

**GAO**

**Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee  
on Foreign Commerce and Tourism,  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation, U.S. Senate**



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Resources, Community, and  
Economic Development Division

B-241024

September 28, 1990

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign  
Commerce and Tourism  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As the Congress deliberates reauthorization of the federal-aid highway program in 1991, consideration is being given to the creation of a national scenic byway program. Scenic byways are broadly defined as vehicular routes with adjacent scenic, cultural, historic, or recreational attractions. Proposals for a national program, contained in various federal studies, have ranged from a minimal federal role involving dissemination of scenic byway information to a large program with federally designated routes and a substantial commitment of federal funds.

In response to your May 19, 1989, request and subsequent agreements with your office, we have reviewed various scenic byways designated by state and private organizations. Specifically, we (1) determined the characteristics of selected byway programs and activities, (2) determined the criteria states use to designate byways, and (3) identified issues raised by scenic byway officials concerning the creation of a national scenic byways program.

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## Results in Brief

The scenic byways we reviewed were created primarily to promote tourism or preserve scenic beauty on land adjacent to the roadway. However, a wide variance exists in the characteristics of 27 byway programs and activities<sup>1</sup> we reviewed in 10 states. The types of roads designated as scenic byways ranged from interstate highways to gravel and dirt roads. Often, to enhance the byways, byway identification signs were erected, turn-outs or scenic overlooks constructed, and outdoor advertising and land development adjacent to the routes restricted. Twelve of the 27 byway programs and activities used federal-aid highway funds to help finance byway improvements. Byways were also

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<sup>1</sup>In this report, we consider byways created through a formal process using specific designation criteria to be part of a "program." We consider byways created without criteria and apart from an organized program to be "activities."

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funded with general state revenues and donations from the private sector.

Some byways are designated using an administrative process whereby routes are visually inspected and rated using specific criteria, while others are created informally without using designation criteria. However, in designating a byway, consideration is usually given to the (1) characteristics of the roadway corridor; (2) accessibility of the route to other byways or major tourist attractions; (3) characteristics of the road, such as length and type of route; and (4) public awareness and support of the byway program by local government or the private sector.

State and private scenic byway officials we contacted were concerned that a national scenic byway program, involving federally designated routes, would limit their authority to designate routes within their jurisdiction or to determine the use of land along routes. Many officials were also concerned that a federal-aid highway program authorized specifically for scenic byways would reduce the federal funds available for highway construction and preservation.

If the Congress decides to create a national scenic byway program, we believe it should be of limited scope for several reasons. First, there appears to be little enthusiasm among state byway officials for a large program. Most scenic byway officials we contacted would support, however, a small-scale program that facilitates the exchange of scenic byway information between the states and assists in promoting byways created for tourism purposes. Second, increased federal funding for such a program at this time may not be warranted in light of the limited funds available to address the nation's highway and bridge needs. In this regard, states have the authority to use federal funds to make improvements they deem necessary to byways located on the federal-aid highway system.

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## Background

Currently, certain federal agencies, many state and local governments, and private organizations have designated existing roads as scenic byways. Federal agencies such as the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management have designated a number of routes as scenic byways on lands they own or manage. (App. IV describes these federal programs.) In addition, many states have developed a wide variety of scenic byway programs within their states with routes that vary in length and traverse both urban and rural areas.

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Private groups, such as the American Automobile Association (AAA), also designate and promote scenic byways.

Interest in establishing a national scenic byway program has existed since the mid-1960s. Both a 1966 study by the Department of Commerce and a 1974 study by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recommended the creation of a national scenic roads program to help unify the various federal, state, and local agency byway efforts. (App. IV describes these studies in more detail.) In 1986, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors recommended the creation of a national network of state and locally designated scenic byways to preserve the scenic or historic character of lesser travelled roads.

Recently, Members of Congress, some states, and private interest groups have also been interested in establishing a national scenic byway program. Their interest coincides with the reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund—a potential funding source for the creation and operation of a scenic byway program.

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## Wide Variance Exists Between State Scenic Byway Programs

The characteristics of the 27 scenic byway programs and activities we reviewed in 10 states varied significantly, as did byway program funding sources, management, and the criteria used for byway designation. Most of the byways, however, were promoted by states or private groups through maps, brochures, or roadway signs. Activities that occurred most frequently after byway designation were the signing of byway routes, construction of turn-outs or scenic overlooks, control of outdoor advertising, and restrictions on the development of private land adjacent to the route.

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## Byway Characteristics

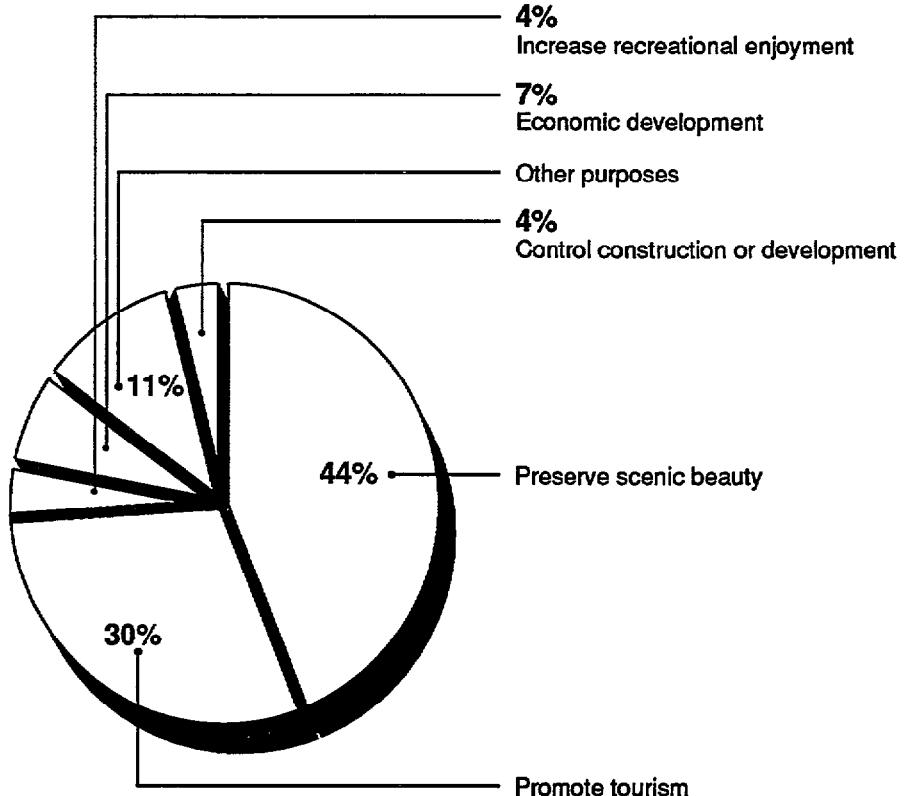
Among the byway programs and activities we reviewed, there is neither a common definition nor uniform terminology for scenic byways. A variety of terms are used to refer to scenic byways such as Scenic Highways, Auto Trails, Parkways, and Circle Tours. Scenic byways in some states, for example, are defined as roads having a high aesthetic or cultural value in areas of natural, historical, or recreational significance. In other states, byways are defined as lightly travelled roads with adjacent outstanding natural features, such as Wisconsin's Rustic Roads, or simply as those routes designated as scenic by a government authority or private group.

