

Lake Koocanusa Scenic Byway Project

FHWA National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program is a grass-roots, collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the U.S. Established in 1991, the program recognizes roads based on their outstanding scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational qualities with a vision “to create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and treasured places.”

The program mission is “to provide resources to the byway community in creating a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated byways.”

Since the program’s inception in 1991, FHWA has provided over \$502 million in funding for byway projects in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Although the new surface transportation bill (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/>) has changed the method of funding, the program is still codified and most program eligibilities remain.

More information can be found at: <http://www.bywaysonline.org/program/> and <http://www.nsbfoundation.com/>.

The National Forest Scenic Byway Program

The National Forest Scenic Byway Program was established in 1988 to connect the American public to some of the country’s most spectacular landscapes within our public lands. The goals of the National Forest Scenic Byways Program are to:

- Support and enhance rural community economic development.
- Showcase outstanding national forest and grassland scenery.
- Increase public understanding of national forests as a major provider of outdoor recreation.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of national forest activities and the importance of sustaining healthy, productive ecosystems.
- Ensure that people remain socially connected to public lands so they become better stewards of our natural resources.
- Meet the growing demand of driving for pleasure as a significant recreation use.
- Increase use of national forests by nontraditional users, including minorities and the elderly.
- Contribute to the Nation’s overall scenic byways effort.

More information can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/byways.pdf>

Montana State Scenic-Historic Byway Program

The Montana State Scenic-Historic Byway Program was established to promote and enhance tourism and foster greater understanding and appreciation of the state’s historic and cultural resources.

Information can be found on-line at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/scenic/>

Lake Koocanusa Scenic Byway

The 111-mile route connecting Libby to Eureka and looping around the southern portion of Lake Koocanusa including Hwy 37 and NFSR 228 was designated as a National Forest Scenic Byway in 1992 for its high degree of scenic and recreational value.

The 42-mile segment of Montana Highway 37 along Lake Koocanusa was designated for its scenic and recreation values in 2011.

Montana State designation requires the completion of a Corridor Management Plan within 2 years.

Definitions

Corridor Management Plan (a.k.a. the CMP)

A CMP is a written plan developed by the communities along a scenic byway that outlines how to protect and enhance the byway's intrinsic qualities and character that define their byway corridor. (It is a guidance-only document, not a regulatory document. It will **not** change any existing Federal or State management or access.)

FHWA requires a CMP include:

1. A map identifying the corridor boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, and land uses in the corridor.
2. An assessment of the byway's intrinsic qualities and their context.
3. A strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of the byway's intrinsic qualities.
4. A list of the agencies, groups, and individuals who responsible for implementation of the plan.
5. A strategy for how existing development along the corridor might be enhanced and how to accommodate new development while preserving the byway's intrinsic qualities.
6. A plan for on-going public participation.
7. A general review of the road's safety record to locate hazards and poor design, and identify possible corrections.
8. A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service.
9. A demonstration that intrusions on the visitor experience have been minimized, as feasible, and a plan to enhance the experience if compromised.
10. A demonstration of compliance with all existing local, State and Federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising.
11. A sign plan.
12. A narrative describing how the byway will be positioned for marketing.
13. Any proposals for modifying the roadway, including an evaluation of design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic qualities.
14. An interpretive plan.

Example CMPs: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5389285.pdf or http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tahoe/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fsbdev3_028146.)

Intrinsic Qualities

Intrinsic qualities (or features) are the scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area.