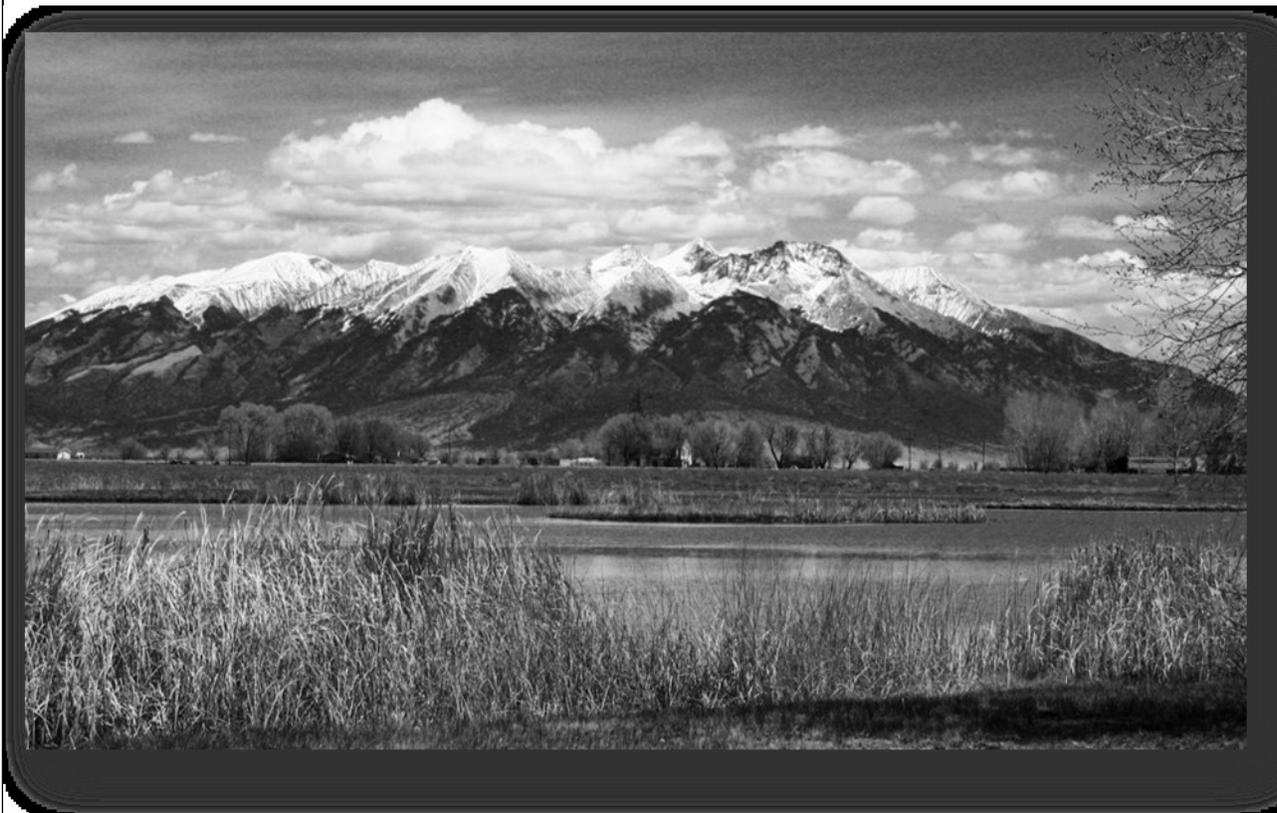


A Framework for Wayshowing:

Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway

Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla Counties
Colorado



October 2015

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October 2015

Cover photo by Kat Olanca

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Executive Summary: Los Caminos Antiguos Wayfinding Assessment

Wayshowing is a collection of maps, signs and electronic media that have been developed to aid travelers in their journey. A system of such information is critical to help travelers successfully choose a destination, plan their itineraries, and navigate once they arrive. The following plan assesses the current elements of the wayshowing system that guides travelers throughout the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway.

The Great Sand Dunes National Park is the prime driver for travelers to the San Luis Valley. Alamosa, the largest gateway community to the National Park, provides most travelers with lodging, food and related visitor services. The challenge for the Byway is to draw more of these visitors south to explore the stunning cultural, historic, and recreational opportunities that are offered in and around the communities of Fort Garland, San Luis, Antonito and Conejos.

The plan recommends that gateway orientation be added at locations where travelers enter and exit the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway, where they can feel a sense of arrival and departure. Gateway locations announce the presence of the Byway, orient travelers to the surrounding area with “you are here” repetitive maps, and help draw travelers into the Byway experience through interpretive content. Blue columbine signs can provide navigational guidance at key intersections, and reassurance (at 10-mile intervals) that they are still on the byway. The plan makes recommendations for improvements to directional signage at key locations, and suggests pre-notification signage to alert travelers to important cultural heritage sites.

Although the Great Sand Dunes and state wildlife areas provide excellent interpretive information on ecosystems, wildlife and recreation in their specific areas, the assessment team expressed disappointment in not finding more cultural and historical information in other locations. The town that needs the most additional interpretive infrastructure is San Luis, and recreational opportunities are the most underrepresented resource.

