



A Framework for Wayshowing:

The South Platte River Trail

Sedgwick County
Colorado

May 2013

Acknowledgments

This plan would not have been possible without the contributions of the Steering Committee of the South Platte River Trail: Anna Scott, Connie Juhl, Mike Sullivan, Paula Fraker, Sue Carter, LoRayne Taylor, Glen Sandquist, Jim Beck, Doris Heath, Muriel Nelson, Gary Lancaster, Kay Blochowitz, and Larry Frame.

The project was designed using concepts based on the work of David Dahlquist and the America's Byways® Resource Center.

Appreciation is also extended to the participants of the South Platte River Trail Wayfinding Project, who donated their time to spend a day behind the wheel in Northeast Colorado. Thanks to
Front Seaters: Chris Pfaff, Larry White (first time visitors to the South Platte River Trail)
Back Seaters: Kelly Barbello (Colorado Tourism Office), Larry Haas (Colorado Department of Transportation).

Special thanks to Lenore Bates, Scenic Byways Program Coordinator, Colorado Department of Transportation for her guidance throughout the project.

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Executive Summary

Wayshowing is a collection of maps, signs and other media that have been developed to aid travelers in their journey. It is critical not only in ensuring that travelers successfully navigate an area and enjoy their stay, but in attracting travelers in the first place. As such, efforts to develop or enhance a tourism economy must consider the assets and deficiencies of existing wayshowing elements located along the full length of the byway corridor. The plan that follows assesses the current elements of a wayshowing system along the South Platte River Trail Scenic and Historic Byway in Sedgwick County, Colorado.

Utilizing a “front-seat, back-seat” approach, travelers unfamiliar with the area took to the road with a list of significant historical, cultural, and recreational sites to locate. Neophytes in the front seat searched for signs, used digital devices, studied maps and asked for directions. Meanwhile, transportation and tourism specialists in the back-seat recorded the navigational challenges of those “new to the byway” travelers in the front-seat.

An analysis of this formal assessment exercise combined with the input of local officials, transportation, and tourism specialists resulted in recommendations that can improve the ease of navigation for visitors, and better capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the county. The thirty individual recommendations contained in this document fall within four broad action items:

- A. Capitalize on Julesburg’s interstate location as “The First Stop in Colorado.” Create a distinctive landing spot for travelers who exit Interstate 76, clearly defining it as an orientation place. The Welcome Center is perfectly positioned, yet needs the addition of a byway-oriented information kiosk in a prominent location on the front lawn to capture travelers and provide a trailhead to points of interest.
- B. Orient visitors to the trail itself, giving them an easy-to-read starting point, i.e. Start Here. Number the interpretive opportunities on the trail by topping the eleven existing handsome steel frames with numbers, and producing a brochure that mirrors the signs as well as a numbered map displayed in the kiosk at the Welcome Center. Plot the trail to travel first to the river, then through Julesburg, and on to Ovid, giving both communities the opportunity to capture traveler dollars.
- C. Open up river access by developing Lions Park which currently has a picnic shelter and some picnic tables, but needs significant work to make the pull-out park feel safe and appealing to travelers. Once this area is improved, consider building a greenway river walk that offers hiking, biking, bird watching and river access for boaters. This development would provide a resource that will benefit both locals and visitors who seek ways to be active in nature.
- D. Expand information for travelers using electronic devices to navigate and connect with communities. This byway enjoys superior Internet connectivity. This is important as there has been a surge in travelers’ usage of mobile devices and social media. To capture this new source of potential travelers, the byway needs to expand its website content and develop apps that will entice travelers to stop for traveler services (food, lodging, gas) and/or experiences (a river walk, bird watching, etc).

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 South Platte River Trail in Sedgwick County. 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 Interstate 76, US Highways 138 and 385, and County Road 28, and designation signage (South Platte River Trail, Pony Express, California Trail, High Plains Route, etc.) along the same routes.
- Provide recommendations for enhancing directional signage to key sites.
- Provide an outline for subsequent action to include a more comprehensive wayshowing study and plan.

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

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.*

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 frame: a cognitive map.

Wayshowing Components

A successful wayshowing system includes multiple components that not only direct the traveler, but 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.
- Direction 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.

