# CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** ............................................................................................................................................... 3  
   BACKGROUND ........................................................................................................................................ 3  
   ROADWAY .................................................................................................................................................. 4  
**METHODOLOGY** ........................................................................................................................................ 6  
   PROCESS .................................................................................................................................................... 6  
**INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS** ................................................................. 7  
   LIONS CLUB PARK & WALKING TRAIL .................................................................................................... 9  
   DEMPSEY ROAD ....................................................................................................................................... 11  
   KEMMERER RESERVOIR ............................................................................................................................ 13  
   LAKE VIVA NAUGHTON DAM .................................................................................................................... 15  
   LAKE VIVA NAUGHTON MARINA ............................................................................................................... 17  
   UPPER VIVA NAUGHTON ............................................................................................................................ 19  
   DEMPSEY POINT ....................................................................................................................................... 21  
   SNOWMOBILE AREA ................................................................................................................................. 23  
   ELK CREEK RANGER STATION .................................................................................................................. 25  
   HAMS FORK CAMPGROUND .................................................................................................................... 27  
   THE BIG SPRING ..................................................................................................................................... 29  
   LAKE ALICE ACCESS ................................................................................................................................. 31  
   PINE CREEK SKI RESORT ACCESS ........................................................................................................... 33  
**OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS** ............................................................................................................. 34  
**CONCLUSIONS** ........................................................................................................................................... 35
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Big Spring Scenic Backway is a 68-mile route between Kemmerer and Cokeville in Wyoming’s southwestern Lincoln County. The Backway is crisscrossed by the Historic Emigrant Trail, the scenic Hams Fork River, and plunges deep into the Tunp Mountain Range in the Bridger National Forest. The corridor is home to several notable recreation areas including the Viva Naughton Reservoir and the Big Spring itself that are highlighted in this report.

This rugged Wyoming Backway is chock full of local history and beautiful places to visit. It is one of only two Scenic Backways on the State of Wyoming.

Lincoln County is home to the Fossil Butte National Monument, located just west of Kemmerer. This prehistoric lake bed is now home to an engaging visitors center, upon the same site where paleontologists discovered fossils of the inhabitants of an ancient water ecosystem.

The Big Spring Scenic Backway (shown in red in figure 1) sits in the middle of Lincoln County between I-80 to the south and Jackson Hole to the north. Jackson has over 4 million visitors, and the beautiful Scenic Backway is not too far to visit.

Figure 1: Regional Lincoln County Map
ROADWAY

The nature of the corridor changes throughout the 68-mile drive from Kemmerer to Cokeville. The landscape, terrain, sites, land ownership, and road conditions all vary depending on where you are along the Backway.

The Backway road itself changes from a State Route (SR) to a County Road (CR) to a Forest Service (USFS) road back to a State Route (SR). The road surface changes with the ownership. The Forest Service recommends high-grade tires when traveling this Backway, and permits only tall clearance vehicles to travel westward from Kelley Guard Station.

This map shows both the road ownership as well as the road surface type along the Scenic Backway corridor. It is notable that while the Lincoln County road section is gravel, it is still plowed in the winter up to the snowmobile access area. The USFS road is inaccessible during the winter.

Figure 2: Road Ownership and Road Surface Map
The sections of the Backway that are State Routes are paved and striped with limited shoulders. The road has two travel lanes, and the cross-section is generally 26 feet wide. The speed limit for much of the way is 50 MPH. Figure 3 is a photograph of the paved state road section of the Big Spring Scenic Backway.

Most of the County Road section has a gravel surface and is well maintained, hard, compact, with width for two passing vehicles. Mostly there is a 26-foot cross-section and a 45 MPH speed limit. Most vehicles can traverse this area. Figure 4 is a photograph of a compact gravel county road section of the Big Spring Scenic Backway.

The USFS controls the road in the Bridger National Forest. This section of roadway is rough and narrow. The gravel surface is rockier and uneven in many places. There is not enough space for two vehicles to pass each other. This section of road is also steeper and in higher elevation. The USFS Service recommends all visitors use high clearance vehicles to navigate this section. Figure 5 and 6 are a photograph of a rough gravel USFS road section of the Big Spring Scenic Backway.
METHODOLOGY

The goal for the Backway Master Plan is to create a comprehensive plan for the 68-mile Big Spring Scenic Backway in Lincoln County that connects the cities of Cokeville and Kemmerer. The Backway is home to historic trails, incredible vistas, as well as modern camping. This complete Master Plan identifies needs and potential enhancements that can make the area more accessible and enjoyable.

Members of the study team toured the full Big Spring Scenic Backway corridor in August 2018 as well as a partial tour in January 2019. Many of the photographs in this report were taken during the August tour.

