

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Real Places. Real Stories.

www.floridascenichighways.com

Summer 2023



Dean Stoddart, Program Coordinator

DEAN'S CORNER

Thinking of our program, I am encouraged by the great effort our byways demonstrate towards the improvement of and their promoting the story of their byways. Byways are re-engaging their local governments and providing reminders of the value a byway can bring to a community, and the need to preserve the intrinsic values. These efforts not only improve their byway, but also strengthen the entire Florida Scenic Highways Program. Just a few things that come to mind...

- ◆ **A1A** - seeking to improve our entire program via legislative effort
- ◆ **William Bartram** - obtaining a Federal grant to construct new facilities for their byway
- ◆ **Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway** - working on solutions to mitigate persistent erosion along their causeway
- ◆ **Broward A1A** - renewing and reactivating their byway organization with local officials.
- ◆ **Palma Sola** - completing efforts to extend their byway.

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter. To those who volunteer and are the foundation of our program, thank you for your stalwart efforts on behalf of your byway.



TOURISM IN FLORIDA

The tourism industry in Florida has seen a major boom in recent years, with millions of travelers contributing billions of dollars to the state's economy annually. Drawn to the pristine natural beauty of the state, tourists benefit from Florida's dedication to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty.

Florida, home to a bounty of natural resources and scenic beauty, attracts millions of tourists each year. Last year, more than 130 million tourists visited the state to experience Florida's sandy beaches, warm weather, and pristine environment. The economic impact of tourism in the state has been estimated at \$101 billion supporting over 1.7 million jobs. As tourists flock to Florida, it is likely they are traveling on one of the state's 27 scenic byways - enjoying the natural resources and scenic beauty while simultaneously contributing to the local and state economies.

Since 1968, the Florida Constitution has explicitly called for the conservation and protection of the state's natural resources and scenic beauty. The Florida Scenic Highways Program advocates for the protection and maintenance of resources associated with our program by promoting the intrinsic qualities of the scenic byways. These qualities represent the cultural, natural, archaeological, historic, recreational, and scenic characteristics that provide value to both the byways and the communities that surround them. Byways across the state provide tourists with incredible experiences due to their unique landscapes and nature.

Green Mountain Scenic Byway runs through the beautiful rolling hills surrounding Lake Apopka, providing

Visit Us Online!



Tourism in Florida (Cont'd)

travelers with stunning views of the lake and opportunities for recreation. The Lake Apopka North Shore is 20,000 acres of preserved wetlands that are home to countless species of plants and wildlife. The Green Mountain Scenic Byway provides direct access to Lake Apopka for visitors seeking to experience the verdant landscape of central Florida.

The A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway snakes along the northeastern coast of Florida, providing access to numerous pristine beaches and access to charming small towns. Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, and Flagler Beach offer travelers the opportunity to enjoy the most beautiful views of Florida's Atlantic coast. The Byway allows tourists to take in the scenic views of Florida without having to visit crowded beach towns.

Vacationers can travel through Florida's southernmost islands on the Florida Keys Scenic Byway. The Byway, which features breathtaking views of the ocean, spans 110 miles of both land and ocean. Tourists visiting the Keys can take in all that the islands have to offer without ever having to leave the Byway.

Passing by the white sand beaches of the Gulf of Mexico, Scenic Highway 30A provides tourists with a fantastic range of recreation opportunities. Coastal dune lakes offer opportunities for visitors to experience the rare geologic feature. Miles of greenway trails connect parks and preserves so that Byway visitors can hike, ride bicycles, and explore.

Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway offers a unique pastoral perspective for visitors to enjoy. The Byway corridor is tranquil, passing by ranches, forests, small towns, and the Withlacoochee River. Known as a settler's haven, the Byway's corridor also has a rich history that travelers can explore.

As Florida's tourism boom continues to attract record numbers of visitors to the state, it is important to highlight that the qualities of Florida's natural and scenic beauty are some of the same qualities that resulted in the designation of the byways. Florida's commitment to the byway program will ensure residents and Floridians alike enjoy the natural and scenic wonder there corridors provide well into the future.

Check out our [Interactive Map](#) to locate our byways and see what natural and scenic resources they have to offer!



Green Mountain Scenic Byway (greenmountainbyway.org)



A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway (scenicala.org)



Florida Keys Scenic Byway (scenichighwayflkeys.squarespace.com)



Scenic 30A (frendsofscenic30a.com)

THE TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY

While David Letterman is no longer part of late-night television, many of his “Top Ten Lists” skits will live on forever. Volunteer Advocacy, whether part of a byway organization or other group, will have to court their local elected officials from time to time to discuss matters of importance. Here are the top ten best practices for engaging your local elected officials (Adapted from a 2019 FHSP State Workshop presentation by John Crescimbeni, former City of Jacksonville Councilmember and longtime community activist)

10. Identify/Define the issue: Before you start, make sure you can clearly define your issue. Remember that a problem clearly stated is a problem half-solved. Do your homework ahead of time and know what, why, and who of your issue.