The first stage of wayshowing is choosing a destination. Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway is currently at a disadvantage during the critical preplanning stage when travelers choose their destinations. The plan recommends the development of a strong mobile enabled website, which will continue to support travelers who depend on smartphones and other mobile devices for their day-to-day decisions. It also recommends the development of a downloadable application to help compensate for intermittent cell service.

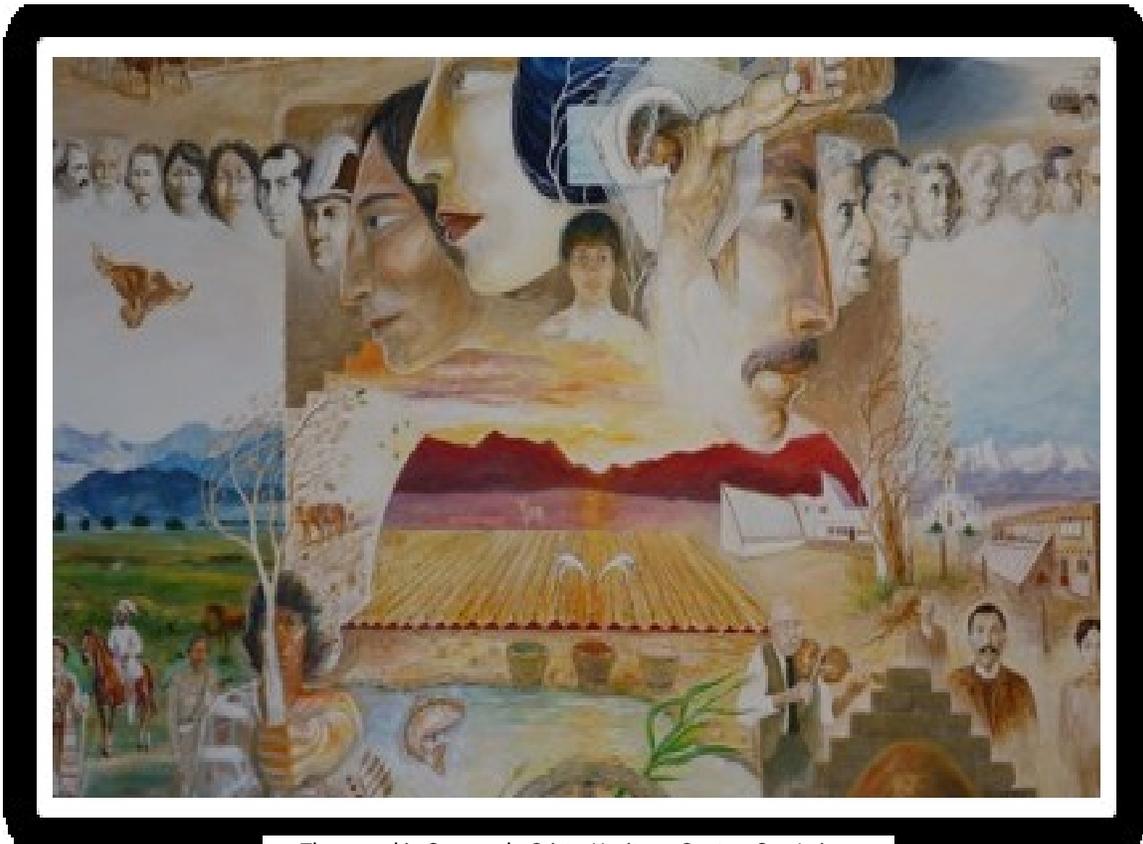
The combination of a stronger Internet presence, new gateway directional and interpretive information, and fresh video materials that can be used to train local front-line staff will create a stronger wayfinding system.

History of Wayfinding Development on the Los Caminos Scenic Byway

The Byway provides a rich combination of expansive views, open spaces, beautiful vistas of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, unique geology (including sand dunes), and wildlife (elk, deer, hawks, sandhill cranes and countless song and migratory birds). The open roads invite visitors to take in stunning mountain views, open skies and historic terrain on this Old Road. Visitors can tap the cultures of Native Americans, Spanish, Hispano, and European settlers, and the histories of mining, railroads, and military in the farming towns of Alamosa, Blanca, Fort Garland, San Luis, Manassa, and Antonito. The Byway also provides an abundance of fishing, hunting, camping, hiking and rock climbing, and sandboarding.

Connecting travelers with these varied assets is the function of wayfinding tools, and require strategies that help travelers with both navigation and interpretation. In 1993, the Byway partners actively pursued funding to build a wayshowing system that could aid travelers with a cohesive system of maps, signs and other media. They received \$56,000 to install interpretive installations at three gateway locations: Cumbres Pass, the intersection of highways 150 and 160 (the turn to the Great Sand Dunes), and the intersection of highway 17 and Lane 6 in Alamosa County. These funds also applied to brochure and website development.

A \$90,000 grant awarded in 1996 funded the writing of the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and Interpretive Plan. The next year, \$63,200 was secured to produce a Public Broadcast System documentary on the cultural aspects of the Byway. In 1999, another \$47,440 was awarded to produce a tour of Hispano Mission Churches.