PROCESS

It is essential for this study to highlight appropriate and specific plans for each of several key areas or stops along the corridor. So, points of interest along the Backway were identified with the help of Lincoln County and others. The 13 areas identified are:

1. Lions Club Park
2. Dempsey Road
3. Kemmerer Reservoir
4. Lake Viva Naughton Dam
5. Lower Viva Naughton Marina
6. Upper Viva Naughton
7. Dempsey Point
8. Snowmobiling Area
9. Elk Creek Ranger Station
10. Hams Fork Campground
11. The Big Spring
12. Lake Alice turnoff
13. Pine Creek

Other areas along the corridor were considered but ultimately were not included.

The study team toured these areas, took photographs and videos, and discussed possible enhancement projects.

Each of the final projects identified in the next section went through a screening process. Once identified, cost estimates were developed based on current costs for similar improvements including the logistic fees associated with their specific location. Then they were presented to the project steering committee that included representatives from Lincoln County, WYDOT, the US Forest Service, BLM, the Snowbirds, and the consultant team. Many changes were made to the initial enhancements based upon feedback from the committee. This report presents these final plans in full in the next section.
Individual Site Improvements & Recommendations
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Lions Club Park & Walking Trail
Day Recreation

Campsite Improvements
Trail connection and crosswalk
Advanced signage
Park information and wayfinding signage
Permanent Toilets
Expanded playground and equipment
Increased gravel parking

$1,500-$3,000
$50,000-$100,000
$200-$300
$500-$700
$20,000-$25,000
$15,000-$25,000
$2,000-$4,000
LIONS CLUB PARK & WALKING TRAIL

This park is located just north of Kemmerer outside the old frontier area. Sandwiched between SR-233 and US-189 along the Hams Fork River. This improvement area has two distinct regions: the campground/walking trail, and the Lions Club Park. They were combined into one map because of their proximity and connection via the walking trail.

The walking trail starts at the end of Pleasant Hill Drive just before the bridge over the Hams Fork River. That area has an overnight campground in a small grove of trees with a small gravel parking area. There is also a small gravel parking lot at the trailhead for the walking trail. A small sign (shown in the photo) on Pleasant Hill Drive indicates the walking trail.

Lions Club Park is one of the most used spots along the Big Spring Scenic Backway. The park already has several amenities like the large pavilion, trails, and pedestrian bridge over the river. The Lions Club in Kemmerer has also made several improvements over the years like the arched entranceway, pictures at right.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signs, trails, and amenities.

**Campsite Improvements** - The overnight camping area probably has a maximum capacity of three camping sites. The sites could be improved with new picnic tables and fire pits.

**Park Information & Wayfinding Signs** - Both the walking trail and the Lions Club Park would be enhanced with park information and wayfinding signs. These signs could include a map to indicate the direction of park amenities like the pavilion, restrooms, walking trails, camping, etc.

**Trails Connection & Crosswalk** - WYDOT recently constructed a paved trail along SR-233 as part of a road project. That paved trail ends on the north side of SR-233 across from the Lions Club Park entrance. This trail needs a crosswalk across SR-233 with an improved trail to connecting it the existing pedestrian bridge and walking trail. The crosswalk should be equipped with appropriate signed and lighted beacons.

Along with a trail connection into the park, it is recommended that the new paved trail extend south along SR-233 to the bridge. This gives people who park at the walking trail entrance the opportunity to make a complete loop back to their vehicles. These paved trail enhancements can be costly, so it is advantageous to start with a simple, inexpensive gravel trail and make improvements as funding becomes available.

**Advanced Signage** - Both the walking trail and the Lions Club Park would be enhanced with advanced signs placed on the state highway. The walking trail has an indicator sign, but it is on Pleasant Hill Drive not the state route. The advanced signs would indicate to drivers the park entrances are before they get there.

**Permanent Toilets** - These can be plumbed or vaulted restrooms, but they need to be permanent toilets on a concrete slab (rather than the temporary "port-o-potty" style). The cost of permanent toilets varies greatly depending on the preferred kind, layout, size, etc.

**Playground Equipment** - The Lions Club Park would be enhanced and likely see increased use if there were new playgroup equipment for children (and adults) to enjoy. The map shows the playground equipment being located near the pedestrian bridge, but it could be located anywhere in the park, and people will use it. Playground equipment costs also vary depending on the size and kind of equipment installed.

