

DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY

INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN



September 2016

Front cover: Highway 9 descends through the Mississippi River bluffs as it approaches Lansing.

Facing page: The Driftless Area Scenic Byway between Waukon and Lansing provides sweeping views of contoured farmland.

DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN

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A roadside view between Waukon and Lansing in late spring 2015



Hiking past an abandoned barn in Yellow River State Forest near Harpers Ferry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Driftless Area Scenic Byway Map.....	3
Establishing the Byway	6
Scope of Work.....	7
The Planning Process.....	8
Chapter 2: Vision and Mission	11
Vision Statement.....	12
Mission Statement.....	13
Goals	14
Chapter 3: Byway Travelers	19
Visitor Attractions	21
Visitor Demographics.....	23
Target Audiences.....	24
Staging Experiences.....	25
Chapter 4: Interpretive Resources	31
Resource Categories.....	32
Driftless Area Scenic Byway Regions.....	32
Byway Regions Map.....	33
Yellow River Region	34
Postville	34
Yellow River.....	38
Volney	39
Paint Creek Valley.....	40
Yellow River State Forest	42
Effigy Mounds National Monument.....	44
Harpers Ferry	44
Lafayette Ridge and Elon Drive.....	47
Waukon.....	48

Upper Iowa Region	52
Highway 9—Waukon to Lansing	52
Lansing	54
Great River Road—Lansing to New Albin.....	57
New Albin.....	58
Upper Iowa River.....	59
Dorchester	60
Decorah Region	62
A26 west to Decorah.....	62
Highlandville and Bear Creek.....	64
Burr Oak.....	65
Seed Savers Exchange	66
Decorah.....	66
A52 (the Old Stage Road)—Decorah to Waukon.....	71
Spillville.....	72
Fort Atkinson.....	74
Chapter 5: Themes and Messages	77
Defining Themes and Messages	78
Primary Theme.....	79
Sub-Theme 1 & Messages: Origin of the Driftless Area	80
Sub-Theme 2 & Messages: Shared Landscape and Culture.....	82
Sub-Theme 3 & Messages: Natural Communities	84
Sub-Theme 4 & Messages: Prehistoric People	86
Sub-Theme 5 & Messages: Northeastern Iowa History	90
Chapter 6: Interpretive Media	93
Existing Interpretive Media.....	95
Improve Wayfinding.....	99
Build on the Driftless Area Sense of Place.....	100
Plan Media Holistically.....	101
Create a Distinctive Visual Identity.....	102
Unified Design Standards.....	103



Cattle cross the road in Highlandville, a small village just off the byway.



A summer view of the Mississippi River and Black Hawk Bridge from Mount Hosmer in Lansing



A jogger makes her way along the scenic byway.



Ancient White Park cattle graze at Heritage Farm at Seed Savers Exchange near Decorah.

Interpretive Experience Hubs	106
Byway Overview Experience Hubs.....	108
Region-Specific Experience Hubs	112
Recommended Hub Sites.....	119
Wayside Exhibits	124
Recommended Wayside Exhibit Sites	128
Site Orientation Signs	134
Recommended Site Orientation Sign Sites	138
Scenic Overlook.....	142
Welcome/Visitor Center Exhibits.....	144
Byway Artwork.....	146
Murals	146
Statues.....	148
Online Media	150
Byway Website.....	150
Social Media	153
Mobile Digital Media.....	154
Audiovisual Tours.....	154
Audiovisual Tour Apps.....	156
QR (Quick Response) Codes.....	157
Recommendations for Driftless Area Byway	158
Publications.....	160
General Byway Brochure	160
Travel Guide Booklet	164
Family Activities	167
Iowa Byways Junior Explorer Program	167
Explorer Discovery Pack	168
Children’s Byway Audio Tour	168
Family Passport Book.....	169
Thematic Play Areas	169
Media Development Cost Estimates	171
Appendix	173
Visioning Meeting Results	174

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Upper Iowa River valley in Allamakee County

INTRODUCTION

The Driftless Area is a 24,000-square-mile island of land once surrounded but never touched by giant ice sheets during the last glacial period. This area, also called the Paleozoic Plateau, has been carved and eroded over thousands of years to reveal a unique terrain of rocky bluffs, deeply carved river valleys and more than 600 cold-water springs and creeks.

Driftless Region Map

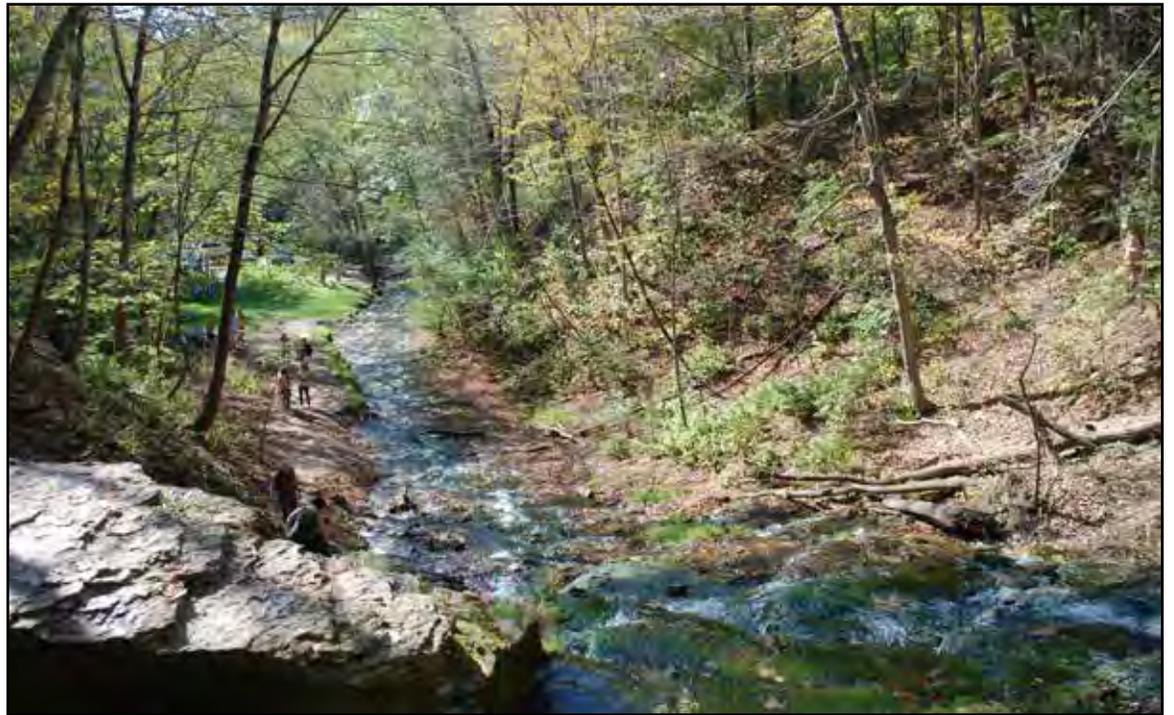


Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway

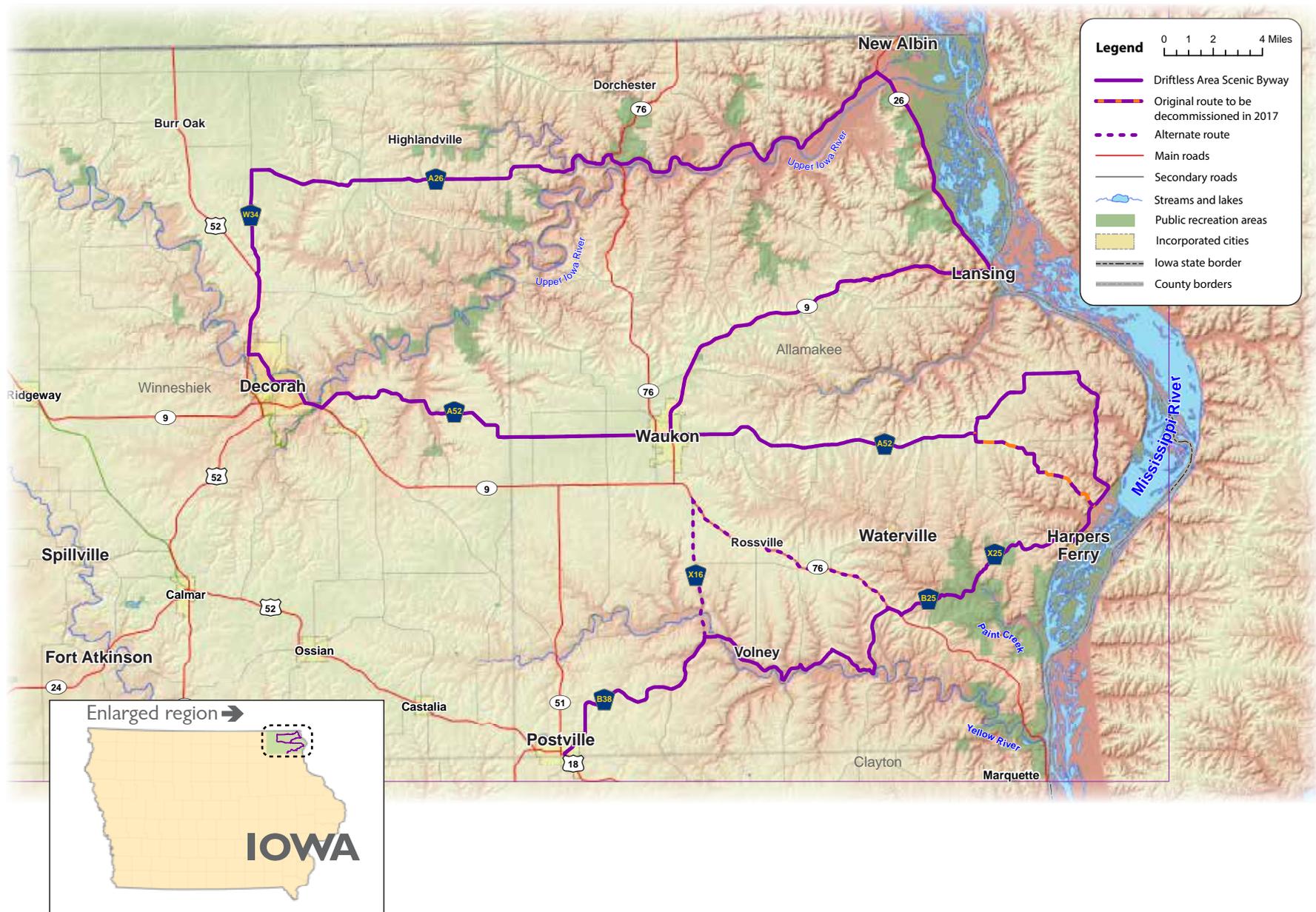
The current byway zigzags across Allamakee County in northeastern Iowa, showcasing some of the most beautiful topography in Iowa. Travelers are rewarded with panoramic vistas of forests, farms, and stream-cut valleys. Bluff-top overlooks offer grand views of the Mississippi River valley where historic river towns welcome travelers.

An extension through Winneshiek County approved in 2016 forms a continuous loop connected to the previous route in Allamakee County. This extension passes through Decorah, the largest community in northeast Iowa. It can serve as a gateway to the byway and includes some of the most beautiful parks and overlooks on the Upper Iowa River.



Dunning's Springs Park is one of several parks in Decorah that welcomes visitors to explore and learn about karst geology.

DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY MAP





The annual rendezvous at Fort Atkinson re-creates life as it was in the 1840s.

A River-Carved Landscape

Along the Driftless Area and River Bluffs Scenic Byways, the Mississippi, Yellow, Upper Iowa, Turkey, and Volga Rivers have carved through the land to create limestone bluffs and rich bottomlands. The Yellow, Upper Iowa, and Turkey rivers are designated water trails popular for canoeing and kayaking. Spring-fed trout streams flow into these rivers and provide some of the best brook, brown, and rainbow trout angling in the state.



Heritage Orchard at Seed Savers Exchange preserves more than 900 heirloom apple varieties.

A Rich History

The towns, villages, and country churches along the byway provide connections to the history and culture of the area. Many communities celebrate their cultural roots with festivals, historic sites, and museums. The byway extension, for example, allows immersion in Norwegian heritage in Decorah, Czech heritage in neighboring Spillville, and early U.S. and Native American history in nearby Fort Atkinson. Numerous stone buildings from the 19th century dot the landscape throughout the byway. Irish-Catholic heritage is evident in stone churches in Dorchester and Wexford.

Living with the Land

The people of the Driftless Area are bound together by their shared landscape, creating a culture that values small farms and locally grown food. With its hills and modest parcels of tillable land, much of the Driftless Region has remained in small-scale agriculture. The region has a history of innovation in sustainable agriculture. The recognition that the Driftless Area's soils, climate, and geography influence the flavor and quality of products is becoming widely accepted. Driftless Area labeled wines, artisan cheeses, heritage apples, and grass-fed meats and dairy are gaining

in recognition and market share. Farm cooperatives, community supported agriculture (CSA) operations, and food co-ops flourish in the region. Seed Savers Exchange of Decorah is internationally significant in preserving heirloom garden varieties through its network of members.

A Haven for Nature

The Driftless Region is a landscape carved by rivers into high bluffs and deep valleys. More of the land is preserved by national, state, county, and local agencies than anywhere else in Iowa. Private farmland is a mosaic of cropland, pastures, forests, and stream

valleys. Byway visitors come here to bird watch, hike, bike, paddle, ride, camp, and tour the Driftless Area. They have the opportunity to see pockets of rare plants and animals in numerous preserves and wildlife areas.



The 8,500-acre Yellow River State Forest is a favorite of nature lovers.



These Iowa Scenic Byway signs marked the byways from 1993 to 2011.

ESTABLISHING THE BYWAY

The Iowa Byways program began in 1993 when the Iowa Department of Transportation designated four routes as Iowa Scenic Byways to encourage tourism. Six additional state byways were added later. The byways are:

- Grant Wood, 1993
- River Bluffs, 1993; additional segments, 2000
- Western Skies, 1993
- Woodlands (renamed Historic Hills), 1993
- Iowa Valley, 1998
- Loess Hills, 1998 (designated a National Scenic Byway, 2000)
- Driftless Area, 2000
- Glacial Trail, 2000
- Delaware Crossing, 2002
- Lincoln Highway, 2006 (designated as an Iowa Heritage Byway)

Initially, uniform Iowa Scenic Byway signs were placed along these routes. However, the byways lacked local

support and promotion. There was little or no information provided to tourists about what to see and do.

The Iowa Byways Sustainability Project (IBSP) began in 2008 as a response to this need. The IBSP is a collaborative effort between the Iowa Department of Transportation and Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) across Iowa to preserve, protect, interpret and promote Iowa's scenic byways. Northeast Iowa RC&D serves as the lead entity for the Driftless Area, River Bluffs, Grant Wood, and Delaware Crossing scenic byways. In the intervening years, much has been accomplished in this mission to interpret and promote the byways.

SCOPE OF WORK

In January 2012, Golden Hills RC&D, based in Oakland, Iowa, was awarded a Transportation Enhancement Grant through the Iowa Department of Transportation to complete interpretive master plans for ten Iowa byways. Additional funds were awarded for the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway plan and the Western Skies Scenic Byway plan through the Iowa West Foundation.

A request for proposals was issued in early 2013, seeking interest from firms to provide professional services to develop long-range interpretive master plans for Iowa's byways. Four firms were interviewed in August 2013. In February 2014, a professional services agreement for the ten interpretive master plans was entered into between Golden Hills RC&D and Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters agreed to develop one interpretive master plan for each of the following scenic and historic Iowa Byways: Delaware Crossing, Driftless Area, Glacial Trail, Grant Wood, Historic Hills, Iowa Valley, Lincoln Highway, Loess Hills, River Bluffs, and Western Skies.

The work is divided into three phases, with Loess Hills and Western Skies completed in the first phase. Phase one interpretive master plans were delivered in 2015. Phase two includes interpretive master plans for Driftless Area, River Bluffs, Grant Wood, Delaware Crossing, and Iowa Valley scenic byways. These plans will be delivered in 2016.

Each interpretive master plan is based on the following tasks:

- Task 1: Inventory and Analysis of Byway Resources
- Task 2: Stakeholder Coordination and Public Input Process
- Task 3: Development of Interpretive Themes and Conceptual Interpretive Plan
- Task 4: Finalize Interpretive Plans with Recommendations and Design of Interpretive Elements
- Task 5: Reporting



The byway's northern terminus is at County A26 and Highway 76. An extension loop to Decorah was approved in 2016 and eventually will be reflected with updated signage.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Interpretation is defined as a communication process that guides visitors in their search for meanings in objects, places, and landscapes. We adhere to the philosophy that interpretive planning is a process of consensus development—of achieving a shared perspective by all stakeholders of why interpretation is needed, who it will serve, and what significant stories it will tell. Effective planning answers the following questions, which can be illustrated by the Planning Triangle:

Who?

Determine who the byway visitors are and the experiences that they are seeking. This includes activities and visitor groups that are not currently being targeted.

Chapter 3: Byway Travelers

Why?

Confirm and/or further define the purpose, vision, and goals of developing a master plan for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

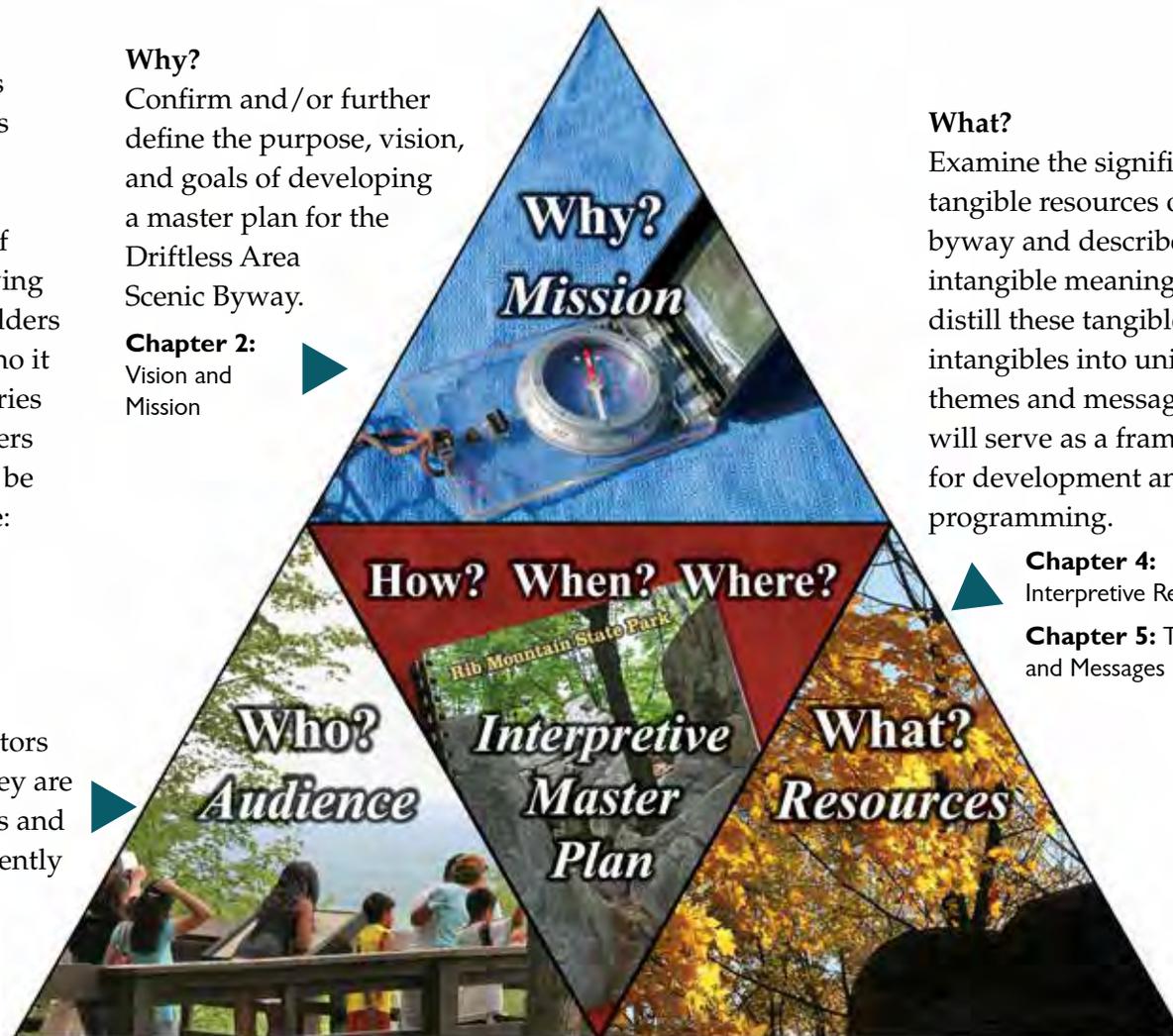
Chapter 2:
Vision and Mission

What?

Examine the significant tangible resources of the byway and describe their intangible meanings. Then, distill these tangibles and intangibles into unifying themes and messages that will serve as a framework for development and programming.

Chapter 4:
Interpretive Resources

Chapter 5: Themes and Messages



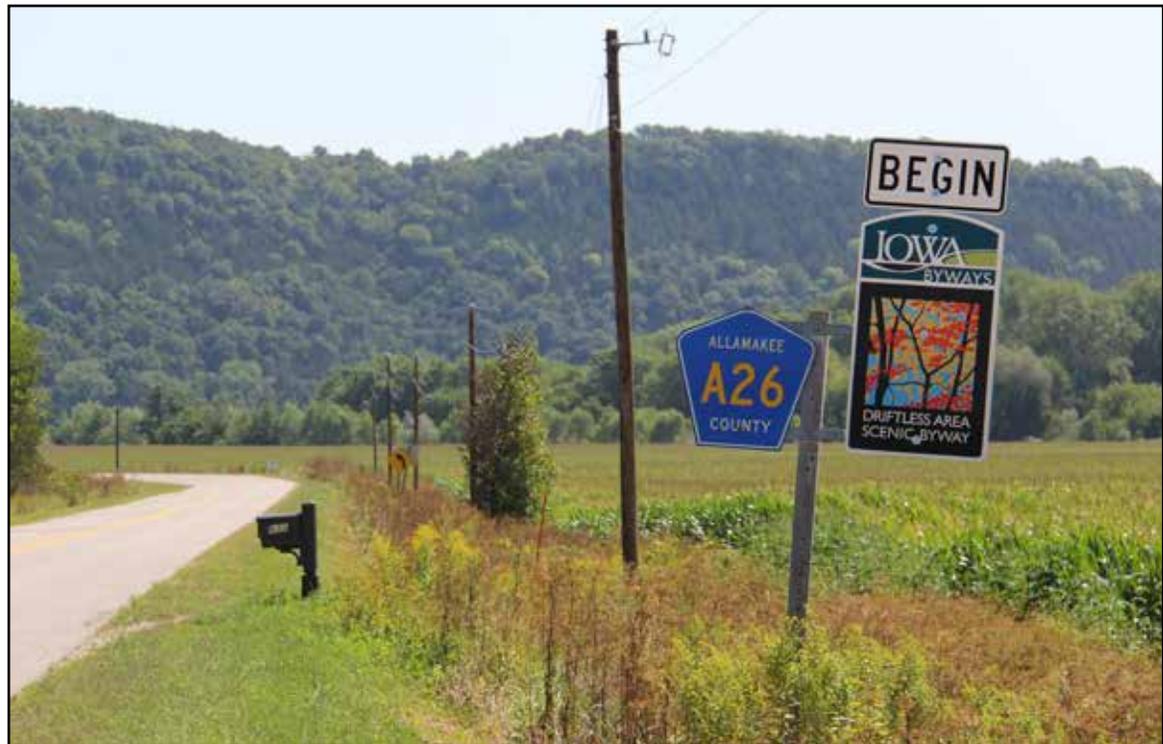
Where? When? How?

Based on the why, who, and what, develop a plan for interpretive facilities, media, and programs that best facilitate visitor-resource connections within the parameters of the mission and vision of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

Chapter 6: Interpretive Media

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A sign marks the northern beginning of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway on County Highway A26, just off Highway 76, heading east toward New Albin.

CHAPTER 2

VISION AND MISSION



A view from the Driftless Area Scenic Byway



An interpretive master plan visioning meeting was held in June 2015 at the Northeast Iowa RC&D office in Postville.

VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

A strong vision and mission statement supported by established values and goals is necessary to guide the future planning, management, and implementation efforts for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

Vision

A vision statement answers two fundamental questions:

1. What are the values or beliefs about the significance of this place that inform your work? Why should people go there?
2. What do you ultimately hope to accomplish as a result of your efforts?

Vision Statement

The following statement was published in the Driftless Area Scenic Byway Fall/Winter 2012 Newsletter. This statement reflects the values or beliefs about the significance of the byway and the ultimate hope of accomplishment by the byway board of directors and byway staff.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Vision Statement

The byway corridor will reflect a thriving multi-jurisdictional community that has successfully balanced growth and economic development with respect and protection of its rural and agricultural landscapes, river valleys, scenic vistas, bluffs, natural areas, cultural traditions and historic places, all of which give the byway corridor its sense of place. It will be a place where both visitors and residents experience, understand and appreciate the intrinsic qualities of the byway and Northeast Iowa through recreation and experiential learning.

Mission

The mission statement answers two questions:

1. How do you plan to work toward this broad vision?
2. For whose specific benefit does the organization exist?

Mission Statement

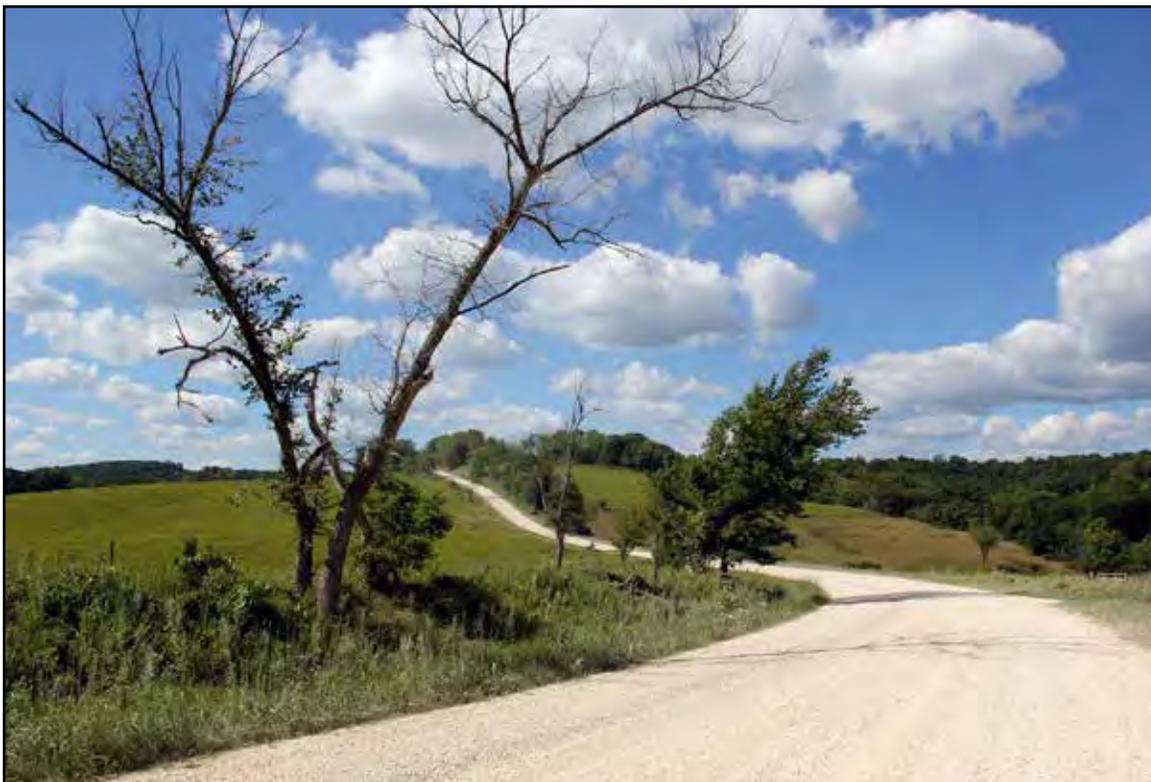
The following statement was published in the Driftless Area Scenic Byway Fall/Winter 2011 Newsletter.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Mission Statement

The Byway Board of Directors will work to understand, develop, promote, enhance and protect the byway through multi-jurisdictional planning, collaboration, and implementation of the byway corridor management plan and through expanded outreach, education, marketing and enhancement of the byway corridor to and for stakeholders and visitors.



A view of the Upper Iowa River from Phelps Park in Decorah



A scenic country road near Volney

Goals

Goals support the vision and mission. They are ambitious, broad statements of desired conditions. The goals are to be translated into actions (programs and projects) that the byway organization, partners, and supporters will strive to implement.

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted an Interpretive Master Plan Visioning Meeting on June 23, 2015, at Northeast Iowa RC&D in Postville. Eight Driftless Area Scenic Byway stakeholders attended.

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters asked: **“What is your vision of success for improving the visitor experience on your scenic byway?”**

The responses to this question are grouped into three goals:

Goal 1

Develop quality interpretive media that guides visitors in their search for meaningful experiences on the byway.

Responses related to Goal 1:

- Provide an information hub kiosk in each byway community
- Develop an interpretive center (one planned near Lansing)
- Interpretive signs/waysides need to be available at special features (like Fish Farm Mounds); signage also needs to be maintained
- Develop more overlook areas with media and interpretive materials
- Provide interpretive media that is sturdy, accessible, and gives visitors what they are looking for
- Find the funds to do more interpretive material so people know about points of interest
- Provide interpretation at each attraction
- Have materials available to visitors to help them easily find attractions and amenities.



Fish Farm Mounds near New Albin and other state preserves along the byway would benefit from interpretive panels to interpret the site-based resources.

- Make information available on personal digital devices (but reception is lousy!)
- Provide bus tours with step-on (or tour guide) interpreters
- Include hands-on experiences for families; to see and do; stop and fish, etc.
- Experience the river ; “a boat ride can be transformational”; get them out to experience the resource
- Activities in the winter, an untapped season
- Interpret the regional history / diversity of the area
- Help visitors understand the pre-development landscape so they can imagine what it looked like

Goal 1 Actions:

- Secure grants and other sources of funding to implement the interpretive master plan



Byway travelers should be encouraged to use the Harpers Ferry boat landing and fishing pier, which is one of the best Mississippi River access points on the route and offers a personal experience with the river.

Goal 2

Develop and promote sustainable and informed recreational opportunities.

Responses related to Goal 2:

- Develop more scenic overlooks and pull-off areas
- Enhancement of the byway corridor, especially roadside vegetation
- Preserve and enhance our resources

Goal 2 Actions:

- Identify potential scenic overlook sites and secure funding to develop them
- Work with all highway departments (city, county, and state) to enhance the visual quality of the byway corridor
- Engender community pride in the unique natural and cultural resources of the Driftless Area so that citizens support and assume responsibility for resource protection

Goal 3

Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the byway.

Responses related to Goal 3:

- Increase tourism in the area through promotion of the byway
- Get businesses and all community organizations on board to help promote the byway
- Educate more locals on the byway and get people to hold more stock in it
- Promote local buy-in, educate the local population; make informed contacts with visitors through website or brochure
- Promote bus tours

Goal 3 Actions:

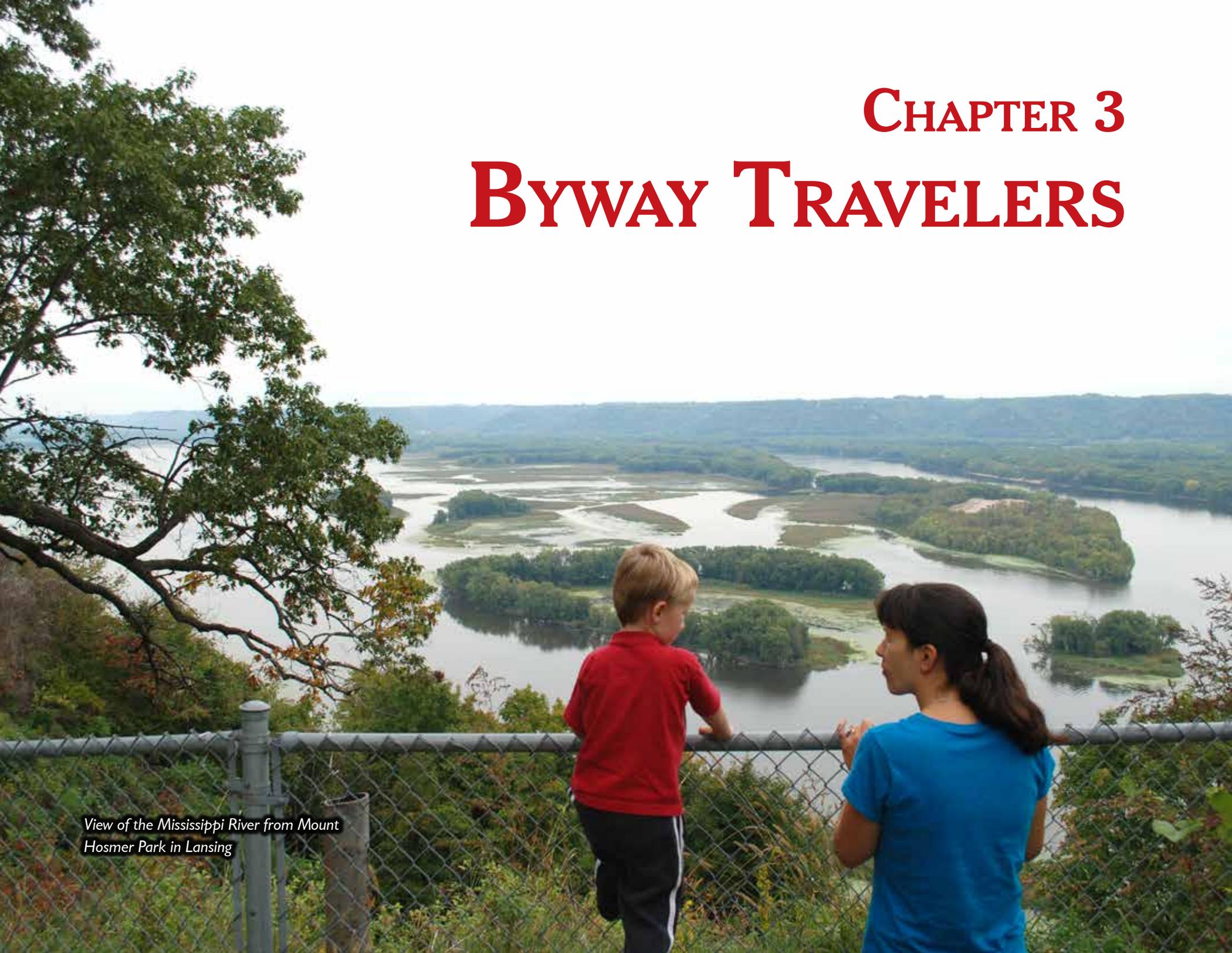
- Secure funding to employ a professional marketing firm to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the byway
- Include businesses, community organizations, and community leaders in marketing planning and implementation



Each byway community could enhance the visitor experience through public art such as murals.

CHAPTER 3

BYWAY TRAVELERS

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue t-shirt, and a young boy in a red t-shirt and dark pants with a white stripe down the side, are standing behind a chain-link fence. They are looking out over a wide, winding river (the Mississippi River) that flows through a lush, green landscape with several islands and peninsulas. The sky is overcast. The scene is captured from a high vantage point, likely a scenic overlook.

*View of the Mississippi River from Mount
Hosmer Park in Lansing*

BYWAY TRAVELERS

The Driftless Area attracts visitors to a variety of cultural and natural resource opportunities, including prehistoric mounds, cold-water trout streams, state forest trails, heritage museums, and a globally recognized birding area, to name a few. The byway stretches across Allamakee and Winneshiek counties, offering visitors beautiful scenery of bluffs, rivers, and forested valleys, along with numerous cultural sites to explore.

Visitors come from within the region and state, from neighboring states, and from other countries to experience the unique qualities of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. According to the *2013 Domestic Travel Impact on Iowa Report*, visitors to Allamakee County spent more than \$39 million, and Winneshiek County reported nearly \$29 million in expenditures (Research Department of the U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Outdoor recreation opportunities are a major part of the Iowa economy. According to an *Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation Activities in Iowa* report conducted by Otto, Tylka, and Erikson in 2011, expenditures during travel to recreation sites and participation in recreation activities resulted in more than \$3 billion of spending in the state. There are more than 3 million acres of forest in Iowa, and the Iowa state forest system includes 43,500 acres for hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, snowmobiling, picnicking, and horseback riding. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources manages more than 356,000 acres for wildlife within the state.



Travelers explore Dunning's Springs Park in Decorah.

Visitor Attractions

Allamakee and Winneshiek counties are rich with attractions for byway travelers.

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge borders the byway between New Albin and Harpers Ferry. The refuge was established in 1924, and today attracts hunters, anglers, trappers, wildlife watchers, hikers, and paddlers.

Yellow River State Forest is another popular recreation area near Harpers Ferry, offering hiking, camping, and other outdoor opportunities. Visitors enjoy backpacking and equestrian trails and two trout streams that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources stocks regularly. According to their forester, the area is a popular recreation facility, attracting visitors from great distances.

The Driftless Area also offers a variety of cultural and historical sites. For example, Effigy Mounds National Monument welcomes approximately 80,000 visitors annually. According to staff, about one-quarter of the visitation is school groups. Visitors come from all over the country and world to see and explore the collection of animal-shaped mounds built by prehistoric Native Americans. In addition, the Effigy Mounds-Yellow



A ranger presents a children's interpretive program at Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry.

River area became Iowa's first globally important bird area in 2014. One visiting birder claimed, "The best day of warbler watching that I ever had was near here on the river overlooks."

A nearby attraction is the Laura Ingalls Wilder Park & Museum, sponsored by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and located in Burr Oak. Staff members have been keeping visitation numbers

for about 15 years, and welcome 6,000 visitors annually from all 50 states and from as many as 27 countries.

