

Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan SUMMARY

What is a Scenic Byway?

A scenic byway is a route that people generally enjoy traveling and that reflects the intrinsic qualities of an area. Intrinsic qualities can be mountains, open vistas, communities, historic landmarks, or recreational resources for which an area is known. A byway can consist of one or more existing roads. Designating a route as a scenic byway makes it eligible for transportation scenic byway funds & can help residents plan how to maintain what they like best about it.

How Does This Apply Here?

The trip over Mount Greylock is often described with affection by residents and in glowing terms by visitors, though sometimes with expressions of concern about the safety of the roadway. Its value was recognized formally with state scenic byway designation which stated: The Commonwealth shall promote the protection of the scenic, historic, recreational, cultural and archaeological characteristics of the roadways which ascend to the summit of Mount Greylock. (Massachusetts Executive Order 387; 6/18/96)

The Byway is the existing roadways between Rt. 8 in North Adams (by Western Gateway Heritage State Park) and the intersection of Rockwell, Greylock, & Quarry roads, .5 miles south of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Visitor Center (Rt. 7 side of the Reservation). This is a distance of 16.3 miles.

Vision Statement

The Mount Greylock Scenic Byway is a beautiful and majestic roadway noted for its striking landscape and distant views. The remarkable legacy of the Mount Greylock Reservation, the first public land holding in the state forest and park system, is shared with visitors using different means of travel, who enjoy its unique natural and scenic setting. Our vision is to ensure that the significant and important features along the Byway are protected, maintained and, where warranted, promoted.

What Does This Mean to Local Landowners?

Scenic byway designation is a way to protect property values, preserve local quality of life, and conserve natural resources, while encouraging the local economy. This scenic byway is locally controlled. The group that developed the Corridor Management Plan (the Plan) included community representatives, DEM, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), and others (see list of participants on back). There is no federal involvement in terms of new regulations or changes in property rights.

How Were Opinions of Landowners and Others Included?

Local land owners, renters, and business owners were invited to participate in each major step by mail. All others were invited through ads in local papers. People who asked to participate more actively were included in all Committee mailings and meetings. The recommended actions were mailed out widely and reviewed at a mid-point public workshop. Also, at the request of residents in Lanesborough, the route of the Byway was changed. The original designation went all the way to Rt. 7, which is 1.3 miles beyond where it currently ends. They felt it made more sense for the Byway to

just link DEM properties: the Lanesborough Visitor Center Mount Greylock Reservation & Western Gateway Heritage State Park in North Adams.

What is in the Plan?

Existing conditions, issues, opportunities, potential management tools, and recommended actions to realize the vision are all covered. The information is divided into the following topics:

- **Scenic Resources** - natural and manmade qualities one sees along and from the Byway
- **Natural Resources** - components of the natural world
- **Historic & Archeological Resources** - evidence of how people lived here in the past
- **Cultural Resources** - how people live here today, as they have built upon the past
- **Recreation** - roads, trails, & facilities in the vicinity of the Byway
- **Land Use & Conservation** - existing land uses; considerations for future development
- **Transportation** - uses of the roads to move people in cars, on bicycles, by walking, etc.; parking
- **Tourism & Traveler Services** - capacity of existing tourist facilities; local economic considerations

What Were the Key Findings?

The central issue is how to balance environmental conservation with economic development. The environmental approach in this Plan is to educate visitors about unique and sensitive natural resources, and to encourage voluntary measures for protecting them. For residents in the area, an example of a possible voluntary measure is reviewing site plans to reduce impacts of development on the landscape. The economic development approach is to encourage existing visitors to spend more time (and money) in the North County area. This Plan does not seek to increase traffic on the Byway. It does seek to increase safety (especially on the North Adams sections near Rt. 8) and to assist in finding funds for preventing the roads from excessively deteriorating. A few of the major findings are:

- **Scenic Resources** - Near & far views from the Byway are vulnerable to development, but coordination with land owners & protection options can be further explored.
- **Natural Resources** - The area within the Reservation (the flagship of the State park system), includes some of Massachusetts' highest mountains, & some of the rarest, most unique natural habitats. A large majority of visitors go to the Summit, which has limited parking & areas of endangered plants. Reducing impacts by introducing visitors to other areas is recommended, although all decision-making for the Reservation remains with DEM and its citizen Advisory Council.
- **Recreation** - Trails intersect the Byway approximately 25 times, including four crossings by the Appalachian Trail, raising safety and parking issues for hikers and drivers.
- **Transportation** - The roads are crumbling & funding should be found to do basic repairs. Safety & parking are problems especially because the number of vehicles on the roads triples for a few Fall weekends. The feasibility of van service at least on a few peak weekends should be revisited.
- **Tourism & Traveler Services** - A survey of tourism facilities was done. It indicates where there seem to be opportunities in the 11 Northern Berkshire communities to encourage visitors to enjoy themselves and support the local economies.

What Are the Bottom Line Results?

There are some threats to qualities of the Byway that people say they like and some opportunities to maintain or, where warranted, promote them. The table below proposes a set of priority actions & starts to refine them for implementation. These are selected from the much longer list of actions developed with public input (see Plan). It will be updated at a public meeting each year.

