

**City of Rocks Back Country Byway**  
Rural Heritage Stewardship Handbook  
and Byway Management Plan  
*Cassia County, Idaho*



**By the City of Rocks Back Country Byway Advisory Committee**

With ERO Resources Corp. (Planning), Community Futures (Tourism and Marketing),  
Community Matters, Inc. (Community Development), Carter & Burgess, Inc. (Transportation Planning),  
Interpretive Management Associates (Byway Interpretation),  
and The Land Use Resource Center (Land Protection)

*June 1998*

City of Rocks Back Country Byway  
Rural Heritage Stewardship Handbook  
and Byway Management Plan

*Cassia County, Idaho*



By the City of Rocks Back Country Byway Advisory Committee

*c/o Cassia County, 1459 Overland Avenue, Burley, ID 83318*

With ERO Resources Corp. (Planning), Community Futures (Tourism and Marketing),  
Community Matters, Inc. (Community Development), Carter & Burgess, Inc. (Transportation Planning),  
Interpretive Management Associates (Byway Interpretation),  
and The Land Use Resource Center (Land Protection)  
1842 Clarkson St., Denver, CO 80218 (303) 830-1188

*June 1998*

# Contents

## Executive Summary 1

---

### I. The Byway Today 5

- A. *What the Byway means to us* 5
    - A.1 Location and Route 5
    - A.2 Purpose and History of this Plan 6
    - A.3 The Vision for the Byway 7
    - A.4 Byway Goals 8
    - A.5 The State Byways Program 8
    - A.6 The National Reserve 9
    - A.7 Public Input for Byway Planning 11
  - B. *Why the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is so significant* 15
    - B.1 Cultural, Historic and Archaeological Resources 15
    - B.2 Scenic Resources 18
    - B.3 Natural Resources 19
    - B.4 Recreation Resources 22
  - C. *The Byway and its Region* 23
    - C.1 The Seven Areas 23
    - C.2 Burley 25
    - C.3 Malta and Declo 25
    - C.4 Public Agencies 26
    - C.5 Current Visitors and Visitor Services—Who is coming? 28
    - C.6 Support and Emergency Services 30
    - C.7 Accessibility 30
    - C.8 Interpretive Services 30
    - C.9 Current Transportation Issues 31
- 

### II. The Byway in the Future 37

- A. *General Concepts for Managing the Byway* 38
    - A.2 Roadway Management 40
    - A.3 Directional and other signs 41
    - A.4 Visitors 42
    - A.5 Interpretation 43
    - A.6 The factors affecting Tourism and Marketing 48
    - A.7 Rural Heritage Protection 48
  - B. *Three levels of effort for the Byway* 52
    - B.1 Minimal Effort 53
    - B.2 Moderate Effort (the preferred option) 57
    - B.3 Major Effort 61
  - C. *Realizing the Plan* 64
  - D. *Byway Organization* 67
  - E. *Assessing Progress* 68
- 

*Appendix A: Summary of Comments from Public Meetings*

*Appendix B: Costs for Interpretive Materials*

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## Executive Summary

**H**ow do you conserve an area's rural heritage in the face of widespread decline in agriculture in our country? Is there a role for a byway in conserving such rural heritage? What difference can it make? These are some of the questions asked when residents of Cassia County first started discussing the newly designated City of Rocks Back Country Byway. After closer examination, they usually conclude that byways potentially represent a very useful and powerful tool to help them achieve community goals.

The people of southern Cassia County love where they live. Many have families that have been in the area for generations, and are responsible for making this part of Idaho productive. They see change coming, though. They know things won't remain as they are and there is uncertainty what the future holds.

This is why the City of Rocks Back Country Byway project is timely. It provides a means for the residents of southern Cassia County to consider what they have as communities that is worth keeping and what they want the area to look like in the future. There are no outside values being imposed; what is important is determined by citizens. Nor is a byway project necessarily a government project, even if funding has come from the county and the federal government. Everyone associated with this Byway and everyone who spoke at the recent public meetings concurred that the project should be directed by citizens.

What this Byway becomes depends on what citizens want it to be and what they are willing to work for. At the public meetings, a range of opinions was expressed. Given that the byway has



The City of Rocks Back Country Byway is ideally suited to helping preserve and tell the story of Cassia County's rural heritage.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

designation from the state and that visitors already come to the area in increasing numbers, most people felt that a modest effort would make the Byway work for, rather than against them.

In further discussions with citizens the appropriateness of a moderate level of effort for the Byway was most frequently heard. To help put that approach in context, in this handbook we describe characteristics of three levels of potential effort, summarized in the chart on the following page. The levels of effort are generally cumulative. Thus, the moderate effort includes everything described under the minimal effort and the major effort includes everything included in the other two.

This document is both a handbook for citizens to use in managing the area's rural heritage and the Byway and a plan to share with organizations and agencies that might want to support the endeavor. Comments on the plan can be sent to City of Rocks Back Country Byway, c/o Cassia County, 1459 Overland Avenue, Burley, ID 83318.



Each year the City of Rocks National Reserve draws thousands of people to the Byway and the area.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

<i>Level of Effort</i>	<b>1. Minimal Effort</b>	<b>2. Moderate Effort<sup>†</sup></b>	<b>3. Major Effort<sup>‡</sup></b>
<b>Road Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses outstanding maintenance needs, especially spot fixes to road surfaces and drainage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks repaving and regravelling of the Byway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also seeks major improvements, such as new pull-outs and parking areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Directional Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes a few signs along or near the Byway to help tourist find their way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes directional signs in nearby communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes directional signs along the interstate highways.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates simple brochures for existing visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets residents of Idaho and Utah who are interested in heritage tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets western US population centers and interstate travelers. Would organize familiarization tours and media kits.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on (separate) efforts currently underway by the Reserve, USFS and museums in Albion, Burley, and Oakley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds interpretative kiosks and wayside exhibits to existing pullouts and museums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies a county-wide system of kiosks and wayside exhibits.</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Heritage Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on individual efforts on private lands and the cooperation of land management agencies on federal lands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops informative programs for landowners about agland protection and conservation easements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes an active role in coordinating agland protection efforts in the county.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Opportunities &amp; Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As is now, except a bit more help in getting visitors where they need to go.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses existing museums and facilities to welcome and direct visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes construction of modest welcome centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on existing budgets already in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks substantial funding for resurfacing the road, otherwise modest funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks substantial funding for most aspects of the Byway effort.</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen Involvement Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily through the Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on annual meetings with citizens to review progress and set priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes ongoing committees to oversee aspects of the Byway.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad hoc, voluntary advisory committee coordinates efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a more structured approach through memoranda of understanding and a simple non-profit organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggests a full or part-time coordinator and a more substantial organization.</li> </ul>

<sup>†</sup>Includes all features of the minimal effort.

<sup>‡</sup>Includes all features of the minimal and moderate efforts.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### **Advisory Committee Members**

*Don Danner, Albion*

*John Evans, Burley*

*Robert Fehlman, Oakley*

*Lawrence Gillette, Declo*

*Timothy Hurst, Burley*

*Ned Jackson (City of Rocks National Reserve), Almo*

*Jim Kempton, Albion*

*Stan Lloyd, Elba*

*Janet Powers, Malta*

*Karen Shilling (Bureau of Land Management), Burley*

*Phyllis Tracy, Almo*

*H. Olen Ward, Almo*

*Lyle Woodbury (Cassia County), Burley*

*Zeke Zimmerman, (U.S. Forest Service), Burley*

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## I. The Byway Today

### A. What the Byway means to us

#### A.1 Location and Route

The 49-mile City of Rocks Back Country Byway runs between the Cities of Albion and Oakley through the expansive landscapes of southern Cassia County, including the dramatic and historically significant City of Rocks National Reserve (see Map 1). Byway visitors see firsthand the workings of traditional cattle ranches and get a feel for the wide open spaces that appear much as they did a hundred years ago when hardy pioneers passed through on the California Trail. The California Trail brought thousands of pioneers in search of new lives westward through the City of Rocks. At the City of Rocks, weary travelers found water, food, shade, and the “silent city’s” mysterious rock formations. These same rock formations, with their great number and variety of technical climbs, rival those in Yosemite National Park as favorites of today’s rock climbers.

In 1996 the Byway was officially designated an official byway by the state of Idaho. Scenic and historic byways are special routes offering travelers access to the beautiful scenery and the cultural and natural richness of our country. They provide an antidote to the monotony of linear, high-speed travel; open up vistas; and introduce us to places and people we might otherwise pass by.

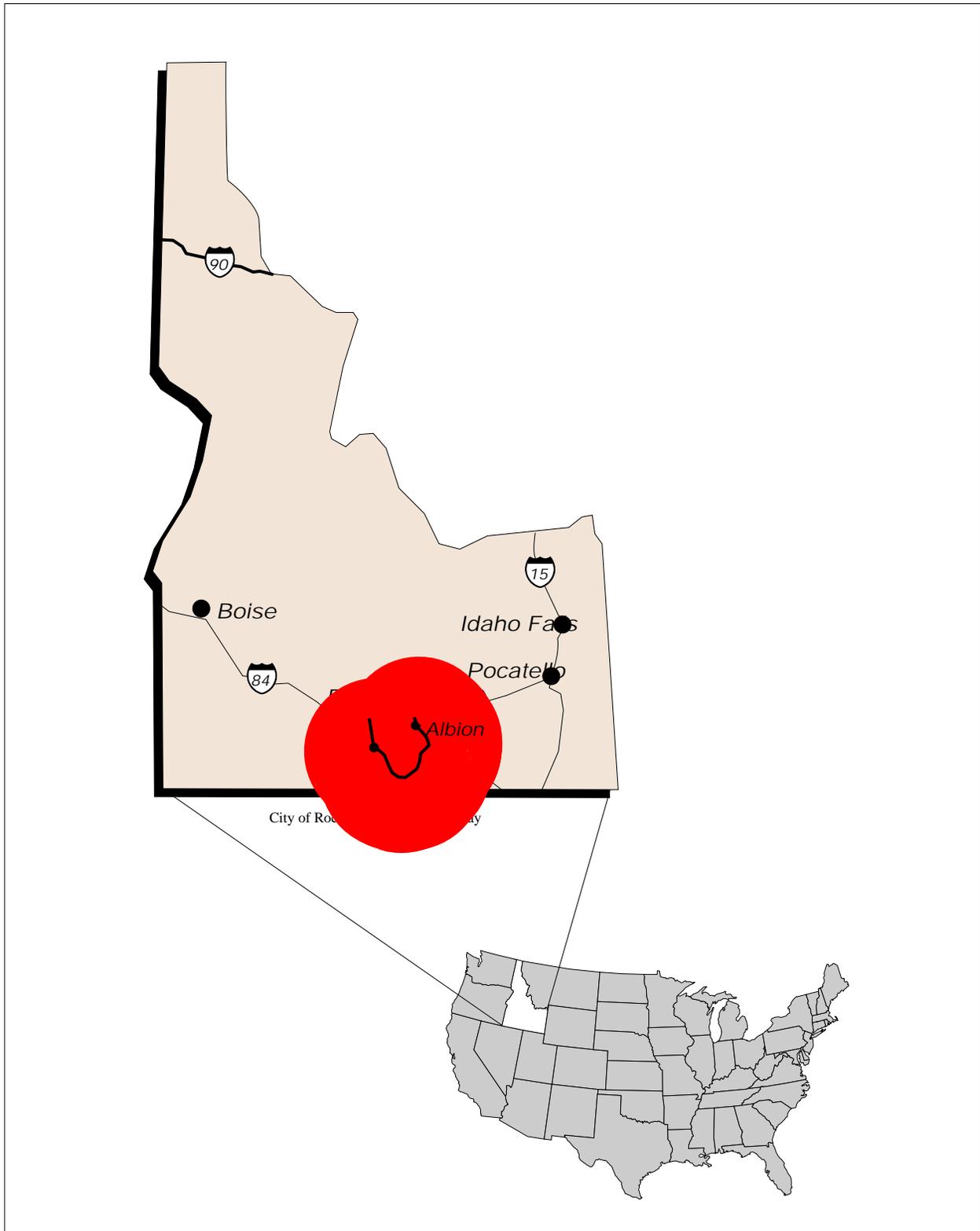
Roughly 25 miles (51 percent) of the length of the Byway is paved road (Idaho Highway 77) and 24 miles (49 percent) is unpaved (Map 2). This Byway is known as a back country byway

#### **voluntary approach**

The recommendations found in this handbook are strictly voluntary. Our goal is to manage the increasing numbers of visitors who are coming to the area and coordinate efforts to protect the area’s rural setting and other resources, not to add to restrictions and requirements.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 1: Location

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

because it showcases more remote countryside not usually seen by visitors and provides some rougher roads for those who want to slow down a bit from their interstate travels.

### Profile of Cassia County

<i>1996 population</i>	20,183
<i>Total labor force</i>	9,808
<i>Farm employment</i>	2,067
<i>Federal Interstate</i>	I-84 (E-W)
<i>Federal Highway</i>	US 30 (E-W)
<i>State Highway</i>	27 (N-S)
<i>State Highway</i>	81 (S-E)
<i>Lowest average daily minimum temperature</i>	18.2 degrees (January)
<i>Highest average daily minimum temperature</i>	88.0 degrees (July)
<i>Average annual total precipitation</i>	9.69 inches
<i>National Parks, Monuments, Forests, or Recreation Areas within 100 miles of Burley</i>	Sawtooth National Forest, Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge, City of Rocks National Reserve

### Population

	1970	1980	1990	% change
<i>Albion</i>	229	286	305	+31
<i>Burley</i>	8,079	8,525	8,702	+7
<i>Declo</i>	251	276		
<i>Malta</i>	196	196	171	-13
<i>Oakley</i>	656	663	635	-3
<i>Cassia County</i>	20,300		19,532	-4

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## A.2 Purpose and History of this Plan

The idea of a scenic and historic route had been discussed for some time in Cassia County, and was proposed by the National Park Service as a preliminary step toward developing the City of Rocks Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan in 1991.

With support from each of the towns along the Byway and after public meetings throughout the county, a successful application was submitted to the State of Idaho by Cassia County for designation of the Byway.

Designation of the route in 1996 greatly expanded the opportunities for protecting rural heritage and interpreting the region. The Byway links the Oakley Historic District (with its numerous properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places), to the City of Rocks and the historic towns and agricultural landscapes of southern Cassia County.

### *Dynamic Plan responsive to the desires of the communities*

This report describes how the Byway can be managed to make certain it becomes what the communities of southern Cassia County want it to be. This document is for use by landowners and other citizens who live along the Byway and for local, county, state, and federal agencies who manage parts of the Byway corridor. Using this document will help these groups coordinate activities.

This plan is dynamic; it aims to help manage a living, changing landscape—the Byway corridor. It provides suggestions and guidance, but will have to be revisited and reconsidered regularly so changes along the Byway and in the county can be considered. An important part of the planning process is monitoring and evaluating whether Byway goals are being achieved. On at least a yearly basis, the community should evaluate progress and readjust priorities, as necessary.

*This plan is dynamic;  
it aims to help  
manage a living,  
changing landscape.*

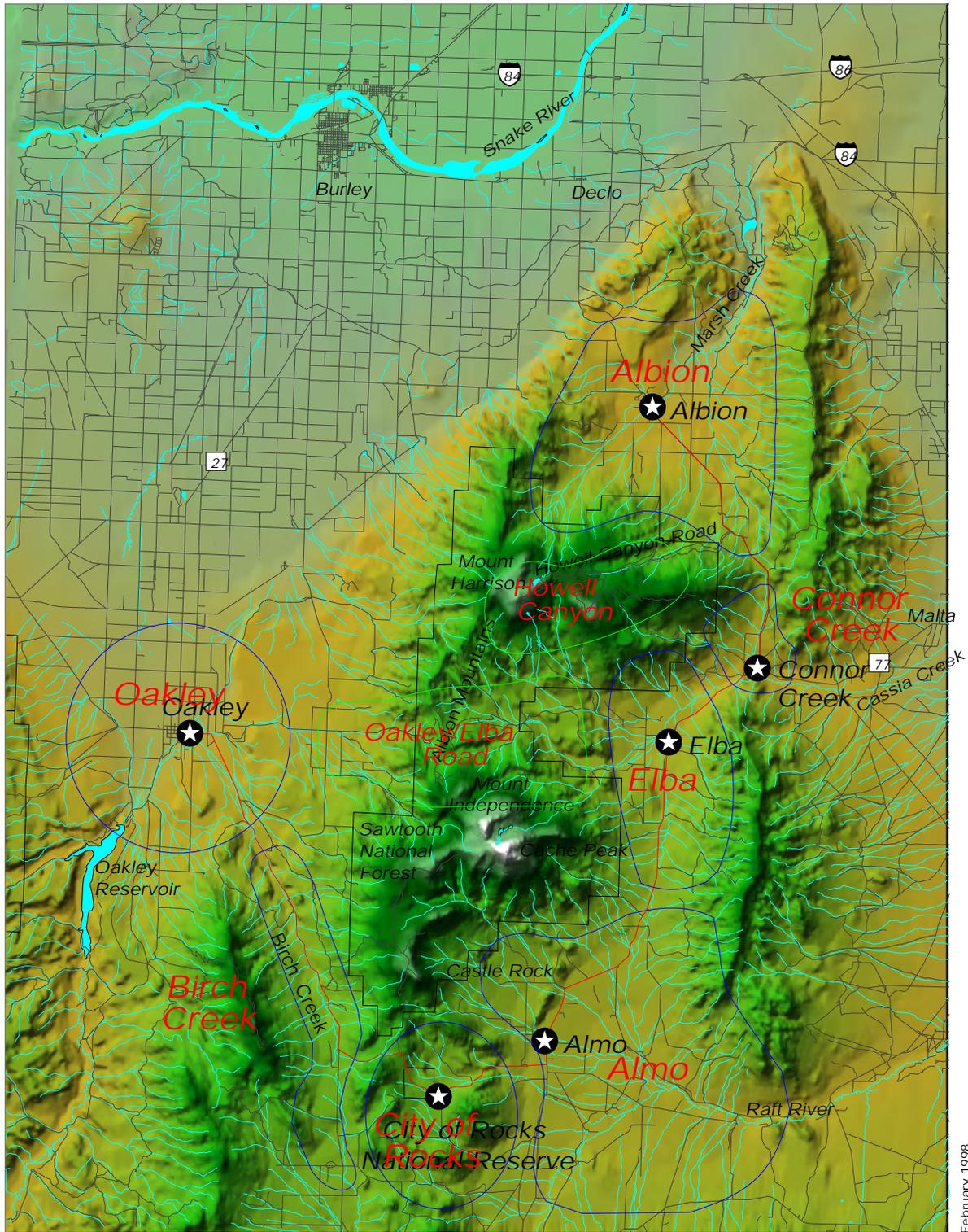
## A.3 The Vision for the Byway

The City of Rocks National Reserve is the linchpin for the Byway. It is where the most areas of historic and geologic interest are protected and accessible by the public. It is the major drawing card for visitors to the area. But without the openness of the surrounding areas, it would be isolated from its historical and visual context. Having a living, functioning agricultural landscape around the Reserve strengthens its integrity. Having a well managed Reserve strengthens the sense of place of southern Cassia County. Together, these elements preserve something that has disappeared from many parts of our country, but remains pivotal to the identity of our nation.

The mission of the Byway is distinct from that of the Reserve, and yet compatible. The Reserve is directed by a state and a federal agency. The Byway is a citizen process.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 2: Base Map

February 1998

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

The vision for the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is:

*“To preserve the unique rural heritage and historic, scenic, and recreational resources of southern Cassia County and provide opportunities for appreciative travelers to experience them. To manage Byway visitors so that they contribute to the local economy in ways that support, rather than, detract from, the agricultural way of life.”*

### **A.4 Byway Goals**

We have identified seven goals in support of the overall vision. These seven goals guide the actions that support the Byway. Three are primary:

- Protect the area’s rural heritage and historic, geologic, scenic, and recreational resources for future generations.
- Help visitors appreciate the area’s agricultural lifestyle, unique beauty, and other resources, while contributing to the local economy.
- Upgrade and maintain roads for the safety of visitors and residents.