Byway travelers can stop by the Seed Savers Exchange Visitor Center in Decorah to explore the heirloom display gardens, historic orchards, and discover diverse garden heritage. In 2014, the site saw more than 15,000 visitors. Their staff reports anecdotally that "most visitors

Seed Savers encourages visitors to explore their demonstration gardens and learn about heirloom fruits and vegetables.



are not local to the Decorah region, but come from around the Midwest (2-3 hour drive) and even across the country and world. We do get several bus tours from the Midwest area, and we've had people say that we are a stop on their 'bucket list.' Ages of visitors tend to be older (50-75) but we have visitors from less than 1 year to age 80-plus. We haven't measured exactly, but assume each visitor group is roughly 2-3 in size. Bus tours can be up to 50 people."

Several other appealing attractions can be found in Decorah, including Vesterheim: The National Norwegian-American Museum & Heritage Center. It was named one of "15 Best Small-Town Museums in the U.S." by Fodor's Travel Guide. Museum staff said about 13,000 people are drawn to their center annually from all 50 states and 35 countries. Approximately 70 percent come from 60 or more miles outside of Decorah and about half are non-Scandinavian. Most visitors are in small groups, with museum staff providing about 100 organized tours a year. According to the survey data collected by the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area, about 16,000 visitors toured the site in 2014.



Vesterheim Museum has a variety of exhibits that chronicle the Norwegian immigration to northeastern Iowa.

Visitor Demographics

To provide an overview of the types of visitors traveling through this region, the Travel Iowa 2013 Welcome Centers Survey Report includes demographic information and insight into why visitors may be in the area. This data reflects the types of travelers who completed a survey at the Dubuque Welcome Center in 2013 (Iowa Welcome Centers 2013 Survey Results, 2014).

- The average age of respondents who filled out a traveler survey was 54 years old
- The average size of travelers' groups is 2.5
- 68 percent are adults traveling with no children, and 26 percent are families with children under 18
- 67 percent indicated that the main purpose of their trip was vacation or leisure
- Most visitors to the Dubuque Welcome Center were from Wisconsin (15.3 percent); Illinois (14.4 percent); Iowa (9.9 percent); other foreign (9.9 percent); and Minnesota (5.9 percent)



A young byway traveler enjoys ice cream at WW Homestead Dairy in Waukon.

Visitors' Main Areas of Interest

The Dubuque Welcome Center Survey reported that more than 55 percent of visitors listed scenic byways as a "main area of interest" as they visit and tour Iowa. But scenic byways are also important as portals for other areas of interest: the resources offered on each byway. Visitors also listed these "main areas of interest" on the survey:

- Museums: 72.5%
- Historical attractions: 61.4%
- Outdoor recreation (trails, hiking, biking): 59.3%
- National and state parks: 42.3%
- Wildlife watching/fishing: 39.7%



Visitors can experience a jail cell at the Bily Clocks Museum and Antonin Dvorak Exhibit in Spillville.

Target Audiences

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted an Interpretive Master Plan Visioning Meeting on June 23, 2015, at Northeast Iowa RC&D in Postville. Eight Driftless Area Scenic Byway stakeholders attended.

The following is a list of their responses to the question, “**Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?**”:

- Parents with younger children traveling together (family-type vacationers)
- Tourists
- Visitors for hunting, fishing, bicycling, fall colors, hiking, cross-country skiing, horse trails, boating, ice fishing
- Local people
- Businesses
- Upper middle class vacationers with

disposable income and interest in nature and Driftless Area scenery and culture

- The elderly
- Motorcycle riders
- Retirees
- Bus company and bank tour groups (could be marketed)
- Car/motorcycle cruises
- Tractor cruises

This list describes the many current and potential byway market segments. However, it does not provide insights into what these audiences are seeking. **A commonality that all groups share is that they travel the byway seeking rewarding experiences.** The forms of experience they seek might include entertainment, education, escape, and aesthetic values. It is the role of interpretive planners to ensure that visitors have quality experiences with the resources available on each byway.

Staging Experiences

In their book *The Experience Economy*, B. Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore contend that in the “progression of economic value,” the American economy has progressed as follows:



As an example, they describe the four-stage evolution of the birthday cake:

“In an agrarian economy, mothers made birthday cakes from scratch, mixing farm commodities (flour, sugar, butter, and eggs) that together cost mere dimes. As the goods-based industrial economy advanced, moms paid a dollar or two to Betty Crocker for premixed ingredients. Later, when the service economy took hold, busy parents ordered cakes from the bakery or grocery store, which, at \$10 or \$15, cost ten times as much as the packaged ingredients. Now, in the time-starved new millennium, parents neither make the birthday cake nor even throw the



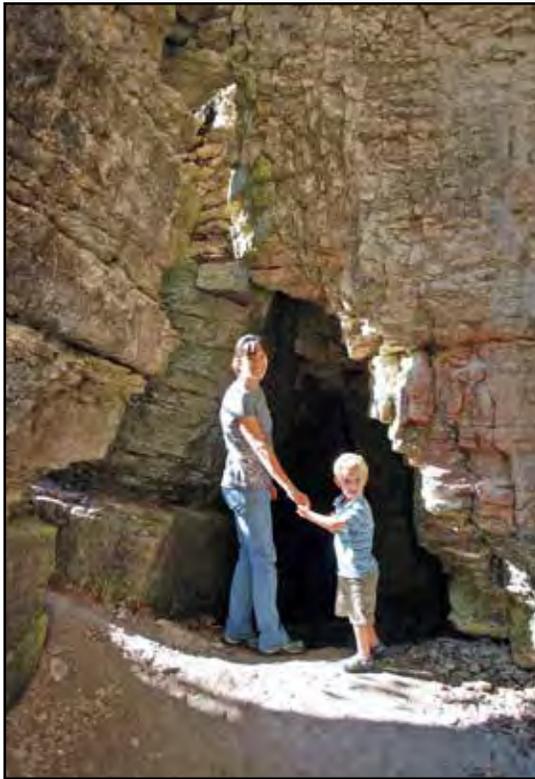
Tour guides at Bily Clocks Museum in Spillville create memorable experiences for visitors. Fascinating stories about the Bily brothers and their hand-carved clocks bring this collection to life.

party. Instead, they spend \$100 or more to “outsource” the entire event to Chuck E. Cheese’s, the Discovery Zone, the Mining Company, or some other business that stages a memorable event for the kids, and often throw in the cake for free.

The implications of this economic progression are clear for Driftless Area travelers: if planners stage themed immersion experiences, the road will grow as a popular tourist getaway.

It is important to distinguish between experiences and services. As Pine and Gilmore point out, “Experiences are a

distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods.” The idea is to intentionally use services as the stage, goods as props, to engage Driftless Area tourists in a way that creates a memorable event. Goods are tangibles, services intangible, and experiences memorable. Goods and services are external to the tourist. Experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level.



The Decorah Ice Cave is one of many attractions where visitors can experience the karst landscape of the Driftless Area.

Pine and Gilmore's Nine Keys to Staging Experiences and Applications to the Driftless Area Scenic Byway

1. **Create a rich portfolio of experiences—create a series of related experiences that flow one from another.**

Develop descriptions of attractions, activities, and events that incorporate the resources of the corridor and its communities. Organize these experiences into categories of related experiences. Market the experiences through electronic, print, and on-site interpretive media so visitors can easily choose those that provide the experiences they seek.



Architectural rendering of the Allamakee County Conservation Center

2. **Use experience hubs in locations where people naturally congregate.**

Place experience hub kiosks, site orientation signs, and interpretive panels at strategic locations and attractions on the byway and travel crossroads where motorists stop.

3. **Create a flagship location—a single place where you stage the very best, most dynamic experience.**

Develop visitor centers that have rewarding media experiences. They should have state-of-the-art audiovisual programs and exhibits and quality personal services that feature the unique attractions of northeast Iowa and provide orientation and incentives to visit specific sites and attractions on the byway. The Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center under development in Lansing will likely serve this flagship function.

4. **Integrate physical and virtual experiences.**

Use the website as an interactive venue for holistically exploring the byway, and to help people plan their getaway on the corridor. Promote the website on all media. Develop mobile apps and other interactive multimedia/audio tours.

5. **Theme the experience. The theme must drive all design elements and staged events of the experience toward a unified story line that wholly captivates the customer.**

Use the interpretive themes developed in this plan (Chapter 5: Themes and Messages). Create thematic experience packages that integrate tours (self-guided or conducted), interpretive media, special events and festivals, programs, shopping, dining, and sleeping accommodations. Feature sites that are already providing meaningful experiences related to the theme.

6. **Harmonize impressions with positive cues—render the experience with indelible impressions. Impressions are the “takeaways” of the experience; they fulfill the theme.**

Create a strong identity for byway communities, which might include murals to celebrate the history and culture of each community and thematic kiosks with panels and maps that interpret the human stories, buildings, and artifacts found there. Decorah is an excellent model for other byway communities



Rendezvous Days at Fort Atkinson could be part of a theme package about the people who sought a new life in the Driftless Area during the mid-19th century.

with its “Walk into the Past Historic District Trail” and the Trout Run Trail that connects parks, the Upper Iowa River, and the fish hatchery.

7. **Eliminate negative cues. Ensure the integrity of the customer experience by eliminating anything that diminishes, contradicts, or distracts from the theme.**

Each community must be committed to enhancing the visual character of the corridor. Enhancing wayfinding to principal attractions must be a top priority. All interpretive and wayfinding media should use unified graphics and other visual cues.



Visitors value photo opportunities as a memory of their travels.

8. **Mix in memorabilia and photo opportunities.** Certain goods have always been purchased primarily for the memories they convey—a physical reminder of the experience.

A range of byway-related memorabilia should be sold at tourist attractions. Patches, buttons, books, local crafts, local foods, and other goods help reinforce the experience.

9. **Engage the five senses.**

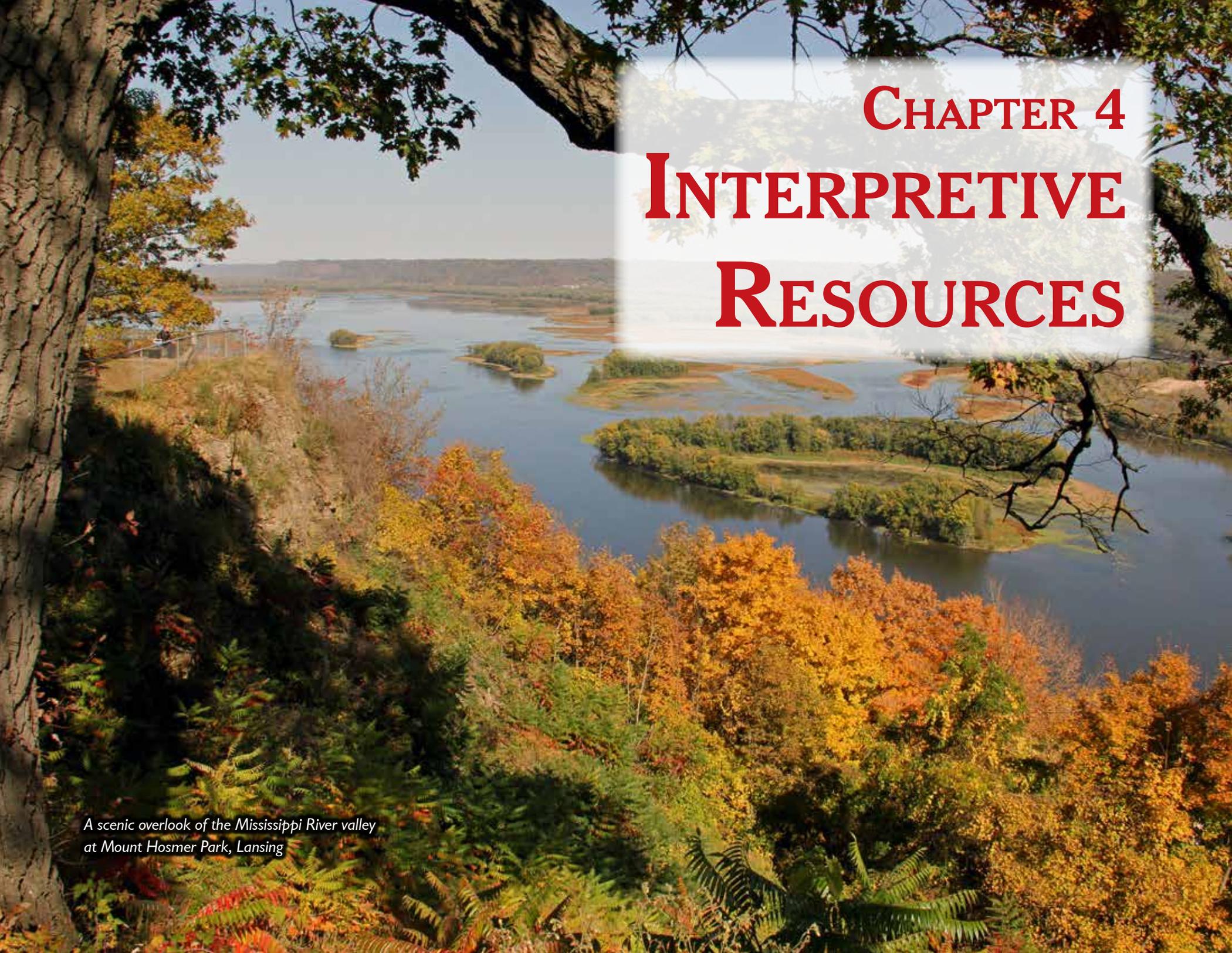
Plan areas that excite the senses and create “get-out-of-the-car” activities for visitors to do. The byway is rich with opportunities to be immersed in Driftless Area experiences. Hiking trails, scenic overlooks, river cruises or tubing, interactive museums, farmers’ markets, festivals or just a walk through a historic river town await their exploration.



Yellow River State Forest hiking trails and easily accessible overlooks immerse visitors in the beauty of the Driftless Area.

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 - ▶ Yellow River State Forest: Bruce Blair, forester
 - ▶ Laura Ingalls Wilder Park & Museum: Barb Olson, director
 - ▶ Seed Savers Exchange Visitor Center: Kelly Tagtow, marketing and development director
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 - ▶ Silos and Smokestacks: Candy Streed, program and partnership director



CHAPTER 4 INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES

*A scenic overlook of the Mississippi River valley
at Mount Hosmer Park, Lansing*

INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES

This inventory of interpretive resources documents the natural and cultural attractions along the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. The inventory serves as a foundation for the interpretive themes and messages in Chapter 5 that connect the tangible resources with their intangible meanings. Interpretive media are developed from these themes and messages to engage visitors in meaningful experiences along the byway.

The interpretive planning team sought input during a leadership visioning session on June 23, 2015, in which the following questions were posed:

- What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?
- What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?
- Who are key people we should interview and what are some documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

The planning team used results from this meeting, byway publications, and other documents to experience each resource

systematically. Staff from various attractions and knowledgeable citizens were interviewed to gain further insight.

Resource Categories

The U.S. Department of Transportation Scenic Byways Program identifies six intrinsic qualities that define and describe a scenic byway. This plan lists each core interpretive resource in these categories, combining Scenic and Natural, and Historic and Archaeological. Core resources are located on or near the byway and offer travelers the opportunity to explore and experience the intrinsic qualities of the Driftless Area. Intrinsic quality categories are:

Scenic and Natural

Resources related to geology, nature, or overlooks with scenic views.

Historic and Archaeological

Resources with artifacts or other tangible evidence of prehistoric or historic people and events.

Cultural

Resources that provide insight into the Driftless Area culture and sense of place.

Recreational

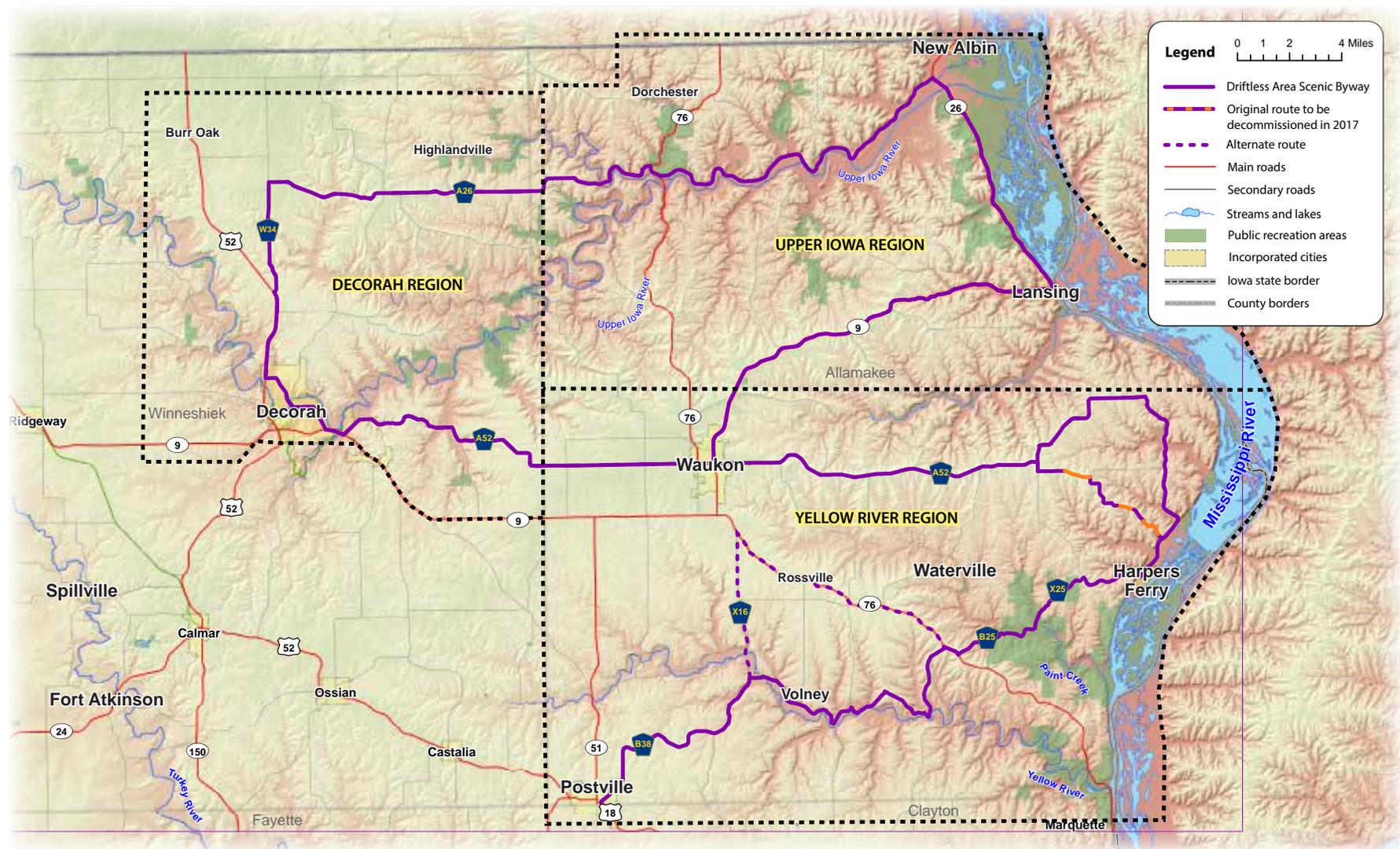
Resources for camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, or canoeing.

Driftless Area Regions

The sinuous nature of this byway presents a challenge for developing maps that are easy to navigate and for planning excursions. To address this complexity, this resource inventory is organized into three regions, each of which comprises anchor communities and an east-to-west switchback or loop. Organizing the byway into three regions provides visitors with locations and activities that can be accessed within a reasonably short drive. The regions are:

- **Yellow River Region:** Postville-Harpers Ferry-Waukon
- **Upper Iowa Region:** Waukon-Lansing-New Albin-Highway 76
- **Decorah Region:** Highway 76-Decorah-Highway 76 (Winneshek County extension)

DRIFTLESS AREA REGIONS MAP





Postville, Iowa promotes itself as “Hometown to the World” because of its diverse cultures.



Northeast Iowa RC&D office in Postville

YELLOW RIVER REGION

Postville to Harpers Ferry to Waukon

The southern region of the byway features the Yellow River and Paint Creek. Postville, Harpers Ferry, and Waukon are regional hubs. Major attractions include Yellow River State Forest and Effigy Mounds National Monument.

Postville

In 1840, a government log shanty in Postville served as a “halfway house” for teamsters bringing goods and materials overland from Fort Crawford on the Mississippi River to Fort Atkinson under construction on the Turkey River. Joel Post, a New York entrepreneur, petitioned the commander at Fort Crawford to occupy the cabin and provide a tavern for troops and teamsters traveling between the forts.

In 1849, after the last Native Americans were removed from the land, German and Norwegian homesteaders established the town of Postville. The town grew over the years as a typical Iowa farming community.

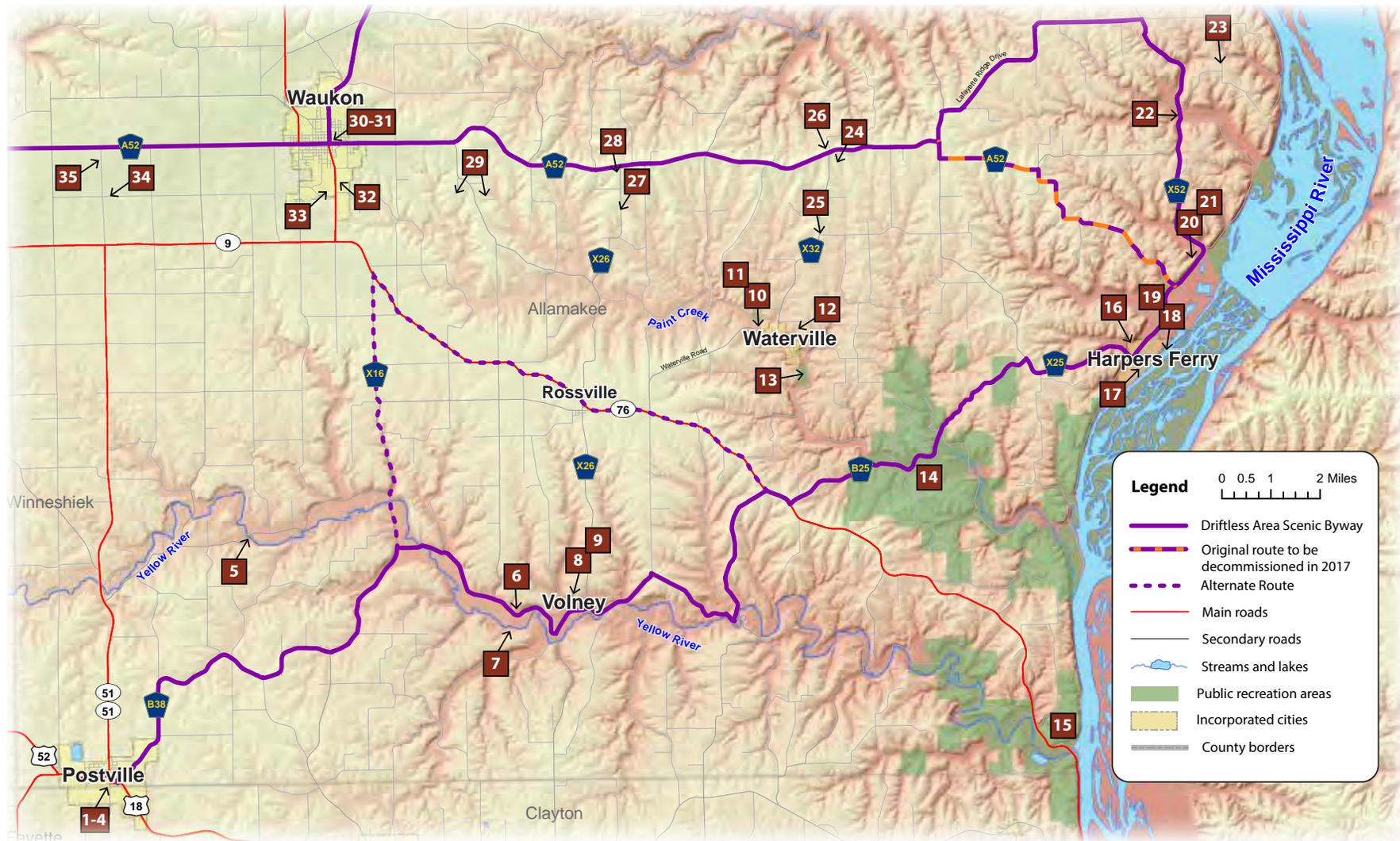
That all changed in 1987 when Hasidic

Jews from New York established a kosher meatpacking plant. They soon employed more than 700 workers from 14 countries, creating one of the most diverse cultures in America. Change came once more when federal agents arrested hundreds of illegal workers in 2008.

Billing itself as “Hometown to the World,” the town celebrates its diversity. Visitors beginning their Driftless Area Scenic Byway journey here will see Hasidic Jews in black dress and Somali Muslims in flowing robes and perhaps eat lunch at Taste of Mexico restaurant.

1 Northeast Iowa RC&D

The Northeast Iowa RC&D office provides byway publications and staff can answer travelers’ questions. In the future, the office will serve as a byway entry hub. A vacant lot adjacent to the building will be developed with conservation demonstration areas and a large sculptural art piece. An experience hub kiosk will orient visitors to the byway and to Yellow River Region attractions. An interior kiosk will provide touchscreen access to information about the byway and its attractions.



- | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1 Northeast Iowa RC&D | 8 Volney Park and Canoe Access | 15 Effigy Mounds National Monument | 22 Wexford Immaculate Conception Church | 29 Amish stores |
| 2 Turner Hall | 9 Bigfoot Canoe Rental | 16 Bluffview Park | 23 Madigan Winery | 30 Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism |
| 3 Lull's Park | 10 Waterville Park | 17 Sandy Point Cemetery | 24 Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church | 31 Allamakee County Historical Society |
| 4 John R. Mott Home | 11 Kolsrud Park | 18 Harpers Slough | 25 East Paint Creek Lutheran Church | 32 WW Homestead Dairy |
| 5 Stonebrook Park and Canoe Access | 12 Waterville Pines Park | 19 Oil Springs School | 26 Elon Drive Overlook | 33 Waukon City Park |
| 6 Rustic Roads of the Yellow River | 13 Waterville Farm 55 Park | 20 Mohn Fish Market | 27 Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church | 34 Peake Orchards |
| 7 Yellow River Water Trail | 14 Yellow River State Forest | 21 Spillway Fish and Wildlife Trail | 28 West Paint Creek Lutheran Church | 35 Empty Nest Winery |



Turner Hall in Postville

2 Turner Hall

German immigrants established the Postville Turner Society in 1873. They built this large hall in 1913 as a replacement for their original frame building and as a community center hosting plays, graduations, and other group events. More than 700 attended the first major event, to hear native son Dr. John R. Mott, leader of the world YMCA movement and renowned author.

In 1940, with the opening of the high school gymnasium and auditorium, the Turners offered to sell the hall to the town for a token sum. Under Iowa law, the town could not purchase the building for town hall purposes alone. They instead purchased it as a memorial for the community's veterans, giving it the name Memorial Hall. It served as City Hall until 1990. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. It is still used as a community center.

3 Lull's Park

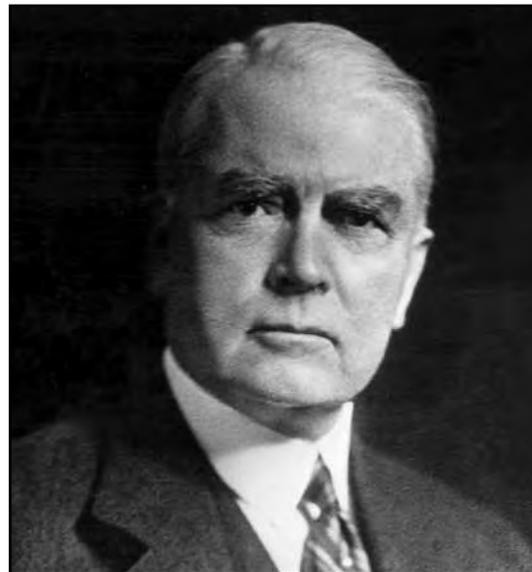
Lull's Park, nestled in a family neighborhood, is Postville's largest and most used park. The city has enhanced the park over the years with playground equipment, a basketball court, a nature trail, and a public swimming pool. Lull's Park is used by the diverse people that make up Postville. Children from the Jewish school across the street from the park, Hispanic children, and other children from the area use the park regularly.



Lull's Park in Postville features a nature trail.

4 John R. Mott Home

John Mott's family moved from New York to Postville in 1865 soon after his birth. His boyhood home, a Victorian house on Williams Street, was built in 1867. Mott received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946 for his work in establishing and strengthening international Protestant Christian student organizations that worked to promote peace. At the time, he was the general-secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA and president of YMCA's World Committee. The home, now a private apartment building, is marked with a bronze plaque.



John R. Mott



Stonebrook Park

Yellow River

The Yellow River is the longest and highest rate-of-fall cold-water trout stream in Iowa and offers paddlers dramatic scenery and a remote recreational experience. Known as the “River of Lost Mills,” the river had the first water-powered mill in Iowa—the Jefferson Davis sawmill—which began supplying lumber to Fort Crawford in 1829. After the Civil War, grist mills, flour mills, sawmills, and woolen mills harnessed the river’s power. Floods and steam power caused most of the mills to be abandoned by the end of the 19th century.



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway takes travelers on gravel roads along the Yellow River.

5 Stonebrook Park and Canoe Access

This park site was originally purchased in 1921 to preserve the Old Stone House, an 1856 historic landmark on the Yellow River built by settlers Rueben and Martha Smith. The Allamakee County Conservation Board recently developed canoe and fishing access with a picnic shelter and a kiosk interpreting the history of the stone house, which burned in 1957.

6 Rustic Roads of the Yellow River

Dusty gravel roads parallel the river from Stonebrook Park to Highway 76 and offer byway travelers an intimate rural countryside experience. A paved loop alternative is available and follows County X16 and Highway 76 through Rossville.

7 Yellow River Water Trail

This state-designated water trail includes the last 35 miles of navigable river out of the stream’s total 50 miles. The trail begins upstream from Volney and culminates in Effigy Mounds National Monument and the Mississippi River.

Volney

Volney was noted in 1888 as “the best in the county” for its flour mill. Today, the unincorporated village is a popular river access point for paddlers and trout anglers.

8 Volney Park and Canoe Access

This riverside park provides trout fishing and canoeing access to the Yellow River. It offers day-use amenities including picnic and playground areas and a (faded) panel interpreting the Yellow River

9 Bigfoot Canoe Rental

Bigfoot offers canoes, kayaks, and tubes for exploring the Yellow River. They also provide shuttle services and advice on how to best experience the river.



Volney Park



Bigfoot Canoe Rental in Volney



A mural in Waterville celebrates Paint Creek trout fishing.



Waterville Park

Paint Creek Valley

This tributary flows from Waukon to the Mississippi River. It was named for a pictograph-illustrated bluff at its mouth on the Mississippi. The creek flows through a Paleozoic Plateau landscape, with the village of Waterville at its midpoint. Here the spring-fed stream courses through a canyon with 150-foot bluffs.

Waterville

This village is about midway between Waukon and the Mississippi River on Paint Creek. Here the Paint Creek canyon is 150 feet deep, bounded by nearly vertical dolomite cliffs. The Waterville Mill, built in 1854, became the nucleus of the community. Today Waterville primarily serves trout fishers. Four Allamakee County parks provide access to this popular cold-water trout stream.

10 Waterville Park

This county park is located at the Waterville Mill site. A history panel provides the story of the mill. No other amenities are provided in this small park.



Kolsrud Park



Waterville Farm 55 Park

11 **Kolsrud Park** 

Just upstream from Waterville, Kolsrud County Park is bisected by Paint Creek. It features handicap-accessible trout fishing, a picnic shelter, pit latrine, and playground.

12 **Waterville Pines Park**  

This is the largest county park in Waterville and borders the town and Paint Creek. Hiking trails traverse the steep bluffs above Paint Creek.

13 **Waterville Farm 55 Park** 

Located downstream from Waterville, this county park includes a picnic shelter, pit latrine, playground, trails, and trout fishing access.



Paint Creek with Waterville Pines Park on the left



Paint Creek overlook in the Yellow River State Forest

14 Yellow River State Forest

The 8,500-acre Yellow River State Forest is bisected by Paint Creek and Little Paint Creek in the north and the Yellow River in the south. Developed recreational facilities are limited to the 5,237-acre Paint Creek Unit. Twenty-five miles of trails that traverse rocky outcrops, bluffs, and steep slopes invite hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, mountain

biking, and trail running. The forest is noted as one of Iowa's best bird habitats and is designated as a Globally Important Bird Area for its large population of Cerulean Warblers. Fishing is a popular activity on the cold-water trout streams coursing through the forest. Overlooks offer spectacular valley views.



A 100-foot tower in Yellow River State Forest is the only fire lookout in Iowa.

Campgrounds

Yellow River State Forest has eight camping areas. All camping facilities are primitive and none of the sites have electricity. Big Paint Creek, Little Paint Creek, and two equestrian campgrounds are the main drive-in campgrounds. Four walk-in backcountry campsites serve backpackers. A kiosk is centrally located in the valley on State Forest Road as an orientation hub for outdoors enthusiasts.

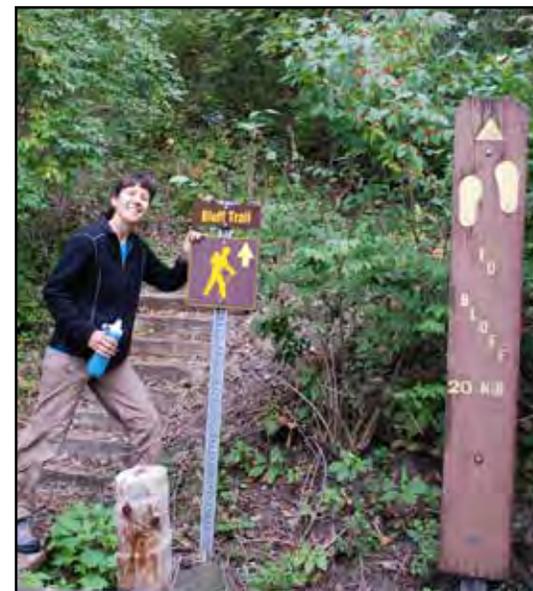


Camping at Big Paint Creek campground in Yellow River State Forest

Trails

The trail system at Yellow River State Forest is among the most rugged in the state, with paths that traverse 700-foot elevation gains along steep, rocky slopes and bluffs. Hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers share about 14 miles of

trails, another nearly 11 miles exclusively for hikers. The Firetower Trail is named after the only fire lookout in Iowa. This 100-foot tower, erected in 1962, is currently not safe to climb and closed to the public.



A hiker heads out on the Bluff Trail in the state forest. The forest is popular among backpackers.

Scenic Overlooks

Located on high bluffs above Paint Creek, the Larkin, Big Paint, Sawmill, and Cedar overlooks are accessed by trails from the valley or by roads on the bluff. These overlooks provide spectacular views of the Paint Creek Valley.



Effigy Mounds is the only national monument in Iowa and preserves more than 200 mounds.



The Effigy Mounds visitor center museum displays ancient Native American artifacts.

15 Effigy Mounds National Monument



The only national monument in Iowa, Effigy Mounds preserves more than 200 effigy and conical mounds built by Native Americans during the Late Woodland period (1,400-700 YBP). It is the largest known concentration of mounds remaining in the United States.

Orientation to the monument begins at the visitor center, which offers exhibits, a film, and a brochure. Two-mile hikes are offered daily to Fire Point, culminating with a panoramic view of the Mississippi River, or visitors can use the “Fire Point Trail Guide” on their own. More adventurous visitors can access steep trails that lead to additional mound groups and vistas. Rangers offer tours and prehistoric tool demonstrations mid-June to Labor Day weekend.

Harpers Ferry

Harpers Ferry was built on a three-mile shoreline that, when settled in 1852, was the site of hundreds of Woodland Native American mounds. Sandy Point Cemetery encloses the last few remaining mounds. Town namesake David Harper was buried on one of these mounds in 1869. Tourists can experience the culture of an old Mississippi River town.



Bluffview Park



David Harper's grave at Sandy Point Cemetery in Harpers Ferry



Harpers Slough

16 **Bluffview Park** 

Bluffview Park is located at the intersection of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and the Great River Road in Harpers Ferry. A bluff provides a dramatic backdrop to this picnic area. An open stone shelter, flush toilets, and picnic tables are provided.

18 **Harpers Slough** 

Located south of Harpers Ferry, Harpers Slough is a day-use area that offers picnicking and 1,200 linear feet of paved sidewalk handicapped fishing access. There is also an active eagle's nest.

17 **Sandy Point Cemetery**  

Sandy Point Cemetery is noted for its seven Woodland people conical mounds. The wide plateau on which the town was built once had hundreds of mounds. The remaining mounds were saved from destruction because they were in the town cemetery where 20 early residents were buried, including town founder David Harper. The cemetery is open to the public but difficult to find.

19 **Oil Springs School**  

Oil Springs is a one-room school named after Oil Spring that flows into Mississippi backwaters 2 miles north of Harpers Ferry. French settlers said an oily film on the spring pool had medicinal value. The Harpers Ferry Area Heritage Society will soon move the school to a site across from the Harpers Ferry boat landing and develop it as a museum.



Oil Springs School



Mohn Fish Market



Wexford Immaculate Conception Church



Madigan Winery



Spillway Trail north of Harpers Ferry

20 Mohn Fish Market 

Mohn is one of the last fish markets in the region. Fish are cleaned on-site, and items for sale include smoked or fresh carp, catfish, sheepshead, and turtle.

21 Spillway Fish and Wildlife Trail 

This 2-mile trail managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is popular with locals and birders leads from Great River Road out to Lock and Dam No. 9. A high concentration of waterfowl migrate through this area in fall. The trail and small parking area would benefit from directional signage.

22 Wexford Immaculate Conception Church 

Father Thomas Hore led 400 Irish families fleeing the Irish potato famine from Wexford, Ireland to the U.S. in 1850. He bought more than 2,000 acres to start a colony, but only 18 families were able to follow from St. Louis where he had left the immigrants. The limestone church was dedicated in 1868.

23 Madigan Winery 

Midway between Lansing and Harpers Ferry, Madigan Winery specializes in small-batch, hand-crafted wines.