Current Byway Conditions

The South Platte River Trail was designated as a Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway in 1991. Located in Sedgwick County in Northeastern Colorado, the 19 mile loop begins at I-76 and US 385 next to the Colorado Welcome Center at Julesburg and follows US 385 north to US Highway 138, then east on US 138 through Julesburg to the town of Ovid. At Ovid, the byway turns south on Sedgwick County Road 27.8 to County Road 28 where the route turns back to the northeast and returns to the Colorado Welcome Center and US 385/I-76.

The byway uses the State scenic byway logo (the Columbine sign) as directional signage to mark the route. On a regional scale, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for signage along state highways throughout the area, including Interstate 76, US Highways 138 and 385. Sedgwick County is responsible for signage along County Roads 27.8 and 28.

The South Platte River Trail Scenic Byway received funding in 1993 through the National Scenic Byways Program/Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Colorado Department of Transportation for two brochures, one serving as an interpretive piece and the other for marketing purposes. In 1996, a second grant from the National Scenic Byways Program was received for

completion of a corridor management plan and a new interpretive brochure. Matching funds were provided by the Colorado State Historical Fund, administered by History Colorado.

An interpretive plan was developed as part of the management plan and upon completion in 1997 was used as the basis for a series of interpretive markers and new brochure. The byway committee received a Transportation Enhancement grant from the Colorado Department of Transportation for the design and installation of interpretive signage at 11 locations along the byway. These included interpretive signs at the Colorado Welcome Center, Italian Caves, Julesburg #2, Windmill/cistern, Pony Express Home Station, Fort Sedgwick site, Town of Ovid/POW Camp, Great Western Sugar Factory, Julesburg #3, the Depot Museum, and Lions Park. The interpretive signage received the Outstanding Interpretive Program in the Rocky Mountain Region Award from the National Association of Interpretation in 1998.

The South Platte River Trail Scenic Byway organization completed an update to their 2001 corridor management plan (CMP) in 2010. The revised plan includes a detailed inventory of all signage found along the byway along current conditions and recommendations for additional interpretive signage needs.

Signs at the eleven primary interpretive sites, in varying stages of deterioration (likely due to sun and water damage) are scheduled for replacement in the spring of 2013. Other issues include signs placed parallel to the road so they are not readily visible to the driver, pullouts that have eroded or are now filled with soft gravel, limited visibility of signs due to parked cars, missing artifacts that are described on the signs, peeling paint of the frames, and lack of advanced warning or Point of Interest signs.

The Colorado Welcome Center, which is well signed and easy to find, is a key element of the wayfinding system in northeastern Colorado as the first point of information in the state. This center serves more than 274,000 visitors per year with information about the region. The volunteer staff at the Welcome Center is well versed in the story of the byway and has received ongoing training; however, before and after business hours, they miss a good portion of the 6,100 travelers that utilize I-76 each day.



Colorado Welcome Center Signage



Colorado Welcome Center and kiosk

Interpretive signage about the byway was installed on the outside of the building in 1998 but was recently removed due to their poor condition resulting from sun damage. A large four-panel kiosk installed by History Colorado provides general information about Colorado including a regional map. The back side of the panels has information about the byway but is not as apparent to visitors due to a narrower concrete sidewalk - not all visitors look on both sides of the kiosk.

South Platte River Trail Wayfinding Assessment

Often the difficulty in providing effective wayshowing tools lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. Additionally, maps, signs, brochures and other media from multiple sources can often provide conflicting information. In January 2013 an on-the-road experiment was conducted along the South Platte River Trail to answer some of these questions. Specifically, the experiment sought to:

- Identify gaps in navigational clues for travelers by identifying points of certainty, and points of confusion
- Identify points of disconnects between what a traveler sees through the windshield and what they read from maps, brochures, mobile devices, web sites in their laps

A list of significant historical, cultural, and recreational sites along the byway was developed for use during the Wayfinding Assessment. Many of these sites were identified by the South Platte River Trail Byway Committee and local stakeholders at a meeting in December 2012. A signage assessment survey of Committee members was also conducted. Representatives were asked to list the top ten heritage, cultural, and/or recreational sites in their respective counties and provide an assessment of the existing directional signage. Seventeen sites were chosen for the Wayfinding Assessment. The attractions and sites chosen for inclusion in this exercise appear in Table 1.

