

Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN:
CRITICAL ELEMENTS



Road signs on Hwy 51 near Elephant Butte Lake State Park

IV. Corridor Management Plan: Critical Elements and Assumptions

Introduction

The Corridor Management Plan was created as a means to chart the Byway's direction. The Plan describes the activities and tasks that need to be carried out to achieve the goals and objectives adopted by the stakeholders along the byway. Collaboration and support by all the stakeholders is essential to accomplish the intent of the plan.

Involved Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

The Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee is the primary group overseeing the byway. Partnerships with other groups include: the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Tourism Department, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Elephant Butte State Park, Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board, Sierra County Economic Development Organization, Geronimo Springs Museum, towns / cities (T or C, Elephant Butte, Hillsboro, Cuchillo, Chloride, etc.) and private sector firms (banks, etc.)

The Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway Advisory Committee was formed in May 1996 and continues to represent the principle stakeholders (communities, businesses and organizations) located along the route. The Advisory Committee will continue to play an important role in all preservation and economic development projects planned along the Trail for the next five years.

Road Sections and Areas

The Geronimo Trail Scenic Byways in Southwest and South Central New Mexico is composed of several State maintained paved roads. The State maintained paved roads consist of two 12-foot paved driving lanes with intermittent shoulders. Within the more urban area of T or C, the roadway consists of four 11-to-12 foot paved driving lanes, 2-to-4 foot shoulders, a median, sidewalks, curb and gutter, and a signalized intersection. Third Street or Hwy 51 has acquired a walking sidewalk within the City limits.

CMP: Critical Elements and Assumptions (continued)

The Volume of Capacity Ratio is generally good for the majority of the GTNSB. The only areas considered congested are NM 187 going down to Caballo Lake, and NM 51 and NM 195 in and around Elephant Butte Lake. These areas experience significant congestion during summer weekends and holidays.



Hwy 152 from Hillsboro to Caballo Lake

Road Safety – Hazards and Possible Corrections

There are numerous sharp curves and the road is fairly steep and narrow from Hillsboro over Emory Pass and down from Iron Creek campground to San Lorenzo. This segment is paved, in good repair and is plowed except nights and weekends. However, there are many places where the road runs along a very deep canyon with no guard rail. There are sharp curves and narrow roads on NM Highway 59 from Beaverhead to NM Highway 52. From Winston to T or C, NM Highway 52 is in good repair but has small sections with very tight curves and winding roads. Safety conditions for the GTNSB are generally good for the posted speed limit.

There is continuous maintenance of the roads as well as minor maintenance projects which are scheduled as the need arises. Construction and maintenance work is performed in compliance with the NM Department of Transportation's (NMDOT) design and construction standards. All work is implemented with minimal impact to the traveling public and maximum safety to all.

CMP: Critical Elements and Assumptions (continued)

Since the previous CMP was written Hwy 152 from Exit 63 on Interstate 25 to Hillsboro has had road shoulders widened to allow for safer passing. In addition more signage has been added or replaced throughout the county. A few locations continue to be identified by the NMDOT as having hazards ranging from safety issues to design complications due to topography. These locations are:

- NM 152 needs slow traffic pullouts and additional guardrails to improve safety. .
- NM 152, 52 and 59 may be closed during severe weather as they are not plowed or salted at night or on weekends.
- NM 27 side trip is over open range areas, therefore livestock on the road may be a hazard. Livestock have the right-of-way, and can cause vehicle damage if hit. During heavy mountain rainfall, care must be taken as washouts may occur where arroyos cross the road.
- NM 142, 52 and 59 have open range areas where livestock may be on the roadway and pose a hazard.
- Sections of NM 52 and 59 need additional slow traffic pullouts and more guardrails to improve safety.
- NM 195 has one-way traffic going south for about two (2) miles around the Elephant Butte Dam area. *This road was closed after 9-11 and has remained closed for homeland security reasons. Possible plans in the future are to open this road to bike and foot traffic only.*



Free Range Cattle off of Hwy 52

CMP: Critical Elements and Assumptions (continued)

Outdoor Advertising

Since so much of the Trail crosses government controlled lands, outdoor advertising is not a problem. The Gila National Forest will not allow any outdoor advertising on National Forest System lands thus limiting outdoor advertising to areas of the Byway outside of the Gila National Forest.

The Bureau of Land Management also has stringent guidelines regarding outdoor advertising. Much of the land along the Trail that is not National Forest lands is under jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management.

The Geronimo Trail communities support the NMDOT's policy, as approved by the Highway Commission, regarding billboards on scenic byways as follows:

“Erecting new billboards on a designated scenic byway is prohibited except in legitimate commercial and industrial areas. Areas identified as lacking the unusual or distinctive features (intrinsic values), included in the New Mexico State Scenic and Historic Byways Program criteria, may be excluded or segmented from existing or future Byways designation, in accordance with the intent of Public Law 102-240 (ISTEA), sections 1046 and 1047. These segmented areas of the Byway would not be eligible for Scenic Byway funds.”



“Dental Health” sign on Hwy 59 at Poverty Creek