



Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) 2026 Annual Meeting

March 25, 2026

A Celebration of Heritage and Highways:

America 250 and 30 Years of the FSHP



2026 Annual Meeting



Welcome!

2026 Theme

- A Celebration of Heritage and Highways: America 250 and 30 Years of the FSHP

Speakers

- **Dean Stoddart**, Program Coordinator, Florida Scenic Highways Program, Florida Department of Transportation
- **Melissa Brooks**, Visit Florida
- **Nick Sanzone**, Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway President
- **Fred Jones**, City of Sebastian Mayor
- **Mike Palozzi**, AtkinsRealis
- **Alice Giuliani**, District 5 Scenic Highway Coordinator
- **Amy Roberson**, District 2 Scenic Highway Coordinator



Sebastian Inlet along Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway



2026 Annual Meeting



Agenda

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 9:00 – 9:15 AM: | <i>Sign in</i> |
| 9:15 – 9:30 AM: | Welcome – Dean Stoddart and John Tyler |
| 9:30 – 10:00 AM: | Program Update and Reflecting on the Journey: America 250 and 30 Years of FSHP – Dean Stoddart |
| 10:00 – 10:15 AM: | <i>Break</i> |
| 10:15 – 11:00 AM: | Visit Florida: Partnering to Promote Florida’s Scenic Highways – Melissa Brooks |
| 11:00 – 11:30 AM: | Local Story: The Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway – Nick Sanzone and Fred Jones |
| 11:30 – 12:45 PM: | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 12:45 – 1:45 PM: | Preventing Byway Burnout (Panel) – Mike Palozzi and Various Byway Leaders |
| 1:45 – 2:30 PM: | Organizational Sustainability – Alice Giuliani and Amy Roberson |
| 2:30 – 2:45 PM: | <i>Break</i> |
| 2:45 – 3:45 PM: | Busting Tourism and Event Myths – Vicky Soderberg |
| 3:45 – 4:45 PM: | Byway Leaders Roundtable |
| 4:45 – 5:00 PM: | Closing Remarks – Dean Stoddart |



Program Update



2026 Annual Meeting



Getting Together

2025 Annual Meeting – Apalachicola, FL

- Theme
 - The Florida Scenic Highways Program and the National Perspective
- Sessions
 - The National Scenic Byway Association (NSBA)
 - Local Gems: Everything the Big Bend Scenic Byway Has to Offer
 - Scenic Highway Program Directors from Around the Country (Panel)
 - Byway Leaders Roundtable

2025 Mid-Year Meet Up

- Sessions
 - Florida Sunshine Law
 - Updating Your Byway Management Plan





2026 Annual Meeting



2024 Annual Report

2024 Annual Report

- 79 Projects Completed
- 2,152 Volunteers Worked with the Byways
- \$1.2 Million in Grant Funding Awarded to Byways

2025 Annual Report – Coming Soon

2024 OVERVIEW

Statewide Program Contribution

As a largely grassroots effort, the Florida Scenic Highways Program relies on dedicated volunteers to plan and execute byway programs, projects, and initiatives. In 2024, byway volunteers completed a total of 79 projects, including community engagement events, litter clean-ups, historic preservation projects, educational events, and more. These projects are fundamental to achieving the byways' individual missions and represent a culmination of planning and volunteer efforts.

In 2024, our FSHP Byways were awarded more than

\$1.2 million

in grant funding.

Grants awarded to byways in 2024 include a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant, a Tampa Bay Estuary Program mini-grant, a Florida Wildflower Foundation grant, and a Felburn Foundation grant.

79 projects completed

7,543 hours spent on projects

19,592 total volunteer hours

2,152 volunteers engaged

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2024 Annual Report | 9

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS
Real Places. Real Stories.

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM
Annual Report
2024

FDOT

PROJECT TREND: BYWAY BEAUTIFICATION

Last year, the byway organizations heavily prioritized programs, projects, and initiatives that enhanced the beauty of the scenic highways. Projects included landscaping, wildflower planting, tree canopy maintenance, invasive plant removal, and erosion control.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| TREE CITY USA ARBOR DAY OBSERVANCE, PROCLAMATION, AND RECERTIFICATION <small>BRADENTON BEACH SCENIC HIGHWAY</small> | VIVA FLORIDA - PRESERVE MICANOPY <small>OLD FLORIDA HERITAGE HIGHWAY</small> | US 41 OSPREY LANDSCAPE PROJECT <small>TAMIAMI TRAIL - WINDOWS TO THE GULF COAST WATERS</small> |
| GULF STREAM ROUNDABOUT LANDSCAPING <small>TAMIAMI TRAIL - WINDOWS TO THE GULF COAST WATERS</small> | INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL AT PERICO PRESERVE <small>PALMA SOLA SCENIC HIGHWAY</small> | INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL AT COUNTY PRESERVES <small>PALMA SOLA SCENIC HIGHWAY</small> |
| EROSION-RELATED ACTIONS <small>COURTNEY CAMPBELL SCENIC HIGHWAY</small> | REGROW THE LOOP 2024 <small>ORMOND SCENIC LOOP AND TRAIL</small> | REGROW THE LOOP 2025 PLANNING <small>ORMOND SCENIC LOOP AND TRAIL</small> |

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2025 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award

Jim and Nikki Thorsen

- Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway (FBB)
- Jim serves as Byway Chair, and Nikki serves as Byway Secretary
- They began developing the Byway with Garry Balogh in 2005. FBB was designated in 2008 and nationally recognized in 2009
- Launched the byway kiosk program in 2012, ultimately installing 19 educational kiosks to support visitor awareness and ecosystem protection

Congratulations, Jim and Nikki Thorsen!