Supportive goals include:

- Deal creatively with likely changes in southern Cassia County so that resources are protected and residents can benefit from the changes.
- Develop a voluntary, incentives-based approach to managing the Byway.
- Keep Byway planning and management citizen-driven.
- Develop partnerships to broaden the base of support for the Byway.

### **A.5 The State Byways Program**

The City of Rocks Back Country Byway is one of Idaho’s 17 scenic and historic Byways, all of which are designated in various partnerships of citizens, local entities, and state and federal agencies. Each Byway is unique in its management and its resources. Many offer motorists and bicyclists facilities such as turnoffs, overlooks, picnic areas, walkways, and campgrounds. Taken together they pass through some of the most breathtaking and intriguing landscapes in Idaho.

Being recognized as a state byway means that the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is highlighted on state highway maps and included in brochures describing Idaho’s byways. It also makes certain economic and planning expertise available from state and other agencies. Because of the designation, Cassia County was able to apply for and receive funds to prepare this report. The most important aspect of the designation is that a community or a groups of communities goes on record as recognizing the significance of its resources and the road running through them.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### A.6 The National Reserve

The heart of the Byway and the area that gives it its name is the internationally known City of Rocks National Reserve. City of Rocks, which lies along the Byway between Almo and Oakley, is a renowned geologic feature that was an important milestone on the emigrant trails west. To trail users headed to California and Oregon in the 1850s, it was a haven from harsh heat and winds—an oasis on an arduous journey.

To modern-day visitors traveling along the California Trail through City of Rocks, the landscape still looks and feels much the same as it did to the emigrants. The ability to recapture the emigrant experience is one of the Reserve's most important resources.

Included in the area is some of the oldest rock in North America, up to 2.5 million years old. Granite created from molten rock deep within the earth's crust intruded through older granite. As time passed, the overlying rock cracked, fractured, and eroded leaving the "City" as seen today.

City of Rocks is a major U. S. technical climbing area. It is known internationally for its number and variety of 5.13 and better (i.e., extremely challenging) climbs. Climbers, including many from overseas, come here expressly to climb rocks with names like Rabbit Rock, Morning Glory Spires, and the Breadloaves.

#### *A History of Recognition*

In 1964, because of its relationship to the California Trail and the history of American westward migration during the mid 1800s, the City of Rocks was designated a National Historic Landmark—one of our country's most significant cultural resources.

City of Rocks also was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1974 because it is a geologically unique area that exhibits nationally significant features. A portion of the Reserve that has remained relatively undisturbed by man's activities was designated a research natural area by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management prior to the establishment of the Reserve.

City of Rocks became part of the National Park System in 1988, when Congress established it as one of four National Reserves. Unlike National Parks, preservation of the Reserve depends on the cooperation of local landowners and other citizens, Cassia County, the State of Idaho, and the National Park Service. Approximately half of the lands in the Reserve are in private ownership. In addition to private lands, private grazing permits for allotments on



The City of Rocks has long been recognized as an area of historical and natural significance.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

public lands are currently in effect on most of the public lands in the Reserve, except Section 36 owned by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Grazing is not permitted in the research natural area (312 acres) even though it is within an allotment boundary.

The Reserve itself encompasses about 9 miles of emigrant trail routes, including some of the best preserved segments of such trails in the nation. It also contains at least 13 “inscription rocks,” where the emigrants recorded their names and dates on the granite, and two large conical rock formations, called the Twin Sisters, at the southern edge of the City of Rocks.

The plan for the Reserve recognizes and protects its historic rural setting, with grazing and other agricultural activities part of the Reserve experience. While the exotic rock formations that characterize the Reserve are not common elsewhere along the Byway, the rural setting is. This rural setting is the common thread along the Byway, including through the Reserve.

### *The Reserve’s Messages*

The National Park Service had drafted a comprehensive management plan for the City of Rocks. This document, which guides the development and management of the Reserve, identifies a number of themes to emphasized in communicating with the public.

They are (in priority order):

- The Oregon and California Trails (routes of the most important overland migration in American History);
- Geology (some of the oldest rocks in the country);
- Livestock grazing (ranching has proved sustainable);
- Diverse habitats (large number of sensitive and rare species, including golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, cliff chipmunks, and Townsend’s big-eared bats);
- Vegetative diversity (northern edge of the Great Basin, southern edge of the Snake River Plains, varied elevations and microclimates);
- Stage route (Kelton-Boise stage route [1869-1883] was the fastest way to get from the east to the gold fields of Idaho).

Two groups of these themes also are relevant to the Byway: the historic trails and stage route; and livestock grazing and its supporting landscapes

### *The Reserve’s Visitors*

The City of Rocks has been a popular destination for camping, sightseeing, picnicking, and rock scrambling for generations of local residents. Over the last two decades, it has become a destination for climbers not only from the region, but from all over the nation and the world. Recognizing the recreational value of the area, a state-owned section of land in the heart of the City of Rocks was transferred to the management of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Tourists have been coming to the area in increasing numbers ever since.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

A 1991 user survey showed that 40 percent of the visitors come from Utah, 35 percent from Idaho, and 25 percent from other states or countries.

Today, the most popular recreational activities in the Reserve are rock climbing, sightseeing, picnicking, camping, hiking, mountain biking, photography, and nature study. An amendment to the legislation establishing the Reserve allows for hunting to continue in locations and under conditions determined cooperatively by the Secretary of the Interior and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

### *The Reserve Plan*

Over the coming years as the Reserve's plan is implemented, a visitor center, amphitheater, and an RV park will be built near Almo. Information signs will be placed on state and interstate highways. Within the Reserve, a system of hiking trails will be created, interpretive signs will be installed, and scattered camping will be consolidated. For more detail, see the Comprehensive Management Plan, Development Concept Plan, and Environmental Impact Statement for the City of Rocks National Reserve, 1994.

### percent of visitors participating in activities at the City of Rocks National Reserve (1987)

Camping	31.9%
Rock climbing	31.4
Sightseeing	14.5
Off-road vehicle use	6.1
Mountain biking	4.9
Picnicking	6.4
Hiking	5.0

### **A.7 Public Input for Byway Planning**

During the week of November 10, 1997, public meetings were held in Albion, Almo, Malta, Oakley, and Burley to determine what each community's concerns were for the Byway and what type of tourism, if any, each community would like to promote. It was emphasized that each community could determine the degree and nature of its involvement in promoting the Byway as a heritage tourism attraction. For example, did a community want to become an integral part of the back county Byway experience? Did it want to "de-market" itself? Or did it desire something in between?

Becoming an integral part of the back country Byway experience requires significant marketing and promotion as well as providing visitor services. A community that wanted as little disruption as possible from Byway visitors was given the opportunity to "de-market" itself. This simply means that little would be done to call attention to that community either on maps or other promotional material. While no communities asked to be entirely left off the Byway map, there were requests to exclude certain places that could not bear the traffic.

Generally, the concerns voiced were common to all of the communities, although the intensity varied among them. The following is a list of the common concerns:

- Visitors' lack of respect for private property;
- Visitors' lack of understanding of the rural way of life (e.g., inappropriate behavior when tourists happen upon a cattle drive);

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Disruption of residents' daily lives (including hours of sleep) by tourists seeking directions;
- Inadequacy of road (Byway) in its current condition to handle existing traffic, let alone any increases;
- Fear of tourism substantially changing existing community character; and,
- Fear of losing a valued way of life.

The following matrix summarizes community concerns and opportunities. *(Also see Appendix A for summaries of meetings with area residents.)*

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## Summary of Community Concerns and Opportunities

(from Public Meetings, the Community Survey, and the Advisory Committee)

Segment of the Community	Byway Concerns	Byway Opportunities
<i>Land ownership/ranching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regulation might be imposed</li> <li>• tourists get in the way in this working landscape</li> <li>• want to benefit, if going to bear some of the cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• voluntary, with incentives</li> <li>• can help manage tourists</li> <li>• can help find funding and other resources</li> <li>• can provide signs to guide tourists</li> </ul>
<i>Retail/hospitality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tourists don't stop or spend much money</li> <li>• community as a whole may not be showing a friendly face to visitors</li> <li>• uncertain about what tourists want to buy</li> <li>• hard to get suppliers to serve our remote stores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visitor center, brochure, signs, etc. can help visitors find services</li> <li>• technical support would be available</li> <li>• can spawn new businesses</li> <li>• can provide jobs for local residents</li> </ul>
<i>Residents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more visitors can diminish community character and our lifestyle</li> <li>• may be places that are better to go than others</li> <li>• may be places to avoid presenting to the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can help maintain desired community character</li> <li>• signs would reduce questions</li> </ul>
<i>Tourism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• easy to get lost</li> <li>• road unsafe</li> <li>• uncertainty of services available</li> <li>• want to know more about what I am seeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• would update and develop tourist information</li> <li>• provide signs</li> <li>• help tourists understand appropriate behavior</li> </ul>

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### *Challenges*

In order for tourism to be more compatible with our rural communities, there are specific questions that need to be addressed, including:

- How can tourism help communities impacted by today's low cattle prices diversify their economic base while maintaining residents' valued rural lifestyle?
- How can conflicts between working agricultural operations and tourists be minimized?
- How are places of significant cultural, geological, and historic importance preserved while allowing public access to those sites?
- How can community character be preserved while encouraging tourism?
- How can visitors be encouraged to spend more time and money in the region?
- How can visitors be alerted to the availability of fuel and other services and overnight accommodations before they reach the Byway?
- How can the service industry and residents be encouraged to be respectful and helpful to tourists?
- How can residents become more trustful of the economic benefits of tourism?
- How will tourists be attracted to the back country Byway and ensured that they have a quality experience once they get there?
- How will visitors be attracted to the back country Byway given the current conditions of the roads and the related issue of safety?
- How can the private sector be encouraged to invest in travel-oriented businesses and services?
- Will tourism-oriented businesses be viable year-round?

## B. Why the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is so significant

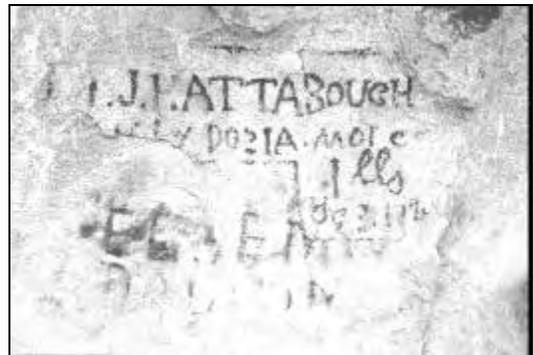
The Byway's resources are of national and international significance. An overview is presented here. (Major portions of this section are from the Comprehensive Management Plan for the City of Rocks National Reserve.)

### B.1 Cultural, Historic and Archaeological Resources

#### *Prehistory and Early History*

The earliest known cultures to inhabit present-day southern Idaho were big-game hunting peoples near the end of the Pleistocene Era. By 7,500 years before the present (BP) the cultural scene had evolved into the Desert Culture. By 5,000-4,500 years BP village life in pit houses had appeared along the Snake River in present-day southwestern Idaho. The history of the riverside villagers in southern Idaho spanned several thousand years.

Prior to the 1840s, Pocatello's Northern Shoshone band ranged over a broad expanse of country from upper Goose Creek and the upper Humboldt-Thousand Springs area to Raft River, with City of Rocks as a part of its territory. The first explorers of European ancestry to reach the area were trappers. But by 1826, the area lacked enough beaver to justify further attention.. Mountain men shifted from trapping to guiding overland emigrant parties, and attempted to find new routes between the Great Salt Lake and California.

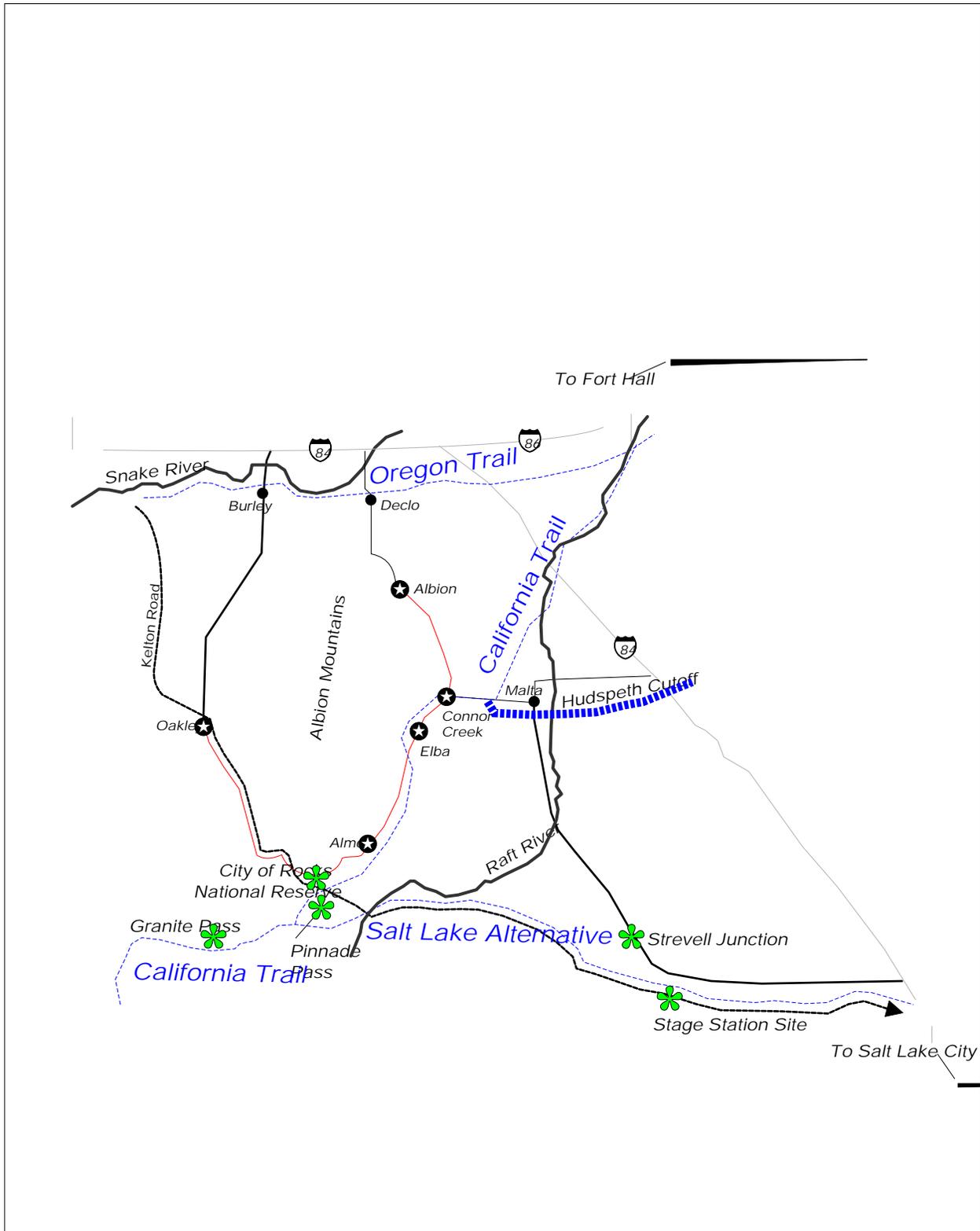


Early pioneers used axle grease from their wagons to write their names on the rocks at City of Rocks.

In 1842, Joseph B. Chiles found that Granite Pass offered a practical emigrant route for California-bound traffic. Continuing past City of Rocks and descending Raft River, they used the existing Oregon Trail route to Fort Hall and Soda Springs. Thereafter California Trail emigrants regularly passed through City of Rocks. (See Map 3.) By 1846 Granite Pass and City of Rocks began to accommodate overland emigrants to California.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 3: Historic Trails

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

In 1848, Mormons traveling overland from California to Salt Lake found that after passing through Granite Pass they could diverge over a new direct route from City of Rocks to Salt Lake without going to Fort Hall. The new route (named the Salt Lake Alternate) accommodated California Gold Rush overland wagon traffic that desired to detour via Salt Lake City on the journey west. This route provided emigrants with a passage around the marshes of the upper Raft River to a narrow pass that took the wagon trains over the summit of the mountain. The City of Rocks provided sheltered campsites with a good water supply and pasture for the emigrants' animals.



Ruins of former homesteads evoke a strong sense of the area's rich history.

Three major groups formed the overland migrations who passed through this area - pioneer families moving to California and Oregon, Mormons searching for a permanent settlement, and thousands of California 49ers heading west for the gold fields. The number of overland travelers reached its peak in 1852 when some 52,000 people passed over the California Trail and through the City of Rocks. The California Trail was the longest, most heavily traveled, and most significant route of westward overland emigration in 19th century American history (Public Law 102-328 designated the California National Historic Trail as a component of the national trails system). It was emigrant James F. Wilkins who identified the monumental granite assemblages as "the City of Rocks."

Following completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, a road was developed from Kelton, Utah, to Boise, Idaho, to provide a connection for postal services, express, and freighting operations between the railroad and the burgeoning mining communities of southern Idaho.

### ***Ranching***

Responding in part to the growing market for meat in the expanding Idaho mining communities, cattle ranching began in the City of Rocks vicinity in 1875. Limited tracts of good ranch land in the City of Rocks area soon led to population expansion in adjacent areas. From the late 1870s to the early 1890s Mormon settlements began to dot the valleys adjacent to City of Rocks. These agricultural settlements depended on the City of Rocks area for their water supply.

Increasing precipitation following a severe drought that ended in the late 1880s, and newly developed dry farming methods led to expansion of crop planting in the City of Rocks area between the mid-1890s and the 1920s. Sagebrush was cleared, fences were built, and grain and hay crops were planted. More arid conditions and a severe agricultural depression after World War I resulted in retrenchment of dry farming operations in southern Idaho during the 1920s.

(For more detailed history, see the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Reserve.)

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### ***Rural Heritage***

The rich history, as well as current agricultural activities, of this remote area explain why rural heritage is very important to the residents of southern Cassia County. To them, the area's history is much more than interesting historical facts, it is a way of life they are working hard to sustain.

Visitors to the area find the landscapes of southern Cassia County very scenic. But to residents it goes far deeper than mere appearance. Their forefathers struggled with adversity to make their lives and homesteads better for their children. The landscapes here starkly contrast with those of northern and western Cassia County, where landscapes are heavily irrigated and support a very different style of agriculture less rooted in the past. The rural heritage of southern Cassia County is really a complex social-environmental system. The visual elements are very important, but preserving them does not necessarily sustain the area's rural heritage.

Some visitors are content to drive a Byway and snap mental (or actual) photographs of an area. Others want to understand what they are seeing, how it is used. Residents of Cassia County have said they would rather see the later kind of visitor come to the Byway.



The area's rural heritage is prized by residents and visitors.

### **What is Heritage Tourism?**

Heritage Tourism is about traveling to natural, historic, and cultural attractions to learn about the past.

#### **What makes Heritage Tourism different?**

Heritage Tourism focuses on historical authenticity, long-term sustainability, and local involvement. It introduces the visitor to authentic places that make history come alive, and events that give individuals the opportunity to experience life as it used to be.

#### **Why does Heritage Tourism work?**

Heritage Tourism maintains a balance between tourism and the preservation of history and the built environment. By visiting heritage sites, visitors assist the local community in preserving these resources for the enjoyment of future generations. Heritage tourism:

- Balances preservation and protection with promotion
- Addresses growth management and capacity of historic, natural, and cultural resources
- Encourages authenticity rather than compromising with incompatible construction
- Communicates culturally sensitive issues without exploitation
- Understands what residents want to share and which "special places" to keep private

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

What is it that visitors find interesting and attractive along the Byway? It is the wide open spaces, the productive landscapes, the dramatic mountain backdrops, the small towns, cemeteries, irrigation ditches, fields, windbreaks, fences, farmsteads, corrals, cattle, and windbreaks of Lombardy poplars. These visible elements of rural heritage, which will continue to evolve over time, are as compelling as the unusual rock formations of City of Rocks.