Old East Paint Creek Church (dedicated 1870)

Lafayette Ridge and Elon Drive

These roads traverse the ridge between Lansing and Waukon. This route offers scenic vistas over Village Creek valley to the north and Paint Creek valley to the south. Several Amish farms are along this ridge. Iowa's first Norwegian settlers laid claim to land here in the 1840s.

24 Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church

Iowa's first Norwegians settled along this ridge in 1850. They built a school that was also used for church services. A call was sent to Norway for a pastor to serve the congregation. A church was built in 1857. The stone Gothic Revival style East Paint Creek Lutheran Church opened in 1870. A large addition was added to the church entrance in 2015.



Old West Paint Creek Church (constructed 1880)

27 Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church

The East Paint congregation grew to the west as more immigrants settled the area, and in 1858, West Paint Creek Church was established and a wooden church was built. In 1880, it was struck by lightning and burned. A stone church replaced it, but it too met with tragedy in 1968 when it burned, leaving only the stone walls. It was reconstructed in 1969.

25 East Paint Creek and 28 West Paint Creek Lutheran Churches

In the 1880s, a dispute erupted in Norwegian-Lutheran churches over predestination. Several members from the east and west churches formed their own churches in 1890. The original churches were renamed Old East Paint Creek and Old West Paint Creek. The new East Paint Creek church opened in 1890, and the new West Paint Creek opened in 1892.



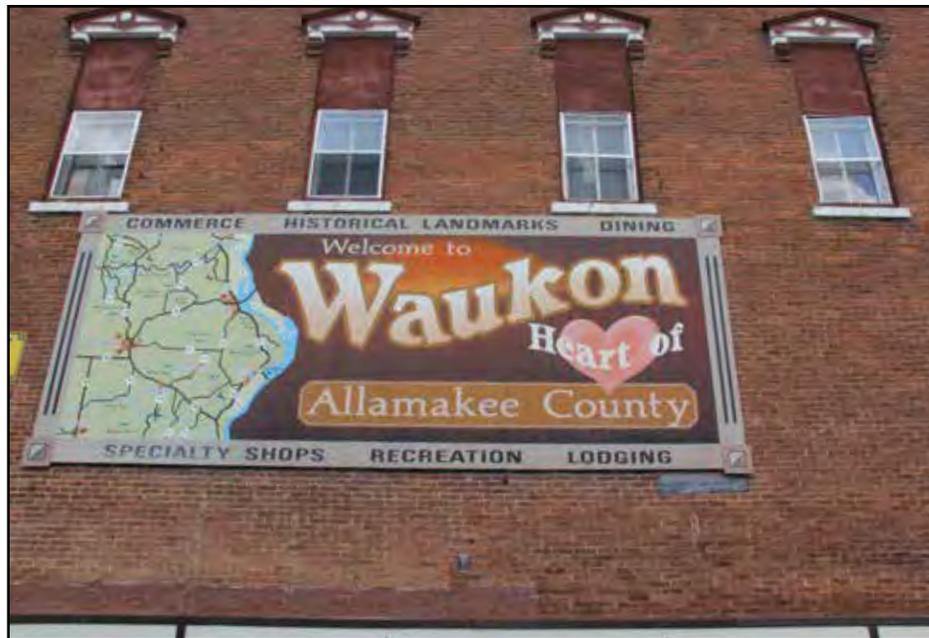
West Paint Creek Church (constructed 1892)



East Paint Creek Church (1890)



Proposed Elon Drive overlook site.



Downtown Waukon

26 Elon Drive Overlook

An overlook has been proposed at the intersection of Elon Drive and Waterville Road. Plans include a parking area and interpretive panels. The site has a spectacular view of the Village Creek Valley, with contoured farm fields alternating with strips of forest. It would be an ideal site to interpret how farmers have adapted to a karst landscape.

29 Amish stores

Between Harpers Ferry and Waukon, visitors can take a side trip for an Amish experience at Amish Hill 'n Country Candies and Amish Paint Creek Bulk Foods and Bakery.

Waukon

This community of almost 4,000 is the county seat of Allamakee County. The town is named for chief Waukon Decorah, leader of the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk people who were resettled in the Neutral Ground in the 1840s before being removed to Minnesota. The first county courthouse was completed in 1861, but a dispute between Waukon and Lansing raged over which town should be the county seat. A "midnight raid" on Lansing in 1866 transferred county records to Waukon and in 1867 it was officially voted as county seat.



Allamakee County Historical Society Museum in Waukon

Waukon is a hub for all three regions of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway but is listed in the Yellow River Region.

30 Allamakee County Economic Development and Tourism

Allamakee County Economic Development and Tourism, located right



Allamakee County Economic Development and Tourism in downtown Waukon

on the byway in downtown Waukon, provides information about attractions, parks, trails, and lodging.

31 Allamakee County Historical Society 

The original 1861 courthouse is home to the Allamakee County Historical Society and its extensive collections and exhibits.

Of special interest to history buffs is the courtroom and exhibits about infamous court cases. The restored Gjefle log cabin, built by Norwegian immigrants, is on the property. The Red Schoolhouse, a one-room school, is located on the county fairgrounds.



WW Homestead Dairy, Waukon

32 **WW Homestead Dairy** 

Known for its cheese curds and ice cream, this popular business has been instrumental in local-food efforts. Homestead Dairy offers farm and processing plant guided tours and sell its products on-site.

33 **Waukon City Park** 

This 64-acre park is a great stopping point for byway travelers looking to take a break from the road. The park has picnic shelters, hiking trails, disc golf, an aquatic center, camping facilities, and an innovative wooden playground called Hideaway Park that is identified on the entry sign as “designed by local school children for kids of all ages.”



Hideaway Park, a wooden playground located in Waukon City Park



Peake Orchards



Empty Nest Winery

34 Peake Orchards 

Peake Orchards is a family-run apple orchard. The first trees were planted in the early 1980s and the orchard began selling fruit in 1989. It has more than 1,000 trees from 10 varieties, all grown with environmentally friendly practices demanded by Driftless Area customers. Their farm stand is open September and October weekends and hayrides are offered Sunday afternoons.

35 Empty Nest Winery 

This family-owned winery off Old Stage Road specializes in whole-berry fruit wines. A new winery building welcomes visitors.



Highway 9 between Waukon and Lansing offers scenic Driftless Area vistas.



County Home Park



Calhoun Creamery, west of Lansing

UPPER IOWA REGION

Waukon to Lansing to New Albin to Highway 76

Majestic landscapes, river scenes, and charming river towns await visitors in this region. After exploring Lansing and its many attractions, byway visitors travel a road that meanders below high bluffs and provides views of the river and its barge-filled channel and braided backwaters. The byway turns west along the Upper Iowa River, coursing through a wide valley flanked by high bluffs. The Upper Iowa is fed by cold spring-fed streams that are some of the most beautiful and productive trout fisheries in the Upper Midwest. This is a region of great prehistoric and historic significance. These were arteries of travel and trade for early Native American cultures and early European explorers. The region was also the heart of the Neutral Ground, an important part of early Iowa history.

Highway 9—Waukon to Lansing

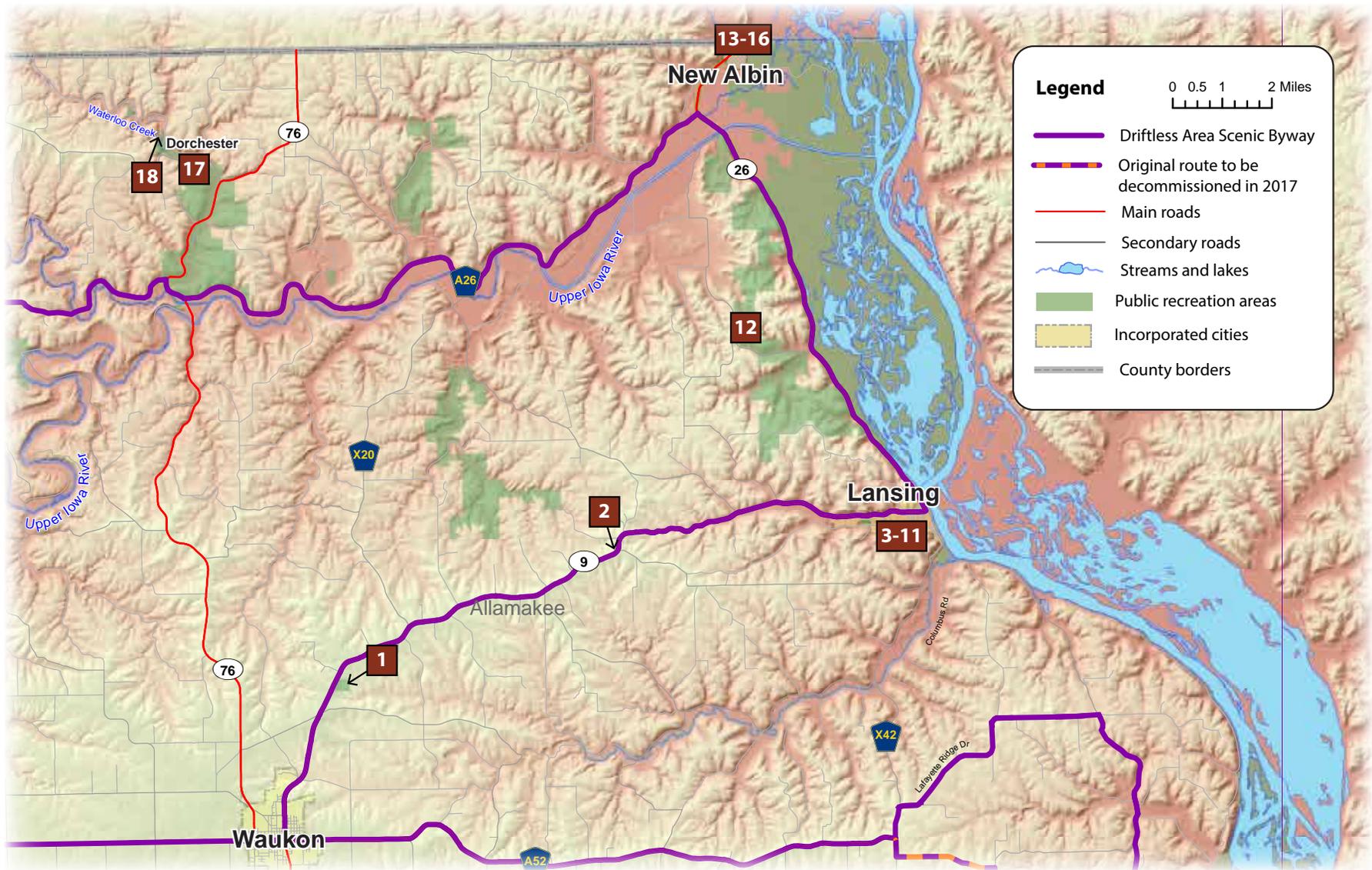
A leisurely drive on Highway 9 from Waukon to Lansing provides sweeping views of the Driftless area landscape of contoured farm fields interspersed with forested ridges and valleys.

1 Allamakee County Home Park

Located on Highway 9 next to the old County Home (now closed), this county park offers trails, a fishing pond, and a picnic shelter, all with magnificent Driftless Area vistas.

2 Calhoun Creamery

Calhoun Creamery, located in Church west of Lansing, was started in 1896 by 20 farmers. Today, Calhoun Creamery is a transfer station, shipping bulk milk to other locations. It includes a retail store with a variety of dairy products.



- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Allamakee County Home Park | 5 Mount Hosmer City Park | 9 Lansing Stone School | 13 The Iron Post | 16 Army Road |
| 2 Calhoun Creamery | 6 Museum of River History | 10 Clear Creek Park | 14 City Meat Market | 17 St. Mary's Catholic Church |
| 3 S & S Houseboat Rentals | 7 Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center | 11 Mississippi Explorer Cruises | 15 Iowa-Minnesota Border Wayside | 18 Waterloo Creek |
| 4 Horsfall's Lansing Variety Store | 8 Black Hawk Bridge | 12 Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve | | |



View of the Mississippi River valley from Mount Hosmer in Lansing.



S & S Houseboat Rentals



Horsfall's Lansing Variety Store

Lansing

Lansing's Main Street, which leads to the Mississippi River where steamboats once docked, was designated a National Historic District in 2014. The bluffs above Lansing offer spectacular views of the Mississippi River valley.

3 S & S Houseboat Rentals

For adventurous byway travelers, exploring Pool 9 by houseboat is the perfect way to experience the backwaters of the Mississippi. S & S is located in Lansing, renting fully-furnished houseboats or smaller craft.

4 Horsfall's Lansing Variety Store

A magnet for tourists, Horsfall's Variety Store has more than 1 million eclectic items in its inventory.

5 Mount Hosmer City Park

Located on a bluff above Lansing, Mount Hosmer offers panoramic views of the Mississippi River valley. The park is named in honor of renowned sculptor Harriet Hosmer who, in 1851, raced a crew member of a steamship to the blufftop. Memorials honor three servicemen from Lansing killed in World War I and all veterans of the six branches who have served to the present time.

6 Museum of River History

The museum, housed in a historic elevator that loaded grain on barges, has a collection of memorabilia that reflects the town's once-thriving commercial fishing, clamming/button-making, and ice-harvesting industries. It is slated to be closed soon, with the collections incorporated into exhibits at the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center in Lansing.

7 Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center

A groundbreaking for the 10,000-square-foot, three-story Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center was held in fall 2015 at the Columbus Bridge property just south of Lansing. When completed, this center will become a destination and orientation hub for byway travelers. Visitors will experience exhibits that bring to life the natural and cultural history of the Driftless Area. This experience will add meaning to the landscape and its people as travelers continue on the byway.



Karen Galema, Museum of River History caretaker, shares clamming stories with a young visitor.



An architectural rendering of the planned Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center, which overlooks the Mississippi River



Black Hawk Bridge

8 Black Hawk Bridge 

This historic bridge connecting Lansing to Wisconsin has one of the most unusual designs among Mississippi River bridges, with a steep incline on the Iowa side. Construction started in 1929 and was completed in 1931. The bridge is named for Sauk Chief Black Hawk, whose band was defeated near here in the Black Hawk War.

9 Lansing Stone School  

Opening in 1864, this historic limestone Greek revival tradition school served Lansing children until 1973. Efforts are underway to restore and re-purpose the building.



Lansing Stone School



Clear Creek Park

10 Clear Creek Park  

Located on South Road Drive, this park is bisected by Clear Creek, which has been restored as a brown trout stream.

11 Mississippi Explorer Cruises 

Mississippi Explorer Cruises, based in Lansing and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, offers nature-themed boat rides that explore the river's backwaters.

Great River Road — Lansing to New Albin

The Great River Road overlooks the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, with its wooded islands and sloughs that are important to waterfowl and songbirds migrating along the Mississippi Flyway. This 240,000-acre refuge is the most visited in the nation, exceeding all but three national parks. This roadway is also designated the Great River Birding Trail, one of three birding trails in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources protects more than 3,000 acres of wildlife management areas along the bluffs between Lansing and New Albin.



Mississippi Explorer Cruises depart from Lansing and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, offering views of Iowa and Mississippi River backwaters.

12 Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve

This 3-acre preserve is located within the 912-acre Fish Farm Mounds Wildlife Management Area. A short hike from the parking area to a bluff-top reveals a cluster of 30 burial mounds from the middle to early-late Woodland Culture (from 100 BC to 650 AD). The wildlife management area can be accessed here and is popular with birdwatchers, especially during spring and fall migrations. There are no trails or facilities in the wildlife area.



Fish Farm Mounds near New Albin



The Iron Post in New Albin

New Albin

New Albin is the farthest northeastern town in Iowa, located on the Mississippi River and the Minnesota border. It was established in 1872 to take advantage of the Chicago, Dubuque & Minnesota Railroad that had been built along the river. The town is an important access point to the Mississippi River and wildlife refuge.



City Meat Market in New Albin

13 The Iron Post

In 1849, Captain Thomas J. Lee settled a border dispute between Minnesota and Iowa when he set the border at 43 degrees and 30 minutes north latitude and placed a 600-pound cast-iron post to mark it. It is the only original marker remaining on Iowa's northern boundary.

14 City Meat Market

Operated by the same family since 1882, this meat market serves smoked meats and other delicacies.

15 Iowa-Minnesota Border Wayside

A Great River Road wayside displays six panels interpreting the mid-19th century border survey, the evolution of U.S. borders, the Great River Road, and the Mississippi River.

16 Army Road

This 2-mile-long gravel road begins in New Albin and ends at Minnesota Slough on the Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. It traverses wetlands, sloughs, and floodplain forests and ends at a boat ramp, informational kiosks, and a handicapped-accessible fishing platform. The road is known as a great drive to spot birds and wildlife, especially during spring and fall migrations. It is also an access point for the refuge's Blue Heron Canoe Trail.

Upper Iowa River

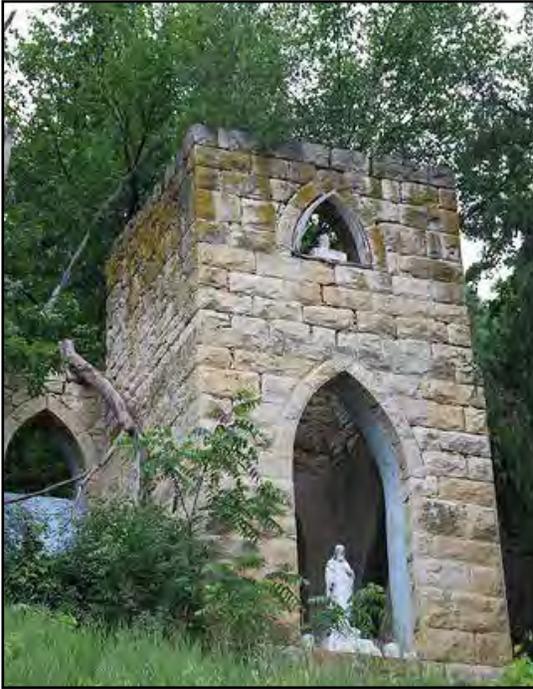
The Upper Iowa River is popular for canoeing and tubing. In Winneshiek County, the river is deeply cut into the karst bedrock, with water flowing past dramatic bluffs. In Allamakee County the river flows through a wide floodplain lined by forested bluffs. Allamakee County has five canoe access points. Several spring-fed trout streams feed this segment, with Waterloo Creek a scenic side-trip. The Upper Iowa River was significant in early Iowa history as the Neutral Ground corridor that separated the Sioux from their adversary Sauk and Fox tribes in the 1830s and which during the 1840s was the reservation of the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), who had been removed from Wisconsin.



Minnesota-Iowa border interpretive panels



The Upper Iowa River in Allamakee County flows through a wide floodplain bordered by forested bluffs.



The front of the original St. Mary's Catholic Church (1895 photo below) is now a shrine.



The present St. Mary's Catholic Church was built in 1914.

Dorchester

Dorchester was settled in 1853 when a grist mill was built on Waterloo Creek. The village was platted in 1873 by immigrants from Dorchester, Pennsylvania. The town was then called Waterloo, which caused confusion since there was already a Waterloo, Iowa. The new settlers decided to name it in honor of their old hometown.

17 St Mary's Catholic Church

This church on Waterloo Creek Road in Dorchester was founded in the 1850s by Irish and German immigrants. The present stone church building was built in 1914 to replace the original church. The front of the original church is now a shrine.

18 Waterloo Creek  

Waterloo Creek is a renowned trout stream that flows through Dorchester to the Upper Iowa River. Upstream from Dorchester, Waterloo Creek Road traverses a narrow valley with several pull-offs and fishing access points.



Waterloo Creek Fish and Wildlife Area



Waterloo Creek

DECORAH REGION

Winneshiek County extension

Northeast Iowa RC&D in 2016 received approval from the Iowa Department of Transportation to extend the Driftless Area Scenic Byway an additional 44 miles from Allamakee County into Winneshiek County. The extension connects two legs of the current byway, forming a loop from Highway 76 through Decorah and back to Waukon.

The byway extension offers dramatic examples of karst topography in Iowa, complementing the original route.



Decorah Visitor Center



Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery is located at the Highlandville Road intersection.

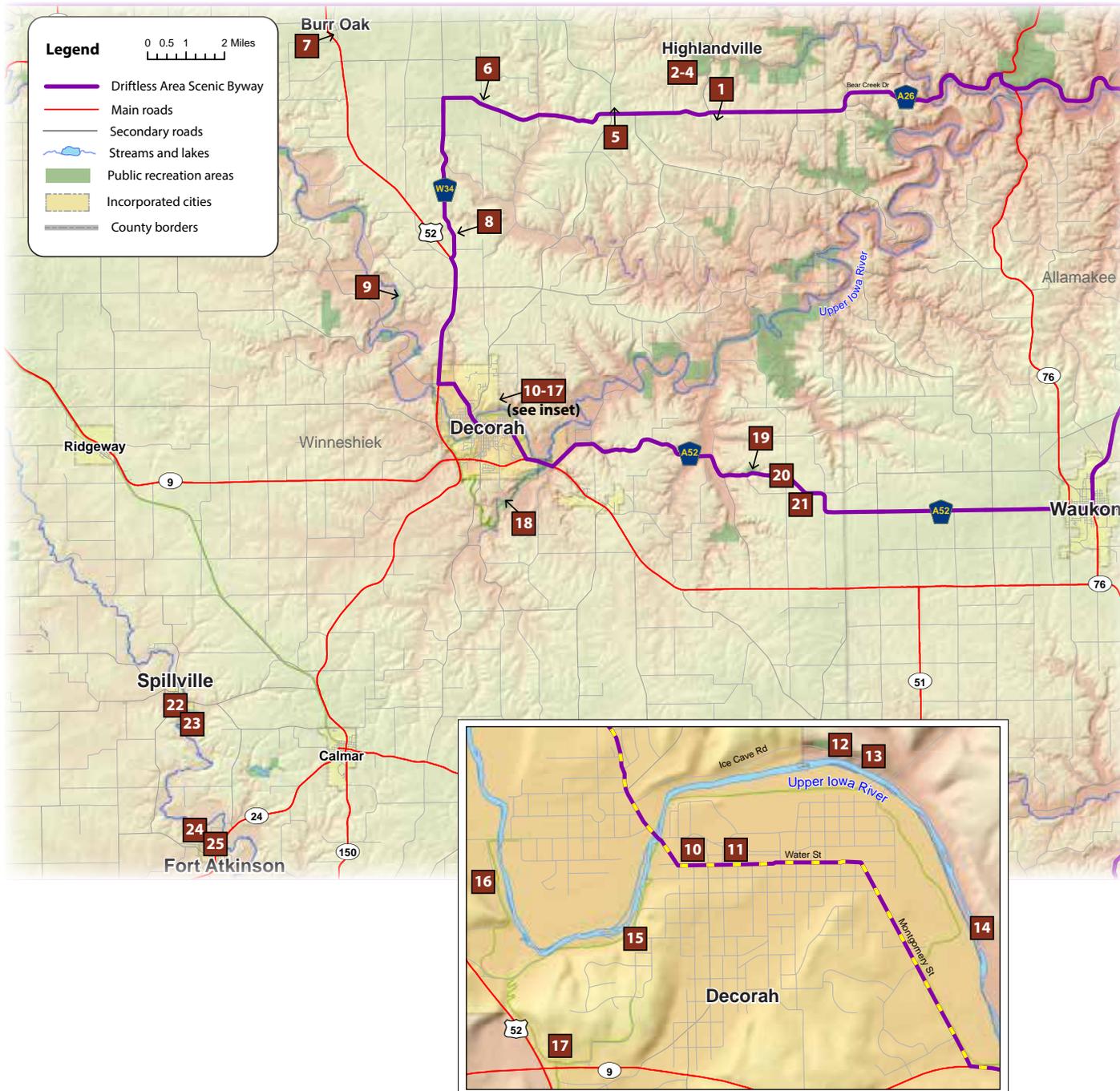
Decorah, the largest community on the byway, is the hub of this region with its many amenities and attractions. The Upper Iowa River flows through town, and several parks and trails await exploration. The city is a cultural mecca with its museums, Luther College, and dedication to the arts and local foods.

A26 west to Decorah

From Highway 76, the byway continues on County A26, which bears the descriptive names of Bear Creek Drive and Big Canoe Road. This ridge-top drive provides scenic views of the Bear Creek valley to the north and Upper Iowa valley to the south.

1 Big Canoe Lutheran Church

The congregation was established by Norwegian immigrants in 1851. After the original stone church was outgrown, the current brick structure was built in 1902.



- 1 Big Canoe Lutheran Church
- 2 Highlandville General Store
- 3 The Old Hospital
- 4 Highlandville School
- 5 Locust School
- 6 Winneshiek Wildberry Winery
- 7 Laura Ingalls Wilder Park and Museum
- 8 Seed Savers Exchange
- 9 Malanaphy Springs
- 10 Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum
- 11 Oneota Food Co-op
- 12 Dunning's Springs
- 13 Decorah Ice Cave State Preserve
- 14 Palisades Park
- 15 Phelps Park
- 16 Pulpit Rock Campground and Will Baker Parker
- 17 Trout Run Trail
- 18 Decorah Fish Hatchery
- 19 Moe Park
- 20 Glenwood Lutheran Church
- 21 Lee School
- 22 St. Wenceslaus Church
- 23 The Bily Clocks Museum and Antonin Dvorak Exhibit
- 24 Fort Atkinson State Preserve
- 25 Fort Atkinson Public Library and City Museum



Former hospital in Highlandville

Highlandville and Bear Creek

Highlandville was described in 1913 as a thriving country town of a “little more than 100” (Bailey). It had three general stores, a new school, creamery, hospital, and other businesses. Here North and South Bear Creeks, which are premier Iowa trout streams, feed into Waterloo Creek.

2 Highlandville General Store

Today only one general store operates in Highlandville, and the owners operate a campground and cabins on South Bear Creek serving hunters, fishermen, or vacationers seeking a quiet getaway.

The Highland General Store primarily serves campers, fishermen, and hunters and offers 24 campsites and six modern cabins.



3 The Old Hospital

Highlandville’s former hospital became a lodging establishment for hunters and fishermen, but was sold in 2015 as a private residence.

4 Highlandville School

Built in 1911, the Highlandville School is on the National Register of Historic Places. “Old time” public dances are held there during the summer.



Highlandville School offers “old time” dances in the summer. Built in 1911, it is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Locust School



Winneshiek Wildberry Winery



Laura Ingalls Wilder Park and Museum

5 Locust School  

This limestone school opened in 1854 and was in continuous use until 1960, an Iowa record for continuous use in the same location. It is open for tours on summer weekends or by appointment.

6 Winneshiek Wildberry Winery 

Located on a 150-year family farm, this country winery offers table wines and a restaurant that serves lunch during summer.

Burr Oak

Burr Oak is an unincorporated community in Winneshiek County near the Minnesota state line. It was settled in 1851 and was a major stopping point for immigrant trains from Minnesota and Wisconsin. Burr Oak is 6 miles off the byway.

7 Laura Ingalls Wilder Park and Museum  

The Masters Hotel is the only childhood home of Laura Ingalls Wilder that remains on its original site. Wilder authored the *Little House on the Prairie* children's series, based on her pioneer childhood. The Ingalls family lived here for one year, 1876, when Laura was 9 years old. Fans of the books from throughout the world come here. A visitor center is in the 1910 Burr Oak Savings Bank.



Seed Savers Exchange

8 Seed Savers Exchange

Seed Savers is a nonprofit organization focused on saving and sharing seeds. At its 890-acre Heritage Farm and through a network of gardeners, Seed Savers collects and preserves heirloom fruit and vegetable seeds. Tour groups and casual visitors start at the visitor center and library before exploring the farm, which includes: display gardens featuring varieties from Seed Savers' collection; Diane's Garden, the special garden of co-founder Diane Ott Whealy; the Heritage Orchard with over 900 varieties of apple

trees; the newly planted Amy Goldman Apple Orchard featuring Midwestern apple varieties; heritage poultry breeds housed by the barn; and White Park cattle.

9 Malanaphy Springs

This state preserve on the Upper Iowa River has a mile-long trail through a maple-basswood forest that ends at a series of cascades and a waterfall. The trailhead is three miles northwest of Decorah on Bluffton Road.

Winneshek County Convention & Visitors Bureau



Malanaphy Springs

Decorah

With the extension, this vibrant community of more than 8,000 residents will become the byway's western hub. Norwegian immigrants established their culture in the 1850s with their many churches, Luther College (est. 1861), and the Vesterheim Museum (est. 1877). Nordic Fest, celebrated each July, attracts 60,000 visitors for an Old-World immersion. Today, Decorah is described as "a pocket of Norway." Even Decorah's name reflects the early history of northeastern Iowa. Decorah was a Ho-Chunk chief who in the 1840s lived along the Upper Iowa River in the Neutral Ground under protection of nearby Fort Atkinson.



Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum



Oneota Food Co-op

10 **Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum**  

Vesterheim National Norwegian-American Museum and Heritage Center is perhaps the most comprehensive ethnic museum in America. In 1877, Norwegian Americans began collecting and preserving objects at Luther College in Decorah to document their immigrant story, making them pioneers in the preservation of cultural diversity in

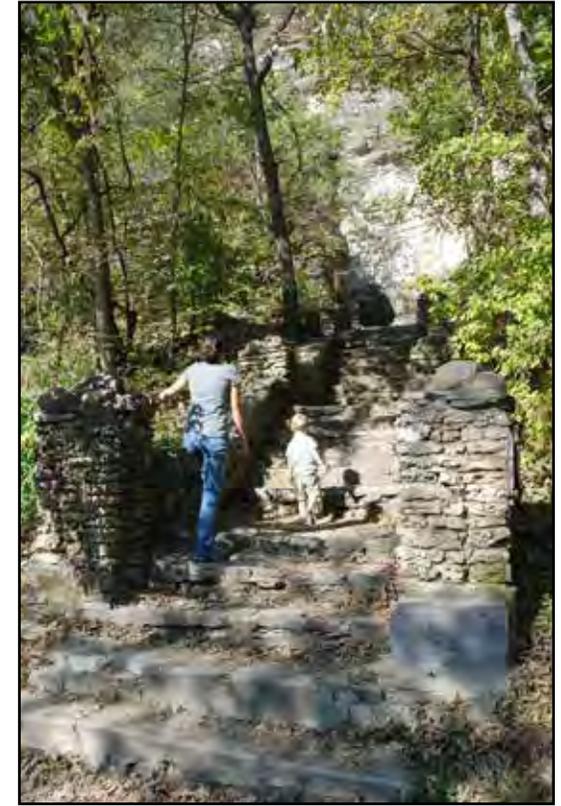
America. That early collection has grown into one of the most comprehensive museums in the United States dedicated to a single immigrant group. Visitors to Vesterheim are immersed in exhibits featuring Norwegian-American history, culture, and folk art. The museum boasts 30,000 artifacts, 12 historic buildings, a Folk Art School, and a library and archives.

11 **Oneota Food Co-op** 

The Oneota Community Food Co-op serves northeastern Iowa with organic, local, and sustainably produced foods. It is a major outlet for Driftless Area farms that practice sustainable agriculture. Their Water Street Café offers a menu of made-from-scratch local, organic foods served throughout the day.



Dunning's Springs



Decorah Ice Cave State Preserve

12 Dunning's Springs  

Iowa's highest waterfall at 200 feet is the main attraction at this park, and hiking trails invite exploration.

13 Decorah Ice Cave State Preserve  

Confounding early explorers, ice was discovered forming in the cave in early summer, lasting through the summer. Early 20th century scientific reports explaining this strange phenomenon

attracted large numbers of tourists and it became the first cave attraction in Iowa. Because of its geological, biological, and historical significance, it was dedicated as a state preserve in 1973.



Palisades Park

14 Palisades Park  

Palisades overlooks the Upper Iowa River and the city of Decorah. Miles of mountain biking and hiking trails meander through the park.

15 Phelps Park   

Phelps Park overlooks the Upper Iowa River and is Decorah’s oldest (1911) and largest park. Beautiful rock structures, built in the early years of the park, are found throughout.



Phelps Park



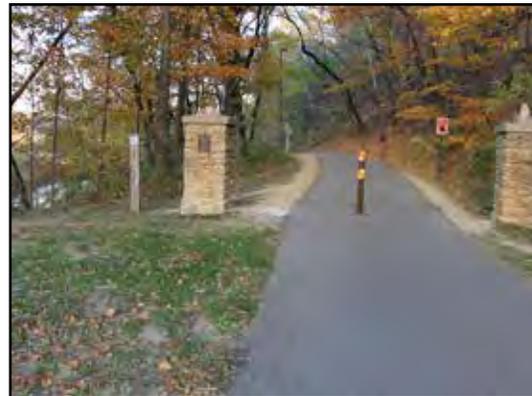
The Severt Larsen fountain in Phelps Park, built in 1934, honors this Decorah park pioneer.



Pulpit Rock viewpoint



Decorah Fish Hatchery



The Oneota Road entry to Trout Run Trail parallels the Upper Iowa River and passes below Phelps Park.

16 Pulpit Rock Campground and Will Baker Park  

Decorah’s city campground, Pulpit Rock, adjoins Will Baker Park, Twin Springs Park, and Trout Run trail. A short hike to Pulpit Rock offers a grand view of the Upper Iowa River valley.

17 Trout Run Trail  

This recreational trail loops for 11 miles through the community, following the Upper Iowa River through town, then Siewers Spring to the Decorah Fish Hatchery. A more challenging and scenic segment continues north from the hatchery back to the river.

18 Decorah Fish Hatchery 

This Iowa Department of Natural Resources hatchery rears brown and rainbow trout for regional streams and lakes. It welcomes visitors to enjoy the beautiful setting, feed and learn about trout rearing, and watch the famous “Decorah Eagles” that have nested here for several years and that are enjoyed worldwide by webcam. The Friends group recently opened a new restroom and interpretive facility.

A52 (the Old Stage Road)— Decorah to Waukon

The Old Stage Road between Decorah and Waukon is the final leg of this region. The road traverses a scenic farm landscape and passes a pioneer Norwegian church, an old country school, and a winery.

19 Moe Park

This 40-acre county park on Old Stage Road has a picnic area, playground, baseball diamond, and pit toilets.

20 Glenwood Lutheran Church

Norwegian immigrants established Glenwood Lutheran in 1854. The first pastor, Vilhelm Koren, served from 1854 to 1883 and was a founder of Luther College, having raised \$6,000 to acquire the site for the college. As the congregation expanded, construction began in 1869 on a limestone church, with members providing much of the labor. The spire was completed in 1892.

21 Lee School

The Winneshiek County Historical Society identifies this school as Lee School, Glenwood #5. It can be seen from the byway extension route.



Moe Park



Lee School on Old Stage Road



Glenwood Lutheran Church

St. Wenceslaus Church, the oldest Czech Catholic church in America.



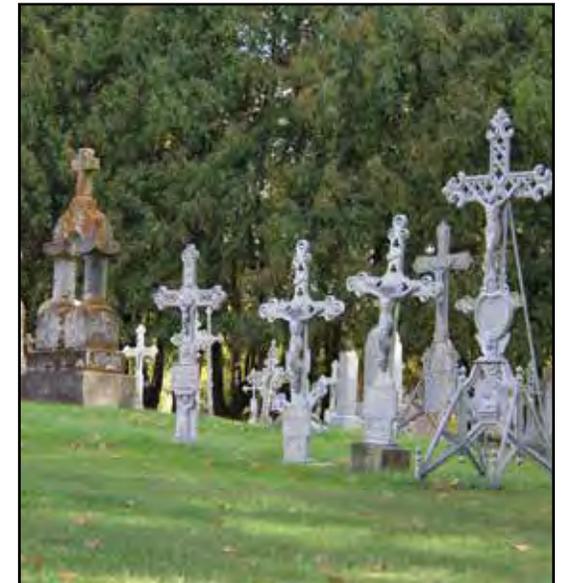
Nearby attractions

Spillville

Spillville was named for early settler Joseph Spielman, who arrived from Germany in the 1850s. The name was misspelled in official records. Bohemian and Swiss immigrants followed. They built churches, a mill, and a popular ballroom along the Turkey River. In the town square, a bandstand serves as a World War I soldiers' and sailors' memorial. Spillville's residents celebrate their Czech heritage and culture.

22 St. Wenceslaus Church and Cemetery

St. Wenceslaus Church, built in 1860, is the oldest Czech Catholic church in America. The St. Wenceslaus 1870 Old School is the oldest Czech parochial school in America. The St. Wenceslaus Cemetery is of particular interest because of the unique iron crosses that mark many of the graves. They were the work of Charles Andera, a Bohemian immigrant who opened a furniture shop in Spillville in 1875. A skilled carpenter

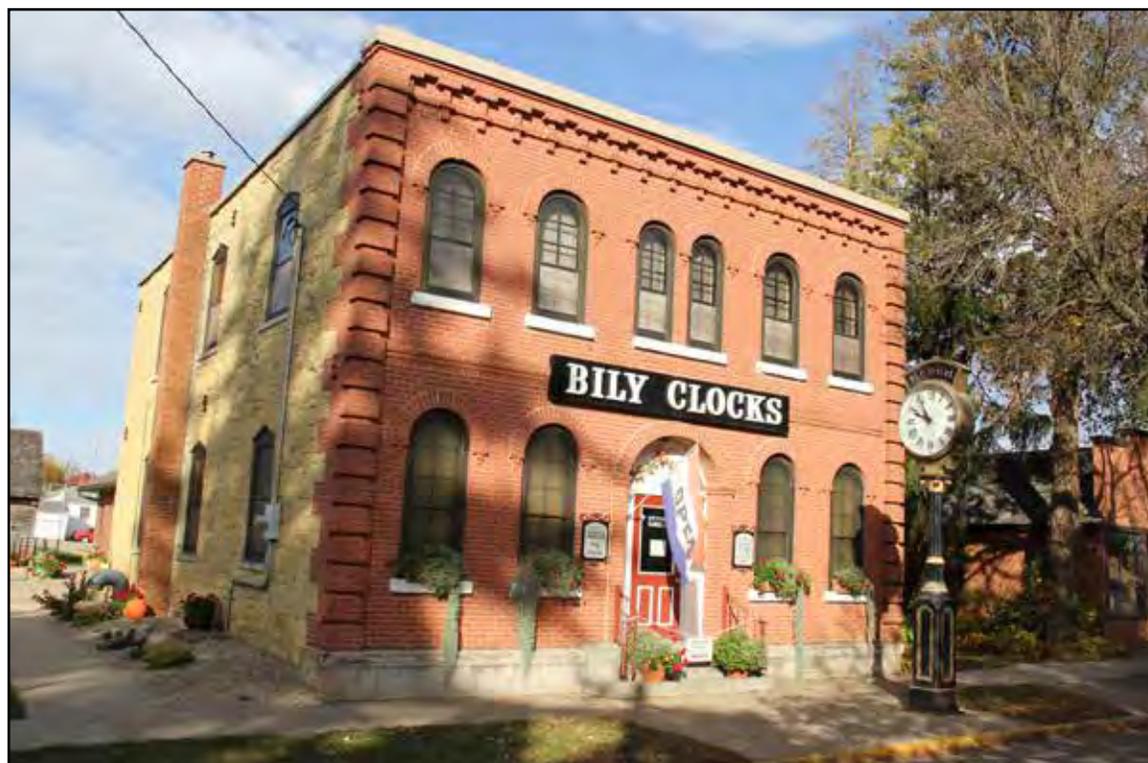


St. Wenceslaus Cemetery has numerous iron cross grave markers made by Spillville artist and cabinetmaker Charles Andera. The crosses reflect a variety of designs and are quite delicate in their details. These crosses are in Czech Catholic cemeteries in 12 states.

and cabinetmaker, Andera sculpted his crosses from wood and plaster of Paris and then sent the pattern to a foundry to have them cast. Loren N. Horton, former chief historian at the Iowa State Historical Society, calls Andera's cemetery art a "Czech-American treasure." His grave markers have been found in cemeteries from Prague, Oklahoma to Bohemia, New York and from Pisek, North Dakota to Hallettsville, Texas.



