

Altamaha Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Submitted to the
Georgia Department of Transportation
April 16, 2002
Revised per DOT Comments
June 12, 2002

Introduction

This document is a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Altamaha Scenic Byway. Preparation and submittal of this plan for state agency review is the next step in having the proposed route officially designated as a state scenic byway by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The plan inventories and recognizes the six intrinsic qualities of the proposed byway and establishes an implementation strategy for achieving the locally determined vision for the corridor. Once the CMP is approved by DOT, local governments along the route will pass local resolutions approving the road's scenic byway designation.

Byway Vision Statement

To protect, enhance and share the cultural, natural, archeological, historic and recreational qualities of this unique region through the preservation, beautification, and interpretation of our coastal heritage for present and future generations.

State and National Scenic Byway Programs

The National Scenic Byway program offers communities an effective method to protect and promote their special scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational, and archaeological resources. Scenic byway designations are community-requested designations at the state or national level that recognize roads with these special features. This designation offers communities opportunities to highlight their most outstanding assets while attracting visitors to increase economic benefits from tourism and recreation. Scenic byway designations encourage local citizens, businesses, conservation organizations, and government agencies to work together to protect the state's best roadways. A strong scenic byway program gives communities a tool to plan for future growth along the designated scenic byway corridor, helping to safeguard against the loss of a road's beauty and intrinsic qualities to inappropriate development.

Local Background

In 1998, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs designated the City of Darien as a Better Hometown. In August 2000, the city hired a Better Hometown director and the Board of Directors held a Community Kick-Off event. At this town hall meeting, many citizens voiced concerns over growing development pressures in coastal Georgia. Rural charm, a European history dating back to England's King George, and the irreplaceable environment are elements unique to coastal Georgia, and their preservation is crucial to the present and future quality of life. Based on these concerns, our community set several local and regional goals to help guide development that will help preserve the most outstanding elements and enhance the beauty of the area. All three affected local governments, Glynn County, McIntosh County, and the City of Darien, voted unanimously to support a joint application to the Georgia Scenic Byways program.

The Georgia Scenic Byway program is an effective tool to promote thoughtful growth along with conservation. As such, it can provide the governments of Darien, McIntosh County and Glynn County with proven methods of guiding development carefully, always with an eye to protecting the beauty and history of our communities.

The proposed Altamaha Historic Byway spans southeastern McIntosh County, the City of Darien and northern Glynn County. The dominant feature of the area is the Altamaha River delta, with its distinctive ecological, historical, cultural, ethnic and archaeological qualities. Many small communities along the byway claim roots in the area dating back to the Scottish Highlanders and General James Oglethorpe who founded the town of Darien in 1736.

Much of the area comprising the proposed Altamaha Historic Byway route represents the last undeveloped land in coastal Georgia. While we welcome the progress that growth will bring, we are concerned about the potential compromise to our quality of life that unmanaged growth guarantees. Participation in the Scenic Byway program provides our communities with the necessary tools to protect and enhance the historic significance and natural beauty around us.

The following organizations and interested parties participated in the discussion that led to the application:

- McIntosh County Board of Commissioners
- Darien City Council
- Glynn County Board of Commissioners
- Darien Downtown Development Authority
- McIntosh County Development Authority
- Better Hometown Community Board of Directors
- Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center
- Department of Natural Resources- Coastal Management Program
- Department of Natural Resources – State Parks and Historic Sites
- The Nature Conservancy
- Brunswick/Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce
- McIntosh County Chamber of Commerce
- McIntosh County Rotary
- Brunswick Rotary
- Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society
- Sapelo Island DNR Education Office
- McIntosh SEED
(Sustainable Environment and Economic Development)
- Altamaha Riverkeeper

Public Participation Initiatives

Community Meetings

The Historic Planner from the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center facilitated six public meetings during the Corridor Management Plan process. These meetings took place at historic buildings and churches along the proposed route. At each meeting new individuals from the community came out to learn about the byway and to support the process.