The mural in Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, San Luis

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 Los Caminos Scenic Byway. In achieving this purpose, the plan aims to:

- Provide an outline of key concepts of wayshowing and wayfinding
- Assess the inventory of existing directional signage to key sites along designated routes.
- Provide recommendations for enhancing directional signage to key sites.
- Provide an outline for subsequent action.

Keys to Effective Wayshowing

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

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

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

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

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.*

frame to form a cognitive map

Wayshowing Components

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

- Entrances, Exit and Gateway Signage. 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.
- Directional Signage to Planned Destinations. Signs that alert and guide motorists to featured stops and attractions along or near a Byway or other route.
- A Portable Map. A carry-on map of a Byway corridor or travel region and its various attractions and amenities.
- Electronic Information. Accessed through travelers' mobile devices.

Method of Traveler-Oriented Assessment

Often the difficulty in providing effective wayshowing lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. Additionally, maps, signs, brochures and other media sometimes present conflicting information. In October 2015 an on-the-road assessment was conducted along the Los Caminos Scenic & Historic Byway to answer some of these questions. Specifically, the assessment 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 travelers see through the windshield and what they read on maps, brochures, and mobile devices
- Evaluate how local business districts guide visitors to essential services

A list of significant historical, cultural, and recreational sites along the Byway was developed for use during the Wayfinding Assessment. Members of the Los Caminos Scenic Byway Committee identified these sites during a conference call. Byway Committee members were asked to list the top ten heritage, cultural, and/or recreational sites in their respective counties, then the following thirty-nine sites were chosen for inclusion in this assessment.

Significant Attractions and Information Centers

<u>Cultural Heritage Sites</u>	<u>Recreation Sites</u>	<u>Visitor Centers & Pull Offs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic town of San Luis and murals • San Luis Valley Museum • ASU Luther Bean Museum • ASU Ryan Geological Museum • Fort Garland Museum • San Luis Cultural Center and Museum • Jack Dempsey Museum • Conejos County Museum & Visitor Center, Antonito • Stations of the Cross • La Vega Commons/ People’s Ditch • R&R Market • Viejo San Acacio Mission Church • Our Lady of Guadalupe Church • Historic Downtown Alamosa • Zapata Ranch • Gallegos Centennial Farm • San Rafael Presbyterian Church in Mogote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve • Cole Park/Rio Grande River • San Luis Lakes State Park • Blanca Mountain • Zapata Falls • Rio Grande Scenic Railroad • Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad • Route to Platoro – Rio Grande National Forest • Conejos Canyon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa • Costilla County Courthouse • La Manga Pass pull off

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

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

- Observe the actions and discussions of the front seaters
- Record locations where front seaters expressed uncertainties and confusion and note apparent reasons
- Quiz front seaters on effectiveness of signs, maps and other driving instructions
- Note which wayshowing devices front seaters are using most often and which they are not
- Resist giving any travel or driving advice unless an immediate safety issue warrants
- Conduct post-trip discussion with front seaters
- Record any disparities between written information in maps, brochures and other media and actual conditions on the road (front-seaters).



Fort Garland Museum, a state owned museum in Fort Garland, CO

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

Summary of Key Observations from the Assessment Team

Internet Preplanning and On-Site Cellular Coverage

The online presence for Los Caminos Antiguos is minimal, and what appears to be the official website is only a single page. Scant and very similar information can be found on pages of Colorado.com (the tourism portal for the state), on the sites of the Bureau of Land Management, on the tourism site for the city of Alamosa, and on the Fort Garland Museum site. The Great Sand Dunes National Park has an excellent website; however, the sites together do not collectively provide a compelling story for visitors to drive south and experience the entire byway.

Today's travelers rely heavily on their mobile devices. In 2015, Yahoo reported that 67% of its subscribers declare that a smartphone has replaced their PC. According to comScore.com, 60% of total online time is now spent via a mobile device. The 129-mile Byway covers many remote areas, and cellular coverage is available only intermittently. The team found reliable connectivity only in the town of Alamosa. Due to a lack of Internet access, the assessment team was forced to navigate the Byway using the "old-fashioned" method of acquiring maps and brochures and asking directions from locals. Although charmed by the people they met, all expressed frustration at not being able to use their mobile devices.

Online Byway maps focus mainly on recreational aspects of the area, and only cover a minimal number of historic sites. The CDOT website map shows minimal detail, but the website does include links to a number of partner sites.

- | | |
|---|--|
| -Colorado Tourism – Official Site | www.Colorado.com |
| -Bureau of Land Management | www.blm.gov |
| -Alamosa, Colo. Tourism Information – Official Site | www.alamosa.org |
| -Colorado Vacation Directory of cabins, campgrounds and lodging | www.coloradodirectory.com |
| -Colorado – The Official State Web Portal | cdot.gov/travel/scenic-byway/ |
| -A Reference and Travel Guide for Rocky Mtn. States | www.sangres.com |
| -Fort Garland Museum | www.museumtrail.org/fort-garland-museum.html |

“Los Caminos Scenic Byway” is not listed on TripAdvisor. The CDOT state byways site lists the telephone #, address and email for an employee of the Great Sand Dunes, but this person has indicated he should not be the contact. On Colorado.com no email is provided, an 800# takes a person to the Alamosa Welcome Center, and the local telephone # listed is disconnected. There are no amenities/ activities listed and only a one sentence “overview” description. The Colorado.com website links to the one page LosCaminos.com. and no other informational links or maps are listed. The “contact” link connects to a online form that submits to an invalid email address.

