existing interpretation of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway will involve a specific "Interpretation Design Plan". Some efforts and funding have already been committed for this purpose on Forest Service property. Other interpretive facilities will be developed by the communities of Meeker and Yampa as well as the local historical societies.
 4. The management of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway and the associated infrastructure will be divided between the various partners. Much of the management responsibility is obvious with Forest Services lands and facilities managed by the Forest Service and County Roads managed by the Rio Blanco and Routt County Road Departments. The major management partners are as follows:
 - a. Forest Service
 - Kathy M. Kurtz, Yampa District Ranger, Medicine Bow-Routt
 - Bill Hahnenberg, Blanco District Ranger, White River
 - b. Routt and Rio Blanco Counties
 - Nancy J. Stahoviak, Routt County Commissioners
 - Joe Collins, Rio Blanco County Commissioners
 - c. Towns of Meeker and Yampa
 - M. Kay, Meeker Chamber of Commerce
 - Brenda L. Northrop, Town of Yampa
- B. Over the years of development, the quantity of facilities and infrastructure may increase. All increased development and usage must be thoroughly planned keeping the integrity of the byway corridor in mind. Increased facilities must be measured against the overall goals and objectives of the byway to ensure quality and protection of the resources which make the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway unique and appealing.
1. Improved accessibility for the public is needed. Accessibility for the disabled and multi-modal forms of transportation for accessibility is important. Development of access to areas currently difficult if not impossible to access is a primary goal. A few examples of planned projects are as follows:
 - a. More RV access for senior citizens
 - b. Meeting requirements of ADA.
 - c. Improve existing trails and road for improved and safer accommodation of bike traffic.
 - d. Road stabilization and widening.
 - e. Improved access to lakes.
 2. To make more of the byway useable to the public, facilities and resource improvement is necessary. Improved roads, trails, campgrounds, interpretive opportunities, disabled access, etc is addressed in various ways. The major improvements are outlined below to make more of the resource available.

- a. Various new campground construction and reconstruction as outlined in the Medicine Bow-Routt and White River National Forest Design Narrative.
- b. Improved fisheries for lakes and streams along the byway.
- c. Major trail reconstruction to allow multi-modal use by foot, bike, horse, skis, etc.

C. Interpretation

Interpretation of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway is a vital concern and professional technical assistance will be sought to provide an "Interpretation Design Plan". The partners will work on different areas of management control.

The numbers of historical, geological, natural, recreational, multiple use and commodity production related interpretive opportunities are staggering. A small number are identified below as examples:

1. Historical

- a. Towns of Meeker and Yampa
- b. Timber Harvest, Grazing, Oil Production
- c. Trappers Lake--"Cradle of Wilderness"
- d. Ute Trail and Lifestyle
- e. Teddy Roosevelt--Multi Use Public Lands
- f. Early settlement sites, cemeteries, etc.
- g. Buford Store and Ranger Station
- f. Ranching and the use of Public lands
- g. Irrigation and water use in the West
- h. Fires role in the forest.

2. Natural/Scenic

- a. Chinese Wall
- b. Flat Tops Mountains
- c. Trappers Lake
- d. Dunkley and Ripple Creek Passes
- e. Spring Cave
- f. Various lakes and overlooks
- g. Cutthroat Fish Hatchery

3. Educational

- a. Wilderness philosophy
- b. Multi-use of resource
- c. Land and resource management
- d. Historic and environmental preservation/protection
- e. Resource rehabilitation
- f. Recreational development
- g. Cultural education
 - 1) Meeker and Yampa Historical Societies
 - 2) Rio Blanco and Routt County School Districts

that Colorado enjoys is derived from nine of these trip types, which in rank order of their importance, are:

1. Visiting Friends and Relatives Vacation	23.5%
2. Touring Vacations	19%
3. Outdoor Vacations	16.6%
4. Local Excursions	11.8%
5. Ski Resort Vacations	10.5%
6. Business/Pleasure Trips	9.3%
7. Country Resort Vacations	4.3%
8. City Trips	3.8%
9. Theme Park Vacation	1.2%

In other words, despite the state's preeminent position within the ski market, the ski resort vacation ranks only fifth as a source of business for Colorado. The Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway can benefit significantly by appealing to touring, outdoor and local vacationers.

During 1991, the research firm of RRC Associates of Boulder, Colorado interviewed 1,486 visitors from nine different communities in the Northwest Travel Region of Colorado. Approximately half of the visitors interviewed were Colorado residents (with about half of this group residing in the Denver metropolitan area). In addition to Colorado, key geographic markets represented in the survey were California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, Wyoming and Utah.

Therefore, the primary market for visitors to the Flat Tops Scenic and Historic Byway are Colorado residents who are looking for a local excursion or an outdoor experience. The secondary markets are the out-of-state vacationers who are looking for touring and outdoor vacations.

B. Establish General Marketing Strategy and Techniques

The main objective of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway's marketing effort will be to attract visitors by educating the general public (in-state and out-of-state residents) of the many interesting and recreational opportunities available.

