



FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

A note from our Program Coordinator, Dean Stoddart



The Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) is pleased to present our 2023 Florida Scenic Highways Program annual report! I'm Dean Stoddart, the State Coordinator for our program. Our FSHP annual report highlights the yearly activities and accomplishments of each of our byways, combined together to document the achievements of our program. It is an end of year snapshot highlighting the value our program offers to each of our byway communities, and celebrates the dedication and commitment of the the individual byway programs. Our program is ranked among the best programs in the nation because of our volunteers.

Each byway has an important intrinsic value and a unique story to tell. Our efforts provide a glimpse of that real Florida to Floridians and our visitors looking to get off the beaten path. As you review the triumphs celebrated by our annual report, be reminded these achievements have directly benefited the communities, people, and visitors of our program. Our Florida Scenic Highways Program is strong, nationally recognized, and well situated for growth of our byway organizations.

Thank you FSHP Byways for your great work!

Dean Stoddart, May 2024

Front Cover: Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway

Back cover: Downtown Micanopy



PROGRAM PURPOSE AND MISSION

Following the creation of the National Scenic Byway Program in 1991, the Florida Department of Transportation established the **Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP)** in 1996 to protect and promote the intrinsic resources of the state. The program is largely a grassroots movement, utilizing community-based support to bolster resource protection and economic development in the regions the byways encompass. Local governments, volunteers, and businesses play an essential role in the success of the program.

As of 2023, 27 byways across the state are formally designated as Florida Scenic Highways for their scenic, archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, and recreational value. These intrinsic resources are considered representative and uniquely characteristic of an area, instilling an inherent value to the byway. Of the 27 Florida Scenic Highways, six are designated National Scenic Byways and two are designated All-American Roads, the “best of the best” for scenic byways. The byways are an invaluable resource and provide rich benefits to Florida residents and visitors alike.

Each Florida Scenic Highway is responsible for completing a Byway Annual Report, which highlights their recent programs, events, and projects, and provides an opportunity for each byway to set goals and aspirations for the following years to come. From the information provided in the annual Byway Annual Reports, the Florida Department of Transportation releases the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** Annual Report to summarize the hard work and dedication of the participating byway programs.

In 2023, the **FSHP** saw continued growth and collaboration at both the statewide and local level. This includes an increase in the use of social media as a tool for awareness and outreach; a statewide quarterly newsletter that featured exciting projects, interviews, and local events; and the second installment of the WFSU’s Florida Crossroads documentary. In addition, AI and Phyllis Abbatiello of William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway were awarded the 2023 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award for their steadfast dedication to the preservation and celebration of the St. John’s River region of St. John’s County.



Real Places. Real Stories.™

MISSION

Help Florida communities deliver high-quality experiences to visitors.

VISION

Promote economic development, enhance local quality of life, and conserve important resources.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Letter From Dean	1
Program Purpose and Mission	2
Florida Scenic Highways Designations	4
2023 Florida Scenic Highways Map	5
Program Contribution at a Glance	6
Statewide Contribution	6
Other Highlights	8
Statewide Annual Meeting	8
National Scenic Byway (NSB) Grant Coordination	9
Florida Crossroads Documentary	10
Newsletter	11
Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award	12
Individual Byway Accomplishments	14
A1A Ocean Islands Trail	14
A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway	14
Big Bend Scenic Byway	15
Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway	15
Broward County A1A Scenic Highway	15
Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway	16
Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway	16
Florida Keys Scenic Highway	17
Green Mountain Scenic Byway	17
Halifax Heritage Byway	18
Heritage Crossroads: Miles of History	18
Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway	19
Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Scenic Highway	19
J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway	19
Martin Grade Scenic Highway	20
Old Florida Heritage Highway	20
Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail	21
Palma Sola Scenic Highway	21
Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway	21
River of Lakes Heritage Corridor	21
Scenic Highway 30A	22
Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway	22
Tamiami Trail - Windows to the Gulf Coast	23
The Ridge Scenic Highway	23
William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway	23
Other Program Benefits	25
National Scenic Byway Foundation	25
Scenic Highways Advisory Committee (SHAC)	26

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS DESIGNATIONS

ID	SCENIC HIGHWAY	REGION	DISTRICT	STATE DESIGNATION	NATIONAL DESIGNATION	ALL AMERICAN ROAD DESIGNATION
1	Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway	Panhandle	3	4/24/98		
2	Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway	Central	4	6/13/00	NSB (2002)	
			5			
3	Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway	Central	1	4/17/01		
4	Old Florida Heritage Highway	Northern	2	6/7/01		
5	Florida Keys Scenic Highway	Southern	6	6/22/01		AAR (2009)
6	A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway	Northern	2	1/17/02		AAR (2021)
			5			
7	Tamiami Trail - Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters	Southern	1	12/19/03		
8	Palma Sola Scenic Highway	Central	1	5/28/04		
9	Green Mountain Scenic Byway	Central	5	7/19/04		
10	The Ridge Scenic Highway	Central	1	2/16/05		
11	Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway	Central	7	5/23/05		
12	William Bartram Scenic and Historic Scenic Highway	Northern	2	10/31/05		
13	Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Scenic Highway	Southern	4	12/14/05		
14	Suncoast Scenic Parkway	Central	Turnpike	8/18/06		
15	Big Bend Scenic Byway	Panhandle	3	11/14/06	NSB (2009)	
16	Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail	Central	5	7/9/07	NSB (2009)	
17	Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway	Central	2	4/9/08	NSB (2009)	
			5			
18	Lemon Bay / Myakka Trail Scenic Highway	Southern	1	4/9/08		
19	Scenic Highway 30A	Panhandle	3	4/9/08	NSB (2021)	
20	Heritage Crossroads: Miles of History	Northern	5	11/19/08		
21	River of Lakes Heritage Corridor	Central	5	3/12/09	NSB (2021)	
22	Broward County A1A Scenic Highway	Southern	4	7/20/09		
23	J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway	Northern	2	4/30/10		
24	Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway	Central	5	5/2/13		
25	Martin Grade Scenic Highway	Southern	4	1/28/15		
26	A1A Ocean Islands Trail	Northern	2	7/26/16		
27	Halifax Heritage Byway	Central	5	10/5/20		