Navigational Signs Overview (Directional)

Visitation is heaviest at the Great Sand Dunes and in the town of Alamosa. Visitor Centers and points of departure from these two core sites need to be given priority to help guide travelers to other parts of the Byway. The start to the Byway is not evident either in Alamosa itself, or east of town. Likewise, the Byway needs to be signed at the critical juncture of highways 160 and 150 for visitors departing the Great Sand Dunes.

Following a day on the road, the assessment team listed the three top attractions as The Great Sand Dunes National Park, Zapata Falls and the Stations of the Cross. The first two have good directional signage, but the Stations of the Cross does not. The assessment team eventually located all the listed sites, but in many cases passed them, then were required to make a U-turns to return. Pre-notification signage would help prevent doubling back.



Photo by Kat Orance

Scenic Byway Columbine Sign
Columbine sign at the intersection of Hwy 159 and County Rd 142 in San Luis.

There are a solid number of Visitor Centers that provide traveler information. The State of Colorado operates a Colorado Welcome Center in the historic train depot in Alamosa, the National Park Service offers information at the Great Sand Dunes, Fort Garland Revitalization Committee operates an all-

volunteer Visitor Center, Fort Garland Museum (a state owned museum) provides regional information, and the town of San Luis stocks visitor information in their Town Hall.

Excellent to adequate directional signage was provided to the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, SLV Museum, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Zapata Falls, Fort Garland Museum, Colorado Welcome Center, Historic Downtown Alamosa, Conejos County Museum and Visitor Center in Antonito, San Luis Culture Center and Museum, San Luis Lake State Park, Jack Dempsey Museum and the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad. Most of these sites did not have pre-notification signs, which triggered multiple U-turns.

Directional signs that were either missing or inadequate included Cole Park, Luther Bean Museum, Mount Blanca, Stations of the Cross, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, R&R Market, San Luis Murals, Costilla County Courthouse, La Vega Commons/People's Ditch, Gallegos Centennial Farm, Viejo san Acacio Church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, and San Rafael Presbyterian Church. There did not seem to be any signage nor maps to the Sangre de Cristo Heritage National Area. It was noted that though there was a brand new directional sign on the ASU campus, the Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums were not listed. When asking for directions at the front desk at Richardson Hall, the staff did not know where the museums were, despite the Luther Bean being located in the same building.

Site Specific Navigational Observations

- Cole Park was only found by using a Smartphone, and once a turn was made off of Main St onto State the team was not able to find any directional signs.
- The chain on the gate for the SLV Museum in Alamosa looked uninviting to the team, and the main entry door was mistaken for an employee entrance.
- Byway Committee members recommend that 4-wheel drive access advisory signs should be added at a number of locations along the road going into Conejos Canyon up to Platoro. The assessment group did not have time to visit this section of the route.



Cole Park

One directional sign is provided off Main Street but no further directional signs exist. Location of the Denver and Rio Grande Scenic Railroad #169 Railcar as well as location for local festivals.

Recommendations for Navigation

1. Work with CDOT to add pre-notification signage for the Colorado Welcome Center, and add an additional directional sign on Main Street. This Visitor Center is a key resource for travelers, as it is located in the largest gateway community for the Great Sand Dunes National Park.
2. Install directional signage at highway 160 and 4th Street to give notification where to turn for Cole Park, a key recreational site for travelers and local venue for special events. At the parking lot, add directional signs to help visitors locate the trailhead.

3. Mark the beginning of the Byway in Alamosa either at the Colorado Welcome Center or the intersection of highways 285 and 17. Another columbine sign would be reassuring for those turning left at the intersection of highways 150 and 160.
4. Encourage SLV Museum to capitalize on their excellent directional signage. Although signage in Alamosa is excellent, upon arrival the assessment team found the chain on the front door uninviting, and mistook the main entrance for an employee entrance.
5. Clarify how to walk and/or drive to the Stations of the Cross. At the north end of San Luis, a Stations of the Cross directional sign directs visitors to a dirt road, but does not continue providing direction when approaching the top of the hill. Likewise, signs in town do not provide directions that lead visitors up the walking path through the Stations of the Cross. The team was completely confused about how to access this important site.
6. Update the museum signage In San Luis with its new name.
7. Design and install an in-town wayfinding system for the many important historic sites in San Luis. This is especially important, as most visitation is experienced through self-directed exploration on foot or in a vehicle.
8. Replace the small wooden sign that reads “Visitors Center” (beneath the Town Hall/Police Department sign) with a larger sign.

Interpretive Signs Overview

The Great Sand Dunes National Park has an excellent system of interpretive signage for visitors, addressing the geologic, wildlife, and ecosystem aspects of the Dunes. State and federal agencies also post interpretative information about various ecosystems. Valuable interpretive information was available at Zapata Falls, deVargas Crossing and Viejo san Acacia Mission.

