

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM



Real



Real Leadership

FLORIDA SCENIC HIGHWAYS



Florida tourism continues to break records reaching 105 million visitors in 2015. Although our beaches and theme parks remain popular, there is a growing trend among travelers to seek out authentic experiences in less-familiar destinations. As visitor numbers increase, it becomes more important to promote the parts of Florida that remain relatively undiscovered, and distribute visitors throughout the state to protect the quality of their experience.

The Florida Scenic Highways Program plays an important role as it provides visitors with the perfect way to escape the well-known and pursue something different, unique, and real. Florida's twenty-five scenic highways showcase our state's most important natural, historic and scenic resources, like the rare coastal dune lakes on Scenic Highway 30-A and historic downtown Micanopy on the Old Florida Heritage Highway. Our scenic highways also offer unsurpassed recreational opportunities like kayaking the Indian River Lagoon, or cycling the Courtney Campbell or Suncoast trails.

But more than anything else, what sets scenic highways apart as destinations are the people and stories to be discovered that are as diverse as our expansive state. Our scenic highways are managed by the same people who run the outfitters, own the local restaurants and shops, and volunteer at the museums. They are passionate and extremely knowledgeable about the places they treasure, and they deliver authenticity to visitors.

I hope you will enjoy this report which further details how the Florida Scenic Highways Program is relevant in today's tourism economy, and also highlights individual byway accomplishments. The Department is proud of this program, and we believe the best way to truly experience Florida is from a scenic highway.

Jim Boxold, Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation



- 1 A1A SCENIC & HISTORIC COASTAL BYWAY
- 2 BIG BEND SCENIC BYWAY
- 3 BRADENTON BEACH SCENIC HIGHWAY
- 4 BROWARD COUNTY A1A SCENIC HIGHWAY
- 5 COURTNEY CAMPBELL SCENIC HIGHWAY
- 6 FLORIDA BLACK BEAR NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY
- 7 FLORIDA KEYS SCENIC HIGHWAY ALL-AMERICAN ROAD
- 8 GREEN MOUNTAIN SCENIC BYWAY
- 9 HERITAGE CROSSROADS: MILES OF HISTORY
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- 12 J.C. PENNEY MEMORIAL SCENIC HIGHWAY
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The Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail sponsored a Kayak Salt Marsh Tour in October 2015. During the two-hour excursion, guides explained the history of modifications to the Halifax River for navigability, and the projects underway to restore the salt marsh in areas of Volusia and Flagler counties.

Real Experiences

Florida’s scenic highways are not just roads that travel through places, they are places. Places that provide Florida residents and visitors alike the opportunity to discover and rediscover the real places, real stories, and real people that truly define the state. The authentic travel experience scenic highways offer is one of the most sought after by travelers today.

The desire of tourists to explore lesser-known destinations, especially those that are relatively untouched or unique, continues to grow. Travelers want to get off the beaten path and experience the places they visit as if they were a local - eating in local restaurants, and learning the stories of the people who call the place home.

The diversity among Florida’s scenic highways allows travelers to venture beyond the familiar and author their own adventure.



The Spoonbills and Sprockets Cycling tour offers the opportunity for cycling enthusiasts to experience their sport on one of the most scenic drives in America - the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway.

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Exciting stories about travel experiences influence today’s traveler. Fifty percent of Florida visitors rely on word-of-mouth recommendations when planning travel experiences.



Since 1987 the share of consumer spending on active experiences and events relative to total U.S. consumer spending increased 70%

Six in ten millennials would rather spend money on experiences than material things



Real Trends

Florida Scenic Highways each possess unique combinations of scenic, historic, cultural, natural, archaeological, and recreational resources. Current tourism data indicates that these resources and the activities associated with them are the most sought after by today's travelers.

All of Florida's top outdoor recreation activities are available on and promoted by the state's twenty-five scenic highways. Wildlife viewing alone produces \$5 billion in consumer spending annually, and overall, outdoor recreation produces \$38.3 billion and creates 330,000 jobs annually in Florida.

All of Florida's top outdoor recreation activities are available on and promoted by the state's twenty-five scenic highways.

