



## 2016 FSHP Byway Annual Report (BAR) Form

Scenic Highway:  
 Form Completed by:  
 Email address:  
 Telephone number:

### Section 1: Completed Projects

#### Did your byway organization complete one or more projects in 2016?

**Yes** – If more than one project was completed in 2016, make a blank copy of Section 1 starting at “Completed Project #1.” Paste this blank copy into the report below Project #1 and change the project number for each subsequent completed project.

**No**

#### Completed Project #1

1. **Project Name:** Lake Apopka Loop Trail Connection

2. **Category/Type (highlight one category that best describes the project):**

- Physical or built** – scenic pull-out, landscaping, wayfinding signage, interpretive panels/kiosks, visitor center, etc.
- Planning** – CMP (now BMP) update, interpretive, marketing, wayfinding, master plan, etc.
- Organizational Development** – fundraising plan, strategic plan or retreat, accreditation, etc.
- Program** – cell phone app, website, beach cleanup, Adopt A Highway, Kids Ocean Day, etc.
- Marketing** – brochure, video, advertising, etc.

3. **Project Budget**

This section has been modified for 2016 to more accurately reflect budgets for completed projects. For some projects, like a sponsored kiosk, the money raised for the project might exceed the cost of the project. Others, like 5K runs or garage sales, generate revenue upon completion. Please see the 2016 BAR Guidance for a more detailed explanation and examples if this budget format is unclear.

Project Budget:	
<b>Government Grant(s)</b> (federal, state, or local)	\$122,000
<b>Private</b> (individual donations, business sponsors, foundations, special events, membership)	\$
<b>Earned Income</b> (merchandise sales, fees for programs, etc.)	\$
<b>In-kind value</b> (only include if allowed as matching for grant)	\$
<b>Revenue Generated by Project</b> (i.e., event registration fees, merchandise sales, etc., - <i>not all projects generate revenue</i> )	\$
<b>Total Revenue Raised for/by Project</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>- Total Cost of Project</b>	<b>\$122,000</b>



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Net Gain or Loss	\$
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**4. Project Dates:**

- a. **Start Date** (can be prior to 2016) **MM/YYYY:** 06/2015 (approx.)
- b. **Completion Date** (must be in 2016) **MM/YYYY:** 04/2016 (ribbon cutting)

**5. Project Lead**

**Did the byway organization lead the project (obtained/helped obtain funding, managed project, etc.)? Yes or No (highlight a response)**

**If No, please indicate the project lead and describe the role the byway organization played:**

This was the final phase of the overlook/trailhead project and by definition, consisted of construction only. Of course GMSB designed, planned, obtained funding, coordinated working relationships among FDOT, Lake County and St Johns River Water Management District....the entity that constructed the trail. Our participation ended with the transfer of authority from FDOT to Lake County

**6. Description of the project (this description should include all information needed to develop a 2-3 paragraph article about the project):**

This last phase of the Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead consisted of constructing 2.5 miles of trail connecting the Overlook facility to the Clay Island trail; part of the larger Lake Apopka Loop Trail. Construction consisted of laying down a solid base of crushed limerock on top of the native sandy soils. The limerock was compacted, leaving a very solid base.

From a more global perspective, this last 2.5 mile segment was necessary to complete the trail from the Overlook in Lake County to Magnolia Park in Orange County. Completion of this segment then allows the next connection(s) planned in Lake County that will consist of the north/south connection to the South Lake Trail and the larger Coast to Coast Trail

**7. Lessons learned from the project:** What worked well? What would you do differently? What elements were critical to success?

The most critical element happened to be obtaining railroad rights of way. The effort began around 2005 with title searches of these properties included in a larger group of properties thought to be owned by CSX by Lake County as part of a larger trails project inside the Land Acquisition Program. Those search data sets remained inactive until the time of the Overlook construction.

The entire project worked very well. All entities were cooperative. This project happened to “be” at the right time and in the right place.

**8. Project impact:** Please estimate return on investment if possible. What is known about the economic, quality of life, and/or environmental impacts of the project?