**Increased Gravel Parking** - The Lions Club Park has simple dirt parking areas that could stand to be widened and/or improved with gravel.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>CAMPSITE IMPROVEMENTS</td>
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<td>EXPANDED PLAYGROUND &amp; EQUIPMENT</td>
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<td>$25,000</td>
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<td>INCREASED GRAVEL PARKING</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$89,200</td>
<td>$171,300</td>
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</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Information sign**: $500-$700
- **Develop parking area**: $1,000-$2,000
- **Information and wayfinding signage**: $500-$700
- **Advanced signage**: $200-$300

Dempsey Road
Winter and Backcountry Access

BLM
DEMPSEY ROAD

Dempsey Road is located four miles north of Kemmerer on the west side of SR-233. Dempsey Road provides access to public lands between Kemmerer and Cokeville and serves as the primary access to private fossil quarries located along the roadway. Dempsey Road also provides backcountry access to public lands for summer recreation as well as being a popular destination for hunting. Currently, there is signage at the SR-233 junction noting the distance to surrounding destinations along the road.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage, wayfinding, and provide information about the area's history.

**Advanced Signage** - Existing signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on SR-233 that would direct drivers to Dempsey Road. Currently, driving directions to preexisting amenities on the road tell drivers to turn just before the Hams Fork Bridge due to the lack of advanced signage. The advanced signs would indicate to drivers where to turn to access Dempsey Road.

**Information & Wayfinding Signs** - The Dempsey Road and SR-233 junction could be improved with additional wayfinding information. These signs could include a map of Dempsey Road that shows the location of historic sites and other recreation opportunities including the parking/overview area with interpretive signage. In addition to the map, wayfinding signage could include the distance to other nearby destinations on the road.

**Gravel Parking** - A parking lot could be established to provide parking for both summer and winter recreation as well as to provide a location for visitors to stop and learn about the area's history with informational signage.

**Information Signage** - At the parking lot interpretive signs could be established that provide an overview of the Oregon Trail and Sublette Cutoff. This background information could include the history of the Emigrant Trail, Sublette Cutoff, Emigrant Springs, and historic cemeteries/grave sites along the road.

Our cost estimates are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with some adjustments for localization in Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Signage</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Wayfinding Signage</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Area</td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Sign</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,200</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,700</strong></td>
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The reservoir is located about 13 miles north of Kemmerer just below Lake Viva Naughton on the west side of SR-233. The reservoir is a diversion point for the town’s municipal water supply and is popular with anglers with year-round fishing for rainbow trout.

The reservoir has a boat ramp for non-motorized access on the east side of the lake and two gravel loop roads for parking vehicles and trailers. The site has been improved to include pit toilets for visitor use. The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signs, parking, and improved picnic sites with additional necessary amenities.

**Park Information & Wayfinding Signs** - Reservoir access could be enhanced with informational and wayfinding signs. These signs would include a map of amenities such as picnic sites, pit toilets, parking, and the boardwalk/fishing pier.

**Expanded Trailer Parking** - During peak visitor weekends, it can be challenging to find parking for vehicles and trailers. The existing loop roads are narrow and often lined with parked vehicles during these peak times, making it difficult to navigate trucks, cars, and trailers through the parking lot. Expanding available parking by adding gravel parking areas near the boat ramp could increase recreation opportunities for visitors during peak times.

**Picnic Sites** - Several picnic sites could be added to provide areas for lake users to enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner during their time on the reservoir. These picnic sites would also provide options for non-anglers to stop, rest, and have a picnic on the Backway.

**Fire Pits** - Fire pits would be added at each proposed picnic sites to increase the overall amenities at the reservoir. These fire pits would allow picnickers the option to grill food or enjoy the warmth of a fire on a chilly night.

**Boardwalk/Fishing Pier** - A boardwalk or fishing pier on the reservoir would create a new public space for people to fish. The pier would allow anglers without boats more options to drop their fishing lines. The boardwalk would also improve accessibility for anglers, and others that may have a difficult time accessing the existing shoreline to fish.

The cost estimate below are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with adjustments for Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION &amp; WAYFINDING SIGNAGE</td>
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<td>$ 700</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXPANDED BOAT TRAILER PARKING</td>
<td>$ 2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW PICNIC SITES</td>
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<td>FIRE PITS</td>
<td>$ 1,000</td>
<td>$ 1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOARDWALK / FISHING PIER</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$ 7,500</td>
<td>$ 13,700</td>
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</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Lake Viva Naughton Dam
Fishing and Day Recreation

# 4

INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

New pavilion or shelter
$5,000-$7,000

Scenic overlook
$5,000-$7,000

Advanced Signage

Blue Springs
$400-$600
LAKE VIVA NAUGHTON DAM

The Viva Naughton Dam, north of Kemmerer Reservoir, is 14 miles north of the City of Kemmerer on SR-233. Currently, the site has a small gravel parking lot and an informational sign. This site also has a vault toilet that has been constructed adjacent to the parking lot. The improvement area is public access to Lake Viva Naughton provided by PacifiCorp.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage and provide additional amenities such as overviews and pavilions so visitors can better enjoy the existing access area. PacifiCorp privately owns the land so all proposed improvements will need to be approved and coordinate with them.