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The types of routes designated as byways varied considerably in the 10 states we visited. The roads designated as byways included interstate, state, or county highways, as well as unpaved dirt roads. Some were loop tours (tours that loop back to the point of origin) near urban areas, such as Wisconsin's Auto Tours, while others were more linear routes parallel to highly travelled highways. While most state programs included a number of separate individual routes, in a few states, byway programs consisted of just one route such as the Mohawk Trail in Massachusetts. The length of the byways also varied significantly. For example, some byways were less than a mile long. Others were over 1,000 miles in length and ran through a number of states or crossed international borders. (See app. I and III for more details on these programs and activities.)

Most byway officials told us that the main purpose of their scenic byway program or activity was either to preserve scenic beauty or promote tourism. Figure 1 shows the frequency of the main purposes for the 27 programs we reviewed.

**Figure 1: Main Purpose of 27 Scenic Byway Programs and Activities**



## Promotion, Funding, and Management

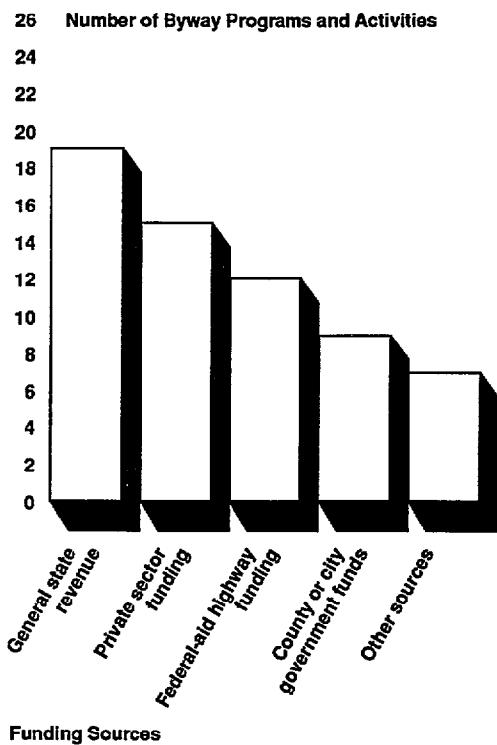
Most of the byway programs and activities we reviewed (20 of the 27) are promoted using a variety of marketing and publicity techniques. However, five byway programs whose main purpose is preservation are not promoted because, according to some byway officials, such actions could increase congestion or development and adversely affect the scenic qualities of the byway. Eleven byway programs that have tourism or economic development as their main purpose are promoted usually with maps, books, and brochures that describe attractions along the route. Also, special designation signs have been erected along routes in 17 of the 27 programs and activities.

Private groups and state agencies play a key role in promoting the byways we reviewed. For example, a nonprofit agency in New York, the Seaway Trail, Inc., produces various publications and other material featuring historic and recreational attractions along the Seaway Trail,

one of the state's Auto Trails. Many states use various methods to publicize and market byway travel by both domestic and foreign tourists. (See app. I for more on byway promotion.)

Most often, states used general state revenue, private-sector funding, and federal-aid highway funds to finance byway programs and activities. About one-half of the byway programs used federal-aid highway moneys to help fund byway costs. Such funds can be used for landscaping and roadside development for amenities such as rest areas and other roadside facilities and, in order to restore, preserve, or enhance scenic beauty, to acquire strips of land adjacent to byway routes. The amount of federal-aid highway funds spent specifically on scenic byways was not available because such work was usually completed as part of other highway improvement projects. The sources used to fund scenic byway programs and activities we reviewed are shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Funding Sources of 27 Scenic Byway Efforts**



Note: Some programs and activities have more than one funding source.

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Other scenic byway funding sources include moneys from local governments, bond issues, and state lottery proceeds. Regional tourism associations in Oregon, for example, received lottery funds from the state tourism office to publish maps of area loop tours. The staff managing the Travel Arizona program is part of the state transportation department, but it is completely self-supported through the sale of travel magazines and books. Massachusetts authorized the sale of \$17.5 million in bonds exclusively for scenic land acquisition, and its Department of Public Works develops partnerships with other state agencies and conservation groups to obtain additional funds to acquire land adjacent to scenic routes. Private groups and associations also provide funds for such things as landscaping and maintenance of land areas adjacent to byway routes.

State transportation departments normally have the primary responsibility for managing the scenic byway programs or activities. However, other state agencies responsible for activities such as tourism, natural resources, parks, and historic preservation are also involved. Private groups and local governments are also involved in managing a few programs. For example, the Circle Tours around Lakes Michigan and Superior and the Cascade Loop in Washington were created and promoted almost exclusively by private tourism associations. Along California State and County Scenic Byways, local governments administer a scenic highway protection program to control outdoor advertising and regulate land use adjacent to designated routes.

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## Designation Process

Roads within the states we visited are usually designated as scenic byways by state legislatures, state or local agencies, and/or private groups. Seventeen of the 27 byways programs we reviewed were formally designated as scenic byways which typically involved a visual inspection and rating of the prospective route using specific factors or criteria. In some cases, public hearings may also be part of the designation process. Other byways, such as those created by private organizations or state tourism agencies, were selected without using a formal process or use of specific designation criteria.

The designation criteria used most frequently related to the route's accessibility, the quality of scenery, or availability of attractions along the road corridor. (See app. II for additional information on designation criteria.) The designation criteria used in New York's Scenic Roads' program, for example, is designed to ensure that the routes selected exhibit exceptional scenic characteristics; highlight distinctive regional, historic,

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or cultural features; and receive support from local government and constituent groups. Other states use designation criteria with a slightly different emphasis. For example, in addition to having historic value, roads selected for Tennessee's scenic highway program must be interconnected with the state highway system, cannot be high-speed or heavily travelled highways, and must be safe to travel.

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### Results of Scenic Byway Designation

A number of changes to a roadway or roadway corridor occur after a route has been designated a scenic byway. For about half of the 27 programs and activities we reviewed, designation resulted in construction of new roadside facilities such as scenic turn-outs or rest stops; improvements to roadside aesthetics through landscaping, mowing or pruning; and/or restrictions on outdoor advertising, building construction, or other development of land adjacent to designated routes. For 22 of the byway programs and activities, designation did not result in increased road maintenance or restoration.

When byways were designated for preservation purposes, land use adjacent to the byway was usually affected. Ten of the 13 byway programs with a preservation purpose restrict or control development along the highway corridor. For example, Tennessee's Scenic Highway program places controls on the heights of buildings and restricts outdoor advertising and junkyards along designated routes. The Open Space Program in Massachusetts prohibits construction on land purchased along scenic routes. Wisconsin's Rustic Roads program enlists the help of local officials in volunteering to limit development on land adjacent to the routes.

In our review of scenic byway literature and discussions with numerous byway officials, we were unable to identify any completed research or studies on the economic impact of scenic byway designation or promotion. State tourism officials we contacted could not isolate the economic impacts of scenic byway designation or promotion in part because of the multiuse nature of scenic byways. Others said they lacked the resources to study the economic effects of scenic byways. However, studies on the economic impact of scenic byways are currently underway in several states, including a Kansas State University study on byways in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. In addition, FHWA's scenic byways study—scheduled for completion in November 1990—is to include case studies on the economic impacts of selected byways.

Despite limited research in this area, private-sector and state tourism officials believe that promoting routes produces a positive economic

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effect. For example, a private-sector byway official told us that business dramatically increased along Historic (U.S.) Route 66 in Arizona when the route was promoted. Also, the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA) and the states of Montana, Utah, and Wyoming recently promoted U.S. Highway 89 in the Rocky Mountain region to Japanese tour operators. According to the USTTA, the promotion resulted in 750 bookings and generated an estimated \$1.5 million in tourism revenues to states along the route.

