3.3 Agricultural Lands

The agricultural heritage of Chaffee County dates to the mid 19th century when miners moving westward found the fertile bottom lands of the Arkansas River and the warm climate conducive to farming. Today, the rural working landscape of farmlands and grazing areas provides a distinct character for the Heritage Area. Ranching and farming operations are valued by the community for their contributions to the county’s scenic beauty, helping to attract tourists and contributing to the quality of life for residents. They are valued as a key economic sector with a direct positive impact on the community. Agricultural lands are also valued for their heritage, reflecting the history of settlement of the Arkansas Valley.

Pastures and hay meadows make up large areas of agricultural lands within the river valley, interspersed with small areas of irrigated cropland. Senior water rights and abundant seep water enhance the agricultural productivity, as well as support adjacent vegetation communities in naturalized sections of the river. The bottom lands are largely cow-calf operations and hay production. Large expanses of the county are used for rangeland, and cattle grazing occurs on adjoining hillsides on both private and public lands.

The county’s agricultural lands have been mapped by Chaffee County using data generated by the Natural Resource Ecology Lab at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. The agricultural classes illustrated in this mapping, presented in Figure 7 on page 24, were generated by analyzing land cover (i.e., vegetation such as grasses and shrubs suitable for foraging) from the USGS National Land Cover Dataset. The mapping illustrates areas by their levels of productivity and includes irrigated and non-irrigated cropland, rangeland, and pasture/hay area.

Productive irrigated agricultural land accounts for less than two (2) percent of Chaffee County’s total land area, but contributes disproportionately to its heritage and scenic quality. These lands are generally located along the Byway in highly visible areas, making them significant contributors to the Heritage Area and the high quality scenic views of the Byway. However, the county’s relatively small amount of agricultural land, along with the county’s close proximity to the Front Range and its appeal due
This dataset was generated by David M. Theobald, Ph.D. at the Natural Resource Ecology Lab, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1499. To identify Colorado agricultural lands, the USGS National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD, 30m land cover) was used to distinguish four agriculture land types: irrigated and non-irrigated cropland, pasture/hay, and rangeland. Within these broad land cover types there are different levels of productivity, particularly for rangeland. To highlight lands of greater productivity, the USDA NRCS STATSGO dataset using the production variable as an estimate for overall productivity was used. Areas higher than 9500 feet in elevation were removed because although these may be identified as grass/shrub in NLCD, they contribute little to forage availability. Isolating the weighted average productivity value across Colorado, two classes were created: low to average and average to high productivity. These productivity classes were then overlaid onto the four agricultural land classes to generate 8 total classes.
to its warm temperatures and scenery, make these farm and ranch lands particularly vulnerable to development, and ultimately to loss of water rights. Colorado Conservation Trust’s recent report, “Colorado Conservation at a Crossroads,” identified Chaffee County as one of 12 counties in the state with the highest potential threat of losing its ranching heritage, but with limited capacity to prevent it.

Conflicts between development and agricultural lands exist in some areas. Ranchers and farmers have noted that rural residential development has had a negative effect in areas where it interferes with ranching. Issues include conflicts between new structures and access to irrigation ditches and areas prone to flooding due to ditch failure, conflicts between dogs and cattle, and new residents who are not tolerant of the dust, noise and smells of productive agricultural lands.

Local ranchers and farmers recognize the value of their lands to the county, as well as for their development potential. Because of this, they have begun to work collaboratively with county agencies and local and state-wide conservation groups. Together, they are identifying issues and proposing solutions to minimize conflicts, protect important agricultural lands for their open space value, and provide ranchers and farmers with viable land use and economic options that allow them to continue ranching.
Chaffee County is a unique heritage landscape, in which its distinct natural setting provides the basis for this heritage. The history of the land from early occupation by indigenous people to railroad and mining industries, and onward to today’s recreation and tourism has left an innumerable quantity and variety of cultural, historical, and archeological resources. These examples of the past are the physical remnants that assist in telling the county’s story of evolution from early Native American habitation to today’s diverse rural community with an economic base of ranching, farming, tourism and recreation as well as light industry and a growing retirement and second home market.

This section presents an overview of the cultural, historical and archeological qualities that characterized the Heritage Area. It begins with a brief history of the development of Chaffee County. This is followed by a description of historic preservation activities that have enriched the county since the 1970s, and the section ends with an overview of current issues and opportunities.

A more detailed inventory of extant historical and archeological resources is provided in Chapter 7.0 Background. The chapter includes the GIS (geographical information system) database prepared by Chaffee County as well as illustrative maps that show locations of these resources.

**History**

Human occupation of the Arkansas River valley by indigenous peoples dates back thousands of years (Paleo-Indians). By the 1600s the Ute Indians, for whom many of the surrounding peaks are named, made the valley their home, taking advantage of its abundant water and wildlife. Several Plains Indians tribes also used this area. Decades of exploration and organized survey expeditions ‘discovered’ Chaffee County. These included such notables as Governor of New Mexico Juan Baustisade Anza who, in 1779, led a military campaign through Salida against the Comanches, and explorer Zebulon Pike, both whom immortalized their travels with elaborate written accounts.

The westward expansion of homesteaders and the discovery of gold in the late 1800s brought miners and farmers to the Chaffee County area. Historic records indicate that, as early as 1862, prospecting and placer operations were occurring near Granite...
on the Arkansas River. Early settlers included Dr. Frank Mayol, the area’s first farmer, and Captain Joseph S. Hutchinson, who served in the Union Army during the Civil War and moved to the area in 1866, first supervising placer operations on Cache Creek, and later starting a cattle business that would eventually cover thousands of acres. By 1874, Hutchinson built a home with his wife Annabel near Salida.

“Well they used to raise a lot of head lettuce. Usually in August, they had the celebration called Lettuce Day and they’d have a parade and rodeo and they always had a big barbeque. They’d cut the lettuce in the day time and haul it into a lettuce shed there in the evening. I worked in the lettuce shed, you’d have to work at night because they were cutting lettuce in the daytime, they’d haul it in, then you’d have to get it all boxed up. A truck would come in and pick it all up and haul it into Denver that same night.”

Ron Little, Buena Vista

Today, this house and its outbuildings and corrals are a historic site, operated by Salida-area Parks Open-space and Trails (SPOT). The Hutchinson family continues to farm and ranch on many of the original homesteaded acres. Although conflicts between the growing settlements and the Native Americans would eventually move the Utes out of the valley, many were on friendly terms with the settlers. These included Chief Ouray, for whom Mount Ouray is named, and his wife Chipeta, who were influential leaders of the seven Ute tribes, as well as the notorious Chief Colorow who would camp at the Hutchinson ranch.