During tours, the chimes of each clock are played.



All of the hand-carved Bily brothers' clocks are on display in the museum. The exhibits in the Dvorak floor take the visitor on a sequential tour of the composer's time in America.



The exhibits on the Dvorak floor take the visitor on a tour of the composer's time in America.

23 The Bily Clocks Museum and Antonin Dvorak Exhibit



The lower floor of the museum is home to the Bily Clocks Museum, which houses elaborate clocks carved by brothers Frank and Joseph Bily. Beginning in 1913 on their farm between Ridgeway and Spillville, the brothers passed time in the winters by carving wood. Their clocks depicted the 12 Apostles, American pioneers, and Charles Lindbergh. They

moved their collection to Spillville in 1946, and bequeathed their clocks to the town with the agreement that they would never be sold. Upstairs in the museum is the 1893 summer quarters of the Dvorak family, which houses exhibits that chronicle the composer's work in America. Dvorak had learned of the village from a resident of Spillville. While staying in town, he composed the widely known "American Quartet."



Fort Atkinson State Preserve

Fort Atkinson

The town of Fort Atkinson was established in 1847, after the Ho-Chunk tribe was removed to Minnesota and the fort was closed. Today, the ruins of the fort attract tourists who learn this history. Each September, Rendezvous Days reenactors re-live those days.

24 Fort Atkinson State Preserve

This site is significant in Iowa history as the U.S. fort built to protect Ho-Chunk Native Americans from neighboring tribes. The state of Iowa acquired the fort in 1921, and reconstruction began in 1958. In 1968, the fort was dedicated as part of the State Preserves System because of its archaeological and historical value. A museum features exhibits documenting the fort's history.



The city museum has limited hours, but a librarian will open it upon request.



The museum displays artifacts from the fort.

25 Fort Atkinson Public Library and City Museum

The city museum and library share space in a former school building. The artifacts on display from the fort, trading post, and agency buildings exceed those in the preserve museum. A replica model of the fort, made by Luther College history professor Sigurd Reque in 1939, is part of the exhibition. Additional collections of historical artifacts document the history of the town and area.

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A scenic landscape photograph of a valley at sunrise. The foreground is filled with dark green trees, some with yellowing leaves. In the middle ground, a river winds through a valley, partially obscured by a thick layer of fog. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a bright, hazy sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

CHAPTER 5

THEMES AND

MESSAGES

*Fog at sunrise at Pulpit Rock in Decorah
overlooking the Upper Iowa River valley*

THEMES AND MESSAGES

An interpretive theme creates a framework for planning and places resources and events into meaningful contexts for visitors. Themes are the important ideas that organize the messages that we wish to communicate about the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. Once these important concepts are identified, decisions can be made about what site resources and media are most appropriate to tell these stories.

The theme statement, which is the main idea of an interpretive opportunity, should contain **universal concepts**.

A universal concept is an intangible meaning that has significance to almost everyone but may not mean the same thing to all people. Universal concepts are the ideas, values, challenges, relationships, needs, and emotions that speak to the human condition.

Compelling interpretive themes link a tangible resource to visitors' interests. Interpretation is most effective when media and other interpretive opportunities allow visitors to grasp the meanings expressed in themes and relate them to their own lives. Visitors may not be able to repeat the themes we write, but if they are provoked, inspired, or can relate the information to something within themselves, we have succeeded.

Organization of Themes and Messages

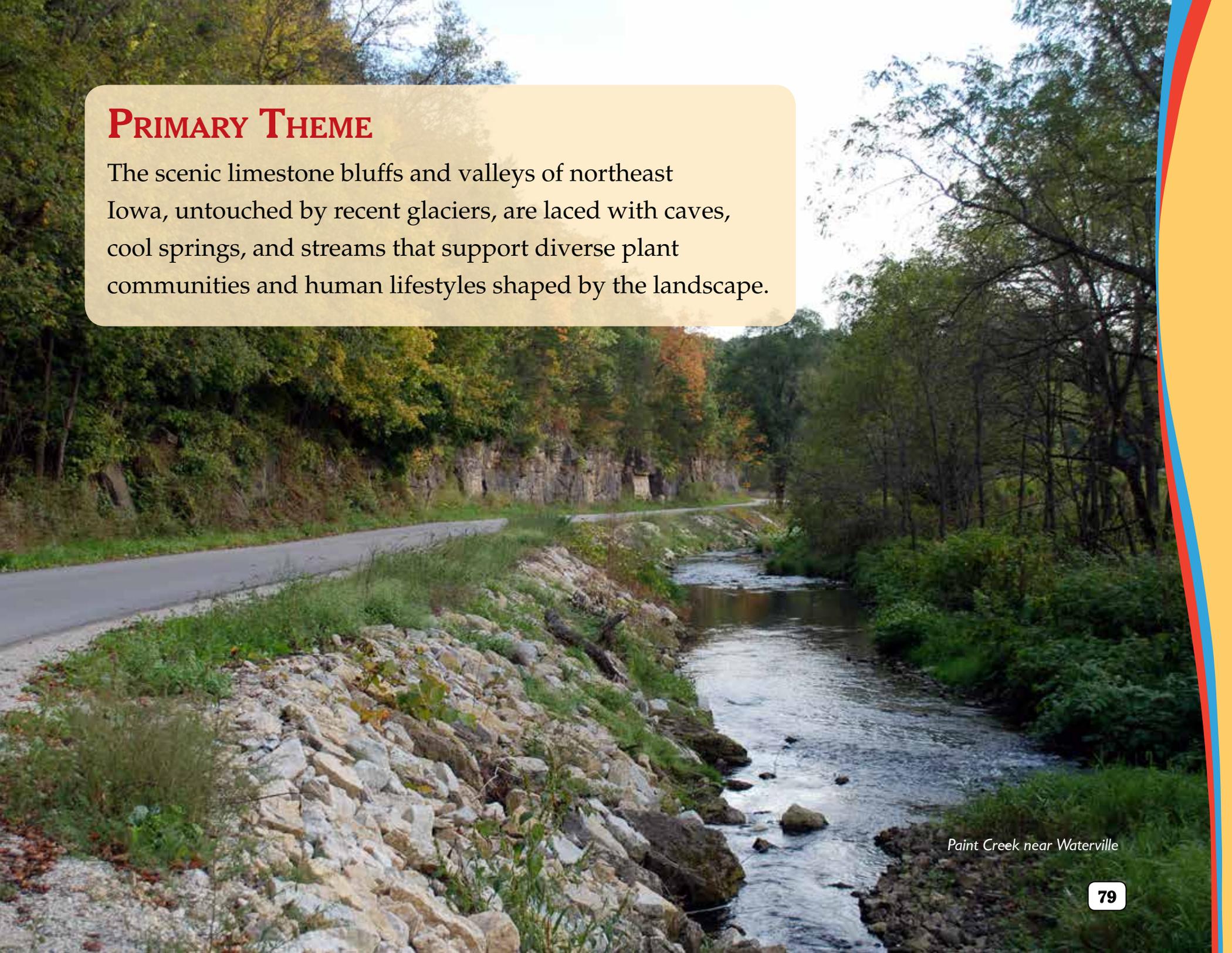
- A **primary theme** expresses the main idea that ties together the stories of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. To provide a cohesive visitor experience, all interpretation should relate to this holistic theme.
- **Sub-themes** split the primary theme into several more specific and workable ideas. These broad storylines guide visitors to discover deeper meanings and relationships with the byway's resources.
- **Messages** break down the broad sub-themes into specific, discrete stories that can be told with interpretive media and programming.

A barn quilt adorns a farmstead along the byway.



PRIMARY THEME

The scenic limestone bluffs and valleys of northeast Iowa, untouched by recent glaciers, are laced with caves, cool springs, and streams that support diverse plant communities and human lifestyles shaped by the landscape.



Paint Creek near Waterville

Driftless Region Map



Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative

SUB-THEME 1

Untouched by glaciers that leveled the surrounding terrain, the Driftless Area is a landscape like no other in the Upper Midwest.

Messages:

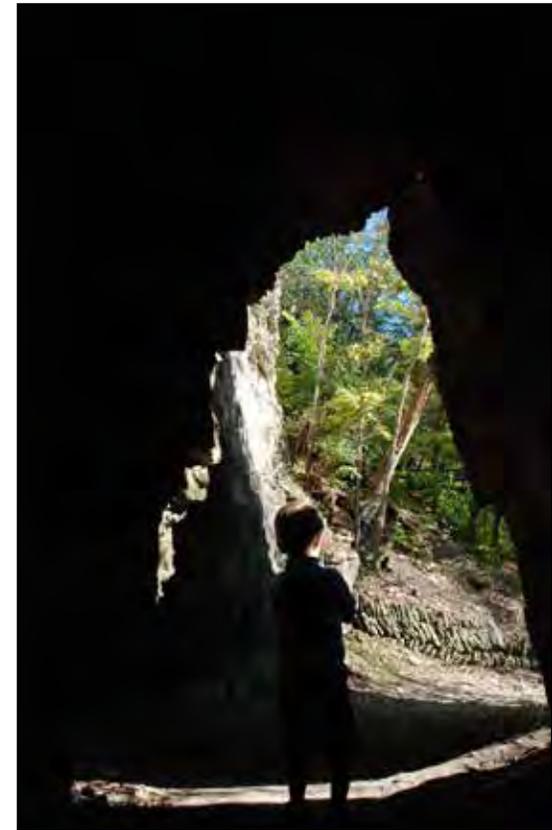
- 1.1 The deeply carved scenic landscape was described by 19th century geologist Samuel Calvin as the "Switzerland of Iowa."
- 1.2 Northeast Iowa is part of the 240,000-square-mile Driftless Area that includes regions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, with the Mississippi River flowing through the heart of it.
- 1.3 The karst landscape of the region evolved over millions of years as water dissolved the dolomite and limestone bedrock. Sinkholes, caves, and underground streams that surface as cold-water springs run into streams such as Paint Creek and the Upper Iowa and Yellow Rivers and flow to the Mississippi River. Prominent bluffs line these rivers as they approach the Mississippi.
- 1.4 Pleistocene streams of rushing glacial meltwater carved deep valleys into the bedrock, leaving resistant limestone, dolomite, and sandstone cliffs, pinnacles, ledges, and bluffs.

The Upper Iowa River, as seen in this 1970s photo, is popular with canoeists who enjoy magnificent views of limestone bluffs.



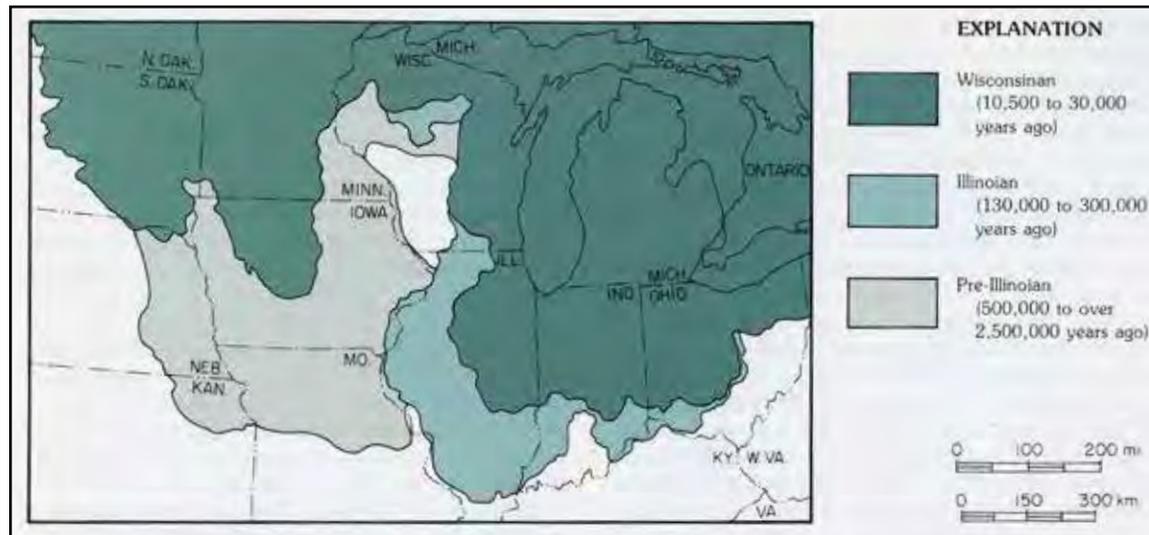
1.5 This is called the Driftless Area, which implies that it was untouched by the “glacial drift” of Pleistocene glaciers. However, southwestern Wisconsin is the only true unglaciated area. Pre-Illinoian glaciers from more than 500,000 years ago did cover the remainder of the area, including Iowa. Glaciated and unglaciated landscapes in the Driftless Area are virtually indistinguishable today because streams have cut so deep into the bedrock. (Jean Prior, *Landforms of Iowa*)

1.6 “Drift” is a term derived from early writings that describe deposits on the landscape believed to have “drifted” on the waters of the Biblical flood. This concept changed in the mid-19th century when geologist Louis Agassiz provided evidence that these deposits were from continental glaciers. The term now refers to material deposited by a glacier or glacial meltwater.



A view from the Decorah Ice Cave

Limits of Major Glacial Advances in the Upper Midwest



Source: Jean Prior, *Landforms of Iowa*



The Driftless Area is federally designated as the Upper Mississippi River Valley Viticultural Area, which winemakers may officially use in marketing. It is the largest American Viticultural Area in the nation.

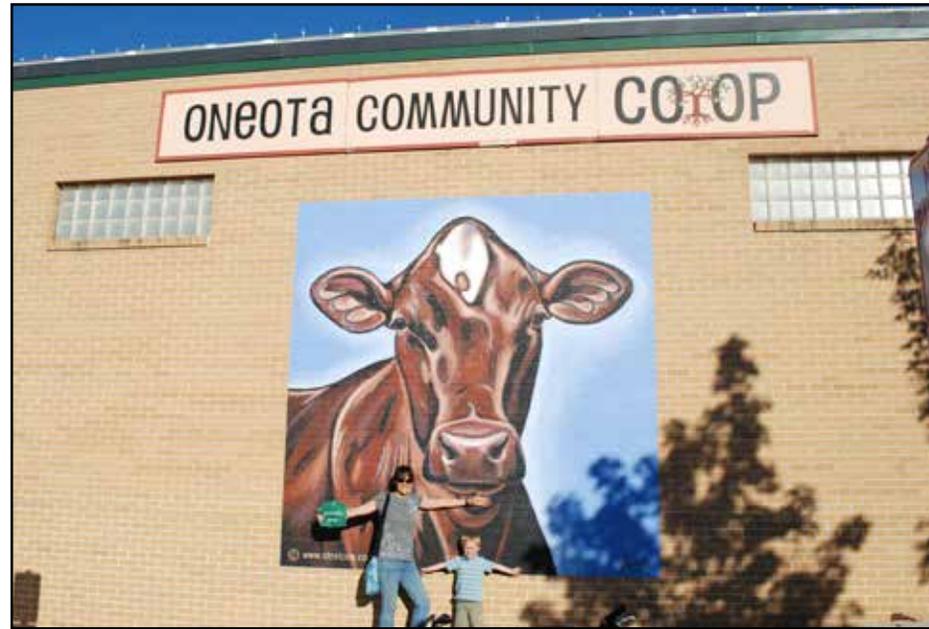
SUB-THEME 2

The people of this region are bound together by a shared landscape and culture, which is reflected in their agriculture, recreation, and arts.

Messages:

- 2.1 There is a distinct sense of place in this Driftless Area, which is manifested in an appreciation for nature, local arts, wholesome foods, and lifestyles compatible with small-scale farms and diversified land use.
 - 2.2 The region's steep bluffs cannot support highly mechanized commercial agriculture and as a result dairy farming and alternative agricultural practices on a family farm scale flourish here.
 - 2.3 The Driftless Area is a landscape well suited to the Amish way of life. Amish farmers began settling here more than 160 years. Affordable land still draws Amish immigrants seeking to maintain their traditional ways. Many welcome tourists to their shops and farmers markets.
 - 2.4 The limestone soils are conducive for fruit and viticulture. Wineries flourish in the region. Honeycrisp and RiverBelle apple varieties were developed specifically for the region. The distinctive flavor and fruit quality result from these soils.
 - 2.5 The 890-acre Seed Savers Exchange Heritage Farm was sited near Decorah because the hills and trees characteristic of the Driftless Area prevent pollen from drifting, thus isolating and preserving the genetics of its 26,000 heirloom varieties.
- “The Driftless area naturally produces a co-operation between nature and people because with the steep bluffs and the fertile valleys and hilltops you have this combination of wild spaces. It's too steep to farm. You can't just set your plow down, drive a mile, turn around and come back...You have these fingers of nature interspersed with fields and agriculture. Nature is part of life here.”
Stephen J. Lyons, *Going Driftless*, (pg. 133)

- 2.6 Food co-ops, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and other outlets offer grass-fed meats and dairy and organic produce from the many small or sustainable-agriculture farms in the region.
- 2.7 Abundant cold-water streams in the Driftless Area provide habitat for wild brook trout and introduced brown and rainbow trout and sustain Iowa's most important cold-water fishery.
- 2.8 The roads of Northeast Iowa meander through the hills with few direct roads between places. This encourages a slower pace appropriate to the rural landscape.
- 2.9 The economy of the region is bolstered by tourism. Trout fishers, canoeists, and roadway tourists are attracted by the beauty and diverse recreational opportunities in the two-county area. Charming old Mississippi River towns and villages offer backwater boating and fishing and scenic views of the Mississippi River gorge.



The Oneota Food Co-op in Decorah specializes in organic, locally produced foods.



Contoured farm fields are interspersed with forest land throughout the Driftless Area.

Photo by Mdf, Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), Rondeau Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported



Cerulean warblers, a federal species of concern, breed in the Effigy Mounds-Yellow River State Forest area.

Map courtesy of Northeast Iowa RC&D



The Yellow River State Forest and Effigy Mounds National Monument, a Globally Important Birding Area, offer excellent birding opportunities.

SUB-THEME 3

The Driftless Area's streams, valleys, forested bluffs, prairies, and migratory flyways offer a biologically diverse and beautiful landscape.

Messages:

- 3.1 Iowa's highest quality forest remnants and freshwater streams are found in the Driftless Area. The deeply carved landscape has made development difficult, preserving much of its natural heritage.
- 3.2 Bluff overlooks invite spectacular views of the Mississippi River valley. Notable byway overlooks include Mount Hosmer in Lansing and Effigy Mounds National Monument.
- 3.3 Winding roads offer motorists panoramic views of what many consider to be the most beautiful byway in Iowa.
- 3.4 The Yellow River State Forest and Decorah parks provide trails to bluffs overlooking the Upper Iowa and Yellow Rivers.
- 3.5 The Effigy Mounds-Yellow River State Forest is designated as a Globally Important Bird Area. It includes a breeding population of cerulean warblers, a federally listed species of concern. The area is also recognized as an Iowa Bird Conservation Area, boasting one of the state's best bird habitats.
- 3.6 The abundant wet forests of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge support what is possibly the largest breeding population of bald eagles in the lower 48 states. In 2011, there were 96 active nests in Pool 9, the highest concentration in the refuge.

3.7 Algific talus slopes are analogous to ice caves. The rush of cold summer air exiting from fissures on the slopes creates a boreal microclimate supporting relic snail and plant species left over from the Ice Age. In Iowa, 775 acres scattered in remote valleys are protected in the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge and not accessible to visitors. According to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, one accessible algific talus slope is next to Dug Road (Oneota Riverview Trail) below the

bluffs of Phelps Park in Decorah. The University of Northern Iowa Museum in Cedar Falls has a large cut-away diorama of one that even blows cold air.

3.8 Decorah was the center of world-wide science news in 2015 when a team excavated a 6-foot sea scorpion fossil from an ancient meteorite crater.

3.9 The Mississippi River forms the core of one of North America's great flyways for waterfowl and neotropical bird migrations.



Courtesy of The Nature Conservancy

Courtesy of Northeast Iowa RC&D



The area of the ancient meteorite crater

Courtesy of Iowa Geological Survey



Excavating the sea scorpion



Fish Farm Mounds near New Albin

SUB-THEME 4

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway provides insight into prehistoric people and the clash of European and native cultures in historic times.

Messages:

- 4.1 Evidence of early Native American cultures in northeastern Iowa includes a Paleo spear point found near Postville and Archaic Indian rock shelter artifacts along the

Yellow River. These hunter-gatherer cultures span more than 9,000 years in Iowa.

- 4.2 About 3,000 years ago, Native American cultures began adopting new tools and life ways that are known as the Woodland Culture. The Woodland tradition is identified by the innovations of pottery, burial mounds, cultivated plants, and the bow and arrow. Conical mounds built by Middle and early Late Woodland people (100 B.C. to A.D. 650) can be seen at Effigy Mounds National Monument, Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve, and Sandy Point Cemetery in Harpers Ferry. The late Woodland Effigy Mound Culture created animal-shaped mounds that were probably used more for ceremony than for burial. Effigy Mounds National Monument has one of the largest representations of these mounds.



Fish Farm Mounds has 30 conical mounds on this three-acre Iowa State Preserve.

- 4.3 Early 19th century explorers including Henry Schoolcraft and Zebulon Pike described paintings on Paint Rock Bluff near the mouth of the Yellow River. Paint Creek, which flows to the Mississippi River through the Yellow River State Forest, was named from this rock art, which is now obliterated.
- 4.4 French fur traders first met the Ioway Indians in their villages along the Upper Iowa River. The Ioway were a Siouan speaking people affiliated with the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) who occupied large territories on the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers.
- 4.5 The 17th to the 19th century was a time of upheaval for Native American tribes in the northeast. Refugee tribes such as the Ojibwa, Sauk, and Meskwaki (Fox) were pushed into the Great Lakes region, fleeing the Iroquois Beaver War expansion westward and the encroachment of settlers. Many

tribes aligned with the British against the United States in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. When peace was made in 1814, the area fell to the United States. A series of treaties were forced upon the tribes for their lands and most were removed to lands west of the Mississippi River.

- 4.6 In 1825 the Great Council of Indians of the Upper Mississippi River and Plains met in Prairie du Chien with about 5,000 soldiers and representatives of the various tribes of the region. This treaty established a line from Prairie du Chien to the Des Moines River to separate and prevent fighting between the Sioux north of the line and the Sauk, Meskwaki, and Ioway to the south. Additional treaties in 1829 and 1830 established two 20-mile strips of land either side of the Prairie du Chien Line of 1825, which was designated as a Neutral Ground where any tribe could hunt and fish.

Courtesy of National Park Service



Captain Nathaniel Boone, son of explorer Daniel Boone, surveyed the Neutral Ground.



A Neutral Ground marker is located at Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve south of New Albin.

Courtesy of New York Public Library Digital Collections



Chief Waukon Decorah

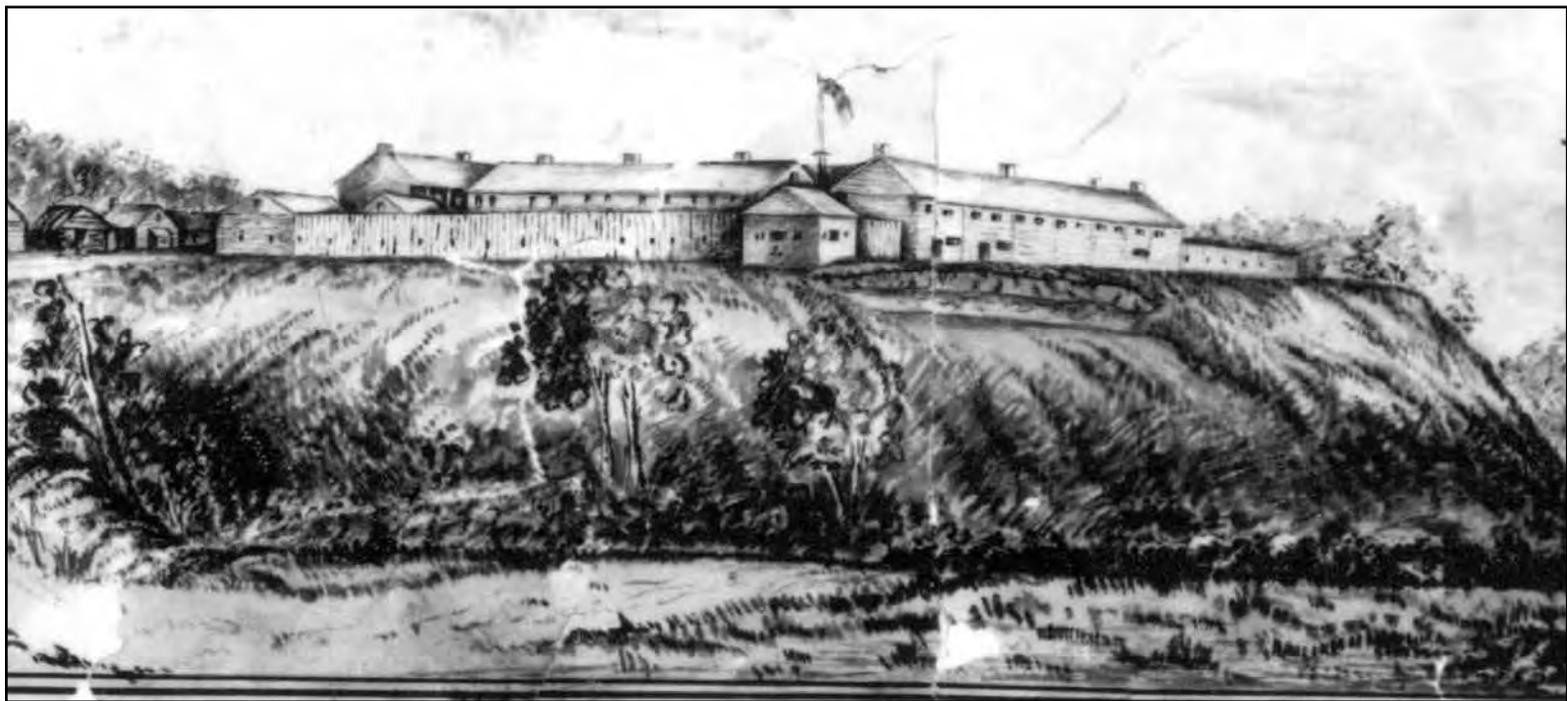
- 4.7 The Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) tribe relinquished all of their ancestral land in Wisconsin in treaties of 1832 and 1837. In the spring of 1840, the Winnebago tribe was escorted by federal troops into the Neutral Ground along the Iowa River (later renamed the Upper Iowa River).
- 4.8 Fort Atkinson was constructed in the Neutral Ground along the Turkey River beginning in 1840 to protect the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) during their removal from their hostile neighbors—the Sioux, Sauk, and Meskwaki—and to discourage white squatters. An agency was built three miles southeast of the fort consisting of 14 buildings to teach the Ho-Chunk white culture. It included a school, model farm, and medical facilities. The Winnebago census of 1842 listed 2,183 people in 13 different villages with 22 bands each under a chief.
- 4.9 Chief Winneshiek, one of the band leaders, was appointed in 1845 by the Turkey River Indian Sub-agency as overall chief of the Winnebago. County lines were drawn in 1847, and Winneshiek County was named for him.
- 4.10 Chief Waukon-Decorah descended from a prominent Ho-Chunk family in Wisconsin. In 1832 he joined the American war against Black Hawk's Sauk and Meskwaki. After the war, in 1834, avenging Meskwaki raiders attacked his camp, killing 10 women and children from Decorah's family, including his wife. In 1837, despite his support for the Americans, Decorah, as part of a delegation to Washington, was forced to sign a removal treaty from Wisconsin territory. He and his band were removed to the Neutral Ground on the Upper Iowa River where the city of Decorah stands. Waukon in Allamakee County is also named for him.

4.11 Euro-American immigrants illegally settled on the reservation, and in 1846, the Ho-Chunk, unhappy with the situation, requested to relinquish the Neutral Ground in exchange for 800,000 acres in Minnesota. In 1848, they were removed to a reservation at Long Prairie, Minnesota.

4.12 Unneeded, the fort was abandoned in 1849. At that time there were no longer any legal tribes remaining in Iowa.



The state of Iowa acquired the fort in 1921 and reconstruction began in 1958. In 1968, the fort was dedicated as part of the State Preserves System.



An 1842 U.S. Army sketch of Fort Atkinson



Harriet Hosmer, an American sculptor, is the namesake of Mount Hosmer in Lansing.



Downtown Lansing is a designated National Historic District.

SUB-THEME 5

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway showcases numerous artifacts and communities that connect visitors to the history of northeast Iowa.

Messages:

- 5.1 Settlers were from a variety of ethnic groups. Prominent were the Norwegians whose heritage is celebrated in Decorah. Vesterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum, shares the story of Norwegian immigrants to America. Luther College was established in 1861, only twelve years after the city was founded.
- 5.2 Irish-Catholic farmers settled in the townships northwest of Decorah. Irish settlers established Wexford Immaculate Conception Church near Lansing, the oldest Catholic Church between Dubuque and St. Paul, Minnesota. On the back wall of the church a port record lists all the Ticonderoga ship passengers who sailed from Liverpool, England to New Orleans in the winter of 1850, many of whom settled here and built the first church, a simple log cabin.
- 5.3 Spillville boasts St. Wenceslaus Church, built in 1860 as the first Czech Catholic church in the United States. In 1893 Czech composer Antonín Dvořák had a summer sojourn here where he composed two chamber pieces he subtitled “American” and “Spillville”.
- 5.4 Lansing was established in 1848 by investors who saw the possibilities of a port for steamboats to carry passengers and grain on the Mississippi River. Lansing was a booming port town until 1872 when the first railroad arrived. One notable steamboat passenger, American sculptor Harriet Hosmer, asked her captain if she had time to climb a bluff overlooking the river. She raced a riverboat employee to the top, waved a handkerchief to the boat, and raced back to the bottom for breakfast. Mount Hosmer Park still bears her name.

- 5.5 Commercial fishing and pearl button manufacturing were once important industries in Lansing. The Museum of River History houses collections and exhibits from this era. These will be incorporated into the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center. Downtown Lansing is a designated National Historic District.
- 5.6 Harpers Ferry, named for businessman David Harper, is sited on a large sand plain that contained one of the largest concentrations of Indian mounds on the upper Mississippi River valley. Most were destroyed by farming and development. However, Sandy Point Cemetery preserves seven mounds because the early residents, including David Harper, were buried among them.

- 5.7 The Allamakee County Historical Museum, housed in the original 1861 county courthouse in Waukon, and the Gjefle Log Cabin, transport visitors back to early settlement years.
- 5.8 Many 19th century churches, cemeteries, and one-room schools dot the landscape across the byway region. Old villages such as Highlandville and Waterville are windows into the past.
- 5.9 The New Albin Iron Post marks the border between Minnesota and Iowa. It was installed in 1849 to settle the dispute over where the border should be established.



Grave of David Harper, the namesake of Harpers Ferry



The Iron Post near New Albin marks the border between Minnesota and Iowa.

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Guides/Brochures:

- ▶ Allamakee County, Iowa
- ▶ Effigy Mounds National Monument, National Park Service
- ▶ Trout Streams of Allamakee County
- ▶ Upper Iowa River Canoe Guide

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETIVE

MEDIA

Fly Fishing

This panel features several circular images showing different fly fishing techniques and equipment. It includes text about the sport and logos for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Trout Hatchery.

Iowa trout fishing has something for everyone.

This central panel is titled "Iowa trout fishing has something for everyone." It features illustrations of three types of trout: Brook Trout, Brown Trout, and Rainbow Trout. Below the illustrations are three circular sections: "FISHING WITH BAIT", "FISHING WITH ARTIFICIAL LURE", and "SPINCASTING". Each section contains text and small images related to that fishing method. Logos for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Trout Hatchery are visible in the top right corner.

Spincasting

This panel is titled "Spincasting" and features a large circular text area on the left that reads: "Those who consider fishing a serious hobby have probably spent quite a bit of money on equipment. However, if a person is just getting into the sport, one can spend a small amount of money and still be successful. Spincasting is the easiest and most commonly taught type of fishing for beginners. It can be fun, rewarding and exciting for any age. It is also a great way for families and friends to enjoy the outdoors." To the right of the text are four circular images showing different types of spincasting lures: "CORNHORN SPINNING LURE", "WORM", "JUG", and "SPINNER". At the bottom, there is a section titled "COMMON KNOTS USED WITH THIS EQUIPMENT" with small diagrams of knots.

An interpretive kiosk at the Decorah Fish Hatchery



In addition to panels and publications, interpretive media also can include artwork. This mosaic walkway with a bear design on the California Pacific Coast Highway was fabricated by Creative Edge in Fairfield, Iowa.

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

Heritage interpretation is a communication process that guides visitors in their search for meanings in objects, places, and landscapes.

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway has a rich natural and cultural heritage. The stories associated with the Driftless Area are expressed in greater detail in Chapter 5: Themes and Messages. The techniques used to communicate interpretive messages to byway visitors are referred to as interpretive media.

Well-planned interpretive media can open windows of revelation to visitors who seek personal connections and meanings in these resources. Part of the reward in traveling a beautiful scenic byway is the sense of discovery in exploring a new and exciting place and the feeling of growing emotionally and intellectually in the process of this discovery.

Interpretive media takes many forms. Wayside exhibits, trail signs, brochures, websites, audio tours, apps, and visitor center exhibits are some of the ways we attempt to help visitors find their way and enjoy their experiences. Visitors' lives are enriched as they discover personal meanings regarding these resources.



The Dixie Truck Stop in McLean, Illinois, has been an Illinois Route 66 enterprise since the beginning of the Mother Road. A silhouette statue and wayside exhibit interpret this iconic gas station. (Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters design)

EXISTING INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

A variety of interpretive media exists along the byway. Parks, museums, and other organizations interpret aspects of the Driftless region. The existing media is mostly site-specific. Media proposed in this plan will thematically unify the visitor experience and brand the byway through unified design.

Visitor Centers and Museums

The primary byway visitor center will be the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center in Lansing. Using the collections of the Museum of River History, professionally fabricated exhibits will interpret the cultural and natural history of the region.



Vesterheim Museum in Decorah exhibits artifacts from Norwegians who immigrated to Iowa.

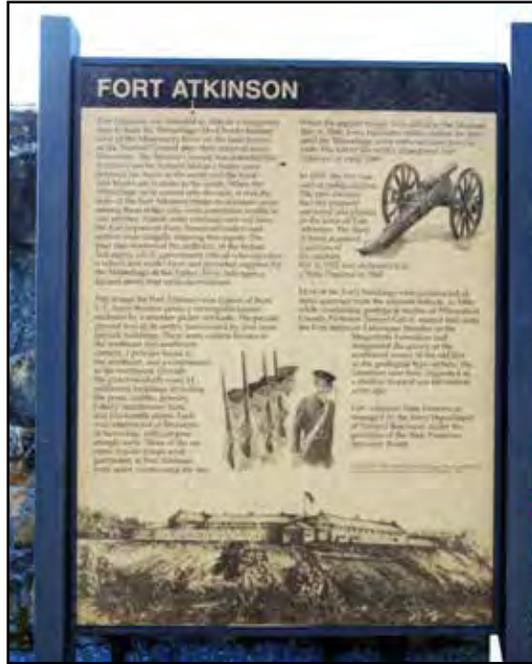


Allamakee County Historical Museum, Waukon

Other museums in the two counties of the byway focus on cultural history. These include the Allamakee County Historical Museum in Waukon, the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry, Fort Atkinson State Preserve and City Library, and Bily Clocks Museum and Dvorak Exhibit in Spillville.



A panel can interpret features that cannot be seen but have significant meaning. Stonebrook Park in Allamakee County has a kiosk with historic photos and stories of the Old Stone House that was purchased by the county as a picnic area in 1921. It was one of the first county parks in Iowa. The house was destroyed in a mysterious fire in 1957.



A historical interpretive panel at Fort Atkinson

Kiosks and Wayside Exhibits

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Effigy Mounds National Monument, city parks in Decorah and Waukon, downtown Decorah, and Fort Atkinson State Preserve all have kiosks or wayside panels that interpret the natural and cultural history of a specific resource or site.

Other facilities such as county parks, preserves, wildlife areas, and Yellow River State Forest could benefit their visitors with additional media.



Stonebrook Park kiosk panel



Decorah has kiosks at each of its parks to introduce visitors to the site's key features. This Phelps Park panel interprets an algalic talus slope, an important geologic feature with rare plant and animal species.