Table 1: South Platte River Trail Wayfinding Assessment Route

Wayfinding Team Sites
1. Julesburg Welcome Center
2. Italian Caves Interpretive Sign
3. Pony Express Interpretive Site
4. Ovid Park – the “Dinkey”
5. Ovid School/Revere Jr./Sr. High School
6. Julesburg Drag Strip
7. Depot Museum
8. Antiques & Artisans
9. Fort Sedgwick Museum
10. Old Ford Garage
11. Hippodrome
12. Julesburg Library
13. Sedgwick County Courthouse
14. Swimming Pool and Park
15. DePoorter Lake
16. Lions Park
17. Platte Valley Inn

A four member team was assembled to travel the byway using a “front seat, back seat” approach. In the front seat were two neophytes, both new to the region. They were given the list of attractions and sites to locate using tools at hand--highway signs, mobile devices, and verbal directions. They were given no printed materials, but were welcome to locate brochures and maps at locations along the route.

Transportation and tourism specialists occupied the backseat. The “back seaters” recorded the experience of the “front seaters” in detail. “Back seaters” recorded the exact locations where the “front seaters” encountered confusion or uncertainty in navigating the region. They also recorded any disparities between written information in maps, brochures and other media and actual conditions as observed through the windshield.

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.”

After the conclusion of the wayfinding assessment, 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 team is found in the Appendix.

Observations from the “Front-seaters,” the tourists behind the wheel:

- Interstate 76 needs to have byway signs at the Julesburg Exit, and pre-notification signs as well
- The Colorado Welcome Center staff was very helpful
- There was no directional sign to locate the byway for travelers exiting the Welcome Center
- A kiosk at the start of the byway would help provide context for the eleven interpretive signs
- The bird watching potential was great
- No sign exists for the South Platte River which is the key site
- Lions Park has great potential for greenway trail and river access
- Great history, lots of stories with themes: agriculture, transportation, Native American
- Ovid’s contribution to telling the byway’s story needs improvement
- POW Camp and story of the Bronco rider were interesting
- Sugar Beet Factory was interesting history
- As the traveler’s first stop in Colorado, the byway needs to figure out how to get people off the interstate
- Brochure is great – coordinating numbers with the signs would be good
- Wanted more information – website simply repeats brochure and interpretive sign information and needs to offer more depth for each of the stories



Pony Express Interpretive Sign



Lions Park Signage

Key recommendations coming from the professional specialists in the back seaters:

- Historical timeline for the whole byway is needed
- More information is needed about the themes of agriculture, architecture, history
- A simple numbering system could coordinate kiosk, brochures and mobile applications
- The traveler is left to self-interpret the Italian Caves Interpretive site
- The Pony Express site is easy to find, but pull off is small and signs need updating
- Ovid Dinkey is off the path of the byway; travelers need interpretive information
- Need better map of the Town of Julesburg
- Julesburg Dragstrip has a good pulloff but signs need refurbishing
- Hippodrome Theater is not well signed and is not included in brochures
- Museums on the byway all need signs that identify their collections
- No confirmation in Ovid that travelers are still on the byway
- The High Plains Highway, Auto Tour Route, and South Platte River Trail signs are confusing

Recommendations and Action Plan

The following recommendations outline improvements and enhancements to the existing system of wayshowing on the South Platte River Trail. This byway is exceptionally well positioned to attract travelers on I-76, and enjoys rich local assets that include the Colorado Welcome Center at Julesburg which boasts a highly trained staff and a fine bank of restrooms. Strong Internet connectivity provides the byway organization with the opportunity to provide local information and in-depth interpretation to the increasing number of travelers who are using use mobile devices. An award-winning series of interpretive panels has laid a strong foundation for historic interpretive information.

Findings of the wayfinding assessment team coupled with stakeholder discussions are categorized by navigational signage, safety issues, interpretive signage, and economic opportunities.

Additional navigational and or pre-notification signage was called for the in the following locations:

1. I-76 Signage (and pre-notification) is needed at the Julesburg exit. This is critical as the first point of traveler information upon entering Colorado State.
2. When travelers leave the Colorado Welcome Center, there is no byway navigational signage directing them to either Julesburg or Ovid. To capture tourist dollars in local businesses, a directional sign in this location is crucial.
3. Lions Park needs a more inviting entrance sign. A traveler going south on US 385 toward Interstate 76 sees no signage at all. Once its full potential is developed as a nature, recreation, and wildlife watching area, the park may qualify for pre-notification signage.
4. In Ovid, the state byway (blue columbine) signs disappear, and there are no navigation tools to either to return to the Interstate, or to double back to the Welcome Center via the loop on County Road 28 which displays many of the interpretive panels.
5. The assessment team found the multitude of trail signs confusing. What is the High Plains Highway? What is the Auto route? Do they follow the same route as the scenic byway? It is recommended that where they overlap, the signs be clustered on one post.



