




BYWAYS - WHO CARES?

Making Byways Relevant


John Whiteman, Whiteman Consulting LTD, Boulder, Colorado

Today,
I am the cranky uncle.
I am the devil's advocate.
I am the curmudgeon.






Assertion: Byways are a work in progress and we need to be able to see where we are still lacking.



We are not yet a significant, relevant experience.

My Gripes:

1. The product is complicated. Our brand is not clear.
2. We are a little boring, distant and serious.
3. We don't focus on human needs sufficiently.
4. We are not destinations, but we try to act like we are.
5. Our stories are fragmented and not yet engagingly told.



I believe these disconnects
are getting in the way of
sustainability.

Everyone should know about
byways.



We should be an easy-to-
support program.





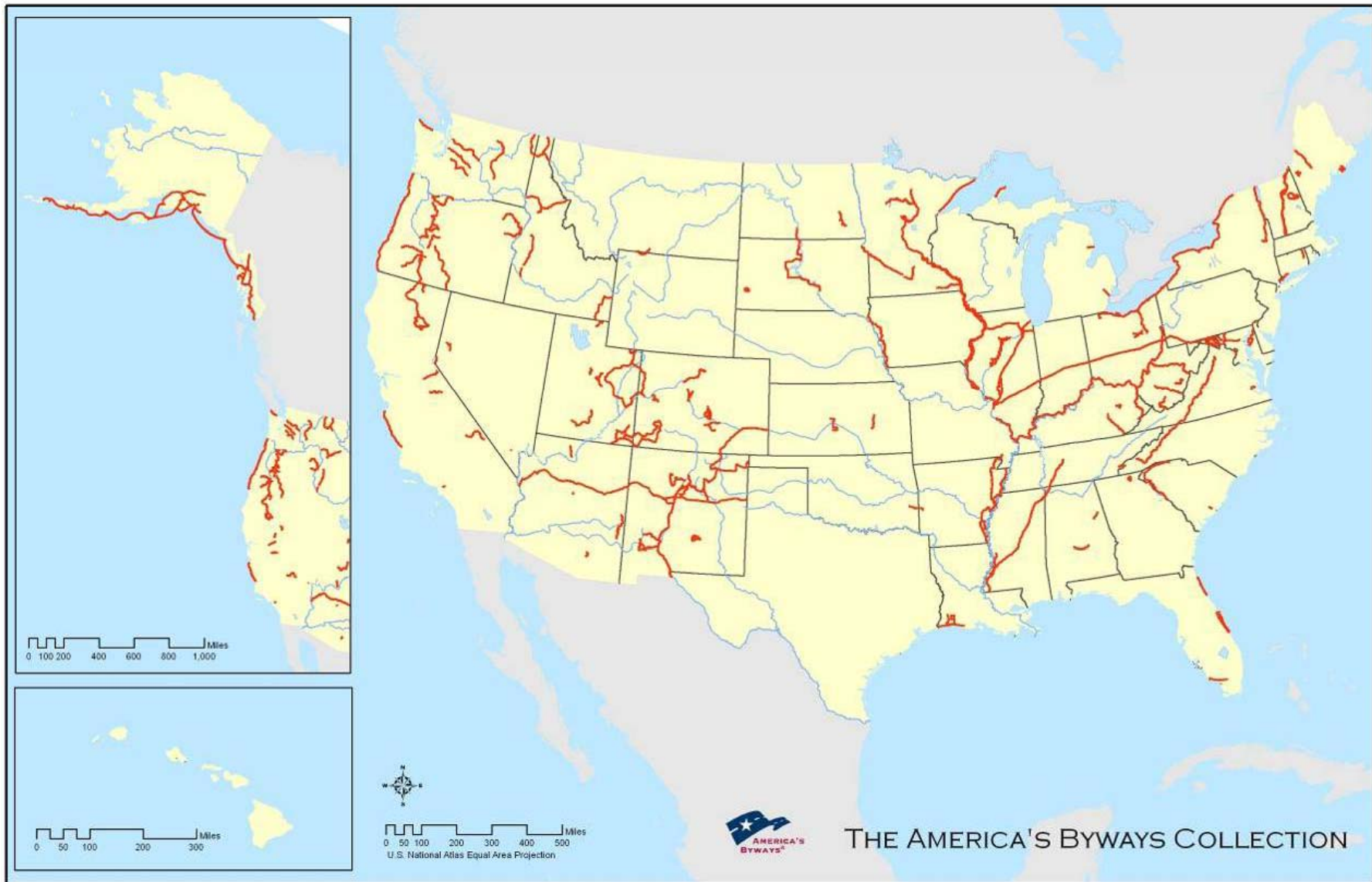
Byways should be compelling

- We weave together disconnected places into a connected, easier to understand experience.
- We use the experience of traveling on the road as a way to tell the story of place.
- We create efficiencies for communities through large scale cooperation.
- We identify important multi-jurisdictional resources and work to conserve them.

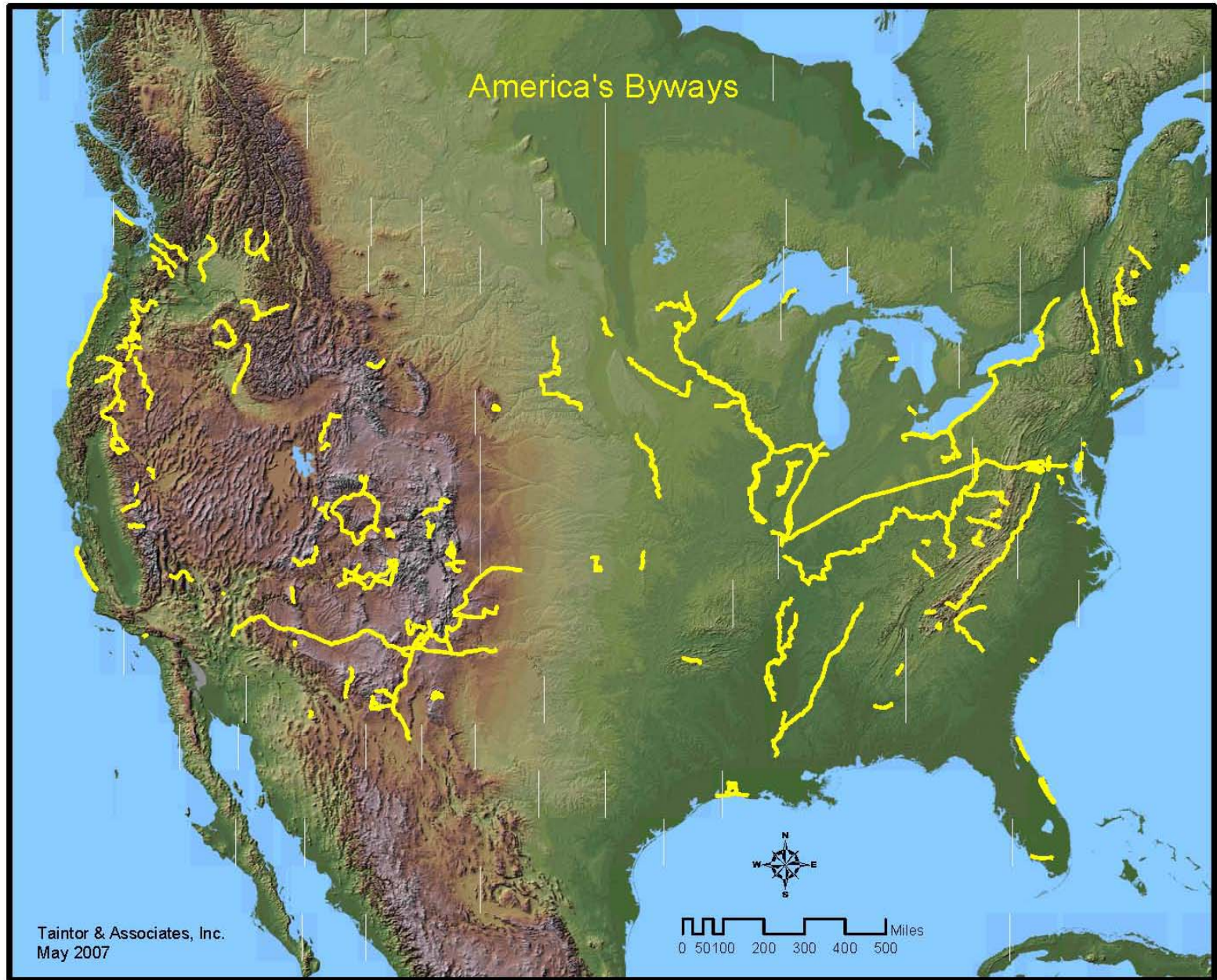
So What Are We Doing?

