

CHAPTER 9

NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM

This chapter describes the creation of the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP), its intent, and its relationship to the Florida Scenic Highways Program. The two levels of national designation, *National Scenic Byways* and *All-American Roads*, are described, and a comparison of program processes and CMP elements is included. This section will assist Florida applicants that are seeking national level designation by outlining the elements of Florida's Program that relate to the national application. To apply for *National Scenic Byways* designation and get the instructions for doing so, go to www.byways.org or www.bywaysonline.org.

9.1 NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM

In 1991, the ***Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)*** established the development of a National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP). To accomplish this task, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation established a National Scenic Byways Advisory Committee. They were charged with recommending criteria and a process by which roadways could be designated in the NSBP. After several years of work, the Advisory Committee reported their recommendations for implementation to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. This report was used by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a basis for developing the NSBP. In May of 1995, FHWA published its interim policy (in ***Appendix E***) for the designation of roads as *National Scenic Byways* or *All-American Roads* and, thus, officially established the Program.

The intent of the NSBP is to recognize and promote corridors that have outstanding cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic qualities by designating them as *National Scenic Byways* or *All-American Roads*. National level designation is intended to preserve and protect these intrinsic resources while providing travelers the opportunity to experience the nation's most outstanding and beautiful resources. While the National Scenic Byways Program aims at preserving irreplaceable resources throughout the country, it also offers the benefits of increasing national and international tourism and stimulating economic opportunities for adjacent communities.

Designation as a *National Scenic Byway* requires that public roadways must possess at least one of the six identified intrinsic resources (cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural or scenic). The characteristics of the intrinsic resources must be recognized as representative of the region in which the corridor lies. These roadways must be recognized by local and state officials as possessing outstanding features and worthy of national recognition. *All-American Roads*, considered to be the elite National Scenic Byways, offer the most outstanding samples of America's unique resources. Considered to be the most exceptional and remarkable scenic byways in the country, these roadways possess at least two of the six identified intrinsic resources and are often considered

destinations unto themselves. The resources contained within these corridors are of the highest caliber and represent unique characteristics not found anywhere else in the world. Their international promotion is intended to stimulate foreign tourism and educate visitors from around the globe on the beauty and character of America.

Roadways considered eligible for designation under the NSBP must meet certain requirements. All designated roads must safely accommodate two-wheel drive vehicles. Additionally, All-American Roads must be capable of safely accommodating tour buses. Designated roadways should attempt to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel as well. An important quality of each designated roadway is that of continuity, which implies a continuous, pleasurable driving experience without too many gaps or intrusions. Each roadway must have a Corridor Management Plan, which is intended to conserve and enhance intrinsic qualities while promoting tourism and economic development.

Similar to the Florida Scenic Highways Program, the NSBP involves a voluntary, grass roots approach that elevates State designated scenic roadways to recognition at the national level. The Program urges State governments to establish their own scenic highways programs and offers federal grants to this end. **It should be noted that the Florida Scenic Highways Program is the required avenue for eventual designation at the national level.** Because of this Federal requirement, all National Scenic Byway candidate roadways should also be designated as Florida Scenic Highways. The Department will work with applicants and the Federal Highway Administration to facilitate national designation.

9.2 NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS APPLICATION PROCESS

Under the guidelines of the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP), all Florida applicants seeking designation as a *National Scenic Byway* or *All-American Road* must process their application through the Florida Department of Transportation, meaning the Florida Scenic Highways Program process. Therefore, in order to qualify for national level designation, an applicant will need to be designated as a Florida Scenic Highway first.

For those Florida Scenic Highways seeking national level designation, the Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) or Corridor Management Entity (CME) should read the Nomination Instructions for the national program found on the *National Scenic Byways Program* web sites at www.byways.org or www.bywaysonline.org. These instructions clarify the requirements and terminology used at the national level. For instance, nationally designated scenic corridors must have qualities which are “distinct and ... recognized throughout the region” [*Federal Register, Vol. 60, No. 96, May 18, 1995*]. According to the national program, this regional significance is defined as “representative of a geographic area encompassing two or more states.” The Florida Scenic Highways Program, however, does not define “regional” as encompassing more than one state. Differences such as these will be important to a CAG/CME’s understanding of the requirements for the national program versus their eligibility for state designation.

When applying for national level designation, a CAG/CME must complete a two-step process.

- 1) Receive designation as a Florida Scenic Highway
- 2) Apply for National Scenic Byways Program designation

Many elements of the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) and the Florida Scenic Highways Program require the same types of information. Therefore, the CAG/CME will find that much of the information required for national level designation has already been addressed or compiled during the state level designation process. For the national level application, the CAG/CME will need to complete additional requirements set forth by the national program. The process for completing the national application is outlined in the following sections.

