

Background

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) nomination guidelines for National Scenic Byways (NSB) and All-American Roads (AAR) were released in the fall of 1995.

These national scenic byway nominations come under the National Scenic Byways Program which was created by Section 1047 of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA authorizes expenditures for the national program, along with state and local programs, for planning and improving designated scenic byways. The program allows eligible state scenic byways an opportunity to receive federal designation as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads.

National Nomination Eligibility Requirements

National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads are two types of national nominations for scenic byway. The minimum requirement for both types is a completed corridor management plan. All-American Road nomination requires additional criteria and is considered the highest honor.

A corridor management plan is the written document that specifies the actions, procedures, controls, operational practices, and administrative strategies that will maintain the intrinsic qualities that merit scenic nomination. See Appendix A.2 for more specific information about the required elements of a corridor management plan.

In addition to a corridor management plan, national nomination requires that the route have at least one intrinsic quality. Intrinsic qualities are defined as those features of a byway that are representative, unique, or irreplaceable.

The six intrinsic qualities include:

1. **Scenic:** The heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of a scenic byway corridor. The characteristics are striking and distinct, offering a pleasurable and memorable experience.
2. **Historic:** Legacies of the past that are associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the traveler and create an appreciation of the past.
3. **Archaeological:** The physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human activity that can be viewed, inventoried, and interpreted.
4. **Recreational:** Outdoor recreational activities directly associated with the natural and cultural landscape of the corridor. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive experiences.

5. **Cultural:** Evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people.
6. **Natural:** Those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state.

National Scenic Byways

National Scenic Byways are roads that merit recognition at the national level for their outstanding intrinsic qualities. They represent some of the best State and Federal Land Management Agency Scenic Byways. The nominated byway must have at least one intrinsic quality, a completed corridor management plan, and accommodations for pedestrians, bicycles, and passenger vehicles.

All-American Roads

All-American Roads are considered to be exceptional byways, recognized nationally and internationally for their outstanding and highly unique intrinsic qualities. These roads are “destinations unto themselves.” The route must accommodate conventional tour buses. The route must also be significant enough to attract travelers who view the route as the primary reason for their trip. An All-American Road must possess at least two intrinsic qualities and have a completed corridor management plan. This corridor management plan must include three additional elements: a promotion plan, a multilingual information plan, and a tourism plan.

More Information

For more information about the requirements and application procedures for National Scenic Byway nomination, contact Washington’s Scenic Byway Coordinator, WSDOT’s Scenic Byway Program (see Appendix A.8).