



Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission August 2021 Meeting Minutes

Time: Wednesday, August 4, 2020, 9:30 am- 12:00 pm

Location: Zoom Online

Attending: Amanda Barker, Lenore Bates, Dr. Chris Bowles, Nathan Boyless, Kathleen Bracke, Christy Costello, Tim Finger, Cheryl Glanz, Andrew Grossman, Nancy Kramer, Cassandra Patton, Chad Schneckenburger, Anna Scott, Dean Stoddart (State Transportation Landscape Architect for the Florida DOT, Manager of Florida Scenic Highways Program), Traci Stoffel

Nathan Boyless called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

May 2021 Commission Minutes

Amanda Barker presented the May 5, 2021, Commission meeting minutes for discussion and corrections. With no debate, the motion to approve was from Andrew Grossman, seconded by Cheryl Glanz. All in favor, none opposed.

Updates from the Byways

- **Top of the Rockies:** The public engagement piece part of their Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is complete. The report writing is underway. Now the hard challenge comes with securing commitments for new board members.
- **Pawnee Pioneer Trails:** Downtown Colorado Inc. kickstarted a planning process for a byways summit on September 15 that will be in-person in Fort Morgan or Sterling. Participation was great for this first planning meeting. Topics included wayfinding assessment, CRAFT, CMP overview, and pulling together a volunteer byways committee as an end goal.
- **Peak to Peak:** The CMP draft is ready to be shared more broadly for comment in August. The next step is recruiting board members.
- **Cache la Poudre:** The City of Fort Collins held another meeting discussing annexing the eastern portal (that includes part of the byway) with the city or not. The North Park city byway is in crisis with the floods. They applied for a Love your Byways grant at Ted's Place at the entry of the canyon (they need 35 volunteers to attend!). They are looking for a unified message from the byways around safety (1 inch of precipitation killed four people). The Byways 30th anniversary will be put off until the spring, but this small grant opens doors to many groups they haven't been working with recently. Hallie Groff is the new Natural Resources Specialist/District Recreation Staff Officer for the Canyon Lakes Ranger District.
- **South Platte River Trail:** On Friday, Aug 6, the Union Pacific Big Boy will stop in Julesburg along the Byway. They are expecting 300 people. The second update is they are in the last three months of renovations for the Depot with the Federal government. The challenge is to get contractors up there. The third update is the byway with TravelStorys finished recording with supplemental text for the I-76 corridor. They are now

working 385 down to Ray. They have paid for the app, but it hasn't launched yet. The final update is there is a Byways exhibit at a local art gallery.

- **San Juan Skyway:** Heidi is wrapping up her work with them. On September 17, they will have a meeting in Durango. The goal is to pull together a revision to the CMP, and hoping Brooke will continue leading the group organization.
- **Highway of Legends:** Debra Malone has officially retired from her byways duties
- **Top of the Rockies:** There is an organization in place again, so the group will now be able to revisit and move forward with their CMP plan.

Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway

Nancy Kramer, NW Colo Cultural Heritage Program, provided an update to the Commission about the Flat Tops Trail Scenic and Historic Byway. You can find her [complete slides online here](#). NWCHP (Northwest cultural Heritage Program) was established in 2009 with 501c3 status since 2015. Nancy is the main/only staff. She recently began working and Andrew and CTO about other support options for their program.

Completed in 2018, Crossens Market is now a community center and welcome center. Because Glenwood Canyon is closed, tons of people were diverted through Steamboat, and traffic numbers are skyrocketing. Wayfinding and analysis were completed in 2015. Nancy worked in 2019 to bring together stakeholders. 2020 had many challenges convening the group, and then COVID hit. Success from the past year includes charging stations in Meeker and Yampa.

They have been sputtering and starting. Their CMP has not been updated for 20 years. Their group asked about funding assistance for CMP revisions, and Lenore responded she has a budget to work with a few groups and will be able to follow up with them. They are reaching out with Top of the Rockies and Dinosaur Diamond groups about CMP revisions and where to take the byway's direction. The CMP template created by the Byways Commission has been of huge assistance.

Flat Tops Byway is considering how to implement a Marketing and interpretive Plan. Their journey tours and signage will be a priority. There are available Main Street Revitalization grants for downtown signage that could be another funding source, as well as economic development grants open for both State and Federal funding opportunities. The Colorado Resiliency Office within DOLA is trying to [track money](#) coming [into Colorado](#).

Roadside Markers

Dr. Chris Bowles shared a presentation on History Colorado's (HC) inventory of roadside markers around the state. The work took place over the past 10 years. The roadside markers that were put up in 1994 were degrading as early as 2003. There is no budget with CDOT for maintenance. HC will now rethink what roadside markers look like.