The opening of the trail has increased the numbers and types of users significantly. The Overlook facility offered the “wow” that was most often followed by “but, when will the trail open?” The opening of the trail has brought bicyclists, hikers, birders, and runners as regular users. Often times,



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bicyclists use the overlook as the turnaround rest stop on a round trip from Magnolia Park. Triathletes and long distance runners access long distance running routes from the Overlook trailhead

As of 2016, the Overlook is quite distant from the nearest restaurant, shop, store, hotel/motel such that linking a trail user to a local business is unlikely. Modeling software, programs and metrics to do the economic benefit calculations are beyond reach of GMSB. We do know that the facility has been used to host a wedding as well as the site for several marriage proposals and the neighboring property is being proposed as a commercial wedding venue.

In the near future, the Overlook (along with the Ferndale Preserve, 1/5 miles to the south) will be the last remaining greenspace as the Sugarloaf Mountain and Hills of Minneola developments begin construction. Hancock Road, a new primary north/south connector to the new turnpike interchange will terminate at the Overlook. The Overlook would then become a driving force linking Overlook and trail users to what we expect is a massive commercial/residential area.

**9. Byway goals addressed:** What planning goals are addressed by the project?

Goal 2. It is a goal of the CME to maintain the Scenic Byway as an international destination for touring and competitive cyclists, to maintain and improve the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists as they interact on the byway, while preserving the intrinsic resources of the corridor. Strategy 2.1.3 - Work with local development interests to encourage pedestrian and bicycle friendly improvements. Strategy 2.1.4 – Identify and apply for grants suitable for the construction of bicycle improvements.

Goal 5. It is a goal of the CME to protect, enhance and promote the Byway as a recreational resource, and to support the development of environmentally sustainable ecotourism, heritage tourism, and agricultural tourism industries. Strategy 5.2.2 – Continue support for the Montverde Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail.

**10. Please list and describe the role of all project partners:**

St Johns River Water Management District was the only participant in this last task of the much larger project. All of the planning and coordination had already taken place.

***Please email 3-5 high-resolution photos of each project that the FSHP has permission to include in Program publications.***

### Section 2: Other Accomplishments and Ongoing Projects

1. Please describe any other noteworthy accomplishments from 2016 not included in the Completed Projects section. Also discuss any ongoing projects that were not completed in 2016.

**Brochure** – Until earlier in 2016, the scenic byway has been involved in continuous, serial significant projects and expansions. There was never a good time to spend the resources on a brochure that would be out of date before the end of the year. The relative lull allows us to take a breath and create a brochure that should remain fresh for the next few years. The Brochure will be completed in Spring 2017.



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**Tower Construction at Scenic Overlook** – As soon as the Overlook was opened, we realized that the facility would be even more spectacular with a structure 40’ taller. We are at the very earliest stages, pre-planning, and marketing the idea to determine levels of acceptance.

**Athletic event** – Very early stages of planning an event that would cross the North Shore Restoration Area. The problems to overcome are primarily logistics and transportation of participants. The Scenic Overlook does not have sufficient parking to host an event; however, it needs to be a focal point.

**Eco-Tourism Coalition** –Green Mountain Scenic Byway as an entity as well as members have joined the Coalition. The Coalition consists of a wide variety of stakeholders, some of whom are landowners, municipalities, local businesses, environmental groups, non-profits, interested public, etc. The Coalition was formed to encourage development (broadly defined) across the 20,000 acres that will bring visitors and tourists and economic development of the surrounding communities. The type of development desired generally corresponded with the profit objective of the entity. The Byway’s involvement is limited to developing sustainable, ecotourism through passive recreational activities. Over the two years, the Coalition has lost some cohesion as some commercial development options have faded from reality and other entities have taken their own course.

**Information Kiosks** –The Byway was fortunate to receive FDOT funding to upgrade the website (previously described) as well as design, construction and placement of a series of informational kiosks across the length of the Byway. All kiosks would follow a general design theme with a focus dependent on the physical location. Locality themes include: changing economies from farming, fishing, tourism; history of Lake Apopka; ecosystems/birds; Mt Dora historical. The Byway intends to take advantage of partners and existing larger kiosk programs where available to control costs. Full kiosks will be constructed in Mt Dora and Winter Garden. The project will be completed in Spring 2017.

**Hull Island** -- The Byway will partner with Oakland Nature Preserve (ONP) and Friends of Lake Apopka (FOLA) to assist ONP with the purchase of the Hull Island property. This property is contiguous to ONP and adds significant Lake Apopka waterfront and uplands property. Hull Island reportedly contains significant Native American history.