There are many scattered cemeteries in southern Cassia County, mostly on private property. These cemeteries are of interest to visitors who are tracing their ancestors. (There is a registry of five cemeteries at the Oakley Museum.) In public meetings held in support of the Byway, there was willingness to help visitors interested in these cemeteries, but concern over trespassing on private property.

### B.2 Scenic Resources

Visitors—and residents—appreciate the dramatic and varied views along the Byway. The most dramatic scenery along the Byway is within the City of Rocks Reserve, where fantastic shapes have been eroded in the granite. Other panoramic views are from Howell Canyon Road (a loop tour off the Byway) and Mt. Harrison, from which you can see great distances. Views along the rest of the Byway are most often of vast openness with distinct mountainous backdrops. The foreground of these views are primarily agricultural, with grazing lands, irrigated hayfields, farms, and mile after mile of barbed-wire fence hung on cedar posts.



The views within the City of Rocks (left) and from the Howell Canyon Road (middle) are immediate and dramatic. Less dramatic, but no less compelling, are the expansive vistas across agricultural lands to distant mountain backdrops (right).

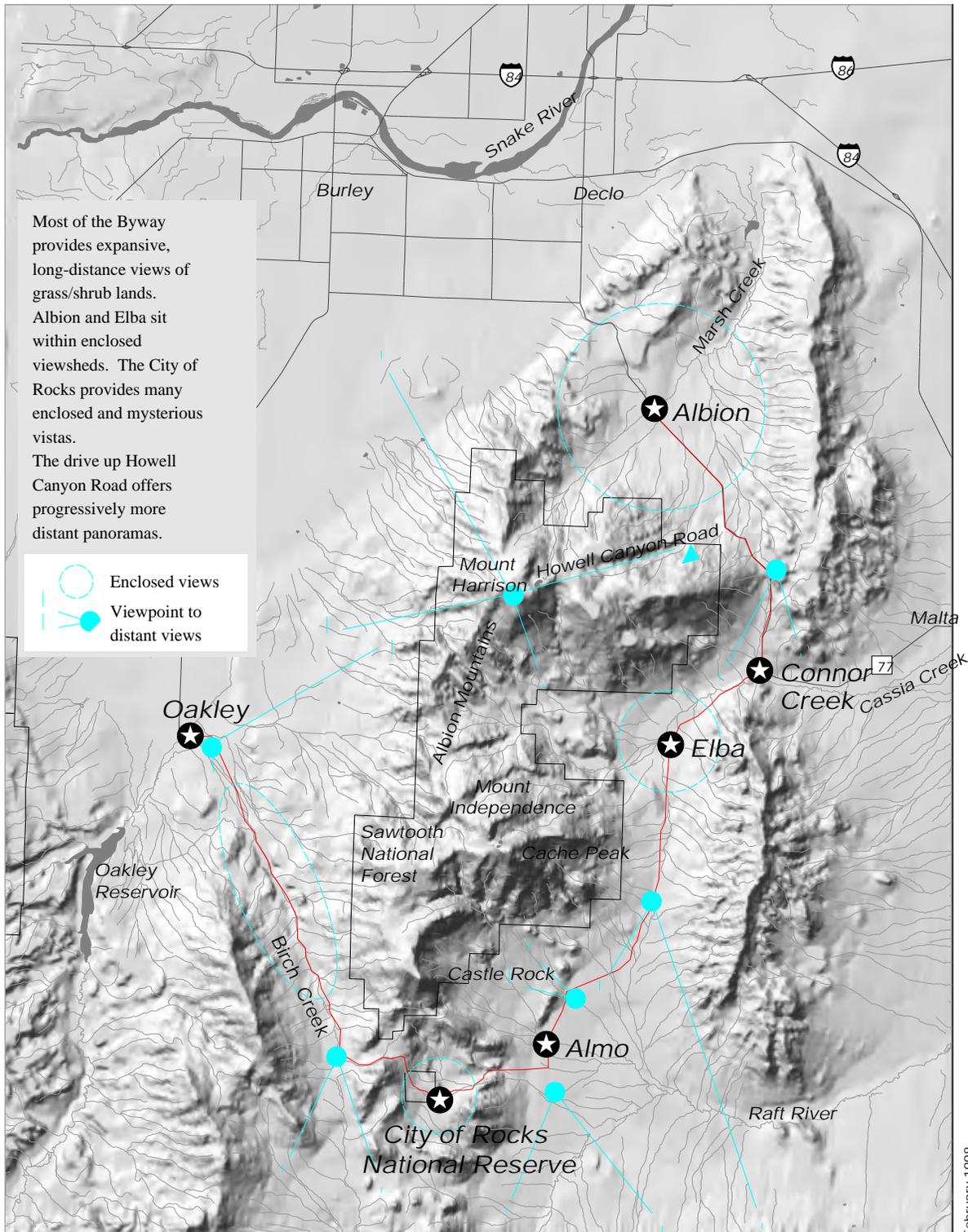
These juxtaposed views make the visual experience along the Byway remarkable. In particular, the contrast in scales between wide expanses and more enclosed views make the area particularly appealing.

Map 4 shows some of the major vistas along the Byway. As the landscape changes over time, it may be possible to guide less compatible future development to the less visually important areas.

Unlike many other Byways, the City of Rocks Byway was selected to include only scenic areas. There is no part of the Byway that does not offer significant views.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 4: Scenic Resources

February 1998

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### B.3 Natural Resources

#### *Geology*

The diverse geology along the Byway offers excellent educational and interpretive opportunities for all levels of interest. The Byway lies on the border of two distinctly different physiographic provinces—the volcanic Snake River Plain and the Basin and Range—and offers excellent examples of both. The Cotterrel and Jim Sage Ranges, which lie to the east of the Byway, are volcanic ranges approximately 10 million years old. A textbook example of “columnar jointing,” a cooling phenomena characteristic of basalt, can be seen from Connor Summit.

In contrast to the rugged, arid volcanic ranges east of the Byway, the Albion Mountain Range, which is surrounded by the Byway, is typical of the Basin and Range province—a north-south trending range surrounded by wide valleys filled with sedimentary rocks. The Albion Range is one of the most complete examples of a metamorphic core complex in North America. In this case the “core” contains the oldest known rock in Idaho, the Green Creek Complex, dated 2.5 billion years old. Ancient sediments deposited over the core were metamorphosed, then uplifted to form a string of domes that drape over the core. Middle Mountain, to the west of the Albion Range, is also part of this core complex.

The City of Rocks offers yet another type of geologic phenomena known as a pluton. A pluton is formed when magma doesn’t extrude onto the earth’s surface, as it does when a volcano erupts, but instead cools within the earth. When the surrounding older rock erodes, the younger pluton is exposed. In this case the Almo Pluton intruded into the Green Creek Complex about 30 million years ago. In fact, the Twin Sisters, the most famous of the City of Rocks formations, are actually not “sisters,” but distant relatives. The older is 3.5 billion-year-old Precambrian metamorphic rock. The younger is 70-million-year-old Cretaceous Tertiary igneous rock.

The most notable landscape feature of the City of Rocks is the abundance of prominent, steep-sided, smooth bedrock knobs. Typically granite erodes into rounded monoliths, but at the City of Rocks the complex pattern of joints has made for a fascinating assortment of shapes and spires, some as high as 200 feet.



A textbook example of “columnar jointing,” a cooling phenomena characteristic of basalt, can be seen from Connor Summit. This formation is similar to Wyoming’s famous Devil’s Tower.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### Vegetation and habitat

The dominant plant communities include: big sagebrush and grasslands, piñon/juniper woodlands and forests, mixed shrub, conifer/aspen woodlands and forests, riparian scrub and herbaceous wetlands, mountain mahogany scrub, high elevation meadows, and other unvegetated areas. (See Map 5.) These communities are described below.

The arid open valley floors of the Circle Creek basin and upper Emigrant Canyon were originally covered with a mosaic of vegetation dominated by open stands of big sagebrush with an understory of native perennial grasses such as Idaho fescue. Today, most of the area is covered by monotypic stands of big sagebrush interspersed with plants, such as tansy mustard, rabbitbrush, and Russian thistle, peppergrass, cheatgrass, and halogeton. Crested wheatgrass dominates the understory where private landowners and the Bureau of Land Management have planted it. Areas with sagebrush steppe vegetation in a natural condition are scarce in southern Idaho.

Although the physical landscape remains much the same as it was historically, the present plant and animal communities are considerably different from those seen by the first emigrants. Past and present uses have resulted in successional shifts toward a dominance of sagebrush, piñon pine, juniper, and non-native plants. Riparian communities are no longer as prevalent near streams and springs, and a number of wildlife species, including bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, gray wolf, beaver, and grizzly bear, have disappeared from this area. Management to preserve natural processes and to restore more natural conditions to sites that have been disturbed by human use would also enhance the historic scene.

The piñon/juniper woodlands occur adjacent to sagebrush areas in rockier and rougher terrain. These woodlands are dominated by single-leaf piñon pine and Utah juniper interspersed with mountain big sagebrush, curlleaf mountain-mahogany, Rocky Mountain juniper, chokecherry, bluebunch wheatgrass, and Great Basin wild rye. The Reserve contains the northern-most range of the single-leaf piñon pine. The piñon pine seed is edible and is gathered today by local residents and historically (through the early 1900s) by Indians. The trees of this cover type may grow to 30 feet in height, but are generally less than 15 feet tall. They are bushy and almost as wide as tall.

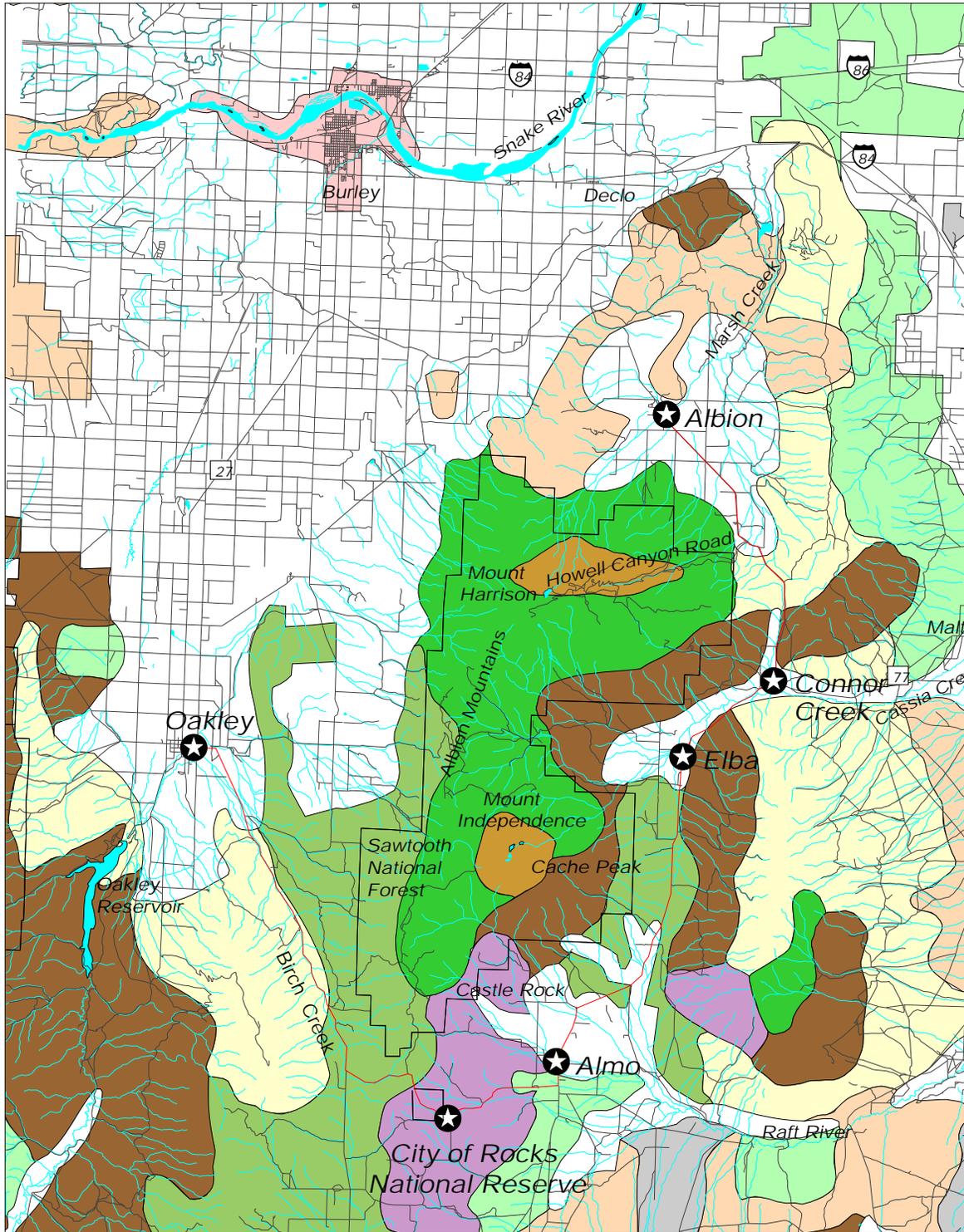
The higher slopes are covered with mountain big sagebrush, mountain snowberry, serviceberry, and bitterbrush, with other shrubs, grasses, and herbs growing in the openings between the shrubs. The mountain woodlands above the Byway are characterized by groves of aspen, stands of Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine, or open meadows located on the upper stony/grassy slopes of the Reserve. Quaking aspen communities occur in canyons containing perennial or intermittent streams. Narrowleaf poplar, thinleaf alder, serviceberry, chokecherry,



With the large elevational differences along and near the Byway comes a wide range of habitat types.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 5: Vegetation Types

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Agriculture                       | Mountain brush                                     |
| Low and fringed sagebrush mosaic  | Agricultural crop and pastureland                  |
| Mountain and low sagebrush mosaic | Mountain sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush mosaic |
| Canyon shrub                      | Mountain sagebrush/forest mosaic                   |
| Brushfields                       | Recent timber harvest areas                        |
|                                   | Urban  |

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

and snowberry occur in the understory of the aspen groves. Rocky Mountain juniper occurs more frequently in the aspen understory than elsewhere in the area.

Riparian vegetation is found adjacent to stream courses and springs. Riparian zones are associated with water and occur as important transition zones between aquatic and terrestrial communities. These transition zones have a greater quantity and diversity of plant species than adjoining land. They provide food, water, and cover for both wildlife and livestock. Historically, overgrazing altered much of the riparian areas, causing accelerated soil erosion and elimination of typical riparian plant species. Today, through proper grazing techniques, riparian vegetation is making a comeback. Typical riparian plants include aspen, willow, Rocky Mountain maple, box-elder, thinleaf alder, chokecherry, rushes, sedges, and bluegrasses.

On some higher mountain slopes above the Byway, nearly pure stands of curlleaf mountain mahogany are present. They occur next to or are surrounded by piñon/juniper on sites that are less rocky and steep. Other species found growing with the mountain mahogany include limber pine, mountain snowberry, Idaho fescue, and bluebunch wheatgrass.

### **Species of Special Concern**

Wildlife and native plants are important parts of the region's rural heritage. They helped sustain early residents and visitors to the area. Some of the plants and animals from those earlier days are no longer found here, others are now classified as threatened, endangered, or rare. Because of the wide range in elevation within a relatively short distance, there is a great diversity of plant communities. This makes the area even more interesting to explore.

Species considered candidates for threatened or endangered status include ferruginous hawk (which nest in the area), and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Some heritage visitors to the Byway will be interested in knowing about or, if appropriate, seeing these species as well as others in the area including:

- Simpson's hedgehog cactus (BLM sensitive species),
- Pallid bat,
- Piñon mouse,
- Christ's Indian paintbrush (globally rare), found on Mt. Harrison,
- Richardson's bitterweed (state rare), Raft River,
- Shasta aster (state rare), found on Mount Harrison,
- Kruckeberg's sword-fern (state rare), found at City of Rocks,
- Nesting are for long-billed curlew (species of special concern), Raft River Valley,
- Cliff Chipmunk (federal watch species, state species of special concern), City of Rocks.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### **B.4 Recreation Resources**

There are many opportunities for recreation within a compact area in and around the Albion Mountains. The most popular Byway activity is sightseeing: taking in the expansive vistas and observing the details of the local geology and agriculture. At City of Rocks, visitors can rock climb, camp, hunt, and picnic. U.S. Forest Service and BLM lands near the Byway provide opportunities to fish, hunt, ski, picnic, camp, mountain bike, and hang glide. People enjoy driving up the recently paved Howell Canyon Road to take advantage of panorama after panorama and, in the fall, vibrant colors of changing leaves.

The town park in Elba has become a popular spot for family reunions. Extended families camp at the park for several days and beside enjoying each other's company, visit many spots around the county.

## C. The Byway and its Region

In planning the Byway it is important to understand how conditions change along the Byway, as well as the characteristics of the Byway's context.

### C.1 The Seven Areas

Driving the Byway from end to end is like moving from room to room in a house. But, instead of walls, the Byway has topographic features that define where one area ends and another begins. Importantly, most of these areas have a rural community in the middle as a focus. We have identified seven distinct areas along the Byway. (See Map 6.)

*Driving the Byway  
from end to end is like  
moving from room to  
room in a house.*

#### *A. Albion (with Howell Canyon loop tour)*

The City of Albion (population 305) sits in the middle of the Albion Valley, surrounded by the Albion and Cottrell Mountains and the East Hills. This agricultural valley, at the eastern terminus of the Byway, is open and expansive. The agricultural fields are punctuated with farmsteads and windbreaks of Lombardy poplars.

First-time visitors to the city are surprised to find a large campus of handsome stone buildings, the former home of the Albion Normal School. One of the buildings houses the newly opened Albion Museum, which tells the story of these buildings, as well as other areas of interest nearby in the county.

