

CHAPTER 5

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The following section details the Designation Classifications, and the *Universal* and *Resource Specific* criteria for designation as a Florida Scenic Highway. Corridors can pursue one of two classifications of designation: Scenic or Heritage. *Universal* criteria are applicable to all corridors, regardless of their intrinsic resources. The *Resource Specific* criteria relate directly to the class of designation being pursued and the six intrinsic resources. These criteria are presented through definitions, visual examples, designation criteria, and additional considerations. This section attempts to simplify the designation process for the sponsoring group and the local government by clearly defining each resource and stating the criteria the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee will be considering.

5.1 DESIGNATION CLASSIFICATION

Designation as a Florida Scenic Highway can be achieved through one of two classifications: Scenic Corridors or Heritage Corridors. Recognizing some corridors are valued because of their inherent beauty while others are valued because they represent our pasts the Florida Scenic Highways Program will grant designation for each of these types of corridors.

For corridors designated as **Scenic Corridors**, the majority of information and events we experience are perceived visually. Because emotional responses and interpretations are associated with our visual environment, the Florida Scenic Highways Program will designate Scenic Corridors based on the visual experience of roadway travelers. At least one of these three Intrinsic Resources - natural, recreational or scenic - must be achieved to become designated under the Scenic Corridor classification.

For corridors designated as **Heritage Corridors**, the Florida Scenic Highways Program will designate based on the historic, cultural or archeological value of the corridor in relation to its role in the State, knowing that Florida is rich in heritage worthy of sharing with visitors and residents alike. At least one of these three Intrinsic Resources – historical, archeological or cultural – must be represented to become designated under the Heritage Corridor classification.

5.2 UNIVERSAL CRITERIA

The majority of information and events we experience are perceived visually. Because emotional responses and interpretations are associated with our visual environment, the Florida Scenic Highways Program will focus on the visual experience of roadway travelers.

The following ten criteria are considered basic elements of a Florida Scenic Highway. These elements either relate directly to the corridor and its resources or to the actions or plans necessary to ensure implementation and continued success. Some of these criteria may require “reasonable judgments” for compliance, but in all cases the criteria must be met to achieve corridor designation. All the criteria listed below are followed by appropriate explanations.

1. Resource(s) must be visible or accessible from the roadway.
2. The corridor must “tell a story” that relates to its intrinsic resource(s).
3. The roadway must be a public road that safely accommodates two-wheel drive motor vehicles.
4. The corridor must exhibit significant, exceptional and distinctive features of the region it traverses.
5. The roadway generally should be more than one mile in length and, if appropriate, provide access to the resource(s).
6. A majority of the corridor must exhibit scenic or heritage qualifying resource(s). These resources must be as continuous as possible throughout the corridor.
7. A Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) must be organized to support the scenic highway designation.
8. A Community Participation Program must be developed and implemented.
9. Strong local support must be demonstrated.
10. A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) must be developed with the endorsement of local government(s) and a Corridor Management Entity (CME) created.

1. *Resource(s) must be visible from the roadway.*

Intrinsic resources must be visible from the roadway, which means these resources must be within the viewshed. In certain cases, however, having the resource adjacent to the roadway may satisfy this criterion. For instance, a roadway may be designated scenic because it possesses abundant recreational resources that are directly accessible from the roadway, but not necessarily fully visible or recognizable to travelers. Adjacency must therefore be viewed within the context of the resource itself, with a consideration of how it interacts with the scenic or heritage corridor. It is anticipated, however, that most intrinsic resources will be visible from the roadway itself.

To prove a roadway meets this criterion, several methods of resource inventory and assessment will be required of the applicant. These techniques involve recording the types, location and significance of the resources within the corridor through written records as well as through photography, video and other visual methods. (Techniques and methodologies are discussed in **Chapter 6 - Intrinsic Resource Assessment.**)

2. *The corridor must “tell a story” that relates to its intrinsic resource(s).*



Simply put, every roadway designated as a Florida Scenic Highway must “tell a story” that provides an educational experience for the traveler. This may require research and compilation of factual information about the region or about Florida that can be organized into a cohesive story and can be told through interpretive means. These could include interpretive facilities, literature, or other multimedia techniques such as video, audio cassette tapes or low frequency radio. Every intrinsic resource should have some relationship to the story, thereby contributing a chapter to the overall story. By using these educational media, travelers of a Florida Scenic Highway may learn about Florida’s history, cultures, industries, ecology and recreational opportunities.