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## Issues Raised by State and Private Officials Concerning a National Scenic Byway Program

Because state and private byway programs are so diverse, it is doubtful that any one state would have a program that could be used as a model for a national program. However, options for such a program have been proposed in prior scenic byway studies and by private groups such as the AAA. These proposals have ranged in scope from a minimal federal role such as a small office which would function as a clearinghouse of byway-related information to a much larger federal program involving federal byway designation and increased funding for scenic byways. (These proposals are discussed in more detail in app. IV.) State and private officials we contacted raised several concerns about a federal program involving federal designation that will have to be addressed if a national program is established.

The issues raised relate to the potential impacts that a federal program involving federally designated scenic byways would have on existing state programs. Officials we contacted believe that greater federal involvement could limit the flexibility of states to manage their existing programs, to set land use policies, or make road or highway improvements. Officials were also concerned that a separate federal highway funding category for scenic byways might reduce federal funding available for highway construction and preservation programs. State and private byway groups do, however, support federal involvement in scenic byways to further information sharing, provide information on program management and organization, and promote state and private byway programs regionally and abroad.

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## Byway Officials Concerned About Federally Designated Routes

Because scenic byways were created on the basis of varying state or local needs and priorities, officials from several states told us that if a federal program for designating national scenic byways were implemented, they would favor a designation process with strong state and local involvement, including the ability to nominate roads for inclusion as national byways. This would allow states to preserve the integrity of

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their own scenic byways programs and to participate fully in decisions that affect their roads.

About two-thirds of the state and private officials we contacted<sup>2</sup> would not support a program with national byway designations, if such designations required that use of land adjacent to the route would be preserved or controlled. Officials in some states said that decisions on land use near such byways should be based on local or state policies and priorities and not federal regulations. Groups such as the National Campground Owners Association are also concerned that national designation of byways would limit or possibly restrict development options on land adjacent to such routes. On the other hand, one-third of those contacted suggested that nationally designated routes should preserve land adjacent to designated routes to protect the scenic characteristics of the byway. Almost three-fourths of the state and private officials also did not support national byway designations if they meant road improvements would be limited or restricted.

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## Federal Funding for Byways Supported

Most state and private officials we contacted support some form of federal funding for scenic byways, but there was no consensus on the specific type or source of those funds. About half of the state and private officials were concerned about creating a new federal-aid highway funding category dedicated specifically for scenic byways. Officials in some state transportation departments we contacted generally opposed such a funding category largely because they believed it might reduce total funding available for other highway program areas, such as highway construction or preservation. In 1989, for example, although \$12 billion was allocated for the federal-aid highway program, capital investment requirements on the federal-aid highway system were estimated to exceed \$23 billion annually.

A number of other state officials suggested that nonhighway-related funding sources be used, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund.<sup>3</sup> Some suggested that funding for federal and state byway activities might also come from partnerships such as those between the U.S.

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<sup>2</sup>Views concerning a national scenic byway program were obtained through responses to a telephone survey administered to managers of the 27 byway programs and activities in 10 states, and officials with 7 private groups with an interest in scenic byways. Officials in four states without byway programs were also interviewed concerning a national scenic byway program.

<sup>3</sup>The Land and Water Conservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, provides grants to states and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas.

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Forest Service and the Plymouth Division of Chrysler Corporation and the Bureau of Land Management and Farmers Insurance Company. Under current partnership arrangements, these companies provide some funding for signs, brochures, and other scenic byway promotional activities.

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### Federal Involvement in Information Sharing and Promotion of Byways Desired

Despite these concerns, state and private officials did support some federal byway activities. State byway officials not familiar with the scenic byway activities of other states or private groups said that more information on byway programs or activities of other states and organizations would be useful to improve their existing byway programs or to help establish new activities. Most officials we contacted supported proposals like that made by the AAA for creating a small office at the federal level as a means to share byway information and assist states and others in developing byway programs. As envisioned by the AAA, such an office would function as a clearinghouse for byway-related information and ideas and provide guidance to states, local governments, or private groups interested in designating or promoting routes as scenic byways. Officials from four states—Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Wyoming—that did not have byway programs told us that federal assistance would be helpful if they were to start their own byway program. According to state officials, federal activities such as operating a clearinghouse of byway-related information and providing guidance and technical assistance on ways to identify, designate, and promote scenic byways would be useful.

Over two-thirds of the state and private officials supported a federal role in promoting scenic byways domestically and/or abroad. Officials in several states said federal promotional efforts are needed because they lacked the resources for such promotions. They also believe that the federal government could better promote scenic byways on a regional basis, especially to foreign tourists. Several officials cited efforts by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission to promote travel along the Great River Road in foreign markets as a example of successful byway promotion on a regional basis. To attract Japanese tourists to the area, the Commission attended tourism conferences in Japan and developed bilingual promotional materials and other marketing strategies. Some of these officials said that federal help in promotional efforts like this could increase domestic and international tourism, help boost local or rural economies, and provide greater visibility for scenic byways at the national level.

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## Concluding Observations and Matters for Congressional Consideration

Given the diversity of state and private byway programs and the concerns of states about federally designated routes, it may be difficult to reach a consensus on the makeup of a national program. There appears to be little support for a large national program funded from a new federal-aid highway funding category or for federally designated byways that would limit states' ability to set land use policies and make road improvements. However, support does exist for federal involvement that would provide information to states and private groups on byway program management and organization, and help promote state and private byway programs regionally and abroad.

If the Congress decides to create a national scenic byway program, we believe that such a program should be of limited scope. The federal-aid highway program already provides funds that can be used to make improvements to scenic byways on the federal-aid highway system. Any efforts to significantly expand federal-aid highway funding for byways may not be warranted at this time, given the need for funds to adequately address our nation's highway and bridge needs and the concerns that many state byway officials have over the creation of a large national program.

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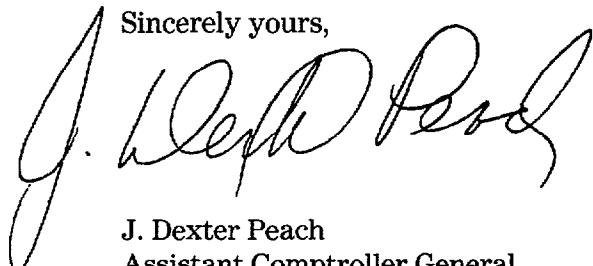
We discussed the results of our review with FHWA officials and with officials of the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service, and incorporated their comments where appropriate. The officials agreed with the factual information as presented. As requested, we did not obtain official agency comments on a draft of this report. Our review was conducted between August 1989 and June 1990 and was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies of this report to officials in the states we visited, the heads of pertinent federal departments and agencies, and other interested parties. This report was

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prepared under the direction of Kenneth M. Mead, Director of Transportation Issues (202) 275-1000. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Dexter Peach".