9.2.1 Step One - Florida Scenic Highway Designation

Prior to any corridor pursuing National Scenic Byways designation, **the corridor must complete the process and be designated as a Florida Scenic Highway.**

9.2.2 Step Two - Apply for National Scenic Byways Program designation

Once designated, the Corridor Management Entity can begin to pursue national level designation. The Corridor Management Entity should read the Nomination Instructions for the national program found on the *National Scenic Byways Program* web sites at www.byways.org or www.bywaysonline.org. The CME will find that much of the information required for national level designation has already been addressed or compiled in the Corridor Management Plan. However, for the national level application, a few additional requirements or supplemental information will need to be addressed.

The CME should set-up their application through the *National Scenic Byways Program* web site and begin to complete the required information. Note: This could be accomplished at the same time the CAG is seeking FSHP designation.

A corridor management plan, developed with community involvement, must be prepared for the scenic byway corridor proposed for national designation. It should provide for the conservation and enhancement of the byway's intrinsic qualities as well as the promotion of tourism and economic development. The plan should provide an effective management strategy to balance these concerns while providing for the users' enjoyment of the byway. The corridor management plan is very important to the designation process, as it provides an understanding of how a road or highway possesses characteristics vital for designation as a National Scenic Byway or an All-American Road.

The corridor management plan must include at least the following:

For the National Scenic Byways Program nomination Application, the CME will need to address the following 14 points...

- (1) A map identifying the corridor boundaries and the location of intrinsic qualities and different land uses within the corridor.
- (2) An assessment of such intrinsic qualities and of their context.
- (3) A strategy for maintaining and enhancing those intrinsic qualities. The level of protection for different parts of a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road can vary, with the highest level of protection afforded those parts which most reflect their intrinsic values. All nationally recognized scenic byways should, however, be maintained with particularly high standards, not only for travelers' safety and comfort, but also for preserving the highest levels of visual integrity and attractiveness.
- (4) A schedule and a listing of all agency, group, and individual responsibilities in the implementation of the corridor management plan, and a description of enforcement and review mechanisms, including a schedule for the continuing review of how well those responsibilities are being met.
- (5) A strategy describing how existing development might be enhanced and new development might be accommodated while still preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor. This can be done through design review, and such land management techniques as zoning, easements, and economic incentives.
- (6) A plan to assure on-going public participation in the implementation of corridor management objectives.
- (7) A general review of the roads or highway's safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance, or operation.
- (8) A plan to accommodate commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service, including convenient user facilities.
- (9) A demonstration that intrusions on the visitor experience have been minimized to the extent feasible, and a plan for making improvements to enhance that experience.
- (10) A demonstration of compliance with all existing local, State, and Federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising.
- (11) A signage plan that demonstrates how the State will insure and make the number and placement of signs more supportive of the visitor experience.

(12) A narrative describing how the National Scenic Byway will be positioned for marketing.

(13) A discussion of design standards relating to any proposed modification of the roadway. This discussion should include an evaluation of how the proposed changes may affect on the intrinsic qualities of the byway corridor.

(14) A description of plans to interpret the significant resources of the scenic byway.

In addition to the information identified in above, corridor management plans for All-American Roads must include:

(1) A narrative on how the All-American Road would be promoted, interpreted, and marketed in order to attract travelers, especially those from other countries. The agencies responsible for these activities should be identified.

(2) A plan to encourage the accommodation of increased tourism, if this is projected. Some demonstration that the roadway, lodging and dining facilities, roadside rest areas, and other tourist necessities will be adequate for the number of visitors induced by the byway's designation as an All-American Road.

(3) A plan for addressing multilingual information needs. Further, there must be a demonstration of the extent to which enforcement mechanisms are being implemented in accordance with the corridor management plan.

National Scenic Byway Nominations are opened usually every two-three years. If a Florida Scenic Highway plans to apply for the national designation, the CME should contact the DSHC for information on nomination periods. When a nomination cycle is open the DSHC will contact interested CME's and inform the CME of deadlines for submittal. The CME should plan to complete their application (both the on-line version and a paper version) and submit it to the DSHC for review prior to the announced national deadline. The CME can then make any changes/revisions to the application before submittal to the state. As in the process for state designation, the application will be forwarded to the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee (SHAC) for review and comment when complete. Once the SHAC has recommended the corridor, the State Scenic Byways Coordinator and FDOT Secretary will approve and sign the paper application and both items will be forwarded to the FHWA. The Nomination Package will be reviewed by FHWA and a decision will be made to award National Scenic Byway or All-American Road status.

9.3 ADDITIONAL NATIONAL LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the CMP elements required in the Florida Scenic Highways Program, the items below must be completed as part of the CMP requirements for a National Scenic Byway. Additional requirements for All-American Roads (AAR) are also shown.

- Commerce Plan
- Promotion Plan (AAR)
- Multi-Lingual Information Plan (AAR)
- Tourism Plan (AAR)

All elements of the national level CMP can be found in the State's CMP documentation. A comparison matrix has been created which relates the 14 points required by the national program CMP to the State's CMP and is shown in **Exhibit 6**. The matrix details where elements of the national program's CMP requirements can be found in the documentation created for state level designation. For example, the national program requires a description of how the byway's intrinsic resources will be interpreted to the traveler. This national level element relates to the State's CMP requirement for the Corridor Story and the requirement for Promotion (**Chapter 3 - Designation Criteria**). A third column of the matrix refers the reader to other chapters and sections where discussion, instructions and requirements for these state level elements appear. In a few situations, nearly identical elements may have subtle differences between the National Scenic Byways CMP and the Florida Scenic Highways Program CMP.

