

GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

BARBER AND COMANCHE COUNTIES

Submitted August 24, 1999

The Gypsum Hills Scenic Highway A Byway of Beauty and History

US Highway 160 from Medicine Lodge to Coldwater in Barber and Comanche Counties of Kansas offers viewers a unique opportunity to experience a transitional topography not normally expected in Kansas. Traveling west from Medicine Lodge crossing the Medicine River one immediately recognizes a change in vegetation, and also of topography. The Plains Indians who roamed the southwest—the Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, Apache, and Cheyenne—believed the purgative effect of the calcium and magnesium sulfates dissolved in this water in which they bathed and from which they drank cleansed their systems. It was here the white man negotiated away the Indians claims to Colorado, North Dakota, New Mexico, and Arizona, forcing them into Indian Territory in what was later to become Oklahoma, clearing the way to white settlement in much of the West.

The vegetative change is first recognized by the profusion of eastern red cedar trees occurring, as a transition is made from rolling farm land to midgrass prairie grazing land, then to rugged, gypsum-capped flower pot shale mesas and buttes with minimal vegetation.

This highway appears in the distance as a narrow ribbon carefully strewn through the deep cuts in the Gypsum Hills for the next 25 miles. Viewers experiencing this drive feel a compulsion to stop and absorb its grandeur. Two scenic overlooks have been established to allow them this opportunity. No matter what season of the year, or time of the day—morning mid-day, or evening—viewers are rewarded. Stepping out of one's vehicle, the diversity and abundance of plants in this area is revealed. The native buffalo, bluestems, grama, and Indian grass dominate the landscape. Many marvel at the deep, claypot russet-red color of the soil. Geologists are attracted to the rock formations unearthed by years of natural erosion, of the sandstone and clay to disclose the Flower Pot Formation of Permian Age with a resistant layer of gypsum from the Blaine Formation.

Abundant wildlife—deer, turkey, quail, pheasant, raccoons, skunks, beaver, bobcats, porcupine, and recently armadillo—are often glimpsed and occasionally encountered. Deep blue clear water fills the ponds, dammed as watering places for the cattle dotting the rangeland. It is not unusual to have the opportunity to view a rancher on horseback tending his/her daily chores. The total experience is one of serenity, relaxation, and perhaps, isolation from society. It fills the soul and spirit.

Traveling on west, one approaches the deep Mule Creek Valley, which marks the western edge of the Red Hills along the highway until they reappear southwest of Coldwater. One now enters the High Plains region recognized by the return to a less rugged grazing area, then to the more brownish, sandy clay alluvial soil, and farming.

The Comanche Pool recognized the potential of this area for grazing and fattening cattle more than a century ago. The basic design of the Pool was for a group to combine cattle, men, and horses on a selected area of public grounds. Each

individual's share of expenses and profits was calculated based on the number of cattle with his brand. The Comanche Pool was the largest organization of its kind encompassing over a million acres including all of Comanche, and parts of Barber, Kiowa, and Clark Counties with more in Oklahoma. In 1884, over 80,000 head of improved cattle were counted. The business headquarters for this organization was in Medicine Lodge, with the working headquarters located in southeast Comanche County.

Evidence of the herds of buffalo that previously roamed this area is still distinctly visible as indentations in the rangeland from the buffalo wallows. Additional turnouts will allow an opportunity to view this area more closely.

The road west gives way to the sand hills for the next 3-4 miles. Its stabilized dunes are typical of those found through the High Plains region of southwest Kansas. On west through interspersed grazing and farm ground, US 160 combines with US 183 from Greensburg. The traveler at this point says to himself and his passengers, "Wow, let's do this again from west to east!"

This experience with nature and history is what we'd like to share with others with the designation of the Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway. The project will promote, protect, and enhance this Byway while bringing increased tourism with its benefits and challenges to the local economies.

Introduction

Project Designation

The Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway travels along US Highway 160 in an east and west direction connecting the cities of Medicine Lodge and Coldwater in South Central Kansas. The east terminal of the forty-two mile route is located at the west edge of medicine Lodge, mile marker 225 near the Medicine River. The byway meanders through ranch country, rugged Gypsum/Red hills and terminates in the edge of High Plains territory at the junction of US 160 and US 183, (See Byway/KS Map Orientation – Attachment 1) mile marker 183. US 160 is a two-lane asphalt surface road with narrow and frequently steep shoulders. Each lane averages 15 feet in width for a total width of 30 feet. According to 1994 data, the highway is traveled by an average of 550 vehicles per day. Of these, (25%) or approximately 140 vehicles are trucks.

The Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway bisects the beautiful Gypsum Hills. Travelers on this road have the opportunity to see flat mesas, deep canyons, sharp high hills, red soils and caprock formations. The Byway encompasses two physiographic regions of Kansas providing a unique opportunity to experience the expansive High Plains region as well as the contrasting Red Hills geography. The area is noted for its beauty in the spring and summer with an abundance of wildflowers and naturally flowing springs. In the fall, the prairie and hills display a rick array of colors from native grasses to deciduous and conifer trees, while winter often covers the hills and cedar trees with a blanket of snow. The spectacular scenery, color contrasts between the red soils, green grasses, deep green cedar trees, crystal clear spring-fed ponds and the endless blue skies contribute to this area being one of the best-kept secrets in Kansas.

