

# Scenic Sumter

## HERITAGE BYWAY



## Annual Work Plan 2020



November 2019

## Introduction

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The Florida Scenic Highways Program guidance requires that each byway develop an annual work plan (plan) for the upcoming year. The intent is to help byway organizations assess their plans for the upcoming calendar year. Although there is no required format for this plan, the guidance recommends that it be realistic and take into consideration the human and financial resources of the organization. In developing this plan, the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway Board (Board) felt it appropriate to first assess where their organization has been before establishing a plan of action for the upcoming year. Thus, this 2020 Annual Work Plan has two parts;

1. Assess current byway organization status
2. Establish a 2020 Work Plan

## Current Status

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### Byway Background

The Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway is in Sumter County and extends through the cities of Bushnell and Webster, and the historic communities of Linden, Tarrytown, St. Catherine, Lake Panasoffkee, Sumterville and Rutland. The corridor is approximately 62 miles in length (**Figure 1**). Through community advocacy, this grassroots organization earned the FDOT designation of Florida Scenic Highway in 2013.

### Guiding Principles

As part of Plan development, the Board first reviewed their Mission and Vision statements to ensure that they still accurately reflected the organizations focus. It was decided that these two statements, as presented here still reasonably meet the organizations desires.

### Mission

*It is our mission to promote and protect the natural beauty, recreation potential and outstanding historic resources and traditions of the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway for residents, visitors and future generations, while encouraging an economic return to Sumter County and its local communities.*

### Vision

*It is our vision that the synergy developed through strong partnerships, education and resource advocacy creates a nationally recognized byway that showcases the natural, scenic, recreational, and heritage resources of Sumter County, and that community decisions are based in part on these special values.*



The Board reviewed their current Goals & Objectives to ensure that their priorities and day-to-day efforts are consistent with these guidelines. It was determined that the Goals & Objectives as listed below still reflect the desires of the Board. As part of this review the Board assessed the status of each statement and noted that several have been accomplished and many are currently being worked on.

### **Goal 1: Protect, preserve, maintain, and enhance the scenic, recreational and natural resources of the corridor.**

**Objective 1:** Support efforts to promote public awareness and use of **Public Land / Recreational Resources** along the byway. **Underway**

- Catalogue existing public land/recreational resources along the byway
- Ensure subject resources are made part of all pertinent Byway publications
- Conduct Byway functions at these facilities whenever possible
- Participate in functions that are held at these facilities whenever possible
- Advocate for government support of these resources and participate in development of strategies that enhance the visitor experience

**Objective 2:** Identify and document **Historic Resources** along the byway in order to enhance community appreciation of Sumter County's heritage. Foster partnerships with like-minded advocacy groups. **Underway**

- Identify and establish partnerships with other heritage advocacy organizations.
- Identify funding to conduct a Cultural Resources Assessment Report for the Byway (portions not previously assessed)
- Work with Byway partners to establish a prioritization process to identify high priority resources
- Work with other heritage advocates to identify viable preservation/documentation techniques available to the community to protect high priority resources
- Support efforts to preserve heritage resources
- Ensure subject resources are made part of all pertinent Byway publications

**Objective 3:** Develop/maintain a "Stories from the Road" archive of materials & information that tells the story of the Byway's heritage (see Goal 4/Objective 5).

- Establish a working committee to identify pertinent items in need of preservation
- For "stories" to be collected, develop a series of targeted questions to be asked by interviewers of interviewees
- Identify "story tellers"
- Identify a depository for materials (hard copy/electronic) collected
- Develop a database of materials collected
- Advocate for long term funding to maintain the established "heritage collection"
- Establish a "Show & Tell" component to the byway organization meeting agenda

**Objective 4:** Identify **Scenic Vistas** along the byway and advocate the protection of these vistas through public awareness and appreciation of the corridor envelope. **Underway**

- Document existing special vistas (areas of extraordinary scenic view)
- Identify potential issues associated with documented vistas (ownership, land use, safety, etc.)
- Work with local government and other partners to identify, categorize and prioritize a list of additional “potential scenic vistas” available along the Byway
- Establish acceptable protection techniques available for preservation of these vistas
- Advocate for funding to preserve current/new vistas & ensure accessibility
- Identify vistas on Byway marketing materials
- Recommend enhancements (e.g. informational kiosks) that educate visitors on the byway.
- Ensure subject vistas are made part of all pertinent Byway publications

**Objective 5:** Accentuate the **Agricultural Heritage** of Sumter County by supporting and promoting the scenic beauty existing along the byway because of ranching/farming/crop production efforts.

