

element is clearly not part of a set. For example, when a white concrete building appears in the middle of a row of brick townhouses, the order of the streetscape is lost.

- **Harmony**

Harmony expresses the degree to which the individual features work together to create a pleasing whole. To the degree that each of the above visual concepts is applicable in a scene, harmony is achieved if they balance and complement one another.

### **Scenic Evaluation Methods**

Scenic evaluation systems typically score attributes or rank visual preference as a foundation for assessment. Adapt these two types of scenic evaluation methods for your byway.

#### **1. Attribute-Scoring Systems**

Attribute-scoring systems look at the attributes and features that make up a view or roadway segment and assign each element either a quantitative score or a qualitative ranking. For example, a quantitative system might give a particular roadway segment a score of 8 for integrity, 6 for color, and so on. Other systems rely on qualitative assessments, such as “distinctive,” “noteworthy,” and “commonplace.” Still other systems simply call for recording whether or not a particular feature, such as a stone wall, occurs within a given segment of roadway. Most of these attribute-scoring systems also use some type of weighting system to arrive at a final determination of scenic quality.

#### **2. Visual Preference Systems**

Visual preference systems do not attempt to analyze why a view is scenic, but rather to rank many views based on the responses by representatives of a community or user group. Typically, people are shown a series of photographs of different views and score the views based on their preferences. Visual preference surveys are sometimes used to support an attribute-based scenic evaluation method.

### **Recommended Resources**

#### **Topic Area: Corridor Management – Intrinsic Qualities**

<http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/topics/corridor-management/intrinsic/>

Each of America’s Byways is designated for one or more intrinsic qualities that are significant to the region or the nation. The loss of those qualities would change the corridor as a place and the traveler would have a very different experience. A major goal of the National Scenic Byways Program is to preserve and protect intrinsic qualities.

#### **America’s Byways & Their Intrinsic Qualities**

<http://library.byways.org/display/86039/DesignatedByways.html>

This site displays the National Scenic Byways Program’s byways designated by the Secretary of Transportation and notes their intrinsic qualities.

#### **Interim Policy**

<http://www.bywaysonline.org/program/publications.html>

The Interim Policy is the principal policy guiding the National Scenic Byways Program, published in the Federal Register in 1995. This policy provides the designation criteria for roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based upon scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, and/or natural intrinsic qualities, and establishes the 14 points necessary to address in a corridor management plan. Although it is entitled “Interim Policy,” it is still the current and applicable policy for the Program.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2: WHAT IS A BYWAY STORY?**

Recognize what a “byway story” is, how it supports the visitor’s experience, and how it can serve as an economic development tool.

#### **What Is A Byway Story?**

A byway story is the intentional, coordinated message that the byway conveys to visitors about the resources and qualities that it promotes. This message may be interpreted through written materials, signs, information kiosks, guides, videos and other media. Most importantly, the byway story is conveyed through the direct experiences that the visitor encounters along the trip.

The byway story refers to the inherently interesting and valuable tale that most roadways can tell about the history, culture and environment of the surrounding landscape and communities.

The additional emphasis of quality and continuity of the visitor's experience distinguishes the National Scenic Byways Program from other landscape protection or land management efforts. The National Scenic Byways Program encourages people to seek out, document and communicate all of the special qualities of a place: archaeological, natural, cultural, historic, recreational and scenic. This makes driving the road a visual experience as well as an educational, physical and emotional experience.

### **The Story As An Economic Development Tool**

For those byway communities that wish to increase tourism, the story becomes an important economic development tool. While most tourist-oriented byways will have exceptional scenic or recreational resources to draw travelers, their experiences are broadened and deepened by a story through its interpretation. This is a way to achieve the most important tourism objectives: lengthening the stay and dispersing the travelers so that their economic impacts are felt throughout the byway corridor.

In addition, stories provide the framework for targeting the markets that have the most impact on the byway. For instance, if your byway has a railroad story to tell, then your tourism marketing can target railroad buffs.

### **How To Tell The Story**

Tell your story through written materials, signs, information kiosks, guides, videos, other media and, most importantly, the direct experiences that the visitor encounters along the byway.