Cooperating Partners

Scenic Byway designation was initiated in May of 1996. Citizens and organizations from Barber and Comanche Counties have formed a community team to develop this Corridor Management Plan for the gypsum Hills Scenic Byway. The organizations involved include: Sunflower Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc., Comanche County Economic Development Foundation, Greater Barber County Historical Action Association, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Barber and Comanche Conservation Districts, Barber and Comanche County Extension Offices, City of Coldwater, City of Medicine Lodge, Barber County Commission, Comanche County Commission, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), and Medicine Lodge Business/Bed Tax Committee. (See Committee members/Organizations— Attachment 2)

Purpose

The Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan will help citizens and communities to recognize, promote, conserve and enhance this uniquely beautiful living resource. The goals, strategies and responsibilities are presented in order to best address issues concerning the sustainability of the byway for future generations.

Vision

The Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway will be a critical thread weaving existing attractions, events history, culture and natural resources into an authentic rural experience for explorers while building community pride for the citizens of Barber and Comanche Counties. It will continue to showcase the uniquely beautiful canyons, soils, mesas, vegetation, wildlife, ranching, and architectural heritage.

Visitors will enjoy a wide variety of quality outdoor recreation opportunities surrounded by clean air, clear water, lush vegetation, diverse wildlife and friendly people.

Motorists will enjoy experiencing primitive views and learning about the authentic uniqueness of the area through information and interpretive services that share and promote a “caring for the land” ethic among scenic byway users and managers. Services and recreation opportunities, provided along the byway or by local communities, will be of high quality, tailored to traveler needs while promoting, protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of our Gypsum Hills.

Pride and the ethic of stewardship will tie communities together with a true recognition of what we have the desire to preserve it for others to experience and behold.

Issues

Issues and concerns were identified during the planning process by the community team developing the Corridor Management Plan. Goals were developed based up these issues and concerns.

1. Safety and Roadway Condition
 - a. Trucking of materials between Sun City and Medicine Lodge
 - b. Narrow bridges
 - c. Trees in close proximity to the land
 - d. Abundance of wildlife (deer)
 - e. Range burning
 - f. Lack of adequate turnouts

2. Visual Quality
 - a. Indian framework at mile marker 213
 - b. Cross at mile marker 217
 - c. Battery tank near base of Twin Peaks
 - d. Maintenance of existing signage, businesses, attractions and communities
 - e. Cedar trees
 - f. Abandoned farmsteads
 - g. Decorated cedar tree
 - h. Little control
 - i. Ribboning highway up, down and through the hills
3. Recreation
 - a. Road too narrow for bicycling
 - b. Lack of public access to Gypsum Hills for climbing, hiking, biking, etc.
4. Water Quality
 - a. Critical area sites
 - b. Range Management/overgrazing
 - c. Natural springs and riparian areas
5. Vegetation and Timber Management
 - a. Cedar tree and brush encroachment
 - b. Tree pruning techniques
 - c. Critical areas
6. Communities and Economic Development
7. Highlight scenic beauty for tourism in area
8. Education of local and traveling public
9. Communication and cooperation across/beyond political boundaries
10. Trespassing
 - a. Support of private property rights along the Byway through signage and education

1. Goals

1. **Enhance scenic byway safety for travelers by working with local area and state department of transportation officials** (Road Use and Safety Record - Attachment 3)

Strategies

- a. Post caution signs for prescribed burning season
- b. Widen bridges and shoulders
- c. Establish scenic viewing point and provide appropriate signage
- d. Install passing lanes
- e. Control cedar trees and remove potentially hazardous trees in right-of-way
- f. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian access to Scenic Byway and Backways.

2. Market and promote scenic byway through existing tourism groups and efforts in addition to specific byway initiatives.

Strategies

- a. Develop marketing plan (See Attachment 4)
- b. Inform local public through slide presentations, programs, historical tabloid, displays
- c. Pursue listing byway on local, regional, state and national maps
- d. Inform travelers and groups through displays, tabloid, brochures, tours and tourism networks
- e. Utilize local community TV channel to promote Scenic Byway
- f. Design, develop and promote Scenic Byway program to network and market byway statewide and nationally
- g. Work with state Scenic Byway program to network and market byway statewide and nationally.

3. Interpret byway resources to visitors utilizing stories by local historians and natural resource information about the area.

Strategies

- a. Develop brochures, audiotapes, (2-way) and tours.
- b. Establish and maintain turn-outs with interpretive panels or kiosks (4-6) highlighting the byway's intrinsic qualities: History, natural resources, cultural, scenic, archeological and recreational. (See Byway Turn-outs, Attachment 6)
- c. Install custom byway signage and centennial ranch markers
- d. Develop cedar cookies and gypsum nuggets as promotional tools
- e. Create byway post card(s) with grass or wildflower seed.
- f. Create scenic byway and area attraction placemats.

4. Develop funding support and partnerships to assure the long-term success of the byway promotion, enhancement and preservation.

(See Agencies, Organizations and Resource Assistance Listing, Attachment 7)

Strategies

- a. Bed Tax
- b. Economic Development/Tourism Committees
- c. State and local agencies, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), Kansas Forest Service (KFS), Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing (KDOC&H), Kansas State Historical Society City Councils and County Commissions
- d. Cedar Cookie/Gypsum Nugget promotion
- e. Byway postcards
- f. Audio tapes
- g. Landowners and local historians
- h. Local foundation and civic groups

5. Preserve Scenic Byway Beauty through education, awareness, activation and cooperation of local citizens, groups, and traveling public.