75% of Florida visitors participate in nature-based activities

25 million residents and tourists participate in bicycling annually

1.4 million Florida residents took trips to view wildlife in 2011 (second highest in the nation)

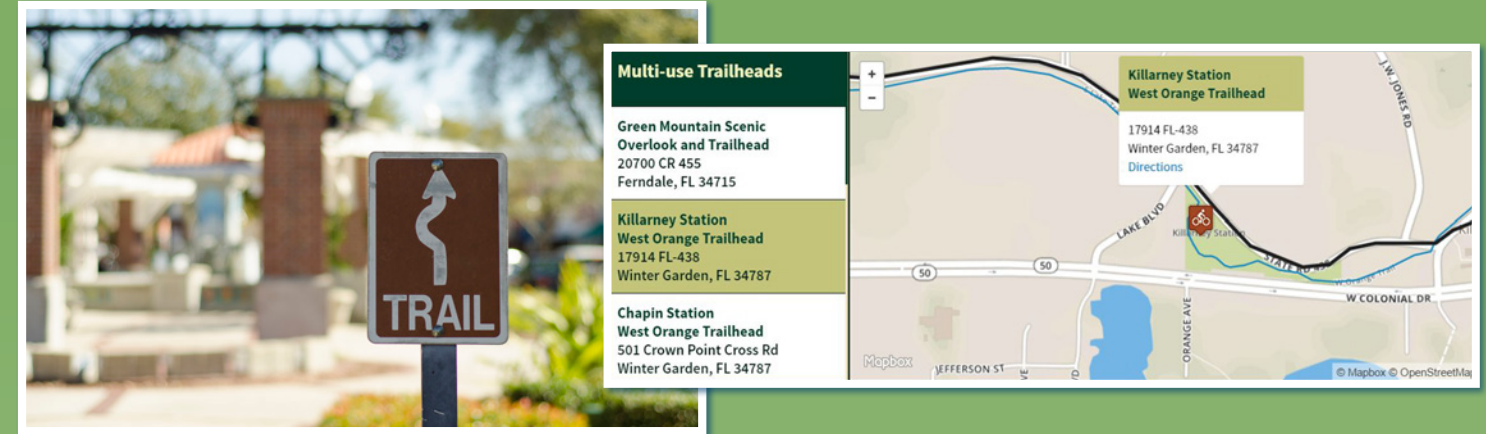


Outdoor recreation is found in abundance on Florida Scenic Highways, and 98% of Florida tourists say outdoor recreation is important to them. The Ochlockonee River State Park on the Big Bend Scenic Byway provides an opportunity to enjoy many of the most popular outdoor recreation activities.

Florida's Top Outdoor Recreation Activities

| | Residents | Tourists |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Saltwater Beach Activities | 63% | 49% |
| Wildlife Viewing | 49% | 47% |
| Fishing | 46% | 22% |
| Bicycling | 44% | 14% |
| Picnicking | 40% | 37% |
| Visiting Historic Sites | 39% | 26% |

Percentage of Florida residents and tourists who engage in these outdoor recreation activities. Source: Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015



The Green Mountain Scenic Byway, Suncoast Parkway, and Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway each have trails that parallel at least a portion of the byway. To assist visitors with trip planning, the Green Mountain website provides an interactive map for nearby trails in addition to a map of the byway.

Scenic highways provide ideal destinations for another growing trend in Florida tourism, the weekend getaway. Scenic highway websites help travelers plan weekend adventures by providing trip-planning tools like maps, itineraries, and links to smartphone apps.

This trend also coincides with consistent growth in the amount of in-state travel by Florida residents. These in-state trips are important to sustaining year-round tourism, especially during the summer months.

Some of the most popular weekend destinations are where scenic highways and trails converge.



The West Orange Trail, part of the Florida Coast to Coast Connector Trail, travels through the heart of downtown Winter Garden along with the Green Mountain Scenic Byway.

In 2014, Floridians took more than 20 million pleasure trips of one or two nights. Many of these trips were to natural and rural destinations throughout the state on or near scenic highways and trails. In fact, some of the most popular weekend destinations are where scenic highways and trails converge. The Green Mountain Scenic Byway and West Orange Trail both run through the heart of revitalized downtown Winter Garden.