### Section 3: Previously Completed Projects and Byway Resources

1. Please describe the significant benefits or positive impacts from projects completed prior to 2016. Name the project and summarize any impacts or measures of success in all areas below that apply:
  - a. Economic:
  - b. Quality of life:
  - c. Environmental:
  - d. Other:

**Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead:**

- a. Economic:



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Use of the facility increases day by day. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a counter nor do we have the financial models that assess the economic value of various users. Never the less, now that the trail has been connected, runners, hikers, bicyclists frequent the facility as a starting point or as a byway point in addition to the usual motorcycle groups, families, and day users.

- Out of county and out of state road bicyclists visit the facility during training rides for the Horrible Hundred ride. The facility is a rest stop for the various ride distances within the Horrible Hundred event.
- Trail bicyclists typically start at Magnolia Park and use the Overlook as a rest stop before the return ride. There's greater population and potential riders east of Lake Apopka. That said, the Overlook parking lot typically holds a number of cars with empty bicycle racks.
- Runners hit the trails early in the morning, in pairs and triples. Many of the runners are longer-distance runners, possibly training for triathlons.
- The Scenic Byway is popular with motorcycle group riders. The Overlook is the typical rest stop; the Overlook itself is a popular way to "stretch the legs" and get a great view at the same time.

### b. Quality of life:

The impact to quality of life will grow exponentially with the development of the local hills. Approximately 20,000 homes are planned for the surrounding properties. Thousands of acres of open spaces have been off limits to the public, awaiting development. As the numbers of rooftops and commercial buildings increase, the Overlook will shine brighter as the last remaining, accessible greenspace and more importantly, as the entry to the 20,000 acres of the North Shore.

The Byway, Overlook and associated trails have become a rallying cry to push the local developers to "remember" the bicycle users in their plans. As other parts of the County are developed, users of those rural areas are turning to the Overlook and trails. A Winter Garden Bicycle shop routinely coordinates trips and get-togethers leaving from a Winter Garden business.

### c. Environmental:

Before the end of 2035, this and the Ferndale Preserve will be the only green spaces (other than small pocket parks) in the immediate area.

### d. Other:

2. Please describe any damages or threats to resources (i.e., resources that contributed to the scenic highway designation) that occurred in 2016:

The Byway will have a difficult time keeping up with the massive developments poised to take over the open spaces.

## Section 4: Public Participation & Partnerships



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1. Describe how byway stakeholders (residents, business owners, local government officials, and partners) were routinely updated about the scenic highway in 2016.

The Byway sends e-mail meeting notices to a small subset of stakeholders. Byway members generally attend municipal meetings when agenda items include the Byway. I hope to increase the electronic communications efforts in 2017.

2. Are there issues or concerns regarding the scenic highway in corridor communities?

Up until the housing crash, the Byway was generally considered an impediment to “growth,” at least in Lake County, where most of the undeveloped land existed. When the developers went out of business we were able to turn wasted reactive energies into positive proactive efforts developing passive recreational opportunities. We hope that the goodwill generated by our creation of the Overlook and trails will alter these perceptions as growth is about to explode again. The Byway and trails afforded by us are starting to pop up in the developers’ literature so we may have turned the corner.

3. How are new byway organization members, leaders, and volunteers recruited?

To date, we have been using visitor sign-up sheets at all of our festivals. We hope to begin a more intensive effort to communicate with the general public, at least electronically in 2017.

4. Is there evidence that more stakeholders are involved/interested in and/or aware of the scenic highway (more people receiving newsletter, attending meetings, volunteering, etc.)?

The Byway has started to receive incoming e-mails coming from website viewers. The Scenic Byway is more often mentioned in local meetings.

5. With how many stakeholders does the byway organization routinely communicate (meeting notices, newsletters, etc.)?

Meeting notices go out to 20 people. We’ve been working on a project to expand this list...pre-empted by other projects. We hope to finalize the list and initiate a more routine communication campaign in 2017.

6. Describe how the byway organization assisted its partners in 2016.

The byway participates in festivals, open houses, and events hosted by municipalities and nonprofits from one end of the byway to the other including: Winter Garden Heritage Foundation, Oakland Nature Preserve, Friends of Lake Apopka, Audubon, Winter Garden, Montverde, Mt Dora, and Lake County.