Strategies

- a. Adopt a Byway Program
- b. Host Byway Improvement Days
- c. Recommend best management practices for pruning, maintenance, removal of problem vegetation, and erosion control efforts along or in view of Byway.
- d. Support minimal outdoor commercial advertising signage and encourage maintenance of existing signs. (See signage and outdoor advertising - Attachment 8)
- e. Encourage a minimum representative number of cedar trees be maintained for beauty and scenic diversity with hills.
- f. Encourage new development or construction projects to blend with existing natural intrinsic qualities.
- g. Maintain existing rolling highway undulating through the hills.
- h. Minimize anomalous intrusions along byway. (See Anomalous Intrusions - Attachment 9)

D. RESOURCES INVENTORY (Intrinsic Qualities, Resources Summary, and Tourist Amenities)

INTRINSIC QUALITIES

NATURAL

Lake Coldwater
Wildflowers
Cedar Trees
Rangeland/Farmland
Oil & Gas Production
Salt Fork & Medicine Rivers
Mule, Bitter, Bear, Dog, Indian
Cedar, Nescatunga Creeks
Gypsum & red clay soil
Caves
Wildlife: Whitetail & mule deer
Pronghorn, armadillo, bluebirds
Monarch butterflies, flyway quail
Pheasant, beaver, raccoon
Skunk, bobcat, porcupine, wild
Turkey, rattlesnakes, roadrunners
Incredible sunsets & sunrises
Open spaces
Rugged Topography
Barber County Lake

RECREATIONAL

Lake Coldwater
Wildflower Tour
Barber County State Fishing Lake
Red Cedar Natural Trail
Bike Tour & Fun Runs
Tour de Ranch Mountain Bike Rides
Historic Evansville/Comanche Pool
Benefit Trail Ride-Merrill Ranch
Comanche County
Swimming Pools
Golf courses, Tennis Courts, Ball games
Hiking, Backpacking
Kimball Ostrich Farm
Bowe Exotic Animals
Hunting - deer turkey, quails, ducks
geese, doves coyote, mountain lions
Natural Springs
Historical Sites

HISTORICAL

Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Memorial Peace Park & Amphitheater
Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty National Historic Site - Buried in Flood Plain
Comanche Cattle Pool
 Evansville (Merrill Ranch)
 Salt Fork Cattleman's Association (after Comanche Pool)
Salt Trail - Hutchinson to Freedom, Oklahoma
Buffalo Wallows and Jumps
Native Americans
 Osage Indian Grounds
 Osage Diminished Reserve (not homesteaded, bought \$1.25/acre)
 1878 Dull Knife Raid (Cheyenne Autumn)
 Kiowa's Sundances & Medicine Lodge
Ft. Zarah Trail - Great Bend to Fort Houston
Cary Nation National Historic Site
Sockless Jerry Simpson (US legend)
Ghost Towns - Evansville, Deerhead, Aetna, Forest City
Grand Hotel
Medicine Lodge Bank Robbery 1884
McLain Roundup - Sun City- Largest single-owned rodeo in the world
Ranching history
Fraudulent county organizations
Highway 160 history - Mountain Plains highway

B.H. Born (1952 Olympics)
Martina McBride
Railroad
Immigrant's Industrial Development
Chief Theater - Coldwater
Comanche County Museum

SCENIC

Gypsum Hills
Twin Peaks
Gant-Larson Scenic Outlook
Flower Pot Mound Turnout
Mule Creek Valley
Gypsum Hills/High Plains Transition
Wildflowers
Wildlife
Hackney Farmstead
Eisenbart Farmstead
Rangeland
Farmland - irrigation
Scenic Backways - Gyp Hills Scenic Drive
 Hardtner to Buttermilk
 Lake City
 Sun City
 Wilmore - Wade A. While Park, Centennial Park
 Aetna
 Open Range Country

ARCHEOLOGICAL

Wilmore - 2 sites
Homestead dugouts
Natural Springs developments
Indian Artifacts
Fossils

CULTURAL

Medicine Lodge Indian Peace Treaty Pageant & Celebration
Kansas Championship Ranch Video, Working Ranch Horse Competition, Cowboy
trappings and trade show
Medicine Lodge Roping Club's Steer Roping
Indian Summer Days - Medicine Lodge
Junefest - Medicine Lodge
Mark Boor's Junefest Bullriding
City Wide Garage Sale - Coldwater
Chief Theater - Coldwater
Holiday Open House & Christmas Parade - Medicine Lodge
Pageant Drive-In Theater - Medicine Lodge
Buster's Sun City
Cowboy culture - Comanche & Barber counties
Barber County Fair PRCA Rodeo - Hardtner
Borderline Theater - Kiowa (Barber)
Comanche County Fair
Barber & Comanche County junior Showdeos
Cary Nation Home & Stockade Museum
Comanche County Museum
Greater Barber County Heritage Center
Stan Herd Murals (Coldwater, Protection, Wilmore - Home was Protection)

Wilmore Community Building and Library

RESOURCES SUMMARY

Following is a list of resources identified by the Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway team as key elements important to the Byway and to consideration in the Corridor Management Plan. The list may be amended at any time.