- Establish a Byway Organization partnership agreement with Cattleman’s Association and Sumter County Farm Bureau that includes partnering on mutually advantageous promotional opportunities (i.e. calendar with stamps/brands)
- Identify Candidate project materials
- Obtain owner approvals
- Establish a sales/promotional plan
- Identify a photographer/printer
- Project production
- Final product advertisement

**Objective 6:** Support or advocate for a byway sponsored **Litter Control / Roadway Beautification Program** along the byway corridor. **Underway**

- Maintain scheduled clean-up events
- Report accomplishments on social media
- Seek additional volunteers to support clean-up efforts
- Seek out other volunteer groups to adopt additional segments of the byway

**Goal 2: Advocate for safe access to the corridor’s intrinsic resources so as to promote their use while preserving them for future generations.**

**Objective 1:** Support the County’s **Wayfinding Plan** and potential links to the byway’s resources. **Completed**

- Schedule periodic updates on the wayfinding program requirements and progress
- Identify/recommend byway resources for inclusion in future phases of the wayfinding system  
Support efforts to fund future phases.

**Objective 2:** Support efforts to **enhance the I-75 Exit 309 interchange** at the Florida National Cemetery. **Underway**

- Partner with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Sumter County, and the Lake Sumter MPO.
- Investigate naming options for the interchange.
- Advocate for a feasibility study to be conducted for the installation of landscape and aesthetic features at the interchange.

**Objective 3:** Support FDOT and MPO **Safety Improvement** efforts related to the byway. **Underway**

- Partner with other corridor users to identify safety needs
- Support BOCC efforts to establish a needs list of projects
- Advocate for BOCC project prioritization of key projects
- Support local efforts to seek funding necessary to accomplish priority projects

**Objective 4:** Partner with and provide support to user groups (hikers, bikers, birders, kayakers, etc.) for the enhancement, creation and maintenance of existing and proposed **Trails and Blueways** on public land. **Underway**

- Identify advocacy groups with similar interests
- Participate in regional planning events.
- Work with partners to advocate for enhanced program funding
- Support “get the word out” efforts to advertise the current system and needed improvements
- Maintain an active role in the Coast to Coast decision making process
- Participate in the FDEP Parks/Trails visioning process

**Goal 3: Partner with local governments, individuals, and community advocacy organizations to promote responsible commercial and residential development that enhances the value of the corridor’s resources.**

**Objective 1:** Promote and develop enhanced **Participation with the Byway** through community volunteers, the local business community and civic groups. **Underway**

- Maintain a Community Participation Plan that identifies promotional tools and potential partners
- Develop informational materials regarding the corridor and the Florida Scenic Highways program (see Goal 4)
- Establish dialogue with partners that shares information. Attend partner meetings (“Information sharing”)
- Maintain an active Speakers Bureau (see Goal 4) to disseminate Byway information
- Support City of Webster community enhancement efforts including trails, complete streets improvements and creation of community aesthetic features

**Objective 2:** Support the county’s **Adopt-A-Highway Program** (see Goal 1/Objective 6 for additional information). **Underway**

- Identify byway segments needing adoption

- Market available segments
- Commit to 100% adoption in 3 years

**Objective 3:** Identify and support byway **User Groups** that promote the byway’s mission – i.e.; bicyclists, birders, motorcyclists, runners, fishermen, boaters (groups within The Villages).  
**Underway**

- Based on the Community Participation plan, identify potential partnering organizations
- Establish contact with potential partners.
- Establish Partnering Agreements as necessary
- Establish a process to share partner organization information
- Link social media accounts through “likes” and “shares”
- Support active participation in each other’s organization
- Support common causes

**Objective 4:** Provide decision makers with a clear understanding of the Byway’s resources, value and the mission of the Byway Organization. **Underway**

- Ensure that decision makers are included in the byway organization contact list. Review the list annually to ensure it is current
- Establish an annual “Tour of the Byway” for newly elected officials with decision making authority over the resources
- Develop briefing materials (i.e. fact sheets, informational pamphlets, photo logs etc.) to be provided to decision makers so they better understand the corridor resources and the Byway’s value to the community
- Develop a “Fast-Facts” informational piece for distribution to elected officials on the program and the Byway.
- Support FSHP efforts to document “Return on Mission”

**Goal 4: Increase awareness of the region’s rich natural and heritage resources through the development and presentation of the corridor story to residents and visitors alike.**

**Objective 1:** Maintain a focused **Awareness Plan** that educates the community about the byway utilizing available media sources. (Facebook, newspaper, newsletters, Villages TV, local radio, Visit Florida, etc...) **Underway**

- Establish an Awareness Committee with a defined mission
- Establish partnerships with the local news industry
- Take advantage of Visit Florida and other marketing resources that can be of value to the long-term success of the organization’s mission
- Maintain a speaker’s bureau and support with digital and print materials for distribution
- Establish/maintain social networking connections (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.)
- Implement a byway organization planning calendar that targets community events of which the group intends to participate. Develop an event participation strategy as part of this effort.