### Section 5: Funding

1. Does your byway organization have an annual budget? (highlight a response)

- Yes – Please email as an attachment to [wanda.maloney@floridascenichighways.com](mailto:wanda.maloney@floridascenichighways.com)
- No – Please provide the following revenue information for 2016:



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<b>Government Grant(s)</b> (federal, state, or local)	\$
<b>Private</b> (individual donations, business sponsors, foundations, special events, membership)	\$1,159.39
<b>Earned Income</b> (merchandise sales, fees for programs, etc.)	\$0.00
<b>In-kind value</b> (Sailforth time and materials outside contract)	\$3,000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$4,159.39</b>

2. Please describe your outstanding funding needs in the following categories:

- a. Project(s) or program(s) that lack funding:
- b. Total amount of funding needed (in dollars rounded to nearest \$100):
- c. Potential sources of funding identified:

One project is in the earliest stage: addition to Green Mountain Scenic Overlook. Estimated cost of construction is \$400,000. We anticipate needing ¼ to ½ match with Lake County providing the balance.

3. Please list potential funding sources being pursued (if not identified above).

Project really hasn't been started. We anticipate generating donations from Overlook visitors from "iron ranger," already have handshake pledge of \$10,000 from Bond Foundation, considering gofundme account.

4. Please describe the organization's challenges to obtaining funding.

There is no special challenge we face in obtaining funding.

5. Please describe your funding success stories from 2016. For example: a successful fundraising event or identifying a new source of funding.

None

### Section 6: Marketing

1. Describe the marketing methods used (website, brochure, festival booths, advertisements, social media, etc.) in 2016 for the scenic highway and *the effectiveness of each*.

Byway members participate in any/all festivals within the corridor as well as some outside. Some of the names include: Wings and Wildflowers (where we set up at the Overlook), Winter Garden Music Fest, Oakland Heritage Days, Oakland Nature Preserve Open House, Winter Garden Bloom & Grow, Birdapalooza. All of these festivals have been successful in broadening our name recognition.

2. What was the total amount spent on marketing?

None.

3. What were the sources of funding for marketing?

None.



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4. Please list the social media accounts active for the byway along with the number of followers for each (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.):

We have a website and facebook account. We do not have the necessary volunteers to maintain, much less measure the success of each.

5. Describe any local tourism trends based on available data (number of tourists increasing, new local/regional economic impact data, etc.).

Not available.

6. Has the impact of the scenic highway on local tourism trends been identified in any way? If so, please describe.

Not available.

7. Please describe how the byway organization is working with local tourism agencies.

None today.

### Section 7: Byway Organization

1. What is the organization's current structure (nonprofit, informal citizen group, etc.)?

501 (c)3 corporation

2. In what organizational development activities did the byway organization engage this year (training, evaluation/assessment, accreditation, strategic planning, etc.)?

We are always going through strategic planning. Much of our monthly meetings are taken up with discussions on how to grow our organization. We may be at a tipping point of critical mass. We've always had too few volunteers to accomplish necessary tasks to ensure sustainability. We are probably like many byways in that we have a wide variety of good ideas yet too few volunteers to turn those ideas into reality.

3. What are the organization's greatest challenges (recruiting new members, getting the work done, obtaining funding, etc.)?

Our challenges are the same as most of the other organizations. Our group of active volunteers is now well below critical mass. The passion overwhelms the lack of volunteer activism but this is not sustainable. We need more members so that the organization can continue during times of ebbing passion.

### Section 8: Byway Management Plan (BMP)

4. In what year was your current BMP (or CMP) adopted?

2013: Green Mountain Scenic Byway 5-yr Corridor Management Plan Update. May 31, 2013