At the end of the day on the road, the team expressed a strong desire for more access to historical information. They never figured out why the Byway was named Los Caminos Antiguos, and didn’t “feel” the historical significance of the Byway while in Alamosa. They only mad an emotional connection to the significance of the byway when they arrived in San Luis, San Acacio Church and Conejos. They were informed that the significance of the Byway is discussed on an interpretive location at Cumbres Pass and La Manga, but this is a location they did not reach.

In addition, the team wanted to see more on-site signage alerting travelers to recreational activities including hiking, biking and fishing.

Site Specific Interpretive Observations

- There were interpretive signs at Zapata Falls, deVargas Crossing, Great Sand Dunes, and San Acacio Mission Church.
- There were no interpretive signs for a significant number of the sites along the Byway, including the San Luis Valley Museum, Cole Park, Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums, Mount Blanca, Zapata Falls, Stations of the Cross, museum in San Luis, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercentile, City of Murals, Costilla Courthouse, Gallegos Centennial Farm, Our Lady of Guadalupe. There is also confusion between churches – San Acacio and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Guadalupe’s directional sign lists it as oldest church, but interpretative sign indicates the church building burned down?



Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

- The team was unable to determine significance of Zapata Ranch, why it was on the list, and why doesn't it provide a more inviting presence that it is open to the public.
- Questions about why the Byway is named Los Caminos Antiguos came up throughout the day. The significance of the Byway is discussed at the interpretative sign at Cumbres Pass and La Manga, but the assessment team did not have time to reach this location.
- On interpretive signage at Byway gateway locations, explain why the Byway is called the Los Caminos.
- Set the stage for the full Byway experience at key gateways. The assessment team didn't "feel" the historical significance of the Byway while in Alamosa, and only felt an emotional connection when they arrived in San Luis, Viejo san Acacio Church and the town of Conejos.
- There were interpretive signs at Zapata Falls, deVargas Crossing, Great Sand Dunes, and San Acacio Mission Church.
- There were no interpretive signs for a very large portion of the sites along the Byway including the Zapata Ranch, the San Luis Valley Museum, Cole Park, Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums, San Luis Lakes State Park [there is a 4-panel Interpretation signage just before the Fee gate but must not have been noticed] Blanca hiking, Zapata Falls, Stations of the Cross, museum in San Luis, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercentile, City of Murals, Costilla Courthouse, Gallegos Centennial Farm, Our Lady of Guadalupe. There is also confusion between

churches – San Acacio and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Guadalupe’s directional sign lists it as oldest church, but interpretative sign indicates the church building burned down?



LCA Mural

Mural with a map of the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway on the sidewall of the Fort Garland Post Office.



LCA Mural

One of a series of murals on Main Street in the town of San Luis.

Recommendations for Interpretation

1. Create a map demonstrating the overlay of the Los Caminos Antiguos Byway and the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage area. There is a clear need for educational material that will help locals and travelers understand the connection between the two entities.
2. Create a training video that could be used with all front-line staff to help them communicate with visitors. In an mp3 format, this same video could be downloaded for travelers.
3. Clear up confusing information about churches, especially the “the oldest in Colorado” distinction. A directional sign lists Our Lady of Guadalupe as the oldest church, but the interpretive sign indicates that the original church burned down. Viejo san Acacio Mission Church has no directional sign. Should the “oldest church” sign currently on Highway 285 be moved to Highway 149 for San Acacio Church, and replace the sign on Highway 285 with “oldest parish?”
4. In the town San Luis, an interpretive plan should be developed to guide information at the rich collection of historic sites. The heritage center currently undergoing restoration will be the future anchor for heritage activities. Meanwhile, visitors rely on self-guided walking tours to understand the significance of the many historical and cultural sites in town.

Recommendations and Action Plan

An analysis of this full-day assessment exercise combined with the input of local officials, transportation professionals, and tourism specialists resulted in the following recommendations that can both improve

the ease of navigation for visitors and better capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the communities along the Byway.

