

Signage & Wayfinding

Enhancing The Visitor Wayfinding Experience

Draft June 2005

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Signage & Wayfinding

Enhancing The Visitor Wayfinding Experience

Consistent Byway Signage with our unique Rt. 60 logo is the cornerstone not only of Midland Trail's signage plans but also our wayfinding, branding and marketing programs.

New Milemarkers placed every two miles in both directions provide a foothold for travelers for wayfinding and identifying points of interest. Our Midland Trail Destination Guide and other marketing and interpretative pieces correspond with the milemarkers.



For MTSHA, Milemarkers reinforce our US Route 60 branding and marketing program, strengthens our 180-mile linear community and creates the core around which we can build our hospitality programs and other signing projects.

After several design concepts, we were able to compromise with WV-DOH on this design which combines their Uniform Byway Sign with the Historic Route 60 Badge. WV DOH has a new policy of no unique logo signs on the DOH right of way. The NSB logo will be utilized on the designated section(s).

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Along The Midland Trail

MTSHA in conjunction with WV-DOH is in the process of revamping the signage on the byway. MTSHA and WV DOH Scenic Byway Program have been working hand-in-hand with WV-DOH Traffic Engineering to devise a workable method of signing the entire Midland Trail.

Our 2000 MT CMP specified several signage deficiencies. Additional signing challenges manifested when an additional 61+ miles of state-designated Byway were added to our already signed byway. MTSHA is in the process of finalizing the MT Signage Plan which offers mutually agreed upon: new signage designs, insight into the development process, a strong interpretative sign program, and a plan for the early stages of implementation.

The Signage Planning Process

Since 2001 creating a workable signage program has been a top priority with the Association.

Shortly after Midland Trail was designated a state scenic byway around 1989, mile marker signage was erected. These prominently displayed brown mile-markers indicated the distance traveled from the State Capitol at Charleston to the Virginia border 119 miles away. Originally this signage was consistent throughout the Trail's 119 miles, in both directions. Across time only, Fayette County remained diligent in maintaining the milemarkers, with Greenbrier coming in second and Kanawha County (mile 0-26) allowed all the signs from 1-22 to vanish.

In June 2000, the 119-mile Midland Trail received the prestigious designation of National Scenic Byway. Shortly thereafter the 61+ miles from the State Capitol to the Ohio border received state scenic byway designation.

In 2002 we began working with the western extension to develop the Revised CMP and the 2003-4 Midland Trail Destination Guide. Utilizing

the Milemarker system in the 2000 MT Destination Guide had proven to be a very effective marketing tool to help the traveling public find the attractions in our Guide and to reinforce the sense of a then-119 mile linear community. The mile marker system makes it easy for travel centers and our business partners along the byway to give directions - (i.e. ?This Go-Mart is Mile 26, the Glen Ferris Inn is mile 36.? It became obvious that we needed to re-number the mile markers to include the west if we were going to pull them into our ?linear community?.

Seems simple? After many exhaustive community meetings at which several ideas regarding the ideal way to sign the Byway were entertained, it was finally agreed that our mile markers would follow the precedent of WV Traffic Engineering (and highway engineers across the US) and the mile markers would be re-numbered the west to east, beginning at the Ohio/Kentucky border. Only the backbone route 60 will be included in the Milemarker measurements. This means the Mile Maker numbers on each site on the eastern NSB section will increase by approximately + 61 miles. As we work with the WV DOH traffic engineers this



Partners all along the byway are looking forward to the new Byway Milemarkers that are being installed Spring 2005! (above). These new designs which comply with the WV Uniform Signage directive, yet reinforce our Route 60 logo branding are replacing the current milemarkers (below) along the entire Byway. New Milemarkers will be placed approximately every two miles in each direction.



Example of current mile-markers along Midland Trail.

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Enhancing The Visitor Experience Linking Signage and Printed Materials

could vary slightly because after we did the measurements, the city of Huntington re-routed a one-way street.

The 2003-4 Midland Trail Guide was released using milemarkers on only the NSB portion. Also during this time we were working on our MT Marketing Plan and on establishing our byway as a brand.

Creating a Brand - Historic U.S. Route 60

While the more detailed discussion of Creating a Brand will be under the MT Marketing Plan, it is important for the purpose a signage discussion to recognize that: Midland Trail is US Route 60, a nationally recognizable route of historic interest and we are branding ourselves as the Midland Trail/Route 60. It is vital that our signage reflect and reinforce our branding, marketing and promotion program.

Juxtaposed with our interest in having our new mile markers reinforce our Route 60 brand, was the WV-DOH Traffic Engineers' desire to have uniform signage across all state and nationally designated byways in WV. The nationally designated byways opposition to this directive seemed futile.

In the spirit of compromise MTSHA, with the help of the WV-DOH Scenic Byway Program worked with the WV-DOH traffic engineering, and after several attempts, seem to have come to an agreement on a sign design that meets both our purposes.



Peek inside a page from our 2005-6 MT Destination Guide to see how we have utilized the Milemarkers to direct the Visitor along our 180-Mile Byway.

As we strengthen our 180-Mile linear community, the Byway Mile Markers will become incorporated into our Byway Partners' advertising campaigns.

When Camden Park, for instance, adds the "Mile 5 on the Midland Trail" to their broadcast ad campaigns --this will increase Midland Trail's name recognition and help build us as a destination.

Enhancing The Visitor Experience Thru Interpretative Signage

Update on Interpretative Signage

Historical markers placed by the WV Division of Culture and History serve as the primary In Interpretative Signage today. While these cast-iron signs are long-lasting, they are often not visible or easily readable from the car.

