



Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the purpose of the State Scenic-Historic Byway Program?

Answer: Montana's Scenic-Historic Byways Program is designed to promote and enhance tourism and the understanding and appreciation of the State's heritage in concert with the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the State's scenic, historic, and cultural resources. Proposed roadways are considered for designation by the Scenic-Historic Byway Advisory Council and approval by the Montana Transportation Commission.

Question: What are the requirements State Scenic-Historic Byway designation?

Answer: To be nominated as a State Scenic-Historic Byway the proposed stretch of roadway must meet the following requirements identified in Administrative Rules of Montana 18.14.201 through 208 and Montana Code Annotated 60-2-601 through 602.

Question: Who is eligible to nominate a roadway as a State Scenic-Historic Byway?

Answer: Local and tribal governments are eligible to nominate a roadway.

Question: What is required for a roadway to be nominated as a State Scenic-Historic Byway?

Answer: Interested parties must follow all requirements for nomination by submitting all required documents to the Montana Department of Transportation, including but not limited to an application, maps, letters of support, and a corridor management plan.

Question: What is a corridor management plan?

Answer: A corridor management plan describes how the maintenance of the scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, natural, and archaeological characteristics of a byway corridor will occur, while providing for accommodation of increased tourism and development of related amenities.

Question: Will corridor management plans restrict land and highway use?

Answer: Corridor management plans required for State Scenic-Historic Byway designations do not have any legal standing themselves. However, they do provide the public, adjacent property owners, local governments, and highway agencies with an opportunity to document exactly what the designation does and does not do prior to deciding whether they support the designation. Without such a document, some individuals or organizations could forever point to the designation as justification for their efforts to impose restrictions or prevent highway improvements.

Question: Can a roadway be designated at the federal level (i.e., National Scenic Byway or All American Road) without it first being designated as a State Scenic-Historic Byway?

Answer: No. A roadway must first be designated as a State Scenic-Historic Byway before it can be nominated for designation at the federal level as a National Scenic Byway or All American Road.

Question: If a roadway becomes a State Scenic-Historic Byway, will it automatically qualify for the National Scenic Byways Program?

Answer: To be considered for a national designation, a road must first be designated as a State scenic byway, an Indian tribe scenic byway, or in the case of a road on Federal land, as a federal land management agency byway. More information can be found [here](#)

Question: Will State Scenic-Historic Byway designation impose additional restrictions on private property owners and highway users?

Answer: Other than the additional Federal outdoor advertising restrictions that apply to scenic byways, scenic byway designation does not provide any Federal, State, or local government with any additional authority to pass or enforce laws or regulations that limits private property use or the activities of vehicles. However, because of concerns raised with earlier legislation, Montana's scenic byway statute specifically states that the designation will not affect property owners, highway users, or the activities of the agency responsible for the highway

Question: Will State Scenic-Historic Byway designation force MDT to change project designs and maintenance practices?

Answer: There are no Federal or State design requirements tied to Scenic-Historic Byway designations. Although a corridor management plan may identify some special design or maintenance requirements tied to a specific route, MDT would have to agree to these requirements before approving the plan.

Question: Will State Scenic-Historic Byway designation give Federal agencies such as the US Forest Service (USFS) more control over State highways?

Answer: MDT has a separate memorandum of understanding with the USFS that describes roles and responsibilities for the two agencies, regarding MDT highways that cross USFS lands throughout Montana. Four of the National Forest Service designated Scenic Byways in Montana are adjacent to MDT owned and maintained highways. The USFS has not attempted to use this designation to impose additional requirements on MDT since the designations occurred in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Question: Are there categories of state byways?

Answer: Yes. Montana's scenic-historic byways program have two tiers of designation:

1. Improved and paved roads that accommodate two-wheel drive vehicles would be designated at Montana byways.
2. Less improved roads that may require four-wheel drive or high clearance vehicles would be designated as Montana backways.

Question: Will byway designation prioritize state and federal funds to improve and maintain the roadway?

Answer: No

Question: What are America's Byways?

Answer: The term "America's Byways" is used to describe the collection of federally designated byways, which includes National Scenic Byways and All American Roads.