**Advanced Signage** - The existing signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on SR-233 that would direct drivers to the public access area. Currently, there is no advanced signage on the highway. Installing advanced signs would tell drivers where to turn to enter the Lake Viva Naughton Dam public access area.

**Scenic Overlook** - The existing public access has an excellent view of Lake Viva Naughton and the dam. A scenic overlook would enhance these vistas by creating an open space from which to view the lake. The viewing area would include an elevated platform to observe the lake and surrounding scenery that would be accessible from the existing parking.

**New Pavilion** - There is no natural shade near the existing public access area. A new pavilion could be constructed to provide shade and unique space to accommodate individual or multiple groups. This space would include picnic tables so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION &amp; WAYFINDING SIGNAGE</td>
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<td>Improvement</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardwalk / fishing pier</td>
<td>$3,000-$6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced signage</td>
<td>$400-$600</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New loop / trailer turnaround</td>
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<td>Additional parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vault bathroom</td>
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<td>New campsites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional picnic sites</td>
<td>$500-$700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New group pavilion</td>
<td>$13,000-$15,000</td>
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LAKE VIVA NAUGHTON MARINA

The Lake Viva Naughton Marina is approximately 15 miles north of Kemmerer and offers public access to the lake. This improvement area can be described by the two distinct areas that create the Lake Viva Naughton Marina. The area consists of the marina and the campground/picnic area north of the marina along the shore of the Lake.

The marina currently has two boat ramps and a gravel parking area for vehicle and trailer parking. There is a vault toilet located adjacent to the parking area for the southern boat ramp. North of the marina, six developed sites include picnic tables and fire pits. These sites are used by visitors for picnics and trailers for camping.

The marina is one of the more heavily used sites along the Big Spring Scenic Backway. The marina commonly experiences congestion near the boat ramps, and during peak period there is insufficient parking for trailers. This congestion can make it difficult for vehicles to turn around after launching or loading a boat.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage, parking, campsites, and amenities. On this page is a description of the recommended improvements. PacifiCorp privately owns the land so all proposed improvements will need to be coordinated with PacifiCorp.

**New Group Pavilion** - A new pavilion could be constructed to provide shade and space to accommodate a larger group or multiple smaller groups. This space would include picnic tables so that visitors could enjoy a snack or meal in a shaded environment.

**Picnic Sites** - Several picnic sites could be added to the campground/picnic area so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner during their time off the lake.

**Additional Campsites** - The camping area has six developed campsites. New campsites could be constructed with picnic tables and fire pits to increase the number of sites by six, doubling the current number of sites.

**Vaulted Restrooms** - There are existing toilets at the marina, but these are far removed from the existing campsites. New restrooms would be added near these sites to serve the new campsites.

**Increased Gravel Parking** - The existing gravel parking lot near the two boat ramps could be expanded. There is currently insufficient vehicle and trailer parking to meet demand on busy days leading to congestion within the marina.

**New Turnaround Loop** - In addition to expanded parking, a new loop road would be created along with a vehicle turnaround so that drivers will not have to back their trailers all the entire way to the boat ramp. This will allow boaters launch and load faster - increasing the number of people that can utilize the existing facilities.

**Advanced Signage** - Signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on SR-233 that would direct drivers to the marina. Currently, there is no signage on SR-233 directing motorists. The advanced signs would indicate to drivers where to turn to access the marina.

**Boardwalk /Fishing Pier** - A boardwalk or fishing pier on the lake would create a new public space for people to fish or enjoy the scenic view. The pier would allow anglers without boats new options for places to fish. A boardwalk would also improve accessibility for those experiencing difficulties accessing the existing shoreline.