The first Indian agent, John Burnett, and his wife Menerva Maxwell Burnett (one of the area’s first schoolteachers) homesteaded in the area now known as Poncha Springs in 1865, building a log cabin for use as a trading post in 1866. The town of Poncha Springs was incorporated in late 1880.

“(My family came) out of Canada, and they went up to Leadville, working up at California Gulch in the mines. In about 1865 they came here and started ranching. They were the first white settlers to ever live here. His name was John Burnett. His wife Sarah Burnett, when the Indians would go on their war-paths, she would feed them biscuits so they wouldn’t bother her. So, all the other people would come to her house, women and children, and they would stay with her, because they knew that the Indians wouldn’t bother her. They were the Utes with Chief Colorow.”

Danny Burnett

By the late 1870s, the area had grown into a significant mining, farming, and ranching region. Silver was discovered as early as 1872 at Chalk Creek, spurring the opening of the Hortense Mine on Mount Princeton, along with mines at St. Elmo and Alpine. The
Monarch Mine opened in 1878, near Monarch Pass, mining minerals such as lead, zinc, and silver with small amounts of gold. Toll roads and transportation routes brought travelers to the area, including one that provided access to the area of Poncha Springs. In 1878 the Jackson Hotel was built along the toll road in what was a booming town. In 1881, Poncha Springs boasted a population of 5000. Today its population is just under 500. Unfortunately the Jackson Hotel is closed and in need of rehabilitation, but the town’s most notable building, the brick schoolhouse, has been rehabilitated as the town hall, and includes a town museum and community room.

The water supply and temperate climate in the Arkansas River valley led farmers to build irrigation ditches to water fields they had cleared of sagebrush to grow grains (oats, wheat, and barley) rotated with legumes such as alfalfa and clover to replenish the soil. In 1874, a dispute over irrigation water between Elijah Gibbs and George Harrington, farmers near present-day Buena Vista, sparked the Lake County War, which lasted for several years and resulted in numerous deaths.

In 1879, Chaffee County was established by the splitting of the older and larger Lake County, and was named for Jerome Chaffee, a United States senator and a local investor. That same year Buena Vista was incorporated. On May 1, 1880, after years of competition and lawsuits between rival railroad companies, the Denver and Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Railroad arrived in the Arkansas River Valley in South Arkansas (now known as Salida), coming from Cañon City through the Royal Gorge Canyon.

The arrival of the railroad spurred the establishment of the City of Salida in 1880, so-named by the wife of ex-Territorial Governor A.C. Hunt, who was an official with the railroad, for ‘salida,’ which means exit in Spanish. Within a month, businesses and establishments from nearby Cleora moved to the new town of Salida. Hotels and banks opened immediately, followed by merchants with clothing, hardware, and drug stores, and then physicians, attorneys, and an architect. Within a decade, Salida prospered as the hub of the thriving railroad, mining, and agricultural region. Devastating fires between 1886 and 1888 destroyed portions of the early business district, but the downtown rebounded with the building of substantial two-story brick buildings of which many remain today and are recognized for their historical significance by the
downtown Salida Historic District. A month after arriving in Salida, on June 5, 1880, the D&RGW railroad had extended its tracks to Buena Vista (on its way to Leadville and its silver and lead mining deposits where the tracks arrived in July). That same year the county seat moved from Granite to Buena Vista. The county courthouse was built in 1882. By 1892, the Buena Vista Correctional Facility opened, and remains today as a strong part of the town’s economy. Early on it provided jobs and day labor for local construction projects.

By 1894, the town was thriving as a small mining and agricultural community with electricity, street lights, and lands set aside for parks, schools, and cemeteries.

Railroad and precious-metal mining activities continued through the 1920s. In addition to the larger towns of Salida and Buena Vista, smaller communities supported the mining industry at Vicksburg/Winfield, St. Elmo, and Hancock. Independent smelters in Romley, Poncha Springs, and Salida served nearby mines. The Ohio and Colorado Smelting and Refining Company began smelter operations near Salida in 1901, building a town site for its workers at Kortz. In 1917 they built a 365-foot tall smokestack, the tallest smelter in the country. Although the smokestack only operated for two years, it has served as an icon for Salida and the Arkansas Valley since its construction. It is currently being restored as an interpretive site by the Salida Museum.

Mining and railroad operations gradually diminished after the 1920s, the same year the Climax Mine near Leadville was established. Its production surged in the mid-to late 20th century, helping to support the Chaffee County economy where many miners and their families lived. Of the dozens of mining towns that were established during the boom days of mining, just three grew into substantial municipalities—the City of Salida, Town of Buena Vista, and Town of Poncha Springs. Others became ‘ghost towns’ like St. Elmo and Hancock, and others have almost completely disappeared. Through local efforts, a few ghost towns such as St. Elmo have been recognized for their historical importance and are designated as historic districts. The downtowns of Salida and Buena Vista are appreciated for their historical value as well.

By the mid-1950s, outdoor recreation and tourism began to grow in importance, primarily due to the scenic beauty of the county and the white water rapids of the Arkansas River. Competitive whitewater boating began in Salida in 1949 with the first FIBark festival.
Historic Preservation in the Heritage Area

In the 1970s, Chaffee County residents began to see the benefits of historic preservation in preserving their own community values, as did residents in other communities across the country. One of the earliest historic preservation actions in the county occurred in 1972, when a group of local Buena Vista residents set out to save and restore the original Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church as a community arts center. With lots of community support, including donations of cash, materials, and labor, the Little Chapel was relocated, repaired and winterized. Today, it serves as the Buena Vista Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center.

In 1975, local citizens rallied to save the original Chaffee County Courthouse when it was threatened with demolition, resulting in the formation of Buena Vista Heritage, which organized to operate a museum in the building. In 2003, voters transferred the Courthouse to Buena Vista Heritage for one dollar. Buena Vista Heritage also owns the Turner Farm, acquired in 1997 for the purpose of a living farm and history museum, and the Buena Vista Depot and Caboose, which they are restoring for use as a transportation museum. Buena Vista Heritage also owns two historic buildings in St. Elmo—the St. Elmo Schoolhouse for which restoration is complete, and the historic Town Hall, rebuilding of which is underway. In accordance with their mission “to preserve and share the history of Buena Vista and Chaffee County for the education and enjoyment of the public,” the historic preservation group also oversees the Maxwell Park School for the state of Colorado.