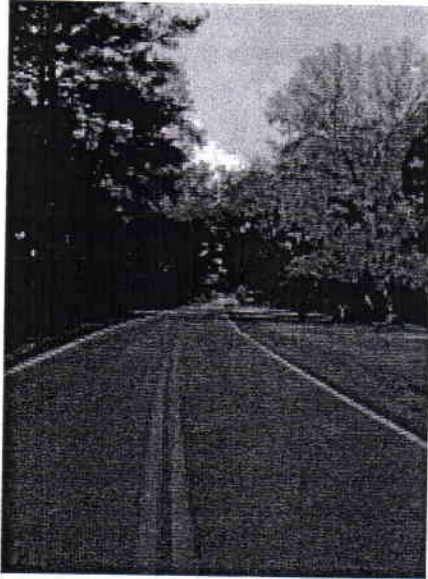
Public Hearings

Staff from the Department of Community Affairs facilitated four public hearings with support from the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. Two hearings were held at the Needwood Church in Glynn County, and two hearings were held at the Ida Hilton Public Library in Darien.

CMP Workshop

Following the first series of public hearings, Georgia Department of Community Affairs staff held a workshop for the members of the Corridor Management Committee.

Proposed Route



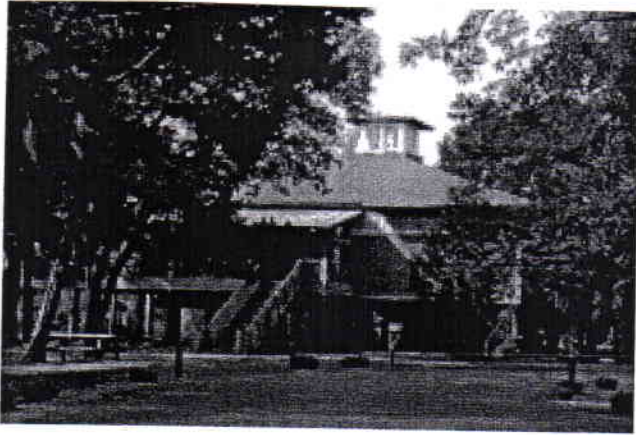
The Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway consists of two highways, SR 99 and US 17. Beginning at the Sapelo Island Visitors' Center off SR 99, the byway runs south past historic sites such as The Thicket, The Ridge, and Ashantilly Plantation on SR99 into Darien, Georgia. At the intersection of SR 99 and US 17, at the historic McIntosh County Courthouse, the route continues South on US 17 through Darien, across the Darien River, the Butler River, the Champney River, and finally, the Altamaha River into Glynn County. The route continues past Howfwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site and ends at the Historic Needwood Baptist Church and School. An alternate loop allows for a left turn on McIntosh Road in McIntosh County off SR99 to travel past Fort King George State Historic Site and continue down Fort King George Drive to US 17 one block south of the McIntosh County Courthouse. The length (in miles) of the entire proposed byway is 17.4 miles. (See map next page)

Our intention is not to halt development along the byway, but with continued public input and education, to assist landowners in making wise choices that will help preserve the intrinsic qualities of the corridor. We are building widespread support for and recognition of the benefits of the byway's potential as a regional tourist destination. Achieving wise land development choices will require combine continued public education targeted at elected officials and property owners. The byway commission will employ the assistance of existing federal and state government financial incentives designed to encourage sensitive growth and management of the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources along the route.

Byway Oversight

To realize the community's vision for the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway the three governments will create a local entity to provide the necessary focus for the preservation and enhancement of the byway. While elected official involvement is paramount to our success, a Byway Commission will give the byway a more distinct community identity. The organizational structure for byway oversight is described further in the Implementation Strategy section of this CMP.