The original markers from the 1920s and 30s, made of stone, concrete, and brass. The nuance of interpretation is somewhat coarse. In the 1950s, DAR or joint partnership with Colorado Historical Society put up many markers, still without any context and thoughtful interpretation. The 1970s markers have a bit more contextualization, for example, with mentions of the Ute guides. The 1990s version of roadside markers is ubiquitous in stopovers with decent

interpretation in much of them. Part of the issue here is some spalling on the splints where concrete was not up to the task. Additional problems are burning in the sun (acrylics are not ideal for Colorado's environment), crackling and plastic effectively melting.

HC gets complaints monthly from communities needing updates. HC is now looking at the digital interpretation of Red Rocks with AR and VR for interpretation at Red Rocks through [FactorEarth](#). Physical markers are still needed in the landscape. Are these roadside interpretive panels or something else e.g., artistic? The work needs to be done in conjunction with communities. HC should not do the interpretation, and we need to be locally meaningful.

HC is thinking about multi-departmental work CDOT, CPW, in order to get a consultant to analyze inventory, needs, and if the markers are still meaningful (some can probably go). They will figure out the community angle, talk to local communities about what they need, a framework for Colorado for the middle of the 21st century. There is some pressure to replace like with like, but HC is unlikely to go this way. The markers could be more culturally interpretive, as landscape context is as important as direct history. The next step is a meeting with GOCO to define the landscape element of this work.

Discussion with the commission gave a few additional insights:

- BLM is working to update Gold Belt's markers.
- HC should think about the overall visitor experience - various age groups will interpret technology differently
- Hearing three things: 1. Language 2. Quality 3. Strategy for digital
- CDOT development grants coming online in 2022.
- The near-term strategy includes the Colorado Byways as the priority. They are the gateway. A condition and wording assessment will come as a report to the Byways Commission.

Byways Executive Order

Nathan Boyless shared revisions and strategies for updating the Byways Executive Order with the Office of Governor Polis. There is not a required revision but is regularly updated with each Governor at the request of the Byways Commission. The [draft and comments are online here](#).

Nathan and Rebecca White are targeting September 23 during the Santa Fe Trails celebration, proposing Bent's Fort. October 3-4 in Trinidad is another possibility as the bookend end of the bicentennial. The Commission will be informed if something gets announced.

2021-2022 Commission Goals

Nathan Boyless and Lenore Bates shared a presentation on the implementation of the Strategic plan and the status of past Commission goals. You can view their full [presentation online here](#). The slides match all Commission strategic plan goals and the relevant progress or completed tasks taken. Please be in touch with Lenore Bates if you have any corrections or additions to our current tracking. The next step is naming the upcoming goals for the 2022-2023 term.

Metrics from Colorado Tourism - Byways Micro-Site

Andrew Grossman presented the end-of-year 2020 numbers for the CTO micro-site of Colorado Byways. Now we have a full year of data, and we should anticipate a higher website usage during the summertime. Mt Evans Byway gets the most traffic. CTO did an electric vehicle photoshoot and filled out Phase 2 photos for individual pages. CTO additionally added an updated map of Electric Byways and enhanced web pages with Electric Vehicle information.

Individual byway groups can continue to submit photos that will improve strong online content. CTO also encourages all individual byways to review their individual webpage to submit updates about business closures and top priorities from the community for what is highlighted.

Open Updates from the Commission:

- **Colorado Tourism Office's GovCon:** GovCon is at the Pueblo Convention Center, November 3, 9:30-11:30. [Scholarships are available](#) to attend.
- **CTO Marketing Matching Grants:** the grant round opens August 10, will close September 23, request amount is raised, match lowered to 50%. Awardees will receive 75 hours of assistance. Andrew also wants to flag that the tourism development grant will return in 2022 that will be a good match for many individual Colorado byways.
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Update:** They have not announced \$16M passed in funding but we expect a [notice from FHWA on this webpage](#), likely in the fall. This is another funding mechanism for Byway corridor management plans.
- **National Scenic Byways Program Update:** Four byways submitted for a microgrant from Toyota - \$2,000 grant with 35 volunteers needed, working with a local Toyota dealership. They are also working with Scenic America and getting funding established.
- **Santa Fe Trail Celebration:** Lenore will have a byways booth at the celebration. Cheryl will follow up about connecting some volunteers.
- **History Colorado Update:** There are continuing changes at History Colorado:
 - Steve Turner leaving at the end of the month. Dawn DiPrince will replace him as Executive director.
 - Steve also leaves his role as the SHPO. HC created the new position of Chief Preservation Officer with the hope that person will be the new SHPO. HC is interviewing people right now.
 - The State Historic Fund is in an active general grant round: applications are in, reviewers are working to rank the applications. A new mini-grant start in February, fund education and preservation up to \$50,000. Diversity and inclusion are the primary focus of both grant rounds.
 - HC expects \$6M from the Governor's Office to backfill some of the losses from gaming during the pandemic.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41 am.