Who are We?

- 18 years of a program
- An amazing collection of special roads, places and stories
- 126 national byways
- Hundreds of state scenic byways
- 23,869 miles of byways
- 44 states participate-more coming
- Over \$300 million in grant dollars allocated
- Visitors centers, interpretive centers
- Lots of signs
- Lots of brochures
- Lots of maps



America's Byways



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We have lots of support

- An amazing grassroots collection of byway groups
- Washington staff focused on program
- Resource Center focused on program
- Great state coordinators



And yet....


- According to Longwoods International in *Marketing: America's Byways Consumer Research*, 'Byways are one of the Nation's Best Kept Secrets.'
- Less than 10% of travelers have been on a byway
- Just 37% have heard the words, 'America's Byways'
- Just 7% have seen the signs
- We continue to not be able to make a good case for the economic impact of byways (hopefully changing)
- If the program is not re-authorized and the money goes away, what becomes of this effort?
- We have byway groups in various states of viability.

Are byways really relevant?

- To **visitors**?
- To **citizens and businesses**?
- To elected **officials**?



Everybody likes the money...



And we tell ourselves that
we have a great travel
product...



But is it true??

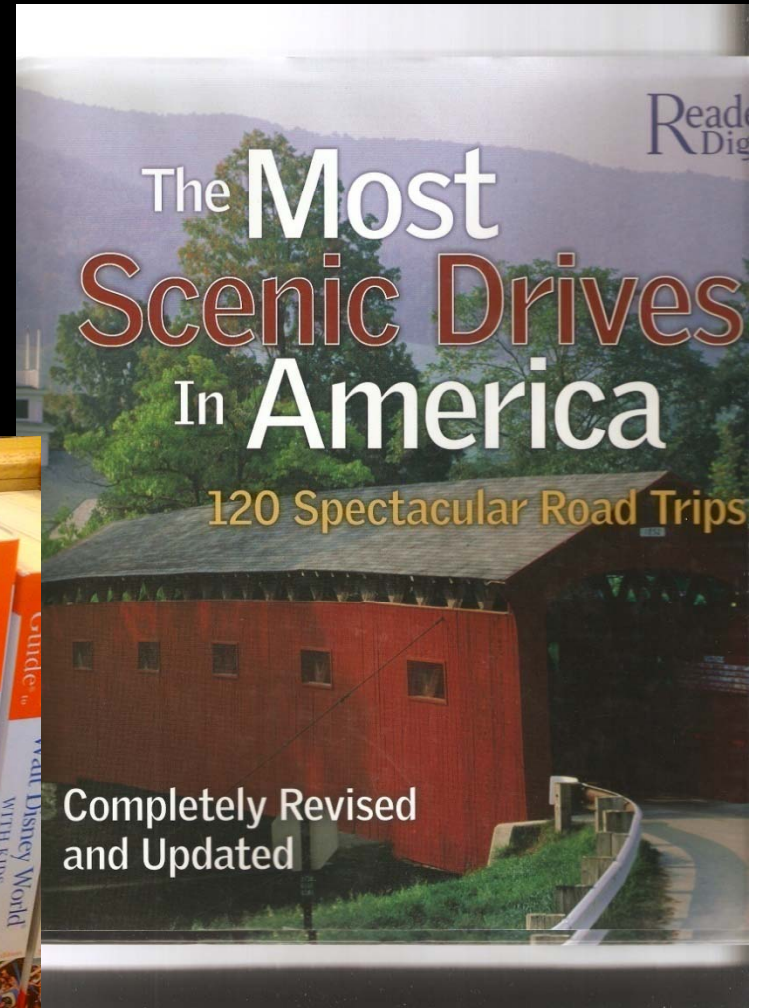
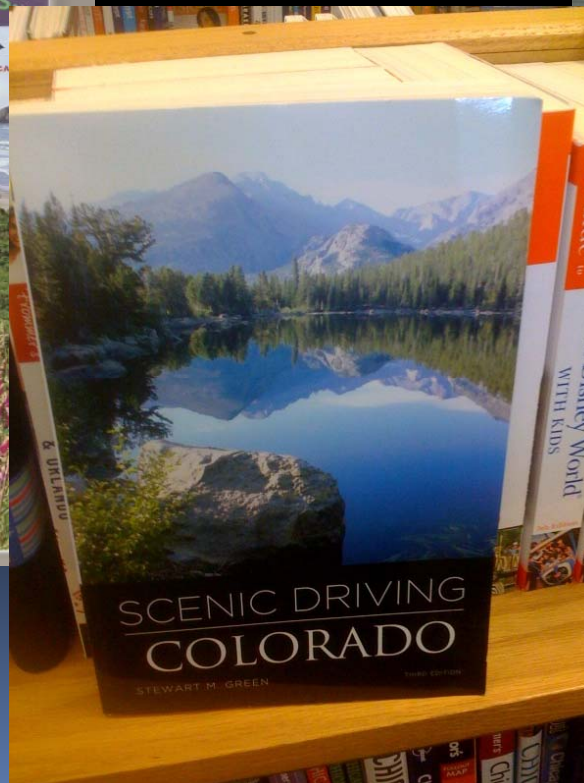
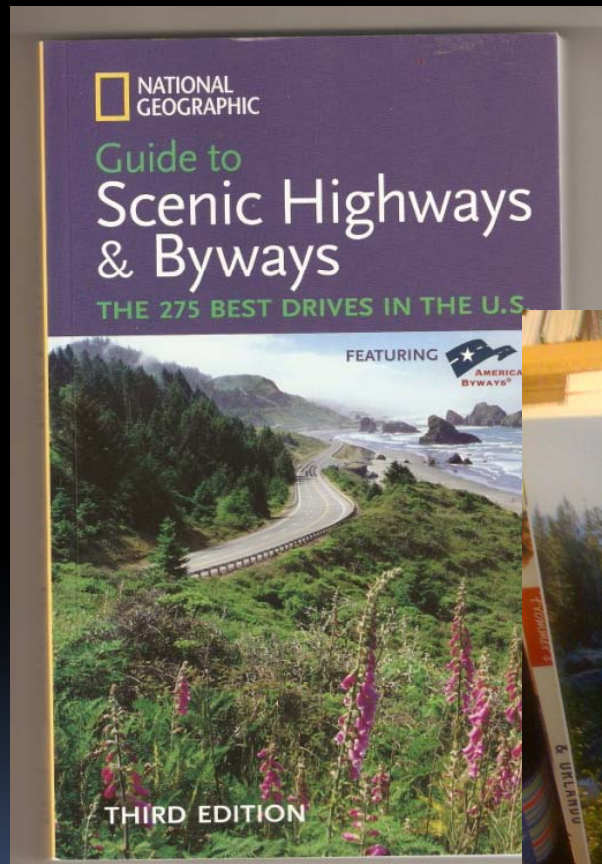



An Experiment:

The Travel Writer Barometer

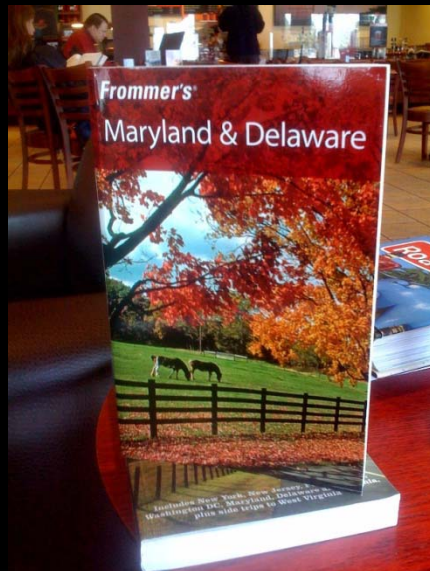


Some books focus on byways

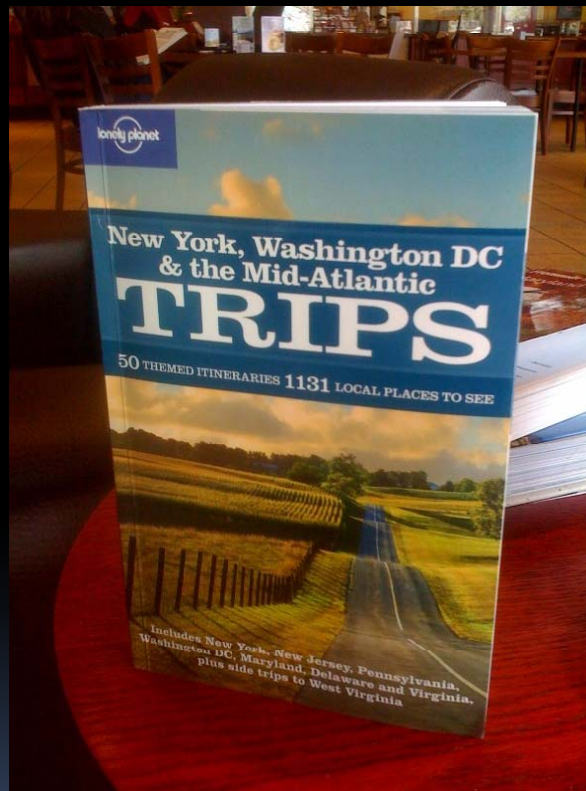




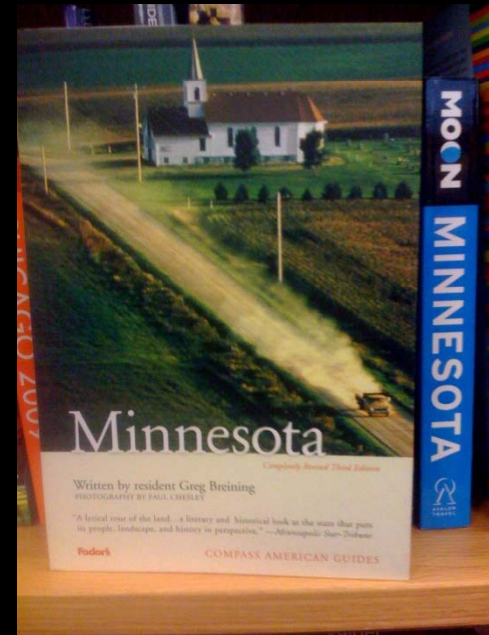
But most do not even
mention byways!!