J. Dexter Peach  
Assistant Comptroller General

# Contents

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<b>Letter</b>	<b>1</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix I</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Characteristics of Scenic Byway Programs and Activities</b>	
Types of Routes Selected	16
Designation Process and Management Structure	17
Promotion	19
Results of Byway Designation	21
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix II</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Designation Criteria</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix III</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Selected Features of Scenic Byway Programs/Activities in 10 States</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix IV</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Federal Scenic Byway Programs and Activities</b>	
National Park Service Parkways	31
U.S. Forest Service Scenic Byway Program	31
Bureau of Land Management Backcountry Byways Program	32
Prior Federal Scenic Byway Studies	33
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix V</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Objectives, Scope, and Methodology</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Appendix VI</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Major Contributors to This Report</b>	

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<b>Tables</b>	Table I.1: Promotion Methods Used in 14 Programs and Activities to Target Foreign Residents	21
	Table II.1: Criteria Used to Designate Scenic Byways	24
<b>Figures</b>	Figure 1: Main Purpose of 27 Scenic Byway Programs and Activities	5
	Figure 2: Funding Sources of 27 Scenic Byway Efforts	6
	Figure I.1: Number of Byways Programs and Activities Using Promotion Methods	20
	Figure I.2: Activities Associated With 27 Scenic Byway Efforts	22

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**Abbreviations**

AAA	American Automobile Association
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GAO	General Accounting Office
NPS	National Park Service
RCED	Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division
USTTA	U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration

# Characteristics of Scenic Byway Programs and Activities

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During our review of state scenic byways, we analyzed 27 byway programs and activities<sup>1</sup> in 10 states and identified key characteristics of the byways including route types; designation processes; and management structures, promotion methods, and results of byway designation. (See app. II for information on designation criteria.)

## Types of Routes Selected

The characteristics of the byways—including the length and type of routes—varied between the byways we reviewed. However, most of the programs and activities shared one common characteristic—the designation of a number of separate, unconnected routes.

The length of the byways varied considerably. One of Oregon's Historic Highways and two of Tennessee's Scenic Highways, for example, are less than 1 mile long. Similarly, Wisconsin's Rustic Roads are relatively short, averaging 5 miles in length. In contrast, some byway routes are very long and sometimes cross state and international borders. For example, the average "back road" in the Travel Arizona program is over 100 miles long. The 1,300-mile Lake Superior Circle Tour and the 3,000-mile Great River Road along the Mississippi River both run through a number of states and Canada.

The types of routes designated as scenic byways ranged from interstate highways to dirt roads. Examples of interstate and state highways are Washington's Interstate 90 across the Cascade Mountains, California's State Scenic Highways, and the Wildflower Routes in Minnesota respectively. Other byways are county or local roads, such as California's County Scenic Highways or Wisconsin's Rustic Roads. Still others byways—some of the Rustic Roads and Travel Arizona routes—are on gravel or unpaved roads.

Some byways start and end in urban areas after looping through surrounding rural areas, while other routes are linear and offer travelers an alternative route to highly travelled roads. For example, the Cascade Loop begins in Everett, Washington—a city of 64,000 people—extends 400 miles through rural and mountain regions, and returns back to Everett. Most of the Auto Tours in Wisconsin also start in cities and loop through the countryside before returning to the same urban area. Other byways run parallel to highly traveled routes. The Seaway Trail in New

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<sup>1</sup>The information contained in this appendix is based on interviews and responses to a telephone survey we administered to managers of each of the 27 byway programs or activities reviewed. Figures I.1 and I.2 and table I.1 summarize the results of selected questions.

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York, for example, runs 454 miles along the northern border of New York state, connecting many scenic, historic, and recreational attractions and providing an alternative to heavily travelled routes I-90 and I-81. Route 99W, one of the Scenic Routes in Oregon, runs parallel to I-5 for 122 miles and provides a more scenic travelling route than the latter.

Most byway programs and activities in the 10 states consisted of a number of separate, unconnected routes. For example, California has 23 Driving Tours in different rural areas throughout the state, and a Scenic Highway program with 51 separate routes in different parts of the state. Tennessee's Scenic Highway program includes 5 urban routes and 17 rural routes in various sections of the state. Virginia established criteria that require designated byways to be widely distributed throughout the state. However, one of the 27 programs we reviewed—the 39-route Scenic Parkway program in Tennessee—links its routes together into a statewide scenic byway system.

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## Designation Process and Management Structure

Scenic byway programs and activities we reviewed require one or more groups or organizations, such as state legislatures, state agencies, local or regional agencies, and/or private groups, to designate<sup>2</sup> byway routes. Minnesota, Tennessee, and Washington use the state legislature to designate certain byways. State transportation agencies often have responsibility for developing and implementing designation procedures as well. For example, officials in the Tennessee Department of Transportation designated the 39 routes in the Scenic Parkway program after reviewing suggestions submitted by its district staff. In Oregon, on the other hand, the legislature commissioned a citizen's task force to study Historic and Scenic Highways and submit its recommendations to the Oregon Transportation Commission for designation. Private groups designated the Cascade Loop in Washington and the Circle Tours around Lakes Michigan and Superior.

Most byway programs designate routes without a formal process or use of specific designation criteria, such as the byways designated by private groups and state tourism agencies. Private groups designated the Cascade Loop in Washington and the Circle Tours around Lakes Michigan and Superior without specific designation criteria. The Wisconsin tourism office designated the Auto Tours, and the California tourism

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<sup>2</sup>We used the term "designation" to refer to byways created or established by state, local or regional agencies, and private groups using either a formal or informal process.

office established the Driving Tours without specific designation criteria.

In contrast, some programs have a formal designation process that can require a number of steps. Many programs involve visual inspections of prospective routes to determine if a route meets established criteria or standards. Officials in states like Arizona and New York use highly quantitative rating methods to score each segment of the proposed Scenic Roads. For example, the designation process for Arizona's Parkway, Historic and Scenic Roads program involves a 12-step process that requires up to 5 different groups or individuals to agree on a route's designation. Public hearings are required before designation takes place for programs in California, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Programs in Arizona, California, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin have provisions that allow officials to revoke designation if a review indicates that a route no longer meets the conditions for designation.

Scenic byway programs and activities we reviewed are managed by state and/or local agencies, private groups, and sometimes partnerships involving several agencies or groups. In about two-thirds of the scenic byway programs and activities we reviewed, the state transportation department had primary management responsibility. But other state agencies such as tourism, natural resources, parks, and historic preservation are also involved in managing the byways. For example, the Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources work together to manage the Wildflower Routes planting and vegetation activities. The Tennessee Department of Transportation designated the Parkways and put up signs along the road, while the state tourism office developed maps and brochures to make travelers aware of attractions along the Parkways. In Virginia, the Department of Conservation and Recreation has the main responsibility for evaluating potential byways, while the Department of Transportation assists with these efforts, designates the routes, and conducts annual inspections of the roadway.

Private groups and local governments occasionally work in partnership with state agencies to manage state byway programs. For example, the Open Space Program in Massachusetts usually requires conservation commissions or local groups to maintain the land acquired by the state along scenic corridors. In Minnesota, local governments maintain the landscapes along the state's Wildflower Routes, and private groups provide landscaping equipment and seeds.

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In some cases, private groups have developed and organized byway programs with little state help or involvement. The Circle Tours around Lakes Michigan and Superior and the Cascade Loop in Washington are examples of byways that were designated and promoted mainly by private tourism associations. Likewise, various chambers of commerce in Oregon have designated Scenic Routes and Loop Tours in their areas to promote tourism.

