



Tracks Across Borders Byway Designation

As approved by the Colorado Transportation Commission April 16, 2015

What is the Tracks Across Borders Byway?

The *Tracks Across Borders Byway* is along the Colorado and New Mexico border between Durango, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico. The Byway travels along two states, Native American cultures, breathtaking countryside, treaties and technology, across ancient and historic time, and varied communities of the present day.

- The Byway's primary feature is one of Colorado's and New Mexico's greatest stories - the creation and development of the state's first, and ultimately the nation's largest, narrow gauge railroad system - the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG).
- The Byway passes through the Southern Ute Indian Tribe reservation land, whose headquarters and superlative Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum are located in Ignacio, Colorado.
- The Byway skirts the north end of Navajo Lake, a little-known environmental and recreational gem in the Colorado and New Mexico State Parks systems.
- Chimney Rock National Monument is an essential thematic feature of national significance on the Byway. The round-trip spur provides access and increased exposure to the unparalleled natural beauty to one of America's newest National Monuments with deep roots in Chaco period significance.



Chimney Rock National Monument



Juanita Townsite

What is the Value in Scenic Byway Designation?

- Byway designation will help with the identification and protection of significant – and irreplaceable - resources along the route.
- Information about the Byway will serve to inform and educate the traveler on the need to respect and protect sovereign tribal lands.
- Byway designation will assist in promoting economic development by providing common goals for collaboration among the communities and major land owners.
- Byway designation is expected to have direct beneficial economic impacts on visitor traffic, visitor expenditures, and total retail sales – all important in rural communities.

Why Tracks Across Borders Byway was Designated a Historic Byway?

The Byway follows a corridor that covers a span with over 800 years of Colorado history.

- It opens to discovery a part of Colorado little known to most residents and visitors.
- The tourism potential encompasses numerous groups including history buffs, rail enthusiasts, recreation and adventure seekers, along with those who want to know more about the diverse nature of our state.
- It offers abundant camping, fishing, rafting, sailing, hiking, biking, and photography opportunities, along with its over-riding value as first-hand history experience.
- It links two of the State's most important historic narrow gauge railroads - the Durango & Silverton RR and the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic RR - both remaining parts of the San Juan Extension built in the early 1880's.
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How is the Tracks Across Borders Byway Designation Different?

This route offers many unique Colorado stories related to the railroad, Native American and Hispanic culture and prehistory that are not offered by the other byways in the state.

- It traverses Colorado and New Mexico, as well as the continental divide.
- It crosses two Native American sovereign nations (Utes and Jicarillas), each with interpretive centers, accommodations and casinos.
- Accesses Colorado's Navajo Lake State Park at Arboles, CO, a major recreation resource.
- Tours through Chaco ruins and the Chimney Rock National Monument.
- It travels over 125 miles between Durango, CO, and Chama, NM, following the route of the D&RG narrow gauge expansion, often on top of the original road grade and near many railroad remnants and through ghost towns.
- It traverses important parts of Colorado's early logging, ranching and farming areas.
- The railroad showcases Chaco, Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures.
- It represents an under represented area of Colorado.



Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad



Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

We are proud that the Tracks Across Borders Byway will join its predecessors and will expand their collective importance to Colorado and New Mexico.