Air Quality: Aromatic Plants (wildflowers and cedar trees) open range and naturally fresh environment

Archeological and Historical Sites: Bridges, Mule Creek, Medicine River, and Centennial Ranches

Commercial Signs: Billboards promoting Medicine Lodge and Coldwater attractions

Contamination Sites: Oil and gas tank battery sites either visual, water, or vegetation-related

Cultural/Ethnic Celebrations and Activities:

Medicine Lodge – JuneFest, Indian Summer Days, Peace Treaty Celebration; Kansas Championship Ranch Rodeo, Wildflower Tour, Gyp Hills Trail Rides

Coldwater – Come On Home Celebration, County Fair, City-wide Garage Sale, Historic Evansville/Comanche Pool Trail Ride

Detour/Opportunities: Sun City, Lake City, Gyp Hill Scenic Drive (backway) Wilmore, Centennial Ranches, Open Range Country.

Dining:

Medicine Lodge – Pizza Hut, A&W, Burger Shack, Raykies, Indian Grill, Daylight Donuts

Coldwater – Dave’s Pizza, Supper Club, Comanche bar & Grill, the Coffee Shop, Double D Restaurant, Thompson’s Kremee

Wilmore – Ranch House

Erosion Control: Scenic overlooks and turnouts, highway shoulders, riparian areas, cropland and rangeland contrast.

Farmland/Ag Use: wheat, milo, sorghum, corn, alfalfa, feed, irrigated cropland, dryland cropland, shelterbelts, rangeland grazing systems, (intensive early stocking, rotational, deferred) hay meadows, year-round cow/calf/operations, season-long stocker setters/heifers, other livestock includes sheep, goats, horses, buffalo, etc.

Fisheries: Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, and Streams

Flood Plains: Medicine River Valley, Mule Creek Valley, Cedar Creek

Fuel: (See Tourist Amenities)

Groundwater: Shallow aquifers adjacent to rivers and small streams.

Geological Resources: Gypsum Rock, deep canyons and tall mesas, natural spring-fed streams and ponds; bloodstain red soils

Land Use: 80-90% rangeland; 10-20% cropland

Lodging/Camping:

Medicine Lodge – Lodge Inn, Copa Motel, Barber County State Lake

Coldwater – Lake Coldwater, Comanche Motel, Branding Iron Motel Rustic camping – Gant Larson Ranch, Deer Trail Camp

Recreational Resources: Lake Coldwater, Barber County State Lake, Gant Larson Trail Rides, Fishing, Hunting, Spelunking, Scenic Drive, Tour De Ranch Mountain Bike Rides, museums, boating/waterskiing, golf, baseball tournaments, Historic Evansville Comanche Pool Trail Ride. Swimming pool, birding opportunities, drive-in movie theater, Chief Theater, tennis courts, Kimball ostrich Ranch, Bowe’s Exotic Animals, and historic sites.

Restrooms: (See Tourism Amenities)

Social and Economic Resources: Coldwater and Medicine Lodge Chambers of Commerce, Barber and Comanche County Economic Development, Special Events, Trail Rides, Tours

Stream Modification: Maintain Riparian Corridors

Structures: Minimal development to date, maintenance of existing farmsteads

Soils: Significant difference between east half and west half of byway

Threatened and Endangered Species: (See List - Attachment 10)

Vegetation: Wildflowers, cedar trees, walnut trees, locust groves, native grasses, annual crops, large cottonwoods, shelterbelts

Visual Quality: Vistas, mesas, canyons, open range, distant view, minimal manmade structures. The road itself "like a ribbon undulating through the hills."

Water Quality: Historically medicinal in nature, clear blue streams and ponds due to gypsum content and natural springs

Wetlands: Scattered throughout byway - spring-fed, offering diverse attraction for wildlife.

Wild and Scenic Rivers - Medicine River navigable with canoe and flat bottom boat

Wildlife Diverse and Abundant: Deer (whitetail and mule), coyotes, raccoons, ducks, armadillos, opossum, fish, geese, turkeys, migratory waterfowl, eagles, hawks, turkey vultures, rattlesnakes, prairie dogs, pronghorn, hero, sandhill cranes, quail pheasant, skunks, porcupine, roadrunners, and bobcats.

TOURIST AMENITIES

A. Dining

1. Medicine Lodge - Pizza Hut, A & W, Burger Shack, Raykies, Indian Grill, Daylight Donuts, Domino Food and Fuel, Wright's Oil Co. Truck Stop,
2. Coldwater - Dave's Pizza Oven, supper Club, Comanche Bar & Grill, The Coffee Shop, Thompson's Kremee, Double D Restaurant
3. Wilmore - The Ranch House

B. Lodging/Camping

1. Medicine Lodge - Lodge Inn and Copa Motel
2. Coldwater - Comanche Motel
3. Camping: Gant Larson Ranch, Deer Trail Camp, Medicine Lodge City Park, Barber County State Lake, Coldwater Lake

C. Fuel

1. Medicine Lodge - Domino Food & Fuel, Primetime, EZ Mart, Mike's Service, Wright Oil Co. & Truck Stop
2. Coldwater - Convenience Plus Store, K & B Short Stop, Hess Service