9. Establish an End Goal: Goal setting is an important initial step toward successful goal achievement. In fact, goals are more than just a starting point, they are the anchor for your vision. When you set smart goals, it gives you clarity on your end vision which in turn ensures that you are channeling your time, energy, and efforts properly to reach your desired output.

- ◆ Determine what you want to accomplish.
- ◆ Define your starting position - which should always be in the best interest of the public.
- ◆ Be willing to compromise - but do not compromise until you absolutely have to.

8. Recruit Like-Minded Partners: Large numbers of voices make more noise than small groups. Groups command attention. Any

WE WANT YOU to submit articles to the FSHP blog, the [Byway Buzz!](#) You can access submittal forms [here](#) to include information, graphics, and photos for a blog post to highlight everything your byway has to offer, from upcoming events to intrinsic qualities.

successful relationship, whether a personal or a business relationship, is unique and evolves over time.

7. Craft a message that is crystal clear: A crystal clear message gives enough information to get people interested and creates a desire to know more.

- ◆ Do your research and be well informed.
- ◆ Develop a message that is targeted but abbreviated.
- ◆ Keep it simple.
- ◆ Be transparent.
- ◆ Preserve your credibility by being truthful.
- ◆ Stick to the facts, don't exaggerate.

6. Use social media: Social media gets your word out. Ask people to take an action step.

- ◆ Ask followers to share your posts.
- ◆ Use action words like read, download, call, contact.
- ◆ Create urgency - using terms like today, now, in the next 24 hours.
- ◆ Tell them what's in it for them (i.e., reward, sense of community, friendship, camaraderie)

5. Create and use a website platform for more detailed information

- ◆ You have absolute control of your message.
- ◆ A website allows for more detailed information (i.e., maps, brochures, etc.)
- ◆ Site owner has full control over content.
- ◆ Consider including a donation button.
- ◆ Builds credibility.

4. Use Print & Broadcast Media: Print and broadcast media are classic ways of getting your message across; they perform very important functions in today's world. They can supply the latest news updates on projects the byway is working on. Contact a reporter to highlight your byway in a newspaper or write an opinion piece. Remember, there are local news stations that are always looking for content.

3. Communicate with decision makers: Emails, calls, and personal meetings have an impact. Remember though that there is a difference

between communicating a message and bombarding an official with emails. Be smart and be strategic! Be purposeful when you ask for a meeting; have your annual report and work plan, practice your elevator speech, and ask for specific assistance on a specific project.

2. Perseverance: Just keep going. Nothing is easy.

- ◆ Persevere over the long haul.
- ◆ Prepare to be discouraged. It happens.
- ◆ Win battles but do it graciously.

1. Establish positive relationships with your elected officials

- ◆ Meet with decision-makers on a regular basis - even when you don't have an issue to discuss.
- ◆ Attend meetings - let decision makers know you are in attendance.
- ◆ Offer to help them with their initiatives when they align with yours
- ◆ Never burn bridges.

So, there you have it! The Top 10 Best Practices for Volunteer Advocacy.

Give it a try - it works!



BYWAY LEADER INTERVIEW

Each quarter, we will include an interview with a byway leader! This quarter, we reached out to Nancy Galdo, who currently serves as Vice Chair for the Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail National Scenic Byway.

Name: Nancy Galdo

Byway: Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail National Scenic Byway

Position: Vice Chair

How long have you been part of the Florida Scenic Highways Program?

Six years. I joined the board shortly after moving to Ormond by the Sea from Miami Beach in 2017. I became Vice Chair of the OSL&T Organization in January of this year, 2023.

Tell us about your experience working with the Florida Scenic Highways Program. It was a slow start. Hurricane Irma hit two months after moving here. Then, as a newcomer, the extended pandemic episode certainly made it more difficult to get out and meet people in the community. But Claudia Calzaretta, my District Five Scenic Highway Program Coordinator and Michael Palozzi, from Atkins Global, and his team have been very supportive. They have given me the information I need to be confident



Nancy Galdo

in moving forward with my chosen community and environmental projects.

What initially attracted you to the OSL&T organization? This was our retirement move. I felt that I might be able to become involved with a worthwhile organization in my neighborhood. I live directly on the Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail, and wanted to make a difference in this

unique, beautiful road.