For example, a historic byway might provide information on important and interesting historic events that occurred along the byway, but it is visiting the old homes, the battlefields, or the landscapes in which these events took place that provide the indelible memories for someone exploring an area.

That is why simply inventorying potentially interesting features and then promoting a byway are not sufficient. These intrinsic qualities must be pulled together into a cohesive and engaging story that serves as a unifying experiential tool.

### **Skill Builders: Giving Direction To Story Development**

The National Park Service is one of the country's foremost interpreters of our nation's natural, cultural and historic resources. Its training programs recommend a three-step process to clarify an interpretive effort:

1. Define the purpose
2. Define significance
3. Clarify the theme

Reflecting on the following questions can help give direction to development of your byway story.

#### **1. Define The Purpose**

Consider what you want the road to accomplish. Bring more travelers and increase tourism expenditures? Raise public awareness about an important cultural or environmental issue? Protect a landscape? Educate people about a little-known aspect of history? Refer back to your vision statement. Make sure everything aligns with the road's purpose and your broader goal(s).

#### **2. Define Significance**

What is the byway's significance? You may know when you start byway planning, or you may need to go through the inventory and evaluation process. No matter how you do it, you must be clear on why this byway is significant. What are its qualities that make it different, interesting and/or important? The story should support and align with the byway's underlying significance.

#### **3. Clarify The Theme**

Once the purpose of the road and its significance are clear, then you can review your thematic or story options. Most byways have a number of valid story threads to pursue; the hard decision is choosing one. Aligning the byway's purpose and significance is a good way to ensure that the story amplifies the most important aspects of the road and corridor.

### **Skill Builders: How To Identify A Potential Story**

As with so many aspects of your byway, the story and its interpretive program are flexible. Find what appears to be the most compelling and interesting byway story and work with it. If you find that you need to amend and alter it in the future – good! This will give your byway vitality and changing interest for travelers.

There are six basic ways to find interesting story ideas along your byway.

#### **1. Tap Your Knowledge**

Your own local knowledge will be sufficient to start down the byway story path. While you may not know every detail of the history or ecology of the byway, you probably know the high points. You probably know what will be interesting to travelers. Imagine you are the visitor. What is special about the places that you like to visit when you are away from home? Test and expand your ideas with those of others in the community.

#### **2. Talk With Interesting And Knowledgeable Individuals**

If your area has a history of tourism, many people, such as tourism officials, entrepreneurs, and travelers, have been exploring this topic for a long time.

If you aren't a historian or naturalist, then talk to people who are. Many parks, forests, and other public sites already have interpretive research and programs in place. Check with public land management professionals.

Create a list of 10 to 15 people who know involved with the area or who hear other people's stories. These might include history buffs, long-time residents, amateur geologists, folk culturalists or politicians. Ask them what stories or facts are most interesting about the people, land and history of the road.

#### **3. Meet With The General Public**

Public meetings can offer important opportunities to identify story ideas that have support from the community. These meetings are often fun and energizing for people. There is no important fiscal matter or regulatory debate at issue. You are just asking people to think about what's great in their community and how to tell that story.

#### **4. Drive There & Look Around**

While you would typically confirm and enhance story ideas during the inventory process, a drive along the byway may unveil a story. Consider yourself a tourist and, with fresh eyes, see what intrigues you. Stop to ask questions about unusual buildings or natural sites. Take photos and find experts who can explain the photo's story.

#### **5. Visit The Library Or Other Research Sites**

Read up on local history, ecology, culture and issues. Find a new idea to pursue.

#### **6. Bring In Experts**

State or Indian tribe historic preservation offices, local planners, university professors, Cooperative Extension agents, and tourism professionals can all be helpful. The best place to start is with your State, Indian tribe or Federal Agency scenic byway coordinator. He or she can direct you to people familiar with both your region's qualities and with the scenic byways program.

