

North Country Scenic Byways Council

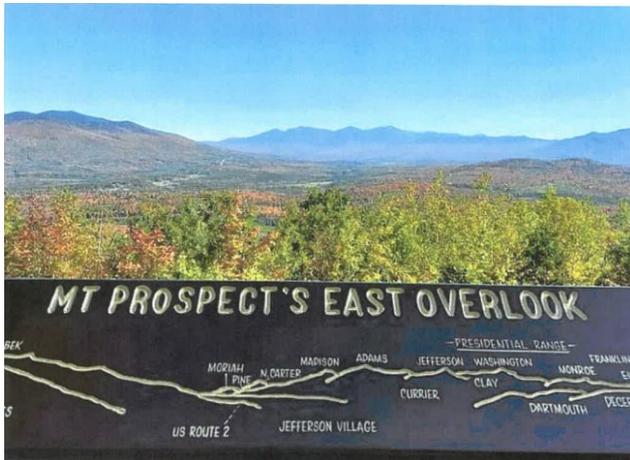
Press Release

(For release on November 15, 2021)

Improvements along the Mountain Road and Installation of New Historical Markers in Bethlehem Are Winners of Byway Enhancement Awards

Projects sponsored by the Weeks State Park Association and the Bethlehem Heritage Society have won the 2021 Byway Enhancement Awards sponsored by the North Country Scenic Byways Council. These awards highlight two outstanding community efforts: assisting in numerous improvements to the Mountain Road in Weeks State Park and installing new historical markers along Main Street in Bethlehem. Each organization will receive a cash award of \$1,000 from the Friends of the North Country Byways.

North Country Scenic Byways Council sponsors two types of awards. The “Read the Marker Award” recognizes improvements that encourage people to pull off the byway to learn about the people, structures or events described on one or more of New Hampshire’s historical markers. The “By the Byway Award” recognizes improvements that encourage people to stop to photograph the scenery, take a walk, have a snack or otherwise enjoy a few minutes at a local rest area, pull-off or trailhead. Nominated projects are evaluated on criteria related to the attractiveness of the site, the activities available at the site, the nature and extent of improvements, the extent of community involvement, and demonstrated success in attracting people to the site.



A new sign identifies peaks and villages visible From the East Overlook on the Mountain Road.



Durable bronze plaques describe the major building found along Main Street in the era of the grand hotels.

The nominations for these two sites included descriptions of the work that was done, the groups involved, and the way that the enhancements have attracted visitors. In both cases, multiple groups of people were involved in making improvements that have led to greater use of the sites by both residents and visitors.

Members of the Weeks State Park Association and other community volunteers assisted in many of the improvements recently made along The Mountain Road in Weeks State Park. This road, which in 1995 was the first scenic & cultural byway designated by New Hampshire, starts on US 3 in Lancaster and climbs through the State Park to the Weeks Estate at the summit of Prospect Mountain. Volunteers helped construct a new welcoming booth near the start of the road, install a new sign at the East Overlook, remove invasive vegetation all along the road, and build a new observation platform at the North Overlook. The reviewers’ comments can be summarized as *“All of the projects are used by many people. The Overlook with the new sign is spectacular! On any given day,*

many people enjoy the tranquil walk up the Mountain Road or the shorter walk to the North Overlook.” Although the road is closed to vehicles in the winter, it and an extensive trail system are open year-round for visitors.

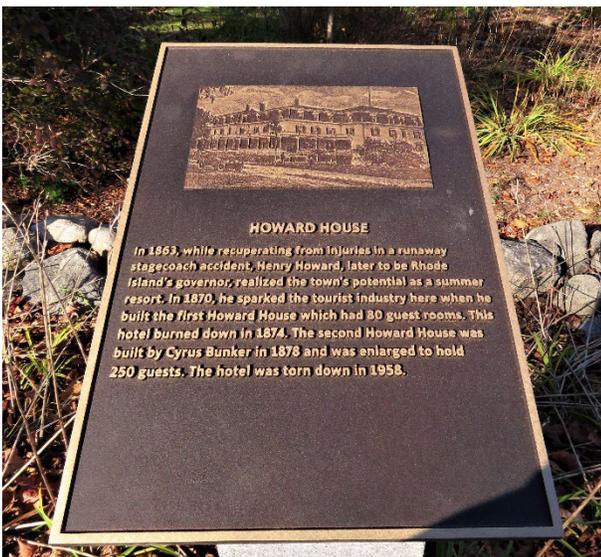


Working on the new observation platform at the North Overlook



The new welcome booth on the Mountain Road

The Bethlehem Heritage Society has located 17 beautiful markers at historic sites along Main Street. Each marker is at the site of one of the historic hotels or other prominent structures that made Bethlehem a famous summer resort more than a hundred years ago. The project was initiated by a donation from Tami Nason in memory of her husband Kent, who was particularly interested in the hotel history of Bethlehem. After walking along the street, stopping to read all of the markers, one reviewer said *“By placing the markers at the actual sites of the hotels and other buildings, some of which have survived, one gets a sense of how different and how magnificent the town must have been back at the peak of the grand hotels.”* Main Street in Bethlehem has now become an even more interesting place to stop for anyone traveling along US 302, which is part of the Presidential Range Trail, one of the North Country’s state-designated scenic & cultural byways.



One of the 17 historical markers recently installed along Main Street in Bethlehem



This marker commemorates the Bethlehem Country Club, established in 1912 and still going strong.

The first Byway Enhancement Awards were announced last June. The first “Read the Marker Award” went to the town and residents of Franconia for the many improvement to the site of the Stone Iron Furnace Historical Marker on NH 18, which is part of the River Heritage Trail. The first “By the Byway Award” went to the town and residents of Sugar Hill for the many improvements to the Coffin Pond pull-offs, which are also on NH 18.

North Country Scenic Byways Council will continue its Byway Enhancement Awards in 2021. Once again, towns, historical museums, conservation commissions, and other organizations or groups of volunteers will be able to nominate their projects for either the “Read the Marker Award” or the “By the Byway Award”. Nominees can indicate one or more non-profit organizations that would receive or share the cash award of \$1,000 if they win the award. For more information about the Byway Enhancement Awards or about the extensive network of scenic & cultural byways in the North Country, please visit the North Country Scenic Byway Council’s website (www.northcountrybyways.org).