3. *The roadway must be a public road that safely accommodates two-wheel drive motor vehicles.*

To ensure travelers are provided a safe driving environment, the roadway must be a paved public road that accommodates two-wheel drive motor vehicles. Additionally, recreational and emergency vehicle access should be provided to all segments of the roadway. In certain cases, operational or geometric improvements (passing areas or vertical clearances) will be necessary to accommodate these vehicles. If recreational or emergency vehicle access cannot be accommodated through reasonable improvements, alternative routes may need to be investigated. Roadway design should balance the need to accommodate travelers safely while supporting corridor goals and objectives.

In some cases, unpaved portions of roadways may be added to a corridor as spur or loop roads off of the main corridor. To be included as an asset for the designation of the corridor, these unpaved portions of road must lead to or provide access to resources valuable to the corridor’s designation and be safe for vehicle travel. To ensure safety, the agency with jurisdiction over the unpaved roadway must verify it meets some safety standards prior to be considered part of the corridor.

An inventory of existing roadway conditions will be conducted to collect data on traffic volumes, crash histories, physical roadway characteristics, and other pertinent information. A comprehensive investigation of roadway safety will also be conducted for identification of potential safety hazards and possible remedies. This study should be conducted in cooperation with the entities (Federal, State, and Local) which have jurisdiction over the roadways.

See **Chapter 2 - Eligibility Phase** and **Chapter 3 - Designation Phase** for details regarding these requirements.

4. The corridor must exhibit significant, exceptional and distinctive features of the region it traverses.

This criterion addresses the degree to which a roadway corridor possesses significant, exceptional and distinctive intrinsic resources. Having resources that are significant, exceptional and distinctive is considered the cornerstone of the Florida Scenic Highways Program and is necessary for receiving designation.



Significant is viewed in the context of whether or not the resource is regionally recognized (meaning more than one county) and valued by the surrounding communities. Significance will mainly be determined by a demonstration of community recognition through official proclamations, resolutions, ordinances, protection and/or enhancement plans, resource management plans or other substantive designations which demonstrate the recognition and importance of the resource. Additionally, significance can be supported through recognition by other entities such as state and federal agencies, state and national organizations.

The other qualifiers for these criteria, *Exceptional* and *Distinctive*, relate to the quality and degree to which the resources are representative of the region the corridor traverses. *Exceptional* implies the resource(s) is outstanding in its quality and composition within the landscape. In other words, the caliber and arrangement of the resource(s) produces a visually pleasing effect. *Distinctive* means the resource(s) is representative of the geographical region in which it is located; in other words, the resource is associated with an appropriate characteristic of a particular area of the state.

5. The roadway generally should be more than one mile in length and, if appropriate, provide access to the resource(s).

In order for a traveler to have a substantial or meaningful experience in driving on a roadway, the roadway generally should be more than one mile in length. Ideally, the length of a candidate corridor should be determined by the resources present along that corridor. This length may also satisfy visitor expectation, for many travelers might often make a substantial diversion in their travel route to experience the roadway's intrinsic qualities. Candidate corridors that are substantial in length and provide an appreciable travel experience are more preferable than short corridors. Exceptions to these criteria may be made on a case-by-case basis, always recognizing the intent of this requirement. For

those resources where vehicular, pedestrian or bicycle accessibility is desirable and appropriate, access from the subject roadway is required.

All candidate scenic corridors shall be evaluated in order to maximize the corridor's length while still addressing designation criteria. This may involve coordination with other local general purpose governments or agencies in an attempt to enhance the traveler's overall experience.

6. A majority of the corridor must exhibit scenic or heritage qualifying resource(s). For a Scenic classification, a majority of the corridor must exhibit natural, recreational or scenic qualities. For a Heritage classification, a majority of the corridor must exhibit at least one of the following qualities: historic, archeological or cultural. For either classification, resources must be as continuous as possible throughout the corridor.

The intention of these criteria is to ensure that intrinsic resources are consistently apparent and of **significant** quality for the majority of the roadway corridor limits, with minimal gaps and intrusions on the traveler's experience.

