



KANSAS SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Introduction

Background

“Driving for pleasure is Americans’ second favorite leisure activity.” (STPP Progress)

Leisurely driving along scenic roadways is a recreation enjoyed by much of the U.S. population nationwide. In 1962, the federal government created a Recreation Advisory Council to provide scenic driving opportunities to the public. The Council recommended that a national program of scenic roads and parkways be developed. In response to this program, the Kansas Highway Commission conducted a study entitled “Scenic Roads and Parkways Study in Kansas” in which 28 routes were identified for possible designation. An update to that report, “National Scenic Highway Study in Kansas,” was completed in 1974 by the Kansas Highway Commission to comply with the 1973 Federal Highway Act.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's little formal work was done on a scenic byways program. In 1989, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), in cooperation with the highway departments in Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska, through the Midwest Transportation Center, conducted a research study which resulted in the development of an inventory and evaluation procedure for scenic byways. One scenic byway, the Frontier Military Scenic Byway, was identified and designated by legislative action in 1990.

The National Scenic Byways Program was created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) to identify and develop scenic byways that offer outstanding scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational, or archaeological values to the traveling public throughout the U.S. The National Scenic Byways Program is intended to spark “grassroots” activity in the identification, nomination, and long-term maintenance of scenic routes throughout the country.

Under the National Scenic Byways Program and ISTEA, the State of Kansas initiated the Kansas Scenic Byways Program from a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant in 1992. The initial grant funded the development of guidelines and the formation of the Kansas Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (KSBAC) consisting of representatives from the following state agencies: KDOT, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing (Tourism Division), Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Kansas State Historical Society.

In summary, the Kansas Scenic Byways Program is administered by KDOT through the KSBAC and the Kansas Scenic Byways Clearinghouse to identify and designate, via grassroots initiative, scenic routes throughout Kansas that have high visual quality. KDOT’s role is to facilitate the process and insure the overall success of the program in Kansas.

Kansas Scenic Byways Program Mission Statement

The overall mission of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program is to identify and designate a system of scenic roads in Kansas for the enjoyment of the traveling public. This mission is to be accomplished

through a program that encourages and promotes state/local and public/private partnerships via community nomination of roads for formal designation and corridor management planning. In so doing, the program also aims to preserve the inherent scenic beauty of these roads for future travelers and to provide opportunities for increased tourism and economic development.

Implementation of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program can be divided into three phases: development, implementation and long-term management. Phase 1 focused on initial policy formulation and the designation of a “pilot route” that serves as a model for the process and for efforts required by state and local agencies. Phase 2 is a multi-year implementation period during which roads are nominated, evaluated, designated and signed. Roads that are both eligible for the program and meet KSBAC and KDOT criteria will be designated and signed. Phase 3 involves long-term management, enhancement and monitoring of the designated Kansas Scenic Byways. Some of the goals of Phase 3 are being pursued concurrently with Phase 2 activities.

Kansas Scenic Byways Program Management Plan

The KSBAC has developed a Management Plan to provide direction and guidelines for the Kansas Scenic Byways Program. The Management Plan consists of a set of goals and action statements that outline the Kansas Scenic Byways Program activities. Unless otherwise indicated, the actions will be undertaken by the KSBAC utilizing the Kansas Scenic Byways Clearinghouse staff. The goals and action statements are defined as follows:

Goals. General statements which illustrate guiding principles of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Actions. Specific techniques that will be used to implement program goals.

Program goals were initially developed in 1995. Since that time, the developmental goals and actions (Phase 1) have been undertaken, and the Kansas Scenic Byways Program has begun full implementation (Phase 2) and the early stages of long-term management (Phase 3).

Flexibility is important to any statewide program with local “grassroots” participation. It is anticipated the Management Plan will be updated annually to reflect the evolving aspects of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program. Since the initial goals were created in 1995, several modifications have been made in the overall program design. The current Management Plan reflects those modifications. In addition, this updated Management Plan reflects a revised format.