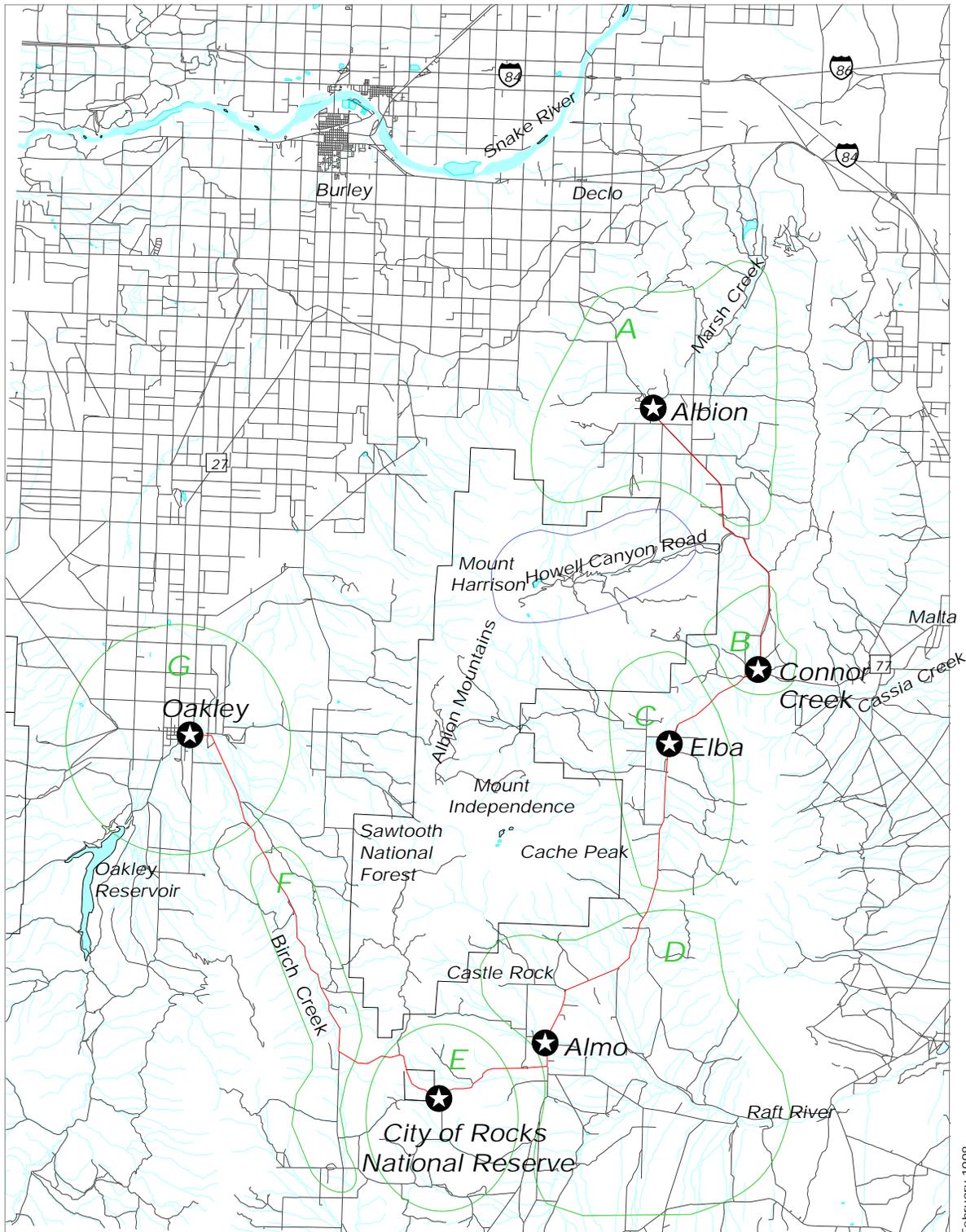
Around the main settled area of Albion, there are attractive farms and farmsteads, with a constant backdrop of mountains.

Four miles southeast of Albion, Howell Canyon starts its climb into the Albion Mountains and to the top of 9,265-foot Mt. Harrison. At each curve of the road, there are distant views of Cassia County and beyond. Mt. Harrison is an ideal place for a visitor to get an overview of the region and understand the route of the historic California and Oregon trails. U.S. Forest Service camp and picnic grounds are located near the top.

Also along Howell Canyon Road is the Pomerelle Ski Area, with 500 skiable acres, a vertical drop of 1,000 feet, and three lifts. Of the 22 named trails, 35 percent are for beginners, 40 percent intermediate, and 25 percent advanced. In addition to alpine skiing, there also are opportunities for snowboarding and cross country skiing (9 kilometers of trail). Average annual snowfall is 500 inches. A plan to amend the Pomerelle Ski Area's existing special use permit is under review. This amendment would include expanding from 522 to 565 acres, constructing a lodge learning center, developing new runs for beginning skiers, doubling the existing parking area to include spaces for snowmobile truck and trailer parking, and developing ancillary facilities such as an amphitheater and hiking and mountain biking trails.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



February 1998

Map 6: Distinct Byway Areas

- |                 |               |                         |                               |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A Albion Valley | C Elba Valley | E City of Rocks Reserve | G Oakley Area                 |
| B Connor Creek  | D Almo Area   | F Birch Creek Area      | Loop Tour: Howell Canyon Area |

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

From Pomerelle, the new Skyline Trail heads south until it reaches the City of Rocks. The trail, which traverses a wide range of topography, accommodates hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

### ***B. Connor Creek***

The Connor Creek area, where the Byway takes a right-angled turn and leaves State Highway 77, forms a transition zone between the Albion Valley and Elba. At Connor Creek, Cassia Creek cuts between the Cottrell and Jim Sage Mountains. It was through this opening that thousands of travelers along the California Trail approached the Albion Mountains and a resting place at City of Rocks. Byway visitors to this area see very expansive views to the east.

There is an overlook 3 miles north of Connor Creek for viewing the Jim Sage Mountains. A gravel road from this point to the east leads 3 miles to a Bureau of Land Management picnic area at Coe Creek.

### ***C. Elba***

The picturesque Town of Elba is nestled between the Albion and Jim Sage Mountains on Cassia Creek. The valley here is smaller than that surrounding Albion, and the sense of enclosure contrasts with the nearby vast openness. Several historic homes as well as the historic Relief Society Building are now owned by the town. The farms in this valley are very attractive, many with large Lombardy poplars planted in rows. This is one of several major access points into the Sawtooth National Forest.

### ***D. Almo***

The Town of Almo, with a population of about 250 people, lies south of Elba. The town sits near the head of the Upper Raft River Valley. The layout of Almo is typical of Mormon communities: a wide north-south main street, the ward church one block off the main intersection, the school and store at this junction, houses and barns clustered around the main intersection, and fields radiating away from the town center. The Tracy Store is one of the oldest continuously operated stores in the state. Almo provides the nearest services for those visiting the City of Rocks National Reserve and its visitor center.

### ***E. City of Rocks***

Two miles west of Almo is the City of Rocks National Reserve—in many ways the heart of the Byway. Established in 1988, the Reserve encompasses 14,300 acres of land (about half privately owned) and is renowned for its scenic, geologic and historic significance. Many of the granitic rock formations are over 2.5 billion years old, some of the oldest rocks found in North America. The rocks were shaped by weathering forces to form the shapes you see today. City of Rocks is one of the finest technical rock climbing sites anywhere. About 350 routes have been

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

described to date. Spires 100- to 300-feet tall provide most of the climbing opportunities. Inscriptions left by pioneers and written in axle grease on many spires are accessible by foot. During the Westward expansion, the City of Rocks area was an important landmark along the California Trail. The Kelton-Boise stage route also traveled through the Reserve. Remains of the station site are still visible.

Recreation at the Reserve includes rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, pleasure driving, walking, and camping. Facilities at the Reserve include vault toilets and primitive campsites. The Reserve visitor center is located nearby in Almo. Area roads typically are closed in mid-winter due to snow. The active season for the Reserve is April to November.

### *E. Birch Creek*

The most enclosed landscape along the Byway is along Birch Creek, running from the Reserve toward Oakley. This was the route of the historic Kelton-Boise Stage Line. Much of the road is through a narrow canyon, with very enclosed views, and an occasional corral or cabin.

### *F. Oakley*

The City of Oakley is a large community at the western terminus of the Byway. Oakley has a National Historic District that includes many Victorian homes. It is the predominant commercial and residential center in southwestern Cassia County. Oakley was colonized by Mormons and served as the religious center of the county until Burley became the county seat. The town has a developed downtown district of commercial and residential uses that has been designated a National Historic District. Quarrying of mica-like sheets of ferrous-colored Oakley stone is a major industry. Oakley is surrounded by irrigated fields of potatoes and sugar beets. There is access to the Skyline Trail to the east of Oakley, in the Sawtooth National Forest.

## **C.2 Burley**

Burley (population 8,702), the county seat of Cassia County, provides all major visitor services. Burley is within a 45-minute drive or less of any part of the Byway. It serves as a major gateway to the Byway and is home to the Cassia County Museum and its extensive exhibits about the county.

## **C.3 Malta and Declo**

Two other communities in the county are important to mention because they serve as gateways to the Byway. Malta (to the east) and Declo (to the north) are located between the Byway and the interstate highway. Many visitors traveling from the interstate pass through these towns and naturally look for directions to the Byway.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### C.4 Public Agencies

Approximately 85 percent of the length of the Byway passes through private lands. Public lands, however, are typically within a few hundred feet to a few miles away. While the lands immediately adjacent to the Byway are generally in private ownership, the preponderance of more distant lands is managed by federal agencies. Three agencies manage most of the public land. (See Map 7.) The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages most of the Albion Mountains as part of the Sawtooth National Forest. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages extensive land holdings in southern Cassia County. The State Lands Board owns a checkerboard of lands around the Byway. Each of these agencies has a specific mission in managing the public lands.

*While the lands immediately adjacent to the Byway are generally in private ownership, the preponderance of more distant lands is managed by federal agencies.*

#### *Cassia County Zoning*

##### Multiple Use Zone

Most of the private lands along the Byway are zoned for multiple uses. The purpose of this zone is to classify land considered to be of remote location, less productive land, or otherwise situated so as to require no regulation except that certain uses are not permitted without first obtaining a special use permit. This zone provides maximum opportunity for private property owners to make decisions for the development and management of the areas in the county that are not heavily populated, but are used for multiple uses, principally for agriculture and for producing forage for wildlife and livestock.

This zone includes most of the Public Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Reserve Lands administered by the National Forest Service in Cassia county.

##### Interim Historical Preservation Zone

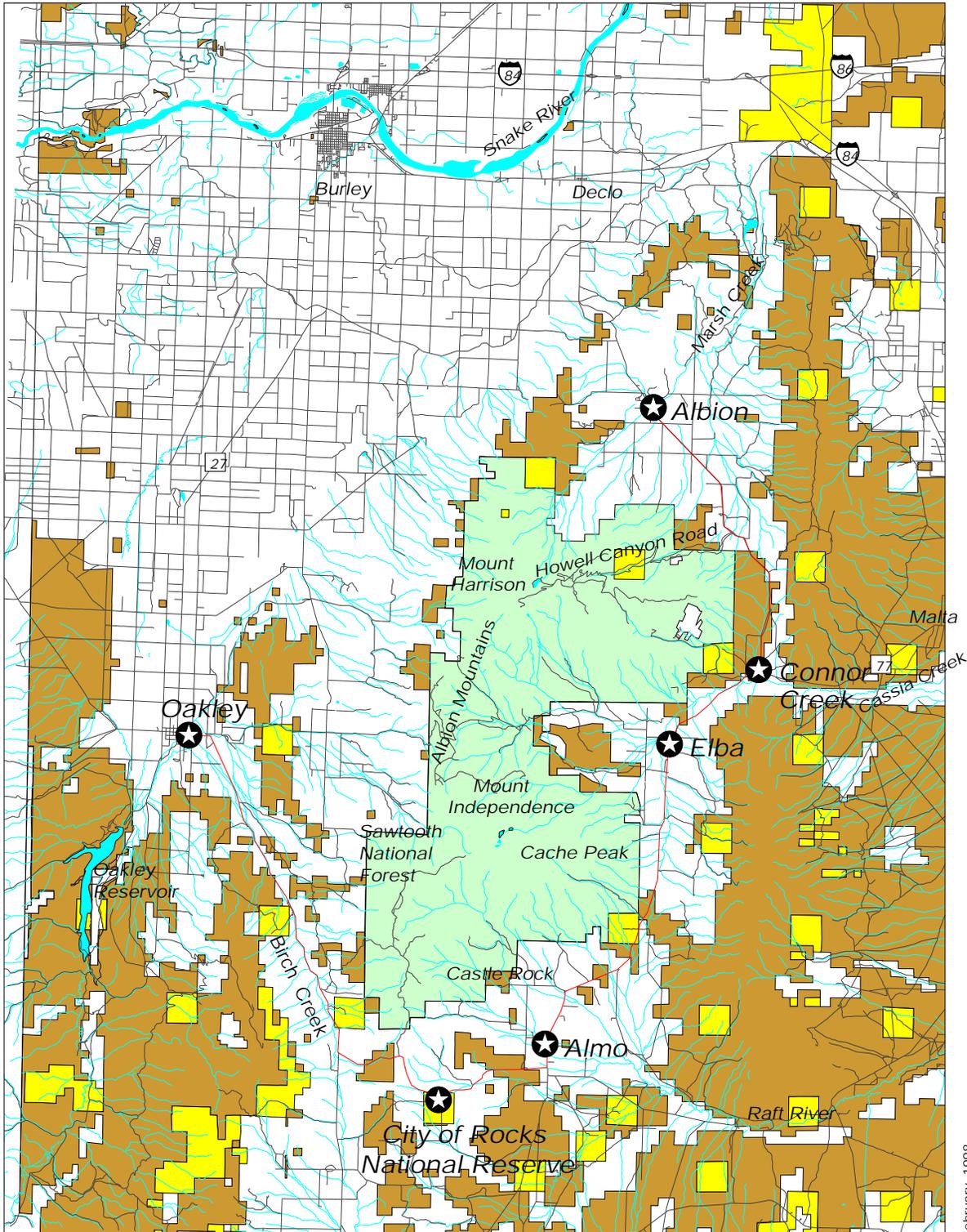
The Cassia County Planning Commission has designated the City of Rocks National Reserve an Interim Historical Preservation Zone. The intent of the Interim Historical Preservation Zone is to preserve and protect the geologic features, rocks, and remnants associated with the California and other trails, the historic sites and current ranching activities that contribute to the scenery, mystery, and silence of the western landscape, and to manage recreation in these areas to ensure preservation and protection of resource values.

Land uses in the Interim Historical Preservation Zone should be limited to those typical during the period 1850 to 1988. Construction and development should be required to conform to and maintain the purpose of the Reserve.

Publicly maintained facilities for education, sight-seeing and appropriately restricted recreational uses are permitted. Residential uses are limited to one residence for each private

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Cassia County, Idaho



Map 7: Public Land Ownership

- U.S. Forest Service
- Idaho State Land Board
- Bureau of Land Management
- Other Lands

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

land owner existing as of the date of passage of this ordinance. Architectural design is subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission to ensure conformity to the purpose for which the Reserve was established.

### ***US Forest Service***

The Sawtooth National Forest is managed for watershed and soil protection, grazing, wildlife habitat, timber, and recreation. The Albion Mountain Division is a popular recreation area. Mount Harrison is the home of Pomerelle Ski Area, an alpine ski resort with a triple and double chair lift. Both groomed and ungroomed cross-country trails are marked in Howell Canyon, which also is a popular snowmobiling area. A warming hut is provided for winter recreationists.

After the snow melts, visitors can reach the major developed campgrounds at Thompson Flats and Lake Cleveland. Picnic sites are also located here and at Twin Lakes and Bennett Springs.

Lake Cleveland, a high alpine lake, is set in a cirque basin—one of two found south of the Snake River. The road continues past the lake to the top of Mt. Harrison, where a Sawtooth National Forest fire lookout facility is maintained from July 1 to September 30 each year (elevation 9,265 feet above sea level). This popular visitor attraction has a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside—the Sawtooth and Teton Mountains, the cinder buttes of the Arco Desert, and the Snake River Plain.

Rocky Mountain Quartzite, better known as “Oakley Stone,” has been mined on the Albion Mountain Division since the early 1900s (and is mined more extensively south of Oakley on BLM and patented lands). By the late 1950s, this durable and colorful stone had been marketed throughout the United States.

### ***BLM***

Like the Forest Service, The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages its lands for multiple objectives. BLM manages the majority of lands within view of the Byway. Grazing is the primary use of these lands.

### ***Idaho State Lands Board***

Proceeds from State Lands go to support schools (85 percent of the total) and nine other institutions. Most of the State Lands in the Byway area are under 10-year leases for grazing. There are also some mineral leases for extracting building stone. Currently, the State Land Board is not disposed toward selling lands, so the emphasis is on leasing. If visitor facilities are built near the Byway, they could be located on State lands leased to the Byway.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### *National Park Service and Idaho State Parks*

These two agencies jointly manage the public lands within the City of Rocks National Reserve. Management is summarized in the Comprehensive Management Plan.

### **C.5 Current Visitors and Visitor Services—Who is coming?**

In 1991, the Outdoor Recreation and Wilderness Assessment Group, a research unit of the U.S. Forest Service, published a report on the market research findings of visitors to Sawtooth National Forest. A total of 717 surveys were completed and analyzed. Of this total, 42 percent were completed in the Burley Ranger District, which encompasses the Byway area. The following characteristics represent Byway visitors at the time of the survey:

- By gender, males comprised 72% of visitors surveyed;
- More than half (51%) of visitors were between 25 and 44 years of age;
- Nearly 94% classified themselves as “white, not Hispanic”;
- Just over half had a high school education or less;
- Nearly 62% were employed;
- Nearly half (49%) reported a household income of \$25,000 to \$49,999; an additional 29% reported household incomes of \$10,000 to \$24,999;
- 80% were Idaho residents;
- 60% traveled 50 miles or less (one-way) to the site; and
- 88% were repeat visitors.

Visitors who responded to the survey were grouped by the main activity for which they had come to the area. The demographic characteristics of rock climbers, a major segment of visitors using the Byway, are:

- Male;
- More than 93% were under age 45;
- Over 90% white;
- More likely to have higher education levels and incomes than the average visitor surveyed;
- More likely to be students (33% versus 7% on average);
- More likely to be in households with two adults and no children;
- More likely to be first time visitors;
- Nearly 50% came from more than 500 miles away;
- Over 40% stayed for 3 to 7 days, and 13% stayed for 1 to 2 days.

Another activity segment in the USFS survey was pleasure driving. Demographic characteristics of the pleasure driving segment are:

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Older travelers (60% over age 45);
- More educated (36% have some post-secondary education);
- More likely to be retired (36%);
- More likely to be repeat visitors (88%);
- Majority (68%) traveled 50 miles or less (one-way) to visit the site where they were surveyed.

### *Existing services for visitors*

The cities of Burley and Twin Falls, less than 1 hour drive from the Byway, have a host of travel-oriented services—lodging facilities, restaurants, gas stations, and auto service stations. Communities along the Byway, however, currently provide some services geared toward the traveling public. An inventory of available visitor services was conducted in November 1997. It showed:

	Albi on	Elba	Almo	Oakley	Decl o	Malta
<i>Gas stations</i>	1	0	0	3	1	1
<i>Restaurants/delis</i>	3	0	0	2	0	1
<i>Grocery/ convenience stores</i>	2	0	1	2	2	1
<i>Lodging facilities</i>	1	0 (RV park planned)	1 (Bed and Breakfast)	1 (Bed and Breakfast)	0	1
<i>Banks</i>	1	0	0	1 ATM	0	0
<i>Museums</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Historical markers/ monuments</i>	1		1	0	0	0
<i>Public parks</i>	1	1	1	1	0	0



## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### C.6 Support and Emergency Services

While some services such as gas stations and food stores are available in several towns along the Byway, all support and emergency services are available in Burley, the county seat. No part of the Byway is more than a 45-minute drive from Burley.

Emergency services for the Byway and the surrounding communities are provided through the Cassia County Sheriff's Department. Most of the communities have medical response units.

### C.7 Accessibility

Activities along the Byway cater to every level of physical ability. The major activity, sightseeing, does not necessarily require mobility. The major land management agencies are mandated by law to provide recreational activities for a wide range of abilities. Thus, there are camping and picnicking facilities that are wheelchair accessible at both the National Reserve and the National Forest. In general, however, the Byway passes through back country that may not be well suited to visitors who are physically challenged.

### C.8 Interpretive Services

There are several sources of interpretive information about the Byway's landscapes that give visitors background to help them understand what they are seeing.

The most complete is the Cassia County Museum in Burley, which has extensive exhibits on many aspects of county life and history. The newly created Albion Museum, housed in a renovated building on the Albion Normal School Campus, has exhibits on the history of the school and the area. A new museum is being planned in Oakley. With this third museum, there will be an important source of interpretation in both Byway terminus towns, as well as the county seat. Additional exhibits are planned for the City of Rocks National Reserve's new visitor center in Almo

Various organizations have placed interpretive signs in the general area of the Byway. They present information about the area's historic trails and historical figures such as Diamondfield Jack. The



The Cassia County Museum in Burley has extensive exhibits on many aspects of county life and history.