2023 FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS COLLECTION



 All-American Road
 National Scenic Byway

- 1 PENSACOLA SCENIC BLUFFS HIGHWAY**
- 2 INDIAN RIVER LAGOON NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY** ★
- 3 BRADENTON BEACH SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 4 OLD FLORIDA HERITAGE HIGHWAY**
- 5 FLORIDA KEYS SCENIC HIGHWAY** 
- 6 A1A SCENIC & HISTORIC COASTAL BYWAY** 
- 7 TAMiami TRAIL - WINDOWS TO THE GULF COAST WATERS**
- 8 PALMA SOLA SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 9 GREEN MOUNTAIN SCENIC BYWAY**
- 10 THE RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 11 COURTNEY CAMPBELL SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 12 WILLIAM BARTRAM SCENIC & HISTORIC HIGHWAY**
- 13 INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - TREASURE COAST SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 14 SUNCOAST SCENIC PARKWAY**
- 15 BIG BEND SCENIC BYWAY** ★
- 16 ORMOND SCENIC LOOP & TRAIL** ★
- 17 FLORIDA BLACK BEAR SCENIC BYWAY** ★
- 18 LEMON BAY / MYAKKA TRAIL SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 19 SCENIC HIGHWAY 30A** ★
- 20 HERITAGE CROSSROADS: MILES OF HISTORY**
- 21 RIVER OF LAKES HERITAGE CORRIDOR** ★
- 22 BROWARD COUNTY A1A SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 23 J.C. PENNEY MEMORIAL SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 24 SCENIC SUMTER HERITAGE BYWAY**
- 25 MARTIN GRADE SCENIC HIGHWAY**
- 26 A1A OCEAN ISLANDS TRAIL**
- 27 HALIFAX HERITAGE BYWAY**



PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION AT A GLANCE

Statewide Contribution

The byways in the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** work throughout the year to plan and implement projects that are important to them. In 2023, the byways worked on a total of 52 projects. Many of the projects involved engaging the community, growing the byway organizations, and partnering with local governments, preservation agencies, schools, and more. Community engagement projects ranged from yard sales to nature walks, to raising historical and educational awareness. These projects are made possible by the volunteers who are fundamental to this program's success. Some contribute their time to the organizations as members and by attending meetings, while others work on specific projects to improve the byways and the communities around them.