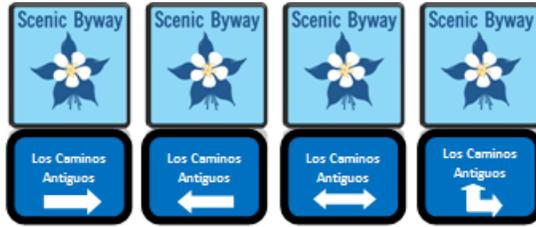
- A. Create a “home page” website specific to the Los Caminos Scenic & Historic Byway to provide navigational, historical, and interpretive information about the Byway. The website should assist visitors in planning a trip to the Byway and provide on-site information for technology-driven travelers.
- B. Make sure that ALL sites and destinations are added as a Google Map pointer; ensure the GPS accuracy for the location of the pointer.
- C. Consider installing hot spot indicator signs to inform visitors of variable wireless availability. These could be clustered with informational kiosks that direct visitors to the Byway website to download interpretive information while in areas of connectivity.
- D. The team found the beginning of the Byway was not clearly marked in Alamosa either at the Colorado Welcome Center or at the intersection of Hwy 285 and Hwy 17. They also noted that additional blue columbine Byway signs would be useful to ensure the traveler is on the Byway (e.g. turning left at the intersection of Hwy 150 and 160).
- E. Assure that navigational signage is in place at each major intersection, where travelers can enter the Byway and as the Byway turns onto other roads: Hwy 17, Hwy 160, 159, 285 and County Rds 142 and Ln 6. Travelers should be able to distinguish the scenic Byway from other roads and be able to navigate the turns necessary to stay on the Byway when reentering the Byway after side-road excursions.
- F. Install orientation kiosks in the towns of Fort Garland, San Luis, Antonito and Alamosa to provide on-site regional navigation and historical information.
- G. Directional signs are needed for Cole Park, Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums, Mt. Blanca, Stations of the Cross, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, First Mercantile in Colorado (aka R&R Market), San Luis Murals, Costilla Count Courthouse, La Vega Commons, Gallegos Centennial Farm, San Acacio Church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Presbyterian Church in Mogote.
- H. Interpretative signs are needed for the Zapata Ranch, the San Luis Valley Museum, Cole Park, Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums, San Luis Lakes State Park, Blanca hiking, Zapata Falls, Stations of the Cross, museum in San Luis, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercantile (aka R&R Market), City of Murals, Costilla Courthouse, Gallegos Centennial Farm, Our Lady of Guadalupe.



Photo by Kat Utance

Zapata Falls

Entrance sign at turnoff on Hwy 150. Is easily seen, but needs maintenance.



- I. Consider adding signage to clarify the seasonally restrictive nature of Hwy 17 going up to Cumbres Pass and side-road excursions such as Conejos Canyon.
- J. The entrance for Zapata Ranch did not make the team feel it was open to the public, appeared to be a private ranch. It is not clear it is not open to the public.
- K. Navigating the Byway was managed by the “old-fashioned” method of acquiring maps, brochures and asking directions of locals (such as the Welcome Center volunteers, Shrine gift shop employee, Visitor Center in San Luis, students at Adams State) as online resources were not available or accessible due to a mostly inaccessible lack of internet access.
- L. A Smartphone app is needed as well as full-coverage by cell phone service with the major vendors.
- M. Supply information about significant historical places.

Partnerships and Funding Resources

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

- Prioritize navigational signs on Hwys 160, 285, 17 and 159 for Scenic Byway
- Conduct an inventory of Byway signs to determine if any additional signs are needed or any signs need to be replaced
- Add mileage on Hwys 17, 160, 285, 159 and 142 to key attractions on signs where possible

Projects to be developed in partnership with counties

- Add mileage from/to key attractions on signs where possible
- Projects to be undertaken with public lands agencies
- Additional interpretive signage

Projects to be undertaken in partnership with Byway communities

- Develop wayfinding signage within each town



Sociedad Protección Mútua de Trabajadores Unidos, Antonito, CO

Photo by Kat Orance



San Luis Interpretive Signage

Interpretive sign on a dirt pull-off off on Hwy 159, at the north end of San Luis, is difficult for visitors to find or access.

Photo by Kat Orance

Projects to be undertaken by the Byway organization

- Create a dedicated website
- Redevelop the Byway brochure
- Develop mobile apps and e-books

APPENDIX

Byway notes and observations from the Wayfinding Assessment Teams during their tour on the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway on October 28, 2015.

FRONT SEAT OBSERVATIONS

Volunteer, Stacey Lewis – Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Driver)

- We were able to find a physical map you could take with you at the Alamosa Welcome Center
- Resources we used to research or navigate the Byway: Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, Lady at Shrine Gift Shop in San Luis, San Luis Visitor Center, and students at Adams State
- Excellent directional sign to Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park
- Directional signs were adequate for Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, San Luis Lakes State Park, Fort Garland Museum, Stations of the Cross, and Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center
- There were not enough directional signs for Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain trailhead hike, Zapata Falls, and deVargas Crossing
- No directional signs were found for ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercantile in Colorado, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, and Costilla County Courthouse
- There were interpretive signs for Zapata Falls and deVargas Crossing
- There were no interpretive signs for ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, San Luis Lakes State Park, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercantile in Colorado, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, and Costilla County Courthouse
- The Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa need one more larger sign to get you through the light
- Had to use smart phone to locate Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa
- No signs at all for ASU Luther Bean Museum and Ryan Geological Museum
- San Luis Lakes State Park needs interpretive signs
- What was the point of Zapata Ranch? We didn't feel like it was for the public.
- Need better directional signs for road to the Stations of the Cross
- Asked gift shop worker for information about Religious Heritage Tours
- Looked for National Heritage Area, no information
- No one heard of City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis
- Called "Rio Grande" Big River

Volunteer, Pamela Hahs – Creede and Mineral County Chamber of Commerce

- We were able to find a physical map you could take with you at the Visitor Center
- Resource used to research or navigate the Byway – Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa
- Excellent directional sign to Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park, Zapata Falls, and Fort Garland Museum
- Directional signs were adequate for Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, Historic Downtown Alamosa, San Luis Lakes State Park, Jack Dempsey Museum, and Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway
- There were not enough directional signs for Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa, ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Stations of the Cross, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, Religious Heritage Tours First Mercantile in Colorado, City of Murals