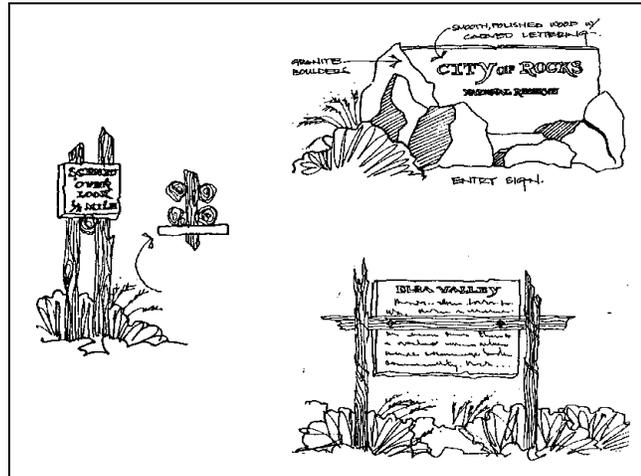
Diamondfield Jack is the main character in one of the colorful chapters in Cassia County's history.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

greatest concentration of such signs is within the City of Rocks Reserve. More are planned as part of implementing the Reserve's comprehensive management plan. The Cassia County Design Guidelines include design suggestions for interpretive and other signs.

Interpretive signs are also planned by the U.S. Forest Service for the top of Mt. Harrison, a location that provides views to many parts of the Byway and the routes of the historical trails.

Two tapes—one audio and one video—have been produced for the Byway or the Reserve and are on sale. The video tape was produced by Idaho Public Television and tells the story of the City of Rocks National Reserve and how uses are managed. The audio tape was produced commercially. It provides a guided tour of the Byway and roads connecting the Byway to Burley. These two tapes help visitors understand what they see as they travel the Byway.



Interpretive and directional signs should be constructed of materials that relate to their surroundings.

### C.9 Current Transportation Issues

#### *1. Overview of Roadway Segments*

When Cassia County residents get together to discuss the Byway, the first concerns they typically mention are the condition of the road and travelers' safety.

The City of Rocks Back Country Byway is used by local, tourist, and through travelers who use various types of vehicles along the roadway—passenger cars, commercial vehicles, pickup trucks, farm/ranch equipment, semi trucks and recreational vehicles. Portions of the Byway also pass through open range land, and livestock are often herded along the roadway between pastures. These multiple uses require unique cooperation among Byway travelers.

Each of the roadway segments that comprise the Byway has unique characteristics and distinct traffic activity. Those characteristics are described below and key current transportation and safety issues are highlighted for individual segments of the route. The information is based on descriptions provided by local roadway maintenance staff with input from county planning and law enforcement representatives. In addition, certain transportation statistics are maintained for the Byway segment along Idaho 77 and for the portion of roadway within the City of Rocks National Reserve.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### Albion to Connor Creek

Idaho 77 between Albion and Connor Creek is a 2-lane state highway maintained by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). The road segment is approximately 11.5 miles in length with an average pavement width of 24 feet and shoulder widths ranging from 1 to 3 feet. Terrain along this portion of the route consists of both flat and rolling highway segments within a rural developed setting. In 1995, approximately 6.5 miles of this segment north of the Connor Creek Junction was repaved.

Current traffic count data from ITD indicates average daily traffic (ADT) volumes along Idaho 77 range from 400 to 500 vehicles, with truck traffic making up 8 to 13 percent of the daily volumes. Higher volumes occur on the road segment closest to Albion. Travel along this portion of the Byway is projected to increase by approximately 25 percent over the next 20 years, reaching volumes ranging from 500 to 600 vehicles per day. Both existing and future 20 year traffic volumes are well below the actual capacity of this roadway.

Overall, this segment of the Byway is in good condition and presents minimal safety problems. The average accident rate documented by ITD is less than five per year. There are currently no outstanding maintenance needs related to traveler safety.

### Connor Creek to Elba to Almo

The portion of Byway between Connor Creek and Almo is approximately 17 miles long and has a maximum pavement width of 20 feet. The Town of Elba is located just south of the Connor Creek Junction. Built in the early 1950s, the 2-lane roadway lacks shoulders, is deteriorated in areas, and currently needs extensive pavement maintenance work. No road striping divides the travel lanes.

The roadway serves ranching and farming areas and accommodates nearly two thirds of the traffic destined for the City of Rocks National Reserve. Due to the diverse nature of travelers along this route, traffic activity can be found at all hours of the day and night. Local and tourist travelers occasionally present challenges for one another due to their differences in familiarity with the road and differences in vehicle types. The narrow paved cross-section tends to influence some drivers to travel in the center of the road without anticipating oncoming traffic. This can present safety problems especially when approaching vehicles include semi trucks, farm equipment, horse trailers and recreational vehicles. There are virtually no turnouts that allow vehicles to pull over for safety purposes or to view historical and scenic landmarks or vistas.

Maintenance along this segment of the Byway is provided by the Cassia County Unorganized Highway District. Cassia County is responsible for approving and allocating an annual budget for the District's overall maintenance needs, which include this portion of the Byway in addition to other local roadways. Most of the maintenance activity along the Byway involves pothole patching, snow removal, and sign upkeep. Due to funding limitations, pavement repair (i.e., chip-seal) work cannot be accomplished where needed.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Formal accident records are not maintained by the County or District for this segment of roadway. Based on anecdotal accounts provided by law enforcement personnel, however, there are no location-specific problems where high numbers of accidents occur. Most accidents are due to driver error where travelers do not anticipate the unique or substandard character of the roadway. Many accidents also involve wildlife (specifically, deer) and cattle. Local travelers are more aware of the potential for animals on the road, but tourists are often surprised by the occurrence, even though wildlife and livestock warning signs exist. Generally, informational, regulatory, and warning signs along the route are adequate.

Based on information collected by ITD, existing daily traffic volumes along the roadway between Connor Creek and Almo range from 140 to 400 vehicles. May through September typically represent the highest volumes of traffic associated with the City of Rocks National Reserve. Peak traffic through the Reserve generally occurs in June or July.

### Almo through the City of Rocks National Reserve

The Byway segment extending south of Almo and through the City of Rocks National Reserve is approximately 9 miles long. Beginning at Almo, this segment passes through the Circle Creek entrance on the east side of the Reserve and continues to the Emery Canyon entrance on the northwest side of the Reserve. The 2-lane roadway is an improved gravel surface, approximately 20 feet wide. A dust guard is used on the County roads in this area to minimize fugitive particles in the air. Maintenance along this route both inside and outside of the Reserve is provided by the Cassia County Unorganized Highway District.

There is a spur road that provides access south to the Twin Sisters rock formation and then extends further west to the Emigrant entrance in the southwest portion of the Reserve. This spur road is maintained by the District and is almost always open year-round, even when the road through the City of Rocks is closed by snow. The City of Rocks works with the Cassia County Unorganized Highway District to assist with funding needs and maintenance staff requirements for Reserve-related work. The County and the Reserve also share the use of machinery for general roadway upkeep.

In retaining a back country historic character along the roadway, narrow rolling segments provide slow speed and reasonably safe travel for private vehicles. The feeling of being allowed to experience nature in an undisturbed state is enhanced by the road surface and the way the road is situated within the landscape. The main east-west roadway through the Reserve is primarily in good repair, with the exception of a segment immediately within the Emery Canyon (northwest) entrance. The first 200 to 300 yards of roadway inside the Reserve is extremely rutted and can present some difficulty for travelers in vehicles with low clearance.

Daily traffic counts are conducted along this segment by the City of Rocks National Reserve. The Reserve uses traffic counts at each entrance to prepare visitation summaries for both the National Park Service (NPS) and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. For 1996 and 1997, no counts were documented for December through March. Operation of the Reserve was

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

limited during these months and the road was closed due to weather conditions. During 1993 and 1994, the Reserve accommodated traffic throughout the year. The highest traffic volumes recorded over the last 5 years occurred in 1994, with a total of nearly 58,000 vehicles passing through the three Reserve entrances.

Table 1 presents 1996 monthly traffic count data for each of the City of Rocks entrance stations. Average daily traffic counts for each month are shown in Table 2. Information for 1997 was not available at the time this document was prepared.

For 1996, May represented the highest monthly traffic count with over 11,000 vehicle entries. Average daily vehicle entries for all stations range from 180 to 360 vehicles during the peak months of May through October. As shown in Table 1, the Circle Creek entrance on the east side of the Reserve accommodated the greatest amount of traffic with 61 percent of the vehicle entries. The Emery Canyon entrance served approximately 29 percent of the traffic, while the Emigrant station served the least amount with a 10 percent share.

<b>1996 Monthly Entrance Station Counts The City of Rocks National Reserve</b>				
Month	Circle Creek (east)	Emigrant (southwest)	Emery Canyon (northwest)	Total
<i>January</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>February</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>March</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>April</i>	1,637	225	178	2,040
<i>May</i>	6,590	1,450	3,134	11,174
<i>June</i>	3,149	1,205	1,634	5,988
<i>July</i>	5,413	378	2,632	8,423
<i>August</i>	4,229	414	2,383	7,026
<i>September</i>	3,194	506	1,775	5,475
<i>October</i>	4,099	695	1,597	6,391
<i>November</i>	1,072	116	374	1,562
<i>December</i>	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,383 (63%)</b>	<b>4,989 (10%)</b>	<b>13,707 (29%)</b>	<b>48,079</b>

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

<b>1996 Daily Average Traffic Counts the City of Rocks National Reserve Entrance Stations</b>				
Month	Circle Creek (east)	Emigran t (southwe st)	Emery Canyon (northwest)	Total
<i>January</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>February</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>March</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>April</i>	55	8	6	68
<i>May</i>	213	47	101	360
<i>June</i>	105	40	54	200
<i>July</i>	175	12	85	272
<i>August</i>	136	13	77	227
<i>September</i>	106	17	59	183
<i>October</i>	132	22	52	206
<i>November</i>	36	4	12	52
<i>December</i>	0	0	0	0

### City of Rocks National Reserve to Oakley

The westernmost segment of the Byway extends for approximately 11.5 miles between the Reserve's Emery Canyon entrance and the City of Oakley. The majority of the 2-lane roadway is a gravel surface with the exception of a paved segment that extends approximately 4 miles south of Oakley. No significant dust problems exist on the gravel segments. Road surface widths range from 20 to 24 feet. The paved roadway section is approximately 24 feet wide and has no center stripe dividing the travel lanes. No formal traffic count data is maintained for this route other than the data collected at the City of Rocks entrance. Count data from the Reserve indicates that this is the least traveled segment of the Byway.

Maintenance along this portion of the Byway is provided by the Oakley Highway District. Roadway repair work is accomplished as needed to keep the route operable at a minimum level. There is no fixed annual budget for maintenance, so work is limited to what can be accomplished with available funds.

The portion of the road leading into the City of Rocks Emery Canyon entrance is kept open as weather allows. The road is typically closed temporarily during the winter months. Just outside the Reserve's entrance, the Byway connects with the route that extends north to Oakley. This

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

road also continues south to Moulton (the site of a former town) and then across the Utah boarder. This southern segment, which is not part of the Byway, is kept open year round. The road also provides access to the City of Rocks Emigrant entrance, located just east of Moulton.

There are currently no location-specific accident or safety problems along this portion of the Byway. According to the Oakley District maintenance staff, accidents that occur are primarily due to driver error or tourists who are unfamiliar with the road. Some conflicts do occur when oncoming vehicles are required to pass in narrow segments. Larger vehicles make it difficult to pass and create hazards for oncoming traffic due to the lack of shoulder area or turnouts.

The primary maintenance need along this route is for a new gravel surface. Additional signing would be helpful but may be difficult to maintain given past problems with vandalism.

## II. The Byway in the Future

**T**he majority of those commenting at the recent Byway public meetings or through the community survey favored a modest effort to manage the Byway. They wanted the Byway to work for rather than against them. Better informational signs for tourists are needed to help them find their way and keep them from getting surprised by cattle drives in these working landscapes. Economic development associated with the Byway should be in keeping with the historic rural setting of the area.

Some people did not support the Byway concept. They expressed concern for the effects of more visitors on their rural way of life. Still others wanted a substantial amount of promotion and activity for the Byway.

Because of this range of responses, we developed and evaluated three levels of effort for the Byway: minimal, moderate, and major. This helped citizens understand the range of options mentioned by their neighbors.

The lowest level of involvement, **minimal**, represents only slightly more than currently is underway. It acknowledges, for example, that the City of Rocks National Reserve, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Idaho State Byway program are carrying out projects that will effect the kinds, numbers, and experiences of visitors coming to the Byway. With minimal effort, these agencies and other groups could be better coordinated. This approach tries to maximize the efficiency of what is already happening, but not instigate major, new actions.

A **moderate** level of effort goes a little farther, seeking to

*Because of the range of public response, three potential levels of effort for the Byway were developed: minimal, moderate, and major.*

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

involve more of the stakeholders, especially private property owners, and also targets limited heritage tourism as an appropriate form of economic development for the county. Devoting a **major** effort would involve creating a more substantial Byway organization and taking more steps to protect our rural heritage.

In most cases moving from a minimal to a moderate to a major level of effort is simply doing more of the same thing, for example, developing more interpretive materials or securing more grant money. Over time individual communities may increase or decrease their levels of effort as they desire. It isn't necessary for all communities to have the same level of involvement with the Byway. Communities can choose to feature or even "demarket" themselves. If they choose the latter, their town can be downplayed on maps and other promotional material. This tends to keep people moving along the Byway to a community or other feature where their attention is drawn.

Each of these three levels of effort is detailed later in this handbook. First, some of their common features are described.

### A. General Concepts for Managing the Byway

The following general steps can be helpful in meeting the challenges of managing heritage tourism while respecting local values, regardless of the level of overall effort. These actions should help minimize conflict between residents and visitors, and are applicable at any levels of effort.

1. Keep all Byway activities focused on the main goal of preserving Southern Cassia County's rural heritage.

2. Target the appropriate market – Who will tread most softly?

Heritage tourism is a niche within the tourism industry and is the most appropriate market for this Byway given citizen concerns about disruption to daily life and desires for some economic diversification. The region's rich history and culture are attractive to heritage visitors, who are interested not only in recreation, but also in learning about the unique history and qualities of a place or region. Over time, it is possible to shift the kinds of tourists that are coming without increasing the numbers significantly.

3. Ensure that Byway marketing and promotion are community driven.

If community support does not exist for the Byway, the traveler will most likely have a negative experience and not want to return. Those residing in the region know the history and beauty of the land better than anyone and are in the best position to offer an authentic, quality experience for the traveler.

4. Install adequate and strategic directional and informational signs.

Informational and directional signs should be used to minimize conflict between ranchers and visitors by giving visitors the information they need not to be disruptive. At the most basic that information is how to find where they want to go. It also should include warning of potential

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

hazards, like driving certain rough roads without a four-wheel drive vehicle, and instructions on how to respond when coming upon a cattle drive.

In addition, signs for the Byway could be installed along I-84 to provide direction to the Byway for those who have come to explore the Byway and the region, as well as to make the traveling public aware of its existence. Often referred to as ‘Tourist Oriented Directional Signs’ (TODS), informational and directional signs can be funded through the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), the Idaho Department of Commerce, or local county and municipal revenue sources. Nationally approved symbols for services should be incorporated whenever possible. Logos for specific businesses are also encouraged. (See the discussion of directional signs below.)

### 5. Use interpretative signs to educate visitors.

Additional interpretative signs can inform travelers about a byway’s historic and cultural significance instilling respect for what they are seeing and experiencing. The region is rich in history. Commemorative road markers can serve to inform visitors about the area’s rich history and direct them to appropriate vantage points along the scenic byway. Signs should inform the visitor of what is special about the area. Initial themes to develop include: the early Mormon Pioneers; the California Trail; and, stagecoach and pony express routes and their respective roles in the westward expansion. In addition, develop interpretive roadside and trailside signs describing the unique geology of the area. (See the discussion of interpretation below.)

6. Share with the public unique attractions or aspects of a community or the region as a means of preserving the resource and a valued way of life.

Sharing unique attractions or aspects of a community or region with the public, for example the sites related to the Diamondfield Jack trial, to encourage residents to preserve that resource. Also, the vast majority of U.S. citizens reside in urban areas and find learning about and experiencing the farming and ranching way of life a valuable opportunity. Landowners could offer tours or hands-on experiences on a working farm or ranch.

Celebrate the culture. Promote and market existing festivals and the museums in Oakley and Albion. Develop more events that celebrate our heritage—e.g., the emigrant experience and the Dutch oven cooking for which the region is known.

Further, the area has considerable recreational opportunities. More and more, people are looking for vacation opportunities that provide both outdoor and educational activities. In addition to the region’s historical significance, it offers great fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, downhill skiing at the Pomerelle Ski Area, mountain bike riding, world-class rock climbing at the City of Rocks, and even hang gliding off Mt. Harrison. Consider mapping some of the regional mountain biking and hiking trails, as well as other recreational sites. Such maps should be developed only after determining what communities believe should be shared.

### 7. Learn the mutual benefits of plain and simple hospitality.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Hold training sessions for those businesses that have frequent contact with the traveling public to instruct them on the mutual benefits of hospitality and joint marketing (e.g., advising visitors of nearby restaurants, lodging facilities, museums) that can encourage more time and money to be spent in a community and the region.

### 8. Take advantage of regional tourism marketing opportunities.

Communities can achieve some economies of scale by joining together in a regional tourism marketing program to present the unique aspects and traditions of each community within the region. The communities and agencies promoting the nearby Sawtooth Scenic Byway and Thousand Springs Scenic Byway could be included for a more comprehensive approach.

### 9. Use local resources for technical assistance.

The communities along the Byway can look to local organizations such as the County's Economic Development Specialist, South Central Idaho Rural Development Association (SCIRDA), Region IV Development Association, the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce, and the State of Idaho's Department of Commerce for technical assistance in their marketing efforts. This in turn will raise these organizations' awareness of the opportunities provided by the Byway and the surrounding region so that they can also responsibly and appropriately promote the byway.

### 10. Consider future funding opportunities to preserve and care for resources.

As time goes on, consider setting aside a portion of tourism revenue to care for resources.

## **A.2 Roadway Management**

One of the most important aspects of managing the Byway, citizens commented repeatedly at the public meetings, is improving and caring for the road itself. There is widespread concern that portions of the road are in poor shape and will be even less safe if more tourists use it.

In improving the roadway along the City of Rocks Back Country Byway, it is important to recognize the needs of the wide range of groups affected by the roadway's design and management. The Byway currently is important to local residents who use the facility on a daily basis for personal and commercial transportation purposes. A significant number of tourists also rely on the Byway to accommodate their travel needs while touring southern Idaho and visiting the natural, historic, and recreational resources in the immediate vicinity. Also, many local businesses, landowners, and residents are directly and indirectly impacted by the Byway's ability to provide safe and efficient travel. Recommendations for roadway improvements must be sensitive to the needs of the local communities and responsible tourists, as well as, funding limitations which ultimately bound what can be achieved.

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## A.3 Directional and other signs

Directional signs are an important part of a successful byway and another topic that the Cassia County public particularly felt needed special attention to help reduce the number of lost visitors.

### 1. Byway signs

City of Rocks Back Country Byway signs should be placed so that they identify all Byway directional changes and the starting and ending points of the Byway. Such signs help people keep on the Byway. Currently there are no such signs and visitors must use a map to know if they are on the Byway.

### 2. State Byway signs

These signs, which are available for use statewide on any byway, are not particularly attractive and clutter the Byway. We recommend working with the Idaho Transportation Department to customize Byway signs.

### 3. Outdoor Advertising Controls

Designation as the City of Rocks Back Country Byway and receipt of federal ISTEPA funding require compliance with outdoor advertising controls that apply to scenic byways on federal-aid roads. No new off-premise business signs are allowed along the Byway. In most cases, existing signs that do not comply do not need to be removed. The goal of this requirement is to maintain an attractive right-of-way for the Byway and avoid distracting clutter that might otherwise result.