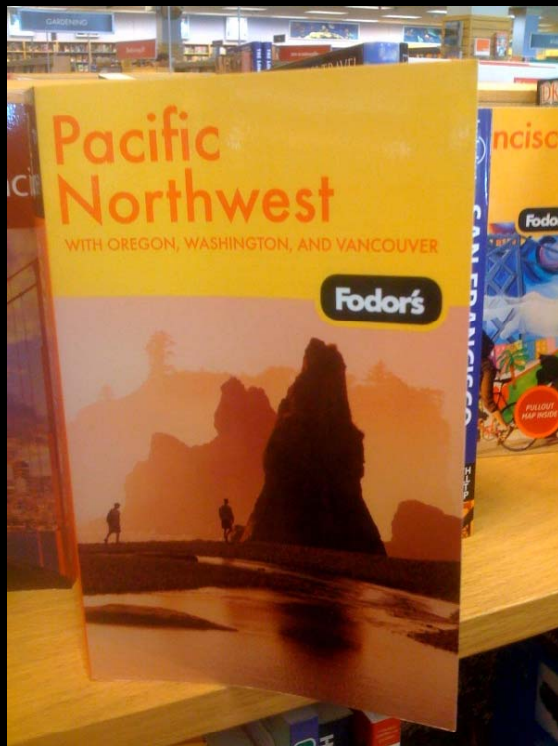
Frommers



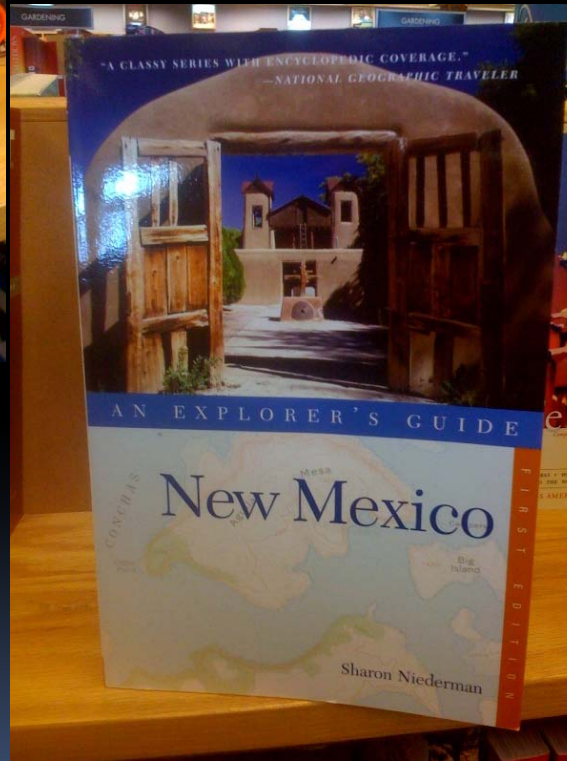
Lonely Planet



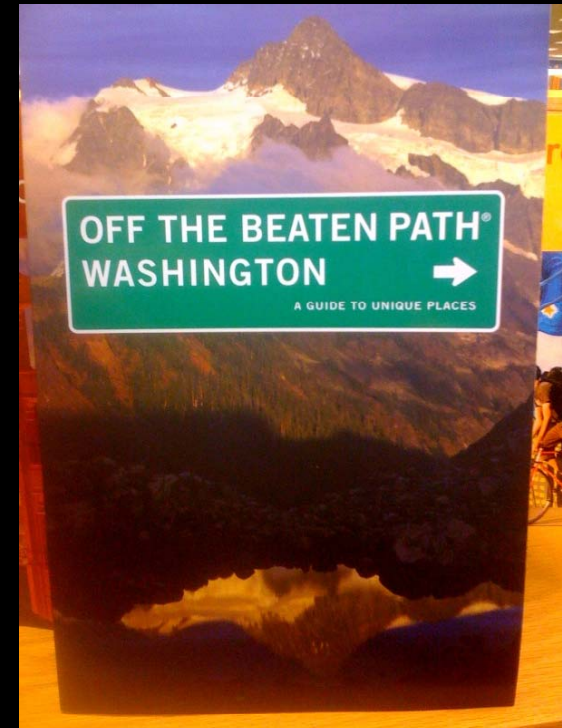
Moon



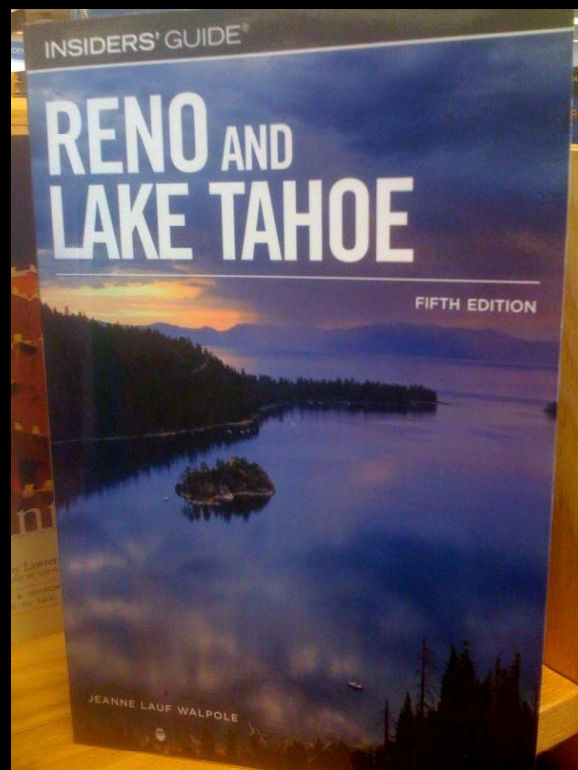
Fodors



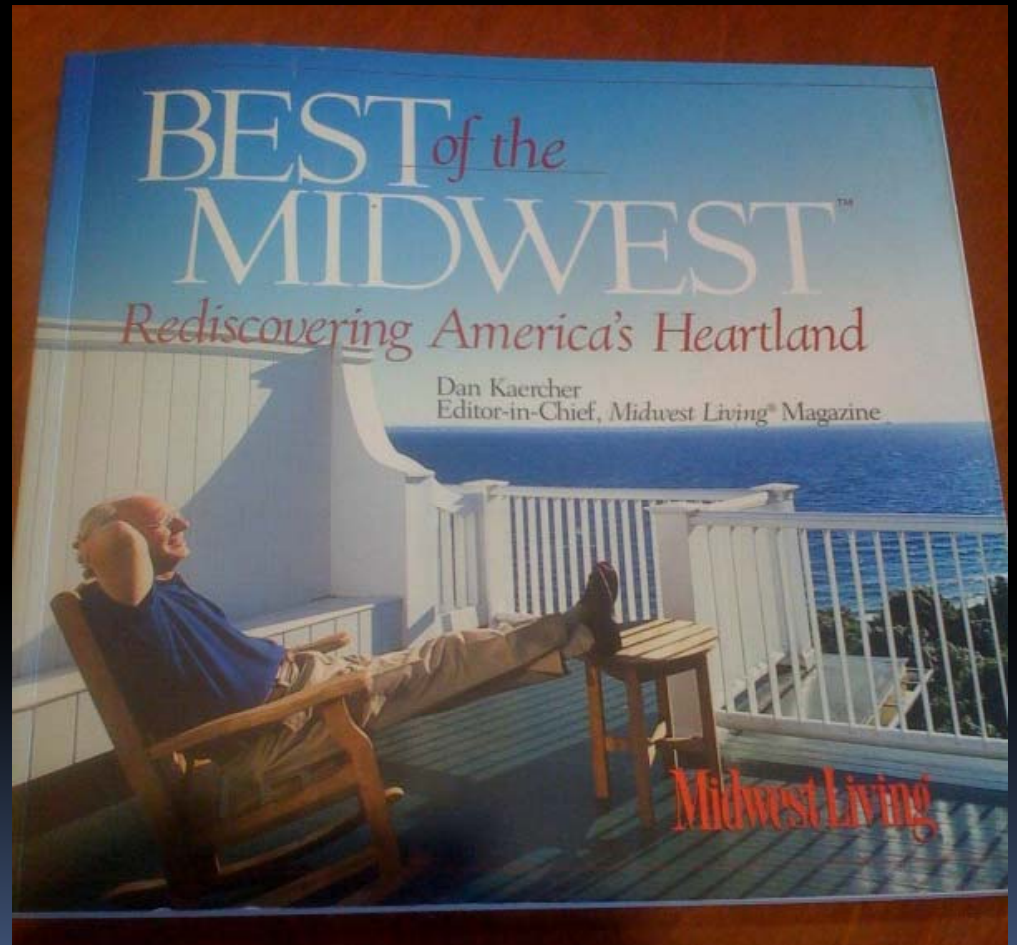
Explorer's Guide



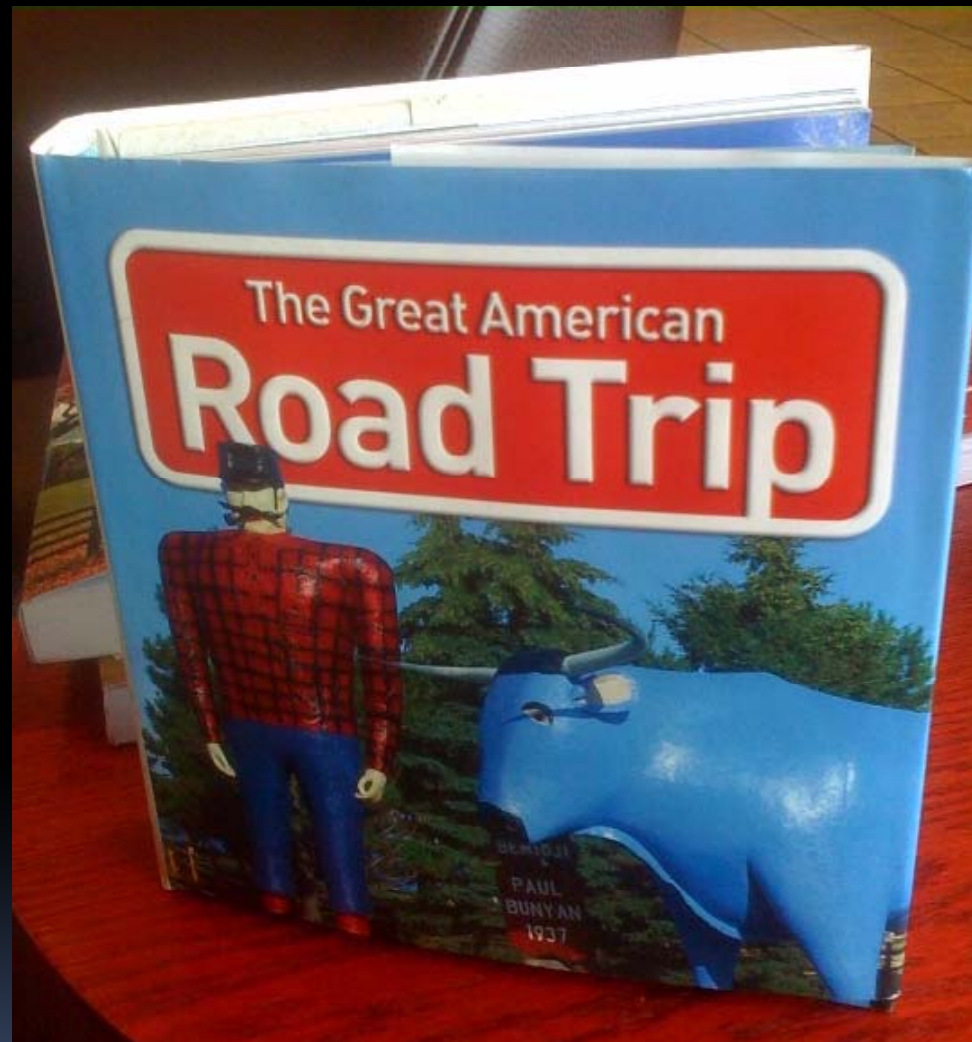
Off the Beaten Path



Insiders' Guide

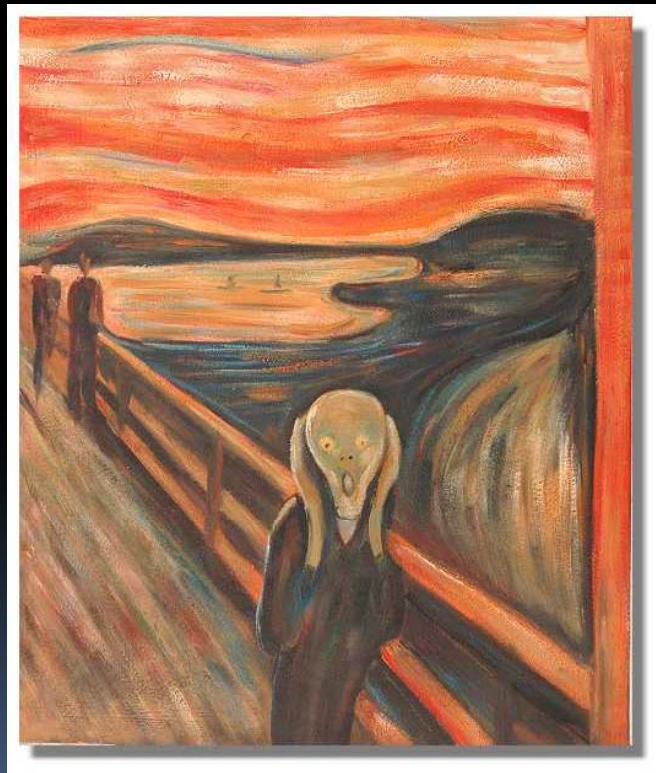


Midwest Living



Huh?

How can
this be?



1111111111111111



Lame...lamer
....even lamer

-

I believe there are other
answers:



Again with the gripes:

1. The product is complicated.
2. We are a little boring, distant and serious.
3. We don't focus on human needs.
4. We are not destinations.
5. Our stories are fragmented.

What else is similar to our byways experience?

- National Parks System?
- National Heritage Areas?
