

# Intrinsic Qualities

## Introduction and Resources



### What Is An Intrinsic Quality?

The National Scenic Byways Program defines intrinsic quality as “features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area.”

Intrinsic qualities arise from a byway’s particular combination of resources that define its character, interest and appeal. These resources are the special views, places, buildings, sites and other features that residents enjoy and that provide the byway’s drawing power and interest for travelers. A resource can be natural, such as a gorge, mountain or lake; or it may be the result of human activity, such as a historic building, battle site, or well-designed parkway.

In response to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) mandate to establish a National Scenic Byways Program, the Interim Policy (May 18, 1995, Federal Register Volume 60, Number 96) established criteria for designation of roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based upon their archaeological, cultural, his-

toric, natural, recreational, and/or scenic intrinsic qualities.

State Byway programs have adopted similar intrinsic quality criteria in their state programs. There are six official Interim Policy definitions, one for each intrinsic quality. The resources listed below contain more information about federal designation and the six intrinsic qualities.

### Six Intrinsic Qualities

The six intrinsic qualities recognized by the NSBP as necessary for designation of roads as National Scenic Byways and/or All-American Roads are: archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and/or scenic.

### National Scenic Byway vs. All-American Road

For federal designation, a National Scenic Byway was required to have at least one intrinsic quality that was nationally or regionally significant. An All-American Road was required to have at least two significant intrinsic qualities.

## REFERENCES & TOOLS

Federal Highway Administration, currently designated All-American Roads and National Scenic Byways – [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic\\_byways/nominations/designated\\_byways.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways/nominations/designated_byways.cfm) (This list includes the dates of designation and the intrinsic qualities the U.S. Secretary recognized when designating them).

Federal Highway Administration, America’s Byways – <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways/byways> (This website includes an overview, map, directions, and photos for each of America’s Byways® – the umbrella term for the collection of 150 All-American Roads and National Scenic Byways).

Analyze the Existing America’s Byways® Collection; Federal Highway Administration, 2008 – [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic\\_byways/byway\\_quality/analysis/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways/byway_quality/analysis/) (This report provides insight into the intrinsic qualities and other dimensions of National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads).

*Byway Beginnings*, Whiteman and Taintor; Prepared for the Federal Highway Administration and the National Park Service, 1999 – <http://www.nsbfoundation.com/index.php/training/byway-beginnings> (This book serves as a guide to understanding, inventorying, and evaluating a byway’s intrinsic qualities).

*Interim Policy for the National Scenic Byways Program*; Federal Highway Administration, May 18, 1995 - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1995-05-18/pdf/95-12211.pdf> (This policy establishes the designation criteria for roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based upon their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological and/or natural intrinsic qualities, and the required 14 points (17 points for All-American Roads) to address in a corridor management plan).

National Park Service, National Scenic Byways Guide, May 2002, [https://www.nps.gov/transportation/pdfs/scenic\\_byways\\_guide.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/transportation/pdfs/scenic_byways_guide.pdf)