Our cost estimates are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with adjustments for localization in Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW GROUP PAVILION</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW PICNIC SITES</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL CAMPSITES</td>
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<td>VAULTED RESTROOMS</td>
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<td>INCREASED GRAVEL PARKING</td>
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<td>NEW TURNAROUND LOOP</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOARDWALK / FISHING PIER</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$71,300</strong></td>
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Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Upper Viva Naughton
Day Recreation

INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional picnic sites
$15,000-$21,000

Potable water
$6,000-$12,000

Advanced signage
$400-$600

Expanded Parking
$2,000-$4,000

New group pavilion or several picnic sites
$13,000-$15,000

Improve and level existing picnic sites
$13,700-$15,000
The next public lake access is at Upper Viva Naughton, approximately 17 miles north of Kemmerer and one mile north of the marina. Located on the eastern shore, it is directly across the lake from Dempsey Point campground that is on the western coast of Lake Viva Naughton. This existing public access includes four designated campsites, vault toilets that are located on more mountainous terrain. These campsites consist of a picnic table, fire pit, and vehicle parking.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage, expand parking, improve and expand the existing sites, and add amenities. On this page is a description of the recommended improvements. PacifiCorp privately owns the land so all proposed improvements will need to be coordinated with PacifiCorp.

**Improve & Level Out Existing Sites** - The existing camping/picnic sites are on uneven ground and can be difficult for people to access. The sites would be graded to make them more level. Additionally, each camping/picnic site could be improved with new picnic tables and fire pits to draw more visitors.

**New Pavilion** - There is no natural shade near the campground. A new pavilion could be constructed to provide shade and create a new space to accommodate both small and large groups. This space would include picnic tables so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner.

**Expanded Parking** - During peak weekends, it can be challenging for visitors to find parking. The existing campground roads are narrow. Expanding available parking with the addition of a gravel parking area would increase recreation opportunities for visitors, especially during peak times.

**Advanced Signage** - Existing signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on SR-233 that would direct drivers to the campground/picnic area. Currently, there is no such signage on SR-233. The advanced signs would indicate to drivers that the campground exists and where to turn to access the site.

**Potable Water** - Currently the campground does not have a potable water source. Adding a well to provide potable water would increase the overall user-friendliness of the campground. Campers would not have to bring their own water or travel back to Kemmerer if they run out of drinkable water.

**Additional Picnic Sites** - Several picnic sites could be added to the campground/picnic area so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner during their visit to the Backway. This would include grading the site since the terrain is relatively steep within the campground.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
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<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
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<td>IMPROVE &amp; LEVEL EXISTING SITES</td>
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<td>$ 15,000</td>
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<td>POTABLE WATER</td>
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<td>$ 50,100</td>
<td>$ 67,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

**INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **New pavilions or shelters**: $15,000-$21,000
- **New campsites**: $3,000-$6,000
- **Improve access road**: $85,000-$98,000
- **Advanced Signage at Hwy 305 Junction**: $400-$600

*Not shown on map*
DEMPSEY POINT

Dempsey Point is located on the western shore of Lake Viva Naughton across the lake from the Upper Viva Naughton public access area. Dempsey Point is about 20 miles north of Kemmerer and is accessible from SR-233 along 2.3 miles of dirt road that crosses the Hams Fork River.

Dempsey Point has many preexisting amenities including a boat ramp and a gravel parking area for vehicle/trailer parking. There are six existing campsites with fire pits along the shore of Lake Viva Naughton that are used by visitors for picnics and camping. Additionally, Dempsey Point has a vault toilet near the boat ramp.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage, parking, campsites, and amenities. On this page is a description of the recommended improvements. PacifiCorp privately owns the land so all proposed improvements will need to be coordinated with PacifiCorp.

**Improved Access Road**
- It can be tricky to access Dempsey Point due to poor road conditions along the access. The 2.3-mile access road would be regraded and new gravel applied where necessary to make Dempsey Point more accessible to Backway visitors.

**Additional Campsites**
- The camping area has six developed sites. New campsites could be constructed with picnic tables and fire pits to increase the number of sites by six, thus doubling the current number of campsites.

**New Pavilion**
- There is limited natural shade near the Dempsey Point. A new pavilion could be constructed to provide shade and additional space to accommodate individuals or multiple groups. This space would include picnic tables so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner.

Our cost estimates are based on similar improvements with some adjustments for Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPROVED ACCESS ROAD</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
<td>$98,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL CAMPSITES</td>
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<td>NEW PAVILION</td>
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</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Snowmobile Area
Winter and Backcountry Access

**INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Cost Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information sign</td>
<td>$500-$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create New Parking Area</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault bathroom</td>
<td>$20,000-$25,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#8
SNOWMOBILE AREA

Currently, snowmobilers park on the west side of County Road 305 in an existing gravel lot shown in the photos below. This gravel parking lot is located about 22 miles north of Kemmerer and five miles past the Upper Viva Naughton public access. During peak days there are parking shortages for vehicles and trailers. Additionally, the existing gravel lot is located on private land making parking lot expansion difficult.

The plan for this improvement area is to move the parking lot to public land that is located approximately one mile north on County Road 305.

