



Colorado Scenic & Historic Byways Commission August 2020 Meeting Minutes

Time: Thursday, August 6, 2020, 9:30 am-12 pm

Location: online Zoom

Attending: Amanda Barker, Pam Denahy, Tony Gurzick, Lenore Bates, Heidi Pankow, Marty Hackett, Debra Malone, Jack Placchi, Nathan Boyless, Kathleen Bracke, Rick Wallner, Traci Stoffel, Chad Schneckenburger, Cynthia Nieb, Andrew Grossman, Cheryl Glanz, Ilana Moir, Christy Costello, Cassandra Patton, Rebecca White, Jane Leche

Call to Order 9:31 am.

May 2020 Commission Minutes

Amanda presented May 6, 2020, Commission Meeting minutes. The motion to approve was from Heidi, seconded by Andrew. All in favor, none opposed.

Updates from the Byways on the Road

- **Highway of Legends:** Debra introduced Marty, currently director of the Trinidad welcome center and the City of Trinidad's Tourism Office, also working with the Marketing Department. They applied for national designation as a National Scenic Byway (will know by the end of the year). The byway is meeting weekly with reps from Los Caminos and Silver Thread byways. They are developing 3-day, 5-day, and 7-day itineraries for summer and fall travel. The 3-day itinerary has already gone live on colorado.com. They are applying to participate in the CRAFT crisis funding to restart their efforts.
- **Mount Evans/Guanella:** Mount Evans did not open this year with significant impacts.
- **Tracks Across Borders:** Meeting regularly, working on an app set-up for a byway virtual tour. This byway crosses the state line with New Mexico, which has a 14-day self-quarantine. The tribal governments have taken strict restrictions on reservations. An old store, the Gomez Store, is going to move
- **Top of the Rockies:** new Corridor Management Plan
- **Flat Tops:** would like to be designated as an electric byway, but two of the towns are 80 miles apart and won't meet the 50-mile threshold.
- **Alpine Loop:** produced a flyer poster "wanted: you to stay on the trail."
- **Dinosaur Byway:** produced a new brochure, looking for more funding for additional printing. They also are looking to install more charging stations, which would need about a \$2,400 match.
- **San Juan Skyway:** CMP update scheduled for next week and will work on the revision over the upcoming month
- **Guanella Pass and Mt Evans:** about 30% of restrooms are still closed on Guanella Pass and with Mt Bierstadt with parking. They are investigating replacing old signage.
- **Pawnee Pioneer Trails:** working on getting the board up and running, a few new folks engaged in Sterling and USFS.

- **West Elk Loop:** Collecting a fee to counter impacts to increased travel.

Updates from Agencies

- **Bureau of Land Management:** Working on reinvigorating the BackCountry Byways, working with the National Scenic Byways Foundation, creating new pages on the NSBF with itineraries (Gold Belt and Alpine Loop are both BCB). Also, sponsoring Leave No Trace courses for visitor centers and byways partners.
- **Colorado Department of Transportation:** [grants page](#), small telework grant (looking for creative applications) and Revitalizing Main Streets.
- **Colorado Tourism Office:** opened its grants up to \$25K on August 11. Also, CTO highlighted in their most recent newsletter the Gold Belt CRAFT program.
- **Great Outdoor Colorado:** changed its grant cycle to focus on community resilience. The grant program is more comprehensive than parks and conservation. They are interested in getting boots on the ground. If there are needs for stewardship or trail maintenance, parking lots, expand access.
 - [Resilient Communities grant program](#) (need to work with a land trust or local government)
 - Conservation Corps Grant program

Byways Presentation from Santa Fe Trail

Pamela Denahy, City of La Junta

Rick Wallner, Canyons & Plains of Southeast Colorado

- The trail's history is about commerce: business and making money taking goods into Santa Fe (as opposed to immigration like the Oregon Trail). The trail ended its heavy regular use after Santa Fe got the railroad in 1880 (?). 1821 was the start of the trail.
- Byways Highlights: Bent's New Fort, Fort Lyon, Boggsville, Bent's Old Fort, Swales (low spot from the impaction of the trail, not as distinct as a trail rut), Santa Fe Trail Museum, Bent's New Fort is a homeless rehabilitation center currently for individuals impacted by homelessness on the Front Range
- The 2021 Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial Symposium is September 22-26, 2021, in La Junta. Registration open at www.2021sfts.com
- The Canyons and Plains Regional Heritage Taskforce have become the management entity of the Santa Fe Trail Byway since earlier in 2020. Past projects include tear-off maps, PSA's, Wayside Panels, Economic Impact Study (found \$8M coming in for heritage tourism in SE Colorado). They will share the EIS with the Commission. www.canyonsandplains.com
- The goals for the Byway Committee are to be representative of the region and to refresh their Corridor Management Plan (created in 2008, revised in 2017, but still need another refresh). They will also incorporate other plans into the CMP to be more inclusive of all the other work that impacts the Santa Fe Trail Byway.
- The next steps include creating a 2020/2021 annual work plan, supporting the Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial Symposium, and focusing on regional inclusivity (presentation tour to county commissioners).