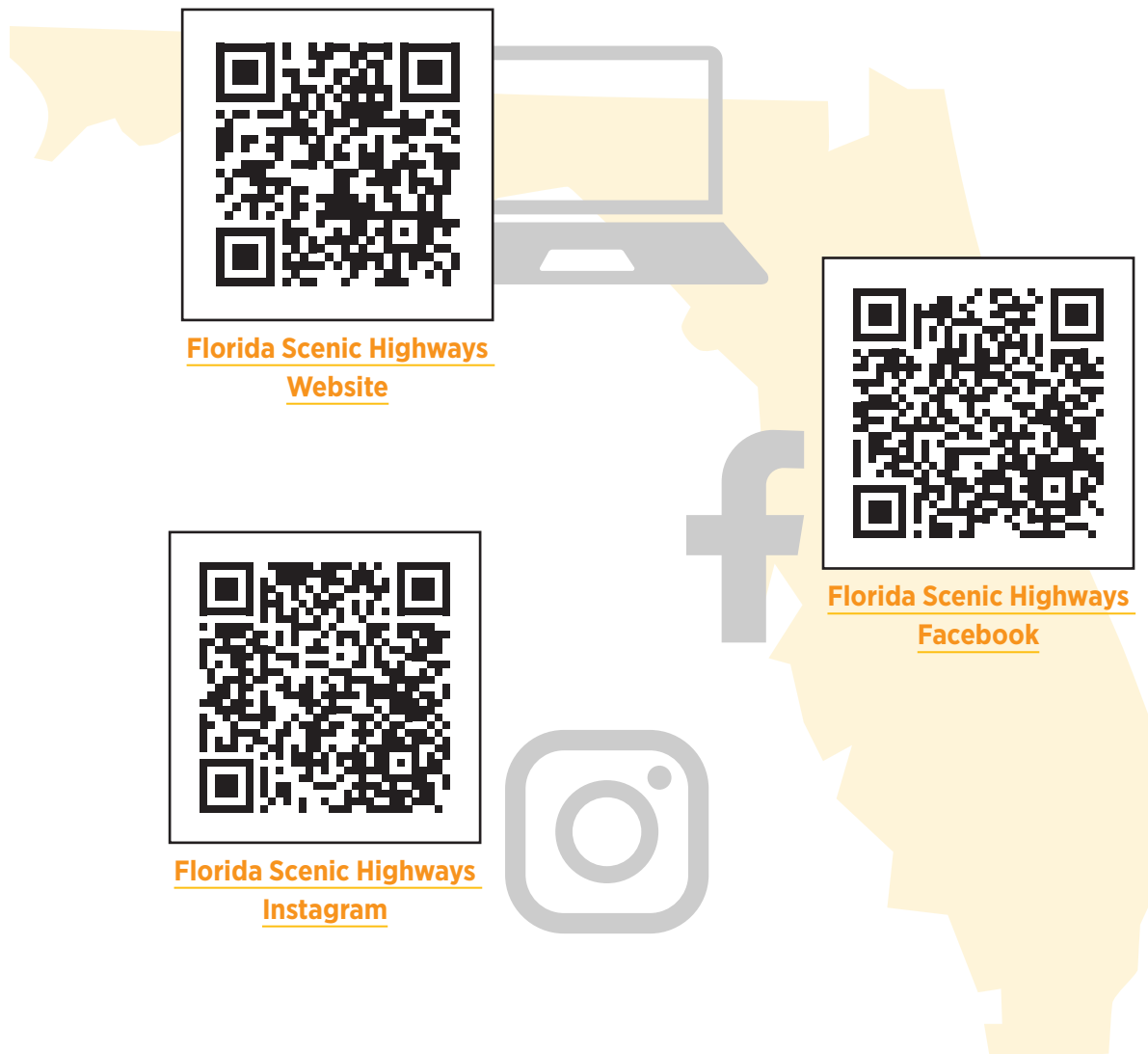
This would include time spent on administrative tasks, meetings, email coordination, event and activity planning, event and activity implementation, time spent on grant application, or any other task completed as part of the functions of the byway organization.



Social Media

Social media has become a popular practice for the individual byways and the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** as a whole. In 2023, **22** out of the 27 byway organizations had social media accounts with a combined total of approximately **46,150** followers. The byways use the different platforms for advertising events, promoting the byway and its resources, recruiting new members, and providing updates on current projects. The **Florida Scenic Highways Program** has its own Facebook and Instagram accounts at the statewide level as well. **FSHP** uses these accounts to highlight and celebrate individual byways, share archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic information, and promote the program and the beautiful State it covers.

Statewide Accounts



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Statewide Annual Meeting

The **Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP)** held its Statewide Annual Meeting on April 20th and 21st, 2023. The meeting was attended by over 30 individuals, both in-person and virtually, from organizations including **FSHP**, Florida Department of Transportation, Scenic Florida, Federal Highway Administration, and many more.

The Statewide Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for District Scenic Highway Coordinators, byway organizations, and volunteers to network, learn more about the **Florida Scenic Highways Program**, and participate in trainings. This year, participants attended sessions discussing social media for the byways, strategies for developing project opportunities and grant readiness, and a presentation from the District Scenic Highway Coordinators and panel. There was also a roundtable, allowing byways to connect with each other. The coordinators were able to spend time together outside of a meeting room with a dinner and outing in Ybor City.

The Statewide Annual Meeting is an important part of the Program for bringing byways together. Community is a key element to **FSHP**. The byway organizations are made up and supported by their communities; therefore, continuing the sense of community among the organizations is essential. The Statewide Annual Meeting provides an environment for sharing best practices, lessons learned, and recent successes for each district and byway.



Dean Stoddart, State Transportation Landscape Architect and Jessica Muroff, CEO - United Way Suncoast



Left to Right: Anne Glick, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Claudia Calzaretta, District 5 Coordinator, Janice Charles, District 2 Coordinator



Florida Scenic Highway Program Coordinators' Dinner

National Scenic Byway (NSB) Grant Coordination

In 2023, Green Mountain Scenic Byway was awarded a National Scenic Byway Grant of \$650,000. The proposed project for the NSB grant is the addition of a 40-foot tower to the existing overlook. The Green Mountain Scenic Byway Overlook was originally built with funds through a 2011 NSB grant and opened in 2014.

In 2016, a trail was opened from the Overlook to 20,000 acres of Lake Apopka Northshore. This area included fish and wildlife resources, natural habitat, and hiking and bike trails. With increased connections for the community from the trail and growing vegetation obscuring the view from the Overlook, a desire to enhance the Overlook grew. FDOT partnered with Green Mountain Scenic Byway, Lake County, and the St. Johns River Water Management District to apply for the first National Scenic Byway Program Grant Cycle in more than 10 years with the vision of enhancing this important feature of the Byway. The Florida Scenic Highway Program and Green Mountain Scenic Byway look forward to the construction of the new tower and the enrichment it brings to the area. Throughout 2023, the team worked together to coordinate with FHWA to develop a grant agreement and move the project forward. The NSB grant did not reopen during the 2023 FY, but the Florida Scenic Highway Program remains prepared to support byways in their applications when the funding becomes available once more.