- Interpretation in San Luis, Costilla County Courthouse, La Vega Commons, DeVargas Crossing, Viejo San Acacio Mission Church, Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church, and Presbyterian Church in Mogote
- There were interpretive signs for Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park, deVargas Crossing, Viejo San Acacio Mission church, and Jack Dempsey Museum
- No interpretive signs were found for San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa, Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa, ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, San Luis Lakes State Park, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Zapata Falls, Stations of the Cross, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercantile in Colorado, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, Costilla County Courthouse, Gallegos Centennial Farm, and Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church
- One more directional sign closer to the corner would be helpful to locate the Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa
- No directional signs for ASU Luther Bean Museum and Ryan Geological Museum
- Even the Welcome Center at ASU didn't know where the Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums were!
- Spoke to lady at the gift shop about the Religious Heritage Tours
- City of Murals interpretation in San Luis – no interpretation – just murals through town
- No interpretive signs on Costilla County Courthouse (just sign on building)
- Found deVargas Crossing point of interest sign
- Found Viejo san Acacio Mission Church only by asking at visitor center

BACK SEAT OBSERVATIONS

Volunteer, Jeff Owsley – San Luis Valley SBDC

- We were able to find a physical map you could take with you at the Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa
- Excellent directional sign to Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park, Zapata Falls, and Fort Garland Museum
- Directional signs were adequate for Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, San Luis Lakes State Park, Stations of the Cross, and Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center
- There were not enough directional signs for Historic Downtown Alamosa, Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa, First Mercantile in Colorado, Viejo San Acacio Mission Church, and Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church
- No directional signs were found for ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Religious Heritage Tours, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, La Vega Commons, deVargas Crossing, Gallegos Centennial Farm, and Presbyterian Church in Mogote
- There were interpretive signs for Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, San Luis Lakes State Park, Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park, Fort Garland Museum, and deVargas Crossing
- No interpretive signs were found for Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, Historic Downtown Alamosa, San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa, Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa, ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Stations of the Cross, Religious Heritage Tours, First Mercantile in Colorado, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, La Vega Commons, Gallegos Centennial Farm, Viejo san Acacio Mission Church, Jack Dempsey Museum, Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway, and Presbyterian Church in Mogote
- Small directional signs in Alamosa, have to slow down
- The chain on the gate at the San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa is uninviting
- Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa is small and hard to cut across lawn, best missed
- Drove straight to ASU Luther Bean and Ryan Geological Museums, but museums aren't on directory
- San Luis Lakes State Park interpretive sign not about area and activities
- Zapata Falls not tourist friendly
- No sign for campground off highway at Zapata Falls
- Stations of the Cross road signs confusing

- Didn't know where to find information about Religious Heritage Tours (at Welcome Center?)
- Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church - "oldest church?"
- Didn't find Presbyterian Church at Mogote
- Students and ASU Welcome Center didn't know about Luther Bean Museum
- ASU Ryan Geological Museum not open
- Missed turn out of Alamosa
- No signage for "Scenic Byway", saw first one at turn off from Highway 17
- No internet available much of the time
- "Lots of tradition"

Volunteer, Rick Routh– Colorado Department of Transportation

- We were able to find a physical map you could take with you at the Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa
- Used a webpage specific to the Byway, map and route description from resources found online; were not able to find approximate travel time online
- Websites used to research or navigate the Byway include Colorado Scenic Byway and Colorado Tourism Site
- Excellent directional sign to Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa, Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, Historic Downtown Alamosa, San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa, Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park, Zapata Falls, and Fort Garland Museum
- Directional signs were adequate for Cole Park/Rio Grande River in Alamosa, San Luis Lakes State Park, Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center, First Mercantile in Colorado, Jack Dempsey Museum, and Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway
- There were not enough directional signs for Stations of the Cross, Costilla County Courthouse, and Conejos County Museum and Visitor Center in Antonito
- No directional signs were found for ASU Luther Bean Museum, ASU Ryan Geological Museum, Zapata Ranch, Blanca Mountain hike, Religious Heritage Tours, City of Murals Interpretation in San Luis, La Vega Commons, Viejo san Acacio Mission Church, Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church, and Presbyterian Church in Mogote
- There were interpretive signs for San Luis Lakes State Park and Fort Garland Museum
- There were no interpretive signs for Gallegos Centennial Farm, Viejo san Acacio Mission Church, and Jack Dempsey Museum
- The Colorado Welcome Center in Alamosa could use an extra sign at State Street
- The Rio Grande Scenic Railroad directional signs could be bigger
- The San Luis Valley Museum in Alamosa has very good signs
- Cole Park not found on map
- Found ASU campus directory sign but Luther Bean Museum and Ryan Geological Museum were not on directory
- Found ASU Welcome Center – They host Bean and Ryan Museums – directed us easily
- San Luis Lakes State Park: kiosks-excellent but no sign to points; map-good sign
- Zapata Ranch – not a tourist destination
- Blanca Mountain hike, found it with U-turn; need signs with point of interest
- Zapata Falls – excellent directional signs; Is camping allowed? (Entry sign doesn't have it)
- Made wrong turn - What road is Stations of the Cross on?
- What is Religious Heritage Tours?
- Saw murals in San Luis
- Did not find La Vega Commons/San Luis People's Ditch
- Used verbal directions to find Gallegos Centennial Farm
- No directional signs to Viejo san Acacio Mission Church (nothing on Highway) used good verbal directions
- Jack Dempsey Museum – signs and billboard
- Found Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church without directional signs
- Several new triple kiosk along highway – no content yet