D. Public Restrooms

1. Medicine Lodge - City Park, Barber County State Lake
2. Coldwater - Coldwater Lake, Dave's Pizza, Convenience Plus

E. Recreational Resources

1. Medicine Lodge - Barber County State Fishing Lake & Nature Trail, Medicine Lodge Gold Course, Medicine Lodge Municipal Swimming Pool, Gyp Hill (Gant Larson Ranch) Trail Rides, Pageant Drive-In Theater, tennis courts, Bowe's Exotic Animals, Carry Nation Home & Stockade Museum, Gyp Hills Scenic Drive,

- Kimball Ostrich Farm, Equatorial Sun Dial, historical sites, Tour de Ranch Mountain Bike Rides, baseball tournaments.
2. Coldwater – Lake Coldwater, boating, water-skiing, golf, Coldwater city swimming pool, Chief Theater, Historic Evansville Comanche Pool Trail Ride (Merrill Ranch), ball parks
 3. Barber & Comanche County – Fishing, Hunting, Spelunking, Bird watching opportunities, Hiking, Backpacking

F. Scenic Byways (See Byways maps Attachment 5)

1. Gyp Hill Scenic Drive – Flower Pot Mountain – Twin Peaks
2. Sun City
3. Lake City
4. Wilmore – Centennial park, Wade-A-While Park, Stan Herd Mural
5. Centennial Ranches and Open Range Country
6. Hardtner to Buttermilk

G. Special Events

Medicine Lodge:

Gypsum Hills Trail Rides, All Mule Ride, Carry’s Cavalry All Women’s Ride
 JuneFest – Bike Tour and Fun Run – Mark Boor’s Bull Riding, Garage Sales
 Kid’s Games & Street Dance
 Wildflower Tour – Medicine Lodge
 Indian Summer Days – Crafts, Sidewalk Sales, Kid’s Games & Street Dance, Fun Run
 Kansas Championship Ranch Rodeo, Cowboy Trappings & Trade Show, Working Ranch
 Horse competition
 Medicine Lodge Indian Peace Treaty & Celebration (every 3 years: 2000) Pageant
 Reenactment – Parades, Crafts, Indian village & Ceremonials – Melodramas of Medicine
 Lodge Bank Robbery & Carry Nation/Saloon Scenes

Coldwater

“Come on Home” Celebration, Comanche County Fair & Junior Rodeo, All-City Garage Sale

GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONS
ATTACHMENT 2

Ted Alexander (landowner)
10718 SW US HWY 160
SUN CITY KS 67143

CITY OF COLDWATER
239 EAST MAIN
COLDWATER, KS 67029

Comanche County Conservation
District
103-105 North New York
P.O. Box 516
Coldwater KS 67029-0062

Barber County Extension Svc
Courthouse
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Dick Henning
Area Eng KS Dept of Transportation
Box 409
Pratt, KS 67124

Harold Kline
NCRS
Rt. 1, Box 1A2
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Bob Larson (landowner)
1801 NW Forest City
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Mike Mayberry (City Admin.)
409 South 10th
Kiowa, KS 67070

Paul Rickabaugh
Rt. 1. Box 582
Coldwater SK 67029

Richard Alldritt
613 West 15th
Harper, KS 67058

Comanche County Commission
Courthouse
Coldwater, KS 67029

Deborah Divine
Kansas Scenic Byways
609 West North St
Salina, KS 67401

Loren Graff
Natural Resources Cons Service
P.O. Box 516
Coldwater, KS 67029

Charlotte Hoagland
Barber County Cons. Dist.
800 West 3rd
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Bill Krug
128 Leslie
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Patty Lawrence
2985 SE Northgate Rd
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Dennis McKinney
612 South Spruce
Greensburg, KS 67054

Phyllis Scherich
HC 66 Box 21
Wilmore, KS 67155

Laura Bleeker
5948 16th Terrace
Great Bend, KS 67530

Barber County Commission
Courthouse
Medicine Bend, KS 67104

Jim Emrick
Gyp Hill Premier
110 North Main
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Linda Hart
Comanche Co, ECD
P.O. Box 268
Coldwater, KS 67029

John Klrkbride
820 Medicine Blvd
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Kaye Kuhn
PO Box 128
115 East Kansas
Harper, KS 67058

Roger Masenthin
Sunflower RE&D Area, Inc
705 East Main
Harper KS 67058

City of Medicine Lodge
114 West 1st
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Shannon Thom
Rte. 1
Box 88
Isabel, KS 67065

Richard Thompson
Dept of Transportation
US Hwy 160
Coldwater KS 67029

Wayne White
Barber County Index
PO Box 344
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Gene Watts
Kansas Dept of Trans.
519 North Cliff
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Jack and Lois Wortman
5961 SE Northstar Rd.
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104

Dave Webb
P.O. Box 308
Protection, KS 67127

GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY ROAD USE AND SAFETY RECORD

ATTACHMENT 3

(A general review of the road's safety record to locate hazards and obsolete design, and identify possible necessary corrections.)