This is not to say that there may not be certain small segments that do not possess the intrinsic resource(s), but the route, as a whole, possesses those outstanding resources for which the applicant seeks designation. In some instances portions of an applicant corridor may be "gapped" or excluded from the corridor in the application to become a scenic highway. The Florida Scenic Highways Program does allow gaps to occur along designated corridors with a strong justification, but it is not encouraged. Considering the Universal Criteria that a majority of the corridor exhibits the resources for designation, these "gapped" areas must be a small portion of the entire length of the corridor and not detract from the traveler's experience. Designated corridors should have continuous resources along the entire length of the corridor, but if there are extenuating circumstances or there needs to be a gap, they are allowed. If a CAG feels there is a compelling reason to "gap" a portion of their corridor, they should discuss this with their DSHC prior to moving forward.

7. A Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) must be organized to support the scenic highway designation.

Just as an athletic team has a team captain, so too must a scenic highway have a leader in the form of a Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG). The CAG will be the initial catalyst in the scenic highway *Eligibility Phase*. It should be comprised of citizens, businesses, civic groups, local governments, Indian Tribal Councils and other proponents willing to initiate and work toward designation as a Florida Scenic Highway. The CAG will carry the project through the *Eligibility Phase* by participating in meetings, building constituency and developing the **Letter of Intent** and **Eligibility Application**. The primary purpose of the CAG is to shepherd the proposed corridor through the *Eligibility Phase* in preparation for more detailed evaluation and planning during the *Designation Phase*.

8. A Community Participation Program must be developed and implemented.

A scenic highway and its intrinsic resources depend upon a community for the management and exposure of the corridor. Consequently, the CAG will develop and implement a Community Participation Program (CPP) designed to gain input and support from the general public, which must be incorporated into the overall corridor planning efforts. This CPP must provide ample and varied opportunities for interested parties to review, comment, and participate in planning the scenic corridor. It should be noted that the CPP can serve as a vehicle for achieving local public support (Universal Criteria #9); it can also fulfill notification requirements of the planning process. In all cases, however, the CPP should be viewed as an integral part of the planning process and be designed to involve the public in all phases, from eligibility and designation to implementation of the Action Plan for the corridor. (**Chapter 3 - Designation Phase** presents some specific ideas and recommendations for the development and implementation of the CPP.)

9. Strong local support must be demonstrated.

From the beginning of a scenic highway project, a community-wide effort is necessary to build and maintain support for scenic highway designation. It is the Corridor Advocacy Group's responsibility to build consensus for a project and then demonstrate the community(s) supports the vision and goals for the proposed scenic highway. Support can be demonstrated through letters from citizens, businesses and civic groups, surveys, partnering agreements, proclamations, resolutions, ordinances or other methods. In urban areas, endorsement by the MPO and inclusion of the corridor in MPO plans and programs demonstrates strong support. The purpose of this demonstration is to prove the community(s) agrees on the significance of the resources along a roadway.

Building and maintaining community support is essential for scenic highway designation. Putting together this "team" of workers and supporters is critical because the greater the number of players a team has, the more diverse the talent and, the higher the likelihood for success. This "grass roots" approach fosters a pride of ownership in which every team member works toward a common goal. (See **Chapter 3 - Designation Phase** for specific guidance regarding local support.)

10. A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) must be developed with the endorsement of local government(s) and a Corridor Management Entity (CME) created.

A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is the primary product of the *Designation Phase* and will be fully developed for submittal with the **Designation Application**. The CMP is a written document that serves as a record of a scenic highway's development as well as the plan by which the scenic highway is implemented, maintained and enhanced. It contains a history of the scenic highway's development as well as a history of the actions, procedures, protection measures, operational practices and all other strategies employed to preserve, enhance and maintain the intrinsic resources of the corridor. This history of the corridor's

development is important in that the vision, goals, resource evaluation, and public support will serve as a baseline for comparison against future conditions. The CMP provides a record of the actions and agreements necessary to implement and sustain the scenic corridor. The CMP is also a dynamic document, which will be revisited and revised as necessary to satisfy the vision and goals for the scenic corridor.

There are many elements to a Corridor Management Plan, all of which are discussed in ***Chapter 3 - Designation Phase***. This chapter provides the guidance and recommendations necessary for satisfying the requirements of the Florida Scenic Highways Program. Chapter 3 includes guidance on the following issues:

Background Conditions Analysis
Intrinsic Resource Assessment and Designation Criteria
Corridor Vision
Corridor Mission
Goals, Objectives and Strategies
Corridor's Story
Corridor Management Entity
Community Participation Program
Local Support
Protection Techniques
Funding and Promotion
Relationship to Comprehensive Plan
Partnerships and Agreements
Action Plan

The CMP will serve as the main repository of information, ideas, vision, commitments, implementation schedule and Action Plan elements necessary to designate and maintain a scenic corridor.