By the late 1970s, residents and public agencies saw the benefits of recognizing significant archeological and historical places by designating them as historic sites. In addition to the grass roots initiatives of local residents, county and municipal agencies, along with state and federal agencies, have inventoried and surveyed properties on lands they own or manage in all parts of the county and for all types of resources. Since 1976, close to 100 properties, including districts and individual sites or buildings with archeological, historical or architectural significance, have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties (SRHP).

These properties include the first listing in the county—the Hutchinson Homestead in 1973. The Ohio-Colorado Smokestack, originally known as the Ohio-Colorado Smelting and Refining Company, was listed on the NRHP in 1976. Other listed properties
include the ‘ghost town’ of the historic mining camp Winfield that was listed in 1980, St. Elmo listed in 1979, the Buena Vista Courthouse in 1978, the Grace Episcopal Church in Buena Vista listed in 1979, the Arkansas River Bridge in Johnson Village listed in 1985, and the archeological remnants of the Marshall Pass route. Two Salida buildings, the old Hospital and the Unique Theater have been locally landmarked.

The largest designation in the county is the downtown Salida National Register Historic District that was listed in 1984. This historic district recognizes dozens of Salida’s intact commercial structures, predominantly two-story brick buildings that display architectural characteristics typical of late 19th century storefronts and their setting in the established downtown. In 2003, the historical and architectural importance of the district’s buildings was re-confirmed by a building survey that defined contributing and noncontributing buildings.

Historic preservation has continued to evolve. In 2001, a Historic Preservation Commission was created in Salida to provide design review for their local historic district. In 2005 the city became a Certified Local Government (CLG) opening up incentives for preservation through tax credits, grant opportunities, and authorizing Salida to locally landmark historic properties. In 2002, Historic Salida, Inc. was formed by local residents to “research, preserve, interpret, and promote historic resources in and near Chaffee County.” HSI offers tours and scholarships, and hosts special events and workshops to promote education. Salida-area Parks Open-space and Trails (SPOT) is currently rehabilitating the Hutchinson Homestead owned by the town of Poncha Springs. The Salida Museum Association is raising funds for the rehabilitation and interpretation of the Ohio-Colorado Smokestack and Maysville School.

A local land conservation organization, the Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas, was formed in 2000 to “advance the conservation and stewardship of agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, open space, scenic beauty, and other diminishing natural and historical resources.” Their efforts in protecting agricultural lands complement the work of the area’s historic preservation organizations.

The establishment of the Chaffee County Heritage Area in 2004 reinforced the value that the community places on its heritage. It recognizes that historic preservation can play a key role in planning growth and development and acknowledges that stewardship of the area’s heritage resources can positively contribute to the county’s rural character, while also providing positive economic benefits.
Existing Cultural, Archeological and Historical Resources

The following summarizes the range of existing resources that exist within the Heritage Area and along the Byway. These existing resources are the tangible evidence of the county’s history. In 2004, the county contracted with GARNA to compile a GIS database using available research and documentation, and with the contributions of partner organizations such as Historic Salida, Inc. and Buena Vista Heritage. This is not intended as a complete listing, but rather a sampling of the range of resources that contribute to the character of the Heritage Area. A more complete list is included in Chapter 7.0 Background, section 7.2 Historical Resource Inventory and Data Base, beginning on page 84.

Archeological resources within the area are plentiful with numerous recorded sites scattered throughout the valley. The upper Arkansas valley was home to various bands of Ute Indians who roamed the mountains as hunter-gatherers. As many are located on public lands, recorded sites are rarely revealed to the general public in the interests required to inventory and survey for archeological sites, revealing a range of resources. There are ample opportunities for interpretation and protection of these sites through educational venues and archeological outreach programs that enhance appreciation of past Native American cultures. Information on archeological sites is available from the USFS, BLM, and the Colorado Historical Society, but specific locations are not made public in order to protect them.

Historical resources include historic buildings of architectural and vernacular merit, historic sites where significant events occurred, and historic landscapes. Historic buildings include the downtowns of Salida and Buena Vista with turn-of-the-century two and three-story buildings on a gridded street pattern.

Examples of the country’s railroad and mining past include the Buena Vista Depot and Caboose and Smeltertown in Salida. Elements associated with early mining and transportation include chert quarries in the foothills east of the river, remnant railroad lines throughout the county, and stagecoach road remnants near Granite.
**Issues and Opportunities**

Most of Chaffee County’s designated historic properties remain in their historic use or in an adaptive reuse that is compatible with their historic qualities. The rehabilitation of historic buildings and sites is generally accepted as a positive and sustainable approach in the broader community.

Important preservation tools include the listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places or the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. The criteria associated with these Registers provide the standard method used to evaluate places for their historical significance and for determination of integrity. The City of Salida has other valuable tools that assist their local community in promoting historic preservation. The primary tool is the local ordinance that includes an historical commission, the Downtown Salida Design Guidelines, and a demolition provision, all of which are related to the downtown Salida Historic District. Salida is the only municipality with a local ordinance for historic preservation, and also the only certified local government (CLG). There are no county-wide historic designations nor are there county-wide guidelines or standards that address the treatment of historic properties.

Because of the county’s broad heritage, there are many additional sites that may be worthy of preservation and recognition. Over the last 30 years, many archeological and historical resources have been inventoried and evaluated. Some have been deemed eligible for listing on the NRHP, others have been deemed
field eligible, and some have been noted as not rated. These resources are identified in Chapter 7 Background by a matrix and an illustrated map that identifies their locations and lists their evaluation. Chapter 7 also provides a matrix of specific sites that may be potentially significant, including agricultural lands, structures on agricultural and public lands, mining remnants, and roads and bridges that may not have been considered significant in previous inventories.

The greatest threat to the county’s archeological and historical resources is likely growth and development. The county’s rapid growth has already resulted in new development and patterns of development that may impact its scenic, natural, agricultural, historical and archeological resources. Preserving the significant buildings and landscapes that characterize Chaffee County can provide positive economic benefits to the community.