### 4. TODS Program

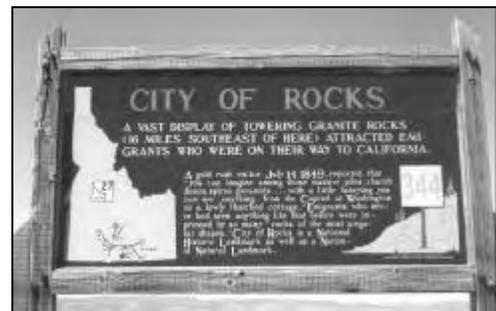
Tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS) are one means of providing limited outdoor advertising along the Byway. These signs, which are more common in some states than others, are of uniform size and color, with white letters on a blue background. Business owners pay the cost of the sign, sign installation, and annual maintenance fees. This approach allows local business to make their presence known to Byway travelers in a way that doesn't distract from the scenic quality of the Byway.

### 5. LOGOS Program or other Interstate signs

At most interchanges along interstate highways there are small signs that advise motorists of the motels, restaurants, and other relevant businesses at that exit. In some instances, byways have also placed their logos on



Placing Byway signs at important intersections would significantly reduced the number of lost tourists.



Interpretive signs will help interpret historical, cultural, natural, and recreational resources along the Byway.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

such signs to show travelers where to exit to reach the byway.

Less common, but also a possibility, is a large, separate sign along an interstate devoted solely to announcing the Byway. Such signs help visitors unfamiliar with an area find the Byway.

### ***6. Interpretive Signs***

As part of the Byway plan, a system of interpretive signs is planned. Signs will interpret historical, cultural, natural, and recreational resources as described in the Interpretive Planning section of this report. Many such signs are already planned by both the U.S. Forest Service and the City of Rocks Reserve.

## **Transportation Contacts**

Several transportation organizations and agencies were consulted in developing this plan and may be useful references in the future: Cassia County Law Enforcement, Oakley District Road Maintenance, Cassia County Unorganized Road District Maintenance, Transportation Advisory, Idaho Transportation Department, Shoshone District (208-886-7800), and Idaho Transportation Department, Headquarters (208-334-8214).

### **A.4 Visitors**

The Byway's full title includes the words "back country" and also the name of a site of considerable importance in American history: the City of Rocks. Thus, even the name of the Byway communicates the essence of opportunities offered visitors: rural heritage and history.

"Back country" is a place that is a little rough and tumble. There is a spirit of adventure and authenticity there, not the homogeneity of much of our country today. It is a living landscape where visitors see firsthand what it is to work the land and make it productive. This rural heritage coupled with the area's vast historical significance are extremely attractive to heritage visitors. Typically heritage tourists tread lightly and show more respect for the places they visit. They have other characteristics, too:

A 1997 survey conducted by the Travel Industry Association found that heritage tourists tend to be slightly older (late 40s to early 50s); better educated; spend more money (\$190 more per trip); prefer small, independent lodging facilities such as bed and breakfasts; and tend to stay longer in an area (4.7 nights vs. 3.3 nights) than other tourists. Further, heritage tourism is a large and growing market. The travel association reported that approximately 65 million Americans took a trip in 1996 primarily to visit a historic site or attend a cultural activity. This trend is likely to continue as the baby boom generation ages.

Knowing the most compatible kinds of tourists to attract and knowing what their interests are allows our communities to manage tourism in ways that enhance, rather than distract from our

rural heritage. In this way, tourism can be part of the process of protecting and sustaining our rural heritage.

### A.5 Interpretation

Frequently visitors drive the Byway and visit the City of Rocks National Reserve without really understanding much of the historical significance of the area. There are several interpretive signs along the road, especially in the Reserve. But it takes real initiative on the part of the visitor to learn more than the most basic information about the area. Interpretation is especially interesting to heritage visitors.

While this handbook does not fully outline an interpretive plan for the Byway (that should come later), it does provide a broad framework for understanding the role of interpretation along the Byway.

#### *What Environmental Interpretation Is and What It Can Do for the Byway*

There are a variety of definitions for environmental interpretation, each with merit and none that really does the full job of defining the term. Quite simply, *interpretation is an approach to communication.* Environmental interpretation attempts to translate the language of nature and the voices of history into stories and experiences everyone can enjoy. It is a communication *process* that involves and provokes visitors to appreciate and learn more about the object being interpreted.

The key to making this happen is in six principles of interpretation developed in the 1950s by the interpreter Freeman Tilden. Whether the object is being interpreted by an exhibit, a guided hike, a brochure, or an astronomy program, each interpretive message will be enhanced by incorporating Tilden's six principles. They are:

- Interpretation must relate to something with which the visitor is familiar;
- Information, alone, is not interpretation;
- Interpretation combines many arts and sciences;
- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation;

### Interpretation Glossary

Interpretation - Based in natural and cultural history, this communication process gives visitors an insight into the world around them by using a wide variety of methods that attempt to *connect* visitors and resources.

Non-Personal Services - Interpretive activities that communicate messages through the use of media such as exhibit panels, brochures, audio tapes, etc.

Personal Services - Interpretive activities that communicate messages through the use of one-to-one (or one-to-many) communication between the interpreter and visitors such as guided hikes, information desk contact, campfire programs, etc.

Kiosk - An upright, sometimes multi-sided stand that houses interpretive exhibit panels. It may be roofed or not roofed.

Low-Profile Wayside Exhibits - Wayside exhibits mounted in stanchions angled at approximately 30 degrees toward the viewer and having the front edge of the exhibit between 32 and 34 inches above the ground.

Lure Brochure - A brochure designed predominantly to *lure* visitors to a specific site or resource through the use of lively photographs and minimal text. It is dispensed to visitors through a variety of channels *before* they arrive at the site.

Self-Guided Trail - An interpretive medium that may use a brochure correlated to numbered stakes, an audio device, or other medium to interpret specific resources at designated locations along a designated route.

Stanchion - A framing and mounting system that supports and holds interpretive wayside exhibit panels.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Interpretation should aim to present a whole story rather than only a part;
- Interpretation for children should not be a dilution of interpretation for adults; it requires an entirely different approach.

### ***Purposes of Interpretation***

Interpretation is *not* equivalent to marketing. It may be used as a marketing tool designed to create a sense of appreciation-of-place in visitors and make them want to learn more about a special resource or return to that place. Interpretation alone, however, cannot promote a destination.

Interpretation is *not* information. Visitors will gain knowledge through interpretive media but the way information is presented makes it interpretive. There are a variety of interpretive media and all have advantages and disadvantages. It is important to understand enough about the *resources*, the *visitors* and the *message* that the three can be blended into a plan that includes themes, locations and types of media that provide the best solution for each interpretive site.

What interpretation planning can do for the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is to provide a framework and process to guide the design, development and operation of interpretive services. Though still broad in scope, planning connects goals, management and resource requirements, and interpretive opportunities. Interpretation is the bridge between those goals and the visitor.

Effective interpretation results in better-informed and more respectful visitors. It does not necessarily attract new visitors. It is important that visitors understand resource protection and their role in protecting the cultural and natural resources they are there to enjoy.

### ***Implementing Interpretation***

Interpretation can utilize a variety of media. For example, to inform them about the sights along the Byway, visitors may use a driving tour-guide in the form of a brochure with numbered stops or an audio-cassette tape. This type of guide could direct visitors to other places of interest or to adjacent sites or facilities. Visitors wishing to hike may be encouraged to take advantage of walks around historic sites, self-guided nature trails, or wildlife viewing sites. Interpretive programming might also include guided walks, living history demonstrations, and slide or video programs. The sites and frequency of programs of this sort could be rotated according to visitor use patterns. Strategically located interactive videos could become a popular option to a staffed information center. The variety of interpretive media is endless. Planning will link the most appropriate interpretive stories and media to locations that best depict the stories.

To communicate consistency to Byway visitors, messages must not conflict with one another and the visual quality of facilities and improvements must be consistent. An interpretive plan can provide consistency over time and as staffing changes. Although implementation of the plan may take place in phases and can use existing facilities where appropriate, visitors should leave with the impression that the Byway is a unit unto itself and has consistency from one stop to the next.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### *Statements of Significance*

Statements of Significance capture the essence of the Byway's importance and serve as the basis of the themes to be communicated to visitors. They are important in identifying resource management and interpretation priorities and defining the kinds of most appropriate visitor experiences. The overall focus of the Byway will be expressed by the Statements of Significance.

The following are the Statements of Significance for the City of Rocks Back Country Byway:

The route of the Byway follows an ancient travel **corridor**. Shoshone and Bannock Indians followed the route as a footpath, as did mountain men later. Later, the route was taken by thousands of westward bound gold-seekers and settlers who followed the California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternate. In subsequent years, the Boise-Kelton stage line followed some of the same route and today it is the path, at least in part, of the City of Rocks Back Country Byway.

The **landscape** of the area has been sculpted from the upper parts of the Cassia batholith, a gigantic mass of rock that intruded into older metamorphic rock about 30 million years ago. The Green Creek complex contains some of the oldest rocks in the United States, about 3.5 billion years old. Rocks have eroded into a fascinating assortment of shapes as high as 200 feet.

Most of the land in private ownership along the Byway is used for domestic livestock **grazing and dryland farming**, important bases for the local economy, currently and historically. Some of the same ditches used today were used prior to the turn of the century. **Range wars**, between those who raised cattle and those who raised sheep were played out here.

**Recreational activities** in the area include: hiking, camping, hunting, skiing, fishing, biking, golf, photography and rock climbing.

Significant **historic sites** in the area, in addition to the City of Rocks, include: the Oakley Historic District, Albion Normal School campus, wagon ruts associated with the California Trail and other trails, and the Cassia County Courthouse nearby in Burley.

### *Interpretive Theme*

Themes are the ideas about the Byway that are so important that we want every visitor to understand them. To develop the theme, common threads are derived from the Statements of Significance. These common threads become the basis of the themes. Themes capture the essence of the entire site. If there is one message visitors should take home with them, it is the theme. All interpretive messages should relate back to this theme. The preliminary theme we have developed for the City of Rocks Byway is:

#### **Theme:**

Because of its location in the broader region and the resources it possessed, the area now traversed by the City of Rocks Back Country Byway was an important crossroads and resting place over many years. These same characteristics prompted agricultural development that survives today. Together the area's agricultural present and its rich historical past make for a rural heritage that is widely appreciated.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### ***Recommended Media***

Keeping with the rural character of the area, interpretive media recommendations for the Byway have been kept to a few simple and direct recommendations. Existing and proposed museums in Burley, Albion, and Oakley have the potential for playing a very important role in presenting the region's stories. Also, major levels of roadside interpretation will occur within the Reserve (according to a plan already developed by the National Park Service) and the Sawtooth National Forest (according to their plan). Complementary to the exhibits there (at both moderate and major levels of Byway planning) would be sites along the byway with kiosks or low-profile wayside exhibits.

#### Guidelines for kiosks and low profile wayside exhibits

Interpretation at identified sites will stimulate visitors to learn about the natural and cultural resources specific to each site and to drive this Byway. Each kiosk should be designed so that visitors will be encouraged to explore the area in more depth. Interpretation at each site will stand alone, yet will blend thematically with the Byway theme.

Outdoor exhibits should be developed using digital methods of fabrication. This medium has been part of interior exhibits for quite some time and has recently been successfully tested against fading, initiating its use as outdoor interpretive signs. It gives more flexibility than former methods and is less expensive to replace.

Since exhibit fabrication methods, such as fused PVC, works from computer-scanned originals, the number of colors that can be utilized in the design of an exhibit panel is unlimited. The embedded product is based on 3mm or 6mm expanded Sintra. The image is fused into the Sintra using heat and pressure then coated with an adhesive 5 mil UV overlamine (Lustex). The resulting interpretive panels are capable of accepting photographs, water color or acrylic paintings as original backgrounds to the interpretive messages.

Exhibit framing should be of powder-coated steel that will meet or exceed the existing NPS standards. These framing / mounting systems should be designed to hold the interpretive panels but not overwhelm the panel design. Their purpose should not be to attract visitor attention but to support the message that is the focus.

#### Guidelines for Exhibits

- Fabricate wayside exhibit panels using one of the common digitized methods
- Install kiosks and low profile waysides at existing developed facilities
- Make certain that selected sites for interpretive media meet Americans With Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
- Develop wayside panels in the standard 36"x24" or 36"x48" for kiosks
- On exhibit panels, use a visually pleasing balance of graphics / interpretive text to tell the story
- Use color to enhance exhibit design, attract visitors, and serve as a common element throughout Byway interpretation

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### Guidelines for brochures

In order to promote the Byway to potential visitors, a “lure” brochure can be designed to “lure” visitors to the area through the use of enticing photographs and a very limited amount of text. This brochure would best be disseminated through local Chambers of Commerce, Forest Service, and Park Service visitor information centers and the State Tourism agency.

A companion brochure could also be developed as a “fulfillment” brochure. This brochure “fulfills” the visitor’s search for information about the byway once they are in the area. It might take the form of a stop-by-stop booklet or an overview of the natural and cultural history of the area, directing visitors to specific locations along the byway.

### Guidelines for worldwide web site

With the accessibility of the Internet, many visitors have changed how they plan their vacations and recreation time. Numerous parks, forests and byways already have web sites through the Great Outdoors Recreation Pages (GORP). Many states, including Idaho, have web pages especially for scenic byways. Other states have general tourism or recreational listings, (i.e., Idaho Tours) and state resource listings. It may be possible to share an existing website, such as that of the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce. A web site is an excellent way to promote the Byway at very little expense and to educate visitors to the area prior to their visit.

### Existing interpretive material

Fortunately, there currently are several audio-visual materials directly related to the Byway. An audiotape (“City of Rocks: Your personal guided tour of Cassia County,” 1991) tells the story of southern Cassia County along an 85-mile loop from Burley through the Reserve and back to Burley. A videotape (“City of Stone”) was produced by Idaho Public Television to tell how new recreational uses of the Reserve (and by extrapolation other parts of the county) have blended with more traditional rural activities.

## Interpretation Contacts

Linda Young, Assistant Chief of Interpretation, Yellowstone National Park, Box 168, Yellowstone, Wyoming 82190, (307) 344-2259. Linda’s specialty is non-personal services (interpretive media that uses print or methods other than personnel to directly communicate the message).

Larry Mink, Interpretive Program Coordinator, Idaho State Parks, 4100 Greenbriar Drive, Boise, ID 83705, (208) 334-4180 ext. 257. Larry represents interpretation for Idaho State Parks, co-manager of the City of Rocks Natural Reserve and as such, he oversees interpretation in all of Idaho’s State Parks.

Rosemary Miller, Executive Secretary, Trinidad-Las Animas Economic Development Council, 136 W. Main Street, Trinidad, CO 81082, (719) 846-9412, Rosemary has coordinated implementation of interpretive media on the Santa Fe Trail Scenic Byway in Colorado, a byway with a character not unlike that of the City of Rocks Back Country Byway.

National Association for Interpretation, P.O. Box 1892, 528 S. Howes, Ft. Collins, CO 80521, (970) 484-8283, The National Association for Interpretation has a listing of professional interpretation contractors and other suppliers who would be able to design and fabricate the interpretive media recommended in this plan. Ask for a copy of NAI’s *Green Pages*.

### **A.6 The factors affecting Tourism and Marketing**

In communities throughout the country, tourism is becoming an increasingly important source of revenue. In the State of Idaho, tourism is the second largest industry. However, the south central section of the state traditionally has been perceived as primarily a travel corridor. The State, Cassia County and others are working together to change this perception. Major infrastructure investments have been made in the region by federal, state, and local government and the private sector in traveler services. The south-central region contributes nearly \$100 million annually to Idaho's regional economy from non-resident sources and \$122 million from residents.<sup>1</sup>

Further, a substantial number of visitors are coming to visit the City of Rocks National Reserve, the Back Country Byway, and the surrounding region. Cassia County reports that there were approximately 95,000 visitors to the City of Rocks in 1996. This number is not likely to decrease over the coming years and could easily increase as a result of the:

- above-mentioned infrastructure investments;
- designation of the Byway by the state in 1996 and ongoing promotion;
- possible expansion of the Pomerelle Ski Area within the next 10 years; and,
- potential of receiving some spillover of visitors attending the 2002 Olympics, just three hours to the south in Salt Lake City.

The designation of the Byway has provided a useful mechanism to help communities manage current visitation, as well as prepare for possible increases of tourism. With designation has come additional funding to prepare this handbook and facilitate discussions in the communities about the appropriate balance between economic development and the conservation of resources. It also has provided an opportunity for each community to discuss which resources they want to share with visitors and it positions them to reap more benefits and less impact from visitors.

### **A.7 Rural Heritage Stewardship**

Substantial government management of resources is in place along the Byway.

- The National Park Service and other federal and state agencies own and manage a majority of the lands within the City of Rocks and Cassia County has zoned the private lands within the Reserve as part of a Historic Preservation Zone.
- The majority of the lands visible from the Byway are federally owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. (The Idaho State Lands Board also manages a scattering of lands throughout the area, mostly for grazing, but they may be leased or sold.)

---

<sup>1</sup> *Assessment and Policy Plan*, Idaho State Parks and Recreation Department (May, 1997)

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- The balance of the lands along the Byway are privately owned and have been placed in a Multiple-use Zone by Cassia County. These areas are primarily used for agriculture and scattered housing, and therefore are compatible with the Byway's rural heritage objective.
- Thus, there is some form of protection—from highly restrictive to slightly restrictive—on all lands visible from the Byway.

Will these existing levels of protection be enough to ensure that the views from the Byway will stay as attractive into the future as they are now? Not necessarily, but that may not be a problem given most people feel that there is little likelihood of major development along the Byway any time soon.

### *Stewards of our Rural Heritage*

There is another form of protection in place that is probably more significant than any of the others. It is not regulatory and doesn't involve government. It is based on the respect that residents of southern Cassia County show for each other and the place where they live. For the most part, lives here are closely intertwined, and have been for generations. People tend to think of the community good when making decisions that affect others. This stewardship is a strong form of resource protection that is very effective within a close community. (Problems can arise, however, when actions are taken by persons from outside the community, who may not understand the local land ethic.)

Protecting resources along the Byway is best encouraged and sustained by supporting agriculture and strengthening rural communities. Ranchers and other rural residents are the best stewards of the area's rural heritage. It is their heritage, something they have a vested interest in protecting.

While overall fewer areas are privately owned, they are the areas that most directly affect the experience of driving the Byway: the foreground. The quality of this foreground is crucial to the experience of Byway visitors. Thus, impacts of development are not simply a matter of the quantity of development, but also its placement. Even limited development in the foreground, if it is incompatible with the area's rural heritage, could seriously degrade the Byway experience.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

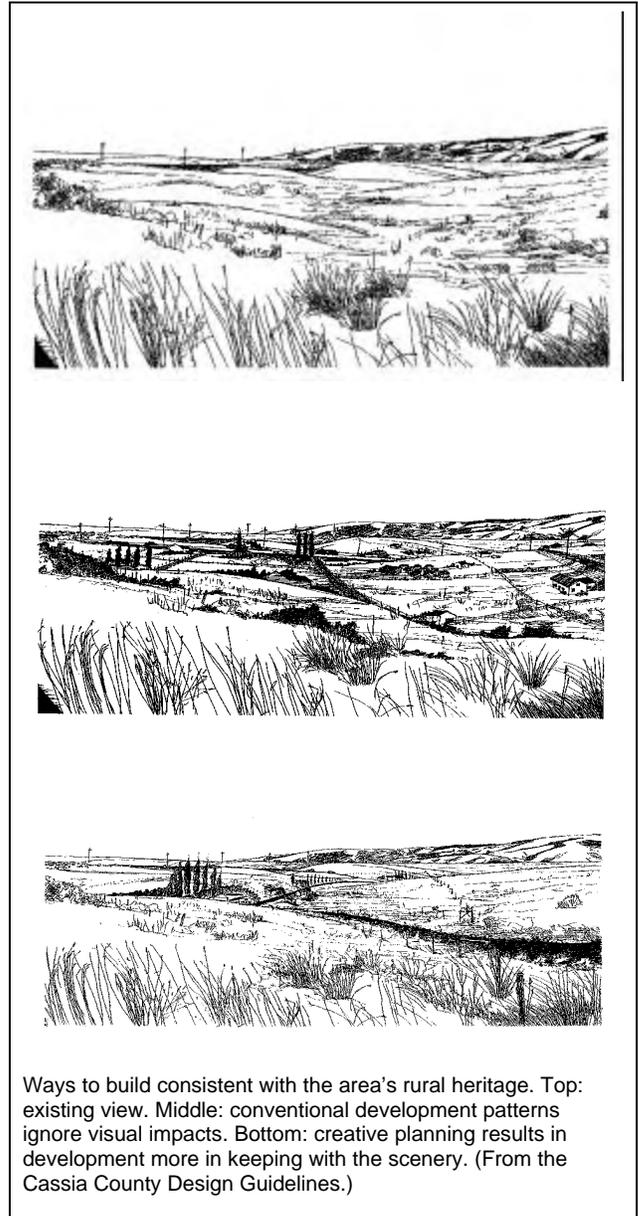
Visitors are coming to the Byway to see a working landscape with strong rural heritage. It is a given that a working landscape will change over time. The Byway goal, which has considerable support from citizens, is to sustain this evolving, rural heritage. If the ranching way of life is lost or seriously reduced, both residents and visitors would be affected.