Program Goals

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program goals are listed below. The list has been and will be updated as the program evolves.

Initial Goals - 1995

- I. Establish and maintain a Kansas Scenic Roads Program that contains road corridors with high visual quality.
- II. Establish and maintain the Kansas Scenic Roads Program in a manner that allows and encourages participation of state and local governments, interested groups and individuals.
- III. Establish and maintain an ongoing program of protection and preservation along designated Kansas Scenic Byways.
- IV. Establish and maintain an ongoing program of scenic byway enhancements.
- V. Establish and maintain a statewide promotional program for the Kansas Scenic Roads Program.
- VI. Establish and maintain the Kansas Scenic Roads Program so that designated roads have a wide geographic distribution offering a variety of road types and different visual characteristics (i.e., Scenic Byways, Scenic Backways, Roads with Scenic Places and Historic Byways).
- VII. Manage the Kansas Scenic Roads Program so that designated routes are eligible for designation under the National Scenic Byway Program.

Revised Goals - 1996

Goal 1 Establish a Scenic Byways Program in Kansas and an advisory committee incorporating representatives from state agencies whose missions are related to the visual, historic, cultural, natural, archeological and recreational scenic byways characteristics as modeled by the National Scenic Byways Program.

Goal 2: Develop policies and guidelines for the implementation of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program that reflect the program mission.

Goal 3: Designate a pilot route from which to model the designation process for the rest of the program.

Goal 4: Devise a grassroots process for nominating, evaluating and designating Kansas Scenic Byways.

Goal 5: Inform and involve state and local groups about the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Goal 6: Process scenic byway route nominations.

Goal 7: Officially designate Kansas Scenic Byways.

Goal 8: Provide signing, mapping and brochure development for designated scenic byways.

Goal 9: Keep abreast of scenic byway program activities at the national level and in other states.

Goal 10: Monitor federal, state and local legislation and regulations as they pertain to scenic byways, e.g., billboard and beautification regulations.

Goal 11: Produce a financial plan that incorporates local, state and national funding sources (public and private) for cooperative ventures and long-term program continuity.

Goal 12: Encourage and promote cooperation among local scenic byway groups.

Goal 13: Develop scenic byway review criteria.

Goal 14: Develop other types of scenic roadways (e.g., backways, roads with scenic places, etc.) and other roadway designations (e.g., historic byways) to add to the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Goal 15: Develop an ongoing program of protection and preservation along designated scenic byways.

Goal 16: Develop an ongoing program of scenic byway enhancements.

Goal 17: Develop a statewide promotional plan to increase tourism.

Goal 18: Establish a cooperative program with neighboring states for promotional and other activities.

Phase 1: Program Development Goals and Action Statements

Goal 1 Establish a Scenic Byways Program in Kansas and an advisory committee incorporating representatives from state agencies whose missions are related to the visual, historic, cultural, natural, archeological and recreational scenic byways characteristics as modeled by the National Scenic Byways Program.

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program is a partnering venture among state agencies and state/local governmental groups as well as with private entities. The program is designed to identify, designate, preserve, enhance and promote the scenic resources throughout the diverse physiographic regions of the State.

Action 1.1: Organize the Kansas Scenic Byways Advisory Committee (KSBAC) to include representatives from KDOT, Kansas Department of Housing and Commerce-Tourism, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and Kansas State Historical Society.
Status: Completed.

Action 1.2: Develop a mission statement for the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.
Status: Completed.

Action 1.3 Plan and hold regularly scheduled meetings of the KSBAC to address policy issues, complete the designation and implementation process, and conduct other activities as necessary.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 1.4 Review and update the Management Plan annually.
Status: Ongoing.

Goal 2 Develop policies and guidelines for the implementation of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program that reflect the program mission.

Policies and guidelines are necessary for carrying out the program. They are subject to revision as circumstances change.