According to *The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Colorado*, a publication funded by the Colorado Historical Foundation in 2002, historic preservation acts as a catalyst for economic development. Between 1981 and 2001, grants and incentives resulted in $676.2 million in direct expenditures, rehabilitation projects amounted to $1.5 billion in indirect benefits, and thousands of jobs were generated in communities across the State of Colorado. Historic preservation promotes sustainability. It reinvests in underutilized buildings and places by returning them to a productive use. Local economic benefits are gained as well, in the form of new jobs and increased tax revenue.

### 3.5 Recreational Resources

The high mountain oasis of the Chaffee County Heritage Area provides the perfect setting for world-class outdoor recreation and adventure in unparalleled scenery. Historically, natural hot springs and rustic resorts offered a respite for travelers from the city, offering nature’s healing powers and a health cure. Hot springs at Mount Princeton and Cottonwood Hot Springs remain from days past, and this experience can now also be enjoyed at Salida’s municipal pool. Recreation has continued to grow to the extent that it is one of the most significant sectors of the county’s economic base.

Visitors from around the world travel to Chaffee County for its four-season adventure
opportunities, and to experience a variety of outdoor activities that few Colorado counties can match. The diversity of recreational settings and activities in the county is an important component of the quality of life for residents as well.

In 1949, competitors boating from Salida to Cañon City started white water competitions in the United States with the first FIBark festival on the Arkansas River. It still tops the kayaking charts today. Whitewater kayaking and rafting on the rapids of the Arkansas River, the most commercially rafted river in the United States, are the most popular summer activities. The area’s abundance of wildlife attracts big game hunters and fishermen and creates opportunities for wildlife viewing. Camping, jeep touring, and ATV and motorcycle riding are popular activities. Hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking choices at all skill levels are available in dramatic settings that only Chaffee County can offer. In the winter, a similar variety of recreation is available, from downhill skiing and snowboarding at Monarch Mountain (established in 1939) to snowshoeing and backcountry skiing on public lands. Snowmobiling on designated trails is another growing winter activity.

The county offers a broad diversity of recreational settings from backcountry wilderness areas such as Brown’s Canyon Wilderness Study Area, the Collegiate Peaks, Buffalo Peaks Wilderness Area, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the Big Bend motorcross track and the white water parks in Salida and Buena Vista. More than 80 percent of the county is public land managed by the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, or the State of Colorado in the form of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area. These lands provide access to the county’s major designated wilderness areas and to the tremendously popular ‘14ers,’ the fourteen 14,000- foot peaks that define the county’s (and the Heritage Area’s) western edge. The wide variety of public lands offers four-season mountaineering activities for families and experts alike, along more than a hundred miles of shorter-distance routes as well as major sections of the state’s long-distance high mountain trails such as the Colorado Trail and the Continental Divide Trail.

A large segment of Chaffee County’s tourism economy ties directly to its heritage resources, and many historic resources offer a wide variety of recreational experiences. Rivers and streams provide settings for placer mining hobbyists, and rock-hounding enthusiasts can dig for gems on Mount Antero, Ruby Mountain, or dozens of other locations on public lands. Mining towns like St. Elmo, Turret, Winfield, and Vicksburg offer a visit back in time. Forest access roads, historic mining routes, and abandoned railroad beds create an attractive and sometimes challenging system of trails and terrain, making the county a popular spot for races, including the Banana Belt Mountain Bike Loop Race, burro races, and an increasing number of semi-professional competitive bicycling and running events. Community events also tie directly to the county’s heritage resources.
4.0 Issues and Opportunities

An important first step in planning for the future of the Chaffee County Heritage Area and the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway is to understand the issues, opportunities, and challenges that exist within the county, and how they may affect the county’s intrinsic qualities. Issues such as growth and development, land use policy, scenic character, recreational conflicts, lack of knowledge of significant resources, economic viability, wayfinding, and visitor amenities are important to consider when determining potential strategies and actions that should be undertaken to promote and protect the Heritage Area and the Byway.

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings determined during this planning process. The findings help to determine the strategies and actions that will be necessary to promote and preserve the Heritage Area and the Byway. Strategies and Actions are presented in a subsequent chapter, Chapter 6.0 Strategic Plan.

4.1 Growth and Development

The county’s scenic beauty, temperate climate, and affordability make it an attractive place for development and growth.

- Chaffee County is experiencing rapid growth, resulting in new development and patterns of development that may impact its scenic, natural, agricultural, historical, and archeological resources. For example, new growth and smaller development patterns such as two-acre lots located along major travel routes are already beginning to impact the significant scenic views adjacent to or visible from the Byway.

- According to the Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan (March 2000) the county has grown by more than 5% each year since 1997 (contrasted with a statewide rate of 2% and national rate of 1%). The county’s population is currently more than 15,000—conservative estimates place it at more than 25,000 by 2020.
• Most new growth occurs in unincorporated areas, placing a financial strain on the county in providing public services. A large amount of this growth is scattered residential development, frequently on two-acre lots with little or no clustering to preserve open space, which is changing the county’s rural and scenic character.

• Although more than 80% of the county is public land, lands adjacent to the Byway are primarily privately owned (most of which is productive agricultural land). Farming and ranching are valued for their historic roles, contribution to the local economy, and function in maintaining the county’s authentic rural mountain character, but they are also endangered by development. Ranchlands are indeed more financially valuable as development property than for ranching income.

4.2 Land Use Policy

Few incentives or regulatory controls are available to preserve the county’s scenic, natural, agricultural, or historic resources. The limited number of planning tools offers few options for landowners or the community to protect lands that provide Chaffee County with its rural character.

• Private property owners are looking for tools that will assist them in protecting their lands, while maintaining their property rights and ability to generate income.

• Regulatory controls are minimal, particularly in the county’s unincorporated rural areas, and especially for lands along the Arkansas River Valley and the Byway.

• There is a need for land use policy that promotes creative and progressive development that maintains open lands and respects natural landscapes while still offering economic benefits to landowners.

• In response to these issues, the Chaffee County community is completing a two-year inclusive public process that is providing input and helping set direction for the county’s land use code revision. CCHAAB is actively participating in this process, advocating land use policies that will balance growth and development with the preservation of Chaffee County’s rural character and local quality of life—key elements of its heritage.
4.3 Scenic Character

In addition to driving growth and development, Chaffee County’s scenic beauty draws tourists and recreationists who collectively bring important economic benefits to the entire community. Scenic character is also noted by residents as being an important reason for living in the county.