Safety concerns were few, but significant:

1. There are no acceleration/deceleration lanes approaching the Julesburg Drag Strip. Request an analysis and recommendation from CDOT.
2. On County Road 28, drivers must go slower than the speed limit looking for the interpretive panels. The signs are parallel to the road; they should be changed to be perpendicular to the roadway.
3. Night lighting at the Colorado Welcome Center needs to be improved.

Enhancements for interpretive signage:

1. Seize the advantage of being “The First Stop in Colorado” for Interstate Travelers. All four members on the assessment team noted that as travelers exit Interstate 76, they must immediately see where to orient themselves. This place must provide a sense of “landing,” clearly point them to the byway itself, and provide an overview of what they can learn or experience on the byway itself. The Colorado Welcome Center at Julesburg is perfectly positioned, yet needs the addition of a byway-oriented information kiosk in a prominent location that will capture travelers and provide a trailhead to additional points of interest. This signage must orient visitors to the byway itself, and give them an easy-to-read starting point, indicating that the “Trail Starts Here”.
2. Number the interpretive opportunities on the trail by topping the eleven existing handsome steel frames with numbers, and also in the brochures and on the kiosk at the Welcome Center to show the same eleven stops. Plot the trail to travel first to the river, then through Julesburg, and on to Ovid, giving both communities the opportunity to capture traveler dollars. The visual should make it clear to travelers that after they exit Ovid, they can either loop back to the Welcome Center or hop back on the Interstate.
3. Deliver on the promise of byway’s namesake—The South Platte River-- by developing Lions Park for River Access and a River Trail. The park currently has a picnic shelter and some picnic tables, but needs significant work to make this pull-off feel safe and appealing to travelers. Once the core picnic area is improved, consider building a river trail that offers hiking, biking, bird watching and river access for boaters. This expanded park could serve both locals and visitors who seek ways to be active in nature.
4. Install a new kiosk in the picnic area of Lions Park that highlights access to river and riparian areas. Highlight three major topics: the significance of the river (both historic and contemporary), the opportunities for bird watching and other wildlife viewing, and opportunities for recreation (hike, bike, paddle).
5. Add detail to outdoor signs that identify local businesses. There are multiple museums along the byway, yet a traveler can tell neither from the museum names themselves or from signage located outside the building what one can expect to find inside. This is also true for the Hippodrome Theater and the Julesburg Drag Strip.

6. Install interpretive information in Ovid including the historic Ovid School and the Dinkey. Expand the stories of sugar beet production and the POW camp, and cover contemporary agriculture more completely.
7. Highlight DePooter Lake as a place for travelers to walk. Investigate river access for the public and the potentials for bird watchers.
8. Expand interpretive information about contemporary life in Sedgwick County. The team members were very complimentary regarding the artistic quality of the existing panels, and one suggested that the multiple themes on panels were confusing. These revisions and additions can be accomplished with new interpretive installations and/or when the next set of panels is replaced.
9. Clarify the potential of the Italian Caves as a future site that can be experienced by visitors. The story has strong appeal, and the location near the Welcome Center makes the site worthy of consideration for development.
10. Actively pursue travelers who use mobile devices and social media. This byway enjoys superior Internet connectivity, and is thus well positioned to capitalize on the surge in travelers who use their devices to inform travelers about services (food, lodging, gas) or experiences (a river walk, bird watching, etc). To capture this new source of potential travelers, the byway needs to first expand its website content and develop apps for mobile devices.

Expand Economic Gain from Byway Travelers

1. Capture additional tourism dollars by pulling additional travelers off the interstate for a meal, gas, an overnight stay or other retail purchases. Dean Runyon Associates, citing the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and the US Bureau of Economic Analysis reports annually tourism-related expenditures to the Colorado Tourism Office. In the 2011 statistics, the Northeast District that includes the counties of Sedgwick, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Washington, Weld and Yuma achieved \$209 million in total direct travel spending in 2011. Of that, Sedgwick County earned \$2.1 million in travel receipts.
2. Review annually updates of tourism-related revenues by county and by region in the Dean Runyon research section of www.colorado.com as an evaluation instrument.

