

North Country Scenic Byways Council Announces “Byway Enhancement Awards”



In the scenic North Country of New Hampshire, almost every numbered state or federal highway has been designated as a scenic & cultural byway. The North Country Scenic Byway Council (NCSBC) is the management entity for this 600-mile network of roads that covers a region that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has called a “National Treasure,” recognizing both its natural beauty and its unspoiled cultural landscapes. (www.northcountrybyways.org)

The world-famous White Mountains, located in the center of this region, attract millions of visitors annually. However, the cultural landscapes, historic villages, and recreational opportunities further to the north and west are also well worth visiting for a day, a weekend, or a vacation. These areas are all well-served by the North Country’s scenic and cultural byways, which offer scenic routes if you are headed toward the Connecticut Lakes to go fishing, to Pondicherry for bird watching, to Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge for canoeing, to Dixville Notch for a picnic or toward the Connecticut River to bike along the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail.

Interesting places to stop, such as scenic pull-offs or historical marker sites, create options for spending more time along the byways, whether you are heading off for a day in the wilds, meeting friends for lunch in a nearby town, or simply enjoying an afternoon drive with your family. Providing better places to stop along the byways will encourage visitors and residents to go beyond the White Mountains to explore and enjoy more of this “National Treasure.” That is why NCSBC is announcing a new awards program.

“**Byway Enhancement Awards**” will highlight outstanding examples of efforts taken by communities, community organizations, or individuals to enhance their byways. Through this awards program, NCSBC will be:

- Promoting awareness of the byways via articles in local papers.
- Encouraging municipalities, historical societies, conservation groups and others to undertake efforts to improve pull-offs, rest-areas, trailheads, or other locations along the byways.
- Encouraging DOT, municipalities and others involved in major projects to consider how those projects can improve the North Country’s system of byways.

Our long-term objective is to encourage local efforts that, taken together, will enhance the byway experience for residents and visitors alike, thereby encouraging more people to “Spend a Day on the Byways”.

NCSBC is seeking nominations of projects that have improved or will improve the attractiveness of the North Country’s byways. **Phase I** of the program will recognize local projects that were completed between **January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2019**. **Phase II** of the program will recognize local projects completed between **January 1, 2020 and October 29, 2021**.

In both phases, nominations will be sought for **two types or categories of projects**:

- ***By the Byway Award*** - outstanding byway enhancement resulting from community efforts that encourage people to pull off the byway to photograph the scenery, take a walk, have a snack, meet friends or otherwise enjoy a few minutes or more at a local rest area, pull-off, or trailhead.
- ***Read the Marker Award*** - outstanding byway enhancement resulting from community efforts that encourage people to pull off the byway to learn about the people or events described on a historical marker.

Nominations for projects completed between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2019 (Phase I) are due by May 28, 2021, and winners will be announced at the June 2021 meeting of the NCSBC. Nominations for projects completed between January 1, 2020 and October 29, 2021 (Phase II) are due by October 29, 2021. Non-profit organizations associated with each award-winning project will share a cash award of \$1,000.

NCSBC has established an Awards Committee to manage the process of seeking nominations, evaluating submissions, and selecting award winners. Nomination forms and the criteria to be used in selecting award winners will be available on-line on North Country Council Scenic Byways website. (www.northcountrybyways.org)

Members of the **Awards Committee** include:

- Carl Martland, Chair NCSBC
- Dick Mallion, Chief Steward NCSBC
- Michael Bruno, author of "Cruising New Hampshire: A Guide to New Hampshire's Roadside Historical Markers"

Eligible projects include any community efforts to improve a site located along or very close to one of the North Country's scenic & cultural byways. Applications should be submitted by individuals, organizations, or municipalities that were involved in the project.

Applications should **demonstrate**:

- Describe the efforts taken to enhance the site.
- Identify the groups or individuals involved.
- Provide photographs of the site and a map detailing the location.
- Identify one or more charitable or non-profit organizations that would share the cash award.

To **qualify for an award**, there must be safe access from the highway to a formal (paved or unpaved) parking area for the site when the project is completed. The site must provide multiple amenities that will attract visitors, including but not limited to scenic views, a historical marker, access to a local walk, information kiosks, or places to sit for a while or have lunch.

Projects will be **evaluated by the Awards Committee** based upon the **following criteria**:

- Visitor Attractions: amenities available at the site.
- Nature of Enhancements: efforts taken to improve the safety or quality of the site.
- Community Involvement: extent of community involvement in initiating and completing the project.
- Use of the Site: ways that the site can be used by residents, visitors, tourists, or other travelers.

Examples of modest investments that enhance the byway experience.



This historical marker for Lake Coos and the Presidential Range has safe access from US 2, formal parking, landscaping and outstanding views. Unfortunately, not all historical markers have safe access, adequate parking, and multiple reasons to pull off the byway.



The pull-off at the intersection of NH 16 and NH 26 in Errol has ample parking, an information kiosk, access to the Androscoggin River, and a trail that extends along the river. It is an interesting spot to stop, take a short walk, take a look at a map of the area, or have a lunch by the river.

For more information and to submit your nomination, please contact Katie Lamb, Transportation Planner at North Country Council through email at klamb@nccouncil.org.

Evaluation Criteria

In order to recognize and reward local efforts to enhance the North Country's Scenic & Cultural Byways, the North Country Scenic Byway Council seeks nominations for two types or categories of **Byway Enhancement Award** projects.

- **By the Byway Award** - outstanding byway enhancement resulting from community efforts that encourage people to pull off the byway to photograph the scenery, take a walk, have a snack, meet friends or otherwise enjoy a few minutes or more at a local rest area, pull-off, or trailhead.
- **Read the Marker Award** - outstanding byway enhancement resulting from community efforts that encourage people to pull off the byway to learn about the people or events described on a historical marker.

To qualify for an award, the nominated site must offer multiple reasons for stopping and provide safe access from the highway to a formal (paved or unpaved) parking area for the site. Sites that have safe access and parking will then be evaluated on by the Awards Committee based upon the following criteria:

- Quality of the site: how attractive is the site when viewed from the byway and what amenities are available at the site?
- Nature of enhancements: what was done to improve the safety or quality of the site?
- Community involvement: how extensive was community involvement in initiating and completing the project?
- Demonstrated use of the site: what evidence is provided to show that the site enhancements have attracted or are likely to attract more people to the site?

The table below provides weights for each of these criteria. The criteria for the *Read the Marker Award* are similar but not identical to those for the *By the Byway Award*.

Evaluation Criteria for the *By the Byway Award*

| Criteria | Description | Weighting |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Quality of Site | | |
| • Attractiveness of Site | How attractive is the site? | 10% |
| • Site Amenities | Are there multiple reasons to stop at this site? | 30% |
| Nature & Extent of Improvements | To what extent did the project improve the safety or quality of the site? | 40% |
| Community Involvement | How extensive was community involvement? | 10% |
| Demonstrated Use of Site | Did the project result in increased use of the site? | 10% |

Evaluation Criteria for the *Read the Marker Award*

| Criteria | Description | Weighting |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Quality of Site | | |
| • Attractiveness of Site | How attractive is the site? Can people easily walk right up to the marker? | 10% |
| • Historical Evidence | What evidence is available at the sight for the events, people or history described on the marker? | 20% |
| • Site Amenities | Are there multiple reasons to stop at this site? | 10% |
| Nature & Extent of Improvements | To what extent did the project improve the safety or quality of the site? | 40 |
| Community Involvement | How extensive was community involvement? | 10% |
| Demonstrated Use of Site | Did the project result in more people reading the historical marker? | 10% |