

# Project Category

## NSBF Byway Community Award: Beautification

The initial project task included conducting a thorough assessment of wayfinding needs and new interpretive opportunities for the entire length and corridor of the byway and creating a distinctive and memorable graphic identity. Significant public and stakeholder engagement and input efforts were undertaken and proved valuable, particularly for the review and endorsement of the new visual identity for the byway. The project moved forward with construction documents for wayshowing, content research, narrative development, and artwork creation for 18 byway kiosks and 21 individual community and village wayside interpretive exhibits.

# Project Name

## Planning, Design, and Implementation of Wayshowing and Interpretive Components for the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway (OBNSB)

# Byway Name

The Outer Banks National Scenic Byway

# Overview

North Carolina's Outer Banks shoreline and its many intrinsic qualities have long been stewarded as a national treasure; interpreted independently by federal agencies, state organizations, and local attractions; and promoted as a major international leisure travel destination. Designation as the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway (OBNSB) in 2009 marked a significant milestone for the OBNSB Advisory Committee and launched a multi-year effort prescribed in the byway's corridor management plan to implement a comprehensive and integrated project for planning, designing, and implementing way showing and interpretive components for the 163 miles of the OBNSB.

In late 2010, the Advisory Committee retained a team of national experts and local professionals to undertake the project and secure NSBP funding for implementation. The initial project task in 2011 included conducting a thorough assessment of wayfinding needs and new interpretive opportunities for the entire length and corridor of the byway; identifying the appropriate way showing components (route guide signs, destination signs, entrance signs, orientation stops, and attraction medallions); and creating a distinctive and memorable graphic identity for the byway. At the same time, the Advisory Committee was awarded a \$200,000 NSBP grant for the project.

Significant public and stakeholder engagement and input efforts were continually undertaken and proved to be valuable particularly for the review and endorsement of the new graphic identity for the byway. From 2013 through 2015, detailed artwork and construction documents were prepared and approved for the way showing components with installation occurring in 2015 and 2016. The way showing components have since been tested and survived several hurricanes, flooding, and tropical storm events.

2017 through 2019 was the timeframe for the content research, narrative development, and artwork creation for the 18 byway kiosks and 21 individual community and village wayside interpretive exhibits. Installation of these interpretive components occurred in 2020. Authentically, the narratives, photographs, stories, and food recipes for all the interpretive exhibits were derived locally and stressed the cultural, natural, and historic intrinsic qualities and resources of this unique environment.

"Front-line" hospitality personnel training has been an important component of the project assuring that key knowledge, emotions, and actions can be realized by visitors and residents alike.

# Intrinsic Qualities

The Outer Banks National Scenic Byway Advisory Committee works to conserve; develop; promote and interpret; and manage the six intrinsic qualities recognized by the Federal Highway Administration and the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) all of which are supported by this project. The byway’s primary intrinsic quality supported by this project is cultural seconded by natural and then scenic.

## Partners

This project provides effective examples of the roles of multiple partners contributing to project’s success.

- Federal Highway Administration: NSBP guidance and grant.
- North Carolina Department of Transportation: Grant administration and integration of byway route guide and directional signage to highway rights of ways.
- Dare, Hyde, and Carteret county governments: Dare County provided fiduciary services.
- The OBNSB Advisory Committee: Essential public and stakeholder input; client responsibilities for planning, design, and implementation of way showing and interpretive exhibits; hospitality training support; and ongoing project stewardship.
- National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: With significant National Seashore and Wildlife Refuge properties adjacent to the byway, these agencies integrate the project into the effectiveness of providing their visitor experiences.
- Individual Communities, Attractions, and Destinations directly associated with the Byway: Nearly 100 representatives of local communities and byway destinations provided valuable content for interpretive exhibits and practical observations for wayshowing improvements.
- Professional Consultant Team: Throughout the project timeframe, this team provided the full range of expertise and services to support the project’s success:
  - o David L. Dahlquist Associates, LLC – National wayshowing expertise
  - o Albemarle & Associates, Ltd. – Local engineering and project management
  - o Breann Bye + Associates – Interpretive content development and graphic design

## Byway Best Practice

This project offers several successful examples of how a byway organization, local governments, federal agencies, and a wide range of stakeholders can employ the guidance of the NSBP to increase the effectiveness of desired visitor experiences. First, the OBNSB Advisory Committee employs the essential understanding of wayfinding and wayshowing. Wayfinding is the problem-solving that travelers do to successfully follow a byway route and arrive at their desired destinations. Wayshowing is the assistance — travel directions, maps, and signs, etc. — which byway providers offer to travelers so that their wayfinding problem-solving can be successful. As emphasized in the OBNSB Hospitality Training Manual, “Without enough information, visitors to the OBNSB may become confused and disoriented – at best they might not even know they’re on the byway. Our goal is to successfully show visitors they’re on the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway and how to find their way along the route, so they have a positive experience, plan to return, and tell their friends and family to do the same.”

Secondly the project provides byway travelers with a consistent and effective package of visual and interpretive components along the entire length of the byway. Again, as the OBNSB Hospitality Training Manual underscores, “To interpret is to translate the voices of the past and the significance of places to create meanings and connections with the people of the present. Interpreters (people working at museums, parks, etc.) and interpretive media (physical exhibits, websites, etc.) connect people with cultural and natural heritage to promote stewardship of resources. They communicate the science of the natural world, the stories of the cultural world, and the excitement of the recreational world to an audience in a manner that is provoking and interesting, and leaves the audience wanting to discover more.”

## Key to Success

These events could not have been a success, without the collaborative nature and partnership-building demeanor of the byway organization, the USDA Forest Service. Through engaging with TDOT, the Tennessee Highway Patrol and several local Keep America Beautiful affiliates (Keep Cleveland/Bradley County Beautiful and Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful), they ensured the successful completion of this series of cleanups. No single agency had the resources to manage every element of these cleanups, whether it be media exposure, volunteer management, public safety and traffic control, or waste disposal.

## Additional Information

### Contact Information

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### Project Year(s):

2011—2020

### Website

[Outer Banks Scenic Byway | America's Byways \(dot.gov\)](#)

# Photographs

