

# **Pine Barrens Byway Corridor Management Plan**

**April 2009**

**Prepared for  
The New Jersey Pinelands Commission  
and  
The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Committee**



### **Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Committee**

Bass River Township	Mayor Richard Bethea Tim Lovingham
Corbin City	Mayor Carol Foster
Dennis Township	Jacqueline Justice
Egg Harbor City	Mayor Joseph Kuehner Dick Colby
Estell Manor City	James R. Owen, Sr.
Galloway Township	Eric Schrading
Hamilton Township	Phil Sartorio
Little Egg Harbor Township	Gene Kobryn
Maurice River Township	Linda L. Costello
Mullica Township	Kathy Chasey
City of Port Republic	Mayor Gary Giberson
Tuckerton Borough	Elizabeth Moritz
Upper Township	Mayor Richard Palombo
Washington Township	Dudley Lewis
Weymouth Township	Michael Hogan
Woodbine Borough	Mayor William Pikolycky
Atlantic County	Harry Tillett Shawn Smith
Burlington County	Joyce Goldsmith
Cape May County	Jim Smith Leslie Gimeno Brigitte Sherman
Cumberland County	Sharon Mollick
Ocean County	David J. McKeon Ryan P. Allen

### **Corridor Management Plan Consultants**

Taintor & Associates, Inc.  
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Whiteman Consulting, Ltd.  
Boulder, Colorado

Paul Daniel Marriott and Associates  
Washington, DC

Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc.  
Boston, Massachusetts





## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
The Pine Barrens Byway .....	1
The Byway’s Intrinsic Qualities.....	1
The Corridor Management Plan.....	3
Next Steps.....	4
<b>Byway Description, Resources &amp; Conditions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Intrinsic Qualities .....	5
The Roadway .....	15
Local Planning and Policies .....	21
Outdoor Advertising and Amenities.....	27
<b>A Vision for the Corridor</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Goals</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Resource Protection & Management .....	31
Regional Identity .....	31
Tourism & Economic Development.....	31
Recreation .....	31
Roadway Design & Management .....	31
<b>Experiencing the Pinelands</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Existing Visitor Sites .....	32
Visitor Needs and Expectations .....	36
Wayfinding.....	38
<b>Promoting Tourism and Economic Development</b> .....	<b>40</b>
The Tourism Market .....	40
Scenic Byway Marketing .....	45
<b>Management Strategies</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>Implementation</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Land Use and Development .....	49
Corridor Aesthetics .....	54
Environmental Issues and Impacts.....	58
Traffic Capacity and Safety .....	61
Visitor information & Services .....	64
Byway Management .....	72
Public Process.....	76
<b>Sample Byway Map Marketing Brochure</b> .....	<b>77</b>





# Introduction

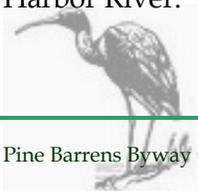
A **scenic byway** is a road with defined special qualities which its local communities wish to preserve and promote. Both the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration have programs to recognize and support scenic byways. Preparation of a corridor management plan is a requirement for designation under both the state and national programs.

## The Pine Barrens Byway

The Pine Barrens Byway was designated as a New Jersey Scenic Byway in 2005. The 130-mile route extends from Batsto and Tuckerton in the north to Dennisville and Port Elizabeth in the south, passing through five counties and 16 municipalities. Along the route are two National Wildlife Refuges, ten State Wildlife Management Areas, three State Forests, five County parks, several major rivers and numerous smaller streams, as well as a variety of historic and scenic sites.

The four “corners” of the byway are Dennisville in Dennis Township, Cape May County; Port Elizabeth in Maurice River Township, Cumberland County; Nesco and Wescoatville in Mullica Township, Atlantic County; and Tuckerton Borough in Ocean County. These four small settlements are visually quite different from each other, but each is in its own way a characteristic Pinelands community.

