



January 2018 Issue

Wisconsin Great River Road's 2018 Adventures

The Wisconsin Great River Road was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2000 and stretches 250 miles from Prescott south to Kieler, Wisconsin. The Byway passes through 33 historic river towns that lie between the Mississippi River and the towering bluffs that border the route. Side trips offer visitors the opportunity to drive to the top of the bluffs for stunning panoramic views of the river and valley below.



The Byway is managed by the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WIMRPC), an affiliate of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. On October 26, 2017, WIMRPC Commissioners and key stakeholders met to begin drafting a new strategic action plan for the Wisconsin Great River Road. The Byway receives tremendous support from state and local tourism agencies, and they hope to continue their important role in supporting the growing number of visitors to the region. They also recognize that growth should be balanced with stewardship of the Byway's resources, and resource protection will also continue to be a priority.

2018 promises be an exciting year for the WIMRPC. A new nonprofit organization, Friends of the Wisconsin Great River Road, is being launched to work alongside the Commission and support the byway through fundraising and community outreach. In the spring of 2018, the Byway's newest visitor and interpretive center is scheduled to open at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery. In addition, there will be celebrations throughout the year to recognize the 80th anniversary of the Wisconsin Great River Road. All of these activities will be promoted through the Byway's recently updated website at www.wigrr.com.



For more information about the Wisconsin Great River Road, contact Sherry Quamme at squamme@centurytel.net.

Wanda Maloney, Corridor Solutions wrote this article. Want to highlight your Scenic Byway? Send us an email with your idea or article, at info@nsbfoundation.com.

Ahead on the Byway: How to Plan for the Year

The summer tourist season has come to an end and even our frequent-visitor, senior population is hunkering down for the cold, winter season. Which means that it's the perfect time to start thinking about and planning for the new year on your Byway.

One helpful tool when planning for the year ahead is a self evaluation. Start by visualizing the Byway and your community of "stakeholders" as a living organization. Arrange for a round table discussion of what your community does well, and what you could do better. (The [NSBF's assessment tool](#) is a great way to guide the discussion during the round table).



The discussion can focus on any one or all six of these topics:

- **Organizational Development, Capacity and Adaptability** - This will assist in evaluating anything from the viability of your mission and organizational vision, to leadership succession and governance; strategic planning; and capacity to sustain and grow as an entity(ies).
- **Finance, Fundraising and Sustainability** - This helps assess whether your financial model is sustainable. How successful has your organization been at fundraising? Does your byway entity have a development plan? You may be confident in your overall financial capacity and planning, but find out what others think.
- **Outreach, Partnerships and Advocacy** - This is a great time to congratulate your organization on it's strength through partnerships and positioning, or to discover if you are in need of stronger partnerships, new funding sources, and new strategies to sustain the work of your group.
- **Byway Recognition, Identity, Marketing, Image and Communications** - Discussions with others will help you develop ways to strengthen the image, identity, and the brand of your Byway, or seek strength in marketing and communicating.
- **The Visitor Experience** - Review this fundamental work of Byways. Consider your technical assistance needs in shaping visitor expectations, delivering effective wayfinding and creating authentic interpretation.
- **Documenting Impact** - Your funders, partners, communities and volunteers seek data (even anecdotal) on economic impacts or visitor satisfaction. Review your capacity to obtain it, provide it and assure return visits.

If you get stuck on any one of these move on to the next. Plan to invite an authority figure from a neighboring Byway or a NSBF volunteer to help you though the sticking points with a specific discussion at a separate meeting. Don't overlook the basic intrinsic values that your organization(s) all agreed on and used to become a Scenic Byway.

Once through the discussion(s) you will find that preparing a budget and vision for 2018 will fall into place.

Eric J. Hamilton, Mohawk Towpath Byway wrote this article. Want to share your ideas/thoughts as a Byway Leader? Send us an email with your idea or article, at info@nsbfoundation.com.

January Webinar: Build a Better Byway Facebook Page

Please join us on **Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 3 p.m. (EST)** as we dive into the basics of getting more engagement with your Facebook page followers and building a more effective page for your Byway.

We'll talk about the key parts of a page that need to be completed, tips for effective posts, a simple posting schedule, post examples, and ways to gather more followers. There will be plenty of time for Q&A and we can even live-review a page or two if you'd like.

Your webinar hosts are Sheila Scarborough and Leslie McLellan from [Tourism Currents](#).

A session recording will be available for those who register, including anyone who can't attend the live event (however, you need to register to get the link to the recording). [Register today!](#)



Highlight Your Byway Through Music

Since the days of cassette mixtapes, people have been building musical playlists to match a certain mood, destination, or holiday. They still do, but now lists are also available publicly on streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, and SoundCloud (known for indie music discovery).

How can you highlight your Byway through its music? Are there distinctive songs and/or musicians that evoke your Byway? If so, consider building a playlist of songs that you can then share on your website and social media. For example, here's some info on the [Mississippi Blues Trail Playlist](#).

To see other examples on [Spotify](#), you'll need an account, but it's free and easy to set up.

Car brand BMW even has one for the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#) and another for California's [Pacific Coast Highway](#).

Talk to some of your local musicians. They might already have Byway-flavored playlists that they'd be delighted if you'd share online.

Tip brought to you by Tourism Currents - www.tourismcurrents.com



By the Numbers!

Here is some information that you might like to share with your Byway communities. A simple way to share? [Follow us on Facebook](#) so that you can share our articles with your own Facebook group!

- It's a great time of year to visit local, state and national forests and parks. You can spot a lot of wildlife (and fewer people) by visiting in the winter. Look for these **10 cold weather animals** during your travels ([National Geographic](#)).
- Check out these **5 spots to watch whales** making their great migration this winter ([Sunset Magazine](#)).
- Trying to think of new ideas to get you outside during the cold weather? Check out these **101 things to do outside** in the winter for kids ([Be outside Idaho](#)).
- **5 wonderful reasons to get outside during the winter**, for all ages! Most importantly, for those who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), getting outside can help improve and moderate mood ([Real Simple](#)).

Know the joys of exchanging ideas with like minded Byway communities.

JOIN THE

National Scenic Byway Foundation

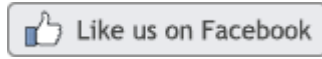
Gain a voice; access tools and training; and spread your Byway message.

Visit our website and learn more about membership benefits: www.nsbfoundation.com



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