- The connection between scenic beauty, rural character, and sustainable long-term economic viability has not explicitly been recognized by the broader Chaffee County community.
- All of the Heritage Area’s intrinsic qualities contribute to its scenic character, which in turn contributes to the county’s economic well-being. The county’s growth and plans for new development should be carefully evaluated and designed to minimize impacts on historical and natural resources.
- CCHAAB’s mission includes the obligation to provide data to the county and local municipalities and residents on the scenic and historic character. As part of this planning process, CCHAAB prepared a scenic quality inventory to identify specific views, vistas, and areas that contribute to Chaffee County’s scenic character. This was shared with the community through the land use code revision process, where it has already been, and will continue to be, an important planning tool for the county in their evaluation of new development. A description of this inventory is included in Chapter 7.0 Background, in the viewshed and scenic quality analysis.

4.4 Recreational Conflicts and Opportunities

Chaffee County’s abundance of sunny and warm days, and its geologically diverse landscape that includes a world-class river and many 14ers, provide outstanding outdoor recreation and adventure in unparalleled scenery.

- The popularity of diverse recreation activities sometimes causes conflicts between users. Commercial rafting on the Arkansas River has grown exponentially, resulting in management issues such as how to allocate river resources fairly among commercial and private boaters and anglers.
• Issues sometimes arise between motorized and non-motorized users on popular trails, i.e., hikers seeking solitude sometimes conflict with motorized users and bicyclists, equestrian use at times conflicts with motorcycles and bicyclists.

• There is increasing demand for access to public lands by local residents and families, as well as by users from the Front Range and out-of-state. Resource protection and trail maintenance are ongoing issues for public land managers, making it important to identify and protect places, features, and sites that are significant to Chaffee County’s heritage.

• As new recreational opportunities arise, such as the addition of hiking and biking trails in and near Salida and Buena Vista, creation of a Brown’s Canyon Wilderness Area, and use of historic routes such as the Midland Railroad, their impact or enhancement of heritage values should be considered. It will also be important to support the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic features such as railroad routes that may pass through private lands, i.e., the potential public use and preservation of the Old Leadville Stagecoach Road.

• Providing more access and new trails throughout the county is sometimes challenging, requiring collaboration between potential users and those who manage or own the land, such as public land managers and private owners. A balance between protecting resources on public lands and ensuring that the rights and opinions of private landowners are respected must be made when providing new access such as trails.
4.5 Protection of Significant Historic Resources

Historic buildings, landscapes and features are visible all across Chaffee County, helping to tell its story of mining, settlement, and adventure. Unfortunately, many locals and visitors are not aware of the importance of these resources, and means to protect these important resources are not always easily available. Although Chaffee County has several historic preservation groups who have been actively protecting important resources for decades, there are many more sites and properties that have yet to be identified and designated.

- Chaffee County has close to 100 designated historic sites. Most of these properties continue in their historic use or in an adaptive reuse that is compatible with their historical qualities. And, reuse of historic sites and buildings is recognized as a positive and sustainable approach in the community.

- There are potentially many more properties that may be historically significant, such as agricultural lands, structures on agricultural and public lands, mining remnants, and roads and bridges that may not have been considered significant in previous inventories.

- The county’s geographical information system (GIS) database includes a listing of the county’s historic sites to date. A historical inventory has also been developed and additional plans to continue surveying the county are included in this management plan.
4.6 Historic Preservation and Economic Sustainability

The economic benefits of historic preservation and land conservation are not readily familiar to the broader Chaffee County community. Recreation and tourism are better understood for the positive benefits they provide to the county’s economic viability.

- There is an opportunity to promote historic preservation within the local community for the benefits that it offers, including its role in environmental sustainability such as returning potentially underutilized buildings and sites to a productive use, and the local economic benefits that are gained in the form of new jobs and increased tax revenue.

- Additional opportunities exist for expanding the county’s tourism base to include heritage tourism, agri-tourism, visits to public lands, and other sectors of the tourism industry that respect the qualities of unique places. Travelers in these categories generally bring a high level of respect to a place with historical or agricultural significance, and are usually willing to pay a premium for quality lodging, food, and collectibles.

4.7 Wayfinding

Travelers to the Chaffee County Heritage Area generally travel the Byway route (along US 285, US 50, US 24, and CO 291). The route is maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), whose future plans consist mainly of widening for passing lanes and improving intersections.

- The route is direct, but inconsistent application of CDOT signs, a lack of signs to promote visitor attractions, and clutter in some of the commercial signs (i.e., sign pollution) diminish the experience.

- There is an opportunity to partner with CDOT on interpretive waysides and signs as they implement their planned roadway projects. Roadway widening or modifications to the Byway should be monitored to ensure that improvements do not diminish the scenic and rural experience.
4.8 Visitor Amenities

Human comforts such as rest rooms and water, quality accommodations, and food service establishments are essential to attracting visitors and to getting them to stay longer. However, establishments that are poorly located or inappropriately designed, or that disrupt important resources or scenic views, can detract from the visitor’s experience.

- Most traveler amenities are well distributed along the Byway (usually concentrated within a town or a developed area). The recreation sites of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area provide restrooms and water. Others, such as gas stations or convenience stores, are scattered along undeveloped portions of the Byway, detracting from the beauty of the setting.

- High-end accommodations, such as a downtown hotel in a historic building, are missing from the Heritage Area.

- Some heritage sites and visitor amenities, although they may be appropriately located, are not yet fully “visitor ready” in the sense that their standards of service, quality of facilities, and maintenance may not be at levels expected and demanded by heritage travelers.
5.0 Wayfinding and Interpretive Strategy

Chaffee County’s palette of natural and scenic resources and historical and cultural attractions draws new residents and visitors to the county every year. The county has an active, involved community that has spent years organizing interest groups and forming partnerships whose objectives are to preserve and highlight these heritage resources for residents and visitors alike. The current picture is one of an assortment of players who use a wide range of logos, signs, and interpretive installations to convey their individual messages.

The designation of the Chaffee County Heritage Area and the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway provides an excellent opportunity to create an integrated framework for education and interpretation that builds on these existing efforts.

The purpose of the wayfinding and interpretive strategy is to set forth a consistent county-wide approach for the interpretation of the scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, archeological, and historical assets of the Chaffee County Heritage Area.

The objectives of the wayfinding and interpretive strategy are as follows.

1. Educate and inform visitors and residents about Chaffee County Heritage Area’s natural environment, and its important scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, historical, archeological, and recreational resources.

2. Assist in preservation and protection of the Heritage Area and its significant heritage resources by telling its important stories.