Real Success



1



2



3



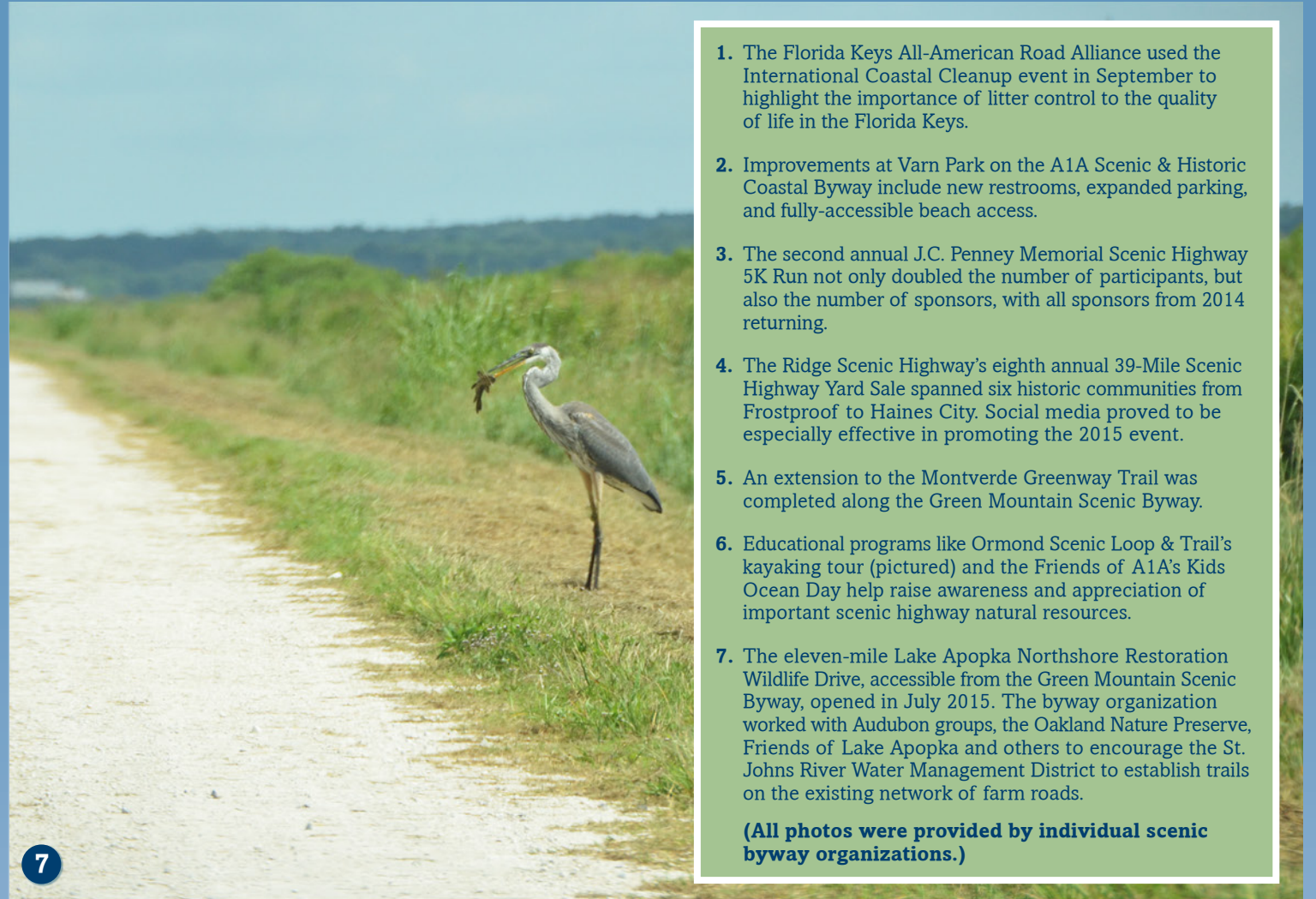
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1. The Florida Keys All-American Road Alliance used the International Coastal Cleanup event in September to highlight the importance of litter control to the quality of life in the Florida Keys.
2. Improvements at Varn Park on the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway include new restrooms, expanded parking, and fully-accessible beach access.
3. The second annual J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway 5K Run not only doubled the number of participants, but also the number of sponsors, with all sponsors from 2014 returning.
4. The Ridge Scenic Highway's eighth annual 39-Mile Scenic Highway Yard Sale spanned six historic communities from Frostproof to Haines City. Social media proved to be especially effective in promoting the 2015 event.
5. An extension to the Montverde Greenway Trail was completed along the Green Mountain Scenic Byway.
6. Educational programs like Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail's kayaking tour (pictured) and the Friends of A1A's Kids Ocean Day help raise awareness and appreciation of important scenic highway natural resources.
7. The eleven-mile Lake Apopka Northshore Restoration Wildlife Drive, accessible from the Green Mountain Scenic Byway, opened in July 2015. The byway organization worked with Audubon groups, the Oakland Nature Preserve, Friends of Lake Apopka and others to encourage the St. Johns River Water Management District to establish trails on the existing network of farm roads.

