

CASE STUDY

the ROAD
BECKONS

BEST PRACTICES FOR BYWAYS

THE BUILT BYWAY ENVIRONMENT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BYWAY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Oregon



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BYWAY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

*Stretching 172 miles, the **Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway** passes through forests and mountains, alongside rivers and rural landscapes on the west side of the Cascade Mountains.*

Rich in natural beauty, the Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway owes its dramatic scenery and incredible landscapes to its volcanic past. Along the Upper Rogue River, the roadway is built on pumice and ash flows that were part of the cataclysmic Mt. Mazama eruption that took place approximately 7,700 years ago. The river itself flows through lava tubes above and below the surface at the Rogue Gorge. Waterfalls, rolling hills, 9,000-foot peaks, whitewater rivers and cascade lakes can all be viewed along the byway. Mindful of the uniqueness of the site, FHWA Federal Lands Division, the USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management (Roseburg District) and the Oregon Department of Transportation drafted a Development Plan to enhance visitor access and experience while protecting the resources of the area. Over time, this partnership has grown to include a variety of public and private interests who have contributed to the vision of how the area should be developed. To date, over \$22 million has been invested.

WINNING ELEMENTS:

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS AND VISION.

Because much of the byway runs through public lands, FHWA Federal Lands Division, the USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management (Roseburg District) and the Oregon Department of Transportation were the primary partners behind the Development Plan. Over time, interest in the project has attracted partners from the Southern Oregon Visitor's Association, 2 counties and 5 communities associated with the byway. Working together, they have successfully revised the corridor



The 33.8-mile Wild & Scenic North Umpqua River offers whitewater enthusiasts an array of thrills (right). Byway facilities complement the landscape (opposite right).



management plan, including the Development Plan segment, to better address the needs of the corridor. Complete with information on funding years, sources and estimated costs, the plan identifies future projects and the means to implement them. Community meetings and presentations held throughout the process helped provide a forum for discussion and raised awareness and support for the project. Broad based support was instrumental in securing national designation for the byway in 2002.

PLANNING FOR THE LONG TERM. To enhance the visitor experience, 7 elements were identified in the Development Plan: (1) Portals and Orientation, (2) Guide Signing, (3) Transportation, (4) Public Safety and Services, (5) Scenic Quality, (6) Recreation, and (7) Interpretation. By developing these goals early on and measuring the selection and implementation of projects against them, partners have been able to

TIMELINE

- **1990** Designated a National Forest Scenic Byway through the USDA Forest Service
- **1992** Designated a Back Country Byway through the USDI Bureau of Land Management
 - Completed a Conceptual Interpretive Plan for the Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway
 - Completed a Preliminary Development Strategy
- **1994** Developed a Design Guide for the Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway
 - Proposed Final Projects—Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway Enhancements
- **1995** Signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Signing between National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management and Oregon Department of Transportation
- **1996** Drafted a Corridor Management Plan
- **1997** Designated an Oregon State Scenic Byway through Oregon Department of Transportation
- **2001–2002** Revised the Corridor Management Plan and Byway Development Plan
- **2002** Designated a National Scenic Byway

maintain a consistency of purpose and product over time. Over a 10-year period, \$22.2 million in highway and recreation facility improvements, interpretive plan and project developments, visitor information and scenic enhancements have been implemented. The 7 elements identified in the plan will continue to guide the identification and implementation of future projects.

DESIGNING FOR THE LANDSCAPE. Early in the process, byway partners recognized the importance of designing facilities that would protect and, in some instances, enhance the surrounding landscape. In 1994, a byway design guide was created to provide reference on the design and aesthetic considerations for site planning and development along the byway. Incorporating Civilian Conservation Corps-era principles, the designs include the use of natural materials such as wood and rock indigenous

to the area in their design. Well-thought out and designed, the facilities preserve the visual integrity of the landscape and provide visitors ample opportunity to connect with the abundant natural and cultural heritage resources of the region.

MAKING INROADS

SUPPORTING A COMMON VISION.

By addressing the 7 elements outlined in the byway Development Plan the visitor experience is protected and enhanced. Sustained partnering and coordination over a 10-year period has yielded significant results.

- (1) Portals and Orientation—provide links to the scenic byway from Interstate-5 and provide visitor information sources such as kiosks and visitor information centers.
 - Numerous infrastructure improvements were made at strategic locations along the byway and information kiosks were installed at 13 recreation sites.
- (2) Guide Signing—develop a system of directional and guide signing with a uniform format.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding between ODOT, the USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management was developed with standards for consistent recreational guide signing along the byway. This included a goal of improved guide and assurance signing with a consistent color scheme of “cream on brown” with agency differentiation provided through the application of agency logos in the various jurisdictions.