In completing the national program CMP, keep in mind the definitions and qualifications set forth in the National Scenic Byways Program may require a greater level of significance and recognition. The sections that contain these subtle differences in meaning are noted within the matrix by a numbered footnote. Below the table, an explanation of each footnote is provided.

Exhibit 6 (following page) outlines how elements of the Corridor Management Plan for the National Scenic Byways Program relates to CMP of the Florida Scenic Highways Programs and where the national requirements for designation can be found in the state level documentation. In most cases, a clear link can be drawn between the elements of each program. However, some differences do exist. One program may ask for more detail than the other or have a separate purpose in mind which requires some additional information or data. These differences are explained below.

[1] A plan to accommodate commercial traffic is required as part of the National Scenic Byways Program, but not required for state level designation. The safety and efficiency of roadways under the FSHP is encompassed in the Background Assessment section of **Chapter 2**. In order to complete this national level requirement, the CAG should

be certain to discuss accommodation of commercial traffic within their corridor, as well as its relationship to the safety of passenger vehicles, bicycles, joggers and pedestrians.

[2] The ***Federal Highway Beautification Act (FHBA)*** mandates the regulation of signs on interstates and Federal-aid primary highways. ***Chapter 479, Florida Statutes*** governs the control of signs in areas adjacent to State highways. The Corridor Management Plan should ensure that the corridor is maintained and enhanced in a manner that is consistent with the Corridor Vision, goals and objectives and any local, state and federal signage regulations.

[3] The requirements for this element under the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) differ from those for state level designation. The NSBP requests documentation verifying the minimization of intrusions on the visitors' experience as well as enhancements to that experience. Under the Florida Scenic Highways Program Universal Criteria #6 (found in ***Chapter 5 - Designation Criteria***), resources along the corridor must be continuous, inherently minimizing intrusions to a visitors experience. Enhancements to this experience will be accomplished through the Action Plan. Additional text may need to be included demonstrating the minimization of any intrusions, if applying for national designation.

9.4 KEY POINTS

In this chapter, the following key points were presented:

- **National Scenic Byways** and **All-American Roads** are the two designations at the national level.
- Some differences exist between the **Corridor Management Plans** of the National Scenic Byways Program and the FSHP. These differences can be seen in some definitions, the level of detail required, and in some requirements.

**EXHIBIT 6
CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPARISON MATRIX**

National Scenic Byways Program Corridor Management Plan Elements	Where it appears in the Florida Scenic Highways Program Corridor Management Plan	Other FSHP Chapters & Sections describing instructions & requirements
A map identifying the corridor boundaries, location of the intrinsic resources and land uses in the corridor.	3.6 Background Conditions Analysis 3.7 Intrinsic Resources and Designation Criteria	Sections 2.13 and Chapter 6
An assessment of the intrinsic qualities and their "context"	3.7 Intrinsic Resources and Designation Criteria	Chapters 5 and 6
A strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of those intrinsic qualities	3.10 Goals, Objectives and Strategies 3.15 Protection Techniques 3.19 Action Plan	Chapter 7
The agencies, groups and individuals who are part of the team that will carry out the plan, including a list of their specific, individual responsibilities. Also a schedule of when and how you'll review the degree to which those responsibilities are being met.	3.12 Corridor Management Entity 3.19 Action Plan	Chapter 4
A strategy for how existing development might be enhanced and new development accommodated to preserve the intrinsic qualities of the byway.	3.10 Goals, Objectives and Strategies 3.6 Background Conditions Analysis	Section 2.12 and Chapter 7
A plan for on-going public participation. A general review of the road's safety record to locate hazards and poor design, and identify possible corrections.	3.13 Community Participation Program 3.6 Background Conditions Analysis	Sections 2.19, 4.3.1, and 4.3.2 Section 2.12
A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians [1].	Not specifically required under FSHP	3.6 Background Conditions Analysis
A listing and discussion of efforts to minimize anomalous intrusions on the visitor's experience of the byway [3].	3.10 Goals, Objectives and Strategies 3.6 Background Conditions Analysis 3.15 Protection Techniques	Chapter 7
A plan to make sure that the number and placement of highway signs will not get in the way of the scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. This includes, where appropriate, signs for international tourists who may not speak English fluently [2].	3.6 Background Conditions Analysis	Section 2.12 and Chapter 7
Plans for how the byway will be marketed and publicized.	3.6 Background Conditions Analysis 3.16 Funding and Promotion	Chapter 8
Any proposals for modifying the roadway, including an evaluation about design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic resources.	3.6 Background Conditions Analysis	Sections 2.12 and 5.2
A description of what you plan to do to explain and interpret your byway's significant resources to visitors.	3.11 Corridor's Story	Sections 2.17 and 5.2