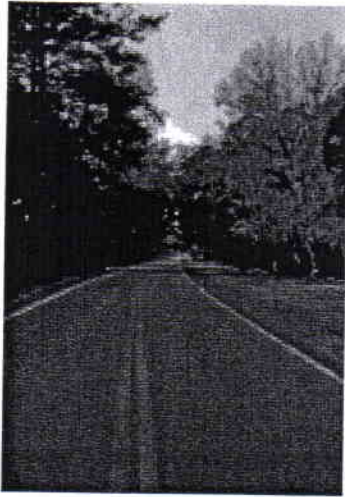
(Attached Route Map should be inserted here)



Existing Conditions

While McIntosh Road and Fort King George Drive are county/city roads, SR 99 and US 17 are under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Department of Transportation. However, Georgia DOT assumes no financial or legal responsibilities as a result of these roads being designated a scenic byway.

SR 99 is a two lane undivided roadway with 6 foot grass shoulders and an estimated right of way of 80 to 100 feet, until the intersection of SR 99 and US17/SR 25. The average annual traffic count for this section is 1900 cars per day.



SR/US 17/SR 25 is a divided four lane roadway, with curb and gutter, and an estimated 85 foot right of way. At the intersection of SR 99/US17/SR 25 and SR 25 Spur, the roadway goes to two lanes, undivided with 8 foot grass shoulders and an estimated 100 foot right of way continuing to the Glynn County line. The average annual traffic count for this section is 6600 cars per day.

SR 99/US 17/SR 25 Spur is an undivided two lane roadway with 5 foot grass shoulders and an estimated 60 foot right of way. There are no traffic counts available for this road.

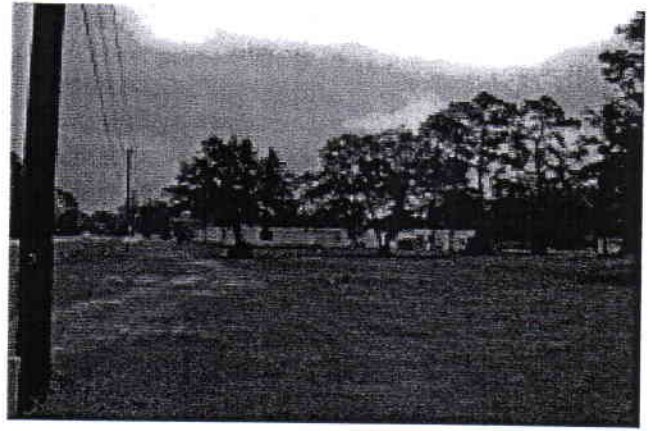


McIntosh Road is a two-lane roadway with 5-foot grass shoulders and an estimated right of way of 60 feet. Fort King George Road is a two-lane roadway with 5 foot grass shoulders and an estimated right of way of 60 feet. There are no traffic counts available for McIntosh Road or Fort King George Road. Both roads have newly completed pedestrian corridor/bicycle routes funded through TEA.

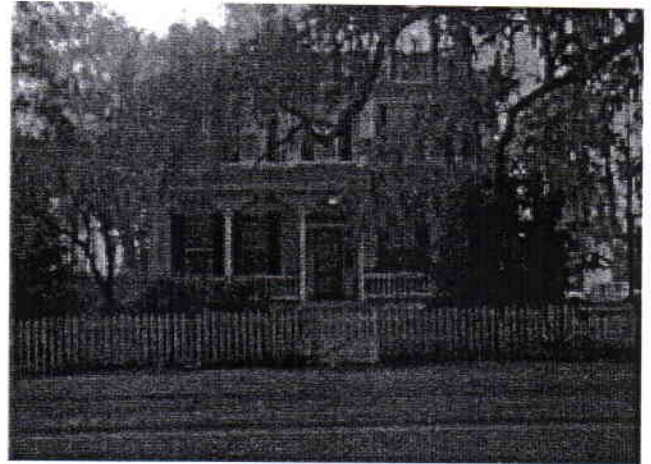


DOT project (PI# 0000422, STP-0000-00 (422), Glynn County, 1.03 miles of widening on SR 99 beginning east of I-95 and extending to US 17/SR 25 has the potential to impact the byway either positively or negatively depending on design factors. Construction funding for this project is in "long range;" meaning it will not be funded for six years. Although it is acknowledged this and all DOT project schedules are subject to change, this time frame would be appropriate since it would allow ample time to coordinate this project with the goals and objectives of the Corridor Management Plan for the byway.