Artist rendering of the completed addition to the Overlook at Lake Apopka



The Overlook as it currently appears in Spring 2023

Florida Crossroads Documentary



Crossroads crew interviewing Jim Thorsen, Chair of Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway



Ongoing filming for the Florida Crossroads program



Catherine Parrott represents J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway on the Florida Channel series

In 2023, a second installment of Florida Crossroads featured the **Florida Scenic Highways Program**. Florida Crossroads is an award-winning documentary series produced by PBS television station WFSU. The segments highlight the program and share the history and scenic features of some of the byways.

The new episode focuses on byways in Northeast Florida including William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway, A1A Ocean Islands Trail, J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway, and the state's newest All-American Road – A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway. Filming took place in October 2023, and the WFSU film crew generally spent one day at each byway. The scenery and communities surrounding the byways were filmed. Byway and local leaders were interviewed about their community, the benefit of a scenic highway designation, and challenges they face as volunteer organizations working to advance the byways.

Individual byway segments of 6-8 minutes are kept online as the **“Florida Scenic Highways & Byways”** series on the Florida Channel. Links to these videos can also be found on each included byway's page on the **Florida Scenic Highways website**. The full 30-minute Crossroads episodes are also available for viewing on the Florida Channel website.

FSHP is looking forward to continuing this partnership and learning which byways WFSU selects for 2024.

NEWSLETTER

Starting in April 2023, the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** began issuing quarterly newsletters to the program community. The newsletters are created as a form of communication between the byway organizations, District Scenic Highway Coordinators, SHAC members, and program leadership. It provides a place for byways to share upcoming events and important projects that are happening. Organizations can share successes and challenges that may be beneficial for others to read. The newsletters also include interviews and articles relevant to the program.

Although the newsletter is only distributed to the program community, all previous newsletters can be viewed on the **FSHP** website.



From the Fall 2023 Newsletter



From the Winter 2023 Newsletter

Garry Balogh

Inspiring Excellence Award

2023

The **Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award**, named for past FDOT District 5 (D5) Scenic Highway Coordinator **Garry Balogh**, is awarded every year to a volunteer in the byway community. This award is a significant honor in the **FSHP** and recognizes the dedication, leadership, and passion a member of the **Florida Scenic Highways** volunteer community has for the program.

The **2023** recipients of the **Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award** are **Al and Phyllis Abbatiello**, from **William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway (WBSHH)**. This husband-and-wife team have devoted over 20 years to preservation and protection of the historic and natural features of the St. Johns River region of St. Johns County. **Al** has served as Chair of the Byway for 18 years, and **Phyllis** has served in many roles, including Treasurer. **Al** is recognized as a leader and advocate in the local community. Both **Al** and **Phyllis** have represented the Byway numerous times at local events, promoting the Byway and sharing its story. Some important events of the Byway that the **Abbatiellos** participate in are the Bartram Bash, the St. Johns River Bartram Frolic, and the Alpine Groves Christmas Celebrations.

One of the biggest achievements of **Al** and **Phyllis** in the past couple years is the growth of the Byway organization. In 2022, after reaching a critically low number in volunteers, they identified all property owners along the 17-mile corridor and sent a passionate letter explaining the organization and the significance in preserving the corridor's resources. This strategy recruited almost 100 new members in a year.

Another project this "dynamic duo" led was developing a local history curriculum as a supplement for St. Johns County schools. The tagline of the project is: We Have the Power to Impact Our Future, and We're Doing Something About it one student at a time. They have also headed a project recording local oral histories of longtime residents of the Byway region, totaling in 24 histories at this time.

They are always willing to speak up for the protection of the Byway and its mission. **Al and Phyllis's** continued passion makes a significant difference to the Byway as well as to their fellow members of the Florida Scenic Highways volunteer community.



Janice Charles, District Two Scenic Highway Coordinator, Phyllis Abbatiello, Al Abbatiello, and Dean Stoddart, FDOT State Scenic Highway Coordinator at the byway meeting where the award was presented to the recipients



Causeway Bridge on Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway

INDIVIDUAL BYWAY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The byway organizations are asked to complete a Byway Annual Report (BAR) to summarize their accomplishments from the previous year. This year 25 out of the 27 byways submitted BARs to the Florida Scenic Highway Program. The BARs allow the byways to share exciting projects, volunteer successes, community

events, organization developments, fundraising efforts, and more that support the byway organizations and the Florida Scenic Highway Program. It is important to note that the byways rely exclusively on their dedicated volunteers, and we thank them for their hard work and commitment to their organization. Read about their accomplishments below!



A1A Ocean Islands Trail

A1A Ocean Islands Trail was one of the several byways that was featured in the Florida Crossroads program on PBS. Chelly Schembera, the Byway Chair and Greer Gillis, the Senior Vice President for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, were interviewed for the documentary. The episode covering A1A Ocean Islands Trail has been released, and the link to watch is available on the FSHP website.

In 2023, the Byway partnered with Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) to help develop organization resiliency strategies. NEFRC received funding from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to assist the Byway in establishing an approach to build a sustainable organization. The Byway also worked to grow their organization with the creation and distribution of promotional materials. A new brochure and byway fact sheet were developed for help with community education efforts. These brochures were distributed to Visit Jacksonville locations and other information resource locations.