The best way to protect and sustain rural heritage is to have successful agriculture and healthy communities. (Without these, there would be more “past” history for visitors to see than “living” history.) Residents made it clear at Byway public meetings that they favor voluntary programs for land owners to support the Byway vision, rather than involuntary measures for preserving this rural heritage.

For example, the County has developed Design Guidelines for the City of Rocks area. When construction is proposed for this area, the guidelines and County staff offer suggestions on how to make that development compatible visually and heritage-wise.

Incentives could also be developed to encourage landowners to modify development so that it is in keeping with the rural setting. Other encouragements, like tax-saving conservation easements, should also be presented to landowners.

Because so much of the land around the Byway is government-owned and even the privately owned land has some limited zoning, it is important that Byway goals are communicated to each government agency. In this way, agencies can incorporate Byway goals into their own management plans. Citizens have made clear that they do not want a government-led Byway. Therefore ***a citizen-led Byway needs to communicate its goals to the government agencies who own and manage land in the area of the Byway.*** For example, the BLM is currently managing their land pursuant to a 1984 Resource Management Plan. Since the BLM Plan pre-dates the Byway, it contains no special protections or prescriptions for the Byway. When that plan is updated, the Byway should be involved in the process to assure that the plan pays appropriate attention to rural heritage and other Byway



## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

issues. (This is particularly important in establishing the Visual Resource Management classifications applicable to BLM land along the byway.)

The Byway organization (whatever form it may take) should explore and present alternative techniques, such as purchase of development rights and conservation easements, for preserving agriculture along the Byway.

Various agencies and entities, such as transportation departments and utility companies, can take actions along the Byway that might compromise scenic and other resources. They can create roads and related infrastructure in ways that either enhance or detract from visual qualities. The Byway should make sure that these entities have a copy of this handbook and are familiar with the special needs applicable to the Byway.

Although there is some reluctance in our region to adopt any type of land use regulation, development pressure may create a need to look at some regulatory tools that can help communities preserve agricultural lands. The following are land use tools, some of which are voluntary, that have been used in other areas throughout the country to preserve agricultural lands. At some point in the future it may be useful to discuss these to determine if any are relevant to this Byway.

- Comprehensive Plan – the community’s recommendation of the most desirable use of the land. A guide to development.
- Exclusive agricultural zoning – prohibits non-farm/ranching uses of designated tracts of land and may prevent significant increases in tax assessment.
- Large lot zoning – requires minimum lot sizes in rural/agricultural areas (e.g., one dwelling unit per 150 acres).

### **Land Protection Contacts**

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation,  
Tom Woodruff, Box 8245, Missoula,  
Montana 59802, (800)225-5355.

American Farmland Trust, Jeff  
Jones, Rocky Mountain Field  
Representative, 401 Edwards Street,  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80524,  
(970)484-8988, [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

## B. Three Levels of effort for the Byway

There are implications for our communities of doing nothing about the Byway and there are likely results from putting forth some level of effort. Our current need is to find an appropriate level of effort somewhere between the extremes. The chart below lists some of the possible implications of doing nothing and of doing something.

<b>Issue Area</b>	<b>Implications of doing Nothing</b>	<b>Possible benefits of doing Something</b>
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continued deterioration</li> <li>• safety concerns (accidents, wildlife, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• road improvements</li> <li>• increased safety</li> </ul>
Use conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will continue; could become worse</li> <li>• visitors impact rural lifestyles; encroach on private property</li> <li>• no opportunity to expand economy</li> <li>• few new entry level/youth jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create balance among uses</li> <li>• inform visitors about appropriate behavior and activities</li> <li>• economic diversification</li> <li>• provide jobs to keep youth gainfully occupied; remain in community</li> </ul>
Community Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hurts rural lifestyles (could some communities become ghost towns?)</li> <li>• confusion about controlling negative aspects</li> <li>• unknown benefits</li> <li>• tourists continue to get lost and disturb residents; litter increases; traffic worsens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain community character while expanding economic development</li> <li>• clarity about controlling negative aspects</li> <li>• clear opportunities to obtain benefits</li> <li>• tourists know what to expect, how to behave and where to go</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visitors don't know where to go or have appropriate information (vehicle, roads, weather, services)</li> <li>• visitors don't stay in the area because there's not enough lodging or food service</li> <li>• existing businesses operate at the margin</li> <li>• visitors can't find the services they need</li> <li>• emergency services limited/strained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visitors can find their way and know what to expect</li> <li>• technical assistance for business development/expansion, promotions and marketing support viable visitor services businesses</li> <li>• businesses able to operate profitably (tourism = profit margin)</li> <li>• services are provided and visitor awareness is improved</li> <li>• emergency services provided at appropriate levels</li> </ul>

The three levels of effort we have explored are on either end and in the middle of this continuum. Here is what we might do in pursuing each of these three levels.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### B.1 Minimal Effort

#### 1. Overall Characteristics

A minimal effort of managing the Byway would take slightly more effort than is currently underway. The major emphasis would be on coordinating the various organizations that are already managing areas along or near the Byway. These organizations include the National Park Service and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (for the City of Rocks National Reserve), U.S. Forest Service (Sawtooth National Forest), the Bureau of Land Management, Cassia County, and each of the towns and cities along the Byway. Many of these groups have undertaken or plan projects that directly relate to the Byway and, with some coordination, they could be even more effective and efficient.

The objective of this minimal approach would be to make small improvements to the Byway for the benefit of both residents and visitors. For example, signs would be installed so visitors could more readily find their way and not have to bother residents as often. Modest improvements would be made to the road, as funds are available. There would be no intentional effort to attract visitors because the road would be incapable of accommodating them. A coordinating group might meet once or twice a year and one of the agencies (perhaps in rotation) might serve as coordinator. (A model for this is the Albion Working Group, which brings together a wide range of agencies active in southern Cassia County.)

This approach emphasizes modest steps to make things work better and does not pursue economic diversification as a goal.

The following actions would be in keeping with this minimalist approach.

<i>Three potential levels of effort</i>	<b>1. Minimal Effort</b>
<b>Road Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses outstanding maintenance needs, especially spot fixes to road surfaces and drainage.</li> </ul>
<b>Directional Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes a few signs along or near the Byway to help tourist find their way.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates simple brochures for existing visitors.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on (separate) efforts currently underway by the Reserve, USFS and museums in Albion, Burley, and Oakley.</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Heritage Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on the existing extensive public lands.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Opportunities &amp; Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As is now, except a bit more help in getting visitors where they need to go.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on existing budgets already in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen Involvement Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily through the Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad hoc, voluntary advisory committee coordinates efforts.</li> </ul>

# City of Rocks Back Country Byway

## ***2. Roadway Management and Improvement***

Based on an investigation of Byway roadway characteristics and review of key deficiencies, a set of outstanding maintenance needs have been identified as projects to target under a minimal corridor management effort. The project types and objectives listed below could help provide solutions to several of the basic problems that currently inhibit efficient travel along the Byway. They are summarized by section of the Byway.

### **2.1 Connor Creek to Almo**

Repair pavement (chip-seal) at several locations along this segment. Deterioration of the roadway surface creates unsafe conditions due to the inconsistency in stability and traction provided to travelers.

Improve spot drainage along this route to address deficiencies associated with soft shoulder areas in certain locations. Due to the presence of larger vehicles (i.e., semi trucks, horse trailers, recreational vehicles) and narrow passing constraints, roadway edges beyond the paved section have been damaged. Poor drainage provisions have accelerated the problem in several locations.

Install additional informational signing to assist tourist travelers in locating overnight facilities, historic landmarks, scenic areas, route connections and in providing general guidance to other local amenities. Efficient signing can enhance driver awareness and comfort. In addition, good informational signing can provide safer travel by reducing redundant travel patterns and unnecessary circulation.



A minimal level of effort would include spot improvements to the road, as funds are available.

### **2.2 Almo through City of Rocks National Reserve**

Add a new gravel surface along the first few hundred yards of roadway immediately within the Emery Canyon entrance to City of Rocks to stabilize the surface and eliminate severe rutting which has taken place over the past season. This short segment of the Byway has recently deteriorated and presents problems for some travelers in large vehicles or vehicles with low clearance.

### **2.3 City of Rocks National Reserve to Oakley**

Apply new gravel in spot applications to improve roadway stability and prevent potentially hazardous locations from worsening. The existing gravel surface along this segment has become increasingly thin and difficult to maintain along portions of the route. As a result, roadway drainage and stability has deteriorated beyond reasonable standards in some locations.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Improve drainage as a supplement to new gravel applications in spot locations. Improvements to cross culverts such as replacement or up-sizing could enhance the roadway's durability and prolong significant maintenance requirements.

Install speed limit and curve warning signs to this segment to heighten awareness for non-local travelers. The potential for vandalism and associated law enforcement/maintenance costs, however, should be considered.

### ***3. Directional /Informational Signs***

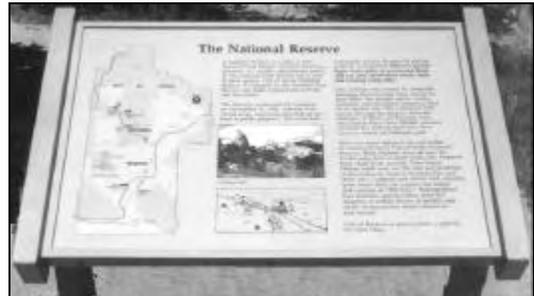
Add directional and informational signs, including Byway signs, along the Byway and repair existing signs as needed. Signs should include information regarding road condition. Livestock crossing signs should also be installed.

### ***4. Visitor Experience***

With minimal effort, the experience for visitors will be somewhat better than it is today because signs will help them find their way and the road surface will be slightly improved. Visitors will still need to go elsewhere for most of their services.

### ***5. Interpretation***

Repairs would be made to existing interpretive signs. New signs are already planned and would be installed in the Sawtooth National Forest and the Reserve. Existing and planned museums would coordinate and share exhibits about the Byway and its resources.



### ***6. Marketing and Tourism Strategies***

Marketing would be limited and targeted at existing Byway visitors, who would be encouraged to stay a few days longer.

New interpretive signs are already planned and would be installed in the Sawtooth National Forest and the Reserve.

Several very simple pamphlets would be developed about the Byway, including one that lists visitor services, special attractions, and general visitor “dos” and “don'ts” of the region. These would help visitors have a more enjoyable time and make them better Byway citizens (i.e., know how to keep out of the way when appropriate). Examples of “dos” and “don'ts” to include: Do proceed with caution if you happen upon a cattle drive. Do respect the residents of the region and that the roads are essential to their daily lives and income generation. Do be aware of the condition of the road to the City of Rocks from Oakley before proceeding. Don't trespass on private land.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Develop a basic “guide to the Byway” brochure identifying visitor services including lodging facilities, restaurants, gas stations, banks, public telephones, museums, special attractions, and their hours of service and seasonality.

Develop a “guide to the Byway” brochure that lists major recreational opportunities including the Pomerelle Ski Area, as well as major trails, trailheads, and fishing sites and their accessibility via a non-four wheel drive automobile. It should also note that much of the land in the City of Rocks and the surrounding area is privately owned.

### ***7. Rural Heritage Stewardship***

Protecting our rural heritage would be accomplished by individual efforts on private lands and in cooperation with Federal and State agencies on public lands.

### ***8. Byway Organization***

The organization would be a simple coordinating group that meets once or twice a year and appoints a rotating chair who coordinates and responds to requests for information.

**B.2 Moderate Effort**

*1. Overall Characteristics*

A moderate effort of managing the Byway would represent more activity than the minimal level, be more proactive, rather than reactive. It would have a longer-term perspective. There would be more emphasis on diversifying the economy of the area with activities related to heritage tourism. Rather than increasing the overall number of tourists, strategies would be developed to encourage visitors who are already coming to stay longer and thus spend more money.

This option includes all of the previous suggestions for the minimal level plus the following.

*2. Roadway Management and Improvement Options*

Roadway improvements suggested at the moderate level are intended to address slightly longer-term Byway objectives. The projects outlined below would both help accommodate increased visitation and provide upgraded facilities for local travelers who rely on the roadway on a daily basis.

2.1 Connor Creek to Almo

Resurface this entire segment. The overall condition of this segment including pavement disrepair and lack of shoulders suggests substantial resurfacing requirements, especially with the potential for traffic increases along this segment as more travelers are attracted via I-84 from the east. Resurfacing efforts should include an extension of the existing 20 foot wide pavement by 1 to 2 feet on each side if possible where extensive regrading is not required. Improvements to shoulder areas should also be addressed where feasible within the existing right-of-way. Shoulder improvements should include new stabilizing materials to help increase durability in areas where vehicles stray from the pavement. In addition, side slopes should also be improved along shoulder areas and deficient drainage conditions improved.

<i>Three potential levels of effort</i>		<b>2. Moderate Effort</b> <i>(Also includes all under minimal effort)</i>
<b>Road Improvements</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks repaving and regravelling of the Byway.</li> </ul>
<b>Directional Signs</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes directional signs in nearby communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets residents of Idaho and Utah who are interested in heritage tourism.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds interpretative kiosks and wayside exhibits to existing pullouts and museums.</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Heritage Stewardship</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops informative programs for landowners about agland protection and conservation easements.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Opportunities &amp; Services</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses existing museums and facilities to welcome and direct visitors.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Required</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks substantial funding for resurfacing the road, otherwise modest funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen Involvement Required</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relies on annual meetings with citizens to review progress and set priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a more structured approach through memoranda of understanding and a simple non-profit organization.</li> </ul>

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Adding vehicle turnouts along this segment could improve roadway safety and level of service. Turnouts are short segments of lanes added to one side of the roadway, which allows vehicles to pull out of the main travel lane. Due to existing right-of-way constraints along this segment, the opportunities for turnouts may be extremely limited. National highway standards recommend that vehicle turnouts be located at sites where there is at least 16 feet of width available and at least 1,000 feet of sight distance. Minimum turnout lengths are recommended by the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual based on average approach speeds. Consequently, the cost of a turnout is very site dependent. Right-of-way acquisition may also be required for this type of improvement.



Included in a moderate level of effort for the Byway would be pursuing funding for resurfacing or regravelling Byway roads.

Add guard rails along segments that contain dangerous curves. Due to the narrow cross-section along this portion of the Byway, many travelers navigate their vehicles close to the paved roadway edge. In some instances, vehicles wander from the pavement creating the potential for accidents. Guard rails strategically placed along hazardous segments can greatly reduce the potential for accidents by containing vehicles within the roadway. The visual aspect of the highway and the potential hazard created by guardrails themselves should be carefully considered when evaluating locations and materials for implementation. ITD policies provide guidance on this issue.

### 2.2 City of Rocks National Reserve to Oakley

Regravel this segment to preserve its usefulness. This segment currently carries a lower proportion of overall Byway travelers, but that number will increase as more visitors come. New gravel would provide a more favorable surface for attracting responsible tourists and also facilitate the maintenance requirements by adding materials for grading purposes. The gravel surface currently contributes to the natural and historic character of the Back Country Byway.

### ***3. Directional/Informational Signs:***

Add signs in Burley, Malta and Declo directing travelers to the byway.

### ***4. Visitor Experience:***

Assist individuals who want to start, expand, or relocate a business that serve visitors by developing a pamphlet that identifies support services available (e.g., County's economic development specialist, Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce, South Central Idaho Rural Development Association, Region IV Development Association, and the State's Department of Commerce).

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Install additional public telephones, accessible 24 hours per day.

House a visitor center in Oakley's planned museum to serve travelers entering the Byway from the west. Cooperate with the new museum in Albion to provide similar functions at the east end of the Byway.

Develop a recreational opportunity packet that includes the location of public lands, key recreational opportunities, a map indicating trails and their suitability to various activities (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, etc.).

### ***5. Interpretation***

Develop an interpretive plan for the Byway. Focus on existing facilities and pullouts for interpretive sites rather than proposing construction of new pullouts. Cluster interpretation at these sites rather than spreading it out along the length of the Byway since travelers are less likely to stop at numerous small sites than they are at one larger one.

Construct kiosks at the following locations:

#### Albion

- Byway map; activities in the area; history of Albion and historic buildings
- Use of this route as a travel corridor through time
- Agricultural history of the valley

#### Oakley

- Byway map; activities in the area; history of Oakley and historic buildings
- Historic stage lines and trails
- Shoshone, Bannock and mountain men as early travelers of this route

Construct low profile wayside exhibits at:

#### Almo

- Byway map; activities in the area

#### Connor Creek

- Byway map; activities in the area; California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate

#### Elba

- Agricultural history

### ***6. Marketing and Tourism Strategies***

Target Idaho and Utah residents who are interested in rural heritage and history.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

Promotional activities would include developing a web site or contributing information to Mini-Cassia's Chamber of Commerce web site.

### ***7. Rural Heritage Stewardship***

Develop a program to inform landowners about agricultural land preservation, conservation easements, and other voluntary programs that might be to their advantage.

### ***8. Byway Organization***

The organization would have a more focused nature than with the minimal level of effort, but might take any of several forms. See the discussion of organization formats below.

**B.3 Major Effort**

**1. Overall Characteristics**

A major level of effort devoted to the Byway would include all of the recommendations for both the minimal and moderate options and also include additional recommendations below. While this level is “major” in comparison with the other two, it is still rooted in the economic and social realities of Cassia County.

A major effort would be characterized by a more formal organization, a goal to raise larger sums of money and attract more heritage tourists.

**2. Roadway Management and Improvement Options**

Recommendations included at this level of Byway management seek to accommodate increased visitation and maximize the efficiency of the transportation system. Improvements considered at this level should be very sensitive to their effect on the character of the Byway and preservation of the area’s resources. Project descriptions are outlined below.

**2.1 Connor Creek to Almo**

In September 1992, two project funding applications were submitted to ITD on behalf of the Cassia County Commissioners. The increased traffic associated with the City of Rocks National Reserve and safety concerns by local residents were cited as the primary reasons for improvement needs. The projects included major roadway reconstruction along two segments - Connor Creek to Summit Creek (9.0 miles) and Summit Creek to Almo (8.2 miles). Preliminary engineering estimates were prepared for regrading, drainage, base material, utility, landscape and guard rail work. The provision for bicycle facilities was also included. In general, the projects identified an upgrade and widening of the roadway from 20 to 24 feet. An additional 30 feet of right-of-way is proposed for the Connor Creek to Summit Creek segment. There are

<i>Three potential levels of effort</i>	<b>3. Major Effort</b> <i>(Also includes all under minimal and moderate efforts)</i>
<b>Road Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also seeks major improvements, such as new pullouts and parking areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Directional Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes directional signs along the interstate highways.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets western US population centers and interstate travelers. Would organize familiarization tours and media kits.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies a county-wide system of kiosks and wayside exhibits.</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Heritage Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages and coordinates agland protection efforts in the county.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Opportunities &amp; Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes construction of modest welcome centers.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks substantial funding for most aspects of the Byway effort.</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen Involvement Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes ongoing committees to oversee aspects of the Byway.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggests a full or part-time coordinator and a more substantial organization.</li> </ul>

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

currently several wetland areas along the route and hillside cuts in some locations could be extensive.