- National Historic and Recreational Trails?
- National Forests?



National Parks



Byways



Why do National Parks get
all the attention??



Not Fair!

We are not National Parks.

But, let's at least consider
the secrets to their success.

National Parks

- Clear brand, iconic, simple, reliable quality
- It's fun
- Lots of human needs met ... in park and outside park
- Significant destinations, can compete with 'Disney mindset'
- Stories are contained and well told

Byways

- Unclear brand, not iconic...work in progress
- A little serious; we have 'heritage-itis'
- Services? Long stretches with few needs met. Uneven quality.
- We are mostly not destinations.
- Story-telling is evolving.

So curmudgeon ... maybe some
of what you're saying is true
...sometimes...

What
should
we do?

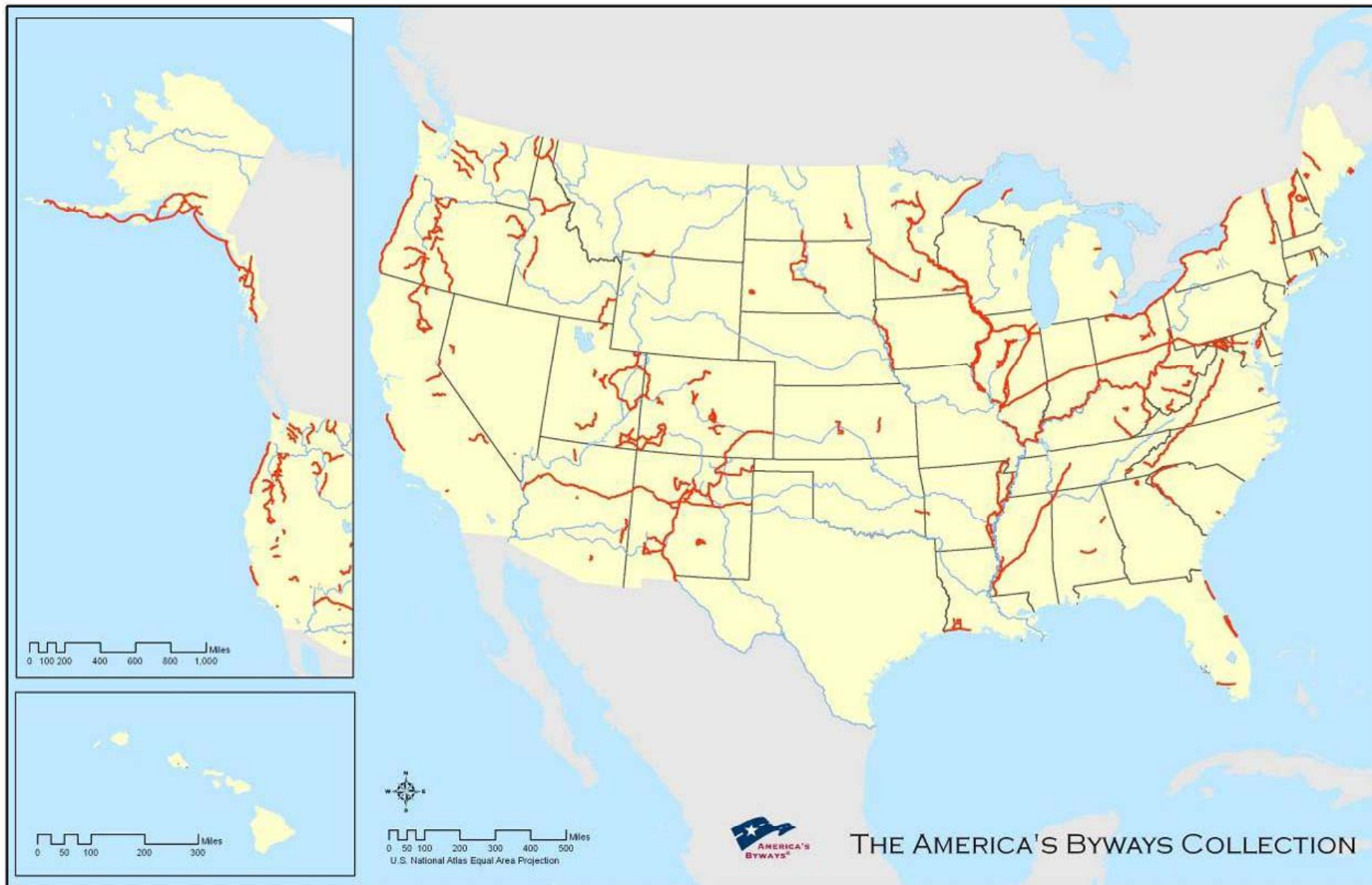


To Do's:

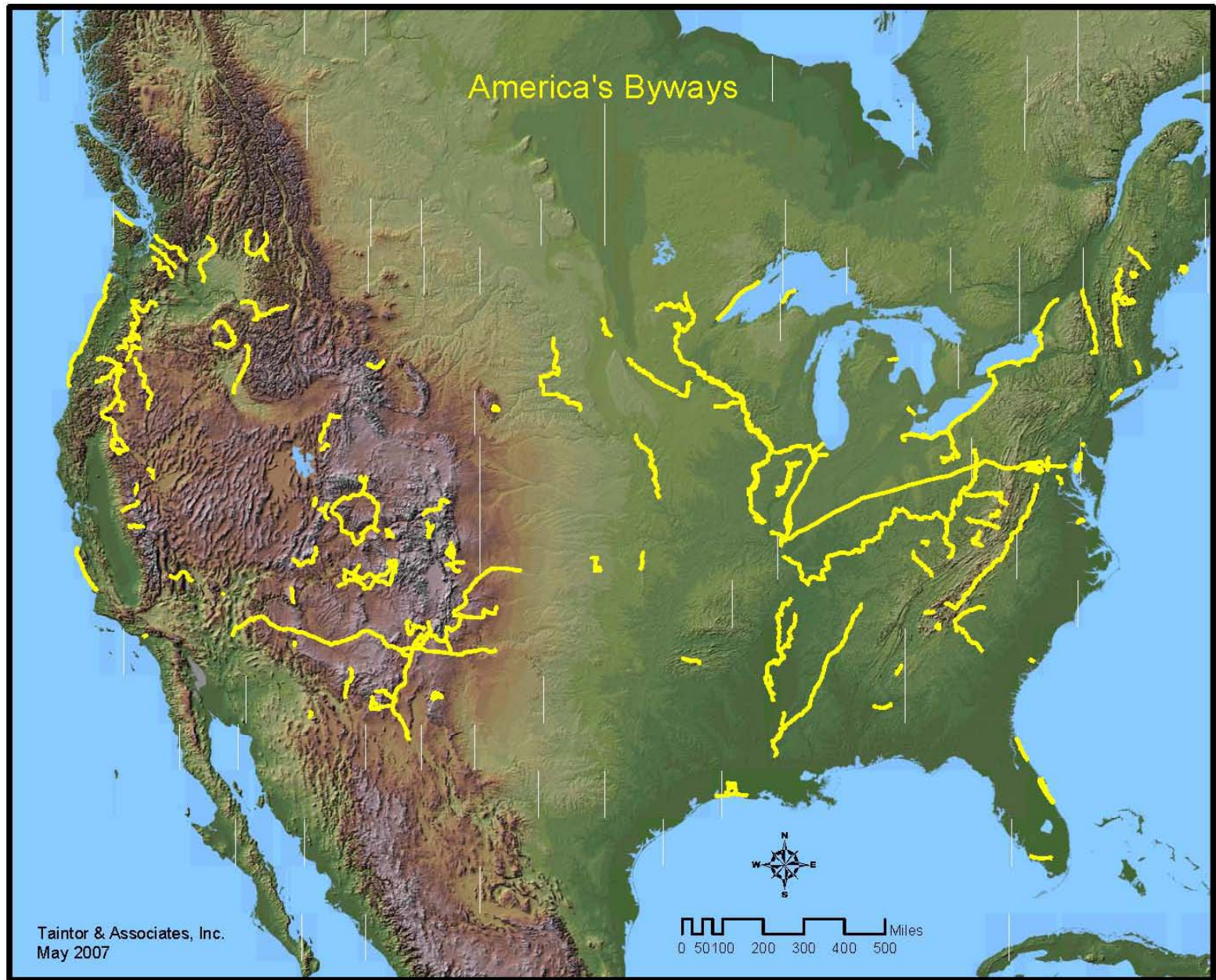
1. Simplify the product.
2. Convey the fun.
3. Think about human needs.
4. Make our stories relevant.

1. Simplify the Product

- Consider a land and people approach – scenic and heritage highways
- Create some larger networks- national byways, state byways, links, border to border
- Be clear on who you are: spur, alternate route, gateway or destination



