

HB 142 Review of Advisory Councils

Scenic-Historic Byways Advisory Council

Prepared by Megan Moore
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Statutory Authority: 60-2-601, MCA

Purposes

- Provide technical oversight to the Montana Transportation Commission to assist in its role in designating scenic-historic byways.
- Assist the Department of Transportation in designing the Scenic-Historic Byways Program.
- Review applications for nominating roads for inclusion in the Scenic-Historic Byways Program.
- Recommend to the Montana Transportation Commission roads that should be included in or deleted from the Scenic-Historic Byways Program.

General Information

Membership

- The Montana Transportation Commission appoints up to 11 members to the advisory council. Members must have expertise in tourism, visual assessment, Montana history, resource protection, economic development, transportation, or planning. One member must be a representative of the Montana Chamber of Commerce.

About the Program

- The Scenic-Historic Byways Program promotes and enhances tourism and the understanding and appreciation of the state's heritage in concert with the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the state's scenic, historic, and cultural resources.
- Byways are designated for their exceptional scenic, natural, historic, cultural, recreational, or archaeological features.
- There are two tiers of designation.
 - ▶ Byways are improved and paved roads that accommodate two-wheel drive vehicles.
 - ▶ Backways are roads that may require four-wheel-drive or high-clearance vehicles.

Budget Information

- Advisory council members are reimbursed for travel, lodging, and meal expenses as provided in sections 2-18-501 through 2-18-503, MCA.
- Since 2009, the Montana Department of Transportation has reimbursed a total of \$759.55 to advisory council members for travel, lodging, and meal expenses.
- The funding source for reimbursements is federal State Planning and Research funds

(SPR) provided through the Federal Highway Administration. The federal funding requires a 20% nonfederal match that comes from the highway account in the state special revenue fund.

- The Montana Department of Transportation staff liaison is also funded with federal SPR funds.

Recent Activities

- Reviewed the Scenic-Historic Byways Pilot Project provided for in section 60-2-606 and, based on ARM 18.14.205, determined that only four of the eight routes had potential for designation.
 - ▶ Black Otter Trail Road in Swords Park in Billings;
 - ▶ Looking Glass Road on U.S. Highway 49 from Kiowa Junction to East Glacier;
 - ▶ Giant Springs Road in Great Falls from River Road to 67th Street; and
 - ▶ Harding Way Highway from Butte to Whitehall.
- Added two other eligible routes for consideration in the initial round of applications:
 - ▶ Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park (Glacier National Park opted to postpone applying until construction of the roadway is complete.); and
 - ▶ Lake Koocanusa (a portion of MT 37).
- Reviewed guidelines and website material developed by the Montana Department of Transportation.
- Conducted outreach to local organizations regarding the initial eligible routes in order to complete applications for scenic byway designation.
- Recommended byway designation to the Transportation Commission for the two qualifying applications:
 - ▶ Giant Springs Road in Great Falls; and
 - ▶ Lake Koocanusa.
- In May 2011, the Transportation Commission approved state scenic-historic byway designation for Giant Springs Road and Lake Koocanusa as Montana’s first scenic byways.

Scenic-Historic Byways Advisory Council Membership

Members	Hometown	Area of Expertise
Ed DesRosier	East Glacier Park	Tourism
Mike Penfold	Billings	Resource protection
Homer Staves	Billings	Tourism