Conservation Innovation Grant Panels

A series of wayside exhibits was developed in 2015 through a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) interpretive panels project. The goal of the project was to develop a cohesive, statewide set of interpretive panels along 10 of Iowa's byways to describe how Iowa's agricultural producers are utilizing conservation systems.

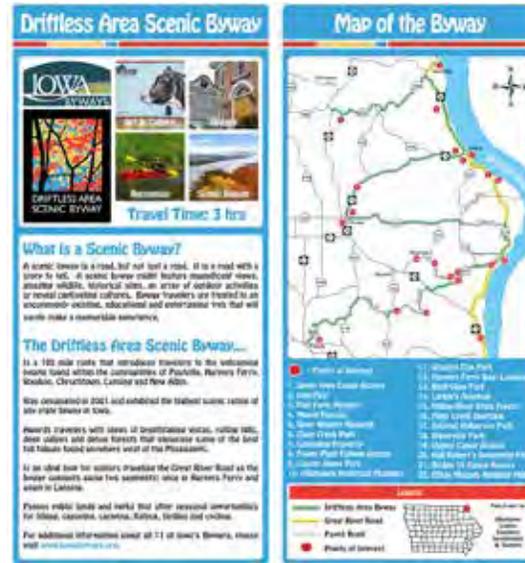
Panel designs for the wayside exhibits were based off concept designs that Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters created as part of its Iowa Byways Interpretive Master Plans project.

Two panels for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway were installed in Yellow River State Forest.



Conservation Innovation Grant wayside panels are being installed along the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. The "Birds Take Flight" panel is located at Larkin Overlook in Yellow River State Forest. The "Bring Back the Monarchs" is located at the Yellow River State Forest headquarters.

A tabloid-size (11"x17") tear-sheet map of the byway, with color-coded descriptions of attractions on the back side, is available at sites along the byway.



A two-sided rack card promotes the byway with a map of attractions and a description of the route.

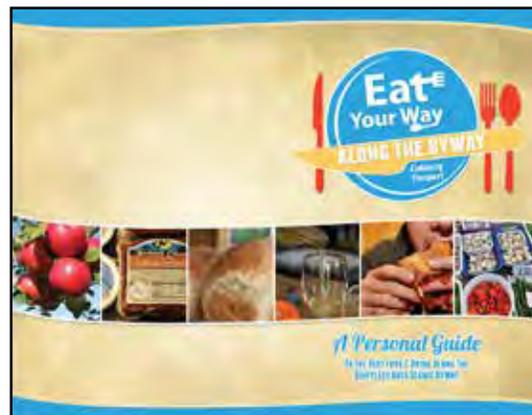
Digital and Print Media

Many attractions on the byway have their own websites, although with varying quality and development. The Driftless Area Scenic Byway website is part of the Iowa Byways website at iowabyways.org.

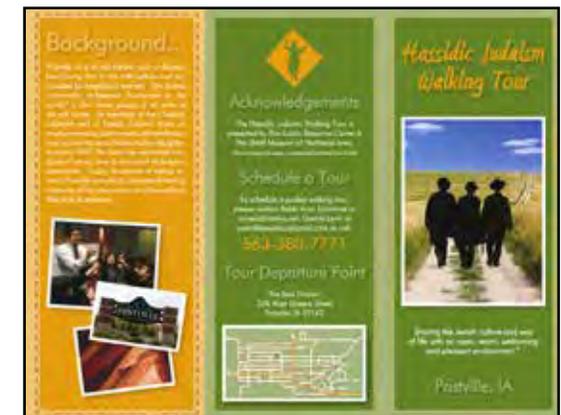
Brochures and booklet guides also are provided at many sites. Northeast Iowa RC&D has produced several byway-related publications, including a tear-sheet map that lists all byway attractions on the back; a rack card with a byway map and a description of the route; a culinary passport guide to restaurants and places to buy delicacies; and a brochure promoting a Hasidic Judaism walking tour in Postville.



Driftless Area Scenic Byway website.



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway Culinary Passport encourages travelers to collect stamps at 16 restaurants and shops along the byway.



A brochure promoting a Hasidic Judaism walking tour in Postville was produced by Northeast Iowa RC&D.

IMPROVE WAYFINDING

Wayfinding, a traveler's ability to follow the byway and find destinations, is the foundation of a positive visitor experience. Without effective wayfinding, travelers will not be able to access interpretive messages and may become frustrated with their entire trip.

Travelers look for directional signs, but also navigate by using other visual cues along the roadway. A thorough analysis of the whole byway with an eye to trouble spots and opportunities for assisting travelers with wayfinding should be undertaken every few years as the route changes.

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway is easy to follow with its attractive and prominent road signs containing both the byway's logo and the Iowa Byways logo. However, certain byway attractions can be more difficult to find, especially when they are located off the main route.

Recommendations for enhancing Driftless Area Byway wayfinding include:

- Add "Byway Information" signs to the bottom of standard byway road signs to direct travelers to

information centers, experience hubs, wayside exhibits, and other sites where they can find more information or interpretation about the byway.

- Similarly, a secondary sign attached to the byway road sign could direct travelers to attractions. For example, a sign could say "Fish Farm Mounds" with an arrow to help travelers turn at the right location.
- Include directional information and maps in online media such as websites, mobile websites, and apps.
- As the byway route evolves, optional loops should be adequately marked.
- Place easily recognized experience hubs in prominent locations along the corridor. These hubs will serve as focal points to draw the attention of travelers and provide orientation.
- Develop a travel guide that includes detailed maps and directional information to attractions.
- Place the byway website address and QR code on all media such as experience hubs, wayside exhibits, brochures, and travel guides.



An "Information" sign added to the bottom of the standard Driftless Area Scenic Byway sign can direct travelers to visitor centers, experience hubs, wayside exhibits, or hard-to-find attractions.

BUILD ON THE DRIFTLESS AREA SENSE OF PLACE

The Driftless Area has a strong sense of place. **Sense of place** is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of Geography* as “either the intrinsic character of a place, or the meaning people give to it, but, more often, a mixture of both. Places said to have a strong sense of place have a strong identity and character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and by many visitors.”

The following is a partial list of elements that define the intrinsic character of the Driftless Area and the meaning people give to it. This sense of place must be reflected in the design of interpretive media.

- The Driftless Area is marked by dramatic rock outcroppings; deep, narrow valleys with cool, fast-flowing springs and streams; and shallow limestone bedrock laced with caves, sinkholes, and underground streams. This landscape is in sharp contrast with the rest of Iowa.
- The wide Mississippi River gorge cuts through the Driftless Area with historic river towns nestled along its bluffs.
- Winding roads offer motorists panoramic views of what many consider to be the most beautiful landscape in Iowa. It has been described as “the Switzerland of Iowa.” These sinuous roads encourage a slower pace appropriate to this rural landscape.
- The region’s steep bluffs are not conducive to highly mechanized agriculture. Family farms thrive here, producing fruits, wines, dairy products, and organic produce. It is a region well suited to the Amish way of life.
- Picturesque towns and rural churches reflect the Norwegian-Lutheran, Irish-Catholic, Czech, and other ethnic groups who settled this region and whose old-world traditions are celebrated more than 150 years after their arrival.
- This is Iowa’s “trout country.” Abundant cold-water streams beckon anglers.
- This is a canoeing and kayaking hot spot, where cold, fast rivers and streams cascade beneath bluffs, cliffs, palisades, and chimney rocks.
- Nature is interspersed with fertile farms and is a part of life here. Abundant forests, prairies, and streams provide for a rich natural diversity of plants and animals.



“If Iowa’s landscape had to be divided into only two regions, one would be northeastern Iowa and the other would include everything else.” —Jean C. Prior, Landscapes of Iowa

PLAN MEDIA HOLISTICALLY

A trip on the Driftless Area Scenic Byway is an opportunity to discover meaningful cause-and-effect relationships between natural and cultural events that have influenced the land and people. While most visitors enjoy their casual journey, many more appreciate understanding the forces and stories that create the sense of place found in the Driftless Area.

By their physical presence, media such as signs and other structures along a roadway command attention. They offer immediate information and orientation. Several things should be considered in order to develop a comprehensive approach to media:

Brand and Unify the Experience:

Visually coordinate the color palette, type fonts, and other design elements to create immediate recognition by travelers. All media should be cross-referenced so a reader can access information that will connect them to related stories, resources, and media. For instance, publications should direct readers to websites, wayside exhibits, and audio tours.

Diversify Delivery Techniques: Multiple delivery approaches are required to communicate successfully with travelers of many ages, interests, backgrounds, and motivations. Weather and seasons require that alternative forms of media be offered.

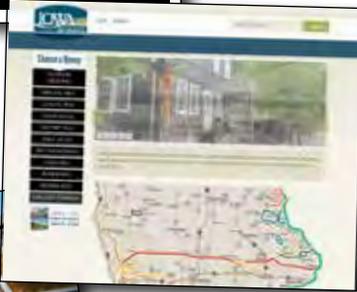
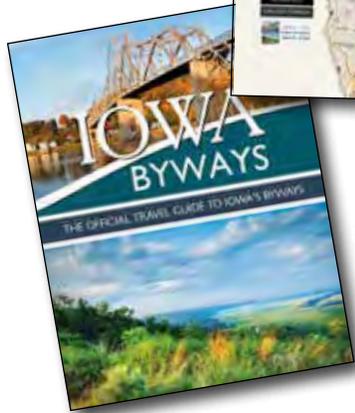
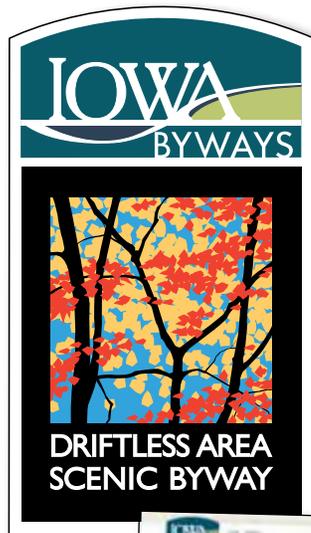
Be Accessible: To communicate with the greatest number of people, incorporate a full spectrum of learning styles such as auditory, visual, and tactile. Media should be developed to connect with a variety of travelers including tourists, bus tours, resident commuters, and families.



Interpretation on a kiosk at the Iron Post in New Albin describes how the border between Iowa and Minnesota was designated.



An interpretive panel at Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah describes the techniques of saving heirloom seeds.



Following a set of design guidelines, as has already been done for the Iowa Byways, creates a family of media that is instantly recognizable as belonging to the state's scenic routes.

CREATE A DISTINCTIVE VISUAL IDENTITY

The complex landscape of any road corridor has conflicting visual components that distract travelers from the byway experience. To be successful, interpretive efforts should capitalize on the recognizable icons and strong features of the area's sense of place.

The colors and curves of the media graphics, the selected construction materials, and even the type fonts of the messages need to be unified to each other and reflect the character of the ridges, valleys, and villages of the byway. What may seem like redundant design elements to the planning team will be reassuringly familiar to a byway traveler.

The Iowa Department of Transportation already has developed a strong identity for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and the Iowa Byways program. New road signs installed a few years ago are unified across the state in their artistic style. An accompanying Iowa Byways guide creates a unified family of byways. The website follows with the same look, reassuring travelers that the Iowa Byways program is well planned and executed. The media recommendations that follow aim to build on the pre-existing design work to further the byway's interpretive goals.

Visual Identity Through Design

- The colors used on the byway logo should serve as the palette for other media.
- The Driftless Area and Iowa Byways logos should be replicated on all publications, interpretive signs, and online media for optimal exposure and recognition.
- Apply unified design standards for all frames and supports for signs, experience hubs, and wayside exhibits.
- Apply consistent graphic elements such as type style and sizes, color palette, and artistic approaches.

Unified Design Standards

To increase recognition and to provide a more cohesive experience for travelers, all media should be graphically and visually unified. The use of unified and repeated colors, fonts, logos, and other graphic elements will combine media into a family of recognizable byway features. The following suggestions should be considered in the design of future media.

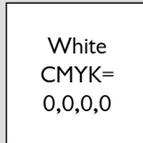
Color Palette

A standard set of colors unites media, highlights important messages, and evokes feelings about a site or an organization.

In 2010, the Iowa Department of Transportation Office of Media and Marketing established logos and color palettes for all Iowa byways and for the overall Iowa Byways brand. Brand descriptions and regulations are described in the “Iowa Byways Brand Guidelines” documents prepared for each byway. “The brand is ultimately the program’s public identity intended to create awareness of the program and its benefits and to encourage and enhance the visitor’s experience on Iowa’s scenic byways,” according to the document.

The color palette established as part of the logo designs should be repeated in byway media. The red, yellow, and blue of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway palette reflect the fall colors that create spectacular scenery along the route. The bright colors are somewhat limiting when designing media, so consider adding colors to the palette that fit with the family but provide more flexibility for attractive design. Various lighter or darker shades of these colors can be used while still unifying the look of media with the byway’s identity.

Driftless Area Byway Color Palette

 <p>Red CMYK= 0,90,90,0</p>	 <p>Yellow CMYK= 0,20,70,0</p>	 <p>Blue CMYK= 70,20,0,0</p>	 <p>Black CMYK= 0,0,0,100</p>	 <p>White CMYK= 0,0,0,0</p>
Curved header.	Curved header.	Backgrounds, tint boxes.	Lettering on large blocks of text over light backgrounds.	Text over dark backgrounds, picture borders.

Additional Color Palette for Media

 <p>Dark Red CMYK= 0,100,100,20</p>	 <p>Dark Blue CMYK= 70,20,0,40</p>	 <p>Green CMYK= 80,60,100,0</p>	 <p>Light Yellow CMYK= 0,12,42,0</p>	 <p>Orange CMYK= 0,68,68,25</p>
Titles and subtitles.	Curved header, titles and subtitles.	Tint boxes.	Tint boxes.	Subtitles.

Recommended Typography

CHELTENHAM BT

Main titles and headings

Brushtiptravis

*Headings and subheadings,
handwriting (quotes, photos)*

Garrison Sans

Main text

Garrison Sans Italic

Photo captions

Garrison Sans Italic

Photo credits

Typography

The design and selection of letter forms creates the personality and readability of blocks of type on interpretive media. Each typeface expresses personality and sets a tone that reflects the organization or the message that is being interpreted, so it should be selected purposefully.

Combinations of various styles can add an interesting hierarchy to the media design and help create specific personalities for each message. Fonts can appear lighthearted and fun, informal, businesslike, old-fashioned, rustic, or legalistic. They can seem difficult to wade through or look easy to read.

Stylized fonts attract attention for titles and short headings but can be burdensome to read in longer texts.

On the Iowa Byways logo, the typeface for “IOWA” is a derivative of Cheltenham BT set in all caps. The original typeface was manipulated to blend with the abstract graphic representations of hills and valleys. The recommended font for main titles and headings on byway media is **Cheltenham BT Bold**, evoking the timeless nature of the Driftless Area and creating consistency between media.

Brushtiptravis is an informal script font that provides contrast to the more formal fonts. It serves a similar purpose as the “Breathtaking Vistas” script font used alongside the curving line in the Iowa Byways guide. These types of fonts welcome viewers and invite them to explore interpretive media. Brushtiptravis is recommended for some headings such as on wayside exhibits, for subheadings, and to emulate handwriting. It can add style to photographs or quotes where handwritten messages may be appropriate.

Simple, familiar fonts work best for longer texts that require more reading. **Garrison Sans** is recommended for the main text on byway media. Garrison Sans is used in the Iowa Byways publication, and it is also similar to Gill Sans, which is the font used on the byway logos. It is a sans serif font that is easy to read. Garrison Sans also works well for photo captions and credits.

A **hierarchy of type sizes** is also important to emphasize the relative significance of various messages. Typically, a main title is the largest size, followed by subheadings, main text, captions, and credits.

Repeating Graphic Elements

Another important factor that contributes to a unified design style is the use of repeating graphic elements. These elements, in combination with the color and typography schemes, develop a unique identity for the byway.

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway and Iowa Byways logos are essential graphic elements that should be included on all byway media, from interpretive signs and publications to digital websites and apps. They provide a unified brand for the byway and for the Iowa Byways program.

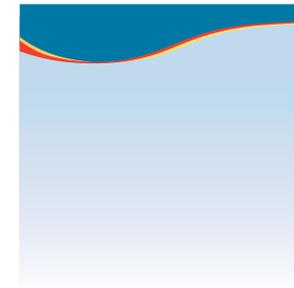
According to the Iowa DOT, “the colors and curves in the Iowa Byways logo are an abstraction of the undulating Iowa landscape. Individual logos for the individual byways in the Iowa Byways program were developed in an intentionally simple graphic style so as to appear as a recognizable and memorable graphic theme, descriptive of the character and experience of the byway, and as a safe and effective wayshowing tool when displayed on signage.”

Other repeated graphic elements on future interpretive media will reinforce the already existing design identity. These may include:

- Curving header bars comprised of gently interwoven contrasting dark, medium, and light colors from the Driftless Area color palette. The curve is reminiscent of the wave pattern in the Iowa byways logo.
- Faded light blue backgrounds with a gradient on interpretive media.
- White, snapshot-style borders for photos, with feathered edges, tilted slightly, and with drop shadows.
- Tint boxes with rounded corners and drop shadows.
- Large focal point images to draw attention.
- Byway website addresses and QR codes that link to the Iowa Byways website.



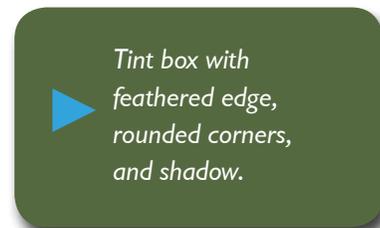
The Driftless Area and Iowa Byways logos are essential graphics elements to include on all media.



Curved header with faded blue background.



Snapshot photo effect with white feathered borders, caption, tilt, and shadow.



Tint box with feathered edge, rounded corners, and shadow.

INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE HUBS

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway can be accessed through multiple entry points. It is important to welcome and orient travelers at various places along the route.

Experience hubs are thematic kiosk structures designed to orient travelers to the attractions and stories of a byway. They consist of multiple signs that provide maps, information, and interpretation. Unlike staffed visitor centers, they are available 24 hours a day year-round. Experience hubs present an opportunity to introduce the byway to motorists who pass by serendipitously.

Although visitors rely on GPS or maps to assist them in orientation, unified kiosk structures that are easily seen on the landscape are reassuring guides. They have enough mass and character to attract attention and to support the byway identity. The most successful hubs are prominently sited at key byway entry points and at areas of high traveler use such as welcome centers, visitor centers, and significant attractions.

Experience Hub Design

The experience hub structures and signage are an opportunity to create an artistic repetition that unifies and identifies the byway experience. The experience hub should represent the Driftless Area byway's landscape with graceful curves and muted colors. Each kiosk structure should:

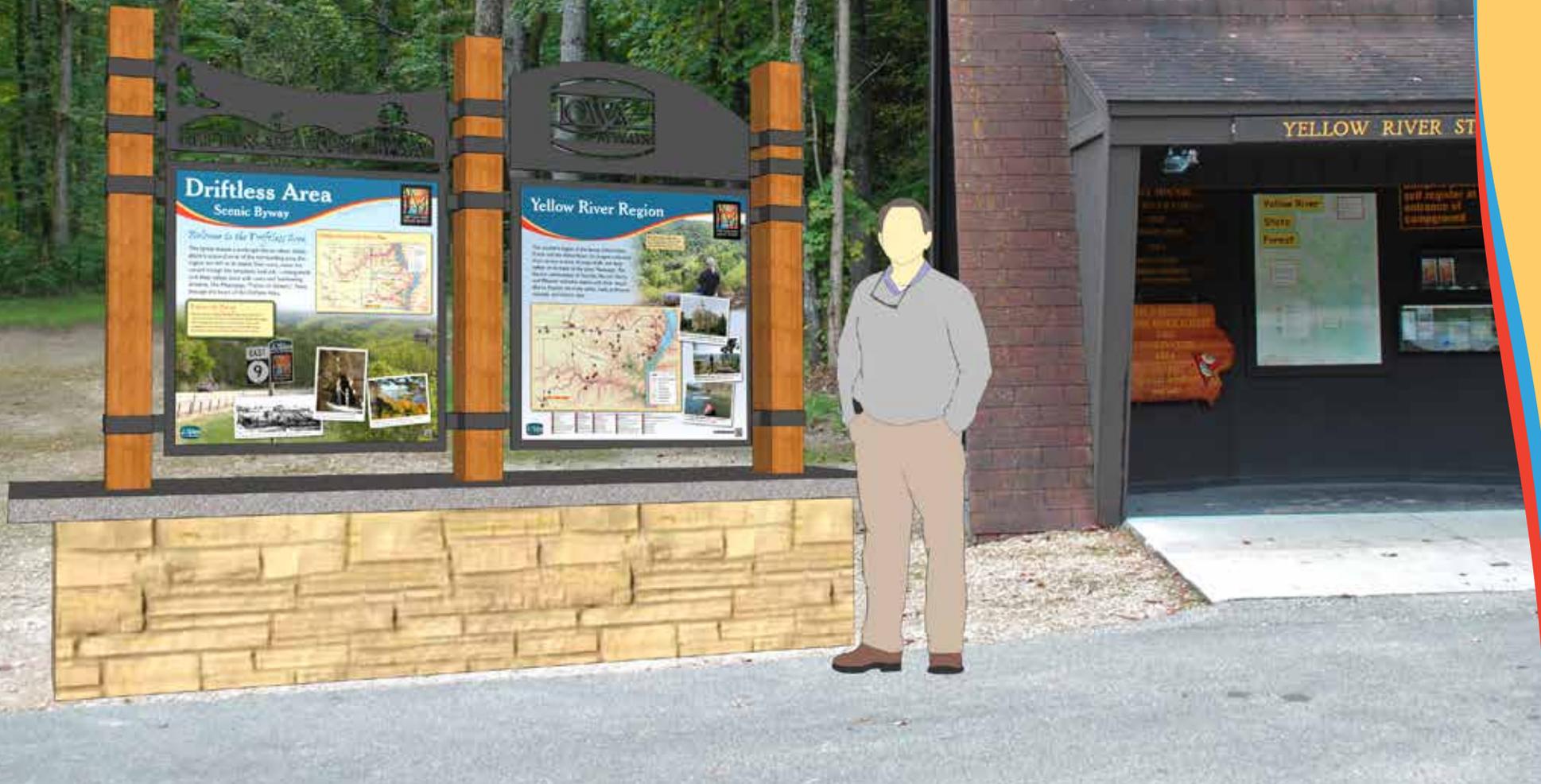
- Exhibit a unified design with all other interpretive media.
- Reflect regional themes through unique graphics cut into the steel frame and through the messages included on each panel.
- Be highly visible to travelers, but not overpower existing agency and site entry signs at welcome centers, parks, and attractions.
- Appear rustic and durable in rural sites but be formal enough to fit into urban settings.
- Appear elegant but be economically produced.

- Be easily replaced, modified, or repaired.
- Be vandal-resistant.

Construction elements, such as wooden timbers, weathering steel, and limestone block, bring a substantial feel and authenticity to the structure. The strong combination of wood and metal appears organic but is vandal-resistant and maintenance-free. The limestone base connects to prominent bedrock and bluffs of northeastern Iowa.

A curved steel header at the top of the hub presents a graceful rustic look, and provides a surface for cut-out symbols and scenes to interpret the stories of the Driftless Area. Each hub can have its own unique cut-out designs.

Byway Experience Hub Concept Design (Yellow River State Forest)





Experience hubs can be created to thematically match the look and feel of a byway, such as this hub on iconic Route 66 in Illinois. (Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters design)

Byway Overview Experience Hubs

Two types of experience hubs are recommended for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway: Byway Overview Experience Hubs and Region-Specific Experience Hubs.

The **Byway Overview Experience Hubs** would broadly interpret attractions along the entire byway. These would be located at major byway entry points or junctions.

Interpretive Signage

The interpretive signage on the Byway Overview Experience Hubs is designed to provide a broad glimpse into the primary attractions that can be experienced in each region. The first interpretive panel introduces the entire byway and what makes it unique, while the other three panels describe the route's three regions.

Each experience hub will contain four interpretive panels—two panels on each side of the structure.

The panels would be 36" by 36" in size and produced with a 1/2"-thick high-density laminate. This affordable material allows for full-color, high-resolution sign faces, and the panels require minimal

attention and are resistant to damage and vandalism. A 10-year warranty against fading and delaminating is standard.

The panels should be dramatic and concise, as viewers generally have a limited amount of time and patience to invest in viewing the hubs. These panels compete for attention with birds singing, weather, people, and traffic sounds. Keeping messages short and exciting and telling the story visually will help grab and keep visitors' interest.

Curved Steel Header

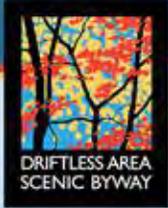
The cut-outs on the steel headers of the Byway Overview Experience Hubs would represent the entire byway rather than a specific region. Byway icons, such as eagles, trout jumping, trees, and a rolling landscape, connect to the primary theme of the byway. The words "DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY" in negative against the cut-out hills, along with the Iowa Byways logo, help to enhance the identity of the byway.

Byway Overview Experience Hub Concept Design: Front Side (Postville)



Driftless Area Scenic Byway

Breathtaking vistas



Welcome to the Driftless Area

This byway travels a landscape like no other. While glaciers scoured most of the surrounding area, this region was left as an island. Over eons, water has carved through the limestone bedrock, creating bluffs and deep valleys laced with caves and fast-flowing streams. The Mississippi, "Father of Waters," flows through the heart of the Driftless Area.

Explore the Byway

Byway travelers follow winding roads with panoramic vistas of contoured farms and forested bluffs and valleys. The many parks, preserves, and historic sites invite exploration. Fast-flowing streams and the Mississippi backwaters beckon canoeists, kayakers, and fishers.



Driftless Area Scenic Byway Map





Fort Atkinson State Preserve is one of many places to discover Iowa's rich history.



Vision-carved limestone landscapes, like the Decorah State Preserve, await exploration.



Vistas of forested valleys, meandering rivers, and small farms make this one of the most scenic byways in Iowa.

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Byway Overview Experience Hub

Overview Panel Concept Design (Postville)

Like the region-specific kiosks, the main panel of each overview experience hub will provide an overview of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and its unique characteristics. A map displays the entire byway with regions outlined and an obvious "You are here" symbol. This panel would be duplicated on each overview hub.

36"

36"

Byway Overview Experience Hub

Region Panel Concept Design (Postville)

The other three panels on the Byway Overview Experience Hubs will interpret the three regions of the byway: Yellow River Region, Upper Iowa Region, and Decorah Region.

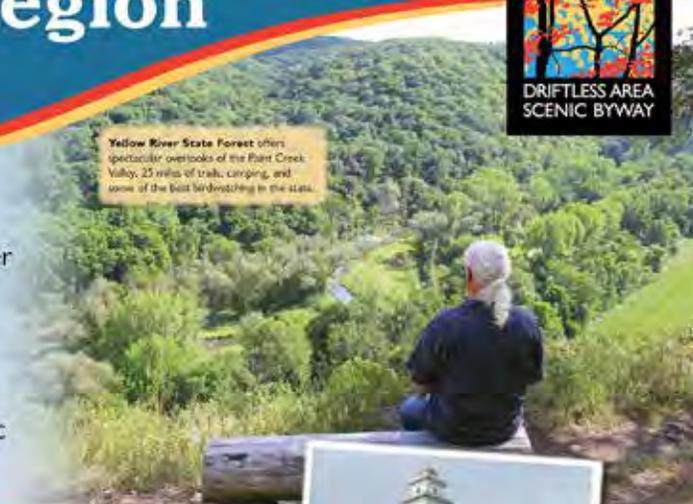
The panels will interpret the unique characteristics of each region and highlight some of the “must-see” attractions with active photos and captions. A large map of the region shows the primary interpretive resources with a “You are here” symbol. These panels would be duplicated on each overview hub.



Yellow River Region

Yellow River State Forest offers spectacular overlooks of the Paint Creek Valley, 25 miles of trails, camping, and some of the best birdwatching in the state.

This southern region of the byway follows Paint Creek and the Yellow River, the longest coldwater trout stream in Iowa, through bluffs and deep valleys on its route to the great Mississippi. The historic communities of Postville, Harpers Ferry, and Waukon welcome visitors with their unique charm. Explore the many parks, trails, prehistoric mounds, and historic sites.







Allamakee County Historical Museum, located in an old courthouse, interprets northeast Iowa's history.



Effigy Mounds National Monument protects over 200 mounds perched above the Mississippi River.



The **Yellow River Water Trail** is a scenic and swift 25-mile paddle through bluffs and rapids.

1 Westcott's Wood RC&D	14 State Park and County Forest	27 Old Age Museum National Monuments	40 Allamakee County Historical Museum
2 Tanager Trail	15 Highgate Creek State Park	28 Buffalo Park	41 Allamakee County Historical Society
3 L.F. Park	16 Riverside Park	29 Sandy Mound Cemetery	42 Allamakee County Historical Society
4 JPH & Matt Home	17 Suburb Park	30 Harpers Ferry	43 State Historical Park
5 Thompson Park and Cross Access	18 Riverside State Park	31 Old Spring School	44 Harpers Ferry Park
6 Nordic Nordic at the Yellow River	19 Allamakee State Park	32 Stone-Campbell	45 Harpers Ferry State Park
7 Nelson Memorial Trail	20 Allamakee State Park	33 Stone-Campbell	46 Harpers Ferry State Park
		34 Stone-Campbell	
		35 Stone-Campbell	
		36 Stone-Campbell	
		37 Stone-Campbell	
		38 Stone-Campbell	
		39 Stone-Campbell	

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Region-Specific Experience Hubs

A second type of hub, the **Region-Specific Experience Hub**, would interpret resources specific to the region in which they are located.

Interpretive Signage and Steel Headers

The interpretive signage would focus on the unique natural, cultural, and historical/archaeological stories of the region that can be experienced along the byway. Like the Byway Overview hubs, the panels would be 36" by 36" in size and produced with a 1/2"-thick high-density laminate.

The first panel of each hub introduces the entire byway, while the other three panels describe the attractions of the specific region divided into natural history, cultural opportunities, and historic/archaeological resources.

The cut-outs on the steel headers would highlight resources found in that region.

Yellow River Region

- **Natural:** Highlights the Yellow River and Paint Creek parks and recreation, Yellow River State Forest, and the scenic views of the Mississippi River at Effigy Mounds.

- **Cultural:** Interprets Harpers Ferry as an old river town, Mohn Fish Market as one of the last featuring smoked or fresh fish, and the farms (including Amish) visible from Elon Drive
- **Historical/Archaeological:** Relates the histories of Postville and Harpers Ferry and features prehistoric people at Effigy Mounds. Specific historic sites include Wexford Church and the Paint Creek churches
- **Header Cut-Outs:** Kayakers and canoeists, trout jumping, people fishing, streams flowing, forests

Upper Iowa Region

(see concept design on pages 113-118)

- **Natural:** Interprets the diverse scenery of the Driftless Area, access to trout streams, and the Upper Mississippi River wildlife refuge.
- **Cultural:** Describes the shared culture of the Driftless Area shaped by the land, and highlights sites such as the Calhoun Co-op Creamery and City Meat Market in New Albin.
- **Historical/Archaeological:** Interprets the history of Waukon, Lansing, and New Albin, and encourages

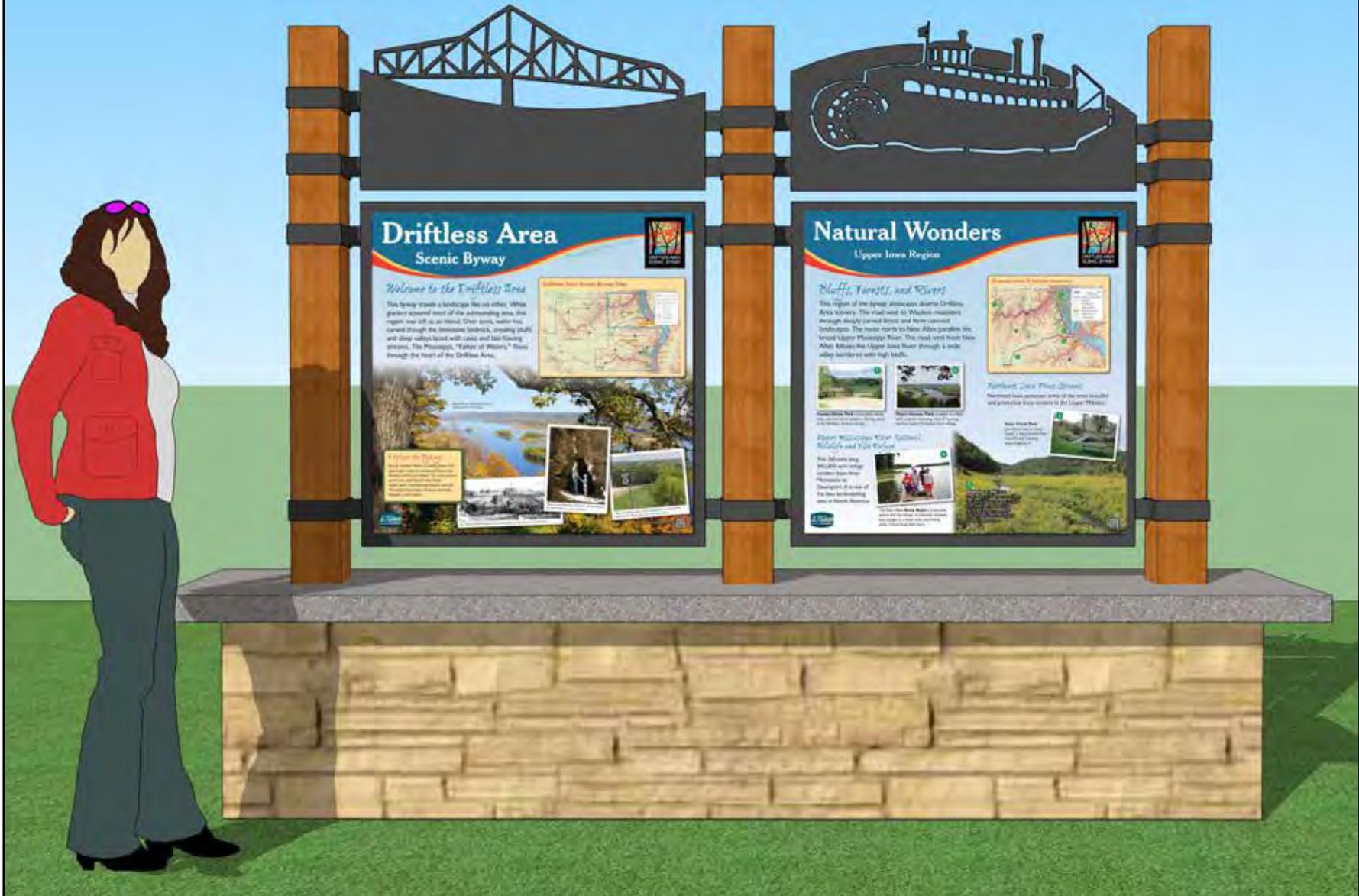
exploration of historic sites such as museums, waysides, and buildings

- **Header Cut-Outs:** Steamboats and historic bridges, eagles soaring, rocky bluffs, arrowheads, and spear points

Decorah Region

- **Natural:** Highlights the Upper Iowa River and its cold-water trout stream tributaries. Decorah city parks, Trout Run Trail, and Decorah Fish Hatchery are major attractions.
- **Cultural:** Describes the Driftless Area farms dedicated to sustainable agriculture. Two wineries, Seed Savers Exchange, and the Oneota Food Coop connect travelers.
- **Historical Sites:** Interprets the Winnebago Indians in the Neutral Ground and Fort Atkinson. Decorah is the center of Norwegian immigrant history, and Spillville is the heart of Czech culture. Highlandville and Burr Oak offer other unique stories
- **Header Cut-Outs:** Flowers, contoured farm fields, cascading waterfall, bicyclists, covered wagons

Region-Specific Experience Hub Concept Design: Front Side (Upper Iowa Region, Lansing)



Region-Specific Experience Hub Concept Design: Back Side (*Upper Iowa Region, Lansing*)



Region-Specific Experience Hub

Overview Panel Concept

(Upper Iowa Region, Lansing)

The main panel of each experience hub provides an overview of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and its unique characteristics, along with a map of the route. This panel would be duplicated on each region-specific experience hub.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway

Breathtaking vistas

DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY

Welcome to the Driftless Area

This byway travels a landscape like no other. While glaciers scoured most of the surrounding area, this region was left as an island. Over eons, water has carved through the limestone bedrock, creating bluffs and deep valleys laced with caves and fast-flowing streams. The Mississippi, "Father of Waters," flows through the heart of the Driftless Area.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Map

Explore the Byway

Byway travelers follow winding roads with panoramic vistas of contoured farms and forested bluffs and valleys. The many parks, preserves, and historic sites invite exploration. Fast-flowing streams and the Mississippi backwaters beckon canoeists, kayakers, and fishers.

Water-carved limestone landscapes, like the Decorah Ice Cave Preserve, await exploration.

Vistas of forested valleys, meandering rivers, and small farms make this one of the most scenic byways in Iowa.

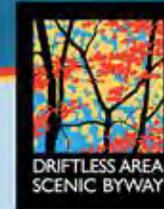
Mount Homer Park overlook of the Mississippi River in Lansing.

Fort Abner State Preserve is one of many places to discover Iowa's rich history.

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Natural Wonders

Upper Iowa Region



Bluffs, Forests, and Rivers

This region of the byway showcases diverse Driftless Area scenery. The road west to Waukon meanders through deeply carved forest and farm covered landscapes. The route north to New Albin parallels the broad Upper Mississippi River. The road west from New Albin follows the Upper Iowa River through a wide valley bordered with high bluffs.



County Home Park has a pond, hiking trails, and two picnic shelters offering views of the Driftless Area landscape.



Mount Hosmer Park, located on a high bluff, provides stunning vistas of Lansing and the Upper Mississippi River refuge.



Northeast Iowa Trout Streams

Northeast Iowa possesses some of the most beautiful and productive trout streams in the Upper Midwest.



Clear Creek Park provides access to Clear Creek, a trout stream that runs through Lansing along Highway 9.

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

This 260-mile long, 240,000-acre refuge borders Iowa from Minnesota to Davenport. It is one of the best birdwatching sites in North America.