3. Convey that the Chaffee County Heritage Area is a friendly and attractive destination built upon a pattern of agricultural, natural, and cultural history that can be experienced through exploration, adventure, and learning.

4. Work collaboratively with public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private groups that already provide educational, recreational, and interpretive experiences to residents and visitors.

The first part of this chapter provides a series of recommendations to improve wayfinding within the Heritage Area and the Byway in order to meet the objectives stated above. These improvements are needed so that visitors and residents can fully enjoy and appreciate the intrinsic qualities of the Heritage Area and the Byway.
The second part of this chapter describes the interpretive strategy that is intended to offer a county-wide approach to better connect visitors and residents with the area’s heritage qualities. The interpretive strategy identifies an interpretive audience and themes, and recommends a series of interpretive installations and media. The third part brings these together into an interpretive framework.

5.1 Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to the ways in which travelers orient themselves as they move from place to place. It includes sensory as well as signs and other graphic communication elements that provide cues to orienting oneself and to choosing a path within an environment. These cues can include natural features and formations, travel routes, and directional and informational signs. Mapping, web-based information, and travel brochures are also elements of wayfinding. Another important aspect is safe travel, which includes road safety and condition of travel routes.

An analysis of the current condition of wayfinding in the Heritage Area and along the Byway determined that there are a number of wayfinding techniques in use, but there is an inconsistent application. There is a general lack of directional and informational signs, especially those directing travelers to important heritage attractions. In addition to the existing directional signs, the Heritage Area has a wide mix of interpretive installations with varying styles, content, and messages. Commercial signage exists in the more populated areas of the Heritage Area, principally in Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs. In some areas, commercial signs detract from the scenic and historical character. There is only one roadside wayside along the Byway route. The mix of existing sign types and style, and information presented by public agencies and commercial enterprises throughout Chaffee County is addressed in Chapter 7.0 Background.

An analysis of the Byway’s existing roadway condition (US 24/US 285, US 50 and CO 291) was conducted in the fall of 2007. A more detailed summary is presented in Chapter 7.0 Background. In general, the roadway analysis noted that the Byway travel
route is direct, but there is an inconsistent application of highway signs. The majority of the roadway pavement is in good to fair condition, with only a few sections rated as fair to poor (from milepost 202 to 212 on US 24). Along US 285 and US 50 where there are intermittent driveways there tend to be wide shoulders, in contrast to the narrow shoulders along CO 291. In addition, there are a few stretches with passing lanes on US 285. CDOT’s future projects include the addition of passing and auxiliary lanes on US 24 and US 285 where needed. Improvements to the bridge and intersection at US 24 and US 285 have been completed, and there are no immediate recommendations to widen any of the Byway routes.

**Wayfinding Recommendations**

A consistent wayfinding approach is required for the Chaffee County Heritage Area and the Byway. Wayfinding should include directional and regulatory signs to help visitors find their way along the Byway and to interesting sites within the Heritage Area. Informational signs are needed to identify important places and events along the Byway, and a visual acknowledgement at the gateways or portals into the Heritage Area is needed to cue the traveler that they have arrived. Specific recommendations include the following. These recommendations are also illustrated on the Interpretive Framework presented later in this chapter.

- Subtly announce the Chaffee County Heritage Area at each of its three spectacular natural gateways along the Byway. Provide an interpretive medallion near the county boundary and in conjunction with another sign. Refurbish the historic Chaffee County signs and reinstall in their current locations.

- Work with public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private groups to develop a family of signs and a method for implementation to inform residents and visitors about heritage sites.
  - Include a consistent application of the ‘brown’ CDOT signs along the Byway to direct visitors to important heritage sites such as to the historic downtowns of Salida and Buena Vista.
  - Include a county-wide wayfinding sign system to direct residents and visitors to important attractions.
  - Include a family of interpretive signs.

- Work with the local business community to reduce “sign pollution” along the Byway and adjacent to important heritage sites.
5.2 Interpretive Strategy

Interpretive Philosophy
Interpretation is about connecting people with places. Its role is to bring forward and explain the underlying meaning of the places, people, events, and natural forces that have marked and shaped an area. The resources that characterize the special nature of the Chaffee County Heritage Area are known as the intrinsic qualities—scenic, natural, agricultural, cultural, historical, archeological, and recreational resources. The intrinsic qualities are described in Chapter 3.0.

The interpretive plan for the Heritage Area is based on these intrinsic qualities, offers unique experiences, and builds on existing amenities. It focuses on portraying the Heritage Area's character as a combination of remarkable natural resources overlain with a fascinating and visitor-attractive social and cultural history.

Interpretive Audience
The Chaffee County Heritage Area interpretive audience is two-part: the first is the traveler or visitor who arrives for their first or repeated visit, and the second is the resident who has chosen to live in the county.

In attracting visitors, the objective is to interest those who will sustain the character of this exceptional place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents. For new or returning visitors who enjoy the area's recreational or natural resources, it is important to provide additional experiences related to heritage that will encourage longer stays.

In attracting new visitors, it is important to attract those with a special interest in the county's heritage, agricultural history, and scenic appeal. Tourism studies have shown that these types of travelers tend to have a positive economic and social impact on communities, and tend to be educationally oriented.

Providing interpretive approaches that support the local community and attract local residents is equally important. Interpretation can play a key role in educating and informing the local community about the significant heritage resources that contribute to their quality of life. Educating local businesses about the preservation and promotion of heritage can increase their business.
Interpretive Themes and the Stories of Chaffee County

Typically, an interpretive theme provides a key message that is used to organize all interpretive activities at an individual site. For a region as broad as the Heritage Area with an equally broad range of stories, the interpretive themes recognize the important stories and places of the area, and convey those that express the qualities of the entire region. The interpretive themes convey a complete message and should be used primarily to provide information that relates to the entire Heritage Area. In most cases, interpretive information on the Heritage Area will be added to existing facilities and be used to promote the region as a whole.

Six themes have been identified for the Heritage Area. They were created with the assistance of the CCHAAB, through the involvement of the community in a series of oral history workshops, and through the inventory and analysis of the area’s historical and natural resources. The oral history workshops were instrumental in identifying individual stories and collective memories. Transcripts from the workshops are included in the Appendix.

The historical and natural resources inventories (presented in Chapter 7.0 Background) helped to identify events, people, and resources that tell the story of the county’s evolution.