New & Expanded Parking - Finding parking for trailers is challenging, especially during peak weekends. The existing parking area is narrow so during these peak times it can also be difficult to navigate through the parking lot. Creating a new gravel parking area could increase recreation opportunities for visitors during these peak times by expanding available parking. Creating a new parking lot on public land also has the benefit of avoiding potential easements or acquisitions otherwise necessary in order to expand an existing parking lot on private land.

Information Signage - Parking lot information signs could be installed that provide an overview of snowmobiling within the Hams Fork area. This background information could include information on trails and rider safety.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION &amp; WAYFINDING SIGNAGE</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW &amp; EXPANDED PARKING</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAULTED RESTROOMS</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>$28,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

# 9

Elk Creek Ranger Station
Day Recreation

Advanced signage

Blue Springs

$400-$600
The Elk Creek Ranger Station is located 36 miles north of Kemmerer on USFS Road 10622 just south of the Hams Fork Campground. The Elk Creek Ranger Station is an important historical site along the Backway. Currently, there is one interpretative sign describing the role of the historic cabin that was built there in 1914.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signage to improve visitor awareness of the ranger station.

**Advanced Signage** - Current signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on the USFS Road to indicate the presence of a historical site. Currently, no advanced signage exists to inform people of this ranger station.

The cost estimates are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with local adjustments for Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED SIGNAGE</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>$200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Group site
- $51,000-$55,000

New Vault Bathroom
- $20,000-$25,000

New campground
- $16,000-$18,000

Information sign
- $1,000-$1,400

New group pavilion
- $13,000-$15,000

Pull thru
- $3,000-$4,000
This campground is located 37 miles north of Kemmerer and 28 miles east of Cokeville on USFS Road 10622. The existing campground is east of the Hams Fork River and has 13 campsites, with two vault toilets, and potable water. The campground is divided by the USFS Road with three campsites west of the road and ten sites to the east. The campground has a use fee of $7 per night. However, even with the fee, these sites are generally full during peak weekends.

The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the campground with additional campsites and site amenities.

**Pull-Through Sites** - The existing campground does not have any pull-through campsites to accommodate larger trailers or RVs. Two new pull-through campsites would be created with one to the north of the existing campground with the other to the south.

**New Group Pavilion** - A new group pavilion could be constructed to provide shade and create a unique space to accommodate individual or multiple groups. This space would include picnic tables so that groups could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner with cover from the elements.

**Campground Information & Wayfinding Signs** - The campground could be enhanced with informational and wayfinding signs. These signs would include additional maps of amenities such as campsites, group pavilion, toilets, parking and potable water.

**New Campsites** - The camping area has 13 developed sites. Eight new campsites could be constructed with picnic tables and fire pits to increase the total to 21. These additional campsites would help meet demand during peak weekends. The proposed campsites would be accessed off USFS Road 10199 that is just south of the existing campground for even distribution of the sites.

**Vaulted Restrooms** - While there are existing restrooms at the campground, these are not close to the proposed new campsites. New toilets would be added within the new area to serve these campsites.

**Group Campsites** - While groups can utilize multiple sites, there are no dedicated group campsites within the campground. Two new group sites would be created west of Hams Fork Road that would be designed to accommodate larger groups of 15+ people. These sites would include larger campfire rings and picnic tables.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull-Through Sites</td>
<td>$ 3,000</td>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Group Pavilion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campground Information &amp; Wayfinding Signs</td>
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<td>New Campsites</td>
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<td>Group Campsites</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 104,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 118,400</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INDIVIDUAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

- Additional picnic sites: $500-$700
- Rock bench: $500-$1,000
- Improved bridge & trail: $10,000-$12,000
- Information, site map, and wayfinding signage: $1,000-$1,400
- Observation / scenic overlook: $5,000-$7,000
- Vault bathroom: $20,000-$25,000
- Expand parking: $2,000-$4,000
- Advanced signage: $400-$600
The Big Spring is located about 21 miles from Cokeville and 44 miles from Kemmerer on USFS Road 10062. The spring is located across West Hams Fork Creek within the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The parking lot and access road are east of the West Hams Fork Creek while the spring and picnic area are west of the creek. A trail and bridge connect these two areas over the creek (shown in the accompanying aerial photo). The Big Spring already has several amenities including picnic tables, trails, and a pedestrian bridge over the creek.

The high vegetation near the parking lot can make it difficult to view the spring without hiking across the creek. The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the signs, trails, and amenities including adding an overlook to make the spring more accessible for all visitors.

**Advanced Signage** - To direct drivers to the parking lot. Currently, there is no signage on FS-10062 to direct motorists to the spring. These advanced signs would indicate to drivers where to turn to access Big Spring parking lot.

