



Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	Scenic Byway Connecting the Historic Flat Rock Byway in Henderson County, the Pacolet River Byway in Polk County, and the Forest Heritage Scenic Highway in Transylvania and Haywood Counties
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Project Narrative:	<p>In the state of North Carolina, the Department of Transportation designates Scenic Byways to provide visitors and residents a chance to experience a bit of North Carolina history, geography, and culture while raising awareness for the protection of these treasures. The Byways are selected based on natural, cultural and historic features along the route.</p> <p>This initiative includes designation of two new scenic byways that would create a connection between the <i>Historic Flat Rock Scenic Byway</i> in Henderson County with existing byway routes through the <i>Pacolet River Byway</i> in neighboring Polk County and a portion of the <i>Forest Heritage Scenic Byway</i> located in Transylvania, and Haywood Counties.</p> <p>Background on Existing Byways:</p> <p>The <i>Historic Flat Rock Scenic Byway</i>, the most recent designated Byway in Henderson County, consists of two roads intersecting as a “T.” The main road, U. S. 25, runs north and south along the byway and through the Village of Flat Rock. This portion of the byway route begins at the intersection of Highland Lake Road (S.R. 1783) and continues south to State Route 1812. Just past the Flat Rock Playhouse, also known as the “North Carolina State Theater,” the byways reaches the Little River Road (State Route 1123) or “T” intersection of the byway. Travelers may continue west on Little River road past “Connemara,” the Carl Sandburg National Memorial Site, for four miles from U.S. 25 to its terminus at Kanuga Road (State Route 1127) or continue on U.S. 25 to Pinnacle Mountain Road (State Route 1114).</p> <p>In Polk County to the east of Henderson County, the <i>Pacolet River Byway</i> begins where U.S. 176 crosses High Bridge at the Henderson County border. This byway parallels the Saluda Grade, the steepest mainline railroad grade in the United States, passing the historic towns of Tryon and Saluda, and terminates at the South Carolina border.</p> <p>West of Henderson County, the <i>Forest Heritage Scenic Byway</i> through the Pisgah National Forest begins at the intersection of U.S. 64 and U.S. 276 near the town of Brevard in Transylvania County. The U.S. 276 Section of this scenic byway has access to numerous attractions, including Looking Glass Falls, the Cradle of Forestry, Pisgah Fish Hatchery, Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, Pisgah Forest, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.</p>
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Description of Proposed Byways:

Two scenic byways, one to join the *Historic Flat Rock Byway* with the *Pacolet River Byway* in Polk County and another connecting with the U.S. 276 portion of **the** *Forest Heritage Scenic Byway* in Transylvania and Haywood Counties would create a unique scenic route, linking these four (4) Counties. (Please see attached maps, Bicycling Henderson County, Western North Carolina Road Map, and narratives with maps on each individual scenic byway, for reference.)

Proposed Byway #1

This new byway would connect the existing *Historic Flat Rock Scenic Byway* (Henderson County) to the *Pacolet River Byway* (Polk County). The byway route would begin on U.S. 276 at the Henderson County border and continue following the Southern Highlands Cross-State bike route (#8) via Oak Grove Road (State Route 1807) and Blue Ridge Road (State Route 1812) and connect with the *Historic Flat Rock Scenic Byway* at U.S. 25 near its intersection with Little River Road.

This byway would preserve access and increase awareness of several historic and natural sites. One of these sites is an architecturally significant and historic bridge. Historic High Bridge, with its concrete Roman arch design towering 200 feet above Green River near the town of Saluda, was the highest bridge of its kind east of the Mississippi when it opened in 1927. This bridge and U.S. 176 carried most traffic between Hendersonville (Henderson County) and Saluda (Polk County) and points south before Interstate 26 opened in the early 1970s. Today, plans include preserving the historic bridge and establishing a destination park with bike and walking trails.

Proposed Byway #2

An additional byway to connect the *Historic Flat Rock Scenic Byway* to the *Forest Heritage Scenic Byway* in Transylvania County would begin at the intersection of Kanuga/Crab Creek Road (State Route 1127) and Little River Road (State Route 1123). The route would continue on Crab Creek Road (State Route 1127), providing access to the Holmes State Educational Forest, a 231-acre preserve and environmental education facility, featuring self-guided trails that include exhibits, tree identification signs, a forest education center and a talking tree trail.