America's Byways

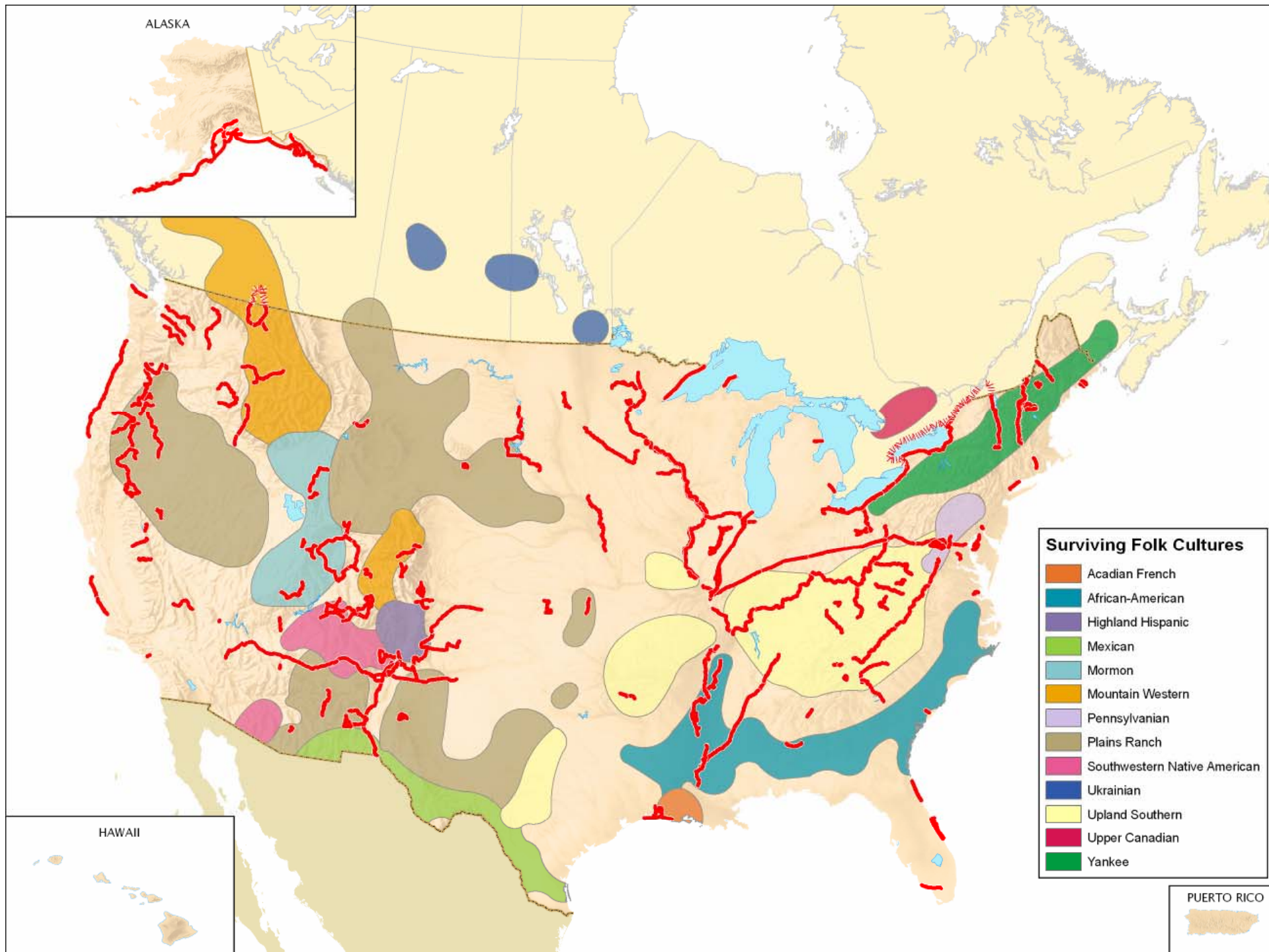


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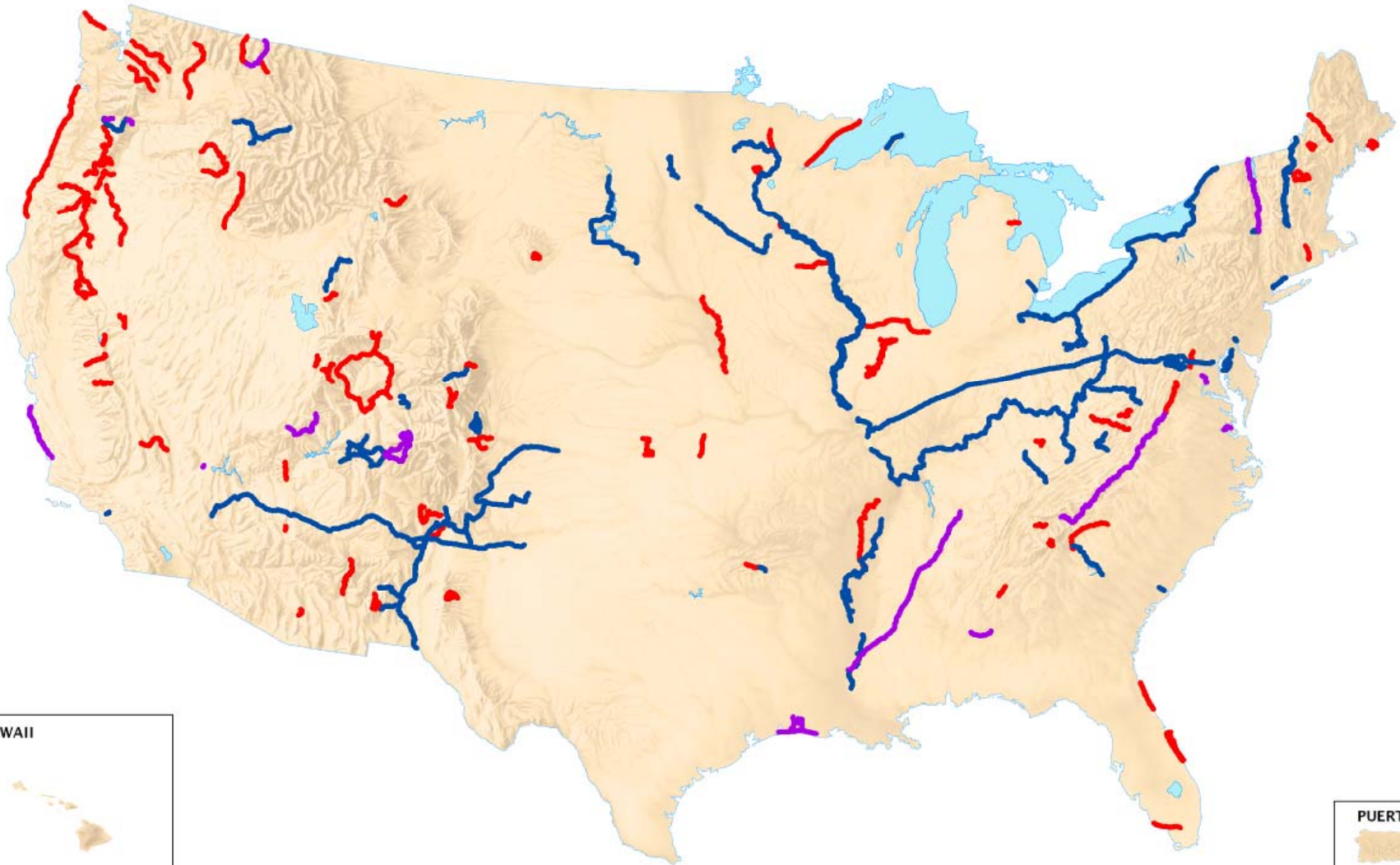




ALASKA



- Byways designated for archeological, cultural or historic qualities (People)
- Byways designated for natural, recreational or scenic qualities (Land)
- Byways designated for both Land and People intrinsic qualities





HAWAII



PUERTO RICO





Create regional networks and
experiences, linked byways

America's Byways

- America's Byways
- National Monument NPS
- National Park NPS
- National Parkway NPS
- National Wild and Scenic River
- Wilderness Preservation System
- BLM
- BOR
- FS
- FWS
- NPS
- TVA



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America's Byways

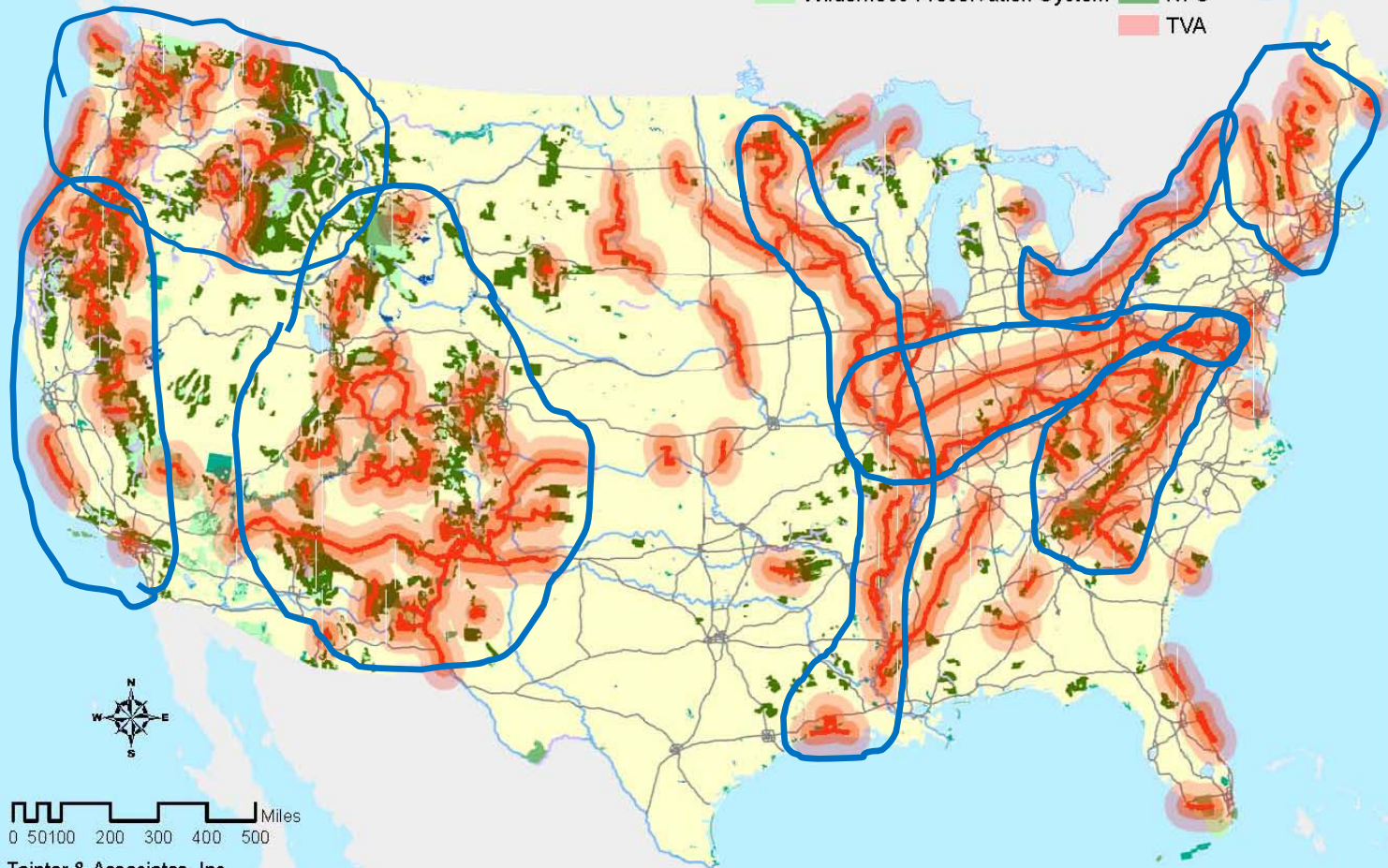
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| America's Byways | National Monument NPS | BLM |
| 25-Mile Buffer | National Park NPS | BOR |
| 50-Mile Buffer | National Parkway NPS | FS |
| | National Wild and Scenic River | FWS |
| | Wilderness Preservation System | NPS |
| | | TVA |



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America's Byways

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| — America's Byways | — National Monument NPS | BLM |
| — 25-Mile Buffer | — National Park NPS | ■ BOR |
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| | — National Wild and Scenic River | ■ FWS |
| | — Wilderness Preservation System | ■ NPS |
| | | ■ TVA |



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Clarify why people will come to your byway

- The **Excursion** from Home:
Spur or loop from an urban area
- The **Alternate Route** along the interstate
- The **Gateway**: Perfect entrance or side route associated with a major, related destination – e.g., national park
- The **Destination**

2. Convey the fun!



2. Convey the Fun

- Pictures of people having fun! Send a message. If you can't find any, you have 'heritage-it is'
- Get wacky....a little won't hurt anyone
- Create fun...think about your family market. What will the kids do?