A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway

A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway had an active 2023. The Byway worked to rebrand its materials for visitors and travelers to showcase the 2021 All-American Road designation. Using funds raised by selling advertisements, the Byway organization printed 50,000 new maps with the All-American Road status. The maps were distributed to Florida Visitor Centers on I-95, I-75, and I-10, as well as businesses and attractions in the northeast and central regions of the state. Friends of A1A hosted the 11th Annual Spoonbills & Sprockets Cycling Tour in the Spring of 2023. Participants could cycle 15, 37, 62 or 100 miles along the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, taking in the nature, historic sites, and ocean views along the way.

In 2023, the Byway was awarded two grants for projects of the organization. The Ocean Conservancy grant was received for the Trash Free Seas project. This project was for cleaning efforts following the Memorial Day holiday. The second grant awarded was from the Surfing's Evolution & Preservation Foundation for the Byway Beautification Program. This is an ongoing project of Friends of A1A to enhance the Byway and highlight the beauty of the area.



Byway Organization Highlights



Big Bend Scenic Byway

After restructuring and restarting quarterly meetings in 2022, Big Bend Scenic Byway is developing endeavors to strengthen and grow their Board. The Byway is continuing its efforts to advance the Wayshowing and Interpretive Exhibit Panel and Signage Project. Big Bend Scenic Byway is working with the local county government to complete the next steps in this project.



Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway

In 2023, Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway was involved in multiple environmental efforts focusing on keeping their water and shores clean. The two programs the Byway partnered with were Islanders 4 Clean Water and Keep Manatee Beautiful. Islanders 4 Clean Water is an initiative from the City of Holmes Beach to keep waterways clean and safe. They share educational information to bring attention to the issue as well as action items anyone can do to do their part. Keep Manatee Beautiful, in partnership with the Adopt-A-Shore program, coordinates litter clean up events.

Another highlight for this Byway was partnering with the City of Bradenton Beach for another year for the Tree City USA community designation. The City of Bradenton Beach has held this designation since 2011. The certification shows a city's commitment to the environment and their community. The City of Bradenton Beach observed National Arbor Day 2023 with a proclamation and tree plantings to meet the Tree City USA standards.



Broward County A1A Scenic Highway

For Broward County A1A Scenic Highway, 2023 was a year of rebuilding and restructuring. The Byway worked on identifying potential leaders and volunteers for the Byway's leadership team. The current team continued to hold meetings in 2023 to discuss organizational structure, community participation, and ways to advance the organization's mission.

The organization also worked to rebuild the brand of the Byway and community presence. A new logo was adopted, and a website upgrade was initiated. The Byway partners attended the Pompano Beach Saturday Market to promote the Byway and its programming. This event allowed them to meet with the community and answer questions about the Byway.





Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway

For Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway, 2023 was a year focused on partnership, promotion, and presence in the community. The Byway organization approached the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority (WVTAA) to assist with brochure printing costs. The WVTAA Board approved the letter of request and awarded the organization \$6,000. The Byway used the funds to print brochures, produce more of the organization's highly popular Byway DVD video, and upgrade its website.

Additionally, in late 2022, Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway established a new partnership with United Southern Bank in Astor and received a donation. In 2023, the Byway was able to use this donation to purchase promotional items, including themed tote bags, t-shirts, and hats. The items were then sold throughout the year at community events.



Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway

Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway made improvements to pedestrian features along the Byway. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) constructed a sidewalk segment on the Northeast end of the causeway, filling in a gap in sidewalk connectivity along that portion of the Byway. The Byway also noted that a pedestrian overpass is planned for the Byway, and design is ongoing for expected construction in Summer 2024.

Volunteers affiliated with the Byway organization also participated in several community clean up events in 2023. In partnership with Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful and Keep Pinellas Beautiful, volunteer cleanup events were organized to collect trash along Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway. Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful removed 33,765 pounds of trash and Keep Pinellas Beautiful removed 808.85 pounds of trash. In the wake of Hurricane Idalia, many organizations came together to help with cleanup and repairs. FDOT, City of Tampa, City of Clearwater, and Hillsborough County were among the agencies the Byway organization partnered with.





Florida Keys Scenic Highway

The Florida Keys Scenic Highway had a successful year when it came to community partnership and projects. One major highlight in 2023 was partnering with Adopt-A-Highway and the community. The organization began inventory of signs and companies that adopted a mile, which continues building more partnerships throughout the community. The Byway also coordinated with Adopt-A-Highway and its partners, Coast Love, Marine Army, and Surf Riders, to organize International Coast Cleanup community events.

Florida Keys Scenic Highway hosted its annual Antique Car Show in Islamorada. This provided an opportunity to showcase the All-American Road designation through a local event. The Byway completed installation of the All-American Road signage northbound outside of Key West at mile marker 6 in 2023, which contributed positively to the event.



Green Mountain Scenic Byway

Green Mountain Scenic Byway used 2023 to engage with the community and participate in multiple events. Events the Byway was involved in include the Winter Garden “Spring Fever in the Garden” Festival, Oakland Heritage Festival, and Oakland Nature Preserve events. The Byway has also started working with councilmembers from the Town of Montverde to establish a plan for becoming a Florida Trail Town. This designation will be achievable once the proposed trails in the town are constructed and ready to use.