The New Albin **Army Road** is a two-mile access into the refuge. It traverses wetlands and sloughs to a boat ramp and fishing dock. Canoe trails start here.



Waterloo Creek near Dorchester is rated as one of the best trout fishing streams in Iowa. The DNR has restored this spring-fed brook, removing invasive plants and restoring its original meanderings.

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Region-Specific Experience Hub

Natural Wonders Panel Concept

(Upper Iowa Region, Lansing)

The natural history panel interprets the geological, ecological, and outdoor recreational themes of the region, with a map identifying scenic overlooks, trails, streams, wildlife areas, parks, and preserves where visitors can explore the outdoors.

Region-Specific Experience Hub

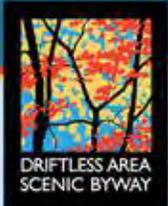
Cultural Treasures Panel Concept

(Upper Iowa Region, Lansing)

The cultural panel interprets the communities, agriculture, and sense of place experienced in this region of the byway, with an accompanying map of attractions.

Cultural Treasures

Upper Iowa Region



A Culture Shaped by the Land

People of the Driftless Area are bound together by a shared landscape and culture. The rivers, ridges, and valleys shape the way of life here. Agriculture fits the contours of steep bluffs and much land remains forested. Even roads must follow the land's contours, leading to a slower pace of life.



1 The Driftless Area is ideal for dairy farming. The **Calhoun Co-op Creamery** was started in 1896 by 20 farmers. Today, it is a specialty cheese store and transfer station that ships bulk milk.



2 **Lansing's Main Street**, which leads to the Mississippi where steamboats once docked, is a National Historic District. Horsfall's Variety Store is a unique attraction with over a million items for sale.



3 **The Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center** features exhibits that bring to life the natural and cultural heritage of the Driftless Area.



4 **City Meat Market** in New Albin has been operated by the same family since 1882. It features homemade jerky, sausage, and smoked meats.



5 **St. Mary's Catholic Church** in Dorchester was originally built by Irish and German immigrants in 1850s. The present stone church was built in 1914.



Regional Cultural Attractions

Legend: 0 10 20 Miles
 - - - - - Driftless Area Scenic Byway
 - - - - - Other roads
 - - - - - Recreational roads
 - - - - - Steep and dense
 - - - - - Riparian vegetation areas
 - - - - - Wetlands/lowlands
 - - - - - County borders



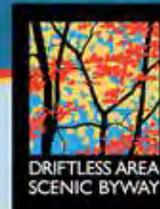
The Upper Iowa River flows through a wide floodplain bordered by forested bluffs.

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Historical Sites

Upper Iowa Region



Exploring Our Past

History comes to life along the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. Old towns celebrate their cultural heritage. Stone churches, schools, bridges, and burial mounds are tangible connections to the past.

Waukon

Waukon is named for the leader of the Winnebago people who lived on a reservation along the Upper Iowa River from 1840-48.



The Allamakee County Museum in Waukon's first courthouse features exhibits about northeast Iowa's history.

Lansing

William Garrison claimed land here in 1848 and named Lansing for his hometown in Michigan. It was soon a booming steamboat port.

This view from Mount Hoar in the late 1800s shows a sternwheeler passing a log raft downriver, steered by a bow boat.



New Albin

New Albin was established on the Chicago-Dubuque & Minnesota Railroad in 1872.



Black Hawk Bridge is an unusual steel truss bridge built in 1831.



The Iowa-Minnesota Border Wayside interprets early border surveys.



Lansing Stone School opened in 1864 and served Lansing children until 1973.



The Iron Post marks a border dispute settlement between Minnesota and Iowa in 1849.



Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve protects 30 conical burial mounds from the early to mid-late Woodland Culture.

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Region-Specific Experience Hub

Historical Sites Panel Concept

(Upper Iowa Region, Lansing)

The historic and archaeological panel interprets the significant historical and archaeological stories of the byway region, with an accompanying map showing resource locations.

Recommended Experience Hub Sites

An adequate number of experience hubs should be installed along the byway to offer orientation and interpretation for travelers. The hubs should be placed in highly visible areas where travelers already gather—where they look for amenities and at sites where there are significant stories and historic structures that entice visitors to stop. It is essential that road signs be installed to alert travelers as they approach these kiosks.

A total of 10 experience hub sites are proposed along the current and proposed byway route.

Byway Overview Experience Hubs

Six Byway Overview Experience Hubs would be located at major byway entry points or junctions or major regional attractions: Postville, Harpers Ferry, Waukon, Lansing, New Albin, and Decorah.



Door County Coastal Byway experience hub (Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters design)



The most effective experience hubs are those installed in highly visible areas where visitors naturally gather, like this one on the Green Circle Trail (Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters design).

Region-Specific Experience Hubs

Four Region-Specific Experience Hubs would be located at other major attractions and stopping points:

- **Yellow River Region:** Yellow River State Forest (Big Paint Campground) and Waukon Harley-Davidson.
- **Upper Iowa Region:** Lansing (Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center).
- **Decorah Region:** Seed Savers Exchange, Decorah.

Byway Overview Experience Hubs

1 Postville

An overview experience hub should be installed near the Northeast Iowa RC&D office, 101 E. Green St., in a pocket park that is being developed adjacent to the building. This is the southern starting point of the byway.

2 Harpers Ferry

Bluffview Park, at the intersection of the byway and Great River Road, is an ideal location for this kiosk. Harpers Landing is one of the best places to access the Mississippi River on the byway.

3 Waukon

Install a hub at Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism, 101 W. Main St., which is near the junction of all three byway regions.



Bluffview Park in Harpers Ferry



Harpers Landing



Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism, Waukon



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway begins near the Northeast Iowa RC&D office in Postville.



4

An experience hub in a courtyard in downtown Lansing could attract byway travelers who stop in this Mississippi River town.



5

An experience hub could be located in the city park right off the byway in New Albin.

4 Lansing

A kiosk in the Main Street courtyard can attract visitors who begin their byway experience in this river town.

5 New Albin

The city park in the heart of New Albin is a perfect location to catch the interest of travelers on the Great River Road and introduce the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

6 Decorah

Two sites that would attract Decorah visitors would be the courtyard next to Vesterheim Museum (across from the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center), or the courtyard next to the Oneota Food Cooperative.

An experience hub kiosk could be installed in the courtyard next to the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah. It is across Water Street from the Winneshiek County Convention & Visitors Bureau.



6

Region-Specific Experience Hubs

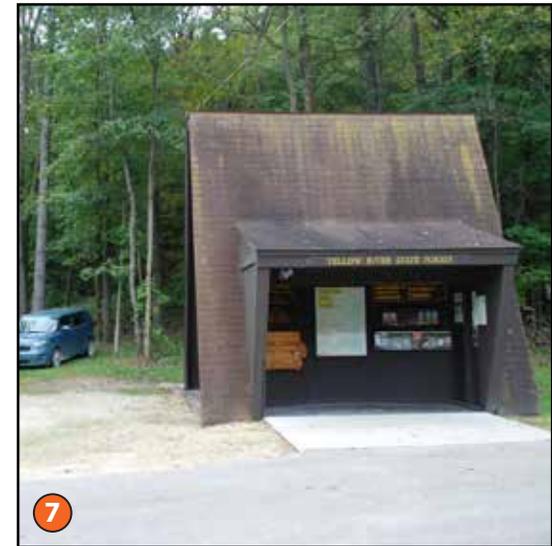
Yellow River Region

7 Yellow River State Forest

A common stopping point for visitors is at the Yellow River State Forest kiosk at Big Paint Campground. A byway kiosk placed here will attract significant interest.



Waukon Harley-Davidson



An experience hub would be installed near an existing kiosk in Yellow River State Forest.

10 Waukon

The Harley-Davidson dealership on Highway 9 south of Waukon will let motorcyclist enthusiasts know about the byway and the attractions they can visit.

Upper Iowa River Region

8 Lansing

This kiosk should be located just outside the proposed Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center in Lansing. See pages 113–118 for an example of these panels.



An experience hub near the entrance to Seed Savers Exchange would let visitors to this heritage farm know they are on the byway.

9 Decorah

Seed Savers Exchange is a destination for a national and even international audience. It would be an ideal site to introduce them to the byway.



This wayside exhibit along a trail at Lorange Creek Nature Center in Arkansas involves visitors through push-button audio clips of frog calls.

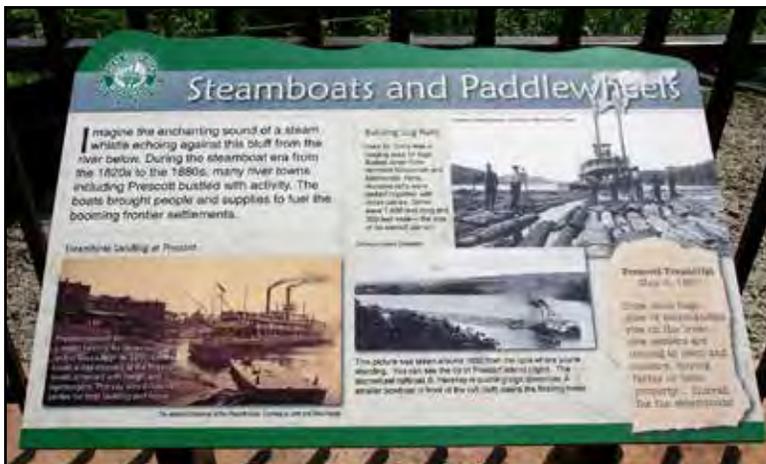
WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Wayside exhibits are interpretive panels placed along roads and trails to help visitors understand stories and meanings behind a resource or landscape. Photos, illustrations, and concise messages attract and hold a viewer's attention as they learn the stories of a site.

Wayside exhibits are an effective medium to communicate with travelers because they are always available regardless of time of day or weather. When installed next to the objects or sites that they interpret, they can immediately answer a viewer's questions. They are a straightforward, non-intimidating way to connect visitors with significant stories on the byway.

Wayside exhibits can visually convey a byway's personality. Historic photos show what a place looked like in the past. Wayside exhibits share site-specific stories of a community, placing them into a broader context and connecting with universal meanings. They can show views from space or magnify tiny objects. They can showcase flowers blooming through a prairie summer or rarely seen wildlife.

Today's technology offers a range of opportunities to enhance interpretive panels. Panels can be cut into different shapes. Digital audio recordings can be incorporated to add dramatic first-person stories, bird calls, or other audio. Touchable and interactive elements can be affixed to the panels for added visitor involvement. QR codes can connect visitors to websites, video, and audio.



Wayside exhibits, like this one on the Great River Road in Prescott, Wisconsin, can connect visitors to site-specific stories. (Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters design)

Wayside Exhibit Design Recommendations

Wayside exhibit panels developed for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway should incorporate the following design elements:

Unified design: Structures should match the same style of the experience hubs and site orientation signs so they are readily identified as part of the byway's family of signs. This should include:

- Weathering steel supports with thematic cut-out graphics similar to the experience hubs. The Iowa Byways logo should be used on the supports to unify these wayside exhibits with those installed as part of the Conservation Innovation Grant panels project fabricated in 2015.
- Driftless Area and Iowa Byways logos.
- Replication of colors, font styles, and graphic elements used on experience hub and site orientation sign panels.
- Website addresses and QR codes to connect visitors to online content.

Wayside Exhibit Panel and Support Concept Design (Fish Farm Mounds State Preserve)

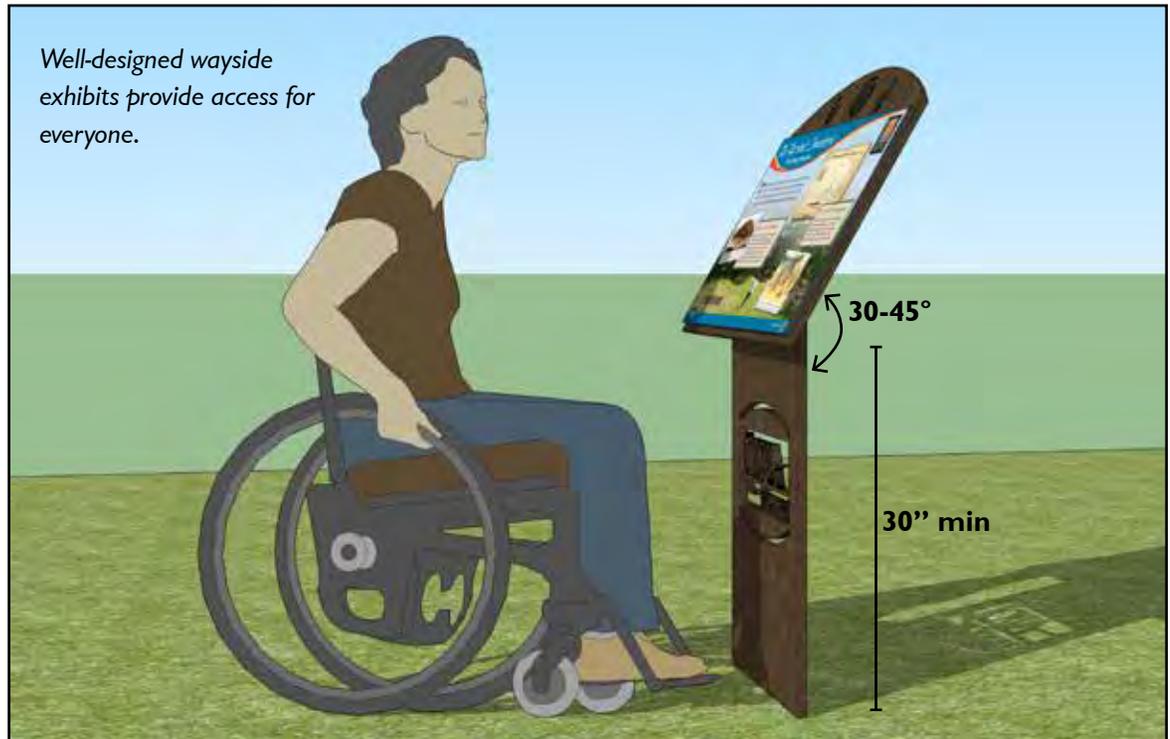


Keep messages short: As a rule of thumb, use no more than 60 to 70 words for the main message of a panel. See the “Creating an Effective Message” tips at right for more recommendations for interpretive writing.

Panel materials: High-pressure laminate (HPL) material is a durable plastic material that allows for full-color, high-quality images and text. It is resistant to graffiti and scratches. Fabrication companies typically offer a 10-year warranty against fading and delaminating.

Size: Wayside exhibit panels should be large enough to be noticeable and easily read but not too large that they detract from the landscape. A recommended size of 24-by-36 inches can be used with either non-framed or framed support styles.

Installation: Wayside exhibit panels should be installed at a 30 to 45 degree angle to the ground, which offers the best view to a standing or sitting person. They should be placed high enough above the ground, a minimum of 30 inches at the lowest edge, to allow a person in a wheelchair to get close.



Creating an Effective Message

1. Communicate visually with photos and graphics.
2. Most visitors will look at an interpretive panel for only a few seconds. Apply the 3-30-3 Rule, a hierarchy that provides 3-second, 30-second, and 3-minute message levels.
3. Use simple words, concise sentences, and short paragraphs.
4. Describe with concrete nouns and active verbs. Avoid adverbs and adjectives.
5. Relate to the reader with familiar terms, personal pronouns, metaphors, and quotes.
6. Provide multisensory involvement with tactile and audio devices.

Wayside exhibit concept design (Fish Farm Mounds, New Albin)

An Ancient Cemetery

Fish Farm Mounds

A short hike up this bluff opens onto a terrace of 30 conical mounds. These burial mounds were built by Middle and early-Late Woodland people from about 100 BC to AD 650, the same time that the Roman Empire reigned over Europe.

Museum reveal at Serpent Mound National Historic Landmark, Ohio

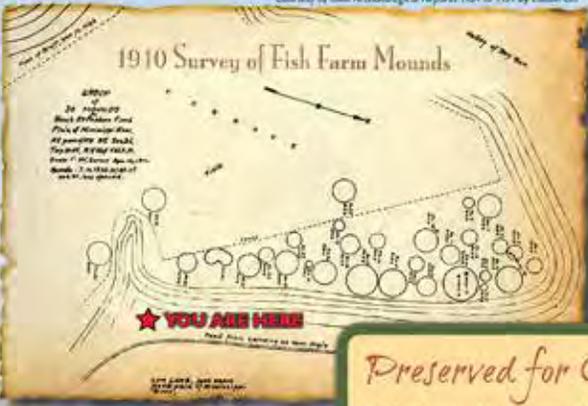


Woodland People built mounds by placing basket loads of soil over one or more bodies. Additional bodies were added over the years, increasing the size of the mounds.

Looking Inside a Mound

Today, these mounds are protected by state law. In 1882, however, archaeologists excavated nearly all of the mounds to look inside. Most were burial sites containing a central core of hard clay covering human bones, pottery fragments, and stone implements. Two or more skeletons were often found lying side by side.

Courtesy of Iowa Archaeological Reports 1904 to 1939 by Elmer Orr



★ YOU ARE HERE

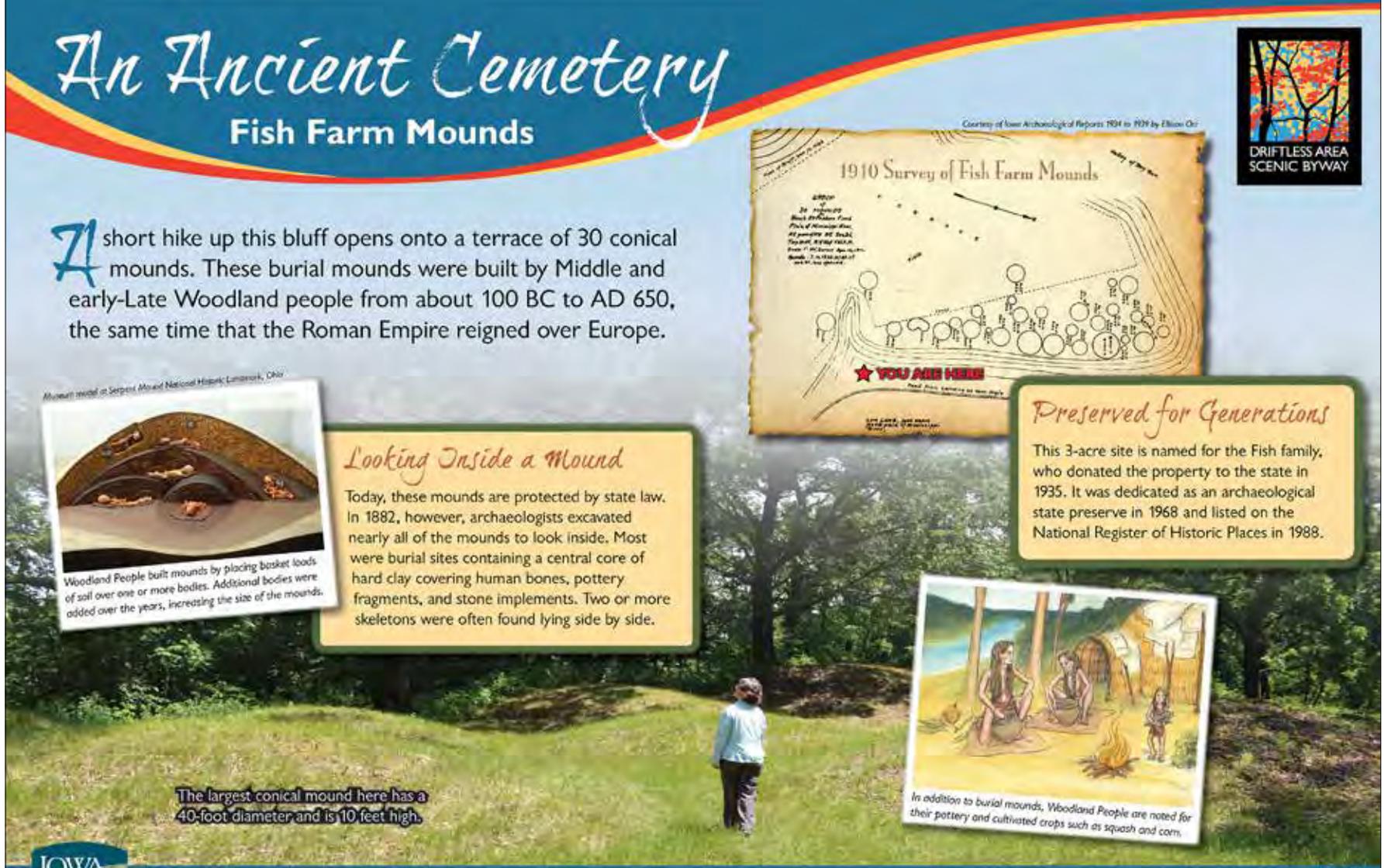
Preserved for Generations

This 3-acre site is named for the Fish family, who donated the property to the state in 1935. It was dedicated as an archaeological state preserve in 1968 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.



In addition to burial mounds, Woodland People are noted for their pottery and cultivated crops such as squash and corn.

The largest conical mound here has a 40-foot diameter and is 10 feet high.



IOWA BYWAYS

www.iowabyways.org



DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY

36"

24"



1 A mural in Postville depicts the story of the Barnum & Bailey Circus that set attendance records in the early 1900s. Wayside exhibits in Postville could interpret significant events and people in the town's history.



2 Waterville's mill and town history could be interpreted on a wayside exhibit.

Recommended Wayside Exhibit Sites

These proposed wayside exhibit locations are an initial recommendation, but other sites may be identified as communities become more invested in byway planning.

Public Wayside Exhibits

Postville

- 1 **Historic Postville:** Postville has a rich history. The town Postville began in 1840 at a military "Halfway House" log cabin between Fort Crawford and Fort Atkinson that Joel Post turned into a tavern; there was great regional excitement about the Barnum & Bailey circuses in 1915 and 1917, which set all-time attendance records; Dr. John R. Mott's work in promoting world peace

led to a Nobel Peace Prize; Early German immigrants established the Postville Turnverein and Memorial Hall. A series of panels (or one large panel) could interpret this history. An ideal location would be in conjunction with a byway experience hub at the RC&D office.

Waterville

- 2 **Waterville Mill:** A faded routed-wood panel provides facts about the early mills and first buildings in Waterville. These facts could be better developed into an interpretive panel that includes historic photos and illustrations and that relates colorful stories of this mid-19th century community. Waterville author Robin Larson has published two books about the history of Waterville—*The Town on the Hill* and *We Remember Waterville*—which would be excellent resources for this panel.



Teacher Alice Evenson's mid-1940s class at Oil Springs School re-created their class photo later in life. The school is being moved to Harpers Ferry.

Harpers Ferry

- 3 **Oil Springs School:** An interpretive panel with photos and stories of teachers and students would bring this school to life. The photo at left, for instance, is teacher Alice Evenson's class from the mid-1940s. A reunion photo shows the class later in life. The Harpers Ferry Area Heritage Society has a grant to move the school from its original location to Tillinghast Park. The history of the school and its unusual name could be told in an inset box on the panel.
- 4 **Harpers Slough:** This park would be an ideal location to interpret river-town history. A panel could include early Mississippi River photos.
- 5 **Wexford Immaculate Conception Church:** This 1868 church is a monument to Father Thomas Hore, who led 1,200 Irish countrymen fleeing the potato famine from Wexford, Ireland to the United States. A panel with historic photos could tell the story of the Wexford church and community.



A wayside panel to replace the existing kiosk at Harpers Slough in Harpers Ferry could interpret this river town.



A wayside exhibit at Wexford Church could interpret the history of the Irish immigrants who settled this area.

Elon Drive

- 6 Proposed Overlook:** This site has an expansive view of farmsteads surrounded by contoured farmland and pockets of forestland. A panel or panels could describe farming practices adapted to the Driftless landscape. See pages 142-143 for more information.

Waukon

- 7 Main Street Plaza artwork:** As part of the Iowa Byways program, an artwork installation is planned for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway at the main intersection in Waukon, where Main Street meets Spring Avenue. A wayside exhibit here could interpret the art and Waukon's history and culture.

Lansing

- 8 Mount Hosmer:** At present, an "Iowa 150" panel briefly tells the story of park namesake Harriet Hosmer. An interpretive panel placed next to the existing one could include her photo and historic images of stern-wheeler steamboats on the Mississippi.



The proposed Elon Drive overlook provides an opportunity to interpret the region's agricultural practices.



A wayside exhibit in downtown Waukon can interpret this town's history and planned byway art.



A view of Black Hawk Bridge and downtown Lansing from Mount Hosmer



9 *Fish Farm Mounds is on the byway and is widely promoted as a primary resource for visitors. However, there is no information provided about the mounds on-site. Visitors would benefit from a wayside exhibit that answers their basic questions.*



10 *Waterloo Creek, famous for its trout-fishing, draws tourists to Dorchester. A wayside exhibit in this small town could interpret the area's history.*



11 *Locust School was open for more than a century.*



12 *The Old Rossville Store is a likely location to interpret the history of this small community.*

9 New Albin

Fish Farm Mounds: This site currently has no information or interpretation about the preserve and burial mounds. A sample panel interpreting this site is on page 127.

10 Dorchester

Downtown: A wayside exhibit in downtown Dorchester could interpret the settlement history of this small town, which is now popular among trout anglers visiting Waterloo Creek.

Highlandville

11 Locust School: This school has the distinction of being in use for more than a century. A panel could include historic photos of classes and children from this one-room country schools.

Private-Business Wayside Exhibits

Rossville

12 Old Rossville Store: The Old Rossville Store is a popular supper club that would be a good location to include an interpretive panel on the history of the community.

Harpers Ferry

- 13 Mohn Fish Market:** One of the last markets selling fresh fish, this store is a throwback to a past when commercial fishing was an important part of the local economy. A panel could interpret historic commercial fishing with old photos of the market and the river.



Mohn Fish Market is a relic of the commercial fishing industry on the Mississippi River.

14 Waukon

WW Homestead Dairy: This dairy is involved in local-food efforts in the Driftless Area, and a panel could describe how pasture-based products and organic produce are flourishing in the region.



WW Homestead Dairy in Waukon allows visitors to taste dairy products produced in the Driftless Area.

New Albin

- 15 City Meat Market:** A panel on the history of this store operated by the same family for more than a century could include historic photos through the years.



A wayside panel can tell the history of the meat market in New Albin.

Highlandville

- 16 Highlandville General Store:** The general store is an ideal location to interpret the history of this community. In 1913, Highlandville was described as “a thriving country town of a little more than 100. It has three general stores, a new school, creamery, and hospital.” A panel with historic photos could describe the town and direct visitors to the structures that still exist.



A wayside panel can tell the history of the Highlandville General Store, a community hub.



The Yellow River Water Trail interpretive panel at Volney Park is faded and no longer readable. A site orientation sign is proposed to replace it.

SITE ORIENTATION SIGNS

Some byway attractions can be difficult to find. State and county natural areas, parks, and forests in particular offer superb recreational opportunities but may be difficult to access. Trailheads or river access points can benefit from adequate wayfinding signs and maps, as well as interpretation to help visitors connect to the site.

Some areas are set aside for multiple uses that include hunting, or they may be in out-of-the-way locations where vandalism and target practice take a toll on interpretive panels and support structures. Many conservation areas lack funds to replace and repair signage.

Site orientation signs that are vandal-resistant are proposed as a durable alternative to solve wayfinding problems. Their purpose is to identify, attract, and orient visitors to remote or easily missed resource sites on the byway. They serve as an obvious marker to let visitors know they are on the Driftless Area Scenic Byway, which can be reassuring. They also can serve as a marketing tool to reach travelers unaware of the byway.

Site orientation signs are tall, narrow, 3/8-inch flat steel structures. A byway logo is placed prominently at the top. Below is an interpretive panel introducing the byway and its unique features, along with a map of the entire road and a “You are here” icon to help travelers orient themselves on the route. At the bottom of the site orientation sign is a thematic cut-out design in the metal structure, which unifies site orientation signs with the look of the experience hubs and wayside exhibits along the byway.

On the back of the site orientation sign is a second interpretive panel that interprets that particular site.

At 8 feet tall and 20 inches wide, these easy-to-find structures will greatly aid wayfinding and site orientation. Steel structures are resistant to bullets and shot.

The maps and informational panels can be constructed from colored vinyl adhesive that is more economical and more easily replaced than high-pressure laminate material.

Site Orientation Sign Concept

(Yellow River Water Trail,
front view)



(Yellow River Water
Trail, back view)



Site Orientation Sign Panel Concepts (Volney Park)

Front panel

16"

Driftless Area Scenic Byway

Breathtaking Views



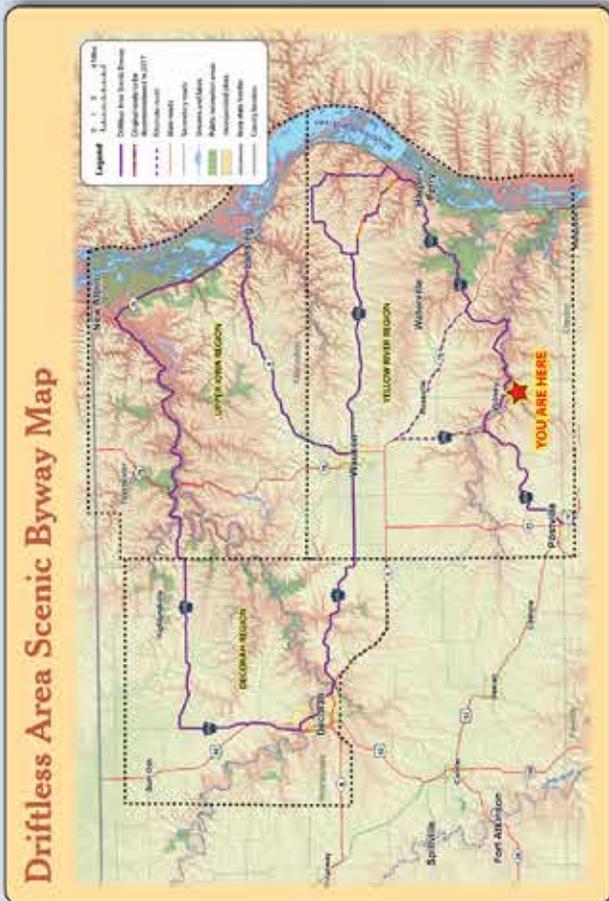
A view of the Mississippi River from Mount Hauser in Lansing.

This 140-mile byway immerses you in the Driftless Area, a region untouched by the last glaciers. In this corner of northeastern Iowa, the landscape is made up of limestone bluffs, forested valleys, and winding river bottoms. Hike ridge-top trails, fish for abundant trout, and stroll old river towns.



A bluff-top view between Waukon and Lansing

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Map



YOU ARE HERE

Without Drift

Retreating glaciers leave behind sand, gravel, and boulders called drift. While the most recent ice sheets scoured most of the surrounding area, this region was left as an island, causing it to be "driftless."



Hiking in Yellow River State Forest.



A bluff-top view between Waukon and Lansing

www.iowabyways.org





A bluff-top view between Waukon and Lansing

30"

Yellow River Water Trail

The Yellow River offers paddlers one of the most remote and scenic water trails in Iowa. The river passes through the Yellow River State Forest and Effigy Mounds National Monument before joining the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, one of America's treasures.



Yellow River Water Trail Map



A Wild and Scenic River

The Yellow River is Iowa's longest and fastest cold-water trout stream. Challenging rapids, towering limestone bluffs, and mature hardwood forests make it an outstanding recreational outing.

Yellow River State Forest



www.iowabyways.org



Stonebrook Park



Volney Park



County Home Park north of Waukon would benefit from a site orientation sign that orients visitors to the byway and the park.

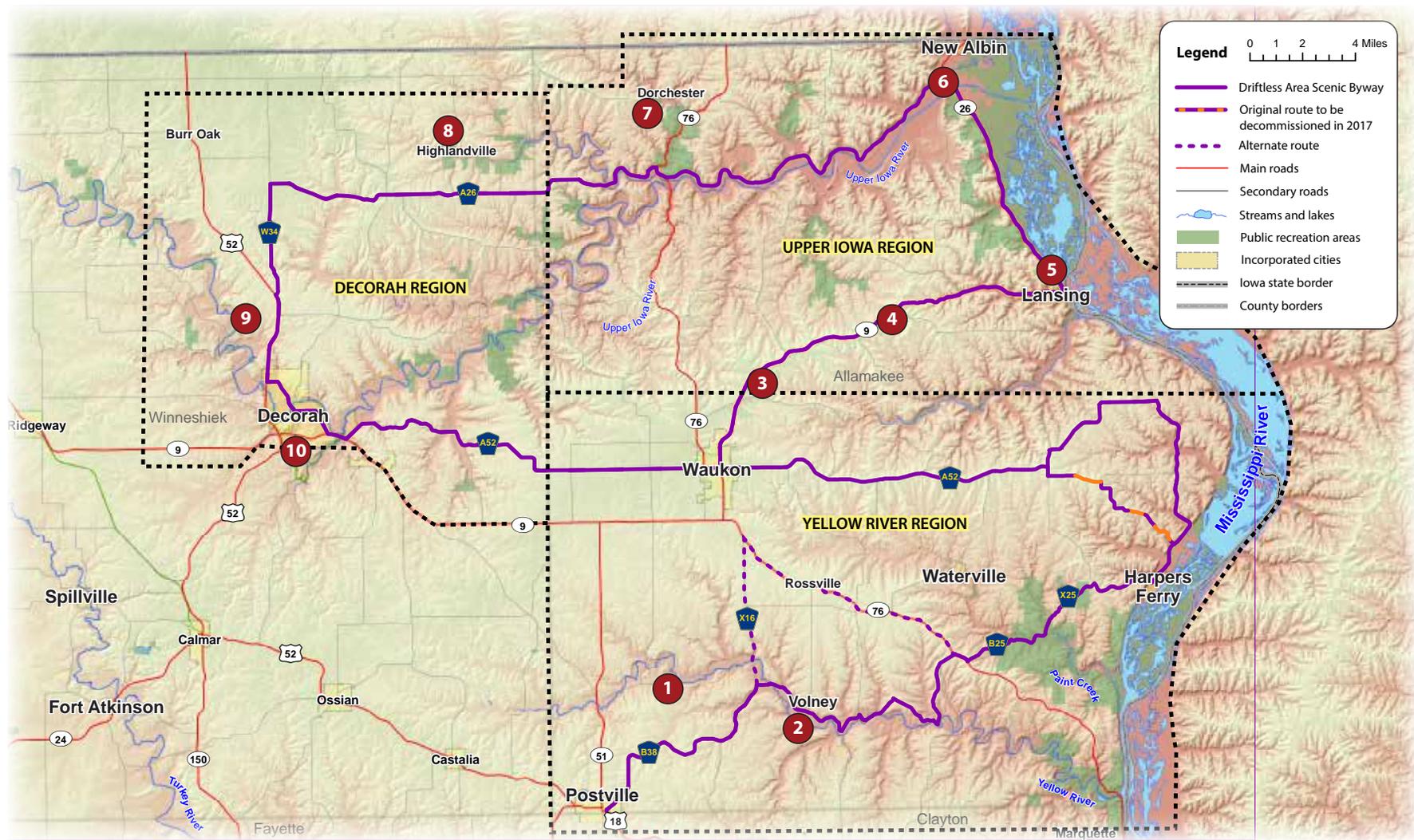
Recommended Site Orientation Sign Locations

Yellow River

- 1 Stonebrook Park River Access:** This site orientation sign panel will include a map of the water trail and will feature the segment between Stonebrook Park and Volney Park. This 14-mile segment is called a Wilderness Canoe Trail. This remote section has some of the best brown-trout fishing on the Yellow River.
- 2 Volney Park River Access:** This panel will describe the water trail and its key attributes. A sample panel design is on pages 136-137.

Waukon

- 3 County Home Park:** An orientation panel placed adjacent to the main shelter building will provide a map of the park and discussion of the forest and contour farming typical of the Driftless Area.



Recommended Sites for Site Orientation Signs

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Stonebrook Park river access | 3 County Home Park | 5 Blackhawk Bridge | 7 Waterloo Creek, Dorchester | 9 Malanaphy Springs, Decorah |
| 2 Volney Park river access | 4 Calhoun Creamery | 6 Fish Farm Mounds | 8 South Bear Creek | 10 Decorah Fish Hatchery |

Calhoun Creamery began as a farmers' cooperative in 1896.



Lansing

- 4 Calhoun Creamery:** Historic photos will tell the story of early settlers and their adaptation of dairy farming to the landscape.
- 5 Pull-out at the end of Black Hawk Bridge:** The history of the bridge and the importance of this river crossing will be described. A map of the Upper Mississippi will illustrate the bridge's significance.

New Albin

- 6 Fish Farm Mounds:** A map of the preserve and Fish Farm Mounds, Black Hawk Point, and Lansing Wildlife Management Areas will illustrate the importance of these bluff-land wildlife areas for wildlife, including migrating songbirds on the Mississippi Flyway.



Black Hawk Bridge, spanning the Mississippi from Lansing to Wisconsin, was built in 1929. It has one of the most unusual designs of Mississippi River bridges.

Dorchester

- 7 **Waterloo Creek:** A map of trout streams along the Upper Iowa River will illustrate the cold-water spring-fed streams that make this a top trout fishery in the Upper Midwest.

Highlandville

- 8 **South Bear Creek:** A map of public access areas along with information and photos will interpret this premiere Iowa trout stream.

Decorah

- 9 **Malanaphy Springs:** A site map will illustrate the key trail features with a description of the forestlands and springs.
- 10 **Decorah Fish Hatchery:** This panel can include a site map and description of the hatchery.



Waterloo Creek in Dorchester is a top trout fishing stream.