Byways Annual Survey Report

Lenore Bates sent out the survey on March 23, gave a short response time of April 3. By the

end of June, we had responses from everyone. It's taken us a trend of four years, but we are presently conversing with all of our byways groups. Past participation in the annual survey was 23 byways (out of 26) in 2019, 21 in 2018, and only 15 in 2017. We are in the habit of completing this report! [Link to read the full report.](#)

Byways Program Goals and Direction

COVID-19 Impacts on Byways:

- CTO is working to view the State of the Union in rural AND urban Colorado, continue to hear feast and famine are happening, high use areas are getting even higher visitation and disproportionate dramatically lower results in some urban areas.
- 2020 is the year of the road trip, seeking public lands and scenic tours, looking for ways to be away from people.
- Colorado is the epicenter of what people are looking for with the reputation to give it (more so than Wyoming or New Mexico): want to drive, see public land, and scenic beauty. The larger mountain communities meet this, but CTO is seeking dispersion marketing to other mountain towns.
- Visitation at Colorado State Parks is up 30% from this time last year. The sale of resident fishing license is up 80% from this time last year, seeing significant abuses to some public lands (trash increases, trail misuse, parking inappropriately), resulting in resource degradation.
- Mountain Biking and Offroad Vehicle Use by first-timers could be problematic. We need to train riders on proper etiquette. Peer education will be a powerful tool.
- Andrew will make a note to get us information on how visitors have engaged with Colorado.com.
- Deb notes a state of “haves” and “have nots” - some steady travel in southern Colorado (mostly from Texas) on the Highway of Legends. Small restaurants are running ragged. These are the ones that could use more traffic. We need to educate the public on how to promote the underutilized byways.
- Marty shared the Welcome Center in Trinidad is using a screening questionnaire for contact tracing. They are seeing 50% of in-state travelers compared to last year.
- Cynthia hears funding conversations happening at the Federal level could implement as early as next year.

Emerging Ideas:

- One way the Commission could help is through **communications and education plans**. CTO is scheduling a meeting with educational folks, developing educational itineraries.
 - CPW tools <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/Education.aspx>
 - Stay the Trail <https://staythetrail.org/>
 - CTO tools <https://industry.colorado.com/care-coloradans-responsible-tourism-toolkit>
 - Several of the byways have Jr Ranger books (Gold Belt, Alpine Loop, Mount Evans, NPS, Santa Fe Trail Association)
 - First-time user guide to camping, lean on the youth. There are cartoon videos on how to do the right thing.
 - [Teacher Guide from Los Caminos](#)
- **Engagement with Youth and Schools**, especially with social media
 - Ann Pritzlaff has Colorado Youth Summit (June canceled because of COVID) - the

- goal is to pick youth people's minds.
- Ties to schools to reach out and see what format we take:
 - Marty works with the regional director of Trinidad Schools (her daughter) to have a school tour of her byway.
 - Federal Managers have Every Kid Outdoors for all 4th Graders.
 - Cheryl can reach out to the district manager.
 - Heidi can chat offline regarding polling educators. She has access to an NW school district that might be a good group to talk to about what they might need/want.
- The **next step is an education subcommittee** to explore this. Take to Ann Pritzlaff, Michelle Pearson, and Rebecca Goodwin for feedback. One goal could be creating a clearinghouse of resources. Volunteers are Nathan, Cheryl, Jack, Andrew, and Marty.

Annual Byways Meeting

The group identified speakers and topics for the annual byways meeting on September 16:

- CDOT's Executive Director Shoshanna Lew to give welcoming remarks
- Dr. Chris Bowles with Hlstory Colorado to connect how his position ties to the byways
- A CRAFT program roundtable around Communications
- Update from the National Scenic Byway Foundation to include current information about the Great American Outdoor Update (35% of the funding can go to transportation, especially for deferred maintenance) and Federal Funding via the transportation bill
- Michelle Pearson to speak about efforts from youth in historic preservation

Open Floor Updates

- **Corridor Management Plans:** Lenore shared that Top of the Rockies and Trail of the Ancients were both moving forward with a revised Corridor Management Plan (CMP, which all byways are required to have, ideally current)
- **Electric Byways Update:** Andrew shared the goal at Tourism Office is to have ten byways designated "electric" by the end of FY21 and five more by the end of FY22. Lariat Loop, Silver Thread, and Flat Top could be ready by October. Focus is on Colorado River Headwaters, Trail Ridge Road, and Peak to Peak after that. He estimates a \$2400 match is needed for these stations to install a fast charger. There is an opportunity to identify a rental EV partner. The new Rivian 4x4 pickup truck could be a game-changer for electric vehicles. Should we explore an "Adopt-an-EV charging station" opportunity?
- **Photo Exhibit Update:** Lenore shared the photos developed for display at Denver International Airport, and the Colorado State Capital is moving again. The Colorado Springs Airport wants the photo exhibit from October 2020 - September 2021. They hope to fit the 52 photos (two photos per byway). If not, they will take 26 photos (one photo per byway). The airport is creating a contract with CDOT and State Controller that Lenore will sign as the owner. After their stint at the COS airport, they will move on to the state fair in 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.