**Objective 2:** Develop **Educational Materials** to be used by locals and visitors alike (brochures, mobile apps, kiosks, etc. describing the history of Lake Panasoffkee, historic cemeteries, Spanish explorer routes, Native American history, transportation history, etc.). **Underway**

- Establish prioritized needs for educational materials
- Identify target issues to be addressed in these materials
- Seek funding sources to produce these materials
- Develop a prioritized distribution plan for the materials produced

**Objective 3:** Maintain a Website and social media presence **Underway**

- Establish an operating policy
- Identify a social media coordinator & volunteers capable of overseeing the networking effort
- Maintain digital connectivity between the website, Byway social media tools and regional and statewide partners

**Objective 4:** Develop a strategy for the **Documentation of Historic Information** to be archived and passed on to younger generations **Underway**

- Work with heritage partners to identify resources/topics for preservation
- Establish/identify methods or preservation techniques (copies, photos, digital recordings etc.)
- Establish a “home” for materials collected/documentated

**Objective 5:** Develop a digital “Stories from the Road” oral histories series

- Establish what stories need to be told
- Identify narrator for story
- Establish a series of topical questions to facilitate the interview
- Identify methods to store and share completed stories

**Objective 6:** Implement a strategy that exposes the byway to the Sumter County business community **Underway**

- Establish an events calendar with targeted community events of which the byway organization intends to participate (see Goal 4/Objective 1)
- Establish a committee to ensure Byway Organization involvement is accomplished (brochures, membership information, registration fees, volunteers, set-up/break-down)
- Designate a designated photographer to record participation and close the loop by posting photos to social media.
- Develop informational materials needed for distribution at events (i.e. brochures, giveaways, display boards, banners, video, maps, etc.).
- Provide the business community information on the FDOT Byway Economic Study
- Develop press releases and news articles that publicize organization activities

**Objective 7:** Recognize Sumter County community founders

- Identify the founding individuals and families that shaped Sumter County's heritage
- Investigate recognition methods
- Collect family stories for preservation

**Objective 8:** Develop community educational programs **Underway**

- Develop a series of educational tours of the corridor that offers narrated tours of the byway, corridor maps/brochures and a snack and/or lunch along the Byway

**Objective 9:** Take a leadership role in establishment of an enhanced I-75/Exit 309 interchange that is more reflective of an entranceway to the near-by National Cemetery. **Underway**

- Seek out funding sources to support organization efforts including supporting Lake/Sumter MPO efforts to fund a project feasibility study to establish project concepts
- Lead efforts to communicate the interchange concept and its importance to local veteran's groups and elected officials

**Goal 5: Encourage investment that enhances the regions resources and improves the corridor's special sense of place.**

**Objective 1:** Support the county's **Economic Development Program** and partner with advocacy groups who also promote economic development in Sumter County (examples include the TDC, Chamber of Commerce, Historic Preservation Society, Visit Florida, Explore Sumter County, native plant group/garden clubs, etc.) **Underway**

- Support economic development tools that boost interest and involvement in Byway priorities
- Advocate for tools that help measure the economic contribution that the Byway makes to the community.
- Maintain involvement in organizations that have similar missions
- Partner on opportunities to highlight Sumter County and Byway resources

**Objective 2:** Promote **Recreational Tourism** in the County (fishing, county parks, antiques, birding, blueways/trails, etc.) through outreach activities such as presentations, guest speakers, and guided tours. **Underway**

- Highlight recreational tourism in Byway marketing materials and community involvement efforts
- Advocate for enhanced focus on recreational tourism with regional and state tourism marketing organizations (e.g. Visit Florida, Sumter Tourist Development Council)

**Objective 3:** Promote and support the FDOT's wildflower program and the use of native plants in Sumter County as it pertains to the byway. **Underway**

**Objective 4:** Identify and support **Local Events/Festivals** that bring attention/awareness to the region and the byway (annual events include the Dade Battlefield State Park reenactments, Bushnell Fall Festival, and the Linden picnic). **Underway**