Navigation concerns (points along the Byway where the route was unclear, or navigation became difficult):

- The route was unclear at the start in Alamosa, didn't notice route, missed turn out of Alamosa
- Need directional signage at Sand Dunes turn (heading toward Blanca)

Safety concerns (points along the Byway that felt dangerous or presented safety concerns):

- Signs in Alamosa were so small we needed to stop on Highway to read and were so close to intersections we had to quickly cut lanes to turn

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

- Didn't notice any at all
- Only the signs for the Scenic Byway

Traveler services (availability of food, fuel and lodging along the Byway):

- Ample amount only in Alamosa; very little most of the Byway
- Not bad, limited in San Luis and Antonito

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

- San Luis Lakes – fishing and boating, Zapata Falls Trail, Blanca Trail, not many others signed
- Zapata, Sand Dunes and San Luis Lakes Falls

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

- Happy to find some and finally stop to read some interpretative information
- Early Spanish settlers, Catholicism, displaced North Americans, farming and irrigation
- Yes, questions about geology and hydrology

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

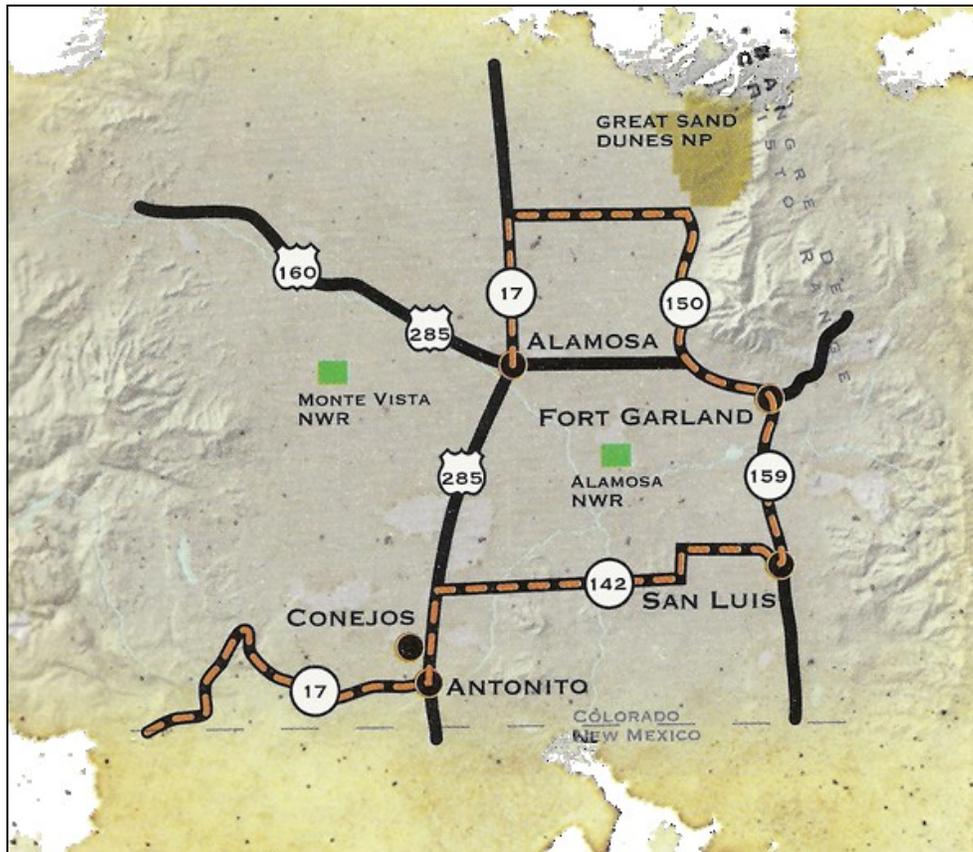
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|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Great Sand Dunes National Park | 1. San Luis Lakes (with water this year!) |
| 2. Zapata Falls | 2. Zapata Falls |
| 3. Fort Garland Museum | 3. Stations of the Cross |
| 1. Zapata Falls | 1. Sand Dunes |
| 2. Sand Dunes | 2. deVargas Crossing |
| 3. Stations of the Cross | 3. Stations of the Cross |

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

- Deep culture and heritage, open spaces and big sky, beautiful vistas, Sand Dunes, variety of ecosystems
- The mountains and plains are close
- Spanish families from 1850
- Trains (narrow and regular gage) with tourists using them
- Low population, large size
- History
- Scenery

Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway (129 miles)

Byway communities include Antonito, Conejos, San Luis, Fort Garland, and Alamosa



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