As highlighted last year, Green Mountain Scenic Byway was awarded a National Scenic Byway Grant of \$650,000 for an addition to the lookout tower at Lake Apopka. In 2023, efforts were focused on finalizing all paperwork and financial agreements for the grant with USDOT, and coordinating on the financial match from Lake County.





Halifax Heritage Byway

Halifax Heritage Byway worked to maintain the organization's current efforts throughout the year and grow where possible. The Byway conducted monthly virtual meetings for the organization's members, maintained the Byway Facebook page, and participated in the FSHP State workshop. Additionally, the Byway updated its brochure and fact sheet, and completed a partner presentation to the Halifax Historical Society.

One exciting event Halifax Heritage Byway participated in was History Con. Hosted by the Museum of Arts & Science and Daytona Beach, History Con is a celebration of Florida history. It included Florida history reenactors, historical displays, presentations, costumes, and local history clubs. Participants were able to attend book signings, historical talks, and meet with local volunteers to learn how they work to preserve and protect the region's history and culture.



Heritage Crossroads: Miles of History

Heritage Crossroads Scenic Byway used the year to focus on partnership. The Byway continued its long-term partnership with Daytona State College (DSC). This partnership is maintained through the Byway Chair and Nancy Duke, a professor at DSC. Service-Learning is a program that allows students to learn while doing with a variety of meaningful opportunities within their community. Ms. Duke's program involves a series of assignments related to local history. The assignments help establish a sense of stewardship to the community and an appreciation of its history.

The Byway demonstrated partnership by providing advocacy support to partner organizations including the Flagler County Historical Society (FCHS), Florida Agriculture Museum, and Kings Road Historic District. Heritage Crossroads was also accepted as a member of the Flagler County Cultural Council. Another exciting partner project is concept development for the Flagler County Eco-Discovery Visitor Center. The center is designed to provide the area access to recreational and education opportunities that preserve the natural, historical, and cultural aspects of the region. This project is a partnership among Flagler County Historical Society, A1A All American Road, FDOT, and the Flagler Board of County Commissioners.

Byway Organization Highlights



Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway

In 2023, Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway focused on promotional projects and growing the coalition. One important project was the Byway Kiosk Program. The Byway partnered with Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce to install an informational panel outside the Pelican Porch Welcome Center run by the Chamber of Commerce. There was an empty, pre-existing kiosk structure the Byway was allowed to use, saving costs on this project.

Throughout 2023, the Byway's coalition held regularly scheduled meetings and even hosted guest speakers at coalition meetings. The Byway was able to recruit a new Board member in 2023 and continued efforts to enlist additional volunteers. The coalition maintained an active social media presence on the Byway website and started a community engagement program.



Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Scenic Highway

At the end of 2023, Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Scenic Highway had no active members. The organization is restructuring and anticipates growing to 12 members in 2024.



J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway

J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway showed an emphasis on community engagement and awareness in 2023. One activity was Running Thru History, the 7th Annual Penney Farms Historic 5K Run. The route went along many of the tree-lined residential streets of the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway loop. Held in October, the participants enjoyed beautiful weather, prizes, and a gathering of community. There was also food and music in the park after the race. 2023 was the largest in race history with nearly 200 registered runners. The Byway also held a successful Arbor Day celebration with a Pancake Breakfast fundraising event.

Community awareness was also important for the Byway this year. The organization had on-going efforts to achieve approval from the US Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the founding of Penney Retirement Community (1926) and Town of Penney Farms (1927). J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway was also one of the several byways featured in the Florida Crossroads program on PBS. This program raised awareness of the Byway.





Martin Grade Scenic Highway

In 2023, Martin Grade Scenic Highway launched a new social media campaign to share the history and significance of the Byway. The campaign was a series of engaging posts paired with historical or associated images. The campaign brought over 1,200 new likes to the page and reached more than 521,700 individuals. The posts initiated many positive and beneficial interactions and demonstrated the value in sharing the Byway's story and engaging with the community.



Old Florida Heritage Highway

Old Florida Heritage Highway used 2023 as a time to engage the community. The Byway organization had booths to pass out informational materials and promotional items at events like the Micanopy Fall Festival and the Earth Day celebration at the Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center. The organization also supported the Byway's partners including Alachua Conservation Trust, Bartram Trail Society of Florida, Friends of Paynes Prairie, Friends of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and the Micanopy Library in efforts to raise awareness of the history and natural beauty of the region.

Another partner of the Byway is the Preserve Micanopy program. In 2023, Preserve Micanopy was awarded a Viva Florida Landscape Demonstration Garden Grant for a project that transformed an open turf field into a native plant garden. This garden provided food and habitats for pollinators in the area, including a large pullulation of bats. This area is a walkable distance from downtown Micanopy and several schools in the area. Preserve Micanopy is also working to create a student educational outreach program in partnership with the Micanopy Academy and Micanopy Area Cooperative School.