Based on the ITD State Design Criteria for Non-National Highway System (NHS) roadways, this segment of roadway is substandard in width according to the criteria using current volumes and design speed. The proposed projects would bring the roadway up to the minimum total width guidelines outlined in the Design Standards. The combined estimated costs for the two projects was approximately \$8.4 million in 1992 dollars. To date, no funding has been allocated for either project.

As funding sources for major Byway-related improvements are investigated, these projects should remain a high priority. The connectivity to other regional roadways and direct link afforded to the City of Rocks National Reserve make this segment a critical component of the overall Byway route.

### *Almo through City of Rocks National Reserve*

The Final Comprehensive Management Plan/Development Concept Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the City of Rocks National Reserve was completed in 1994. As part of the Plan, two major road alignments were identified for changes. These changes would require a significant investment and therefore are included under the maximum level Byway management effort. The specific roadway changes are outlined below.

The General Development section of the Plan states that—

*“...the east-west gravel road from Nicholson Ranch to the west boundary at Emery Canyon, approximately 3.5 miles, would be relocated to the south of the inscription rocks and the Silent City of Rocks rim activity area. This would help preserve the historic setting surrounding the inscription rocks and create an access circulation pattern more conducive to separating potentially conflicting uses along the rim. The new road, which would be approximately 4 miles long, would retain the scale and textures of the existing road and be designed to support a 25 mph speed limit, in keeping with the historic rural setting.”*

*“A segment of the north-south road across the Twin Sisters basin, approximately 2 miles, would be reduced to a ranch route to minimize vehicular travel through one of the most significant trail viewshed areas. Although vehicular use would be allowed, it would be discouraged. Fencing might or might not be removed at the discretion of the landowner.”*

The east-west route discussed in the Plan constitutes a segment of the Byway. The revisions suggested to the north-south route, with the objective of discouraging vehicle travel, would likely concentrate more traffic onto the actual Byway route through the Reserve.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### 2.2 City of Rocks National Reserve to Oakley

A new gravel surface was previously identified for this segment as a moderate effort management objective. A higher level improvement and related cost investment could ultimately include roadway paving. This concept has been recently debated by residents and policy makers. Local stakeholders have communicated both opposition and support for the idea. The ultimate decision should be carefully considered and incorporate a comprehensive public involvement process.

The concept of roadway paving has distinctive tradeoffs in terms of roadway character, safety and maintenance. As noted previously, the existing gravel surface contributes to the natural setting of the Byway. Pavement would change the character of the road and could also influence the speeds at which visitors travel. Increased speeds could potentially contribute to safety problems. As a benefit, a paved surface could reduce certain maintenance requirements associated with the regrading of gravel. However, pavement would generate other unique demands for repair and upkeep.

The application of pavement along this segment should be reviewed as part of future planning efforts and weighed in terms of the impacts and benefits which could be realized. The overall goals and objectives of the Byway Management Plan should be carefully considered when evaluating this concept.

### ***3. Directional/Informational Signs***

With this option's emphasis on promotion, larger numbers of signs would be installed over a broader area (e.g., along the interstate highways) to attract visitors.

### ***4. Visitor Experience***

This level of Byway effort would provide the most activities and services for visitors and the most economic development for local residents. Visitors would be offered a wide range of activities that help them enjoy the heritage and recreational opportunities of the area.

The County would offer an economic development package to assist those who may need financial assistance to start, expand, or relocate a visitor-oriented business.

The Byway committee would work closely with the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce and others to develop recreational events along the byway (e.g., bike races, 10 kilometer races, hang gliding competitions, balloon festivals, etc.).

A stand-alone Back Country Byway visitor/interpretive center would be created (location to be determined). Interpretive displays should be developed that depict such things as a day in the life of an early homesteader, an emigrant on the California Trail, a present day rancher, etc., and/or displays explaining the unique geology and wildlife habitats of the region.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### ***5. Interpretation***

Informational kiosks would be installed in gateway communities close to the interstate highways in an effort to interest and draw more visitors to the Byway. For example, in Burley a kiosk would present:

- Byway map; activities in the area; history of Burley and historic buildings
- California Trail and other historic trails

### ***6. Marketing and Tourism Strategies***

Target markets would include interstate highway travelers and visitors to other byways in Idaho. Signs would be installed along the interstates to direct travelers to the Byway.

Familiarization tours would be conducted for travel writers and a media-kit would be developed and distributed to travel writers, regional media outlets, and tour operators that specialize in heritage tourism.

### ***7. Rural Heritage Stewardship***

The Byway organization would start a non-profit, land trust organization capable of holding easements and negotiating land swaps with Federal agencies.

Workshops would be offered to landowners to explain tax and other advantages of various land protection options.

### ***8. Byway Organization***

Because of the many activities needed to support the Byway under this option, a part- or full-time coordinator would probably be needed.

## C. Realizing the Plan

Because the City of Rocks Back Country Byway is just getting organized, many questions are still to be worked out and the “personality” of its Byway organization still is being determined. That is one reason this corridor management plan is presented as a byway handbook, so that the tools are at hand as the decisions are made.

It is clear from comments to date that residents want more information and time to understand what the Byway will be about. Citizen efforts such as developing a byway take time if they are going to be successful and sustainable.

For these reasons, the roles and responsibilities for the Byway will evolve over time and project priorities and schedules will have to be set on an opportunistic basis as people and resources are available.

Through discussions with the public in February 1998, the Advisory Committee concluded that it wasn't necessary to select between the three levels of effort for the Byway. As one

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

participant put it at that meeting, over time all three levels will probably make sense. The minimal level of effort is a reasonable goal for the next year or two. The moderate level would make sense in the next three to five years. And, the major effort would probably be appropriate in five to ten years.

Of course, each of these timeframes is open to ongoing discussion and re-evaluation. The main point, however, is that the public believes a moderate pace of developing the Byway is appropriate and that much thought and care should be given before successive steps are taken.

### **Funding Options**

Finding ways to fund Byway-related projects is one of the more important and creative aspects of having a successful byway. Securing funds can demand a great deal of time and effort. Potential sources are diverse and generally have a specific focus.

Three main sources of funding opportunities exist for scenic corridors - 1) Federal, 2) State and 3) other. The majority of funding will be found at the Federal and State levels through government grants, trusts and assistance programs. Additional funding may be found in other public agencies or from private groups.

Each funding program has different requirements for eligible applicants and stipulations on how the monies can be used. Most often, these determinations are made on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the applicants' needs. Just as one scenic corridor differs from the next, so too will its eligibility for funding. For example, a corridor with significant historical or cultural resources may be eligible for funding under programs administered by historical/cultural agencies.

The following Federal level funding opportunities exist for byways:

*National Scenic Byways Grant* - The Federal share typically shall be 80 percent reimbursable with a matching 20 percent coming from State funds. These grant funds include projects associated with the development of Corridor Management Plans involving work activities such as safety improvements to a highway, construction along scenic byway facilities (i.e., rest areas, turnouts, shoulder improvements, passing lanes, overlooks, interpretive facilities, pedestrian and bicycle amenities), protection of historical, archaeological, and cultural resources adjacent to the highway, and development and provision of tourist information to the public, including interpretive information about the byway.

*Transportation Enhancement Funds* - The Federal share shall not exceed 80 percent with matching 20 percent coming from the State or local funds. Use of these funds must involve projects associated with the development of Corridor Management Plans after eligibility has been determined.

*Other Federal Funds* - Other Federal funds (i.e., Surface Transportation Programs) may possibly be used for transportation improvements under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and similar subsequent legislation.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### ***Important potential sources of funding or technical assistance include:***

- Idaho State Historical Society: Certified Local Government Program; small grants (\$2,000-\$5,000 available) for inventories or walking tour development.  
Contact: Ann Swenson  
W. Idaho St.  
Boise, ID 83702  
208-334-3861
- Idaho Historic Preservation Council: Can provide education and help preserve buildings  
Contact: Donna Hartmans, Director  
PO Box 1495  
Boise, ID 83701
- Idaho Heritage Trust: \$1 million trust that gives total grant amounts of \$60,000 to \$70,000 annually.  
Contact: Gaetha Pace, Ex. Dir.  
PO Box 352,  
Bellevue, ID 83313  
208-778-7529
- Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Travel Council: Travel council gets money generated by the 2% hotel/motel tax; money is distributed by counties; small grants available for tourism marketing.  
Contact: Carl Wilgus, Director  
208-334-2470
- Department of Commerce, Information Services Section: State Data Center acts as information liaison for business and community development programs for the State.  
Contact: Alan Porter  
208-334-2470
- Center for Business Research and Services, Idaho State University: Gathers and provides assistance on social and economic data from many sources.  
Contact: Paul Zelus  
208-236-3049
- EDA: Provides extensive economic development technical assistance and project funding, primarily for projects that create or expand jobs in a region.  
Contact: Al Ames, Economic Development Representative  
208-334-1521

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Region IV Development Association  
Contact: Joe Herring, Ex. Director  
208-734-6586
- University of Idaho Extension Service: The State's Community Resource Development program supports part-time extension professionals with expertise in rural sociology and agricultural economics.  
Contact: Neil Meyer  
208-885-5883
- National Trust for Historic Preservation Western Office: 415-956-0610

An organization whose experience might be relevant in Cassia County is the Cattlemen's Association of Colorado. They have a Land Trust Program for easements, which provides a means to avoid estate taxes and help keep agricultural land in the family.

### D. Byway Organization

Any of a wide range of organization types may be appropriate for the City of Rocks Back Country Byway and the type will probably need to change over time. The most appropriate will depend on the volunteers and resources available and the tasks at hand over a period of time.

#### **Informal byway organizations:**

Some byway organizations are very informal. There often is an ad hoc group of people who meet on a fairly regular basis. Generally, these groups have a limited budget, many projects, or conflicts. Often one or two individuals do most of the work.

#### **501 (c) (3) organizations**

Some byways receive 501 (c) (3) status from the Internal Revenue Service as non-profit corporate entities. This is a fairly simple process. One advantage for gaining non-profit status is the byway becomes eligible for funding from organizations and individuals that contribute only to non-profits. Non-profit status also gives the organization a little more formality, and requires electing corporate byway officers each year.

#### **501 (c) (3) organizations with a membership organization**

This option is similar to the previous, except there is also a membership-at-large. The corporate officers become the board of directors or the executive board. A means of creating a membership organization is determined, and there is a membership group that provides input to the Board of Directors and can help with fund raising.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

### **Commissions**

Some byway groups form commissions, though they seldom refer to them as such. These may comprise groups of 15 individuals who theoretically represent all the byway partners. Every representative has one vote.

### **IGAs or MOUs**

Some byway organizations consist of groups of individuals representing all of the significant partners, and who have entered into an intergovernmental agreement or memorandum of understanding. This approach is effective when County, State, or Federal partners are required to be decision-makers, but need accountability to county commissioners or others.

### **Byway Associations**

Some byways create an association, often with their 501 (c) (3) organizations. The San Juan Skyway (Colorado) has a group referred to as the Friends of the San Juan Skyway. This is a public-private partnership with wide membership. A planning steering committee prepared a corridor management plan, with partnership from the Friends group. Technical assistance was also provided by specific individuals including the Forest Service.

## **E. Assessing Progress**

Although many benefits of scenic highway designation are intangible, benchmarks and documentation of successes in a quantifiable manner can be helpful. Federal, State and local agencies may require data supporting activities or successes before assisting in the corridor financially or writing resolutions for resource protection. The Byway organization will need to be capable of verifying their successes in writing during CMP reviews or when applying for funding. These quantifiable methods most often involve some form of data collection.

In relationship to transportation, the following information is invaluable in measuring the success of a designated corridor:

At businesses or kiosks along the route, surveys can be provided that ask the traveler about information on their intent, number of passengers, length of stay and opinions regarding the roadway facilities. Transportation-related questions can be combined with additional inquiries that may be helpful to verify target markets that should be the focus of the Byway promotional plan.

Surveys conducted as part of this CMP effort indicate that most people feel that the area's roads, utilities and infrastructure are inadequate to support additional visitation along the Byway. The majority of respondents also feel that Byway management should attempt to maintain the rural and scenic nature of the Byway route. Respondents were neutral regarding the opinion that highway improvements would reduce the scenic qualities. A slight majority of those surveyed felt that large recreational vehicles should be discouraged from using the Byway.

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

This type of information should be collected annually or at a predetermined specified interval of time. This would greatly assist in the tracking of Byway perceptions and accomplishments.

Traffic count data collected by local jurisdictions, the County, or the State can track changes in vehicle travel. Knowledge of historical traffic activity can assist in presenting facts regarding trends and future demands, which may influence roadway design. ITD rural roadway design standards use thresholds of 400, 1,000 and 2,000 vehicles per day to prescribe minimum and desirable roadway widths.

Traffic accident data can also be extremely valuable when making a case for roadway safety improvements. Accident rates that fall above acceptable levels are often used as criteria to warrant changes. Location-specific accident information is also useful for verifying the existence of a safety problem.

Collecting additional roadway and right-of-way data annually or every 5 years can help document the effectiveness of facility improvements such as turnouts, guard rail, informational kiosks and new signs. This information is helpful for tracking progress and identifying future needs.

Two sources are particularly helpful in measuring success in less quantifiable areas: residents and visitors. It is important to regularly ask these groups how the Byway effort is going.

## Appendix A: Summary of Comments from Public Meetings, Nov. 10-13, 1997

### Oakley

- The Byway exists, the question now is what to do with it and how to maximize benefits to everyone along it.
- Roads: source of funding for maintenance?
- roads better on east side
- Would the Byway be designated as a herd district? (changing liability, responsibility)
- This is an ag community. Benefits from the Byway don't help ranchers.
- Livestock should have right-of-way.
- Oakley-Elba Road- should be off the map
- The Skyline Trail would be good to have on the map.
- If the Oakley-Elba Road is not on the map, how do you get visitors to the Skyline Trail from Oakley?
- Resource protection- who decides? who drives? landowners? community? other?
- With designation, can land along the byway be taken from owners? No.
- Who controls negative aspects brought by tourists. Who's responsible?
- Interstate signs should be balanced from both ends (Oakley & Albion)
- Highline Trail: should not be motorized (for recreational uses)
- Of City of Rocks' 95,000 visitors: 1/3 come through Oakley
- Need to take care of/direct/provide information to visitors
- Oakley reservoir- OK for visitors
- Private property- not OK
- Some people use the shortcut from the interstate to Almo.
- Alternate routes to the Byway could be attractive.
- Back country routes allow you to see country stores at Almo and Naf.
- Historic homes: 100 homes on National Register; historic home tour: third weekend in June.
- There is a guidebook for self-tour
- Balance values with tourism
- Visitors only buying few things
- Visitor Orientation Center would help
- People want to find cemeteries so they can track their ancestors.
- How Oakley markets itself has an effect on how visitors treat Oakley.
- There could be joint staffing of the future Oakley Museum with Park personnel.
- Ag community — additional benefits don't outweigh the burdens.

### Malta

- Signs at Elba: show distance and direction to City of Rocks
- Landowners- what is the economic benefit to us?
- Competition with visitors for resources
- City of Rocks getting too developed
- City of Rocks campgrounds being moved (plan)
- Hard to move livestock along the road because there is too much traffic.
- Manage visitors to certain days
- Road safety and maintenance an issue
- Road widening- impact on houses close to road?

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Road speeds
- Tour buses already on the road
- Ranch economy stable
- There is a concern that the Byway might be funded through increased property taxes
- Federal money not the way to fund, why increase our national debt?
- Rock climbers: do they spend money?
- Three groups: landowners, retail and residents
- Elba/Oakley Road: running cattle vs. conservationists
- How to maintain commitments/ agreements with communities?
- Need to plan for the future
- Would like to see more landowners/farmers on advisory committee
- We need to preserve the option to sell property to buyers
- Tourists will continue to come, what can we do about it?
- Individual landowners must be able to keep control over their property
- Could cattle eventually be banned for the road?
- Basic services on existing roads should have a priority
- Who will be assessed/how will it be funded?
- Lots of roads in the county deserve improvements, why should the Byway get priority?
- Traffic creating need for safety improvements
- Elba/Oakley road- take off map or show it as closed
- Educate visitors about appropriate behavior
- We need clear signs and directional markers
- Visitors must respect private property
- We need/funding for additional law enforcement
- “Entry” to City of Rocks- at Declo or at Malta

## Almo

- Communities can choose level of participation/interest in the corridor
- Corridor includes resource management and economic development
- Who pays for costs of additional service needs?
- Long term future- how to preserve resources for generations to come
- What are economic development tools and opportunities?
- We like Almo the way it is. We can't all benefit from more visitors.
- Maintain open vistas
- Opportunities for concentrated educational programs to attract specific types of visitors
- Elba: community sometimes don't have say with private development
- Elba Park gets a lot of family reunions
- Don't put restrictions on private property
- What can stop abuse of byway corridor?
- Use education/promotion to both attract/reduce conflicts with visitors
- Resources of interest
- cemetery in Junction (Civil War veterans)
- Almo Massacre
- Pioneer Trails
- Stagecoach/Pony Express stations
- Salt Lake alternate road- still being used today
- Geology of the area

## City of Rocks Back Country Byway

- Preserve Castle Rock- don't market it
- Elba/Oakley Road- don't draw additional visitors
- Skyline Trail- 27 mile trail (hiking, horse)

### Albion

- Interest in history
- Funding ? Equitable pay for road repair
- Accommodate tourists/trailers
- Open range: tourists need to understand
- Why Oakley to Albion?
- Other communities may not have history
- Need to include Raft River in the story presented to visitors
- Speed limits may need to be rethought with more visitors
- Impact on wildlife must be considered
- Is there a place for visitors to spend money?
- What do we want out of Byway?
- Want road fixed Connor Creek to Almo
- Give incentives
- Landowners must be free develop as they want
- Tourists are good for business
- Tourists won't stay only on byway
- Trespass, liability, road surfaces
- Extra policing will be needed
- Private property rights very important
- Voluntary compliance good approach
- Road maintenance
- Rock climbers don't spend money

### Burley

- Connor Creek to Almo- not enough people (tax base) to pay for road upkeep
- Road needs total reconstruction (\$25-30 million)
- Interest has been expressed in developing private RV parks in Almo and in Elba
- Issue of increased property taxes driving people out
- People are coming; participate in the development associated with them
- Maintain beauty of Elba Valley
- Additional signs are needed to warn visitors
- Change is hard to accept
- Skyline trail- would help business, but brings more people
- Paving to top of Mt. Harrison makes it too accessible
- Impact on wildlife should be considered
- Cougars in back country
- Issue: abandon other State highways to make Oakley-Connor Creek a State highway (could be changed)
- Few accident reports (because local residents know what to do)
- Signs vandalized
- Balance is critical

## Appendix B: Costs for Interpretive Materials

KIOSKS.....\$10,500.00

Kiosk pricing includes (per individual kiosk):

Construction of kiosk with roof, framing for 3-36" x 48" exhibit panels, research, writing, layout, design, fabrication and freight for exhibit panels

LOW PROFILE WAYSIDE EXHIBITS .....\$2,000.00

Low profile wayside exhibit pricing includes(per individual exhibit panel):

Mounting and framing for 36" x 24" exhibit panel, research, writing, layout, design, fabrication and freight for exhibit panels

BROCHURES ..... \$6,400.00

Brochure pricing includes:

Research, writing, layout, design, fabrication and printing of 1,000 copies