Action 2.1: Develop, review and adopt implementation policies and guidelines.
Status: Initial policies developed, and policy development activity is ongoing.

Action 2.2: Develop criteria for selecting roadways for scenic byway designation that reflect high visual quality; the physiographic diversity of the State; accessibility not only to autos but also to tour buses, recreational vehicles and touring bicyclists; and sufficient length to provide a worthwhile trip to the traveler.
Status: Completed.

Action 2.3: Develop and publish guidelines for implementing the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.
Status: Completed.

Action 2.4: Develop scenic definitions.
Status: Completed.

Action 2.5: Develop safety policy for scenic byways.
Status: Draft completed.

Action 2.6: Develop signing policy.
Status: Completed.

Action 2.7: Develop scenic byways evaluation criteria.
Status: Completed and revised.

Action 2.8: Develop scenic byway evaluation techniques that include local input and professional input.
Status: Completed and revised.

Action 2.9: Conduct scenic quality study to test evaluation techniques.
Status: Completed.

Action 2.10: Manage the Kansas Scenic Byways Program so that designated routes are eligible for designation under the National Scenic Byways Program.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 2.11: Study effects of scenic byways designation on local community economy.
Status: Completed.

Goal 3 Designate a pilot route from which to model the designation process for the rest of the program.

A pilot route project is a way of evaluating the program process which provides valuable information and direction for other groups who will be nominating routes.

Action 3.1: Compile a list of potential scenic routes and select a route to serve as a pilot scenic byway.
Status: Completed.

Action 3.2: Contact local groups to take responsibility for the scenic byways pilot project.
Status: Completed.

Action 3.3: Assist local group in developing subcommittees to develop corridor management planning activities: promotion, preservation and enhancement.
Status: Completed.

Action 3.4: Assist local group in publicizing byway pilot project and informing local communities about the project.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 3.5: Write and submit grant applications for byway pilot project.
Status: Completed for FY 96. In process for FY 97.

Action 3.6 Develop logo, signing plan and install signing.
Status: In process.

Action 3.7: Develop brochures.
Status: Completed.

Action 3.8: Administer grant projects.
Status: In process.

Action 3.9: Document pilot route experience for benefit of other byway groups.
Status: In process.

Goal 4 Devise a “grassroots” process for nominating, evaluating and designating Kansas Scenic Byways.

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program has been developed for local groups to nominate, evaluate, have designated and manage scenic byways.

Action 4.1: Develop user friendly instructions for local groups to nominate and evaluate their nominated routes.

Status: Completed.

Action 4.2: Develop and present workshop in six KDOT districts to inform local groups about the program and encourage them to participate.

Status: Completed. May consider a second round in future.

Action 4.3: Establish deadlines for receiving nominations.

Status: First deadline (6/1/96) has been met. Annual deadlines will be January 1 beginning in 1997.

Action 4.4: Develop designation review process.

Status: Completed.

Phase 2: Implementation Goals and Action Statements

Goal 5 Inform and involve state and local groups about the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program uses a “grassroots” model which fosters local initiative and participation. To be successful, state and local groups must be informed of the program.

Action 5.1: Establish the Kansas Scenic Byways Clearinghouse for information distribution and program management direction.

Status: Completed.

Action 5.2: Develop and conduct workshops in the six KDOT districts to inform local groups about the program and to encourage their participation. (Same as Action 4.2)

Status: Completed.

Action 5.3: Publish brochure, newsletter and other promotional materials about the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 5.4: Provide technical information and assistance to requesting local groups.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 5.5: Present program to groups and organizations throughout the State.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 5.6: Inform Kansas legislators and other state agency officials about the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 5.7: Provide information to local scenic byways groups related to funding, legislation and other pertinent issues.

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 6 Process scenic byway route nominations.

A formal process for obtaining and evaluating route nominations is necessary for uniform consideration.

Action 6.1: Develop application form and guidelines and place in application kits for distribution to interested parties.