- Establish a 12 month “Look-ahead” calendar to identify and track local events & commitments (see Goal 4/Objective 1)
- Partner with the Sumter Chamber and other event planner/sponsors to populate the calendar with events of which the byway organization intends to participate
- Identify volunteers to represent the organization at planned events
- Maintain marketing/event involvement materials for use at each event (brochures, sign-up sheets, display tables, banners etc.)
- Seek new membership/donations
- Document involvement with photos, news releases and posting through social media outlets

**Objective 5:** Partner with local businesses to promote the Byway. **Underway**

- Encourage “Byway welcome stops” with appropriate local tourist-related businesses willing to display interpretative information and offer corridor informational materials
- Develop promotional materials (e.g. restaurant placemats, fans, do-not disturb hangers) that appropriate local tourist related businesses can use to encourage byway usage
- Develop informational materials (e.g. targeted brochures) that focus on special resources (boating, fishing, country cooking, heritage)
- Encourage special interest publications to produce byway related tourism articles

## **Goal 6: Maintain the administrative duties of the organization through active committees.**

**Objective 1:** Maintain an organization structure that assures the long-term success of the Byway Organization. **Underway**

- Develop/maintain an organization chart including board members and committees.
- Establish working committees that address organizational needs. Ensure each committee is provided a working mission and responsibilities to establish their duties
- Establish “Core Values” for the organization
- Track volunteer hours

**Objective 2:** Maintain Byway Organization Documentation. **Underway**

- Develop a records management policy
- Identify a depository for all Byway Organization documentation
- Establish a photo log of Byway Organization events

**Objective 3:** Ensure the successful completion/submittal of FSHP reports, Florida Department of State Incorporation documents and IRS filings as required. **Underway**

- Develop a tracking spreadsheet of all required documents and update/submittal schedules to ensure accurate and timely organizational filings

**Objective 4:** Byway Organization Sustainability. **Underway**

- Establish a membership committee whose responsibility includes member services and recruitment
- Implement an “Everybody Brings Somebody” strategy to increase participation
- Establish a fundraising program that seeks donations for organization efforts

## Recent Accomplishments

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Part of the Board's assessment of their status was to document recent accomplishments. The Board believes that past accomplishments help determine their future course of action. These accomplishments are part of a larger implementation strategy that is consistent with the organizations long term focus (Mission, Vision, Goals, and Work Plan).

- Participation in 2019 Community Events (i.e., Dade Battlefield Reenactment, Bushnell Fall Festival).
- Participated in the University Florida/FDOT Funded Economic Impact Study.
- Participation in the 2019 District Five Byway Workshop in Deland, Florida.
- Developed an “elevator speech” for the Byway.
- Partnered with FDOT in the development of two volunteer recruitment videos that were promoted on the Byway website and social media outlets.
- Developed volunteer recruitment materials focused on high schools students requiring volunteer hours (i.e. Bright Futures Scholarships)
- Development of two vertical retractable banners promoting the byway and volunteer recruitment.
- 300-follower increase on the byway organization's social media platforms.
- Partnered with Coastal Angler Magazine to market the byway in their monthly publication
- Began planning efforts for the development of an interpretive kiosk panel to educate the community on the history of Sumterville and the Sumter Electric Co-Op.
- Upgraded the information panel located at the Webster Market
- Continued planning efforts for the I-75 Exit 309/Veteran's Memorial Gateway project.
- Hosted the Clays 2 Raise fundraiser event for the Byway.
- Participated in quarterly Adopt a Highway (Roadside Litter Removal) Events.
- Hosted the 2019 Annual Dinner Meeting.

- Hosted a guest lecture series of speakers as part of the organization’s monthly meetings
- Hosted a tour of the Byway for Congressman Daniel Webster.
- Participated in the long-range planning of the Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail through Webster.
- Updated the Sumter Byway Tour Guide Itinerary.
- Updated the Byway brochure.
- Maintenance of the Byway Website.
- Hosted multiple games of Cow Chip Bingo at community events.
- Active participation in social media tools (i.e., Facebook, Instagram) to promote the byway.
- Briefings on the program and the byway to elected officials, including Congressman Daniel Webster and Senator Bill Nelson.
- Community recognition of the byway organization through multiple local newspaper articles and targeted press releases
- Continued fundraising efforts for the Donor Brick Program.
- Completed all Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) planning and annual reporting requirements.
- Completed all corporate reporting requirements including IRS filing, corporation status renewal, and Florida Department of Agriculture Solicitation of Contributions renewal.