### **Recommended Resources**

**"Interpretation: Telling Your Byway's Story," by Tim Merriman and Lisa Brochu. Vistas, May 2000.**

<http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/topics/visitor-experience/interpretation/articles/238/>

This article is based on a May 3, 2000 conference call with Tim Merriman, Executive Director of the National Association for Interpretation, and Lisa Brochu, an interpretive writer and planner. It discusses interpretation and offers insights for byway storytellers.

### **Topic Area: Visitor Experience – Interpretation**

<http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/topics/visitor-experience/interpretation/>

Tap your byway's opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through interpretation. It's about telling your story in an interesting, concise, relevant and memorable way. Even more, interpretation helps your

byway's intrinsic qualities make emotional and intellectual connections with visitors and create richer meanings for them. Learn about the interpretive process and specific interpretive methods, from static exhibits to "living history."

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE #3: BYWAY INVENTORY & THE BYWAY STORY

Explain the purpose of the byway inventory and its relation to the byway story.

#### **What Is The Purpose Of Inventory And Assessment?**

The purpose of the byway inventory and assessment is to take a close look at your road's intrinsic qualities and to develop an understanding of compromising changes it could face in the years ahead. As noted earlier, the significance of a scenic byway's intrinsic qualities is based on the resources along the roadway corridor. Because of this, it is important to identify and clearly describe the features that contribute to or otherwise affect the byway's significant intrinsic qualities.

By thoroughly documenting the byway's important resources, you create a complete record of the byway's significant aspects. You can also assess the places, views and experiences to include in the byway's management plan. This helps you make the case for designating your road.

#### **What Is The Difference Between Inventory And Assessment?**

The two concepts seem similar. However, inventory is more about what you have and assessment is more about the condition or importance of what you have. Inventory precedes assessment.

#### **Inventory**

Your byway inventory is a survey of the intrinsic qualities and resources within your byway corridor. It is a list of "goods on hand."

At the completion of the inventory, you will have a series of photographs and descriptions of the resources that contribute to the byway's intrinsic qualities and maps that illustrate the location of these sites and views.

Remember that your inventory should focus on the intrinsic qualities that you know to exist along your byway. Focus your efforts on recording and describing the resources and features that relate to those qualities and support your byway's story.

#### **Assessment**

During your byway assessment, take a good look at your route to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Your high regard for this stretch of road and appreciation of its significance and uniqueness are important, of course. For the next steps, however, set aside your sense of local pride and take a realistic look at what you have.

After completing the inventory, evaluate or assess your list to determine the importance or value of those intrinsic qualities and resources as essential parts of your byway. Prioritize and choose which are the most significant and representative intrinsic qualities and resources to include in your byway planning for future protection, promotion and capturing the "byway story."

#### **How The Byway Story Shapes The Inventory Process**

You want a thorough and complete byway inventory. This does not mean recording each physical feature along the byway. Often, the tendency is to account for every little detail.

Knowing your story or theme can help. If you have thought ahead of time about what makes your byway special, you can focus your inventory work on the most relevant features and resources.

Even if you have not developed a complete story for your byway to tell, it is worth spending some time thinking about your roadway as a whole before you set out to catalogue each of its pieces.

#### **Skill Builders**

Currently, Skill Builders are unavailable for this Learning Objective.

### Recommended Resources

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVE #4: THE INVENTORY PROCESS

Describe the inventory process, including important tools, community resources and tips.

### Using Volunteers Or Professional Help

Please note that byway resource inventory and assessment is a skill application that will vary for each individual byway’s resources. The inventory and assessment information provided in *Byways 101* is not all-encompassing.

Inventory and assessment of a byway’s resources can sometimes be a complicated task that may go beyond the scope of a volunteer group’s abilities. Some byway organizations choose to employ professional assistance to assist with the fieldwork of gathering and organizing data.

Before you begin an inventory and assessment of your byway, talk to your State or Indian tribe byway coordinator about your plans and the skill capacity of your volunteer team. If you have questions about obtaining professional assistance, your coordinator may be able to provide recommendations and funding considerations.

### Coordinate The Byway Inventory Across Communities

Many byways travel through more than one town or county. This makes it necessary to coordinate between each government and/or private sector entity that manages the road and the corridor. Depending on the characteristics of the area through which the byway passes, the inventory work may consist of one multi-community effort or several separate efforts.