**Expanded Parking** - New parking areas would be established next to the USFS Road to create an overlook area. This new parking area would be on the hill so visitors could easily view the Big Spring without hiking. The expanded parking areas could also increase parking opportunities for visitors during peak times.

**Vaulted Restrooms** - There are currently no toilet facilities near the Big Spring area. New toilets could be constructed near the new parking/overlook area to serve the existing and new area. The toilets will be at the new overlook area to keep them out of the watershed.

**Scenic Overlook** - The existing parking lot has limited views of the Big Spring. Creating a scenic overlook to the west of the USFS Road would take advantage of the natural terrain to provide unparalleled views of the Big Spring. The viewing area would include an elevated platform to view the spring and surrounding scenery. Constructing a scenic overlook would enhance these vistas by creating a public space from which to view the spring.

**Destination & Wayfinding Signage** - Both the walking trail and the Big Spring area would be enhanced with information and wayfinding signs. These signs could include a map of the area that provides an overview of the amenities like the picnic tables, restrooms, and walking trails. Interpretive signs could also give an overview of the Big Spring as well as the flora and fauna that can be observed near the Big Spring.

**Improved Bridge & Trail** - The existing bridge that connects the Big Spring and picnic area to the current parking lot does not span the entire West Hams Fork Creek. To access the spring visitors must trek through the water to reach the spring and picnic area. The bridge could be improved to fix these existing deficiencies and make the spring more accessible to users.

**Additional Picnic Sites** - Several picnic tables could be added to the existing picnic area so that visitors could enjoy a snack or lunch/dinner during their visit to the Backway.

**Information & Wayfinding Signage** - After the advance signage additional wayfinding could be added to direct visitors to the parking lot since it is not visible from the turnoff from the USFS Road.

The cost estimates are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with adjustments for localization in Lincoln County, Wyoming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED SIGNAGE</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPANDED PARKING</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAULTED RESTROOMS</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENIC OVERLOOK</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORM &amp; WAYFINDING SIGNAGE</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPROVED BRIDGE</td>
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<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL PICNIC SITES</td>
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<td>$700</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESTINATION SIGNAGE</td>
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<td>$700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$39,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>$51,400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Springs Scenic Backway Master Plan

Lake Alice / Cokeville Overlook Access
Overnight Recreation

# 12

**Advanced signage**
- Blue Springs
  - $400-$600

**Information sign, cell phone coverage**
- $500-$700
LAKE ALICE ACCESS

The primary access to Lake Alice is located approximately 21 miles from Cokeville on the east side of USFS Road 10062. This junction with Hobble Creek Road/FS-10193 provides access to the Lake Alice trailhead as well as the Hobble Creek Campground. Lake Alice is the largest natural lake in the western Bridger-Teton National Forest.

The plan for this improvement area is to add the signage and wayfinding to provide information about nearby destinations.

**Advanced Signage** - Existing signage would be enhanced with advanced signage on FS-10062 that would direct drivers to Hobble Creek Road. These advanced signs would indicate to drivers where to turn to access Lake Alice and the Hobble Creek Campground.

**Information & Wayfinding Signs** - The FS-10062 and Hobble Creek Road junction could be improved with additional wayfinding information. These signs could include a map of other nearby recreation sites. Also, signage indicating cell phone service availability at the Cokeville Overlook area - one of the only locations along the Backway that has cell phone service - would be important.

Because the actual costs vary, we show the estimated costs as a range within which the actual cost should fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS</th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
<th>HIGH COST RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED SIGNAGE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO &amp; CELLULAR COVERAGE SIGNAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Advanced signage

Blue Springs

$400-$600

New paved trail

$750,000-$1,300,000
Access to the Pine Creek Ski Resort is from SR-232 and Pine Creek Road (County Road 204). Pine Creek Road is located approximately 3.5 miles north of Cokeville on the east side of SR-232. Pine Creek Road provides access to both the Pine Creek Ski Resort and BLM campgrounds, offering opportunities for both winter as well as summer recreation.

Currently, there is some advanced signage on SR-232 for northbound traffic indicating the junction with CR-204 and ski resort. The plan for this improvement area is to enhance the existing signage and provide a multi-use trail adjacent to the road.

**Advanced Signage** - Existing signage would be updated with advanced signage on SR-232 for both northbound and southbound traffic. These signs would direct drivers to Pine Creek Road as well as indicating where to turn to access the ski resort and campground.

**Multi-Use Trail Connection & Crosswalk** - The community has discussed connecting Cokeville to the Pine Creek Ski area with a paved multi-use trail. This 7.5-mile trail would run adjacent to SR-232 and Pine Creek Road in the existing right-of-way. The trail would connect two community destinations and provide new recreational opportunities for users to bike, run, or walk.