5. Based on FSHP Guidance Section 4, when does your byway organization anticipate the next BMP update will occur?



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2018

1. Does your byway organization have questions about or need help deciding when to update the BMP?

### Section 9: Final Comments

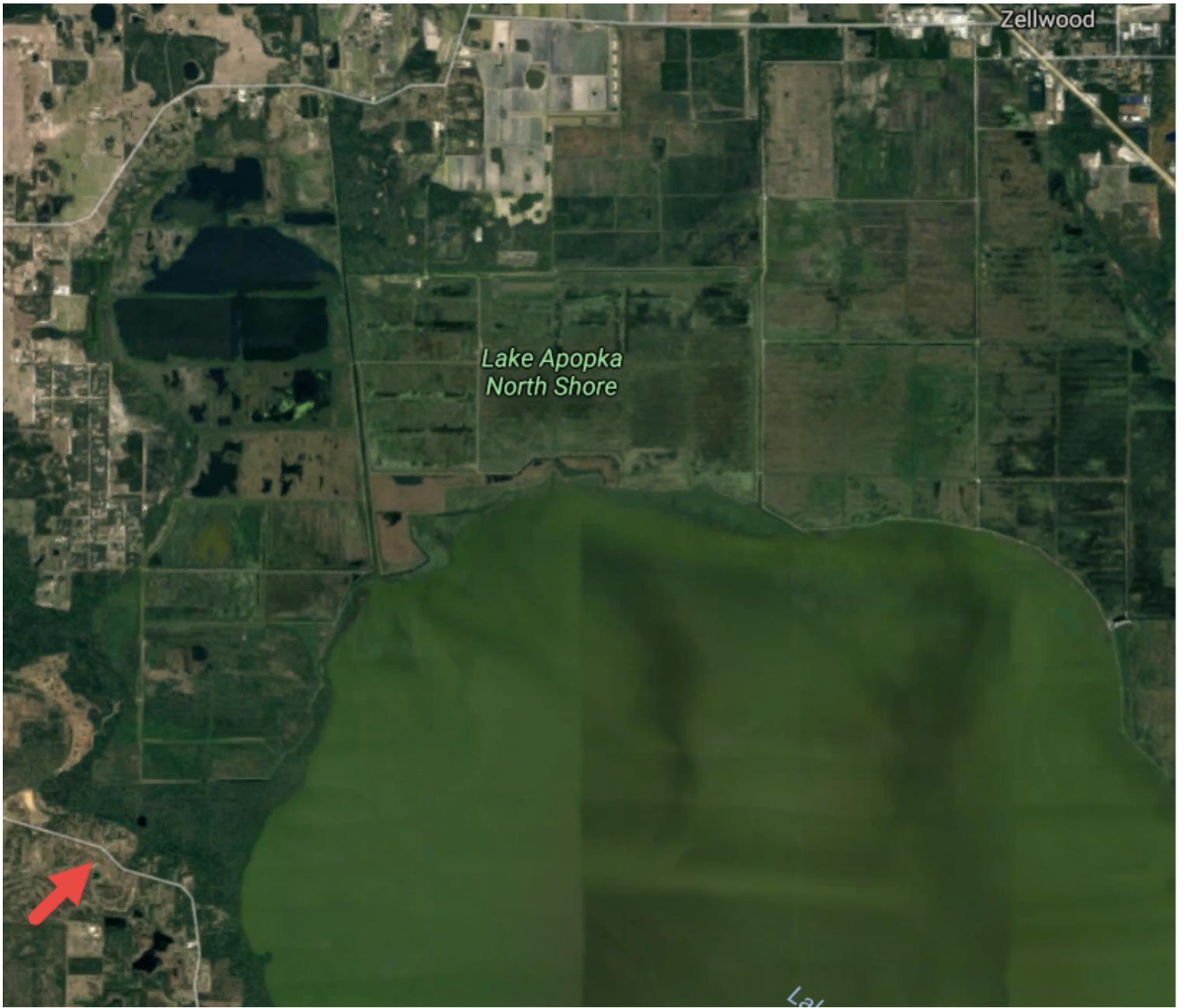
1. Please list any other significant accomplishments or activities that have not been captured in this report.

Over the many years we've been in existence, "value" of the byway has shifted from quality of life to economic return. Quality of life is best portrayed with quality-type words. Sun, fun, beaches, viewsheds, and festivals. A good author worked wonders in portraying the byway's value; e.g. a visitor to the beach equals \$43.75; a visitor to the Coast to Coast Trail equals \$253. Green Mountain Scenic Byway has gone a long way to improving the quality of life in our small part of the State. That value will become more evident and more valuable as the open spaces are filled with asphalt shingles, driveways and roads. The value of the Byway as the destination will diminish as the value of the recreational opportunities we've helped create increases. We've created or enhanced access to recreational opportunities that are suitable for families, seniors, athletes, and enthusiasts.

