

# Project Category

NSBF Byway Organization Viewshed Improvement Award

# Project Name

Historic Stone Fence Restoration Workshop

# Byway Name

Native Stone Scenic Byway – Byway designation (established) 2005

Byway length, originally 48 miles, extended to 75 miles in 2015.

# Overview

In 2007, a local rancher approached an NSSB committee member and suggested that we consider hosting a stone fence restoration workshop to teach those who are interested in how our ancestors built the existing historic stone fences 150 years ago. Our committee discussed this potential project and soon we were planning and organizing our very first workshop, in the Fall of 2007. Due to the many stone fences that line 99 Highway, north and south of Alma, we had many fences to choose from and property owners to hopefully get on board with our project and agree to co-host our workshop weekends. The criteria for our workshop is simple, one must own property along the Native Stone Scenic Byway, have an existing stone fence and surplus stone; or if the property owner wishes to have a “new build”, they must provide the stone and an appropriate site for the fence to be built. The property owner must also agree to donate \$1000 for the entire project, which would cover the pay for the instructor, food, drink and a porta-potty, if needed. The property owner can also pay a \$500 fee, provide the food, drink and bathroom facilities, if available.

Our workshop is a 3-day weekend, we have a \$100 fee, for newcomers, which covers the fence instruction and food and drinks for the weekend. We do not charge our Alums if they choose to return and volunteer their time and services, but we do provide food and drinks for them.

Friday, is foundation day and per our instructor, who is a certified dry stack stone mason, we try to use our Alums, the more experienced volunteer masons. Our instructor likes to have around 20 volunteer masons per each project...although we can manage with as few as 10 volunteers. Saturday and early Sunday they work on shaping stones and laying up the wall. Sunday afternoon, they finish the project with the perfectly chosen diagonal coping stones...or depending on the style of the fence, flat capstones are sometimes used. If our fence is a restoration, the existing stone is used but many times, we have to supplement with extra stones from fallen fences, in pastures, that the rancher wishes to clear. If the fence is a “new build”, we would ask that the property owner provide the rock but we do have a stockpile of rock, from which we may also choose. We have renovated/built fences of 20', 30' up to 50' in length. We have had 7 workshops on one property to complete one stone fence renovation, due to the length of the fence and the willingness and generosity of the property owner. We will have our 5th workshop, for another property owner, this coming June, on Symphony weekend, which will be our 26th workshop.

We advertise in local and regional newspapers, place fliers in the local businesses and also on our Facebook page. We also work closely with our local Wabaunsee County Economic Development Director, who prints our fliers and also advertises our event on the Wabaunsee County website. We have also built fences in Shawnee county, along our Byway, and we were invited to build a stone fence in the historic section of the Wamego City Park during, the 2015 Kansas Sampler. The workshop weekend at the Kansas Sampler was highly successful, as 11,000 people were in attendance. We were pleased that we were invited and are proud of the completed fence. This is the only fence that is not along the Native Stone Scenic Byway.

## Intrinsic Qualities

We would consider our workshop to be historic restoration. We are utilizing the Intrinsic Qualities of our Natural Resources, which would be the Native Stone used to build the fences and the Historic Resources due to the fact that we are building these historic fences just as our ancestors built them 150 years ago.

Our restored stone fences showcase the historic value in the preservation, education and use of the plentiful “natural” Native Stone in the area. Our workshops convey this message locally, as well as, to travelers and tourists. Our restored fences are all located along the corridor of the Native Stone Scenic Byway and are easily seen by visitors to the area.

## Byway Best Practice

Our bi-annual workshop project began in 2007 and is ongoing. We have completed 25 stone fences.

We are excited and proud to announce that we have been invited to partner with the Symphony in the Flint Hills for our 26th Workshop, in June of 2020. The Symphony will be held at beautiful Lake Wabaunsee, which is along our Byway.

Our restored stone fences showcase the historic value in the preservation and education brought about by our Workshops.

## Partners

Our partners include our instructor, who is a certified dry stack stone mason; the many volunteers who have helped build each stone fence; the land owners who generously allow us to conduct our workshops on their property; local cafés who have donated food and drink for our projects.

## Keys to Success

The project had a team that believed in what we were doing. We had the right people doing the right jobs. We had an incredibly creative fourth grade teacher who loved history who wrote our activities. We had people willing to write grants and who had ties with federal, state, academia, and every level of organizations to garner partnerships. A research scientist in Indiana University’s Department of Anthropology has worked with us our committee. The team worked hard and we continue to see the rewards of those efforts when we see other people become equally passionate about the Buffalo Trace story.

## Additional Information

### Contact Information

ksmarsha@msn.com

785-220-4634

P. O. Box 211

Dover, KS 66420

### Project Year(s):

2007-2020

### Website

[The Native Stone Scenic Byway | Flint Hills & Mill Creek \(travelks.com\)](http://The Native Stone Scenic Byway | Flint Hills & Mill Creek (travelks.com))

# Photographs