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## Promotion

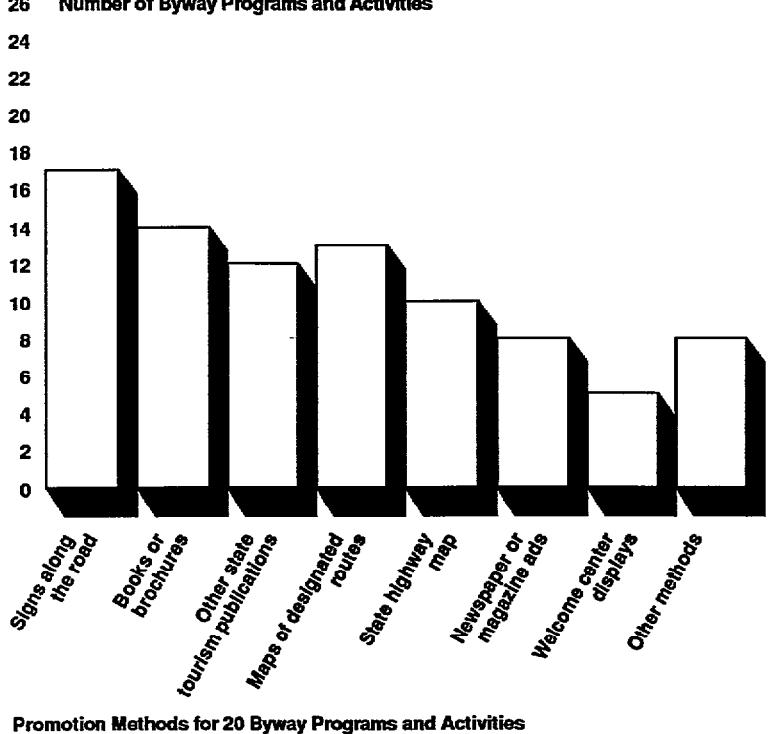
States and private groups use a variety of methods to promote byways and their attractions. Twenty of the 27 byway programs and activities we reviewed are promoted in some way. In some states, private groups organize activities for a particular route in a scenic byway program. For example, a nonprofit agency in New York, the Seaway Trail, Inc., produces various publications featuring historic and recreational attractions along the Seaway Trail, one of the state's Auto Trails. In Arizona, the Historic Route 66 Association publishes a monthly promotional newsletter and helps organize car rallies and historic billboard restoration activities along one of the state's Historic Roads.

As figure I.1 shows, promotion methods used most often to promote the byways are signs along the routes, books, brochures, maps, and tourism publications.

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**Appendix I**  
**Characteristics of Scenic Byway Programs  
and Activities**

**Figure I.1: Number of Byways Programs  
and Activities Using Promotion Methods**



Signs play an important role in promoting scenic byways and their attractions. An Oregon study on highway signs found that because people do not plan their trips completely, they are receptive to new information when travelling. According to the study, signs encourage travelers to leave the major traffic corridors and visit nearby attractions. The study also found that travelers in rural areas have a difficult time finding attractions without appropriate signs to help them locate the attractions.

Some states also focus their byway promotional efforts on foreign tourists. According to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA), seeing outstanding scenery is among the top goals of Europeans and Asian tourists. To stimulate foreign interest in byway attractions, states like Massachusetts and California set up tours to introduce foreign writers and bus tour operators to byway attractions so they will promote them in their own countries. Some states have representatives in foreign countries or send tourism officials to conferences overseas to promote the state, including its scenic byways. Some states and private

groups use materials in other languages to promote attractions in their areas. For example, California publishes a map in Spanish that highlights its Scenic Highways, and the Mississippi River Parkway Commission uses materials in Japanese to promote the Great River Road.

Fourteen of the 20 byway programs and activities that are promoted in some way target foreign residents. Table I.1 lists the most frequent methods to promote byways internationally.

**Table I.1: Promotion Methods Used in 14 Programs and Activities to Target Foreign Residents**

<b>Method used</b>	<b>Number</b>
Activities directed toward foreign tour operators	12
State representation at foreign tourism conferences	10
Publication in other languages	9
Offices or representatives in foreign countries	8

Little or no promotion is done for byways with a preservation focus because, according to officials from several states, promoting such programs could increase tourism and traffic in areas not meant to accommodate such increases. For example, officials in Wisconsin do not want to promote the Rustic Roads too heavily because greater publicity could increase traffic congestion on narrow, low-access roads. Massachusetts' officials said that increased attention on scenic byways might require additional road construction—like widening shoulders or creating new lanes—to safely accommodate the additional traffic. Of the 13 byway programs that had scenic preservation as their main purpose, 5 are not promoted at all.

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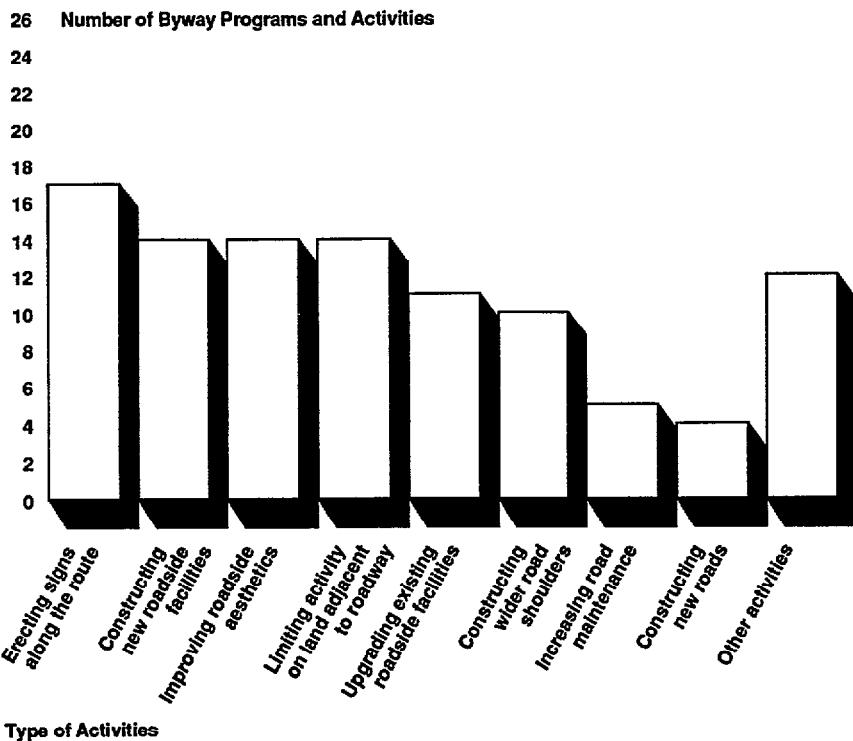
## Results of Byway Designation

Scenic byway designation has resulted in a number of changes to the roadway or to land adjacent to the roadway. Figure I.2 identifies the types of changes that have taken place among the 27 programs we reviewed.

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**Appendix I**  
**Characteristics of Scenic Byway Programs  
and Activities**

**Figure I.2: Activities Associated With 27  
Scenic Byway Efforts**



Many programs put up special signs along the route to indicate that the route has been designated as a byway. In many cases, the same sign is used on all the routes of a program. For example, Tennessee put up over 2,000 mockingbird signs along its Scenic Parkways. Arizona uses identical signs along its Parkway, Historic and Scenic Roads, even though the routes have been designated using different criteria. The Great River Road uses the same sign along the entire 10-state route. In a few programs, however, the signs vary from route to route. For example, different signs were developed and put up along the Scenic Routes and Loop Tours in Oregon. Since each route or loop has different types of attractions, the signs reflect those differences. Each of the 11 Auto Trails in New York—like the Dude Ranch Trail, the Military Trail, and the Seaway Trail—have distinctive signs because each Trail has a different theme. Two signs are used along Minnesota's Wildflower Routes, one for routes through prairies and one for other routes.

In many cases, roadside facilities are constructed or upgraded once a route is designated. Rest stops, picnic areas, scenic turnouts and scenic

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**Appendix I**  
**Characteristics of Scenic Byway Programs**  
**and Activities**

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overlooks are among the facilities typically built or upgraded along the routes. On some routes, byway designation results in special landscaping activities, such as planting trees, shrubs, or native grasses and trimming vegetation more frequently. Other activities improve the appearance of the road, such as using wooden or rock guardrails, burying utility lines; or painting guardrails, signs, and concrete.