The byway has three distinct parts. The northern loop follows both sides of the lower Mullica River from Batsto to the estuary and links communities along US Route 9 from Tuckerton to Oceanville. The southern loop connects the Tuckahoe River, the Maurice River and Dennis Creek, along with Belleplain State Forest and Woodbine Borough. A north-south route between the Mullica River and the Tuckahoe River runs through the heart of Atlantic County, crossing and (for half its length) paralleling, the Great Egg Harbor River.



The byway route is dotted with small farm fields, pastures, and river towns and punctuated by historical ruins. At night the lightly settled byway is a stargazer’s paradise and during the day it provides sights and points of interests for a wide variety of tastes. It is also easily accessible to a huge pool of potential vacationers and day-trippers, surrounded as it is on all sides by New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore/Washington, and the heavily developed Jersey Shore.

The Pine Barrens Byway region has received national and international recognition for its unique natural characteristics. For example, it was designated as the nation’s first national reserve in 1978, named an international biosphere reserve in 1988, contains two National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and is part of the US EPA’s national estuary reserve program.

## The Byway’s Intrinsic Qualities

Under the National Scenic Byways Program, a scenic byway is a road that has regional or national significance with respect to at least one of six defined “intrinsic qualities”: archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic. While the Pinelands region includes elements of each of these six qualities, its **natural** quality is most distinctive and therefore primary, with **recreational** and **historic** qualities also important.

The **natural quality** of the Pinelands region is what most clearly sets it apart from other areas and defines the focus of the scenic byway. The region’s ecological significance is



recognized both nationally and internationally through designations including:

- Pinelands National Reserve
- United Nations Biosphere Reserve
- Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Edwin B. Forsythe and Cape May National Wildlife Refuges
- Great Egg Harbor River and Maurice River National Scenic and Recreational Rivers

Natural qualities not only define the Southern Pinelands on their own, but they are also the basis of the region’s recreational and historic qualities.



**Recreation** opportunities along the Pine Barrens Byway are abundant and tied to the natural resources of the area, its rivers, forests, and diverse ecosystems. Hiking, boating, canoeing and kayaking, bicycling, birding, hunting and fishing take place along the byway in state forests and wildlife management areas and county and municipal parks, and along rivers, streams, estuaries and marshes that can be rated as some of the most scenic in the country. Recreational use of the area’s natural resources draws a wide audience of participants to the region, enhancing the area’s potential for supporting commercial ventures, and increasing the pool

of environmental stewards concerned with protecting those resources and opportunities.



**Historic** resources are also plentiful throughout the area of the byway. Twelve historic districts and numerous historically or archaeologically significant individual sites and structures showcase the unique human story of settlement of the Pinelands. The Corridor Management Plan groups these diverse resources into five themes:

- Mullica River Corridor
- Great Egg Harbor River Corridor
- Tuckahoe River Corridor
- Coastal Trade and Industry
- Churches and Cemeteries



## The Corridor Management Plan

The Corridor Management Plan will be used to guide local, regional and state efforts to preserve, protect and enhance the natural, recreational, historical, and scenic qualities of the Pine Barrens Byway; and to enhance the local economy by guiding the traveler through the corridor and improving access to recreational resources and activities.

### BACKGROUND

This Corridor Management Plan is the culmination of ten years of study and planning. The initial impetus for scenic byway planning in the southern Pinelands was the Pinelands Rural Economic Development Pilot Program (1999-2000), which examined economic conditions in several Pinelands towns and recommended measures to stimulate environmentally suitable economic growth. The project's recommendations included planning and designation of two scenic byways – one in the Mullica River corridor, and a second along the Delaware Bayshore – to promote tourism based on the natural and recreational assets within these two areas.

Working with an ad hoc committee representing communities in the region, the Pinelands Commission designed a scenic byway route that combined and connected the two separate routes recommended by the Rural Economic Development Pilot Program. Commission staff inventoried natural, historic and scenic resources along the byway, and prepared a nomination for designation as a New Jersey state scenic byway. All 16 municipalities and five counties through which the proposed route passed adopted resolutions supporting its designation. On behalf of the organizing committee, Commission staff submitted the nomination to the State Scenic Byway Committee, which formally designated the route as a New Jersey Scenic Byway in early 2005.