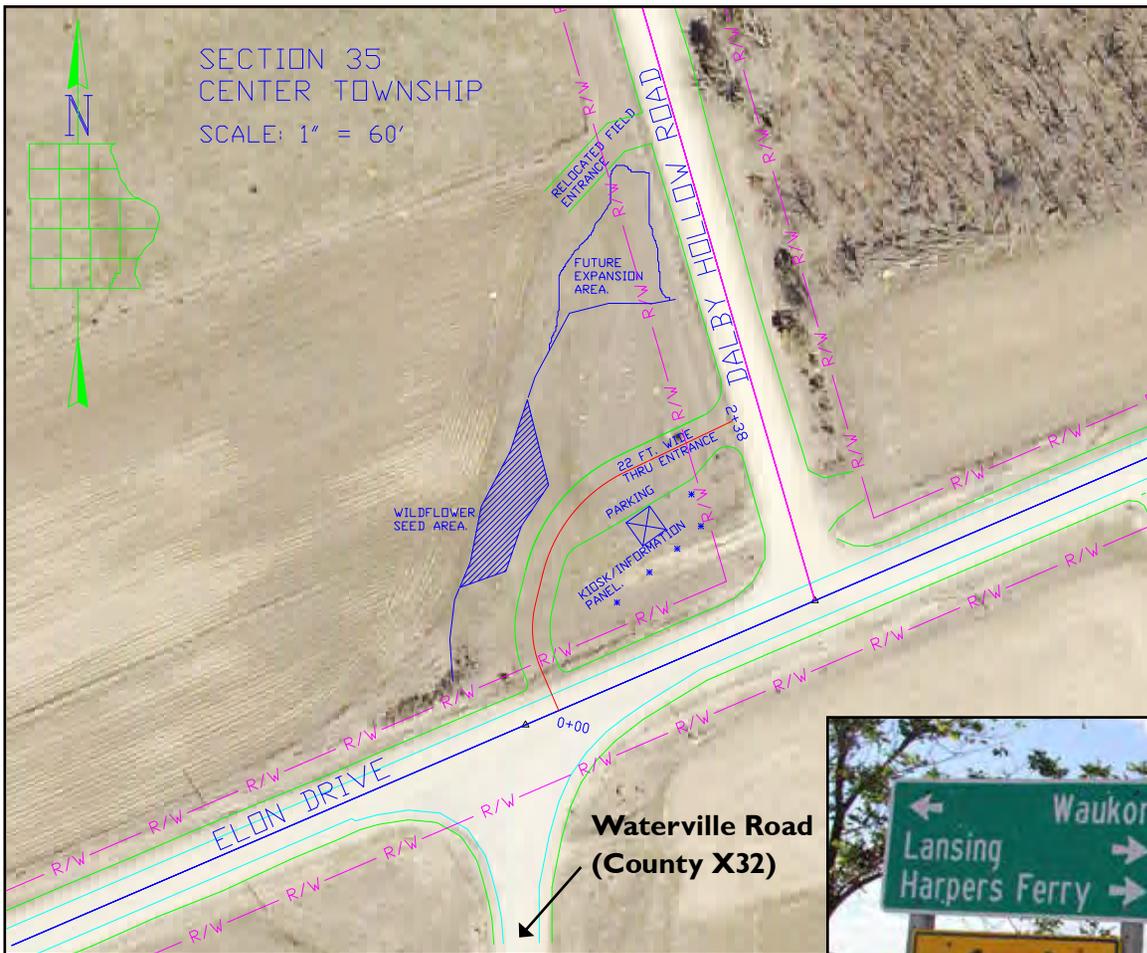
Malanaphy Springs



South Bear Creek in Highlandville is popular among trout anglers.



Decorah Fish Hatchery



The engineering plans for Elon Drive overlook propose a drive-through development with parking and a kiosk.

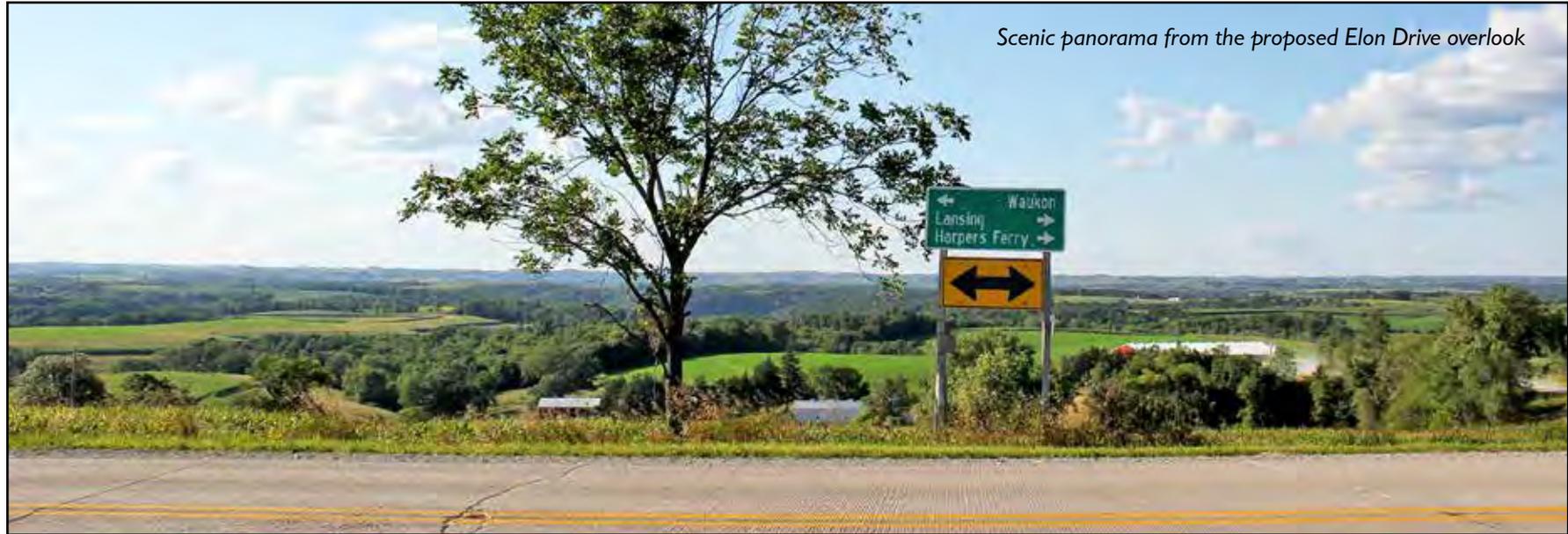
SCENIC OVERLOOK

A scenic overlook development is proposed between Harpers Ferry and Waukon along Elon Drive, near the intersections of Dalby Hollow and Waterville Roads. This is a short distance from Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church. While other overlooks exist at Mount Hosmer Park in Lansing, Effigy Mounds National Monument, and Yellow River State Forest, this is the only overlook proposed that is directly on the scenic byway route.



Dalby Hollow Road

Proposed overlook site



Scenic panorama from the proposed Elon Drive overlook

The site has a spectacular view north of the Village Creek Valley, with contoured farm fields alternating with strips of forest.

Proposed Media

An overlook built at this site will be a natural stopping place for byway travelers. Its location between Harpers Ferry and Waukon is ideal for stretching legs and introducing visitors to the unique character of the Driftless Area.

Additional wayside exhibit panels will specifically interpret the landscape seen from this overlook (see page 131). This is an ideal place to highlight agricultural practices that accommodate the steep hillsides of this ancient karst landscape.



Panels installed on Chicken Ridge along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway serve as good models for interpreting the agriculture, topography, and history of the landscape visible from the Elon Drive overlook.



Welcome center touch-screen computer exhibits with associated printed media, like at the Great River Road Visitor Center in Prescott, Wisconsin, provide trip planning and interpretive opportunities for byway travelers.

WELCOME/VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS

Welcome and tourist information centers are important sites where byway information should be prominently displayed. In addition to brochures and booklets, an interactive exhibit in the form of a touch-screen computer should be considered at these locations to alert travelers to the existence of the byway and to help them plan trips to byway attractions.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway tourist information centers that could host this exhibit include:

- Northeast Iowa RC&D, Postville
- Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism, Waukon
- Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center, Lansing. The proposed exhibit plan includes interpretation about the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. This touchscreen computer would complement the planned exhibit.
- Winneshiek County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Decorah
- Seed Savers Exchange, Decorah

The purpose of the byway exhibit is to:

- Make visitors aware of the byway and its attractions.

- Facilitate impromptu planning for visitors.
- Heighten people's expectations with dramatic visuals of scenic attractions and dynamic events such as festivals and parades.
- Introduce the "byway brand" through its logo and characteristic fonts and colors. This prepares travelers to recognize attractions like experience hubs and wayside exhibits as they drive the byway.

A touch-screen computer is an ideal tool to achieve these purposes because:

- They take up little space in already crowded information centers.
- They are easy to use. Reaching out and touching symbols on a screen comes naturally to many people. This empowers visitors to seek their own information rather than asking staff who may be busy or simply aren't informed about the entire byway.
- Touch screens offer a durable, widely used technology.
- Information is presented using icons and symbols that are more universally understood than words.

Design Recommendations

The exhibit will be designed small enough to fit inside welcome centers where space is limited, yet large enough to attract attention.

- The exhibit will be topped with sculptural metalwork similar to the experience hub kiosks.
- A large map of the byway can be placed below the color header and logo to introduce the byway and its main attractions. The map should welcome travelers to the byway and include a “You are here” symbol. Iconic photographs of landscapes and attractions with short captions encourage further discovery.
- A rack installed next to the map will hold byway brochures and travel guide booklets.
- Below the map, a durable touch-screen computer housing will provide digital information about the byway that can be updated easily. For a unique perspective, the byway route can be placed over an air photo, and users can press arrows to fly over the landscape and discover more about attractions.



Byway touch-screen exhibit concept design



A steel silhouette on Route 66 in Elkhart, Illinois, re-creates the day when child star Shirley Temple stopped for lunch. A wayside exhibit interprets this notable event. (Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters design)



Ringling Bros. Circus Parade mural in Postville

BYWAY ARTWORK

Public art can be created for many reasons: to express civic values, beautify communities, or to inform the public about local history and culture. Public art is for everyone, as it is a form of collective community expression.

Public art is placed strategically, both inside and outside buildings, for viewing by a large number of people. It tends to be large-scale and visible from a distance. The media may be three-dimensional such as a sculpture, or two-dimensional such as a mural. Public art is usually made to last but may be ephemeral to celebrate a community event or simply a form of artistic expression like a chalk or sand painting.

Scenic byways invite visitors into their region and communities. Public art can offer visitors insights into the history and culture of those communities and provide a welcoming aesthetic quality to town and village streetscapes.

Driftless Area Byway Art

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway and its communities already display many public art pieces, and more will be developed in the future.

In 2015, Northeast Iowa RC&D was awarded a \$75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the development and construction of public art in communities along Iowa scenic byways. This grant is a great incentive for Iowa byway communities to invest in public art. Postville and Waukon on the Driftless Area Scenic Byway have been selected to receive public art under this grant.

Murals

Many towns and villages have historic buildings with unfinished walls, either on the end of a block or where an adjoining structure was razed. These large exteriors can be converted to artistic expressions of the community's sense of place.

Murals can provide simple decoration, but more often they illustrate local history or provide social commentary. These "through-the-windshield" interpretive pieces are a great way to make the past come alive or to introduce the personality of a community.

Existing Byway Murals

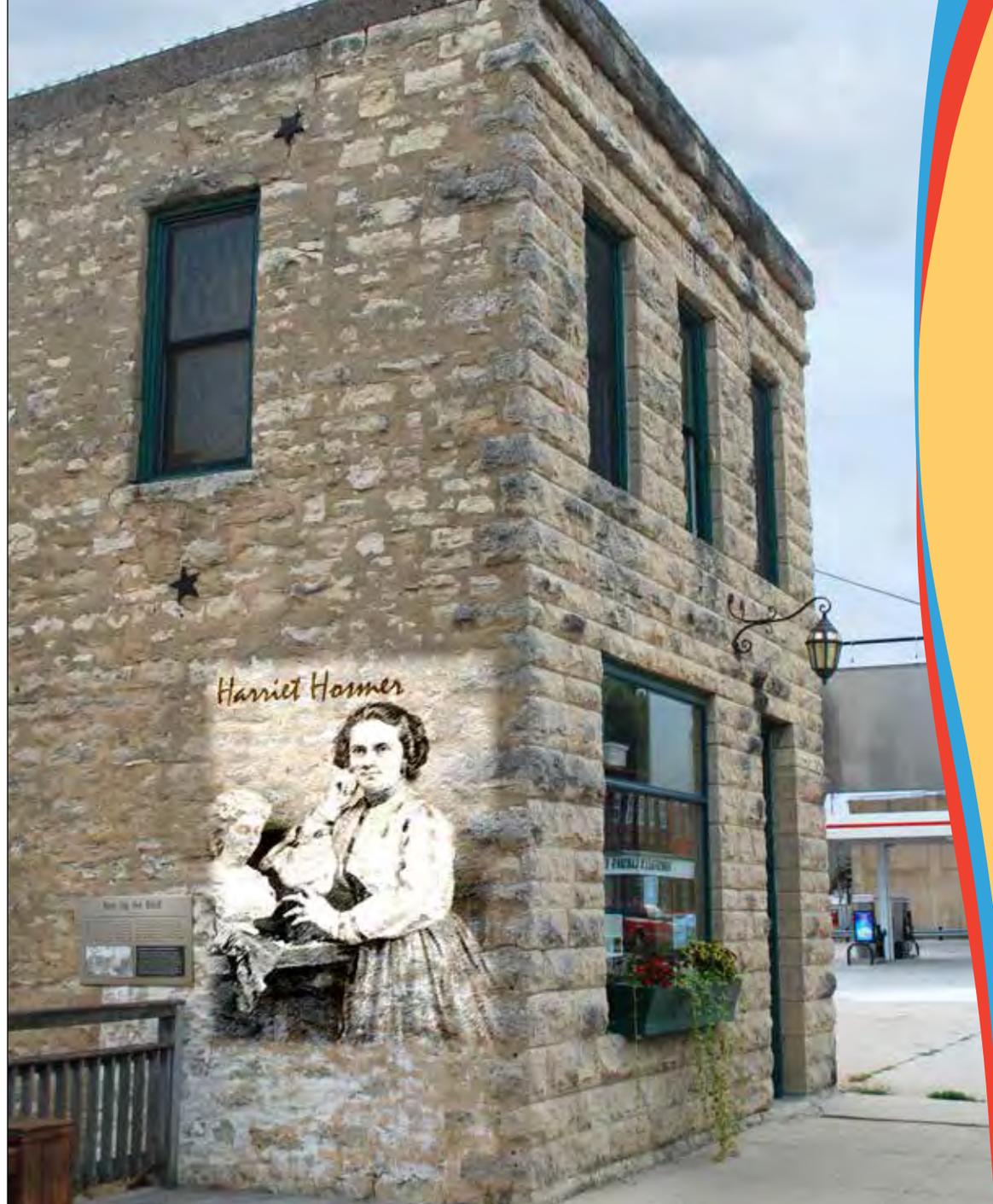
Postville has a historic mural based on a scene from when the Ringling Bros. Circus came to Postville in 1915.

Postville, at the intersection of two railroads, had a history of attracting big crowds for the circus. In September 1915, the Ringling Bros. Circus brought five separate trains to Postville. More than 18,000 people crowded into the Big Top, far more than there were seats. It was the largest matinee attendance of all time, a record that has never been broken.

This story could be interpreted on an interpretive panel at the base of the mural or in the proposed sustainability demonstration park next to the Northeast Iowa RC&D office. Many historic photos of the Postville circus are available.

Decorah also has murals, with most of them relating to nature, history, and agriculture themes.

Recommendations: Driftless Area Scenic Byway communities should be encouraged to identify “canvas” walls for murals. Mississippi River towns can illustrate a romanticized view of steamboats, lumber rafting, and other scenes from the past. Lansing might illustrate the story of Harriet Hosmer racing to the bluff while her steamboat waited below. Waukon might illustrate the story of its namesake, Chief Waukon Decorah, and the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) people who preceded European settlement.



Mural Concept Design (Harriet Hosmer, Lansing)



The Trout Run archway is an artistic passageway for bikers and walkers on the Trout Run Trail in Decorah.



A sculptural bike rack at Decorah Fish Hatchery has an eagle's nest at the top.

Sculptures

Because sculptures occupy space in much the same way as humans occupy space, we interact with sculpture in a different way than with two-dimensional art. Sculpture is tactile—one can touch it and feel its various textures and forms. Looking at a sculpture is a dynamic activity: the work changes as the viewer moves around it or at different seasons and time of day.

Sculptural pieces can be realistic or abstract concepts that express a community's sense of place. They can even be utilitarian such as the bike rack adorned with a metal eagle's nest at Decorah Fish Hatchery.



A deer sculpture is a prominent feature in a street-side park on Water Street in Decorah.

Recommendations

Develop sculptural pieces that encourage participation and interaction by the traveler. For example, a weathering steel cut-out of a steamboat with open windows is a photo opportunity in Lansing. A steamboat pilot wheel can be turned to reveal historic photos of steamboats that once made port here. Along the Yellow River, a visitor could grab hold of an oversized fishing pole with a trout jumping on the end of the line, or sit in a kayak mounted on springs that replicates the movement of water. A floor mosaic of the Yellow River from its source to its outlet could be followed like a maze. Sculptural flowers with petals that move in the wind could be placed at Seed Savers Exchange near Decorah.

At each sculptural piece, the Driftless Area Scenic Byway should be highlighted. For example, the logo might be included as part of a metal cut-out design, reinforcing the identity of the byway. Wayside exhibits in association with the sculptures can enhance the interpretive value of the artwork by providing thematic background and the story of the artist(s).

Steamboat Sculpture Concept Design
(weathering steel cut-out, Lansing)





Effective byway websites, like the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway in Nebraska and the Coastal Connection Scenic Byway in Alabama, convey a thematic personality. They provide attractive design, obvious navigation, dramatic focal-point images, and concise writing.

ONLINE MEDIA

About 65 percent of leisure travelers begin researching online when deciding where to go, according to a 2014 survey commissioned by Google that polled 3,500 U.S. respondents.

A strong, well-developed online presence is imperative for sharing information and interpretive messages about the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Website

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway has an online presence through the statewide Iowa Byways website, iowabyways.org. The Iowa Byways homepage links to a separate web page for each of Iowa's 11 scenic byways, including the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

The Iowa Byways website exhibits excellent unified design with other byway media, including the logos, road signs, and Iowa Byways travel guide. Stunning photographs entice prospective visitors to tour the byways.

The Driftless Area web page, like the other byways featured on the site, includes separate sections for events,

attractions, and travel services. A Trip Planner function allows website visitors to create an account and save attractions to an itinerary that can be printed or shared online.

Recommendations

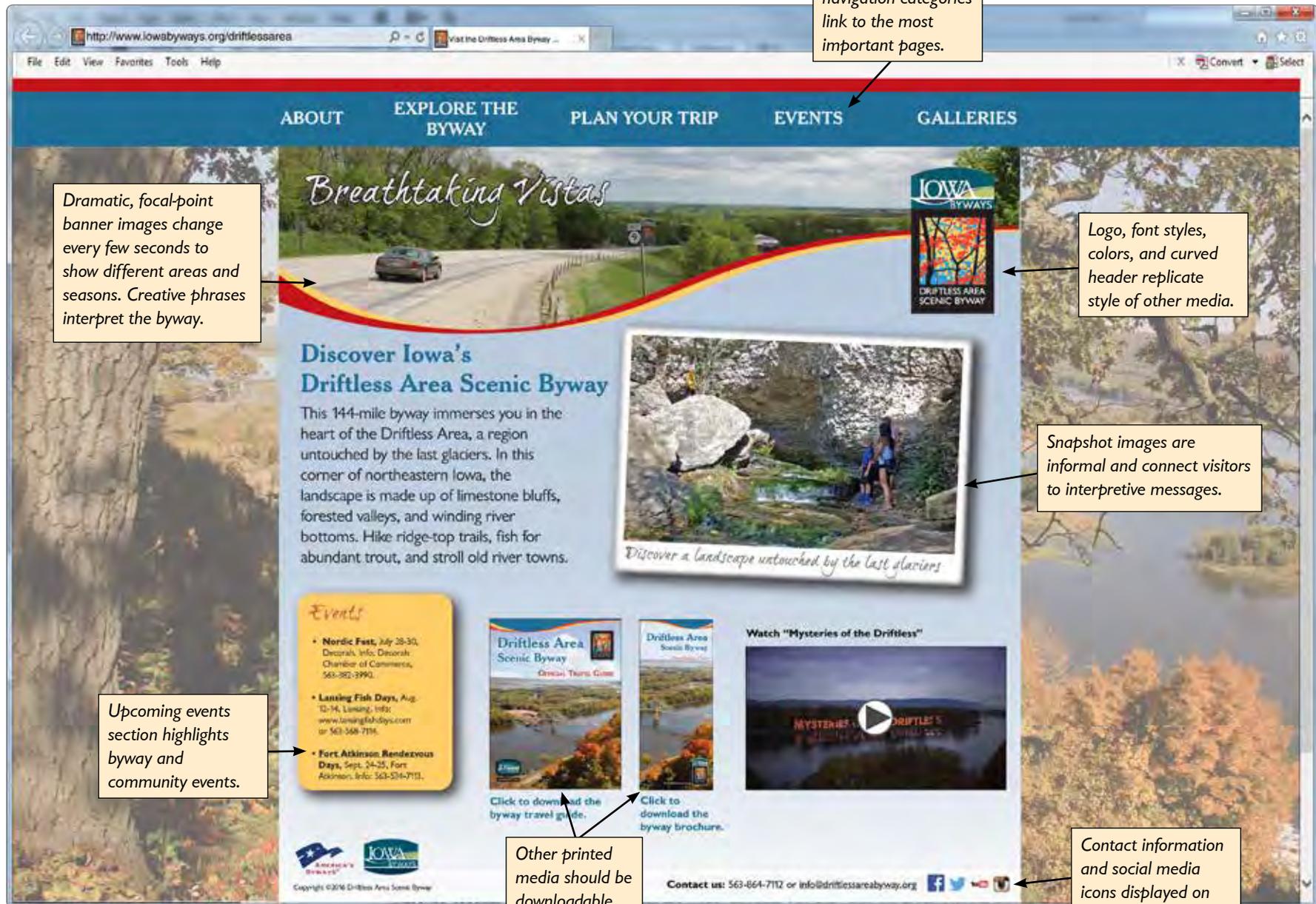
Driftless Area Scenic Byway—in addition to Iowa's other byways—should consider redesigning its Iowa Byways web page. A redesign could enhance the web page navigation and create opportunities to interpret the cultural and natural stories of the byway, using the overall theme and sub-themes in this master plan.

Design Recommendations

The **website navigation** should be obvious and should include links to pages that are most important to visitors planning their trip. Main navigation links include:

- **About:** Drop-down menu items under About can include a **general overview** of the byway, a **brief history** of its development, a list of **byway board members**, and **contact information** for more information.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Website Concept Design



Clear and obvious navigation categories link to the most important pages.

Dramatic, focal-point banner images change every few seconds to show different areas and seasons. Creative phrases interpret the byway.

Logo, font styles, colors, and curved header replicate style of other media.

Snapshot images are informal and connect visitors to interpretive messages.

Upcoming events section highlights byway and community events.

Other printed media should be downloadable.

Contact information and social media icons displayed on every page.



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway website should accommodate mobile devices' smaller screens. The messages and photos are reduced to a single column. To reduce clutter, the navigation menu is hidden under the red and white icon in the upper left, which is familiar to smartphone users. Clicking that icon brings up a menu with large buttons showing different navigation categories.

- **Explore the Byway:** Drop-down menu items under this heading can include links to explore more about each of the **byway communities**; and the **resource categories** (scenic and natural attractions, historic and archaeological attractions, cultural attractions, and recreational destinations).
- **Plan Your Trip:** Includes an interactive **byway map** to be used for planning and while driving the byway. Different icons can show the location of attractions and categorize them by topic. When a user clicks on an icon, they see a concise description and photo of the attraction, with a link to a more detailed description elsewhere on the site or directly to the attraction's website. This section also can include **suggested itineraries** based on topics (attraction categories). It also should offer options to download the **Byway Guide, Request Information, Iowa Road Conditions, Iowa Welcome Centers, Lodging Options** (hotels, motels, cabins, camping), and **Dining Options**.
- **Events:** Includes news stories and events that are specific to the byway

or its communities. It is important to keep this updated to show that the byway is actively supported.

- **Gallery:** This heading links to various **photo albums** showcasing the byway's communities and attractions by category.

The **website design** should be updated to encourage discovery and to reflect the unified design standards recommended in this plan. This would include:

- Unified font styles, colors, and graphic elements (like the curved header) reinforce the visual identity of byway media.
- Incorporate dramatic and engaging photographs of byway scenery and attractions.
- On the home page, a rotating banner can switch photos every few seconds, representing different communities and seasons along the byway. A creative phrase superimposed over each image can reinforce the interpretive themes.
- Social media options, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, should be available in the same place on each web page on the site. This encourages sharing and interaction.

- Contact information also should be available on every page of the site, providing opportunities for travelers to ask questions.
- Other engaging media, such as videos, experience hub locations, and travel guides should be highlighted to encourage exploration.
- Design for viewing on mobile devices, which are increasingly used by travelers, both at home and on the road.

Social Media

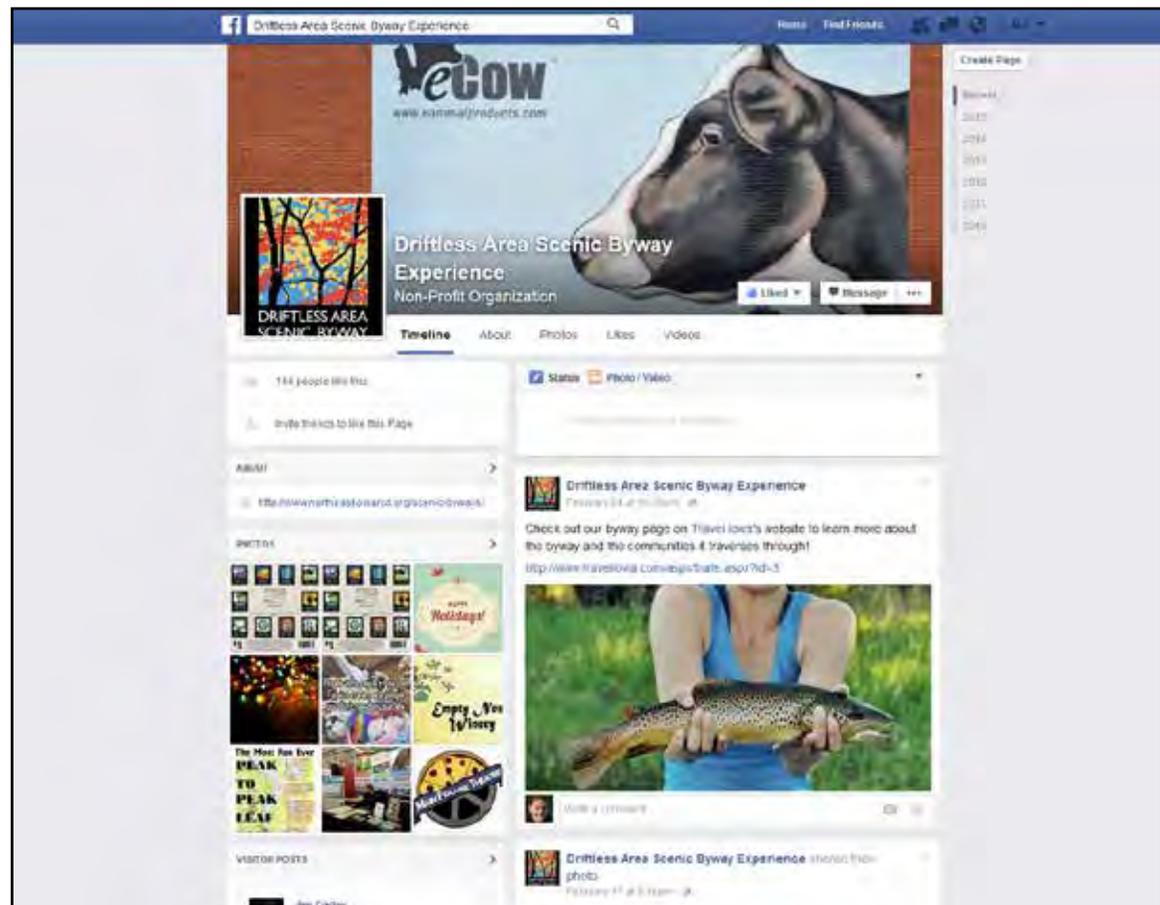
Along with using more traditional travel websites to research destinations, tourists also are turning to social media.

In a 2014 Google travel survey, about 83 percent of respondents said they use social networking, video, and photo sites to be inspired about travel destinations.

An active social media presence allows the Driftless Area Scenic Byway to spread the word about current events and to interpret the byway’s resources, while also serving as an information-gathering tool for the byway board and staff to stay in tune with travelers’ needs.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway has a social media presence on Facebook and Pinterest (allows users to “pin” images to boards). Other opportunities exist with Twitter (sharing text messages limited to 140 characters), YouTube (sharing videos) and Instagram (sharing square photos with filters applied).

The major challenge with social media sites is keeping them updated and pertinent, but they can be well worth the time invested. They are inexpensive to communicate through, are instantaneous, and are easy to change or alter.



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway Facebook page includes regular postings and updates.



Trail users on a bike trail in Rapid City, South Dakota use smartphones to scan QR codes on interpretive panels.



Cell phone tour for “Looking for Lincoln” sites in the Springfield, Illinois area.

MOBILE DIGITAL MEDIA

The number of people who own mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers continues to increase in the U.S. According to a 2015 Pew Research Center survey, nearly two-thirds of adults (64%) own a smartphone, up from just 35% in 2011. For people ages 18 to 29, 85% own a smartphone. About 45% of adults own a tablet computer, up from 10% in 2011.

Travelers expect to stay connected and find information through social media sites, Internet searches, GPS navigation, apps, and other technologies that are constantly evolving. Scenic byways like the Driftless Area should plan innovative solutions for connecting with visitors who are using mobile technologies. The proliferation of personal mobile devices opens up a vast world of opportunities for sharing interpretive messages.

Audio Tours

Audio tours have always been an effective method for interpreting messages along a scenic byway. Interpretive audio provides short clips of narration, sound effects, and music themed to specific sites along the byway.

Benefits of audio tours include:

- Hearing a human voice adds a personal character to the tour, something difficult to accomplish with other forms of media.
- Music and sound effects are powerful connections to different places and times.
- Travelers on scenic byways often have long stretches of time driving from one point to another, an ideal situation for listening to interpretive audio messages.

Audio tours have evolved from cassette tapes and CDs, with the Internet now providing a means for sharing audio (and even video) tours with a much wider audience through the use of mobile devices. Several forms of distribution are available, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Cell Phone Audio Tours

Developed before the increase in smartphone ownership, a traditional cell phone tour is a system where visitors call into a centralized phone number, enter a specific tour code, and listen to the interpretive message.

Benefits of a cell phone tour:

- The vast majority of U.S. adults today own a cell phone, 92% according to the 2015 Pew Research Center survey. The technology is very accessible to most people.
- It is easy to update audio messages in a centralized database as resources and events along the byway change.
- It allows for tracking visitors for marketing purposes. How many people are accessing messages? Which messages are they accessing? Where are they accessing them from?

Limitations of a cell phone tour:

- It requires a cell phone signal in order to work. Rural areas away from cell towers are not the best places for inclusion in the tour.
- Requires monthly hosting fees.
- May cost the user minutes depending on their cell phone plan.

Podcasting/Downloadable Tours

A less expensive method for distributing audio tour files is offering them online for users to download. This can be done through a podcasting feed (a user subscribes for automatic downloads

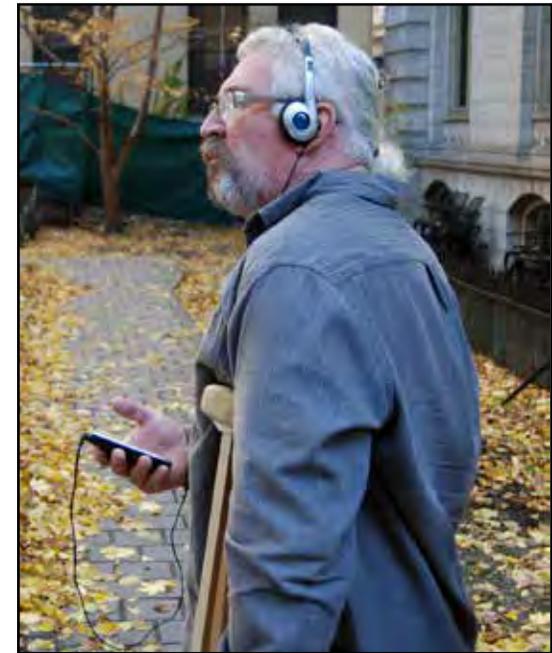
and updates of the files) or posted on a website for manual downloading. These audio files are then transferred to a personal audio device, like an iPod or MP3 player, or a mobile device that plays sound, like a smartphone or tablet.

Benefits of a downloadable audio tour:

- Messages can be downloaded before the trip for planning purposes.
- Depending on the size, files can usually be provided on an existing website for free (no monthly maintenance fee beyond normal web-hosting costs).
- Messages can be recorded in-house and easily updated on the website.

Limitations of a downloadable tour:

- Users must be knowledgeable about how to download and transfer files from a computer to the device.
- Audio and video files can take up large amounts of precious space on a mobile device, which may limit their use.
- Users typically will need advance planning to download the files prior to the trip; not a good choice for serendipitous travelers.



The Freedom Trail Audio Tour in Boston, Massachusetts can be downloaded to a mobile device prior to the visit.



The Illinois River Road mobile tour website at illinoisriverroad.org/mobile includes customizable searches for interests by community and a GPS-enabled “What’s Near Me?” feature.



Alabama’s Coastal Connection Scenic Byway has a free app that includes videos, events, a list of attractions, and a byway map.

Audiovisual Tour Apps

Using the power of personal smartphone and tablet devices, audiovisual tours combine sound, images, video, text, and interactive components to create rich and diverse interpretive experiences. They are ideally suited to byways, providing directions to nearby attractions and offering interpretation during long drives.

Mobile Tour Websites

Mobile websites are similar to regular websites but designed specifically for the smaller touch screens of mobile devices. As tours, they can incorporate text, visual, audio, and interactive components (like buttons and links) that provide an engaging experience.

Benefits of a mobile tour website:

- Encourages interactive participation.
- Works with all brands of web-enabled mobile devices; just requires an Internet browser.
- Does not require any downloading of files; all pages, sound, and video are streamed directly through the Internet when viewed.
- Easy to create and update using common website editing tools.

- Services can be added to the website to track visitor usage.

Limitations of a mobile website tour:

- Requires access to the Internet; a strong cellular signal or Wi-Fi connection is needed.
- Website programming has some limitations in terms of visual layout, responsiveness, and tools. They don’t look or react as slick as apps.
- Must design for multiple Internet browsers, as some will display content differently than others.

Native Tour Apps

Native device apps are small digital programs distributed through online stores like the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. An app is downloaded to a mobile device, providing quick and easy access to content. Like mobile websites, apps incorporate text, visual, and audio components and encourage interaction. An app can tell a story through photos, narration, music, video, games, demonstrations, and other techniques.

Benefits of a native tour app:

- Encourages interactive participation.
- Provides nearly unlimited options for design and techniques.

- Can use the GPS feature of a mobile device to automatically trigger site-specific messages or show attractions near the user’s current location.
- Typically much faster and responsive than web-based media.
- Does not require Internet access to run (although some features of the app may require this).

Limitations of a native tour app:

- Apps must be downloaded and installed onto mobile device. Depending on content, this may take up a considerable amount of space.
- Multiple apps must be developed to reach the largest number of users. They are specific to a mobile device’s operating system.
- Apps must be updated every time a mobile device’s operating system is updated; high maintenance costs.

QR (Quick Response) Codes

QR (Quick Response) codes are matrix bar codes that quickly link mobile devices to online media such as websites, audio clips, and videos. They can be incorporated into publications, interpretive panels, and even artifacts

along the byway. A traveler uses the camera on their mobile device to scan the QR code with an app, which decodes the information and uses other apps on the device to show the interpretive content.

Benefits of QR Codes:

- Quickly connects mobile devices to online resources without needing a URL.
- Can be created and printed on media for free.
- Online resources can easily be developed, changed, or updated at minimal cost.
- Different QR codes can be generated to link to different messages. A wayside exhibit might have one QR code for adults and one for children.

Limitations of QR Codes:

- QR codes require access to the Internet (cellular signal or Wi-Fi).
- Traditional QR codes are composed of black and white squares, often an unattractive design for media.
- Once created, a QR code will always link to the URL address that it is encoded with. If the online address changes, the QR code on all media will also need to be changed.



Visitors to J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife refuge scan QR codes on signs to view videos along an innovative “iNature Trail.”



Each iNature Trail panel at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is thematic and features two QR codes: one that links to a video geared toward adults and the other geared toward children.



Conceptual rendering of a Driftless Area Scenic Byway tour app that would provide a flexible way of sharing audio and visual interpretive messages with travelers.

Recommendations for the Driftless Area Byway

The byway has great potential for tapping into the mobile devices that most travelers bring with them on their byway journey. Cellular coverage can be spotty in some rural areas along the byway. Fortunately, there are digital media options that can be downloaded prior to the trip that do not require on-demand Internet access.

1. Create an audiovisual byway tour

An audiovisual tour is an ideal way to introduce travelers to the stories of the byway. Once developed, it can be distributed in multiple ways to reach the largest audience. Some ideas for development include:

- **Set a clear theme for the tour,** which will assist in the collection of stories and interviews. “On the Paleozoic Plateau” would be an animated story that zooms above and through this ancient landscape of dolomite and limestone, dotted with sinkholes, caves, and underground streams. “Local Food and Farms” would describe how agricultural practices were adapted to this rugged landscape to produce sustainably
- **grown dairy products and produce.** “Diverse Driftless” can use video, images, and sound to illustrate how the region’s bluffs and valleys aren’t just scenic; they also provide ecologically diverse habitat for rare plants and animals, including the importance of algal talus slopes as a microclimate.
- **Edit the messages down to their essence.** Choose messages that relate to universal concepts, those beliefs and ideas that mean something to all of us (love, family, tragedy, survival, etc.). These make the most interesting and engaging stories for visitors. Keep the messages short. Travelers will likely not listen to anything more than 3 minutes. Short, intriguing messages will encourage visitors to choose more messages.
- **Record oral histories and interviews** with people who lived and worked along the byway, and those who have special expertise based on the theme. High-quality video recordings will provide the most flexibility for producing an audiovisual tour.
- **Find music and sounds** that will help bring the stories of the Driftless Area to life. These make the tour more interesting and engaging.