Implementing the Actions

These are the proposed highest priority actions on which to start work

Action	Leadership	Funding Sources & Estimates	Time Period
Visitor information brochures & design of an appropriate Byway logo, coordinated with the Department of Environmental Management (DEM)	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) with DEM	Funded: Scenic Byway Program for \$9,600 Grant #SB-MA-98-02	2001
Signs, strategically placed to provide directions and interpretive information	BRPC with DEM	Funded: Scenic Byway Program for \$12,576 Grant #SB-MA-98-03	2002
Recreation Access focusing on trailhead safety	BRPC with DEM & Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	Funded: Scenic Byway Program for \$21,032 Grant #SB-MA-98-06	2002
Safety improvements & pavement repairs on Furnace Bypass, Furnace St., and Reservoir Rd.	North Adams/BRPC	Funding to be determined: \$5,000 - \$100,000	1-2 years
Critical Road Repairs identified by DEM: Summit Road, Mount Fitch Overlook/Hopper area, Rockwell Road (just north of the intersection with Sperry Rd.)	DEM (technical plans already prepared by Huntley & Associates)	Funding to be determined: \$500,000 - \$2,000,000	1-3 years
Safety Repairs & improvements throughout remainder of Byway of bollards, guard rails, reflectors and erosion control	DEM, North Adams, possibly Lanesborough	Funding to be determined: \$50,000 - \$1,000,000	1-3 years
Projects to protect the most significant natural communities & endangered species habitats in heavily used areas of the Reservation	DEM with support by BRPC	Funding to be determined: \$5,000 - \$100,000	1-5 years
Realign the intersection of West Mountain Road & Notch Road/Turn to the Mt. Greylock Gate (North Adams). This project was approved years ago but has waited for funding; there is potential for a small parking lot which could be kept plowed in winter	DEM	Funding to be determined: \$100,000 - \$500,000	3-8 years
Additional key road, drainage, and retention wall repairs as identified by DEM Culvert Survey & per departments of public works	DEM, North Adams, possibly Lanesborough	Funding to be determined: \$100,000 - 2,000,000	3-10 years
Cross-promotion of northern Berkshire recreation resources & activities, support for tourist-oriented business development	Coordinated effort of existing organizations	Funding to be determined: \$1,000 - \$10,000	1-5 years

See the Actions section of the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for additional recommendations.

These ideas on who might take the lead are only conceptual at this point.

The Funding Sources section of the Plan describes potential ways to procure needed funding.

What Are the Next Steps?

This summary is being distributed widely & the draft Plan is available for public review. It is available at the town (or city) hall of each of the communities along the Byway. Additional copies are available from BRPC. The draft will be revised to incorporate comments, then reprinted. The final Plan will be available at town (and city) halls, libraries, and upon request.

Who Contributed to the Plan?

The Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (the Committee) was a working group of representatives from communities & organizations (as well as interested citizens) that worked on preparing this Plan. It included representation from the Mount Greylock Advisory Council (the Council), a permanent citizens' group which has met quarterly on DEM Reservation issues since 1969. The Committee will be disbanding now that its work is complete and the Council will become the keeper of

the Plan, with technical support from BRPC. An annual meeting will be held each April on the Byway and to review proposals for grants to implement actions. Your participation is welcome in this effort to preserve & improve (where warranted) a beautiful part of the Berkshires.

Congratulations & Thanks to the Participants!

Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (the Committee)

- Representatives
Adams Conservation Commission (Joe Nowak), Appalachian Mountain Club (Fiona Hawley), DEM-Mount Greylock State Reservation (Clebe Scott), DEM-Division of Forests & Parks (Doug Poland, Paul Adams), DEM-Western Gateway Heritage Park (Dale Waterman), Lanesborough Select Board (Barbara Davis-Hassan as citizen liaison), Mount Greylock Advisory Council (Jack Kirby), North Adams City Hall (Leo Senecal, Angela Grey, Michael Nuvalle, formerly Greg Humora & Geoff Buswick), Northern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce (Michael Supranowicz), Williamstown Chamber of Commerce (David Cammer), Williamstown Planning Board (Richard DeMayo), BRPC staff (Tom Matuszko, Zoe Neaderland, Lauren Gaherty, Rob Pruyne, formerly Jeff Owen, Sheila Finn), & others
- Actively Involved Citizens
Gailanne Cariddi, Rich Cohen & Cheryl Sacks, Aimee Cole, Bonnie Dydowicz, Jerel Dydowicz, Diane Gallese-Parsons, Joe Knysh, Claudia LaPlante, Jennie Loricco, Paula Oparowski, Hank Poirot, Mr. & Mrs. Ken Randall, Wanda Robinson, Bob & Pam Wirtes, Jesse Wirtes, & others

Mount Greylock Advisory Council (the Council)

Stephen Blazejewski, Roderick Corey, Barry Emery, Jack Kirby, Stanley Kopala, William Linscott, Harley Phelps III, Claire Rowley, Lauren Stevens, Harold Taskin, Pamela Weatherbee, Lawrence Wright, DEM staff (Doug Poland, Paul Adams, Clebe Scott), & others

Contact Information

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To participate in the on-going implementation & updates of the Plan, contact:

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