## 2019 Work Plan in Review

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The following table reviews the status of our 2019 work plan. Most items in the plan were either accomplished remain underway. Those noted as not completed are the result of a lack of available volunteer support to complete the task.

## 2019 Annual Work Plan – Status Update

Program/Project	Goal(s) & Objective(s)	Estimated Date of Completion	Comments
<b>Publish Quarterly Byway Newsletter</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Underway	Byway volunteers are assembling articles to publish a quarterly email blast/newsletter.
<b>Update the Florida Scenic Highways Program Office of Events along the Byway</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Ongoing	The board communicates events to the FSHP and submits event updates via targeted press releases
<b>Continue implementation of Kiosk Program</b>	Goal 4, Objective 2	Ongoing	The board is currently planning a kiosk to be installed in Sumterville at the Community Center. Completed upgrades to the Webster Market information panel
<b>Brick Donor Fundraising Program</b>	Goal 3, Objective 1	Ongoing	Several bricks were ordered this year. The board continues to encourage its membership to purchase bricks.
<b>Participation in the Sumter County Adopt-a-Highway Program</b>	Goal 3, Objective 2	Ongoing	Byway volunteers organizes these events quarterly.
<b>Participation in Partner Events within the Community</b>	Goal 5, Objective 1	Ongoing	The board partnered with the community at multiple events.
<b>Maintain Social Media Presence</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Ongoing	An Instagram page for the Byway was established in 2018 and is maintained, along with its Facebook, by the byway volunteers.
<b>FDOT Annual Reporting</b>	Goal 6, Objective 2	February 2019 (Complete)	Completed by byway volunteers.
<b>Maintain Not-for-Profit Corporation Status</b>	Goal 6, Objective 3	April 2019 (Complete)	Corporation status fee; paid by donation
<b>Disseminate the findings of the Economic Impact Study of the Byway to locally elected officials</b>	Goal 3, Objective 4	Complete	Community presentations were held in early 2019. Information materials were posted on web site/social media sites and reported through news agencies
<b>Participate in Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail Planning Efforts</b>	Goal 2, Objective 4	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Initiate a member/leadership recruitment program</b>	Goal 6, Objective 4	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Participation in the D5 Byways 2019 Workshop</b>	Goal 6, Objective 2	March 2019 (Complete)	Byway volunteers attended the Workshop and developed an “elevator speech” for the byway.

As noted above, before the Board could develop a work plan for the upcoming year they needed to assess where they had been. This assessment showed an organization that remains consistent with its original focus to be an advocate for Sumter County's heritage and beauty and to serve as an economic development tool for the long-term vitality of the County.

In developing their 2020 Work Plan, the organization was careful to identify actions that provide continuity and carry forward past successes. All items in this 2020 Work Plan are consistent with the byway organization's long-term focus.

## Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway Annual Work Plan (2020)

Program/Project	Goal(s) & Objective(s)	Lead	Estimated Date of Completion	Funding Source
<b>Publish Quarterly Byway Newsletter/Email Blast</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Dawn Cary	Underway	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Update the Florida Scenic Highways Program Office of Events along the Byway</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Continue implementation of Kiosk Program</b>	Goal 4, Objective 2	Martin Steele	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Brick Donor Fundraising Program</b>	Goal 3, Objective 1	Dawn Cary	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Planning for the I-75/Exit 309/Veterans Memorial Gateway Project</b>	Goal 2, Objective 4	Dawn Cary	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Participation in the Sumter County Adopt-a-Highway Program</b>	Goal 3, Objective 2	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Participation in Partner Events within the Community</b>	Goal 5, Objective 1	Dawn Cary	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Establish an Awareness Committee to educate the community and promote the byway</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Board	January 2020	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Maintain Social Media Presence</b>	Goal 4, Objective 1	Dan McCormic	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>FDOT Annual Reporting</b>	Goal 6, Objective 2	Board	February 2020	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Maintain Not-for-Profit Corporation Status</b>	Goal 6, Objective 3	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Participate in Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail Planning Efforts</b>	Goal 2, Objective 4	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Initiate a member/leadership recruitment program</b>	Goal 6, Objective 4	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time
<b>Support statewide program visioning efforts</b>	Goal 6	Board	Ongoing	In-kind donation for volunteer time

## **Contact Information**

Judie Mueller, Chairman

[SumterByway@gmail.com](mailto:SumterByway@gmail.com)

P.O. Box #6  
Webster, Florida 33597

[www.SumterByway.com](http://www.SumterByway.com)