(All photos were provided by individual scenic byway organizations.)



42 Byway Sponsored Projects completed on Florida Scenic Highways

The J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway 5K



doubled

runners & sponsor participation in its second year



5,000

Shoppers attended the 39-Mile Scenic Highway Yard Sale along The Ridge Scenic Highway



1,483

Emergency 911 decals installed on the Suncoast Parkway Trail



45%

Average increase in Facebook Followers for Florida Scenic Highway pages



Volunteer hours contributed to the Friends of A1A

12,750

Real Champion

In December 2015, the **Florida Scenic Highways Program** lost its greatest champion with the passing of former District Scenic Highway Coordinator Garry Balogh. Garry was an endless source of expertise and encouragement for byway leaders for nineteen years. He was an outstanding mentor, innovator, and cherished friend whose love of the program was evident to all who knew him.

Although impossible to measure Garry's impact on the **Florida Scenic Highways Program**, his contributions can be celebrated. Upon his retirement in June 2015, the Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award was created as the highest honor bestowed by the **Florida Scenic Highways Program**. The award recognizes leadership, innovation, stewardship, and inspiring achievements that have made a significant and lasting impact on the scenic highways program.

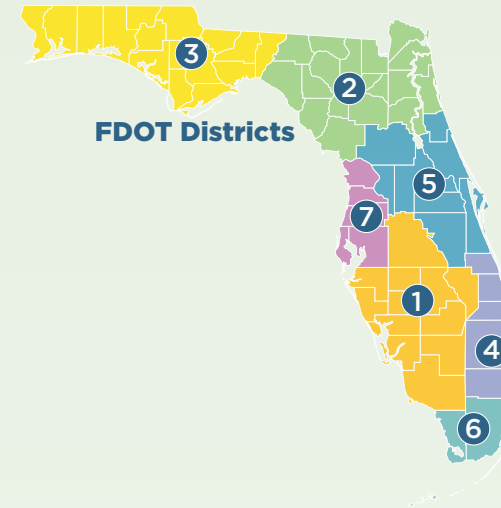
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Garry Balogh recommended the selection of the **Friends of A1A byway organization** as the first recipient of the **Inspiring Excellence Award** to recognize the group's outstanding achievements in community outreach and participation. The Friends of A1A have the largest contact list and host more special events each year than any other scenic highway in the state.

These events, like Kids Ocean Day and the Super Scenic 72-Mile Garage Sale, help gain support for the byway in local communities, continue to build the byway's strong brand, and raise operating revenue. Like Garry's career, the impact of the Friends of A1A community outreach is significant and lasting.



Garry Balogh presented the first Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award to Friends of A1A chair Danielle Anderson in June 2015. Special events like the ones successfully staged by the Friends of A1A engage residents and visitors, and increase awareness of the scenic highway.



FDOT District Scenic Highway Coordinators

- **Russ Muller | District 1**
D1 Byways: Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway, Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Scenic Highway, Palma Sola Scenic Highway, Tamiami Trail - Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters, The Ridge Scenic Highway
- **Debrah Miller | District 2**
D2 Byways: J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway, Old Florida Heritage Highway, William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway, Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway, A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway
- **Zena Taylor | District 3**
D3 Byways: Big Bend Scenic Byway, Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway, Scenic Highway 30A
- **Lauren Rand | District 4**
D4 Byways: Broward County A1A Scenic Highway, Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Scenic Highway, Martin Grade Scenic Highway, Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway
- **Claudia Calzaretta | District 5**
D5 Byways: A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway, Green Mountain Scenic Byway, Heritage Crossroads: Miles of History, Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway, Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail, River of Lakes Heritage Corridor, Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway
- **Kirk Hoosac | District 6**
D6 Byway: Florida Keys Scenic Highway All-American Road
- **Christopher Speese | District 7**
D7 Byway: Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway
- **Daniel Kastelic | Florida's Turnpike**
Florida's Turnpike Byway: Suncoast Scenic Parkway



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Real Places. Real Stories.™



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