In addition to the CMP, a Corridor Management Entity must also be created. The CME will serve as the initiator, coordinator, and promoter of all corridor related activities. Typically a partnership of elected officials, private citizens, business representatives and technical advisors, it is the responsibility of the CME to implement the Corridor Management Plan.

5.3 RESOURCE SPECIFIC CRITERIA

The foundation of the Florida Scenic Highways Program is the preservation and protection of the State's outstanding resources. Within the two classifications of designation, the Program identifies six intrinsic resources which must exhibit significant, exceptional and distinctive features. For Heritage Corridors, the resources include historical, archeological or cultural. For Scenic Corridors, the resources include natural, recreational and scenic qualities.

The following section describes the six intrinsic resources in separate subsections. A definition and visual examples are provided for reference. The specific criteria required for each resource is included with other considerations which may affect eligibility or designation.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Definition:

Historical resources embody the distinctive physical elements in the landscape, either natural or manmade, that reflect human actions in relation to past events, sites, or structures. These historic resources symbolize an important era in Florida history and serve to educate viewers while providing an appreciation of the past. Such resources may include buildings, Native American habitations, trails, engineering structures, settlement patterns and landscapes.

Visual Examples:

- WWII Submarine Lookout Tower, on Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail in Volusia County, built sometime in the early 1900's, was a part of the United States' coastal defense. This is one of the last remaining WWII Submarine Lookout Towers on the east coast.
- The town of Micanopy along the Old Florida Heritage Highway has many historic buildings that function as modern day antique stores and restaurants.



Criteria:

1. Listed or determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or designated by a local government to be of historical significance under the guidelines adopted by the Division of Historical Resources of the Florida Department of State.

2. The corridor must have a documented historical past.
3. Historic resources must satisfy the significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria. More than one historical resource must be present when no other intrinsic resource(s) has been identified, unless the resource is a historic district. One historic district is acceptable if a substantial portion of the district lies adjacent to the highway.
4. Historical resources must be able to be experienced by the traveling public.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Definition:

Cultural resources are portions of the human environment that express aesthetics, traditions, values and customs. Traditions are usually associated with distinct groups of people and passed on from one generation to the next. Cultural resources may include crafts, music, arts, dance or drama, rituals, tribal or ethnic customs, festivals, languages, museums, foods, special events, vernacular architecture, physical or recognized legacies, non-resource based recreational activities, and customs practiced by people, in the past or present.

Visual Examples:

- DeLand's Equifest is held along the River of Lakes Heritage Corridor Scenic Highway at the Lake Helen Equestrian Center. This is one of the many cultural events held in Central Florida annually.
- The Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota, along the Tamiami Trail – Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters Scenic Highway has excellent examples of culture, shown by its many students.



Criteria:

1. Cultural resources must be identifiable within the distinctive traditions of a specific ethnic, religious, familial, occupational or regional group or be recognizable as a legacy attributed to a people that influenced a specific geographic area.
2. Cultural resources must satisfy the significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria.
3. Resources must be able to be experienced by the traveling public.

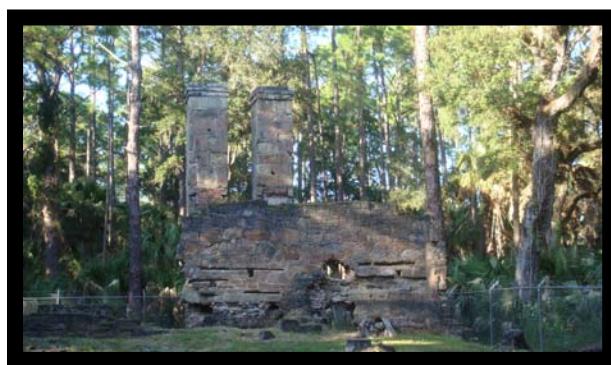
ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Definition:

Archeological resources embody the physical evidence or remains of known historic or prehistoric human life, activity or culture in Florida. For example, significant ruins, artifacts, inscriptions, structural or human remains may all be considered archeological resources. These resources differ from historical resources in that they may have existed before written records were kept in an area.