1. A comprehensive brochure that describes the history, geology, wildlife, flora and recreational activities available along the Flat Tops Trail.
2. Directional Byway signs posted along connecting highways.
3. Notifying map companies of the new Scenic and Historic Byway designation of this road.
4. Construction of kiosks at the beginning and end of the byway to provide educational information.
5. Placing informational signs at key areas along the byway.

C. Establish a Promotional Strategy

The primary and secondary visitor markets will be reached through the cooperative effort of the State of Colorado, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the surrounding communities.

The Colorado Department of Transportation helps with highway signage and maps. The Colorado Tourism board spends millions of dollars annually to attract visitors to our state and Colorado Travel Region published and distributes a Vacation Guide that highlights the Flat Tops Trail. The U.S. Forest Service and local interpretive organizations are distribution outlets for pertinent information such as brochures, books and audio tapes. Also, the surrounding communities, which include some very popular winter and summer resorts, will continue to help with brochure distribution, motor coach tours, and press releases to travel writers. This cooperative effort insures a continuous and diversified marketing plan that will continue to grow as the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway evolves.

D. Recommendations

1. Constant monitoring of available visitor research data will keep the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway in touch with the visitors changing trends and demographics.
2. Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Committee should be formed with bi-annual meetings to share insights and to coordinate joint promotions.
3. Publish a seasonal news letter to brochure distribution outlets.

IV. Implementation of the Byway Plan

A. Short and long-range development strategies, includes the various Byway Partners and resource organizations (Definiton-short term 1-3 years, long term 3-10 years)

1. SHORT RANGE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

a. Plan Development and Local Support

The first efforts at at developing the Byway have and will continue to center on gaining local agreement and support for the development of the Byway. These efforts include formulation of a Steering Committee, identification and development of designs for agreed to improvements, interpretive themes, etc. Upon development of support and committment for Byway development the focus will switch to identifying and procuring sources of support and services for implimenting first priority Byway improvements.

b. Funding Strategy and Sources

Sources will likely be a mix of funding and volunteer individual or governmental services from local governments or groups and the federal government. Sources need to be identified that can be used within the boundaries of the Medicine Bow-Routt and White River National Forests and sources that can be used outside the boundaries. Opportunities are being identified to apply for various grants for developments. Grant proposals will be developed by Steering Committee representatives.

Development strategy will focus initially on spending of limited funds on improvements considered to be highest priority by the Steering Committee.

2. LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development strategy in the long term will focus in 2 areas: 1) specific needs to complete improvements immediately along the Byway or in areas that will be a logical destination for Byway travelers such as Trappers Lake, and 2) land uses in the vicinity of the Byway whether public or private lands.

a. Byway Improvements

Funding for improvements along or adjacent to the Byway will continue to be utilized for priority items. In the long term developments should switch from those needed immediately along the Byway to those which will provide for a quality experience to those recreating for several days. These improvements may include improvement of the trail system one can access from the Byway for activities such as hiking, horse back riding, mountain biking and off highway vehicle driving. Improvements may also include development of facilities on private or public lands to provide services for customers and include improvements which will provide and opportunity for those who wish to stay several days in the area.

B. Types and sources of funding to implement strategies

	TYPES	SOURCES
1.	Federal funding sources	
	a. ISTEA funding	State Byway Commission
	b. Meeker RD capital investment \$\$\$	White River National F.
2.	State funding sources	
	a. Watchable Wildlife	CO Div Wildlife
	b. State byway signs	CO State Hwy Dept.
	c. Interpretive/Historical Preservation	CO Historical Society Grants
3.	County funding sources	
	a. road mtc., construction & sign \$\$\$	Routt County
	road mtc., construction & sign \$\$\$	Rio Blanco County

- b. Lottery dollars through the counties
- 4. Local non-profit organizations
 - a. In-kind donation-historical research, audio-tape White River Historical Society
 - " " Meeker Historical Society
 - " " Yampa Historical Society
 - b. Interpretive signs Trout Unlimited
 - " " Ducks Unlimited
 - " " Rocky Mt. Bighorn Society
 - " " Rocky Mt. Elk Foundation
 - " " CO NW Chapter of Mule Deer Society
 - c. Interpretation of biological control of noxious weeds Rio Blanco County Weed Association.
 - d. Watchable Wildlife interpretation Audubon Society
 - e. Hunting & fishing interpretation Meeker Sportsman's Club
 - f. Interpretation of multiple use & riparian recovery Rio Blanco Cty Woolgrowers
 - Rio Blanco Cty Cattlemans Ass.
 - g. Firefighter memorial CO-WY Society of Am. Foresters
 - h. Ute Indian research Clifford Duncan, Kenny Frost
- 5. Local organizations, businesses
 - a. Assistance in fisheries improv. projects. Elk Creek Lodge and Orvis Association.
 - b. Research and signing of historical significance of the lodge Trapper's Lake Lodge
 - c. Interpretive signs Sleepy Cat Lodge
 - d. Historical research and Interpretive signs. Dick Moyer and Moyer Lumber Company