FUNDING SHARE & SOURCES	DOLLARS	PERCENTAGE
STATE SHARE:		
ODOT Highway Funds	\$7,725,000	34%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARE & SOURCES:		
Roseburg Visitors and Convention Bureau	\$8,000	—
Other:		
Forest Service	\$865,000	4%
FHWA—Forest Highways	\$2,455,000	11%
FHWA—Public Lands Access	\$11,500,000	50%
BLM	\$225,000	1%
TOTAL COST	\$22,778,000	100%

- In 2001, a Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway logo was developed and full-color signs were financed and installed by ODOT to provide identification along the byway. These signs were coordinated with the “family of signs” developed by ODOT for the statewide scenic byway program.
- (3) Transportation—implement highway reconstruction projects that provide enhancements to the route and access to sites and areas along the route in a safe and efficient manner with adequate protection of the natural environment.
 - Four major road reconstruction projects on State Highways 62 and 138 were completed and funded by ODOT.
 - Highway reconstruction projects included paving pullouts to provide river access at critical locations and the installation of specialized self-weathering steel guardrails designed to blend with the landscape.
 - (4) Public Safety and Services—enhance safety and provide additional services for byway users.
 - Nine restroom facilities were installed and lighting provided at 2 high-use visitor sites.



- A winter snow condition camera provided by ODOT provides up-to-date information on driving conditions.
 - Interpretive signs at key sites include segment information on elevation, distance, parking facilities and trailheads for the 79-mile North Umpqua Trail to enhance trip planning.
- (5) Scenic Quality—maintain or improve existing scenery along the byway.
- At Steamboat Junction, converted a sand stockpile and loading site through grading and establishment of parking and visitor kiosk signing to enhance a formerly unattractive site.
 - Landscape aesthetics were improved during the State Highway 62 waste area clean-up.
- (6) Recreation—provide diverse and accessible recreation opportunities and facilities.
- Infrastructure improvements were completed at 12 recreation sites.
 - Major accessibility improvements were made at several recreation sites including Thielsen Viewpoint, Colliding Rivers Overlook, Union Creek Wayside, Watson Falls and Swiftwater.
- (7) Interpretation—provide interpretive information about the abundant natural and cultural resources found along the byway.
- Completed an interpretive plan in 1992.
 - Interpretive panels were installed at 12 recreation and visitor information sites. Interpretive panels were placed at 7 trailhead sites along the North Umpqua Trail.
 - Guide signing was replaced and upgraded along the byway.
- SHARING THE STORY.** Implementation of the byway Development Plan has contributed significantly toward sharing the story with visitors. In addition to infrastructure and interpretive facilities, a “family” of brochures has been developed to highlight resources throughout the area.

LESSONS FROM THE ROAD: “IN THEIR OWN WORDS”

During this project we learned:

- The importance of developing a plan and working the plan
- The value of coordinating resources and sharing management strategies across jurisdictional boundaries
- The importance of considering enhancements for “quality of life” and “economic diversification” when planning road reconstruction projects within the state
- How much people appreciate quality access to public lands and special places and associated recreation and interpretive improvements
- How important the Scenic Byway and the Forest Highway programs are in protecting natural resource values along the byway while

maintaining important access and providing facilities for citizens to enjoy nature

If we were to do it again, we would:

- Involve local communities earlier in the process
- Publicize the accomplishments more widely, both within organizations and to the public
- Pass on appreciation to the people who were instrumental in plan development and implementation for their good work over the past 10 years
- Invite local officials on a comprehensive tour of the accomplished projects and discuss the methods by which they were accomplished and funded to facilitate community learning and future visioning



ASSESSING YOUR EFFORTS

This project was successful because of a number of factors. Is your byway implementing similar best practices?



Diverse and accessible recreation opportunities abound.

ASSESSMENT
1 2 3 4

1: Never 2: Sometimes 3: Frequently 4: Always

1. Our projects advance our byway's mission and corridor management plan.
2. We think ahead. We have a long-term (year by year) development plan for our byway projects.
3. We have researched federal funding sources beyond the National Scenic Byways grant program (e.g., Transportation Enhancements and others).
4. We involve local, state, regional, and federal partners in our projects.
5. We engage the public through community meetings, byway tours, and other forums.
6. Byway facilities are designed to complement the surrounding landscape and setting.
7. When planning byway facilities, we consider visitor needs for safety, accessibility and wayfinding.

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RESOURCES

Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan
(January 2002), Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway brochure, Thundering
Waters brochure, Off the Beaten Freeway Brochure.

ROAD WORK AHEAD

1. When an idea for our byway comes to mind, how do we decide when and what to share with other partners and stakeholders along the byway?
2. Are we successful in finding champions for getting things done on our byway?
3. What can we learn from this case study?
4. Are there aspects of this case study that we would like to incorporate into our byway plans and initiatives?
5. What are our success stories? What physical improvements have we made along our byway?
6. What steps would we like to take to improve and enhance our *byway's built environment and visitor facilities*?
7. What would we like to know more about related to this case study?



Interpretation at key sites enhances the visitor experience.



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Case studies are drawn from the 2001 and 2003 Best Practices for Byways competitions.