MTSHA is in the process of developing a MT Signage Plan which will include a section on Interpretative Signage. One major component of this Interpretative Plan is utilizing Fine Art murals to interpret intrinsic qualities, and to tell our byway story and its history in a compelling way that will appeal to all ages and serve a a public art project that will entice Visitors to travel all 180+ miles of our Byway.

The 2000 CMP included drawings drawing as an example of the updated recommended interpretive signage. These will remain appropriate for some areas/applications.

Along pull-offs and in special instances like the Ansted-Hawks Nest Trail we will use colorful digitally reproduced signs to identify flora and fauna.



Sample of Cast Iron Historic Markers placed by WV Culture and History

How much more enticing the above sample interpretative sign is for bringing to life the a young Booker T. Washington's desire to learn to read than an black text on white . Inspired by a successful installation in Jamestown, VA, a major component of our MT Interpretative Plan is our Historical Murals Project. The initial project will be the creation and installation of 30 Fine Art murals placed in groupings of 3-5 signs in approximately 6-10 locations across the Byway. The outdoor murals are planned to be at least 4'x 6' and will provide interpretation of to:

- * to interpret intrinsic qualities,
- * tell our byway story and history in a compelling way that will appeal to all ages and
- *serve a a public art project
- * entice Visitors to travel all 180+ miles of our Byway



Signage

Updating the 2000 CMP Signage Section

Draft June 2005

6.5

Updating the 2000 CMP Information

Chapter 9 of our 2000 MT-CMP discussed Signage, Accident Rates and Data, Traffic Conditions and identified four categories of signage: Directional, Informational, Interpretative, and Advertising. Examples of each were given. The following is an update to each section.

I. DIRECTIONAL

In the 2000 CMP, directional signage was termed adequate.

An important improvement has since been made:

1. Several places east of Charleston where Route 60 runs close to I-64 and to US 19, the words "Midland Trail" have been added to the overhead green exit signs.

Proposed steps to further improving directional signage:

1. We will work with WV-DOH to have the same "Midland Trail" added on the signage on the western extension where I-64 runs close to Rt. 60.
2. We will work with WV-DOH to revise the overhead I64 and US 19 signage to read "Midland Trail National Scenic Byway" on the east.
3. New 18" x24" and 18" x18" Byway Logo signs will be placed at all intersections and where needed for confirmation. With mile makers placed approximately every two miles in each direction, the need for additional confirmation will be limited, except at crossroads and intersections.

2. Informational

A. New MT Byway Logo Signs are replacing the MT signs with the brown background with white lettering and the old Trail logo, used since its designation as a state Scenic Highway 15 years ago. Our new Byway signs will serve as the General informational signs that indicate that the visitor is traveling the Midland Trail.

B. There are also Specific informational signs which indicate some points of interest, such as a museum or historic home.

New Byway Logo Sign, with a directional arrow and the word SITE will replace these signs which are now brown background and white lettering that point out specific sites. (see Old Stone House example right).

As was noted in 2000, specific informational signage is not consistent and some areas have little or none. Some points of interest are not indicated with the specific marker, once the visitor is directed to the site.

Signage does not indicate all points of "intrinsic quality" interest or visitor services like restaurants, lodging and comfort facilities.

Our MT Signage Plan will indicate the points of interest that we believe are important to sign, and the Association is working with the towns and counties along the Byway to set priorities and establish a timetable for correcting deficiencies absence or inadequate signage.

Pages 6.7-6.8 recaps the sites we believe to be the top priorities for signage.

The Old Stone House in Belle is an example of a common problem that we are addressing. Although there is a posted informational sign directing the traveler to the site, the sign is lost in the middle of other signs, and does not clearly direct the visitor to the appropriate turn-off for the house.

Once the visitor arrives, there is no signage at the Old Stone House (circa 1810) to indicate they have found the correct house or why it is historically significant.



The Old Stone House

Signage - Updating the 2000 CMP Signage Section Draft June 2005 6.6



Left: New Byway Logo Sign, with a directional arrow and the word SITE will replace brown signs with white lettering that point out specific sites.



signs like the one below to carry forth our plan for specific tours with accompanying printed materials that would guide the Visitors to sites along the 180-mile Byway,

but to date WV DOH has not agreed to our Plan. We hope the above numbering of certain sites will be an acceptable compromise.



We know that travelers would like guidance to locating Civil and Revolutionary War Sites, and Historical Homes and Museums.

3. Interpretative

See Page 6.4

4. Outdoor Advertising

The Association is on record as opposing the use of any large billboard advertising, especially any advertising in open vistas which will obstruct or distract from the scenic qualities of the Trail.

The eastern end of the Byway - Greenbrier and Fayette counties are opposed to outdoor billboard. In fact, Fayette County has recently prohibited new billboard installations.

Only a few large billboards are along eastern section Trail. Most advertising is small, unobtrusive separate billboards or those which are attached to business buildings or are standing marquees on business properties.

The Association has been inundated with requests for billboards on the western extension and WVDOT consistently overrides our recommendations to deny new installations citing a directive in support of "segmentation".

The West Virginia Commissioner of Highways, by Order dated 11/30/98, prohibited additional outdoor advertising on state byways except in identified segments. In WV this directive is consistently utilized by DOH to segment out sections of the Byway to allow new Outdoor advertising installation.



Citizens groups in Fayette County successfully took on the issue of billboards such as this. New billboard installations are prohibited by the Fayette County Zoning Plan.