- According to 1998 data, US 160 from Coldwater to medicine Lodge has an average of 855 vehicles per day. Of these, approximately 196 vehicles are trucks.
- Recently, a trucking firm from Medicine Lodge has begun transporting gypsum material between Sun City and Medicine Lodge. The number of trucks on the highway each day has increased by about 70.
- Records for the years 1991-1995 indicate a total of 59 accidents. As a result of these accidents, only one fatality and 12 injuries have occurred.
- The Scenic Byways Committee has identified some possible road hazards. These include narrow bridges and trees in close proximity to the road.
- Narrow bridges on US 160 are a concern. With Scenic Byway designation, vehicle numbers on the highway will increase. The possibility of wider bridges should be considered. Although all of the bridges are narrow, some are of more concern. These include bridges at the following locations: Cedar Creek, Bitter Creek, Bear Creek, and Dog Creek.
- The architecture and age of the bridges have some historical significance. At least one bridge, that is considered safe, could be maintained with its intrinsic quality noted.
- Trees in close proximity to the road are also a concern. Even though the trees are an intrinsic quality of the area, they are in abundant supply. Trees that are growing in the road ditches create an unnecessary hazard and obstruct the picturesque view of the area.
- Wildlife, mainly deer, in the area is difficult for travelers to notice in advance due to trees along the road. The deer jump quickly into oncoming traffic from behind the trees allowing little or no reaction time for motorists.
- The Scenic Byway Committee recommends that a plan be developed for tree management, pruning and hazard tree removal in the right of way along the byway. The committee will assist KDOT with obtaining agreement on such a plan from interested parties, such as the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.
- A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians.
- The designation of Highway 160 as Scenic Byway will increase the number of travelers through the area. Some of these travelers will be in smaller vehicles and on bicycles. Pedestrians will also be in the area viewing the landscape.

- To ensure the safety of these travelers, caution signs can be posted, bridges can be widened, additional scenic turnouts established, and road shoulders and passing lanes could be installed where possible.
- Caution/Awareness signs could be posted at each end of the Scenic Byway to notify travelers of the possibility of slower traffic and pedestrians.
- The narrow bridges on the roadway tend to squeeze together traffic and would be dangerous to bicyclists and pedestrians. Wider bridges would allow bicyclists and pedestrians room on the bridge with traffic. The bridges could have a pathway on the side of the bridge that is separate from the main part of the bridge.
- The addition of road shoulders and passing lanes would increase the safety of vulnerable travelers. Since the topography of the area does not allow these features to be continuous, they could only be built where possible.
- Another item to consider would be a reduced speed limit, especially through the hills.
- Any proposals for modifying the roadway should include an evaluation about design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic qualities.

The Scenic Byway committee recommends that future roadwork not interrupt the natural beauty of the area. For example, the ribboning/undulating nature of the roadway needs to be maintained as road improvement are planned and implemented. In addition, designs for bridges, passing lanes, etc., should not disrupt the natural look of the landscape.

GYP HILLS SCENIC BYWAY MARKETING PLAN

ATTACHMENT 4

Marketing a 'road less traveled' with a Scenic Byway designation will increase the awareness of the area's intrinsic qualities, social benefits and the economic development of the region. A process of educating the local, general public is highly important so that each individual in the area will help promote the Scenic Byway as well as educating public officials, and the media. The marketing plan objectives outlined will strengthen communications, increase awareness, and ultimately help execute the programs maintaining our valuable area resources.

The strategies indentified will be used to accomplish the objectives of the marketing plan and goals of the Scenic Byway Committee. Maintaining promotions and active participation by every possible resource is the key to the success of the Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan on a long-range basis. The process of educating locally to create interest and guarantee future maintenance is highly crucial to the success of the marketing plan. Local support and understanding will insure positive feedback to travelers, and increase excitement about what the Scenic Byway has to offer.

Methods of Promotions include personal contact, committee presentations, direct mail, news releases, newsletters, and orientation meetings. Membership in tourism associations, media, and services offered will cover many facets of the educational process. Support materials, such as brochures, posters, and public service announcements will show existing and potential visitors what our scenic byway offers! We feel our beautiful Red Gypsum Hills are the Best Kept Secret in Kansas! Pictures can say a thousand words when describing the uniqueness of the area.

Advertising, consumer sales promotions at trade and travel (outdoor) industry shows will cover another marketing level. Distribution of information will inform tourists, travel writers, planners and consumer groups on a consistent level in the form of news releases, brochures, and posters. Displays in Tourism Information Centers, at conventions and special events provide a great highway for delivery of education and information to large numbers of potential travelers.

The Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Pageant is a great time to promote the goals of the Scenic Byways to visitors attending the celebration, which is held every three years. The lands along the scenic byway are those where the five plains tribes were encamped during the time of the signing of the treaty of 1867. Other special events are the Gyp Hill Trail Rides (Gant Larson Ranch), the Kansas Championship Ranch Rodeo and Indian Summer Days, which are held on a an annual basis and bring many visitors to the area.

A very important program is to upgrade visitor services. Hospitality seminars will be held for "front line" businesses and employees. "Fam" tours will also provide a positive visit to the area for tourists and will expand our people resources. Those travelers who are well-received and given every opportunity to see the area will leave happy and by word-of-mouth be some of our best advertisement. "Teach Us The Road To Travel" is the 1997 theme of the Peace Treaty Celebration; a phrase once used by an Indian Chief. Perhaps it is the theme to market our Scenic Byway.

MARKETING PLAN

Objective 1: Strengthen communication with the media, public officials, and general public.