Status: Completed.

Action 6.2: Distribute application kits.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.3: Conduct preliminary review of application nominations for completeness.

Status: First deadline has been completed. Ongoing.

Action 6.4: Distribute evaluation forms to local nominators for completion of local group evaluation.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.5: Collect and review completed local evaluations.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.6: Compile local group evaluation data.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.7: Conduct in-house evaluation of routes.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.8: Complete report of nominations and submit to KSBAC for review.

Status: Ongoing. First round in process.

Action 6.9: Complete KSBAC review for preliminary determination of eligibility for designation.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.10: Notify local groups of KSBAC recommendations.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 6.11: Assist local groups with development of corridor management plans and other documentation for designation (e.g., byway name, route sign panel design, etc.).

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 7 Officially designate Kansas Scenic Byways.

Once all of the necessary documentation is completed, the designation process begins.

Action 7.1: The Clearinghouse receives and reviews for completeness corridor management plans from local nominating groups.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 7.2: KSBAC reviews and accepts corridor management plans based on Clearinghouse recommendations.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 7.3: Legal scenic byway descriptions are written.

Status: Ongoing by KDOT.

Action 7.4: KSBAC forwards the recommendation for scenic byway designation to the Kansas Secretary of Transportation.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 7.5: The Kansas Secretary of Transportation makes the official designation.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 7.6: Press releases will be produced to announce new official scenic byways.

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 8 Provide signing, map depiction, brochure development, etc. for official Kansas Scenic Byways.

Kansas Scenic Byways will be signed, indicated on state maps and brochures will be developed.

**Action 8.1: Signing plans will be developed by the Clearinghouse.
Status: To be completed.**

**Action 8.2: Contract negotiated for signs to be fabricated and erected.
Status: To be completed by KDOT.**

**Action 8.3: Notify state cartographers of designated scenic byways.
Status: Ongoing by KDOT.**

**Action 8.4: Work with local groups to develop brochures.
Status: Ongoing.**

**Action 8.5: Coordinate state agency participation in any official opening ceremonies.
Status: Ongoing.**

**Action 8.6: Assist local groups in developing grant applications for project funding.
Status: Ongoing.**

**Action 8.7: Administer federally funded grants for local groups.
Status: Ongoing by KDOT.**

Goal 9 Keep abreast of scenic byway program activities at the national level and in other states.

Networking is an important component in fully developing a quality Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Action 9.1: Monitor state and national legislation, particularly ISTEAs reauthorization activities, as they relate to scenic byways programming and funding.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 9.2: Maintain contact with national scenic byways interest groups such as Scenic America and American Recreation Coalition.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 9.3: Attend and participate in interstate, regional and national scenic byways meetings.

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 10 Monitor federal, state and local legislation and regulations as they pertain to scenic byways, e.g., billboard and beautification regulations.

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program needs to keep abreast of federal, state and local legislation as it affects the national and state programs. In some cases, proactive information distribution may be necessary to ensure that scenic byways programming and funding is assured.

Action 10.1: Contact state and federal officials for information and clarification of legislative impact on scenic byways programming.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 10.2: Monitor legislative activities at local, state and national levels as they relate to scenic byways.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 10.3: Review program policies for conformity to state and federal regulations.
Status: Ongoing.

Action 10.4: Provide information to legislators and other officials regarding the long-term significance and benefits of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.
Status: Ongoing.

Phase 3: Long-Term Management Goals and Action Statements

Goal 11 **Produce a financial plan that incorporates local, state and federal funding sources (public and private) for cooperative ventures and long-term program continuity.**

Action 11.1: Research possible funding sources and maintain current listing with deadlines, requirements, etc.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 11.2: Develop a financial plan.

Status: To be completed.

Action 11.3: Pursue other funding sources via grant writing, budgeting, etc.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 11.4: Pursue grants for projects for designated scenic byways.

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 12 Encourage and promote cooperation among local scenic byway groups.