# Designation Criteria

Twelve of the 27 byways programs and activities we reviewed used specific criteria to designate scenic byways. The criteria generally fell into four categories: (1) corridor characteristics, (2) accessibility, (3) road characteristics, and (4) public awareness and support. The criteria used most often related to the route's corridor characteristics, and more specifically, to the quality or quantity of attractions along the route and the quality of scenery. The following is a listing of the various types of criteria used.

**Table II.1: Criteria Used to Designate Scenic Byways**

Category	Types of Criteria
Corridor characteristics	Quality or quantity of scenic, recreational, historic, cultural, or geologic attractions along the route. Intactness, uniqueness, unity, vividness of scenery. Complementary facilities (parking, visitor centers, rest stops). Existence of land use restrictions or protections. Amount or type of existing or potential development along the route. Plans for reviewing or managing proposed or existing roadside development.
Accessibility	Connection with other designated routes. Connection to major attractions. Proximity to population areas and well-travelled routes. Alternative route to well-travelled routes. Availability or number of connecting access roads and arterials.
Road characteristics	Safety issues (guardrails, shoulders, warning signs, ability to carry large vehicles safely, speed limit). Road or roadside design. Length of the route. Type of users (commercial, residential, local). Existing or potential volume of traffic.
Public awareness and support	Local and state government support Private sector support. Availability of partnerships for funding, management, maintenance, and promotion Widely recognized routes.

# Selected Features of Scenic Byway Programs/Activities in 10 States<sup>a</sup>

Program/activity	Main purpose	Scope of routes	Who designates the routes?	What happens after designation?	Who manages or oversees the program/activity?	How are the routes promoted?
<b>Arizona</b>						
Parkways, Historic and Scenic Roads	Preserve scenic beauty	1 parkway, 2 historic, and 6 scenic routes covering a total of 395 miles	Advisory committee recommends route; state transportation board designates routes	Signs put up along route, recommendations made for improving and preserving scenery; some construction of roadside facilities	Advisory committee	One route promoted by private association, local communities highlight routes in some promotional material
Travel Arizona	Promote tourism	16 routes that take 1 to 3 days to drive (length of routes unknown), 20 "back road" routes on paved and unpaved roads covering a total of 2,144 miles	Editors of a state transportation department magazine	Promotional material developed	Editors of a state transportation department magazine	Books describe attractions along the routes; state tourism office booklet describes attractions along the 16-route system
<b>California</b>						
County Scenic Highways	Preserve scenic beauty	Parts of 4 county highways covering a total of 47 miles	Advisory committee reviews request for designation by local jurisdictions; state transportation department approves designation	Local jurisdiction implements a scenic protection program; state transportation department puts up signs along the routes	State transportation department	Not currently promoted by state tourism office
Driving Tours of the Californias	Economic development	23 routes, primarily loop tours in rural areas	Routes identified by local tourism and promotion agencies	Routes promoted by state tourism office	State tourism office	Booklet describes the routes and their attractions
State Scenic Highways	Preserve scenic beauty	51 routes covering a total of 1,068 miles	Advisory committee reviews request for designation by local jurisdictions; state transportation department approves designation	Local jurisdiction implements a scenic protection program; state transportation department puts up signs along the routes	State transportation department	Routes are signed and identified on state tourism map

(continued)

**Appendix III**  
**Selected Features of Scenic Byway**  
**Programs/Activities in 10 States**

<b>Program/activity</b>	<b>Main purpose</b>	<b>Scope of routes</b>	<b>Who designates the routes?</b>	<b>What happens after designation?</b>	<b>Who manages or oversees the program/activity?</b>	<b>How are the routes promoted?</b>
<b>Massachusetts</b>						
Mohawk Trail	Promote tourism	One 63-mile route linking the northeast & northwest parts of the state	Route constructed in 1914 as a scenic road	Private association and state tourism office promote the route	Private association promotes activities and attractions along the route	Various public and private-sector maps and publications highlight the route and its attractions; route shown on state highway map
Open Space	Preserve scenic beauty	116 acres of land acquired along 4 routes	State legislature authorizes acquisition of scenic roadside parcels based on recommendation of state transportation department	State agencies, private groups, and local governments acquire land which can only be used for conservation and recreation purposes	State transportation department advisory committee; land maintained by local groups, state agencies, or conservation commissions	Signs put up on preserved parcels along adjacent route
<b>Minnesota</b>						
Great River Road	Promote tourism and increase recreational enjoyment	700-mile section of a route through 10 states and Canada that runs the length of the Mississippi River (does not include 420-mile portion of a federally funded route)	State legislature	Signs put up along the route; amenities built or improved; some road construction and maintenance	Legislative commission coordinates work with several state agencies	Variety of books, maps, and brochures available for the sections in the state; legislative commission promotes route in foreign countries; signs put up along the road; route shown on the state map
Legislative Routes	Promote tourism	19 routes and 2 bridges	State legislature	Some construction of roadside facilities; increased road maintenance; signs put up along the route	State transportation department	Brochures and maps developed for some routes by local groups; signs put up along the routes
North Shore Drive	Preserve scenic beauty	150-mile section of highway along the northern border of Lake Superior	Route not designated, but 3 other byway programs have designated parts of the route (Lake Superior Circle Tour, U.S. Forest Service scenic byway, and a legislatively designated route)	Construction of roadside and recreation facilities; increased road maintenance and landscaping	Board of local officials, state transportation and natural resources departments	Signs put up along the route; various publications and maps promote attractions and amenities along the route; some promotion in international markets

(continued)

**Appendix III**  
**Selected Features of Scenic Byway**  
**Programs/Activities in 10 States**

<b>Program/activity</b>	<b>Main purpose</b>	<b>Scope of routes</b>	<b>Who designates the routes?</b>	<b>What happens after designation?</b>	<b>Who manages or oversees the program/activity?</b>	<b>How are the routes promoted?</b>
Wildflower Routes	Preserve and improve scenic beauty	6 routes covering a total of 238 miles	State transportation department in consultation with the natural resources and tourism departments	Environmentally sensitive landscape management; some recreation facilities built, planting some native flowers and grasses	State transportation and natural resource departments, local governments	Signs put up along the routes; local media promotion and dedication ceremonies
<b>New York</b>						
Auto Trails	Economic development	11 routes in the northern part of the state	State legislature	Signs put up along routes, promotional materials developed	Private nonprofit organization	Maps, brochures, and other material distributed by state tourism office and private organizations describe scenic, historic, or recreational attractions along some routes
Parkways	Increase recreational enjoyment	13 routes covering a total of 160 miles, mainly in metropolitan New York City	Routes built in the early 1900s as parkways and were not designated afterward	Special landscaping and guardrails designed to enhance and maintain aesthetic driving experience; several routes listed on the National Registry of Historic Places	State transportation department; state office of parks, recreation, and historic preservation	Not currently promoted by state tourism office
Scenic Roads	Preserve scenic beauty	29 road segments covering a total of 104 miles along town, county, and state roads, mainly in the Hudson River Valley	Local groups submit nominations; environmental conservation department approves designation	Local government encouraged to adopt a corridor management plan to protect and preserve the natural, cultural, and scenic resources adjacent to the road	State environmental conservation department	Program promoted to local or regional planning boards; local government has the option of putting up signs along a route

(continued)