C. Types and Sources of Personnel to implement strategies

TYPES	SOURCES
1. Recreation Planner	United States Forest Service
2. Landscape Architect	" "
3. Archeologist	" "
4. Interpretive Specialist	" "
5. Graphic Artist	" "
6. County Commissioners	Routt and Rio Blanco Ctys
7. Historians	Local Historical Societys
8. Town Boards	Yampa, Meeker

- D. Types and Sources of Necessary Additional Support
 The following organizations and individuals have offered assistance toward some aspect of the Flat Tops Trail Scenic Byway (FTTSB):

1. **Lombardis Gas Stop**, located just off State Highway 131 has received approval to construct an RV dump station as a partnership project.
2. The **Town of Yampa** will provide manpower to work with other towns and counties in developing a marketing strategy.
3. The **Chamber of Commerce of the Greater Craig Area** will receive and distribute informational brochures regarding the byway.
4. The **Routt County Commissioners** in conjunction with other area marketing organizations will assist in marketing the FTTSB and offer their support and assistance.
5. **Routt County Road Department** cooperates in the maintenance and care of approximately 7 miles of the byway. They also have voluntarily maintained the Trout Creek Picnic area over a 20 year period.
6. The **Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association** will conduct a field trip of the FTTSB to educate their seasonal staff, display and distribute literature at all three of their VIS centers and will include the FTTSB in any literature produced by their organization.
7. The **Yampa Valley Economic Development Council** are committed to support year round tourism on the FTTSB.
8. The **Hayden Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Committee** will publicize the route in their brochures and magazines.
9. The **Town of Hayden and the West Routt Fire District** authorize their ambulance service to respond to emergency situations on the byway as the closest provider of emergency care to some sections of the FTTSB.
10. The **Town of Oak Creek** will include mention of the FTTSB in any future marketing efforts.
11. The **Rio Blanco County Commissioners** have agreed to cooperatively fund multiple use signing on the National Forest along the designated byway, road maintenance and Sheriff's patrol within their normal budget process.
12. **Rio Blanco County Road Department** cooperates in the maintenance and care of approximately 65 miles of the byway. They have agreed to regravell the road if the Forest Service provides a gravel source and will install Scenic Byway signs, warning and regulatory signs and destination signs along the FTTSB.

13. **The American Hiking Society and Sierra Club** provide annual work groups for trail improvement and erosion control projects in and around the Yampa Ranger District.
14. **The Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association** will assist in creating and maintaining mountain bike trails.
15. **The White River Snowmobile Club Inc.** will continue winter grooming along the FTTSB and will extend their grooming as needed to facilitate winter activities.
16. **The Colorado Division of Wildlife** stocks thousands of fish annually in the lakes, streams and reservoirs along the byway, will provide expertise in developing interpretive signing regarding wildlife and fisheries including verbal support for monetary expenditures of cooperative funds for these signs and will cooperate in providing locations for two FTTSB interpretive sites.
17. **Trout Unlimited** will produce and interpretive sign at Trappers Lake and will assist with fisheries projects and interpretive signing along the FTTSB.
18. **Ducks Unlimited** will assist with waterfowl projects and interpretive signing along the FTTSB.
19. **The Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society** will provide expertise and financial support for interpretive signing along the FTTSB.
20. **The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation** will provide expertise and financial support for interpretive signing along the FTTSB.
21. **The Colorado Northwest Chapter of the Mule Deer Society** will provide expertise and financial support for interpretive signing along the FTTSB.
22. **The Audubon Society** will assist in interpretation of watchable wildlife.
23. **The Meeker Sportsman's Club** will provide financial support to hunting and fishing interpretation and information along the FTTSB.
24. **The Meeker Chamber of Commerce** has resolved to promote and encourage use of the route and to produce and distribute a brochure on the FTTSB.
25. **The Northwest Colorado Travel Region Board** will ensure the designated byway is well represented in the Official State Vacation Guide, will illustrate the map of the FTTSB in their four color brochure of Northwest Colorado and will be highlighted

per ISTEA grant Chamber

LONG RANGE

1994	Rio Blanco County Master Planning	Rio Blanco County
1994-1995	Routt National Forest-Forest Plan	US Forest Service
	Impliment developments per Steering Committee and development plan	US Forest Service and Counties
	Develop additional funding sources	Steering Committee
1995-1997	White River National Forest -Forest Plan	US Forest Service
1995-1998	Continue to develop funding sources and impliment improvements	Steering Committee

L. Budget/Funding to Implement the Byway Strategy

Short range Byway strategy will be implimented by agencies, counties and local entities that can and have committed funding for development of plans, strategies and through formulation and interaction of the Steering Committee.

Long range Byway strategy will be implimented through a combination of local and federal funding sources. Some aspects of the long range strategy, such as land use planning, will be accomplished by the Counties or the Forest Service through projects already funded as part of normal planning activities.

M. Develop coordinated Byway Management Plan intended to fulfill requirements of the anticipated federal Corridor Management Plan as defined by the federal government as:

"A formal policy that specifies the management actions, procedures, controls, and operational practices, along with the manner in which they will be administered, by which the scenic, historic, recreational, archeological, or cultural integrity are to be managed, once a highway is designated as a Scenic and Historic Byway."