Partnerships and Financial Resources

The recommendations above present a step-by-step approach to continually developing a more effective system of wayshowing. In the short term, improvements concerning directional signage, clustered signage and interpretive signage can be pursued by consulting with the CDOT staff who have been involved directly in this wayfinding assessment and have thus seen the safety and navigation needs both through their own eyes, and through the eyes of new travelers to the region.

The next step will involve working with city officials to improve signage inside the city limits of Julesburg and Ovid, thus attracting increased number of byway travelers to local businesses. Establishments in both towns need clearer signage on the outside of individual retail businesses, on museums, and attractions so that travelers immediately know what is being offered.

The byway organization also needs to engage new and powerful partners whose mission it is to promote nature, conservation, and recreation. The Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife, regional conservation groups, and Great Outdoors Colorado all may be able to help develop natural assets to create new experiences for travelers that reflect the byway's namesake —The South Platte River.



Personnel at information centers in both Julesburg and Sterling reported to the team that they are experiencing strong demand for information about local hot spots for birding. The northeast section of the state is scheduled to be added to the Colorado Birding Trail, and this will present an excellent opportunity within the next two years to work on the development of this asset both for locations on the byway and on local ranches and farms.

Finally, a priority for the byway organization should be developing more depth and breadth in the content on the byway website. All the members of the assessment team were curious as they traveled the byway. Each expressed a desire to learn more, and all had devices in the car to accomplish a search. One wanted to know more about contemporary Sedgwick County, another wanted to discover bird watching sites, and yet another wanted a schedule for the drag races. Partnerships to help accomplish this last challenge that involves upgrades to the byway website, mobile devices, and social media may well lie with the youth of Sedgwick County.

APPENDIX

This section includes the list of sites identified by the South Platte River Trail Byway Committee as key heritage, recreational, and cultural attractions that are meaningful for travelers along the South Platte River Trail Scenic Byway. Also included are the notes and observations from the Wayfinding Assessment Team during their tour on the South Platte River Trail on January 28, 2013.

Assessment Team

Front Seat: Chris Pfaff, Larry White (First time visitors to South Platte River Trail)

Back Seat: Kelly Barbello (Colorado Tourism Office), Larry Haas (CO Department of Transportation)

Starting Point: Sterling Information Center

Sites to be located:

Julesburg Welcome Center

Italian Caves Interpretive Sign

Pony Express Interpretive Site

Ovid Park – the “Dinkey”

Ovid School/Revere Jr./Sr. High School

Julesburg Drag Strip

Depot Museum

Antiques & Artisans

Fort Sedgwick Museum

Old Ford Garage

Hippodrome

Julesburg Library

Sedgwick County Courthouse

Swimming Pool and Park

DePoorter Lake

Lions Park

Platte Valley Inn

FRONT SEAT RECORDED OBSERVATIONS

Interstate needs to have a sign for the byway – signage was bad. There should be signs outside of Julesburg several miles away and then at the exit.

As Gateway to Colorado – need to figure out how to get people off the interstate; “This is where Colorado begins”

At the Colorado Welcome Center, there was no sign directing visitors to the byway; we thought a kiosk at the start of the byway should be installed to help provide context for all the interpretive signs.

Donna at the Welcome Center was very helpful; she drew maps, gave us the brochure and we had no trouble finding all the sites on the brochure; we noticed that on the big wall map of the byway, the road paralleling the interstate with the Italian cave site is not identified. Use route numbers on the map at the Welcome Center (it should have read CR 28).

Brochure should be reviewed – adding numbers on textual descriptions to coordinate with numbers on signs would be very helpful.

South Platte River is the key feature of the so-named byway, yet it isn't even mentioned in brochure. There are no signs at the river crossing or interpretive signage explaining significance - i.e. South Platte River is a major Colorado waterway that Native Americans used, pioneer trails followed, led to creation of towns along its route (including Julesburg); and allowed agriculture to prosper.

The bird watching potential is great along the riparian habitat adjacent to South Platte River.

At Lions Park there is great potential for greenway trail along the river. Existing watchable wildlife sign is faded, almost illegible. No good signage at turnout, no indication of picnic area (that would need to be refurbished). An introduction sign would help at the park.

Ovid – interpretive signage provides vague history; needs improvement

History of POW Camp is very interesting and should be further developed. Story of Bronco rider overshadows it. Sugar Beet Factory has interesting history and massive building is a powerful reminder of the role of sugar beets.