Byway Organization Highlights



Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail

For Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail, 2023 was all about the natural beauty of the area surrounding the Byway. The Byway organization orchestrated professionally guided nature walks for the public. These walks were designed to educate the community, grow its appreciation for the natural and historic resources of the Byway, and provide a scenic view. The nature walks were advertised in emails to stakeholders, newsletters, and public service announcements published by local newspapers. The walks themselves provided great word-of-mouth promotion for the Byway as well.

Volusia County Government announced a new, one-year pilot program called “Regrow the Loop.” This program was designed to restore and preserve the natural and native beauty of the flora and fauna of the Byway’s area. This was accomplished through revitalizing and increasing native plant species, removing invasive species, attracting wildlife and pollinators to the area, and educating the community on ways to support these efforts.



Palma Sola Scenic Highway

In 2023, Palma Sola Scenic Highway worked with Manatee County on a project to repair the sea wall at Palma Sola Causeway park. Notably, Palma Sola was successful in the extension of their Byway, which includes the addition of a .22-mile segment and separate .84-mile segment. These additions contribute positively to the cohesion and aesthetic of the Byway.



Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway

In 2023, Pensacola Scenic Bluff Highway’s organization searched for a new president and recruited new members. This led to the decision for the Byway to partner with a new organization, Bluffline. The Byway looks forward to exciting opportunities ahead in 2024.



River of Lakes Heritage Corridor

River of Lakes Heritage Corridor hosted and participated in a series of seminars held at the Enterprise Museum. This year the Byway organization took a day to visit the current FDOT SR 44 bridge replacement project. This is a multi-year project to replace the SR 44 bridge over the St. Johns River.





Scenic Highway 30A

Scenic Highway 30A worked to move along several existing projects in 2023. One project the Byway is involved in is the Deer Lake Overlook, a dock connected to a multi-use path on 30A. Concept plans were developed for the overlook location as well as initial construction cost estimates. Park volunteer meetings with DEP staff are beginning in 2024 to develop the five-year project plans.

Another project the Byway organization is involved in is Friends Corner, a 30A landscape improvement project, partnering with the Tourist Development Council (TDC). The Byway requested funds from the TDC Destination Improvement Committee and presented to the TDC Board and were ultimately awarded \$50,000. Site planning and surveying for this project was donated by Dewberry Engineering.



Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway

In 2023, Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway hosted multiple fundraising events that engaged the community. The Byway held its 4th Annual Fish-in-the-Pan fundraiser. This event was a fishing tournament held at the historic Pana Vista Lodge on Lake Panasoffkee. This year had the highest participation with 30 fishing teams registered. Partnering with Blackjack Sporting Clays, the Byway hosted another one of its annual fundraising events, Clays-2-Raise. This was the 4th year of annual sporting clays fundraiser. This event was developed to support the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway organization to advance their mission and efforts.

Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway also started two new projects in 2023. The organization began the development of a scholarship fund through local high schools in Sumter County. It also introduced an extension request to FDOT for the Byway at the Wahoo Swamp area of western Sumter County.





Tamiami Trail - Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters

Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway spent 2023 strengthening the organization and accomplishing projects. The Byway started organization meetings again for the first time since COVID and updated the Byway's informational brochure. One project the Byway was involved in this year was the Gulf Stream Roundabout Landscaping. This was in partnership with City of Sarasota using FDOT funds, and the project included the installation of landscaping and irrigation at US 41 and Gulf Stream Avenue. Another project for the Byway was the US 41 Osprey Landscape Project, funded by Sarasota County. This project involved workshops and public review of the design plans for landscaping and irrigation in the median of US 41 from McIntosh Road to Bay Street.



The Ridge Scenic Highway

After struggling with membership numbers since COVID, The Ridge Scenic Highway Corridor Management Entity (CME) had an increase in membership in 2023. The CME provided updates to local governments along the Byway and were able to recruit members from the community. The CME was able to host The Ridge Scenic Highway 39-Mile Scenic Highway Yard Sale Event in November 2023. This event was designed to bring people to the Byway area, promote the Scenic Highway, and provide economic opportunities along the corridor. This event also generated funds for the CME annual incorporation and website fees.



William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway

William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway highlighted volunteer success in 2023. The Byway organization initiated a volunteer recruitment plan that generated a significant increase in membership. The increase in volunteers created opportunities for the organization to establish subcommittees for membership, social media, and fundraising. Two volunteers for William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway exceeded in their dedication to the Byway and were awarded the Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award, the Florida Scenic Highways Program's most prestigious award for volunteers. Al and Phyllis Abbatiello were bestowed the 2023 award for their commitment to the Byway and the community around it.

In 2023, the Byway participated in the community events including the St. Johns River Bartram Frolic and Bartram Bash. The organization made upgrades to the Byway website in 2023. William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway was also one of the Scenic Highways highlighted in Florida Crossroads filming program on PBS.





View from the Trout Creek area of William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway

2022 HIGHLIGHTED AFFILIATES



National Scenic Byway Foundation

The National Scenic Byway Foundation provides support and guidance on a range of topics pertaining to scenic byway best practices. The Florida Scenic Highways Program maintains a membership with the National Scenic Byway Foundation to access marketing support, receive information about grants and funding opportunities, and have access to a network of other scenic highway professionals.