The thread of the county’s dominant natural setting, and its role in the development of the county, is a consistent idea that is woven through all six themes. The themes convey the historical development of the county. The six themes are: 1) Finding Our Roots, 2) Pushing Cattle, 3) Recreation and Adventure, 4) Making a Living: Mining, Transportation, and Industry, 5) Exploring the Valley: the Earliest Days, and 6) Tapping the Water: the Lifeline of the West.

Finding Our Roots
The human character of Chaffee County is built upon the ingrained and varied traditions and ethnic roots of its pioneering and long-residing families. These stories explore the ethnic diversity, and the ways in which families and residents have contributed (and continue to contribute) to the sense of place that makes the county unique.

“My uncle, George Naples, was a brake-man and he worked from Denver to Salida. He was one of the older members, working on the railroad for over 50 years. I had four children and he took them on the last ride from Salida to Denver. That railroad was so much fun. We’d stop under the Royal Gorge every time we went down the canyons. And it was more fun to get out, every time, and look up at the Royal Gorge. The train was a very integral part of our town, it really made the town. And my dad and my father-in-law were both tailors and they made suits for all of the railroad men because they had to dress in blue suits, so they were quite busy tailors.”

Jane Ferraro
Pushing Cattle
From the 1860s onward, opportunities for productive high altitude agriculture brought many settlers to the Arkansas Valley, where dry land farming, irrigated hay meadows, grazing, and other practices continue today as important livelihoods. Agriculture and its land patterns in the valley provide a distinct landscape character, particularly along the Byway, where broad open fields contrast with the steep backdrops of the mountain peaks to the west. Stories of ranching, farming, and the industries they supported, including truck farming and mining, will be explored.

Recreation and Adventure
The magnificent and largely publicly held lands in the county have long drawn adventurers and outdoor recreationists to fish, hunt, raft, climb, photograph, and explore its environs. And from very early on, the clean high mountain air, an untamed river, and world-class scenery have offered a respite from ‘city life’. How such large expanses of land came to be protected and the stories of how they have been managed, as well as the history of the Heritage Area’s recreation and the diverse and popular activities still pursued, will be explored.

Making a High-Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry
The discovery of gold and silver in Colorado and the Homestead Act in 1863 brought settlers, miners, and entrepreneurs to the Arkansas Valley. But it was the advent of the stage routes and eventually the railroads in the late 19th century that truly facilitated development of a thriving economy in the Arkansas Valley. These stories will explore the evolution of transportation as well as the mining industry and other industries that have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the character of the county – railroad, hard rock mining, processing minerals, timbering, recreation, construction, and the prison.

Exploring the Valley: The Earliest Days
Before European settlers moved to Chaffee County, the lands were inhabited by Native Americans, and later by transient explorers and adventurers. These stories will explore the earliest history of the county, from aboriginal inhabitants until the first permanent settlers.

Tapping the Water: The Lifeline of the West
Water is the lifeblood to the West, and Chaffee County is no exception. The role of water in the development of the Arkansas Valley, and the intriguing history of water bought and sold to support the development of distant communities, will be explored.
Interpretive Framework

Figure 8
5.3 Interpretive Framework

The Interpretive Framework describes an integrated current and future system of physical infrastructure that will provide facilities necessary to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the Heritage Area.

Specifically, the Interpretive Framework recommends adding several interpretive sites, including local visitor centers and interpretive waysides (newly developed and existing sites). Destination Sites and Adventure Routes included in the Interpretive Framework are also important amenities because they offer ways of logically directing travelers through the Heritage Area to its significant places. Interpretive media, including a Heritage Area logo and marketing brochure, are also important elements that will support the Interpretive Framework.

Interpretive Sites
A hierarchy of places and sites will be created to convey the stories of the Chaffee County Heritage Area and the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway. The sites are intended to allow residents and visitors to gain knowledge about the Heritage Area through a variety of experiences. Many of the proposed sites are locations where the interpretive information is already available. A few new sites will be created specifically to tell the stories of the Heritage Area and the Byway. The type and amount of information and level of detail will vary by site, depending on its role in the interpretive framework.

The development of the interpretive sites will build upon existing sites where visitors and residents currently congregate and where interpretation already exists. Most of these sites were built and are managed by one or more of the partners of the Heritage Area. The interpretive sites include the following.

• Local Heritage Centers
• Historic Downtowns
• Interpretive Waysides
• Destination Sites
• Museums
• Adventure Routes

Local Heritage Centers
To complement the activities of existing visitor centers that are site specific or related to one entity (such as the USFS), a new visitor center is proposed for each municipality. Each municipality will create a local visitor center in conjunction with an existing facility that already has
a similar mission. The function of the local visitor centers will be to provide basic information about the Chaffee County Heritage Area to aid in trip planning and general interpretation, complemented by providing more in-depth interpretation about the immediate place in which the center is located. Because each would be incorporated within an existing site and/or program the local visitor center would provide an individual focus on that community while also providing county-wide information.

Three local visitor centers are suggested, one each in Poncha Springs, the City of Salida, and the Town of Buena Vista.

- **Poncha Springs Local Heritage Center** – Located at the crossroads of US 285 and US 50 in the current location of the seasonal visitor center and an outdoor display.

- **City of Salida Local Heritage Center** – The second location is in downtown Salida, possibly in collaboration with the offices of GARNA, Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), National Scenic Byways Program, or the Chamber of Commerce.

- **Town of Buena Vista Local Heritage Center** – The third location is in downtown Buena Vista, in conjunction with the Buena Vista Chamber of Commerce.

**Historic Downtowns**
The primary destinations within the Chaffee County Heritage Area are its three municipalities—Poncha Springs, the City of Salida, and the Town of Buena Vista. The traditional downtowns of each of these municipalities include many of the Heritage Area’s cultural and historical resources as well as many of its visitor amenities such as lodging, shopping, and food.

Historic downtowns are key locations to provide a variety of interpretations. These may include exhibits, historical markers, walking tours and maps. The CCHAAB will coordinate with its partners including the municipalities and historic preservation groups.

**Interpretive Waysides**
In addition to the local heritage centers, a series of interpretive waysides are proposed along major travel routes and at sites where opportunities exist to provide information related to the Heritage Area and to complement the material already presented.
Interpretive waysides would expand or improve existing facilities or would be developed as new waysides in locations considered missed opportunities.