This byway route would provide direct access to the newly designated DuPont State Forest. DuPont State Forest, located along the Henderson/Transylvania County line, has three significant waterfalls and miles of trails for equestrian, mountain biking, and hiking enthusiasts and is the most visited forest in the state, with 106,000 visitors in 2004. Access to the forest would follow a loop route veering off Crab Creek Road to Old CCC Road (State Route 1128) which connects with DuPont State Forest just past its intersection with Sky Valley Road.

From the DuPont State Forest, the byway route would loop back to Crab Creek Road via Old CCC and Sky Valley Roads and continue to U.S. 64 near the community of Pisgah Forest. The new byway would continue west, paralleling U.S. 64, to the intersection of U.S. 276 and the starting point of the Forest Heritage Scenic Byway in Transylvania County.

The byway route would continue northwest along U.S. 276, past its intersection with the Blue Ridge Parkway, to the intersection of Highway 110 and 215 in Haywood County. The route of the byway would then loop back around to U.S. 276 by following Highway 215 to the Blue Ridge Parkway and heading to U.S. 276 and then south to U.S. 64.

The two new scenic byways, connecting to existing byways in Henderson, Polk, Transylvania, and Haywood counties, would create a unique scenic route past historic sites, rivers, waterfalls, and forests. These connected byways would create an attraction and would preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and historic features in the four-county area.

Goal:	<p>Scenic byways designated with inclusion in an updated NC Scenic Byway Map to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased tourism through a new “attraction” - Establish a push-pull opportunity for visitors between four counties - Create access to newly designated DuPont State Forest in Henderson County - Preserve and protect the natural, cultural and historic features in four counties
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Henderson County Travel & Tourism	None	Start 2005, Complete by March 2006

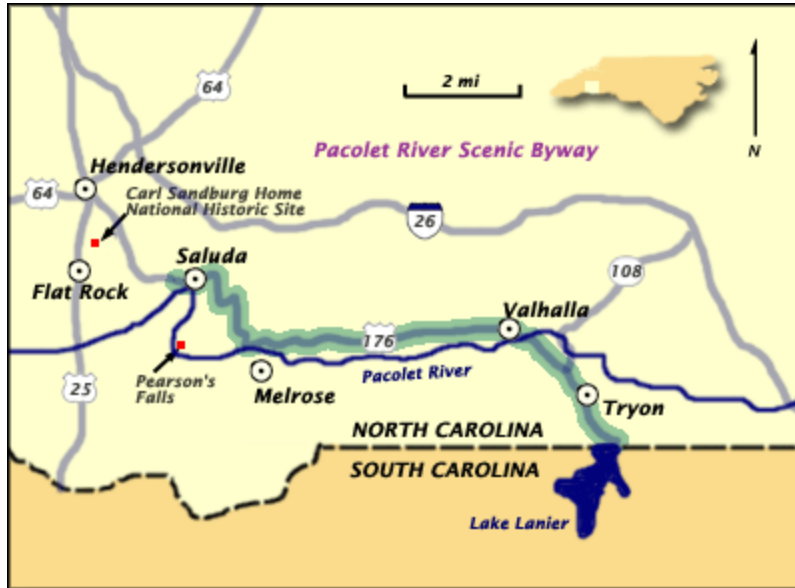
Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who’s Responsible:
<p>Initiate and coordinate project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fill out the Designation Readiness Worksheet - Contact State Byway Coordinators to begin understand and confirm the nomination process, including representatives from NC Department of Transportation, NC Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development, and the Environmental Programs Director for Federal Highway Administration – North Carolina Division - Complete application for byway nomination 	<p>Staff Coordinator</p> <p>40 Hours Estimated Time to Coordinate Project</p>	Henderson County Travel & Tourism

- Send in Nomination to FHWA - North Carolina Division office no later than March 31, 2006		

Performance Measures:	NC Scenic Byway designations for two new routes in Henderson County and inclusion in the NC Byway Map
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Status:	Preliminary Nomination Process
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PACOLET RIVER SCENIC BYWAY
Henderson and Polk Counties



FOREST HERITAGE SCENIC BYWAY
Transylvania County