Sign In | Your Profile

Search Go



HOME EXPLORE BYWAYS SHARE EXPERIENCES ABOUT BYWAYS PRESS ROOM come

Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway (Colorado, Utah)

Get your
**America's
Byways®**
Brochure
with maps & photos



...where do
you want to go?

[Browse America's Byways](#)



AK, HI, PR NOT TO SCALE

**America's Byways
Podcast**

Listen to the [America's
Byways Podcast](#)

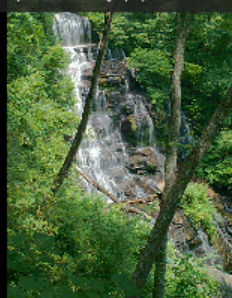
A Traveler's Tale
Historic Columbia River
Highway (OR)

"KissMyBulldog"—Incredible
scenery! We spent nearly a
day from Vancouver to
Bonneville Dam. I took so
many pictures, it was hard
to decide which to share,
but I... [\[more\]](#)

[Share Your Story](#)

Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway (SC)

Photo © 2006, Tony Smith Photography



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**National Parks
and Byways**

Known worldwide as hallmarks of
immense beauty, moving history,
and unrivaled recreational
activities, America's National Parks
draw citizens and international
travelers alike to discover the
matchless experience each park
provides. Drive America's Byways
through these national parks from
coast to coast along icy fjords,
19th-century aqueducts, coastal
marshes, and beyond. [\[Read\]](#)

[Birding on America's Byways](#)

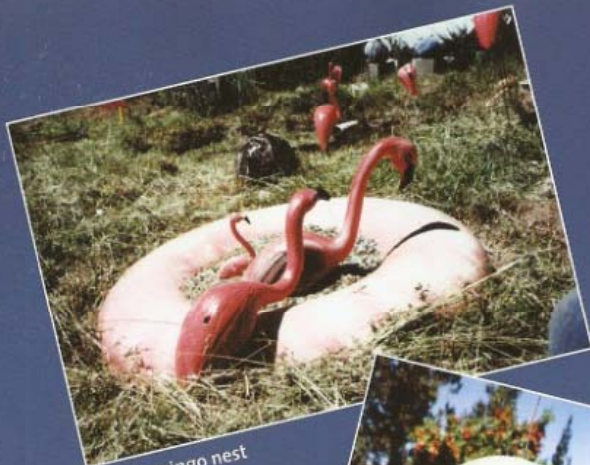
http://www.byways.org/explore/byways/2474

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Be fun!!!! Be a little wacko
and novel (if it fits)



Pink flamingo nest

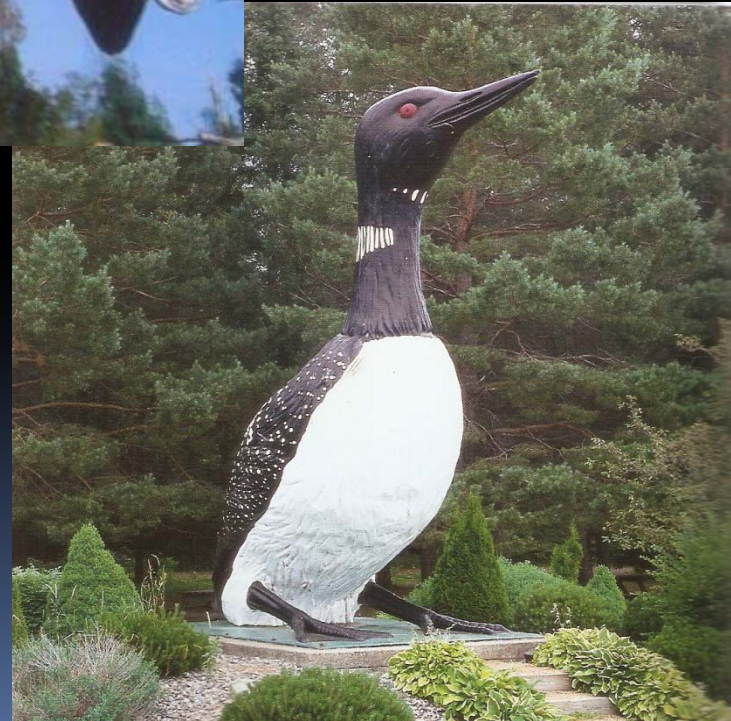


Bowling ball garden



Graceland Too
Holly Springs,
Mississippi

Paul McLeod may well be the world's most dedicated Elvis fan. Want proof? For starters, he named his son Elvis Presley McLeod. He also named his house after Graceland, the King's Memphis abode. Like its inspiration, Graceland Too is open for tours each day. McLeod's comprehensive Elvis collection contains thousands of records and CDs, countless pieces of memorabilia, and pictures, posters, and original art covering nearly every square inch of wall and ceiling. Tours often include a dab of Elvis impersonation for good measure.



Create!



3. Address human needs

- Emotion, senses, relaxation, escape....bathrooms
- Food
- Lodging
- Shopping

What we remember when we travel:

- Senses: taste, comfort, smell, touch, music, sounds, sights, new environments
- People
- Food
- Great lodging experience

Does anyone go to a place
because of or really cherish
memories of a great
interpretive sign?



Food



Lodging- get innovative



Music

Explore The Crooked Road.
Virginia's Heritage Music Trail.



[THE TRAIL](#)

[THE VENUES](#)

[THE MUSIC](#)

[THE STORE](#)

[THE COMMUNITIES](#)

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Shopping!



4. Make our stories relevant

- Get into the classroom – national project to weave together the stories, link them to places and events
- Use audio. Use video. Perfect projects for volunteers.
- Connect visitors with local experts.



NPS.gov

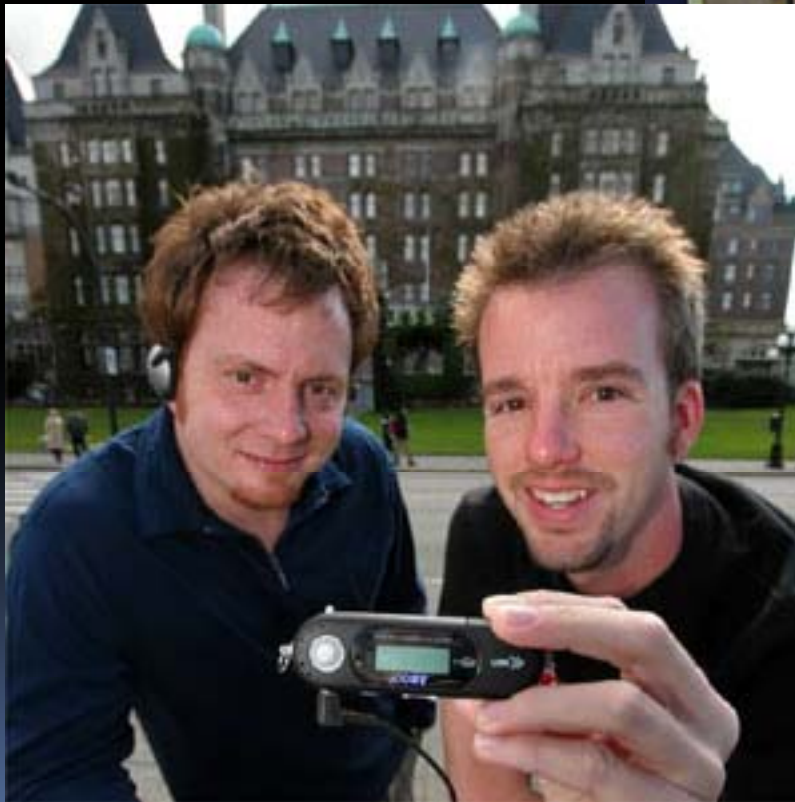
the KidsZone



FEATURES



Audio



Is your byway
relevant???

Get Relevant to Average Folks

1. Simplify the product
2. Convey the fun
3. Think about human need.
4. Make our stories relevant.

Be Relevant and They'll Care