Visual Examples:

- The Dummett Sugar and Rum Factory Ruins, circa 1825 are located along the Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail in Volusia County.
- The Bulow Plantation Ruins along Heritage Crossroads: Miles of History Heritage Highway show what's left of a sugar mill, spring house, wells and the plantation house after the Second Seminole War of 1836.



Criteria:

1. Listed or determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or designated by a local government to be of historical significance under the guidelines adopted by the Division of Historical Resources of the Florida Department of State.
2. Resources must have played an identifiable role in the evolution of Florida.
3. Resources must be able to be experienced by the traveling public through interpretive facilities or materials.
4. Site is well documented and certified by the State Archeologist as suitable for visitation.
5. Archeological Resources must satisfy significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Definition:

Recreational resources provide either active or passive outdoor recreational activities directly dependent upon the natural elements of the landscape. These activities may include boating, saltwater and freshwater fishing, hiking, canoeing, camping (RV/Trailer and tent), biking, saltwater beach activities, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, driving, hunting and picnicking.

Visual Examples:

- The Ocala National Forest along the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway offers many recreational opportunities in Central Florida.
- The Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway has great recreational opportunities like surfing and fishing, along the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean.



Criteria:

1. Recreational opportunities must be resource-based (i.e. dependent upon a particular element or combination of elements in the natural environment).
2. Resources must be identifiable as unique recreational attractions unto themselves.
3. More than one recreational resource must be present when no other intrinsic resource(s) has been identified.
4. The resource and user facilities must support an increase in visitors without degradation of the resource.
5. Recreational Resources must satisfy significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Definition:

Natural resources occur naturally in the environment. Examples include wetlands, marshes, geological features, forests, landforms or topography, as well as water bodies and vegetation that are indigenous and characteristic of Florida and its differing regions. These resources should show minimal evidence of exotic vegetation and adverse human disruption.

Visual Examples:

- Paynes Prairie along the Old Florida Heritage Highway in Alachua County offers a sweeping view of fresh water marsh, wet prairie grasslands, and upland oak hammocks.
- The rare coastal dune lakes along Scenic Highway 30A in Walton County are made with the changing of the tides and offer wonderful views of natural species and areas.



Criteria:

1. The resource must be a viable, indigenous functioning natural system.
2. Landscape must contain features that are relatively unaltered from their original state and show little or no adverse intrusion by manmade features.
3. Resources must be able to be experienced by the traveling public.
4. Natural Resources must satisfy significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Definition:

Scenic resources may include a combination of natural and manmade features that give remarkable character to the visual landscape. These resources are striking in appearance, and provide a pleasing and memorable experience for viewers.

Visual Examples:

- The scenic overlook from atop high, clay bluffs in the City of Pensacola and Escambia County offers wonderful bay and coastline views, along the Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway.
- Rolling hills and green meadows provide scenic views of central Florida, along the Green Mountain Scenic Byway.



Criteria:

1. Resources must be striking and memorable, and contribute to the quality of the experience. Resources must serve as attractions unto themselves or in combination with other resources.
2. The road, itself, must fit into or blend with the natural landscape and character of the area.
3. Views from the roadway must encompass a variety of landscape characteristics or features that are picturesque within the viewshed. The viewshed should be determined through community based surveys, opinion polls, or letters of support.
4. Resources must transition from one landscape scene to another with pleasing visual links.
5. Scenic Resources must satisfy significant, exceptional and distinctive Universal Criteria.

5.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Some Intrinsic Resources have been recognized by other agencies or organizations as exhibiting qualities which merit special attention. The Scenic Highways Advisory Committee, while not requiring these other merits, will evaluate them when determining eligibility and designation. These additional considerations would be seen as confirmation of the quality and validity of the intrinsic resource by other groups. For example, Historical and Archeological Resources that contain a National Historic Landmark will be recognized as an additional consideration.

Additional considerations will be given to recreational resources, such as forests, parks, preserves or trails recognized by State or national agencies, such as the Florida Greenways Commission. Natural Resources that exhibit qualities such as rare, threatened or endangered plant and wildlife species, or are recognized at the national, regional or State level as significant natural resources, will be given additional consideration. Finally, any intrinsic resources, particularly Scenic Resources, which are considered to be a destination unto themselves, will be considered as such by the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee when determining eligibility and designation.