**Appendix III**  
**Selected Features of Scenic Byway**  
**Programs/Activities in 10 States**

<b>Program/activity</b>	<b>Main purpose</b>	<b>Scope of routes</b>	<b>Who designates the routes?</b>	<b>What happens after designation?</b>	<b>Who manages or oversees the program/ activity?</b>	<b>How are the routes promoted?</b>
<b>Oregon</b>						
Historic and Scenic Highways	Recognize historic and scenic highway construction	9 highways, 11 bridges, and 5 rockwork sites	Citizens advisory committee recommends; state transportation department designates	Construction or landscaping activity must be approved by state transportation department; signs put up at sites	State transportation department	Booklet published by state transportation department but routes and sites are not promoted by state tourism office; some routes promoted by local communities
Scenic Areas	Preserve scenic beauty	Scenic areas along 3,451 miles of state and federal highways in all parts of the state	Board in the state highway department approved locally nominated routes	Advertising signs and junkyards removed in designated areas	State transportation department monitors compliance along routes	Not currently promoted by state tourism office
Scenic Routes and Loop Tours	Promote tourism	16 loop tours and alternative routes	Local chambers of commerce	Signs unique to each route put up along some of the roads	Chambers of commerce coordinate promotion efforts with state tourism office; state transportation department puts up signs along routes	Brochures and maps highlighting attractions in the area printed for each route by local chambers of commerce; state tourism office lists routes in state booklet; signs put up along some routes
<b>Tennessee</b>						
Scenic Highways	Preserve scenic beauty	5 urban routes and 17 rural routes covering a total of 234 miles	Routes identified by local officials and approved by the state legislature	Controls are placed on outdoor advertising, junkyards, and on buildings constructed adjacent to the route	State transportation department or local agency with jurisdiction over the route	Not currently promoted by state tourism office
Scenic Parkways	Promote tourism	39 parkways covering a total of 2,810 miles in an interconnected system linking state parks, historic sites, and tourist attractions	28 routes designated by the state legislature in 1982; 11 routes designated later by the state transportation department	Some construction of roadside facilities; landscaping along the routes; signs put up along the routes	State transportation and tourism departments	Over 2,000 highway signs installed; state tourism brochure highlights historic sites, parks, and other attractions

(continued)

**Appendix III**  
**Selected Features of Scenic Byway**  
**Programs/Activities in 10 States**

<b>Program/activity</b>	<b>Main purpose</b>	<b>Scope of routes</b>	<b>Who designates the routes?</b>	<b>What happens after designation?</b>	<b>Who manages or oversees the program/activity?</b>	<b>How are the routes promoted?</b>
<b>Virginia</b>						
Virginia Byways	Preserve scenic beauty	33 individual routes covering a total of 553 miles	State transportation board	Local governments control land use along scenic corridor; state transportation department conducts yearly inspections to make sure the route meets the minimum criteria; some roadside improvements made	State transportation and conservation/recreation departments	State highway map indicates routes; signs put up along the routes
<b>Washington</b>						
Cascade Loop	Promote tourism	400-mile loop through mountain and coastal regions in the north and central parts of the state	Private nonprofit association	Private nonprofit association promotes the route; signs put up along the route	Private nonprofit association	Signs put up along the route; traveler's guide promotes attractions and amenities in areas along the route
Scenic and Recreation Highways	Preserve scenic beauty	27 separate routes covering a total of 1,909 miles	State legislature	Some land purchased along the routes; landscaping to create better views; some scenic turnouts constructed	State transportation department	Signs put up along the route; brochures describe attractions along the routes
Scenic Vistas	Preserve scenic beauty	12 separate routes covering a total of 455 miles; also includes 27 routes that are part of the Scenic and Recreation Highways program	State legislature	Most highway billboards removed	State transportation department	Not currently promoted by state tourism office
Utilities Accommodation	Control construction or development	Scenic character of over 7,000 miles of state highway has been assessed	State transportation department and state utility coordinating council	Aerial utilities are buried or relocated along selected scenic sections of state highways	State transportation department	Not currently promoted by state tourism office

(continued)

**Appendix III**  
**Selected Features of Scenic Byway**  
**Programs/Activities in 10 States**

<b>Program/activity</b>	<b>Main purpose</b>	<b>Scope of routes</b>	<b>Who designates the routes?</b>	<b>What happens after designation?</b>	<b>Who manages or oversees the program/activity?</b>	<b>How are the routes promoted?</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>						
Lake Michigan and Lake Superior Circle Tours	Promote tourism	1100-mile Lake Michigan Circle Tour runs through 4 states; 1300-mile Lake Superior Circle Tour runs through 3 states and Canada	Route identified by private nonprofit associations	Signs put up along both routes; promotional material developed	Private nonprofit associations	Signs put up along both routes; maps and booklets promote attractions and amenities along the routes
Auto Tours	Promote tourism	23 separate routes covering a total of 4147 miles	State tourism office	Routes publicized in state tourism book	State tourism office	Book describes attractions and side trips available along the routes
Rustic Roads	Preserve scenic beauty	55 separate routes covering a total of 280 miles, located primarily in rural areas	Private landowners, in conjunction with local or county government, request designation; board in the state transportation department designates routes	Future land use and roadway improvements should preserve rustic character of route; signs put up along the route; speed limit restricted	Board in the state transportation department	Signs put up along the routes; brochure and map describe the program and each route, program mentioned in state tourism publications

<sup>a</sup>The scenic byways programs and activities listed for each state are not exhaustive but are intended to show the diverse nature of the byway efforts in the 10 states reviewed.

# Federal Scenic Byway Programs and Activities

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This appendix summarizes the scenic byway programs managed by the Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Land Management, and the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service, and discusses prior scenic byway studies conducted by federal agencies or commissions.

## National Park Service Parkways

Since the 1930s, NPS has maintained a system of parkways and other scenic routes in the National Parks. Routes are designated either by the Congress or the NPS as parkways or scenic or historic routes.

Perhaps the most well-known type of designated routes are "parkways," which are routes designated by the Congress. Essentially, parkways are elongated federal parks designed for pleasure driving on routes with scenic, recreational, historical or other features of national significance. As of June 1990, there were nine parkways located mainly in East Coast and Southeastern States. One well-known parkway, for example, is the Blue Ridge Parkway, established by the Congress in 1936. The route was designed specifically as a scenic route and extends 470 miles through the southern Appalachian Mountains of western Virginia and North Carolina.

Other routes have been approved by the NPS for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places because of their unique settings, historic values, or design features. Routes such as the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park and the Generals' Highway in Sequoia National Park are examples of such routes.

## U.S. Forest Service Scenic Byway Program

In 1988, the U.S. Forest Service created a National Forest Scenic Byways program as part of its national recreational strategy. The main objectives of this program are to provide greater public awareness of National Forest activities and recreational opportunities; to meet increased demand for pleasure driving; to showcase outstanding National Forest scenery; and to increase the use of National Forests by urban minorities, the disadvantaged, and the elderly.

As of May 1990, the Forest Service had designated 71 Scenic Byway routes covering over 3,761 miles located in 31 states. The Forest Service identifies and designates its byways using specific designation criteria, and seeks the concurrence of states or local groups if prospective routes traverse their respective jurisdictions. According to an agency official, the main designation criteria used by the agency emphasizes routes with

a high degree of scenic, historic, or recreational features; routes safe for driving by passenger car; and routes whose designation is consistent with existing National Forest plans.