What are the intrinsic qualities of your byway that make it unique? The northern part of the OSLT, where I live, has some of the last remaining, wild, natural scenery in Coastal Central Florida. It is Old Florida at its best. There are three state parks sitting together along the byway, Tomoka, Bulow and N. Peninsula State Park. These areas are alive with wildlife. Our beaches host hundreds of sea turtle nests during the summer months and

the during the winter months, ultra-rare Atlantic Right Whales come just offshore after birthing their calves. The southern part of the byway includes historic Ormond Beach with its history of racing, historic homes, fine dining and beautiful views along the Halifax River. There are many different types of recreational activities throughout the area, as well, with numerous parks and trails giving visitors the opportunity for boating, hiking, fishing, swimming, bicycling, beach walking, birding and much more.

What has been your favorite project to work on as part of the byway organization? We are currently participating in a Volusia County initiative called ReGrow the Loop. It is a one-year pilot program to restore and enhance the natural beauty of the 33-mile Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail in Ormond Beach. The County has partnered with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Extension of Volusia County and other local organizations to eradicate invasive plants, increase the use of native plants that will attract wildlife and pollinators. It also aims to share information about sustainable, good practices that our residents can adopt to help protect our county's natural resources and beauty. We are proud to be a participant in this worthwhile project. Our board is also vested in a more long-term plan to replant the aging oak and other native trees throughout the Loop to ensure the canopy will still be here for many generations to come.

What is one piece of advice you would give to other Scenic Byway organizations based on your experience? Reaching out to other dedicated organizations to achieve common goals and participating in community events has been the most meaningful action we have taken to help form partnerships and build our board and increase Loop volunteers.

Which byway would you most like to visit (besides your own!) and why? That's a tough one. Each byway in our country is so unique, I recently visited an amazing byway in Maine, the *Rangely Lakes National Scenic Byway*, which has stunning views, the height of the land, and the deep western Maine mountains and forest. But I will have to stay closer to home. I haven't visited it in quite some time but I'll go with the

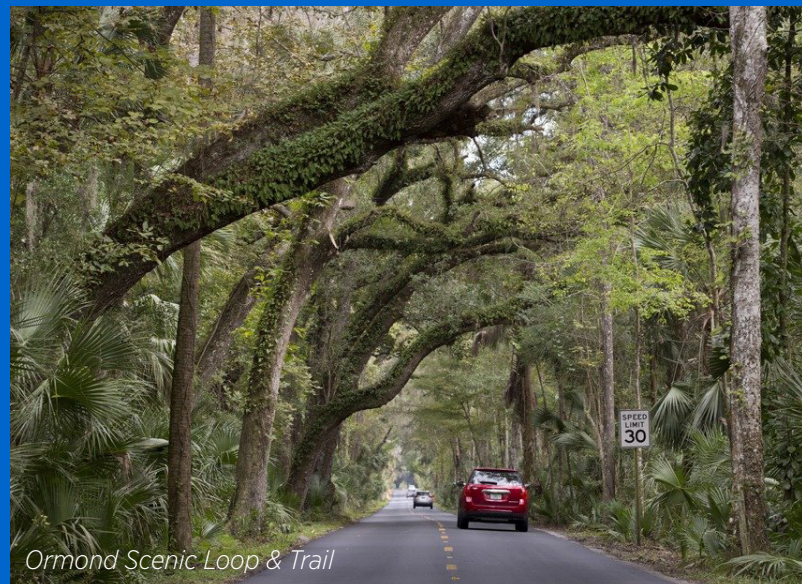


Florida Keys National Scenic Byway All American Road. My heart is in the Keys as I spent many a vacation there as a youngster, swimming, fishing and snorkeling. It is so amazingly beautiful being surrounded by water on both sides as you drive toward Key West.

What does "volunteering" mean to you? I feel that I have certain skills to offer that will help improve the area where I live. Volunteering allows me to work with dedicated, talented, passionate like-minded people who all want to make a difference in our community.

What prepared you for your volunteer time with the byway? My life experiences have prepared me to contribute in a positive way to our Loop group and with the public. I am a wife, a mother and grandmother and all the volunteer experience that comes with it. I spent many years as a project manager and leader in my professional career working as a Manager of A&R Administration for a major record company. I produced multi-faceted weekend events and conventions for thousands of people in my shell collecting hobby. And I have a vast experience working with the public, including many years as an international Flight Attendant.

Any final thoughts? When we moved to Ormond by the Sea, I hoped to find a worthwhile organization that offered the opportunity to donate my time and efforts in order to make a difference in the community and environment where I live. I believe that working with the Florida Scenic Highway Program has given me that chance to make a difference.