The cost estimates are based on what others have paid for similar improvements with some adjustments for localization in Lincoln County, Wyoming.

### POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LOW COST RANGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED SIGNAGE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW PAVED TRAIL</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$750,400</td>
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</table>
OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The specific area recommendations are designed to have low-cost improvements that can be completed incrementally and as funding becomes available. Each enhancement identified will make these areas better and more inviting for visitors, which is the goal of this Master Plan.

Any of these improvements will improve the Big Spring Scenic Backway, attract more visitors, and create economic development opportunities in Lincoln County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Area</th>
<th>Low Cost Range</th>
<th>High Cost Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Lions Club Park &amp; Walking Trail</td>
<td>$89,200</td>
<td>$171,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dempsey Road</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
<td>$3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Kemmerer Reservoir</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Viva Naughton Dam</td>
<td>$10,400</td>
<td>$14,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Viva Naughton Marina</td>
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<td>$71,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Upper Viva Naughton</td>
<td>$50,100</td>
<td>$67,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dempsey Point</td>
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<td>$103,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Snowmobile Area</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>$28,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Elk Creek Ranger Station</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Hams Fork Campground</td>
<td>$104,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 The Big Spring</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Lake Alice Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Pine Creek Ski Resort Access</td>
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<td><strong>$1,457,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,946,200</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Advanced Signage Map

Developing an investment and implementation strategy may be a crucial next step. Lincoln County may want to prioritize individual projects at different locations based on potential funding, use, cost, or location. Then work towards making the improvements. For instance, if Lincoln County wanted to invest $10,000 a year to improving the Scenic Backway, they could set out a plan to make incremental improvements at Lions Club Park or the Hams Fork Campground. Slowly but surely the area would improve and locals would see the commitment and investment in the area enticing them to use it more and tell their friends about their weekend trips to the Backway.

Accompanying the site plans at the 13 Improvement Areas should be a few regional signs that help direct people to the Big Spring Scenic Backway. An indicator sign that says, “Big Spring Scenic Backway” with an arrow should be placed at intersections in Kemmerer and Cokeville, at the junctions of HWY 189 and HWY 233 (in Kemmerer) and HWY 30 and HWY 232 (in Cokeville). In addition to these signs it would be beneficial to install improvement informational signs at the end of the pavement heading north on both sides of the Big Spring Scenic Backway. These signs can help guide people as well as promote the area.

Besides the individual site improvements, there are other efforts that can enhance the entire area, including marketing and advertising the Big Spring Scenic Backway. There are a handful of websites that have information for visitors about the Backway including:

www.travelwyoming.com/listing/kemmerer/big-spring-scenic-Backway

Lincoln County and the Wyoming Office of Tourism could do more to promote the area to attract visitors to Lincoln County, and to boost the local economy, including creating a video or video series showcasing recreational opportunities along the Backway. These videos are an excellent tool for promoting a naturally beautiful area such as Fossil Basin. Showing the Viva Naughton Reservoir, highlighting the Hams Fork Campground, and aerial drone footage of the pristine Big Spring would all be compelling footage that might inspire people to visit.

Our brief video at the Big Spring can be found here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBOrM3iXcCE

The Big Spring Scenic Backway is truly beautiful. From the majestic mountains, colorful wildflowers, pristine Hams Fork River, animals grazing in prairies, and the unique Big Spring it is a wonder worth visiting.
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the Big Spring Scenic Backway Master Plan is to guide Lincoln County and the Kemmerer/Diamondville communities in the development of improvements along the Backway that will attract more visitors to the area. It incorporates concepts and ideas from a committee of Federal and State agencies as well as interested parties. It describes the potential improvements at each area including the type and general costs.

This plan set out to achieve the following:

**GOALS OF THE PLAN:**
- Create a comprehensive plan for the Big Spring Scenic Backway from Kemmerer to Cokeville
- Identify potential enhancements at specific areas that can make them more accessible and enjoyable
- Create economic development opportunities in Lincoln County by drawing visitors to the Scenic Backway
- Create an easy-to-read brochure for the Big Spring Scenic Backway

Having a completed Master Plan for the Big Spring Scenic Backway is a good first step toward improving the area. This master plan is a guide for specific improvements for each area, but it also proves Lincoln County’s commitment to the Backway and may allow the County to pursue different funding sources like TAP and WYDOT grants to make some of these improvements. This process also included collaboration between Lincoln County, WYDOT, USFS, BLM, and others which is an important step toward working together to construct some of the potential improvements.