Scenic Highways Advisory Committee (SHAC)

The State Highway Advisory Committee (SHAC) is an advisory committee dedicated to the Florida Scenic Highways Program. The SHAC is comprised of representatives from several state agencies, including Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The SHAC assists the program by reviewing state byway applications, providing technical guidance, informing program policies and procedures, and provide guidance on administrative initiatives such as byway extensions. The SHAC is instrumental in the smooth operation of the Florida Scenic Highways Program and ensures that industry best practices are implemented.

FDOT DISTRICT MAP AND FSHP LEADERSHIP

Florida Scenic Highways Program Coordinator

Dean Stoddart | Florida Department of Transportation

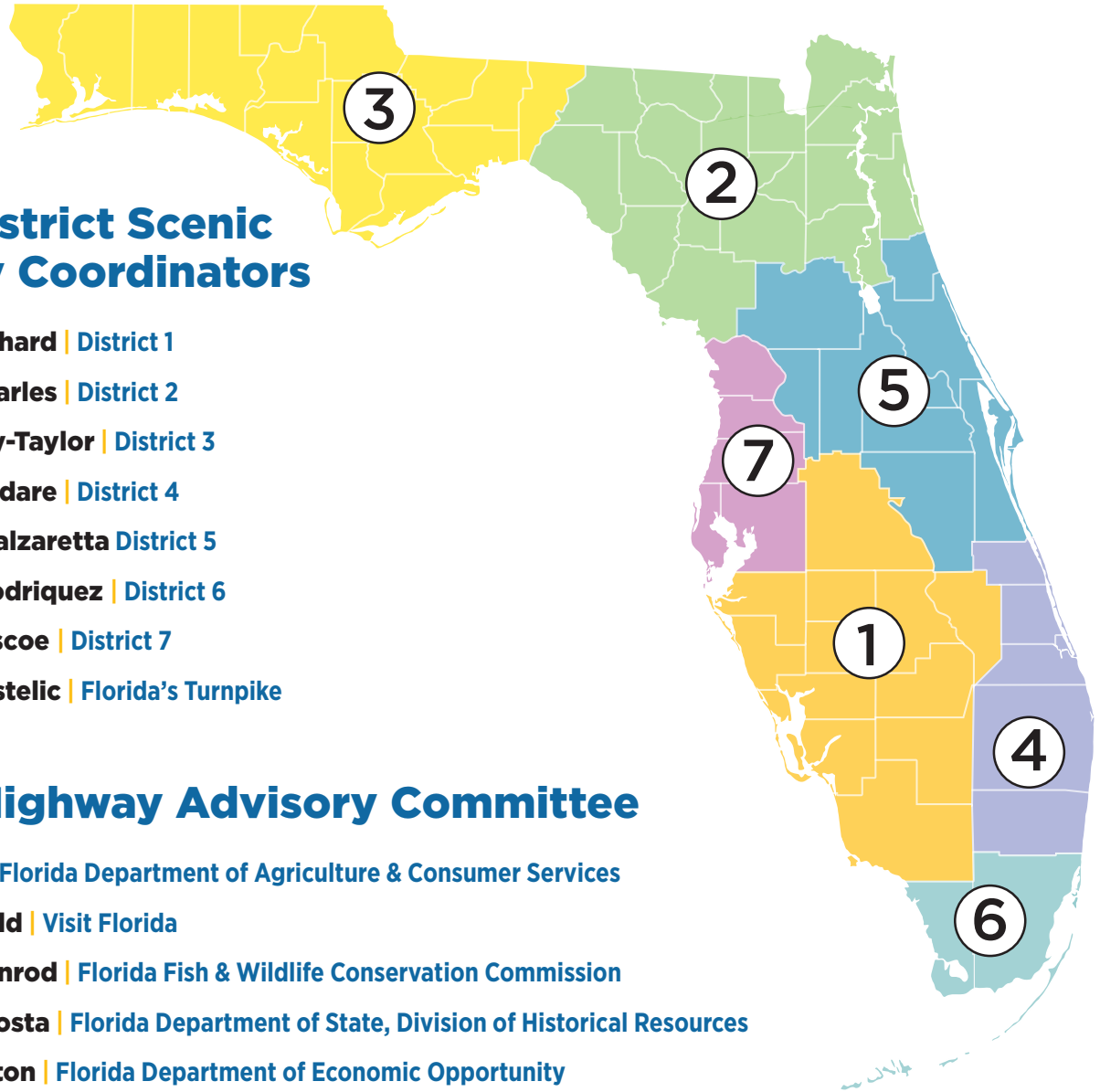
FSHP contact email: info@floridascenichighways.com

FDOT District Scenic Highway Coordinators

- Darryl Richard | District 1
- Janice Charles | District 2
- Zena Riley-Taylor | District 3
- Kaylee Kildare | District 4
- Claudia Calzaretta | District 5
- Monica Rodriguez | District 6
- Roger Roscoe | District 7
- Daniel Kastelic | Florida's Turnpike

Scenic Highway Advisory Committee

- Bin Wan | Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- David Dodd | Visit Florida
- Rachel Penrod | Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Ruben Acosta | Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources
- Matt Preston | Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- Britney Moore | Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails
- Vacant | Federal Highway Administration



[FloridaScenicHighways.com](https://www.floridascenichighways.com)



Real Places. Real Stories.™