Funding for Forest Service scenic byways comes from partnerships with several companies and, to a lesser extent, from agency funds. The Forest Service has established a partnership with the Harley Davidson Company and has executed a collection agreement with the Forest Education Foundation, which has formed partnerships with the Plymouth Division of the Chrysler Corporation. These companies will provide funding for signs, brochures, and other promotional activities. A Forest Service official told us that Forest Service moneys have been or will be spent for signing, building turn-outs or interpretive sites, and roadway maintenance costs due to increased traffic.

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## Bureau of Land Management Backcountry Byways Program

In 1988, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) created a program of Back Country Byways. The main goals of BLM's program are to provide greater awareness of recreational activities available on BLM land, provide more opportunities for pleasure driving in back country areas, and boost local economies through increased tourism. Other goals of the program are to facilitate partnerships at the local, state, and national levels and to help recreational visitors understand the multiple uses of BLM land through interpretative signs and information.

As of June 1990, BLM had designated 34 Back Country Byway routes covering 1,644 miles in length in 11 western states. Back Country Byways are divided into four types, which range from paved roads with grades negotiable by passenger automobiles to trails designed for off-road vehicles, trail bikes, or snowmobiles. Like the Forest Service, BLM identifies and designates routes using specific designation criteria. BLM also seeks concurrence from local and state officials when routes being considered for designation traverse state or local jurisdictions.

Like the Forest Service, BLM has established partnerships to help pay for promotional or other costs associated with Back Country Byways. BLM has a cooperative agreement with the American Recreation Coalition which, in turn, has formed partnership agreements with the Farmers Insurance Company and American Isuzu Motors Corporation. These companies provide funding for maps, brochures and signs, entrance stations, and interpretive waysides along the routes. A BLM official told us that because of the funding agreements with private companies, BLM has reduced the amount of federal funds spent on the program.

## Prior Federal Scenic Byway Studies

Although federal involvement in scenic byways has been evident since the 1930s, interest in creating a national system of scenic byways did not emerge until the 1960s. In 1962, the federal Recreation Advisory Council recommended the development of a national program of scenic roads and parkways and tasked the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Public Roads to study the development of such a program. The study, published in 1966, recommended development of a \$4 billion national scenic roads program over a 10-year period. Also, in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson hosted a White House Conference on Natural Beauty, which produced legislative proposals for scenic improvements and preservation along the nation's roadside. Such efforts led to enactment of the 1965 Highway Beautification Act, which provided for control of junkyards and outdoor advertising and increased expenditures for landscaping and other scenic enhancements. Implementation of a national scenic road program did not occur during the late 1960s and early 1970s because of competing budgetary and policy demands, according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

In 1973, the Congress directed FHWA to study the feasibility of developing a national scenic byway program. The purpose of the study was to develop an inventory of the nation's scenic roadways, identify measures for preserving and enhancing those resources, and identify costs and issues related to implementing a scenic highway program. On the basis of data submitted by states and federal agencies, the inventory consisted of 1,781 scenic byway routes totalling 93,000 miles. About 81,000 of those miles were on existing routes, with the remainder proposed as new construction.

The study identified five major components of a byway system that would have to be addressed if a national scenic byway program were created:

- National designation of scenic routes, which would require minimal investment and designated certain existing highways or highway segments as components of a national system. Special signs could be erected, maps and brochures published, and a media promotion program established.
- Scenic enhancement and corridor protection, in which attention would be directed to preserving and enhancing the scenic qualities of selected highway corridors. Various means would be considered, including the purchase of additional rights-of-way or the procurement of scenic easements.

- Complementary facilities, aimed at improving scenic highway use by upgrading the condition of existing facilities, such as overlooks, picnic areas, walkways, and water facilities, and adding new ones.
- Urban emphasis and energy efficiency, to improve and protect scenic resources within an hour's travel of major population centers.
- National connectivity, a small program in which emphasis would be to improve access to recreation areas and to link recreation resources, including scenic highways, and, historical, scientific, and cultural sites to one another.

The study recommended that a series of high-quality scenic highways be designated which would cost between \$800 million to \$1.8 billion over a 10- to 20-year period. The study cited no technical barriers to establishing a national system of scenic highways. However, given the need to conserve energy resources at that time, the study concluded that it was not in the national interest to establish a new Federal-Aid Highway categorical grant program exclusively for the construction or reconstruction of scenic highways.

In 1986, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors reemphasized the importance of recreational driving for many Americans. The Commission made three recommendations concerning scenic byways:

1. State and local governments should create a network of scenic byways, on the basis of their own criteria and standards, and take actions to preserve resources along those roadways and thoroughfares. Byway designations should be based on local land-planning guidelines and zoning ordinances.
2. The Congress should establish an incentive program of matching grants to local and state governments to encourage scenic byway designations. Grants, initially funded for 2 years from Highway Trust Fund revenues, could be used for safety improvements, removal of inappropriate billboards, and construction of scenic vista or interpretive turnouts, or picnic or sanitary facilities.
3. Information concerning scenic byways should be made available through partnerships between the private sector and all levels of government. Local and state governments should determine which roads and routes should be part of the byway system. The federal government could provide technical assistance and grants to encourage byway designation but should not mandate program activities. Private organizations, local chambers of commerce, historic preservations offices, and natural

heritage organizations should also play an integral part in identifying and designating scenic byways.

In response to the interest of the President's Commission in scenic byways, several federal agencies have studied scenic byways further. In 1988, for example, the Federal Highway Administration published the book Scenic Byways, which provided definitions and a history of byways as well as many examples of local, state, and federally designated byways. The book was published as a reference guide for participants at the Scenic Byways 1988 national conference. In 1989, the Federal Task Force on Rural Tourism recommended that a "national policy on scenic byways" be developed to stimulate rural tourism and economic growth.

There has also been recent interest in the Congress and by states and private organizations in creating a national scenic byways program. As a result, in November 1989, the Congress requested that FHWA conduct a nationwide study of scenic byways. The study, to be published in November 1990, will include an updated national inventory of existing scenic byways; guidelines for developing a national program, case studies on the economic impact of byways, and an analysis of the safety and environmental consequences of byway designation.

# Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

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In a May 19, 1989, letter and in subsequent discussion with his office, the Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Commerce and Tourism, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, asked us to (1) determine the characteristics of selected scenic byway programs and activities, (2) determine the criteria states use to designate byways, and (3) identify issues raised by scenic byway officials concerning the creation of a national scenic byways program.

To address these objectives, we analyzed 27 scenic byways programs and activities in 10 states: Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. These states were selected because they provided a sample of byway programs and activities that were diverse in size, geographic location, and program purpose. On the basis of discussions with FHWA officials, we also contacted four states without byway programs—Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Wyoming—to determine their reasons for not having a byway program and to obtain their views concerning a national scenic byway program.

In each state, we interviewed state and private-sector officials in transportation, natural resource, tourism, and other agencies responsible for managing byway programs or activities. We obtained agency or organizational documents and reports pertaining to scenic byways. We also conducted a telephone survey of managers of 27 programs and activities in 10 states. The survey asked questions about their programs and activities and their views on the creation of a national scenic byways program.

We interviewed federal officials responsible for administering scenic byway or byway-related programs, including FHWA officials in Washington, D.C., and in various field offices, and officials of the U.S. Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management; NPS; and U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. At each agency, we obtained any relevant scenic byway-related documents, studies, or reports.

To identify issues which should be considered if a national scenic byway program were created, we also interviewed officials with seven private groups with an interest in scenic byways: the American Automobile Association, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, American Recreation Coalition, Highway Users Federation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Scenic America, and the Travel and Tourism Government Affairs Council. We selected these groups on the basis of their activities, interest, and knowledge relating to scenic

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