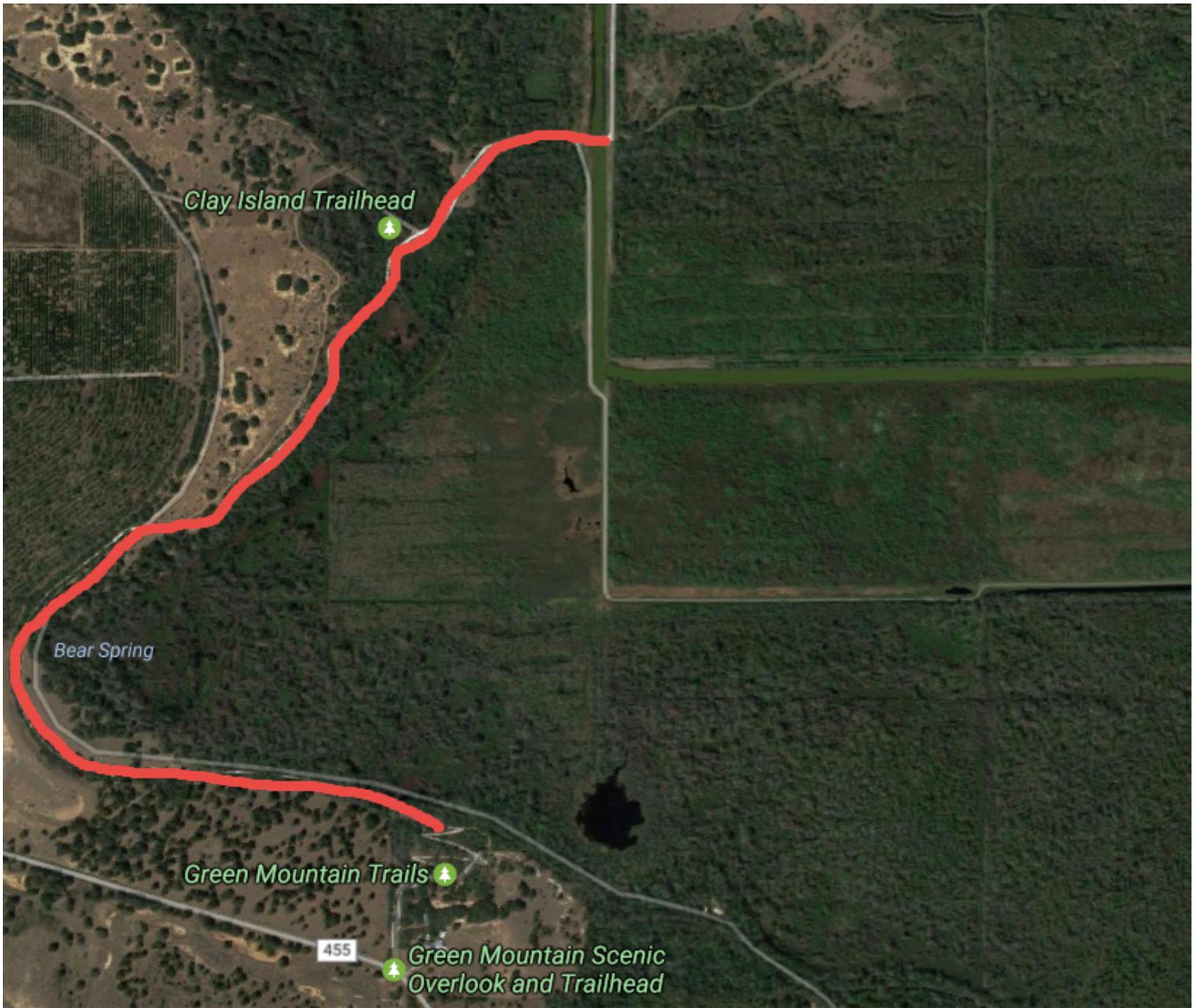
For GMSB to continue, we need to be able to put \$\$ values to each type of visitor. Local businesses, economic development and tourist agencies; all strapped for revenues want to see a measure of the value of their contributions. General conversations among Byway leaders indicate a uniform need for the information for their own byways. This is the time for a uniform approach to develop the economic model that is usable by each Byway.

The economic model would have applicability to some of the intrinsic values unique to each Byway. Is it utopian to think that if one Byway is able to sponsor a study, that the results have applicability to other byways? I suggest that staff at FSHP sponsor and lead a study that would apply to each of us if only in a tangential way.

If or once we have a model or approach, individual byways can begin to focus on one or more measurement activities to begin showing value within our corridors. Today, I guess too few of us know what to count or how to count people or cars (see economic questions above), much less the value of these variable measurements.







Clay Island Trailhead



Bear Spring

Green Mountain Trails



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Green Mountain Scenic  
Overlook and Trailhead