Once the byway received state recognition, the Pinelands Commission began preparing for development of this Corridor Management Plan (CMP), which is both a requirement of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program and a prerequisite for nomination as a National Scenic Byway. In August 2006 the Pinelands Commission received a National Scenic Byways Grant to fund preparation of the Corridor Management Plan. Additional matching funds for the project were provided by the Pineland Commission and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

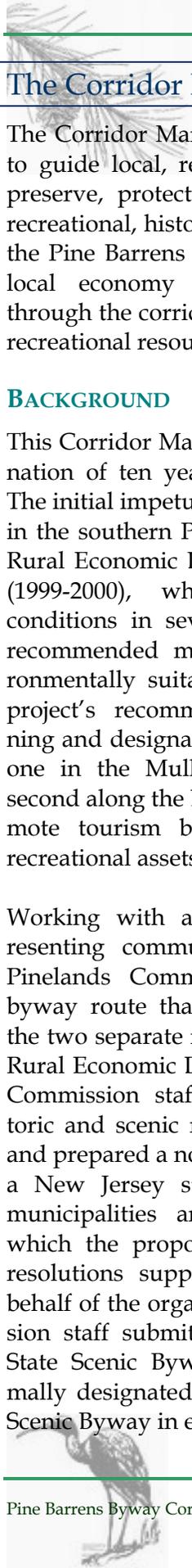
### THE CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure local input into the planning process, the Commission organized a Heritage Trail Committee (HTC), consisting of representatives designated by each community and county along the byway route. This Committee held its initial meeting in September 2007.

The Commission also established a scope of work for the Corridor Management Plan, and selected a team of consultants to assist in preparing the plan. The formal planning process began in December 2007 and was completed in April 2009. During this 16-month period the consultants met a total of 12 times with the HTC or its subcommittee, the Corridor Management Plan Committee (CMC).

### WEBSITE

At the start of the planning process, the CMC created a website ([www.njpinelandstrail.com](http://www.njpinelandstrail.com)) to facilitate information-sharing with the committee members, other constituents, and the public. Throughout the planning process, the website was updated regularly. This site was also designed to serve as a foundation



for a future permanent website for the byway.

### STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION MEETINGS

In January 2009, the consultant team facilitated a series of meetings in four locations along the byway (Batsto Village, Tuckerton Seaport Museum, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters in Oceanville, and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing) to discuss tourism, recreation and visitor activities with local stakeholders. Stakeholder groups invited to participate included public and non-profit land managers, recreation businesses and visitor service providers, historic preservation groups, environmental organizations, chambers of commerce, tourism councils, and economic development groups. Each meeting focused on a particular aspect of the byway's management with participants discussing visitor needs as well as strategies to help promote, interpret and protect the byway and its resources.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS

In March 2009, the CMP was presented at two public meetings in Woodbine Borough and Egg Harbor City. Meetings were scheduled to allow for municipal, county, and stakeholder input. At these meetings, the consultant and CMC members outlined the inventory and recommendations made by the CMP. The public input was incorporated into the final CMP.

### Next Steps

With the completion of the CMP, an application to designate the Trail as a National Scenic Byway will be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation for federal designation. National designations occur every three years or so, and it is likely that the next round of National Scenic Byway designations will occur in 2011 or 2012.

As a state-designated byway, the route is currently eligible to receive National Scenic Byway grants and provides access to a variety of promotional and marketing opportunities, including development of visitor centers, wayside exhibits, and self-guided tours.

Once designated as a national byway, the byway will also be featured in the U.S. Department of the Interior's byway website (<http://www.byways.org>) and in other state and national tourism materials and maps.

There is also the potential to extend the byway north to include more of the Pinelands Natural Reserve, including the heart of the Preservation Area. A preliminary northern route has been designed connecting Green Bank north through Chatsworth to Whitesbog, and then east and south back to Tuckerton. Any potential extension will require further analysis and consultation with the affected communities.