Wanted more information as we traveled the route – tried Googling information at several points; could get online but could not pull up any additional information.

Great history, lots of stories to tell that fall into various themes such as agriculture and ranching, exploration, transportation, Native Americans, settlement; Byway needs to rethink narrative on interpretive signs; multi-themed interpretive signs were confusing.

BACK SEAT RECORDED OBSERVATIONS

Observer #1

Request for Byway signage coming off exit on I-76

There needs to be a “timeline” or a better overview of the area’s history prior to starting travel on the byway

What is the High Plains Highway?

Themes: agriculture, architecture, history

Julesburg Welcome Center – staff was helpful; there appear to be two different brochures for the byway directing travelers in two different locations for more information; request for better map of byway; no byway signage leaving center

Italian Caves Interpretive Sign- perhaps brochure “numbers” should be coordinated with signage

Pony Express Interpretive Site – no South Platte River signage; more information on agricultural component, i.e. sugar beets

Ovid Park – the “Dinkey” – not much information on agricultural history of the area

Ovid School/Revere Jr./Sr. High School – Ovid school and town history missing

Julesburg Drag Strip – found, no comments

Depot Museum - Fort Sedgwick Museum? Transportation museum?

Antiques & Artisans – found, no comments
Fort Sedgwick Museum – found, no comments; expressed desire for county map
Old Ford Garage– found, no comments
Hippodrome – theater not marked; “We need a better map of Julesburg”
Julesburg Library – found, no comments
Sedgwick County Courthouse – found, no comments
Swimming Pool and Park – found, no comments
DePoorter Lake – Offerings?
Lions Park – Didn’t find (actually did – but not under that name; watchable wildlife site, signage and maintenance needed)
Platte Valley Inn - found, no comments

Observer #2

Sign to get off Interstate needed (East Bound)
No confirmation of scenic byway in Ovid

Julesburg Welcome Center- no off ramp sign to Welcome Center; staff friendly – no county map as requested; no sign outside to direct travelers to the byway when leaving information center
Italian Caves Interpretive Sign (Devil’s Dive) – on east side of road; easy to pass for SW travelers; not much to see; points left up to self interpret
Pony Express Interpretive Site- easy pull off, lots of information; one/two cars only; signs need updating
Ovid Park – the “Dinkey” – off the path; did find; small town, asking more questions
Ovid School/Revere Jr./Sr. High School – off the path; did find; small town
Julesburg Drag Strip – Found; good pull off, no acceleration/deceleration lanes; signs need refurbishing;
Depot Museum- Found using maps
Antiques & Artisans – Found on Cedar
Fort Sedgwick Museum - Closed on Mondays
Old Ford Garage- Part of museum
Hippodrome- not listed; no sign
Julesburg Library – Found, no comments
Sedgwick County Courthouse - Found, no comments
Swimming Pool and Park – Found on 8th & Oak, no comments
DePoorter Lake – Found; has questions
Lions Park – no comments
Platte Valley Inn – Found

ASSESSMENT TEAM COMMENTS AT STAKEHOLDER DEBRIEF

Entrance into Julesburg – needs map; should reproduce map in a kiosk
Multiple museums, not all on the brochure
Question – what is the best way to travel the byway (north to south or south to north)

Some sites not on the brochure – not technically on the byway either
Misunderstood that the Watchable Wildlife Site is also Lions Park; signage needs improvement

Identify byway themes at the Welcome Center – byway not presented in a way that gets people to understand its importance
Timeline on entry kiosk would help tie the story together

Make interpretive sign posts easier to spot with wings on sides or perpendicular to traffic
Not enough reassurance signs on byway at points of decision
No sign for swimming pool
Lions Park not signed going south to Interstate

Four Julesburg sites need to be placed in context
Flagpole in field is hard to see at Fort Sedgwick
Training for Welcome Center staff – what would the volunteers say if they had not been presented with a list of sites?
Economic Development has to do with how many hours you can keep visitors in town
Need information at Welcome Center or along Interstate for what there is to do in town; what's available
Look at Gateway – not just welcome center
Tie the Present of Julesburg to the Past (add contemporary elements)



Wayfinding Assessment Team

Larry White (Front Seater), Kelly Barbello (CTO), Chris Pfaff (Front Seater), Larry Hass (CDOT)