12 WAYS YOUR BYWAY CAN HAVE GREATER EXPOSURE TO TOURISTS

The Sunshine State, ubiquitously known for its pristine beaches, warm weather, and beautiful landscapes, is a major hub for tourists. Impact travel, a method of tourism that prioritizes traveling with a purpose and making a positive impact while on vacation, has become popular in recent years. Tourists are increasingly finding value in destinations off the beaten path and seek to experience a vacation from the local's perspective. The Florida Scenic Highways provide this unique perspective and are ripe with the small businesses, museums, cultural sites, and parks that tourists are drawn to. Here are twelve tips to promote your byway and capitalize on Florida's many visitors.

1. Participate in local markets

Farmers' and makers' markets are a huge draw for tourists wishing to experience the local culture. Participate in local markets by having an information table promoting your byway. Visitors can ask questions and form connections while learning about the byway's mission and purpose. Byway brochures, pamphlets, and maps will be great tangible tools for you to hand out, but the word-of-mouth advertising you will accomplish from getting out in the community will be unmatched.

2. Create a guide to the Byway's Best

Tourists that visit Florida are increasingly interested in living like a local while on vacation.

Protect these visitors from tourist traps by creating a Byway's Best guide featuring favorite local restaurants, bars, museums, music venues, parks, and cultural sites. Locally owned establishments will appreciate the shout out and the byway will benefit from increased foot traffic.

3. Manage a public Google calendar

Maintaining an up-to-date calendar with all the byway's events is a great way to advertise upcoming activities and allows potential visitors to plan trips around the happenings of the byway. If you are feeling generous your calendar can also advertise events from partnering agencies.



Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway



River of Lakes Heritage Corridor

4. Identify your ideal visitor

Is your ideal visitor outdoorsy? Hang flyers in outdoor recreation stores. Are you hoping to appeal to motorcyclists looking for a scenic road to recreationally travel? Post online in forums relating to Bike Week. Identifying your target demographic will allow you to reach them through advertising more effectively.

5. Keep the byway's website and social media up to date

To tourists, updated websites and social media pages illustrate an active business. Abandoned websites or Instagram pages could indicate a business's hiatus or closure. Don't have tourists second guessing your byway's existence. Maintain an updated website and social media presence to keep the public engaged and updated with the byway's activities.

6. Collaborate with other local organizations

Ask other similar organizations, government agencies, and non-profits to advertise byway news and events. Organizations such as tourism agencies, sustainability departments, and historical councils are great partners to have and can open doors to future collaboration. Return the favor by sharing news about their upcoming events on your social media.

7. Hide Geocaches at locations along the byway

Geocaching is a global treasure hunt where players use the online app to seek caches, hidden containers with various objects inside. Create a Geocaching account, hide a geocache on public land along the byway, and submit the location on

the Geocaching app so that players can start the hunt. Choose fun and meaningful objects for the cache that represent the byway, the community, or the history of the region. Make sure you replace the objects as the cache is discovered!

8. Offer virtual experiences for online tourists

For many, vacations are not always feasible. Hosting online events, programs, and seminars will allow for those who can't visit in person to still be able to experience what your byway has to offer. Zoom presentations on topics such as the byway's history, natural resources, or cultural significance can allow for attendees from all over to be educated on the byway. Prerecorded videos such as byway tours can also be a great resource to promote the byway to online tourists.

9. Promote traveling with a purpose

In recent years, tourists have become more aware of the impact they can have on a community and are increasingly interested in immersing themselves in a new community or culture by giving their time. Create a list of unique and interesting volunteer opportunities that will allow for tourists to experience a slice of real life along the byway.

10. Connect with travel influencers

Social media has had a significant impact on tourist destinations. According to American Express's 2023 Travel Trends Report, 75% of respondents have been inspired by social media to travel to a specific destination. Connecting with travel influencers can be a great way to promote your byway and community. Even smaller influencers will have a substantial impact on your byway's public reach.

11. Promote the use of hashtags

Host a photo contest where visitors post their best photos of the byway to Instagram using the byway's name as a hashtag. Award the winner a gift card to a local restaurant. Not only will this advertise the beauty of the byway, but you will also gain access to unseen photos to use on the byway's social media accounts.

12. Submit blog posts to the Florida Scenic Highways Program website

The Florida Scenic Highways Program website includes a Byway Buzz Blog that features stories from the various byways. Representatives from the individual byways can submit blog posts to potentially be posted on the website. Type up a quick blurb about your byway's recent activities and submit it to the [Byway Buzz!](#)