To coordinate several separate groups, begin by clarifying the types of information to collect and how to collect them. Once each community performs its inventory work, host joint meetings and brainstorming sessions to synthesize the work into a whole. This process moves much more smoothly if some standards are agreed upon at the outset.

The inventory process does not involve recommendations for management. The various communities are simply assembling lists. However, with leadership and guidance, the inventory phase can lay a firm foundation for the trust and cooperation necessary later in the process after you broach the topic of management choices. Then, the varying interests and philosophies of different communities can make the process more challenging.

*See the [Skill Builders: Assessing The Data](#) for more about the process.*

### Identify And Assemble Your Resources

Conducting an inventory and assessment of your route requires some tools, references, resources and specialists who can broaden your level of expertise. This list helps you begin the process.

**Maps:** Your State or Indian tribe's transportation agency should be able to assist in locating pertinent maps of your route. Property maps from your county's tax office enable you to understand the nature of ownership of nearby property. Zoning maps, if available, provide information on current and potential uses of land within sight of the byway. U.S. Geological Survey maps show every hill, valley, stream and building in a 1:1200 scale. They're often easily obtained at local stores that sell sporting goods, boating supplies and outdoors equipment or you can order them directly from the USGS by phone at 1-888-ASK-USGS, or visit the USGS website at <http://www.usgs.gov>.

**Libraries:** Visit local or university libraries to research aspects of the geography, history, resources, plants and culture of the route.

**Local Groups:** Contact local preservation organizations or historical societies, garden clubs, recreation clubs and university departments to see if they've already conducted surveys or inventories.

**Natural Resource Departments or Environmental Organizations:** Contact your State or Indian tribe Department of Natural Resources (or equivalent) or groups like the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land or the National Audubon Society that may have chapters or offices in your area. They may be able to provide you with helpful information on the inventory, conservation and management of natural resources along your byway.

**Highway Department:** Contact your State or Indian tribe's transportation agency, which may have already conducted an inventory of some of your byway's resources. Many have planners, environmental engineers, landscape architects and historians on staff that may be able to offer resources or information pertinent to your route.

**Local Experts:** Talk to long-time residents of the area. They may be familiar with the route's history, how your byway and the surrounding land has changed over time and other significant information.

**Fresh Opinions:** Local residents can sometimes take for granted the structures and landscapes that they view every day. Newcomers and visitors can help point out the uniqueness of your corridor and the specific views along the way.

**Professional Resources:** Search online for professional resources that might be helpful to you in your inventory of archaeological, cultural, historical, natural, recreational and scenic intrinsic qualities along your route. Some websites to consider are listed here.

- State Departments of Transportation: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm>
- State Historical Societies: [http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?P=PMHP&contentId=11168&contentType=GSA\\_BASIC](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?P=PMHP&contentId=11168&contentType=GSA_BASIC)
- State Historic Preservation Officers: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/shpolist.htm>
- Tribal Historic Preservation Officers: <http://www.nathpo.org/map.html>
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: <http://www.preservationnation.org/>
- NPS – National Historic Landmarks Program: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/>
- National Register of Historic Places: <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/>
- Bureau of Land Management: <http://www.blm.gov>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: <http://www.fws.gov/>
- U.S. Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/>
- National Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov/>
- American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>

#### **Working With Grassroots Volunteer Teams**

With a little organization ahead of time, a small group of volunteers can complete the inventory process in a relatively short period of time—if you quell the urge to go into great detail.

Begin by recruiting volunteers from the communities along the byway. Organize these volunteers into teams, with each responsible for collecting information relating to one segment of the byway or to one intrinsic quality.

Hold a meeting with the full volunteer group to discuss the byway story so that everyone shares a common understanding of the purpose and focus of the inventory.

Depending on the length and character of the byway, volunteers can do their work in cars, by bicycle or on foot.