An interpretive wayside would typically include a small parking area, safe ingress and egress into the wayside, educational and interpretive media, and a means to explore or further enjoy the setting such as a trail connection, a picnic site, or a photographic opportunity. Interpretive media would include wayfinding information, panels or signs conveying information on the history of the site or its surroundings, an illustrated map of the Heritage Area for orientation, and seating if appropriate.

For locations that already provide facilities such as parking, interpretive signs, and amenities, information about heritage resources associated with the immediate surroundings and identification of the site as part of the Heritage Area would be provided. In some cases, the only need is the addition of the Heritage Area logo. At others, new interpretive panel(s) would convey Heritage Area information. At a few, all of the typical wayside facilities listed above would be new improvements.

Interpretive waysides are recommended at select locations along the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway, Trout Creek Pass, at select points on the Arkansas River, and along Poncha Pass. Their locations and interpretive content are as follows.

**Collegiate Peaks Scenic Overlook**
Providing additional interpretive information related to the area’s heritage at the existing Collegiate Peaks Scenic Overlook is proposed. Interpretation of the Heritage Area would be integrated with the existing panels, and could include the interpretive themes of *Pushing Cattle, Exploring the Valley, and Tapping the Water.*

**Arkansas River Interpretive Waysides**
Several interpretive waysides are proposed along the Arkansas River where the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) provides facilities such as rest rooms, camping, and visitor information. Sites were selected that are easily accessible from the Byway, that have existing visitor facilities or have the potential to add visitor facilities, and that offer effective interpretive opportunities.
These sites, their content, and potential interpretive themes (in italics) include the following.
• Clear Creek/Stagecoach Road (a crossing of the Midland Railroad and Leadville Stage Road incorporating an 1876 William Henry Jackson panoramic view) - *Making a Living: Mining, Transportation, and Industry*

• Pine Creek (story of the Class V rapids and railroads—the DRG narrow and standard gauge, Midland Railroads) - *Making a Living: Mining, Transportation, and Industry, and Recreation and Adventure*

• Ruby Mountain - *Pushing Cattle*

• Hecla Junction - *Tapping the Water*

• East Salida - *Recreation and Adventure*

• Buena Vista River Park (Midland Railroad, adding the Heritage Area logo) - *Making a Living: Mining, Transportation, and Industry*

• Coors Boat ramp in Salida - *Recreation and Adventure*

**Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway Interpretive Waysides**

Five interpretive waysides are recommended along the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway, including three sites that require improvements to existing facilities, and two new sites that would require the construction of all of the features of a typical wayside as identified above. The interpretive waysides and their content include the following.

• Old Stage Road near existing sign - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*

• Christmas 1806 - at existing CDOT facility at mile marker 132 - *Exploring the Valley: the Earliest Days*

• Smeltertown - an interpretive wayside at the smelter site near Salida - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*

• Hutchinson Ranch - an interpretive wayside along US 50 - *Exploring the Valley: the Earliest Days*

**Poncha Pass Interpretive Wayside**

One interpretive wayside is recommended along Poncha Pass. The wayside would be located at an existing pull-out, and will require the construction of all of the features described above.

• Poncha Pass - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
**Destination Sites**

In addition to the historic downtowns, there are dozens of significant places within the county that contribute to Chaffee County’s heritage. Many are not located immediately adjacent to the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway, and some are found in distant and even remote locations, such as in the foothills and in the 14ers to the west of the Byway, or in the rugged foothills in the Fourmile area east of the Arkansas River.

Collectively, these places play a vital role in telling the broader Chaffee County stories to residents and visitors. They are termed Destination Sites, where detailed educational and interpretive information should be made available on the history and value of these specific places, and general information should also be provided on the Heritage Area and the Byway. The destination sites and their content include the following.

- Historic Downtowns of Buena Vista, Salida and Poncha Springs - *Multiple Themes*
- Granite - *Finding Our Roots*
- Vicksburg / Winfield - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
- Buena Vista Depot - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
- Turner Farm - *Finding Our Roots and Pushing Cattle*
- Fourmile Area (Historic Lenhardy Toll Road, Midland Railroad, mining and timbering, tie cutting) - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
- Cottonwood Hot Springs - *Recreation and Adventure*
- Mount Princeton Hot Springs - *Recreation and Adventure*
- St. Elmo - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
- Smeltertown - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry, and Finding Our Roots*
- Hutchinson Ranch - *Finding Our Roots, Pushing Cattle, Exploring the Valley, and Tapping the Water*
- Maysville Schoolhouse – *Finding Our Roots*
- Monarch/Mine/Quarry - *Making a High Altitude Living: Mining, Transportation and Industry*
Museums
Several museums and archives already provide exhibits and interpretive information on local history as well as serving as depositories for historical information. The museums are key locations that will be supported by the Heritage Area. They are also locations where information about the Heritage Area can be distributed, and activities undertaken by the Heritage Area can be conveyed. The existing museums include the Salida Museum and the Buena Vista Heritage Museum, and the Salida Regional Library Local History Archives.

Adventure Routes
The county’s municipalities and the destination sites offer many ways to explore Chaffee County’s heritage, but the routes to and between these places are just as interesting, offering scenery and experiences that are world renowned. Designating scenic routes that access the destination sites as adventure routes will assist in providing a broader heritage experience for travelers. The following are routes that should be considered as adventure routes.

- Clear Creek Canyon Road to Vicksburg and Winfield (County Road 390)
- Cottonwood Pass (County Road 306)
- County Road 162 to Mount Princeton Hot Springs
- US 50 to Monarch Pass
- US 285-Johnson Village to Trout Creek Pass
- County Roads 339 and 326 connecting Cottonwood Pass to Mount Princeton
- Spiral Drive on “S” Mountain in Salida
- Old Monarch Pass (County Road 234)
- Aspen Ridge – Trout Creek Pass to Ute Trail (County Roads 307, 185, and 175)
- DSP&P Railroad to Hancock from St. Elmo (County Road 295)

Logo
There already exists a wealth and diversity of markers, signs, logos and identifying symbols that are used by the multiple public agencies, municipalities, and preservation groups to highlight their own cultural, historic and recreational features. Because of this, it is important that the CCHAAB introduce a simple mechanism that identifies the region as the Heritage Area.

A simple logo that identifies the Heritage Area will be added to existing and future interpretive sites. The logo can be displayed prominently on partner sites, and at new Heritage Area sites. The logo will also serve to visually tie the proposed interpretive sites and elements of the Heritage Area into a cohesive image. It is also envisioned to be a part of the county threshold signs and other county-wide wayfinding signs.