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FSHP Outreach

Quarterly Newsletter

- Interviews, upcoming events, relevant articles, and byway projects
- Previous newsletters can be viewed on the FSHP website

Byway Buzz | The FSHP Blog

- Byway news, events, project highlights, awards

Social Media

- FSHP Facebook and Instagram
- FSHP social media accounts have over 8,000 followers combined

Florida Crossroads | The Florida Channel

- 13 Byways have been featured by Florida Crossroads

The screenshot shows the Florida Scenic Highways Program website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and links for 'About Us' and 'Our Byways'. Below the navigation, there are two featured articles:

- 2025 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award Jim & Nikki Thorsen**: A photo of a man and a woman smiling. The text below reads: "Announcing Jim & Nikki Thorsen as the 2025 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award Winners! Recipients Jim Thorsen, Byway Chair, and Nikki Thorsen, Byway Secretary, being presented with the 2025..." dated January 13, 2026.
- St. Johns County Honors the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway its 20th Anniversary**: A photo of a group of people standing together. The text below reads: "St. Johns County Honors the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway its 20th Anniversary" dated December 15, 2025.

To the right, there is a preview of the 'FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER' for Fall 2025. It includes sections like 'DEAN'S CORNER' with a photo of a man, 'FALL'S NATURAL SHOWCASE: BIRDING & WILDLIFE WATCHING ALONG FLORIDA'S SCENIC HIGHWAYS', and 'Suggested Locations' such as Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Sebastian Inlet State Park.

Scan here for the FSHP website!





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FSHP Guidance Manual Update

Purpose

- Establishes criteria and procedures for the designation and management of Scenic Highways

Key Improvements

- Streamlined and easier to navigate
- Provides a detailed explanation of the byway designation process
- Expands guidance on byway extensions
- Includes a clear byway de-designation process
- Redefines the 5-year Byway Management Plan (BMP) update requirement and outlines minimum requirements for completing the 5-year BMP update
- Adds helpful appendices, including a Byway Extension Process Checklist and a Byway Management Plan Outline
- Features easy-to-follow flowcharts illustrating program processes



Florida Scenic Highways Program

Guidance

February 2026



Real Places. Real Stories.





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FSHP Guidance Manual Update

Mission

Old

Help Florida communities deliver high-quality experiences to visitors.

New

The mission of the Florida Scenic Highways Program is to support our community leaders and quality visitor experiences by promoting an appreciation of Florida's cultural, historical, archaeological, recreational, natural, and scenic values.

Vision

Old

The Florida Scenic Highways Program promotes economic development, enhances quality of life, and conserves important resources.

New

The Florida Scenic Highways Program is a nationally recognized leader celebrating Florida's rich culture, natural beauty, and vibrant communities through support of grassroots leadership and economic opportunity, in fellowship with quality of life and conservation of our intrinsic resources.



Reflecting on the Journey:
America 250 and 30 Years of FSHP



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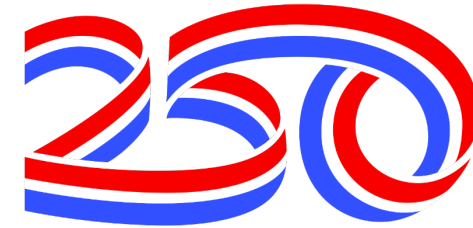
America 250

- On **July 4, 2026**, America will celebrate the **250th anniversary** of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- A milestone moment to reflect on the past and shape the future—much like FSHP’s 30th anniversary.
- **America250** is the national commemoration of the 250th anniversary, with nationwide initiatives and events.

American250FL – Florida’s observance of America’s 250th anniversary

- Historic and Heritage Sites
- American250FL Road Trip – 103 destinations across the state
- Official and Local Events

AMERICA



Scan here to visit
[America250FL.com!](https://America250FL.com)





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Scenic Highways in America

- **1991:** The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).
- Through the NSBP, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation designates certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads.
- **Today:** There are **184** nationally designated byways across **48** states, collectively promoted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as America's Byways®.
- To be eligible for national designation, a road must first be designated at the state level.
- This requirement led to the enhancement of existing state scenic byway programs and the creation of new ones nationwide, including in Florida.



Florida Keys Scenic Highway, All-America Road

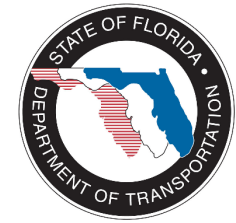


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Scenic Highways in Florida

- **1993:** State legislation was passed to enable Florida, through the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), to establish an official program for scenic byways
- **1996:** The Florida Scenic Highways Program was launched by the FDOT
- **1998:** The first Florida Scenic Highways Program byway was designated – Pensacola Bluffs Scenic Highway.
- The program was established to showcase the outstanding intrinsic resources that can be found along Florida’s highway system.
- These intrinsic qualities include:
 - Cultural
 - Historic
 - Archaeological
 - Recreational
 - Natural
 - Scenic
- The program is a grass-roots effort to increase awareness of these resources which enhance the overall traveling experience in Florida



Pensacola Bluffs Scenic Highway, the First Byway of the FSHP



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The FSHP Today

- There are **27** byways in the FSHP
- **6** National Scenic Byways
- **2** All-American Roads

Program Initiatives

- FSHP Annual Report
- FSHP Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual Meeting & Mid-Year Meet Up
- Byway Buzz, Florida Scenic Highways Blog
- The Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award
- Photo and Video Galleries for Each Byway
- Florida Scenic Highways Program Website, with Interactive Byway Map



Real Places. Real Stories.™



Halifax Heritage Byway, the Newest Byway of the FSHP



Up Next:

Visit Florida: Partnering to Promote
Florida's Scenic Highways