Equip each team with the following materials:

- Maps, preferably USGS quad sheets or similar
- Cameras
- Notebooks
- Inventory Worksheets (see Skill Builders)

Ask teams to seek out the views, places, buildings and other features that contribute to your story. Take photos to capture the visual quality of the byway corridor and to record the specific resources that support the byway's story. Record photo locations and important features on a map.

Note that evaluating some intrinsic qualities and resources may require specific expertise and experience, such as in historic preservation or archaeology.

*See the [Skill Builders: Assessing The Data](#) for more about the process.*

### **Skill Builders: Inventory Worksheets**

Complete the Resource Inventory Worksheets from *Byway Beginnings*, pages 61-64, for your byway. Print or download these worksheets below.

[Download PDF](#) | [TXT](#)

### **Skill Builders: Intrinsic Quality Summary**

Complete the Intrinsic Quality Summary Worksheets from *Byway Beginnings*, pages 69-72, for your byway. Print or download these worksheets below.

[Download PDF](#) | [TXT](#)

### **Skill Builders: Tips To Make Your Job Easier**

Here are some tips for completing an inventory efficiently while limiting the demands on volunteers in your group.

### **Keep Mapping To An Easily Attainable Level Of Detail**

If the resource has a precisely determined location, such as a building or a bridge, use a symbol to note it on the map. On the other hand, if the resource is more generalized, such as a natural resource area like a marsh or desert, a view, or an entire village, use shading to identify it or circle the general area on the map.

### **Avoid "Analysis Paralysis"**

Don't become bogged down in minutiae while performing the inventory and evaluation of your corridor. You can always come back to fill in details as you need them. Don't build roadblocks for yourself because you don't have every bit of information organized.

### **Verify Visibility**

Generally, inventory only those resources visible from the roadway. These are usually the most significant contributors to the byway corridor's intrinsic qualities and the visitor's experience. For something to be scenic, it needs to be seen.

### **Skill Builders: Assessing The Data**

After you identify and describe the intrinsic qualities and key resources along the byway, the next step is for all of the inventory teams to meet together to discuss and evaluate their findings. This important step of assessment sets the stage for your further byway development efforts.

Important: During assessment, refer to Learning Objective #1 of this section, which discusses inventory and designation considerations for each of the six intrinsic qualities.

### **Questions For Assessing The Intrinsic Quality**

The following questions can help structure this discussion and lead toward a summary of the intrinsic qualities.

## Byways 101 Text File

- Can the intrinsic quality be conveyed by a coherent theme or story, or is it represented by a collection of diverse and loosely related resources?
- Are the resources that contribute to the intrinsic quality distributed along the byway, or are they concentrated in only a few locations? For a traveler along the byway, do these resources occur often enough that they truly offer a distinct experience?
- How does the road itself relate to the intrinsic quality? For example, for a historic quality, does the road play a role in the historic story you are describing? For a scenic quality, is the road's planning, design or construction part of the scenic experience?

### Questions For Assessing Each Resource

You may also want to provide the teams with questions to address each resource, such as these examples of helpful assessment questions:

- How does the resource contribute to the intrinsic qualities that you are trying to demonstrate? Does it stand on its own as a significant feature, or is it important as part of a group of resources along the road or in the region?
- What is the condition of the resource? Does this condition affect the resource's value as part of the byway's story? Is the resource intact? If not, can it be restored? What factors have led to its current condition: neglect, overuse or change of use?
- If the resource is included for its contribution to scenic quality, how does it relate to scenic evaluation concepts such as intactness, variety, order, contrast, scale and harmony?
- Are there factors that undermine the intrinsic qualities? Is there anything that your group would consider as an eyesore, or being out of place?
- Is the resource threatened? What would happen to the resource or its surroundings that could affect its existence, its integrity or the experience that it provides to visitors?
- Who owns and manages the resource? Does the current ownership affect how the resource is used or maintained? Are the owners and managers involved in the byway planning process? What are their concerns relative to scenic byways?
- Is the resource visible from the byway? Does it currently handle visitors? Could it handle more visitors if it were promoted as part of the byway?
- How ADA-accessible is the resource to someone with a disability? Are there facilities and services accessible to those with physical, visual, auditory or other impairments?
- Do the resources you may promote have any safety considerations? Are any areas particularly dangerous?