- **Create a narrative storyline.**

Narrators are often necessary to tell the story in a concise way and introduce the various oral histories and interviews.

2. Develop a Native Tour App

A native app provides a great deal of flexibility for presenting the audiovisual tour. Messages can be offered in an audio or video format. If only audio is available, photos can be shown to enhance the message (for example, historic photos of the community). The app should provide a map with tour locations indicated and be linked to the user's current GPS location. It can also be programmed to read a GPS location and automatically offer site-specific messages.

3. Develop a Mobile Tour Website

To maximize the audience base, a mobile tour website also should be created. Once an app is developed, it will be easy to take the text, audio, photos, and video from specific messages and make them available in other formats. A web page with links to the audio or video files provides options for users to either download the tour before their trip onto a mobile device or stream the messages while traveling (as long as a cellular signal is available).

4. Add QR Codes to media

Once a mobile tour website is up and running, QR codes can link directly to specific online attraction web pages and audio/visual tour files. A user can simply scan a QR code with their mobile device, and interpretation will be streamed automatically to the device (again dependent on a cellular signal). QR codes can be added to experience hub or wayside exhibit panels, travel guide and map publications, or welcome center exhibits to provide a more in-depth and interactive experience.



QR codes, like the sample above, can be added to existing media or made into separate signs. They link directly to the byway tour website.

Cost Estimates for Mobile Tour Websites and Apps

Costs for developing audiovisual tours vary considerably, but they are typically quite expensive. A more affordable option is to use an existing app system that allows users to enter customized content.

OnCell, a company that specializes in tour apps, offered the following cost estimates in March 2016:

- **Lite Tour Website or Native App:** \$199/mo or \$280/mo for both

Includes text, audio, images, GPS-enabled maps, social media, geo-alerts, analytics

- **Pro Tour Website or Native App:** \$399/mo or \$499/mo for both

Includes everything in Lite version plus photo gallery, video, surveys, favorites page, RSS feed, custom color themes, and Scavenger Hunt Game.

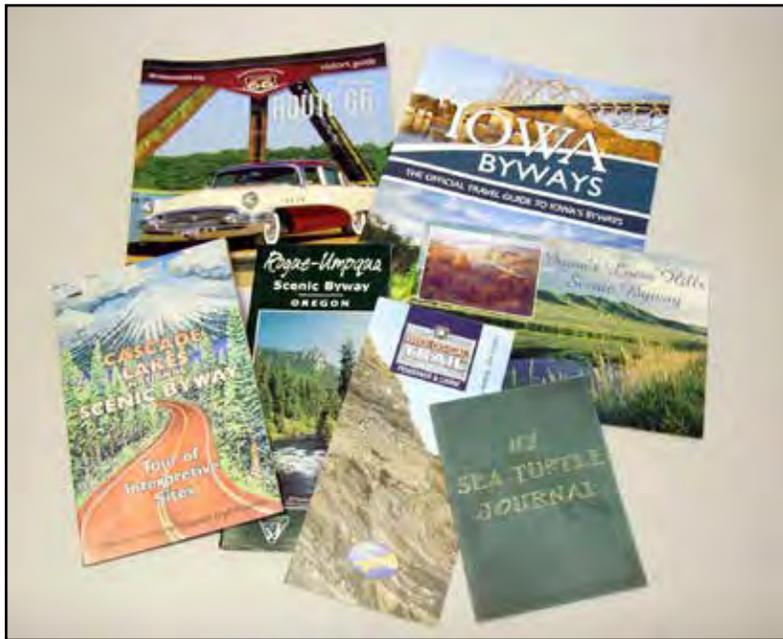
These prices reflect the user entering the content. OnCell can also **build the app** with supplied content for \$3,700–\$7,000 based on the number of pages.

OnCell also offers **additional custom designs:** \$1,000 for custom colors, buttons, and splash screens, or \$5,000 for complete customization.

PUBLICATIONS

While many travelers prepare for their trips using the Internet, there are many reasons to develop printed publications.

Although smartphone use is increasing, not everyone has one or prefers to use one as their primary means of planning a trip and navigating. A significant number of people like to have a printed publication that can be tucked in their pocket and is not limited by spotty cell phone coverage or low batteries.



Interpretive publications can take many different formats, including brochures, maps, travel guides, and kids' activity booklets.

Publications have take-home value and serve as placeholders and keepsakes of an adventure. They often are shared with others and have a longer life than digital media that pass fleetingly over a screen.

General Byway Brochure

Brochures are a cost-effective marketing tool for byways because they reach casual travelers who are unaware of the byway. There are many travelers who do not plan a road trip in advance but look forward to a serendipitous adventure as they travel a new route.

A basic byway brochure should not attempt to do more than stimulate people to access more in-depth information online or at welcome centers. It should be bold and concise with a simple, clean design and dramatic images that highlight significant attractions and other byway media.

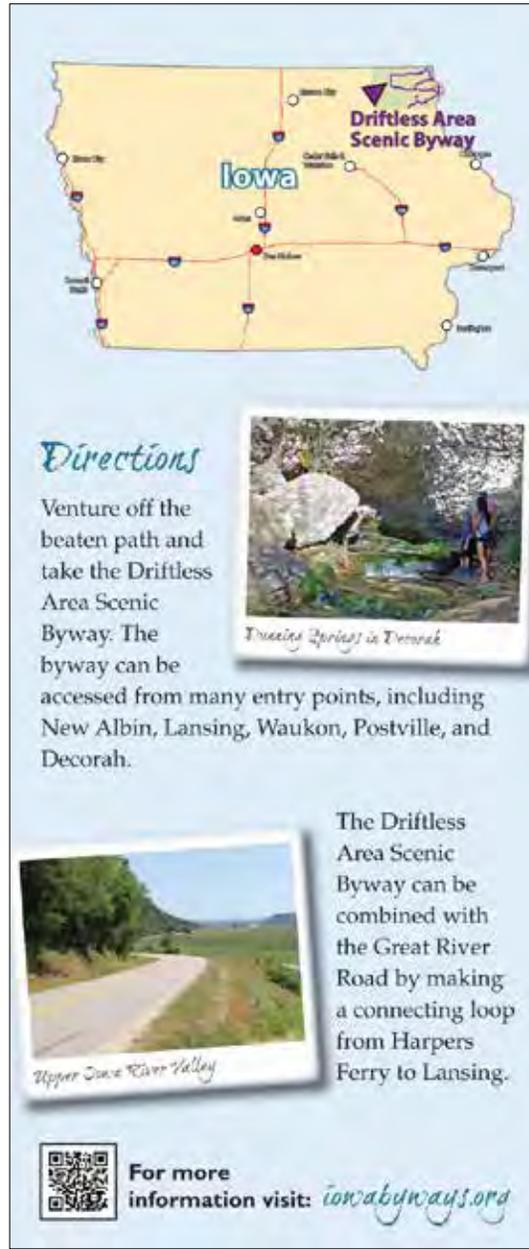
Design Recommendations:

- **Size and folds:** an 11-inch-by-17-inch panel leaflet brochure is an effective layout for introducing the byway.
- **Design elements:** Colors, font styles, and graphic styles should be unified with other byway media (see “Unified Design Standards”).
- **Front Cover:** Needs to be designed to be noticed in a rack with other brochures. An obvious “Driftless Area Scenic Byway” title should be visible above the rack holder. A dramatic focal-point photograph that represents the byway, like the view from Mount Hosmer in Lansing, encourages readers to open the brochure. The byway logo should be added to unify with other media.
- **Back Cover:** The back cover would be an ideal place to include a map of Iowa showing the location of the byway. Contact information will also be important here.
- **First Reveal:** When a reader first opens the brochure, another dramatic image draws the eye to a concise and active description of the byway.

Driftless Area Scenic Byway Brochure Concept Design



Front Cover



Back Cover



First Reveal

Yellow River Region

River Recreation and Small-Town Iowa

A trip through this region begins in Postville, which bills itself as “Hometown to the World” because of its many immigrant residents.

The route follows the Yellow River and Paint Creek with their abundant canoe access parks and trout-fishing opportunities. Yellow River State Forest is a major attraction, with 14 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails that meander through the Paint Creek valley.



Yellow River State Forest



Sample ice cream and cheese made at WW Homestead Dairy in Waukon

Effigy Mounds National Monument invites exploration of animal-shaped burial mounds.

Harpers Ferry offers the charm of an old river town. Explore history at the Allamakee

County Historical Society in Waukon.

Upper Iowa Region

River Bluffs and Valleys

A leisurely drive from Waukon to Lansing provides sweeping views of contoured farm fields and forested ridges and valleys.

Lansing is a charming river town. Don't miss Mount Hosmer, with its commanding views of the Mississippi and Blackhawk Bridge.

Walk among the Fish Farm Native American mounds in New Albin. See the Iron Post that once marked the Iowa-Minnesota border. Watch wildlife in the Mississippi backwaters along Army Road. Then head west to follow the Upper Iowa River and its wide floodplain.

A side trip to Dorchester leads to Waterloo Creek, one of the most pristine cold-water trout streams in Iowa.

Mount Hosmer, Lansing



Decorah Region

Experience Many Cultures



Norwegian History at the Vesterheim

From Highway 76, the byway continues on County A26 and offers scenic views of valleys.

Take a side trip and a step back in time in Highlandville.

Approaching Decorah, stop at the internationally

known Seed Savers Exchange to sample heritage fruits and veggies.

In the Norwegian enclave of Decorah, browse through museums and shops and see internet-famous eagles at the fish hatchery. Hike bluff-top trails overlooking the Upper Iowa River in Decorah's many parks.



Heritage Fruit at Seed Savers Exchange

Connect with northeastern Iowa's cultural history at Fort Atkinson State Preserve and the Czech village of Spillville.

Second Reveal: Regional Descriptions



- **Second Reveal (3 panels):** As the reader continues to open the brochure, three adjacent panels will highlight the three regions of

the byway. A description of the characteristic features of each region and some key attractions will pique the visitor's interest.

- **Full Reveal Inside (6 panels):** The inside of the brochure features a map of the byway with the byway route clearly marked.

Driftless Area Byway Guide

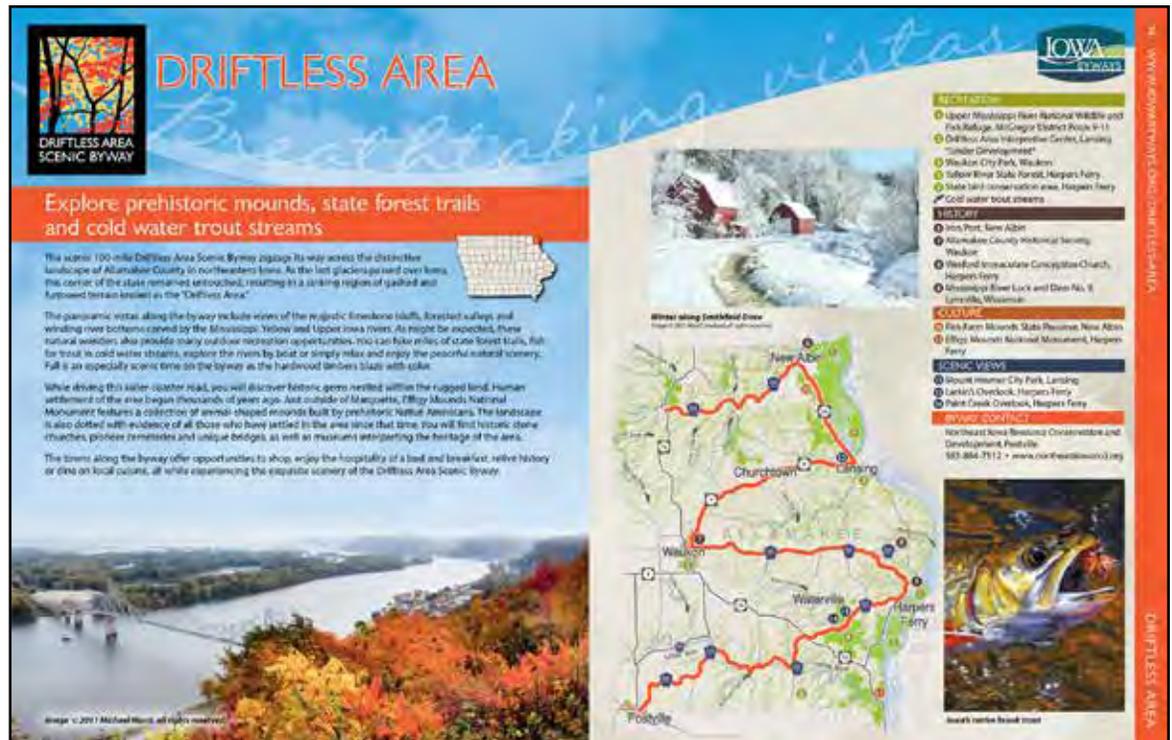
The Driftless Area Scenic Byway is included in “Iowa Byways: The Official Travel Guide to Iowa’s Byways,” a full-color, 32-page booklet that measures 8.5-inches-by-11-inches. This guide is an essential resource for visitors traveling Iowa’s byways.

The guide is organized by byway in a user-friendly format. The two pages devoted to the Driftless Area Scenic Byway feature photos from different seasons, a concise, creative description of the route, a map, and a brief list of attractions. The guide is attractive and is unified with other media, including road signs and the Iowa Byways website.

However, while it provides an excellent overview of the byway, it is not well-suited for traveling the route. The map and resource listings are not detailed, making it difficult to use the booklet for navigation or to better understand the attractions.

Recommendations

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway should develop its own standalone byway-specific travel guide. Such a guide would add greater depth to visitors’ understanding of the byway, extending



The Driftless Area Scenic Byway is featured in the “Iowa Byways: The Official Guide to Iowa’s Byways” booklet.

their visits and their connections to the resources.

Organize the guide by region: As discussed earlier in this plan, visits to the byway may be limited to a few hours or a day. Visitors may not have time to drive the entire byway, but they are still interested in a Driftless Area experience that immerses them in the region’s natural and cultural significance—to experience the “sense of place.” Organize

the guide by the three regions: Yellow River; Upper Iowa; and Decorah regions.

Theme the attractions within the region: Many visitors have specific interests that are not readily covered by current publications or online media. Byway attractions within each region can be further grouped into the categories developed in this plan: Scenic and Natural; Historic and Archaeological; Cultural; and Recreational. Themed

itineraries that address visitor interests would provide focus to their trip-planning. The need for themed itineraries was expressed by participants at the visioning meeting.

Design the guide to be consistent with Iowa Byways design standards: The design should use the logos, fonts, and colors consistent with those described in this plan and with other interpretive media.

Include maps of attractions that are more than approximations of their locations: This would require adding specific roads that lead to each attraction. Currently, travelers must use an Iowa road map or GPS in addition to the guide to locate many of the attractions, and even then it can be difficult.

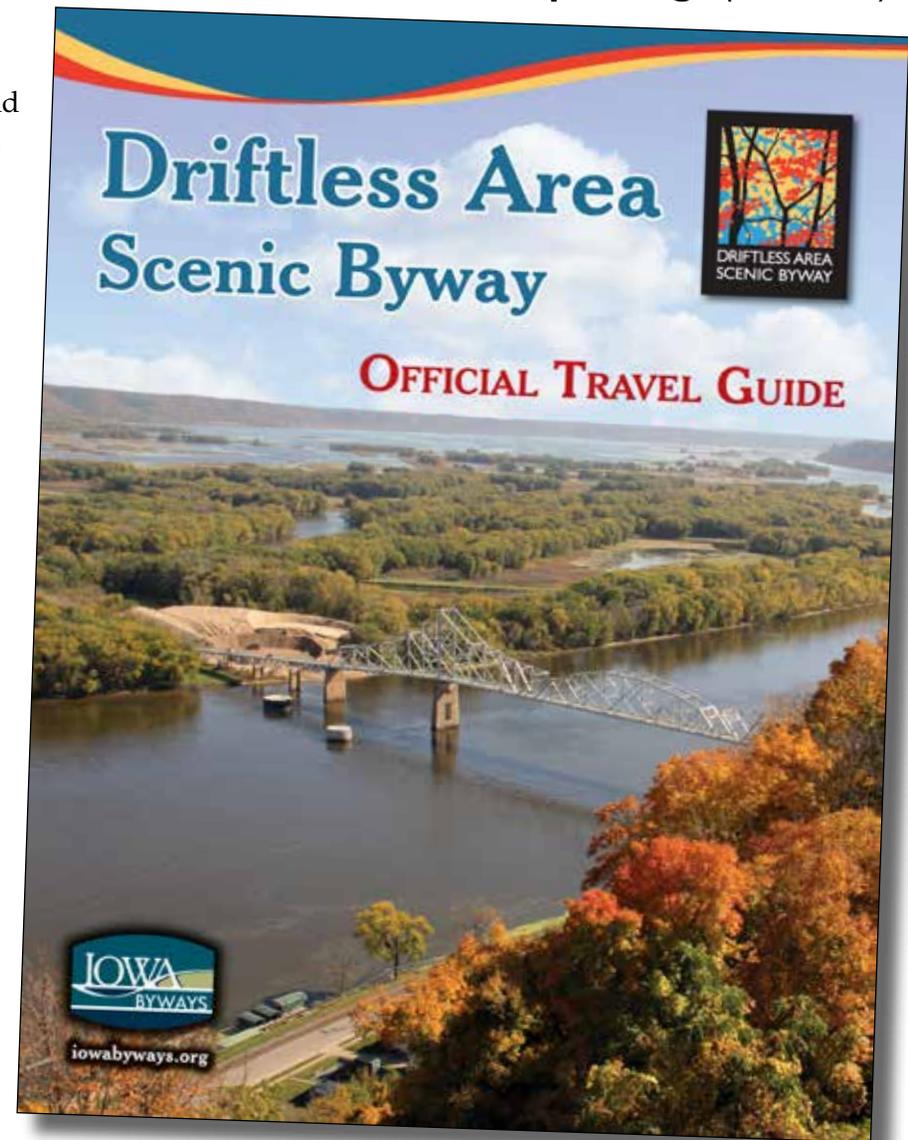
In the revised guide, each region should be developed in the following format:

- An introduction to the region that expresses its unique natural and cultural character.
- A map of visitor centers, experience hub kiosks, and wayside exhibits in the region.
- Two or more pages (as many as needed) for maps and descriptions of that region's attractions in each

of the themed categories: Scenic and Natural; Historic and Archaeological; Cultural; and Recreational.

- Concise, lively descriptions of each attraction, with websites and phone numbers where visitors can find more information.
- Strong, focal point photos and informal snapshot photos of other attractions.

Driftless Area Byway Guide Concept Design (front cover)



Driftless Area Byway Guide Concept Design (Decorah Region cultural attractions)

Cultural Treasures

Decorah Region

Exploring the Decorah Region's Cultural Roots

The Decorah region is a mecca for Norwegian culture. The Vesterheim Museum, which opened in 1877, is perhaps the most comprehensive ethnic museum in America. Norwegian immigrants also built places to learn and worship, including many country churches and one-room schools. Today the region also celebrates its culture through food and wine.

1 Big Canoe Lutheran Church: Norwegian immigrants established this congregation in 1851, with the current brick structure built in 1902. Info: www.bigcanoechurch.org

5 Winneshiek Wildberry Winery: This 150-year-old family farm reopened as a winery in 2005, serving wine and lunch. Info: www.winery.com

2 Highlandville General Store: The once-bustling town of Highlandville had three general stores, but now only one remains. The store carries a little bit of everything, and even houses a U.S. Post Office. Info: www.bearcreekcabinisa.com/general-store

6 Laura Ingalls Wilder Park and Museum: The pioneer Ingalls family lived in the Masters Hotel in Burr Oak for one year, 1876, and it is the only childhood home of Laura's the remains on its original site. Info: www.lauraingalls-wilder.us

3 Highlandville School: Built in 1911, Highlandville School is on the National Register of Historic Places and now hosts old-time public dances.

7 Seed Savers Exchange: Through a network of gardeners and on its own farm, Seed Savers preserves heirloom fruit and vegetable seeds. Tour the visitor center and gardens. Info: www.seedsavers.org or 563-382-5990.

4 Locust School: This limestone school built in 1854 was open until 1960, setting an Iowa record for continuous use of a school in the same location. Info: www.visitdecorah.com/business/locust-school

8 Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum: This multistory museum will immerse you in Norwegian-American history and culture. Info: www.vesterheim.org or 563-382-9681.

Locust School, a one-room country school
Childhood home of Laura Ingalls Wilder
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum
Seed Savers Exchange

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Families are a significant audience for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. Thematic activities that engage parents and children will create meaningful experiences that last a lifetime.

Iowa Byways Junior Explorer Program

Similar to the Junior Ranger programs found in many parks, an Iowa Byways Junior Explorer program would be an activity-based experience with the purpose of encouraging families to explore the state's scenic byways.

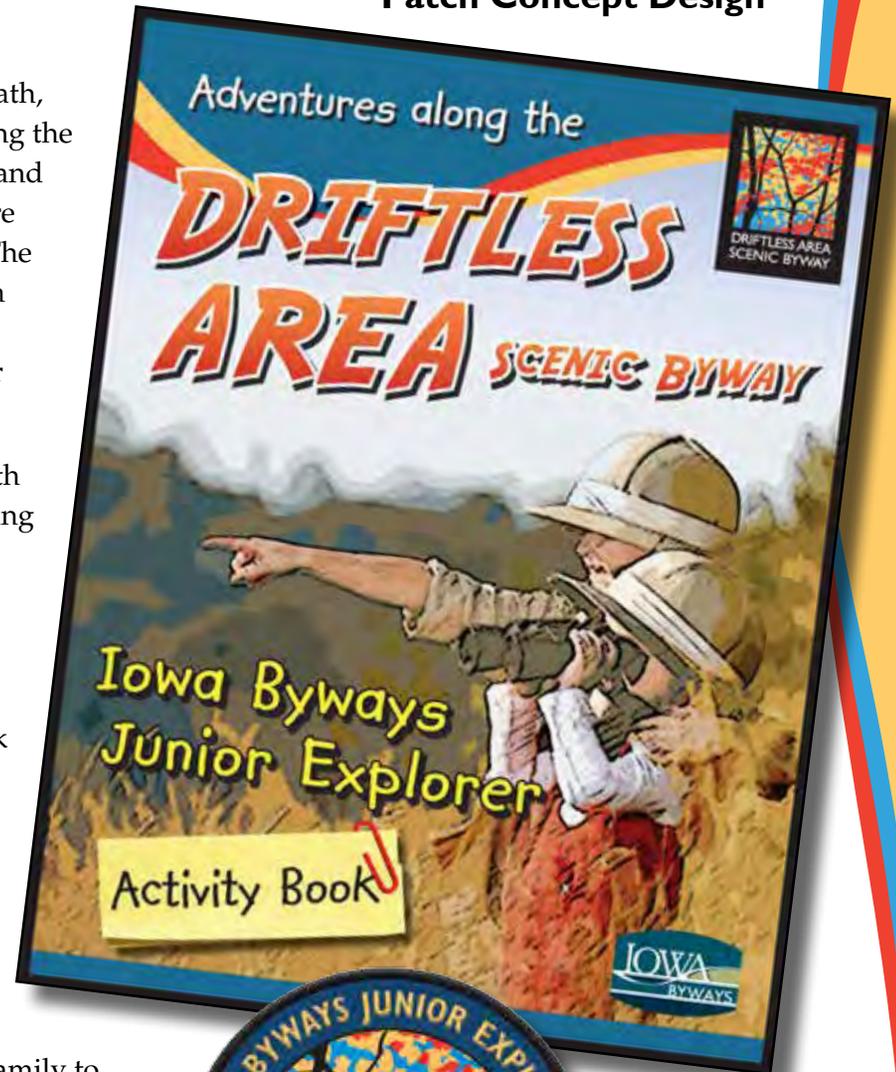
Each byway would develop a kid-friendly activity guide that reveals the natural and cultural resources of a byway. The activities would be completed while traveling the byway. The guides would be made available at key locations along the byway, such as information centers and major attractions.

When children—with the help of parents or guardians—complete a certain number of activities, they would turn it their book at a designated information centers, where a byway representative would look over the activities and talk to the children about what they learned. The

children would then take an oath, promising to continue exploring the state's scenic byways, respect and protect the resources, and share their experience with others. The children would receive a patch (or other item) declaring them an official Iowa Byways Junior Explorer.

The guides would be filled with fun games, puzzles, and coloring pages that entice families to discover the Driftless Area. Some ideas include:

- A byway bingo game that encourages families to look for iconic features along the byway, like an eagle, trout angler, one-room schoolhouse, Mississippi River bridge, or Native American burial mound.
- A nature scavenger hunt that encourages the family to explore a trail or natural area.
- Stories written by children who live in the Driftless Area that describe their daily experiences (for example, living on a farm).



- Coloring pages depicting scenes from the Driftless Area.
- Crossword puzzles with Driftless Area terms they may learn.
- Dot-to-dot puzzles of resources they may see.
- A maze that follows the twisting tributaries of the Mississippi River.

Explorers Discovery Pack

In association with the Iowa Byways Junior Explorer program, “Discovery Packs” filled with equipment and resources for young explorers could be made available to encourage more in-depth discovery along the byway. The packs could be borrowed from and returned to designated information centers.



A Driftless Area Junior Explorer Discovery Pack would be filled with hands-on tools and resources for exploring the byway as a family.

Items in the packs could include: binoculars, hand lens, bug magnifying box, bug net, field guides, Driftless Area songs CD, stargazing chart, field journal, and other essential exploration tools.

Children’s Byway Audio Tour

An audio tour geared toward children is a unique way to tell the stories of the byway. When children provide the lively narration, it creates a personal connection with kids as they tour the byway. The son of a Mississippi River commercial fisherman might tell about living on the river, harvesting catfish, and hauling them to market. A girl might tell what it was like to walk to her country school, where all eight grades studied in one room, a pump was used for water, and an outhouse was the school bathroom.

Singer-songwriters could be recruited to record a CD or downloadable compilation of children’s songs about Mississippi River folklore, Driftless hills and valleys, and the corner of Iowa untouched by the last glaciers.

Family Passport Book

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway has already developed an attractive Culinary Passport guide to the best food and drink along the byway. Building on this foundation, a Family Passport booklet would encourage exploration of family-friendly attractions.

A passport book provides motivation to visit places that may otherwise be passed by or overlooked. The incentive to fill up the passport with stamps creates a goal for the family. Adults and children alike are engaged in the scavenger hunt to find the next stamping location. The booklet has take-home value, and each stamp represents a memory from the trip, an important connection to the byway experience.

The passport booklet is itself an interpretive opportunity. It should be written in concise, personal, kid-friendly language that reveals the stories behind the Driftless Area resources.

A unique stamp design should be developed for each attraction that rewards travelers for their effort. Ideally, stamps would be located at attractions where people are available to answer questions and watch over the passport

stations. However, self-service passport stations could also be developed for those who visit sites during closed hours.

Thematic Play Areas

As any parent who has traveled with a child knows, finding play areas along the route is a major priority. Byway travel involves long periods of sitting in a vehicle. Kids need breaks from the car ride to run and play. For families, play areas serve as focal points for stretching legs, eating snacks and meals, and using restrooms.

Typically, play areas along byways are serendipitous, standard playground equipment often associated with municipal parks. These are untapped, potentially powerful resources for engaging families with the stories of the byway.

The Driftless Area Scenic Byway should consider developing interpretive play/rest areas along the route that reinforce the themes of the byway. Some examples:

- A climbing wall replicates the limestone bluffs of the Driftless Area and tells the geological story.



Family Passport Book: Concept Design (Seed Savers Exchange page)

- A sand box encourages children to dig to find replica prehistoric artifacts left by the Effigy Mound builders.
- A climbing tube is designed to look like an ice cave that was carved through the limestone.
- The curves and meanders of the Yellow River are re-created as channels in concrete. Major sites are highlighted like a map. Water flows through the channels to encourage wading.

Play areas don't necessarily need to incorporate expensive manufactured equipment. Natural playgrounds are landscapes where children play with natural materials, such as logs, sticks, wooden blocks, boulders, stepping stones, gravel, sand, and water. This encourages children to use their imaginations while directly interacting with the Driftless Area landscape.

Concise interpretive signs incorporated into the play area can provide ideas for families to explore each play space together, along with related byway stories.



Natural playspaces, like in Osborne Park, Iowa (above) and Burr Oak Woods Nature Center, Missouri, can be designed to reinforce the themes of a byway, while providing a natural outlet for children's creativity and energy.



MEDIA COST ESTIMATES

These cost estimates were developed in March 2016 based on quotes from multiple companies. They include

research, design, and fabrication/printing. The estimates are listed as broad ranges and should be used only for the

purposes of planning and fundraising. Actual prices will vary considerably based on the specifics of each project.

Media Type	Info	Rationale	Cost Estimate
Experience hubs	pp. 106–123	Highly visible way to orient travelers to regional attractions. Cost-effective where attractions are not routinely staffed.	\$15,000–\$20,000 each (stone, metalwork, timbers, 4 HPL panels)
Wayside exhibits	pp. 124–133	Best way to communicate must-tell stories at significant sites along the byway where no other tools are available.	\$2,500–\$3,000 each (metal base with cut-out, 1 HPL panel)
Site orientation signs	pp. 134–141	To assist visitors in finding locations and to interpret the byway and that specific site.	\$3,300–\$5,000 each (metal stands with cut-out, 2 vinyl logos, 2 vinyl signs)
Welcome/visitor center touch-screen computer kiosk exhibits	pp. 144–145	Valuable in alerting travelers to the byway’s existence and for trip-planning; small size appropriate for existing centers.	\$15,000–\$25,000 each
Byway artwork	pp. 146–149	Highly visible way to focus attention on a significant story or event on a roadside scale.	Highly variable based on type and artist. Steel silhouette statue: \$1,500 average Wall mural: \$10–\$35/sq. ft. average
Website design and social media development	pp. 150–153	Essential planning tool that reaches a large audience; is easily updated.	\$10,000–\$25,000 for development plus monthly hosting/maintenance.
Byway mobile tour website or native tour app	pp. 154–159	Ideal tools for incorporating sound and visuals to make stories come alive; convenient, easy to use, and encourage interaction.	\$8,000–\$50,000 for development plus monthly hosting/maintenance. See pg. 155 for monthly plans options.
General byway brochure	pp. 160–163	Small publication that can be widely distributed to promote awareness of the byway.	\$1,500–\$2,000 per 10,000 copies (tabloid size, full-color)
Travel guide booklet	pp. 164–166	A physical method for visitors to navigate the byway and discover its stories; not dependent on cellular service.	\$12,000–\$15,000 per 10,000 booklets (32 pages, 8.5"x11" size, full-color)
Byway Junior Explorer booklets	pp. 167–168	Keeps families engaged in the byway’s interpretive themes and encourages discovery.	\$8,000–\$12,000 per 10,000 booklets (20 pages, 8.5"x11" size, full-color)
Family passport books	pp. 169	Provides motivation to visit specific sites along the byway and has take-home value.	\$5,000–\$8,000 per 10,000 booklets (20 pages, 6"x6" size, full-color)

APPENDIX

Overlook view of Yellow River State Forest

DRIFTLESS AREA BYWAY VISIONING MEETING RESULTS

On June 23, 2015, Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted a visioning meeting with the Driftless Area Scenic Byway staff and board members at the Northeast Iowa RC&D office in Postville. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information about the places, activities, and stories that should be interpreted along the byway.

During this meeting, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. **Attractions:** What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?
2. **Stories and Messages:** What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?
3. **Audience:** Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?
4. **Vision:** What is your vision of success for improving the visitor experience on your scenic byway?
5. **Research Recommendations:** Who are some key people we should

interview and what are some documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

The responses were recorded, organized, and sent to Northeast Iowa RC&D for review and dissemination. The final results are included below.

Attractions

What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?

- Yellow River State Forest: fishing, camping, hunting, scenic overlooks, trails, horseback riding
- Mount Hosmer in Lansing, majestic view of Mississippi River, bluffs, picnic
- Mississippi River: boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, birdwatching, backwaters—get on the river
- Upper Iowa River: very scenic inland river valley with fishing, canoeing, etc.
- Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center at Columbus property south of Lansing (when complete)
- Fishing trout streams

- Local restaurants and shops in each community
- Iron Post
- Historical museum
- Old country churches (Wexford)
- Black Hawk Bridge
- Horsfall's
- New Albin Meat Market: best jerky, beef sticks, etc.
- Birding opportunities
- Fishing
- WW Homestead Dairy cheese curds and ice cream
- Waukon City Park, 46-acre park
- Empty Nest Winery, great wine
- Effigy Mounds
- Hiking the bluffs
- Lansing River Museum
- Fishing the river and cold-water trout streams
- Eagle nests
- Conservation, public boat ramps, access to river, Harpers Slough
- Islands and sloughs #7 fishing
- Tillinghast Park, early settlers family

- Sandy Point, Harpers Ferry cemetery, Indian mounds, David Harper, veteran of Civil War
- Rookery, one of the largest bird migration areas
- Mohn Fish Market
- Cherry Mound Cemetery
- Stillwell Island, Indian mounds
- St. Ann's/St. Joseph church cemetery
- Harpers Ferry one of first settlements
- Oil Spring one-room schoolhouse

Stories and Messages

What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?

- Fishing/hunting—Allamakee Co. Scenic beauty will command preservation for future.
- Iron Post, settling the boundary line, New Albin
- Amish settlement in Allamakee Co, their stores (Amish Hill & Country Candies, Countryside Bakery & Bulk Store, and the Country Store)
- Mississippi River—rookeries, bird migration (Harpers Ferry)
- What does “driftless” mean? Glaciers missed this area
- Types of ag: dairy, crops, logging
- Change of seasons, especially dramatic in fall
- Unique shops, Main Streets, downtown Lansing
- Sullivan Bros., Irish families, Harpers Ferry
- Wexford Church, oldest Catholic Church (first in the area), Irish families immigrated
- The history of each community, its origin.
- Change in ag techniques
- Oldest geologic formations, rock formations & bluffs
- Neutral zone story, Native Americans and government intervention
- Most scenic state byway (rated by the state DOT)
- Local foods production huge part of the byway (organic farming)
- “Little Switzerland” has more connotation than “driftless”
- Whole history associated with Mississippi River, a force in economic development: logging, trapping, ice harvesting, clamming (early button industry), tourism
- Eagles
- Mohn Fish Market, Harpers Ferry, last remaining commercial fishing
- Yellow River State Forest
- World Bird Area (Yellow River Forest), warblers
- A lot of public land along byway
- Grain growing, harvesting; mills & storage along river (Lansing)
- Mount Hosmer, Lansing, the Harriet story related to its name
- Tourist destination for anglers, water recreation in Allamakee Co.
- Boundary marker on Highway 2, Capt. Talcot, prime meridian, “initial point”
- Cemeteries
- Cows, Creameries, Art, a Waukon artist, local creameries: WW Homestead, Calvin, Countryview in West Union
- Spillway, Lock & Dam, Harpers Ferry
- Hiking Yellow River State Forest and other areas
- Recreation, canoeing, and kayaking the Upper Iowa River, a National Geographic destination, an Indian border
- Bridges on the Byway (Red Bridge over Yellow River, wood truss,

Monsrud Bridge relocated to state forest)

- Railroad stories/depots, especially along the Mississippi River
- Harpers Ferry Native American mounds and cemeteries
- Churches and general stores as centers of communities
- Infamous gangsters on Miss. River islands (often named for them), moonshine stills, Al Capone, a map of them needed
- Boats evolution: dugout canoes, steamboats, today's pontoons and motorboats
- Motorcycling, Waukon Harley-Davidson dealership
- Local arts and crafts
- New Albin Meat Market
- Logging a huge business
- Local art studios, clay studio
- The panoramic views

Audience

Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?

- Parents with younger children traveling together (family type vacationers)
- Tourists
- Visitors for hunting, fishing, bicycling, fall colors, hiking, cross-country skiing, horse trails, boating, ice fishing
- Local people
- Businesses
- Upper middle class vacationers with disposable income and interest in nature and Driftless Area scenery and culture
- The elderly
- Motorcycle riders
- Retirees
- Bus company and bank tour groups (could be marketed)
- Car/motorcycle cruises
- Tractor cruises

Vision

- Scenic overlooks
- Kiosks
- An interpretive center (one planned near Lansing). More overlook areas with media and interpretive material
- Increase tourism in the area through promotion of the byway
- Include hands-on experiences for families; to see and do; stop and fish, etc.
- Businesses on board to help promote the byway
- Bus tours with step-on (or tour guide) interpreters
- Educating more locals on the byway and getting people to hold more stock in them.
- Local buy-in, educating the local population; make informed contacts with visitors, through website or brochure
- Be able to find the funds to do more interpretive material so people know what some of these points of interest are.
- Having materials available to visitors to help them easily find attractions and amenities.

- Comprehensive marketing plan
- Promote bus tours
- Information available on personal digital devices (but reception is lousy!)
- Protecting our resources
- Pride in the collective regional history/diversity of the area
- Enhancement of byway corridor, especially roadside vegetation
- Interpretive signs/waysides available at special features (like Fish Farm Mounds); signage also needs to be maintained
- Experience the river as a visitor; “a boat ride can be transformational”; get them out to experience the resource
- Interpretation that is sturdy, accessible, and gives visitors what they are looking for. DNR is concerned about vandalism, etc., in remote areas.
- An info hub in each byway community and some interpretation at each attraction
- Visitors understand the pre-development landscape, can imagine what it looked like

- Activities in the winter, an untapped season
- Itineraries for special interests and available time, “what can you do on the byway?”

Research Recommendations

Who are some key people we should interview and what are some documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

- Allamakee County Historical Society
- Historians in each community
- Chambers within communities that the byway runs through
- Amish
- Allamakee Co. Visitor Guide
- Any info you can find about the old railroad. So many people are interested in that.
- Bruce Palmburg
- Jim Janett
- Robert Vavra
- Norman Delphey, Harpers Ferry
- Jerry Valley, mayor, Harpers Ferry
- Betty Palmer has a lot of history and stories
- Mohn Fish Market, Robinsen Mather