Strategies:

1. Execute a community relations program designed to increase awareness of the benefits of the tourism industry and promote the scenic byway as a strong representative serving the public interest.
 - A. Relate the purpose and goals of Scenic Byways and the economic and social benefits of tourism to our community.
 1. Personal contact and word of mouth
 2. Committee Presentations
 - a. Public bodies and organizations
 - b. Business and Professional Groups
 - c. Civic and social groups
 3. Direct Mail
 - a. Informative letters
 - b. Response to all inquiries
 4. News Releases
 5. Guest Participation on radio and TV programs
 6. Scenic Byways newsletter
 7. Host Orientation Meeting
 - a. Hospitality Training for “front line” businesses
 - b. Host Orientation meetings to tourism businesses
 - B. Maintain membership and participate in regional tourism associations (SCKS)
 - C. Maintain membership and participate in activities of media and public relation associations
 1. Kansas Press Association
 2. Public Relations Council of Kansas
 3. Outdoor Press Association
 4. Hotel sales and marketing Association
 - D. Host public officials
 - E. Strive to broaden the base of participation in activities
 1. Active Recruitment of member base of committee
 2. Broaden use of committee
 3. Staff meetings with community leaders
 - F. Expand services
 1. Distribute tourism newsletter
 2. Distribution of brochures by committee members
 3. Provide staffed information booths at state events
 4. Promote and publicize promotional efforts of attractions and events through news releases
 - G. Seek public service outdoor billboard

II. Monitor results of community relations programs

- A. Subscribe to clipping service to monitor response

- B. Survey tourism related businesses
- C. Read Car tags - Registrations at local museums

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase awareness of all opportunities and facilities or region.

Strategies: Design or produce support materials to execute marketing and public relations program

- A. Brochures
 - 1. "Attractions along the Byway" brochure
 - 2. "Outdoor" brochure
 - 3. Accommodations brochure
- B. Publications
 - 1. Meeting planner at conventions
 - 2. Travel planner - Tours
 - 3. Tourism newsletter
 - 4. Coloring book
- C. Display materials
 - 1. Identification signage for brochure racks
 - 2. Identify sponsors plaque or certificate for display
- D. Media Materials
 - 1. Media Kits, news releases and feature stories
 - 2. Public Service Announcements
 - 3. PHOTOGRAPHY!
- E. Promotional Items
 - 1. Cedar cookies & Gypsum nuggets
 - 2. Post cards
 - 3. Wildflower seed packets
 - 4. 2-way audio tape

II. Execute marketing and public relations program to maximize the Scenic Byway economic and social benefits to the region.

- A. Advertising
 - 1. Publications and directories
 - a. Midwest Living
 - b. AAA Magazines
 - c. Tour guides
 - 2. Display posters and outdoor billboards
- B. Consumer sales promotion and solicitation
 - 1. Consumer travel and outdoor shows
 - a. Governor's convention on tourism
 - b. TIAK conference
 - c. South Central Kansas tourism
 - d. Sunflower RC&D Area, Inc.
 - 2. Direct sales calls
 - a. Social Groups
 - b. Civic Clubs
 - 3. Participate with lodging facilities and attractions in marketing efforts in 200 mile radius
 - 4. Participate in marketing efforts of State Travel and Tourism, TIAK, Travel Councils, and US Travel and Tourism

- C. Trade sales and promotions and solicitations
 - 1. Tour Associations
 - 2. American Bus Association (through KDOT)
 - 3. Maintain public relations program to promote consumer interest in special events and attractions
- D. Maintain public relations program to promote consumer interest in special events and attractions
 - 1. Timely flow of news releases, media kits, feature copy
 - 2. Seek out radio and TV programs
 - 3. Distribute public service spots and encourage their play
 - 4. Participate in cooperative promotional program with area chambers in surrounding regions
 - 5. Provide copy and encourage publication and distribution of travel supplements featuring the region
 - 6. Participate in meetings and conventions that attract meeting and travel planners
 - 7. Host "fam" tour with travel writers and other media props
 - 8. Make staff presentations to consumer groups
 - 9. Distribute brochures featuring Scenic Byway events and attractions
 - a. Tourism Information Centers
 - b. Museums within 200 mile radius
 - c. Major attractions
 - d. Set displays featuring Scenic Byway attractions and events at Welcome Centers, conventions & events
- E. Maintain public relations program to promote special events and accommodations at nearby towns and major highways

III. Monitor Results of Marketing and public relations efforts

OBJECTIVE 3: Execute a program to upgrade Visitor Services

Strategy I: Expand visitor services – training program for front line.

- A. Hospitality Seminars
- B. Fam Tours

II: Expand Visitor Information Program

- A. Expand brochure distribution
- B. Work with Highway Department to improve highway signage
- C. Continue support of tourism information centers
- D. Expand and designate tourist information sources and provide with guest directories
 - 1. Members of Chambers of Commerce

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Welcome Centers
Sheriff and Police Departments
Members attractions
Libraries

III. Establish Visitor Resource Bank

- A. Materials
- B. Personal Assistance

**GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY POINTS OF INTEREST
ATTACHMENT 5**

Busters

Gypsum Mine

Prairie Dog Town

Open Range

Oklahoma

Round Barn

Mural

Achenbach Hospital

Union Chapel Church

High Wall

Flower Pot Mound

Wagon Wheel Fence

Twin Peaks

Stockade & Carry Nation Home

Peace Treaty Amphitheater

State Lake

Z-Bar Ranch

Sterling's Barn

Sod House

GYP SUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY INTERPRETIVE TURNOUTS

ATTACHMENT 6

The following is a description of what we plan to do to explain and interpret our byway's significant resources to visitors

1. Brochures will be available at both beginning points, possibly at the Barber County roadside park and Comanche County KDOT headquarters. The brochures will consist of information as to what will be seen as a visitor travels the byway and other points of interest such as history of the area. The brochures will also include a map of the byway.
2. Four to six turnouts will be established along the entire byway. The turnouts will allow adequate space for a multitude of visitors in various types of vehicles. Interpretive signage posted at each turnout will feature geology, vegetation, topography, land use management, wildlife and history of the area.
3. The local public will be informed of the byway via news articles, direct mailing, and/or assemblies conducted with the schools. A slide show, video or audiotapes, etc., will be used to depict what can be experienced along the byway. (See Marketing Plan - Attachment 4)
4. Area and state maps, as well as the South Central Kansas tourism brochure will have the byway charted on them.

**GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS
RESOURCE ASSISTANCE LISTING**

ATTACHMENT 7

ENTITY	ASSISTANCE
KDOT (State, Region, County)	Signage Turnouts Maintenance Highway Improvements Marketing Funding Program
KDOCH & H Travel & Tourism Division	Attraction Development Grant Funds Project Coordination Public Education Grants/Seed Money
South Central Community Foundation	Grants/Seed Money
Comanche County Economic Development	Fund Raising Promotion Improvement Projects
Greater Barber County Hist. Action Assn	Promotion Education Fundraising Improvement Project
Chambers of Commerce (Coldwater/Medicine Lodge)	Promotion Fund Raising
NRCS - Barber and Comanche County	Cultural Resources Soils Topography Land Use Maps Surveying
Conservation Districts - Barber & Comanche	Promotion Education Improvement Projects Landowner Contact
County Extension - Barber & Comanche	Education Promotion Landowner Contact

Range Forage & Livestock (RFL) Comm.	Rangeland Management Practices Livestock use
4-H, Scouts, Civic Groups	Improvement Projects Seed money Education
Local Ranchers & Landowners	Access Equipment History
Land Use	
Historical Society (State & Local)	Education Seed Money History
Community Service Program (Barber & Comanche)	Labor Power
Sunflower RC&D Area, Inc.	Program Coordination Strategic Planning and Fundraising

GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY SIGNAGE AND OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

ATTACHMENT 8

Highway signs will be kept at a minimum number and size as required by Kansas Department of Transportation guidelines.

Scenic overlooks and drives will be marked.

No additional advertising billboards will be allowed in the byway. Owners of existing billboards will be contacted to maintain their billboards or asked if they would be willing to remove them.

Coldwater and Medicine Lodge, along with each of the towns that have access from the Byway, will be allowed to have one double-faced billboard sign to promote their respective towns.

Interpretive signs at the scenic overlooks/turnouts could be sponsored by businesses. The business, therefore, could be recognized on that sign.

GYPSUM HILLS SCENIC BYWAY ANOMALOUS INTRUSIONS

ATTACHMENT 9

A listing and discussion of efforts to minimize anomalous intrusions on the visitor's experience of the byway.

The approximately 42 miles corridor of Highway 160 from Medicine Lodge to Coldwater has a minimal amount of anomalous intrusions on the visitor's experience, considering the distance it covers. It is a sparsely populated area with spectacular near and distant vistas of the topographical relief through the Red Hills area, changing gradually to the flatter mid-grass rangeland and farmland of the High Plains region on the west.

Some of the existing intrusions are:

1. Indian framework on the north side at mile 213.
2. Cross on the hill at mile 217.
3. Tank battery near base of Twin Peaks at mile 218. Also inadequate (dilapidated) sign indicating Twin Peaks
4. Intrusion of cedars in the fence lines and into the road ditches blocking near and distant views. Example: near mile 211 on south side of road, old picturesque wooden cattle pens are nearly blocked from view by infringing cedars.
5. Felled cedar trees left to deteriorate in several locations
6. Abandoned farmsteads in various stages of disrepair
7. Other misc Signs, mailboxes, and easily removable "trash"
8. Decorated cedar tree during holiday season (until blown away)

Some efforts to minimize these could be:

1. Encourage them to be removed or completed with a deadline. Try to IGNORE IT - perhaps time will solve the problem!
2. Decide nothing can be done about it, just endure it and, perhaps, use signage to explain. Example: cedar tree removal, abandoned farmsteads.
3. Check with the oil company to see if tanks are currently in use. If not, see if they can be removed. If they are in use, check to see if the oil company would cooperate by painting them in such a manner that they would blend with the environment. Or, perhaps, see if landowner would allow a natural barricade - such as a cedar fence - to be planted to hide the tank battery from view.
4. Work with the state highway department/conservation offices for a long-term plan to control the invading brush.
5. Use signage to explain control measures being implemented to control the exploding overpopulation by cedars in this area, perhaps with dialogue about how they spread, and why they need to be controlled.
6. Organize and encourage a combination of clean ups by private owners, other volunteers, highway department, byway committee, etc., on properties that are determined to be "eyesores." On others which are more "quaint" sometimes convey old architectural styles of the area, or simply convey the changing times and "what is happening." Perhaps a combination of some cleanup and some signage can be used to make these an integral part of the corridor.

7. Check with landowners on possibility of remove them, or having volunteers remove them with the consent of the landowner.
8. Work with groups for more picturesque or natural decorations and/or ask them to agree to remove decorations after holidays during January.

ATTACHMENT 10

**THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES REGULATIONS
KANSAS FOTG NOTICE 210**