Local scenic byway groups can benefit from networking with one another via the Clearinghouse and from other sources to share experiences.

Action 12.1: Set up annual meetings for all local Kansas byway groups to keep them informed of program activities, provide networking opportunities, etc. “piggybacking” with other conferences as appropriate.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 12.2: Maintain lists of contacts and share the lists among local groups.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 12.3: When possible, share Kansas Scenic Byway Program information at conferences sponsored by other groups.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 12.4: Encourage and motivate local groups to follow their locally developed corridor management plans.

Goal 13 Develop designated scenic byway review criteria and process.

The Kansas Scenic Byways Program recognizes that some designated byways may lose their scenic qualities over time. This goal reflects the need to establish a process for regular review of scenic byways and for formal de-designation if necessary.

Action 13.1: Develop designated byway review criteria and procedures.
Status: To be completed.

Action 13.2: Develop de-designation policy and procedures.
Status: To be completed.

Action 13.3: Conduct periodic reviews of designated byways to affirm their continued scenic status.
Status: Ongoing.

Goal 14 Develop other types of scenic roadways (e.g., backways, roads with scenic places) and other roadway designations (e.g., historic byways) to add to the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

The National Scenic Byway Program incorporates consideration of scenic, historic, archeological, recreational, cultural and natural qualities for scenic designation. The initial efforts of the Kansas Scenic Byways Program have been oriented towards paved roadways with scenic qualities. Backways and roads with scenic places will be added in the future. This goal also incorporates provisions for consideration of roads that may not possess high scenic quality but may have other characteristics (e.g., historic) which make them worthy of special designation.

Action 14.1: Develop definitions, criteria and nomination processes for backways, roads with scenic places and historic byways.

Status: In process.

Action 14.2: Develop policy and criteria for incorporating other roadway designations including previously designated historic trails, etc. into the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.

Status: To be completed.

Goal 15 **Develop an ongoing program of protection and preservation along designated scenic byways.**

The local corridor management plan is the primary guide for protection and preservation efforts.

Action 15.1: Provide the technical assistance necessary to local scenic byway groups for completing the preservation and protection portion of their corridor management plans.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 15.2: Provide data on important visual, historic, cultural, recreation and other intrinsic resources that should be preserved and protected using corridor resource management techniques.

Status: To be completed.

Action 15.3: Oversee the implementation of corridor management plans to assure that preservation and protection measures are taken.

Status: Ongoing.

Goal 16 Develop an ongoing program of scenic byways enhancements.

Corridor management plans contain an enhancement element.

Action 16.1: Provide a list of potential enhancements, both for visual quality and traveler enhancements, including estimated costs, to local scenic byway groups.

Status: To be completed.

Action 16.2: Encourage local voluntary participation in providing enhancements.

Status: In process.

Action 16.3: Seek grants from FHWA and other funding sources for corridor enhancement projects on designated routes that require significant construction and/or development funds.

Status: Ongoing.

Action 16.4: Develop a program for small scale enhancement projects applicable to all designated scenic byways such as landscape management, planting of native vegetation, etc.

Status: To be completed.

Goal 17 Develop a statewide promotional plan to increase tourism.

This goal focuses on the need to have a coordinated promotional effort to promote all of the scenic byways in a comprehensive package.

**Action 17.1: Apply for funding to develop a statewide promotional plan.
Status: Completed.**

**Action 17.2: Complete a statewide promotional plan working with existing tourism organizations.
Status: Underway.**

Goal 18 Establish a cooperative program with neighboring states for promotional and other activities.

Cooperative ventures with adjacent states will enhance Kansas' ability to attract tourists to our scenic byways.

Action 18.1: Submit grant application for funding to undertake a regional promotional effort.

Status: Grant application submitted for FY 97.

Action 18.2: Meet with representatives from other states and other organizations with similar purposes (e.g., America's Heartland) to develop a coordinated program.

Status: Awaiting funding.