At the end of this session, you should have the information you need to complete the documentation for your byway nomination.

For each intrinsic quality, confirm that you have the following:

- A series of photographs of resources and features along the byway that contribute to the intrinsic quality.
- Descriptions of these resources based on the answers to the questions listed for the fieldwork task.
- A map of the byway showing the locations of the resources. Electronic formats and geospatial information to accommodate geographic information systems (systems that use computers to collect, store, manipulate, analyze, and display data) are highly desirable.
- A statement explaining how the byway demonstrates the intrinsic quality.

### A Reminder On Professional & Funding Assistance

Byway organizations should not forget the judicious use of paid experts in this stage of planning. Certain information gathering and assessment requires specific expertise, education and experience. Discuss your inventory work with your State or Indian tribe byway coordinator and consider the cost to fund experts when calculating realistic costs for the planning process. Under the National Scenic Byways Program, corridor management planning is an eligible grant category that byways can refer to as a funding consideration to assist with this phase of byway development and planning.

### Recommended Resources

#### Lessons From The Road, Case #3 – “Intrinsic Qualities Make A Byway”

This case study describes the process used to analyze intrinsic qualities of the Colonial Parkway

(Virginia) and identifies some useful lessons for anyone undertaking an intrinsic quality analysis for the first time. See America's Byways Resource Center's website for electronic issues at <http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/resources/specialprojects/lfr/>.

**From Milestones To Milemarkers by Dan Marriott, 2004.**

This book provides information to help local byway organizations understand and manage a scenic byway with historic intrinsic qualities and resources. This publication helps byways to identify a historic road, define the elements that make it historic and determine the appropriate course of action. Copies may be available from the [America's Byways Resource Center](#).

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #5: IDENTIFYING THE BYWAY CORRIDOR**

Express how to identify the byway corridor.

**The Importance Of Mapping The Byway Corridor**

A scenic byway corridor map should show the length and width of the corridor, the location of intrinsic qualities (recognizing that the scale of the map may prevent showing all details), and current land uses. By drawing lines on a map, the byway begins taking shape and definition.

- How long will it be?
- Which route is the most scenic?
- What will visitors see?
- What are the route's intrinsic values?

A corridor map should provide a snapshot in time of the corridor that can be used to track changes and potential threats to the corridor viewshed.

**Where Are Your Corridor Boundaries?**

As you begin to inventory your byway's resources and develop your byway's story, think of where your corridor logically begins and ends, and how wide it will be to incorporate all of your route's features. Sometimes this is a fairly self-evident decision; however, it's often one that will continue to evolve and change as your group evaluates the roadway and environment, political boundaries and other realities.

**Length**

Simply put, your corridor should be long enough to incorporate the roadway's special resources and qualities. Ideally, this occurs at visually logical points, such as a distinct change in land use or environment—perhaps the edge of town, the peak of a hill, or the center of a river. In many cases, however, no such distinct visual change occurs, and your determination will be based on regional boundaries or other factors.

In some instances, you may not have a continuous corridor. While it's best if a scenic byway is a complete and unbroken experience, some communities are faced with interruptions or intrusions (commercial strips or political boundaries, for example) that can't be easily accommodated.

Think first about whether there might be a way to include the problem area in your scenic byway corridor by mitigating, softening or camouflaging the distractions, and by building coalitions with groups across political boundaries. If this cannot be accomplished, work to ensure that the points of entry into and departure from the byway are well defined and that direction is clearly provided between byway segments so you don't lose travelers in non-designated areas.

**Width**

Some scenic byways programs define the corridor using a standard but arbitrary distance on either side, such as 1000 feet or a quarter mile. This technique makes it easy to define the corridor, but its accuracy is low; in some areas with trees or buildings, it may extend for just a few feet; in others, it may extend for miles.

Ideally the corridor limits should be considered as everything within the road's viewshed—that is, everything visible through your car windows. If dense trees border your roadway, your corridor viewshed will be very narrow at that point. Farther down the route, if you can see distant mountains over the farmland, you have a very broad viewshed to consider.