The McIntosh County current and future land use maps show that all property along the byway is primarily residential. The Glynn County land use element of the comprehensive plan states "Glynn County will maintain and enforce development regulations which meet legal standards, encourage high quality development, allow a reasonable use of property and protect the interests of citizens." Darien's business district allows a variety of uses that will suit the tourism needs of byway travelers. Each local government has expressed support for enforcing current regulations and encouraging appropriate business, residential and recreational development on the corridor.



Along the seventeen mile route, much of the housing is rural in nature. That is, mostly on large lots, although there are several clusters of mobile homes and one mobile home park. While The Ridge offers the traveler a glimpse of a well-preserved Victorian neighborhood, other communities are much more utilitarian in appearance. Several specimens of southern vernacular architecture along the route are dilapidated and uninhabited. These houses, barns and garages should be rescued and returned to housing, or converted to small businesses that may capture the tourism potential of the byway. The historic character of the architecture is worth the effort of preservation.



DOT rules specify that "the CMP shall provide for segmentation (the exclusion of corridor sections with industrial or commercial use that include little or none of the intrinsic qualities for which scenic byway designation is desired). However, the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway route (shown on the map on page 5) is rich in the five intrinsic qualities, and no segmentation of this byway appears to be appropriate.



There are no existing Billboards along the route and the participating local governments will work to see that the scenic route remains billboard-free.





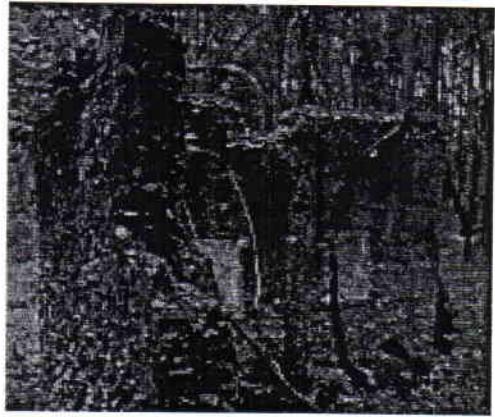
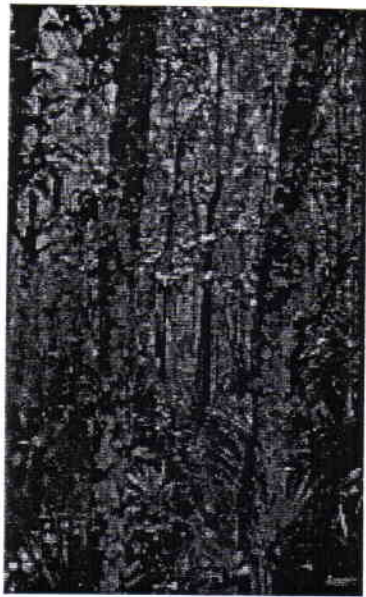
Scenic Qualities

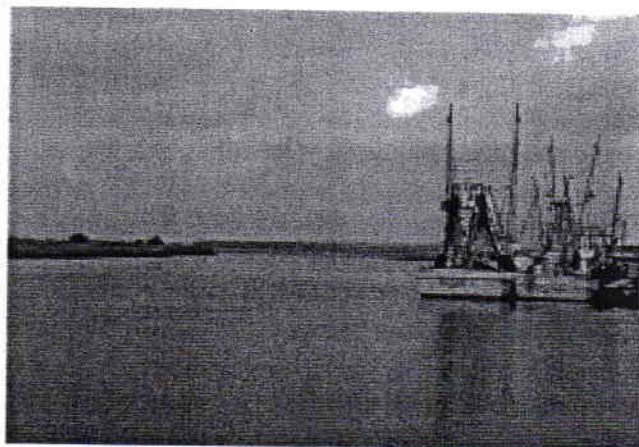
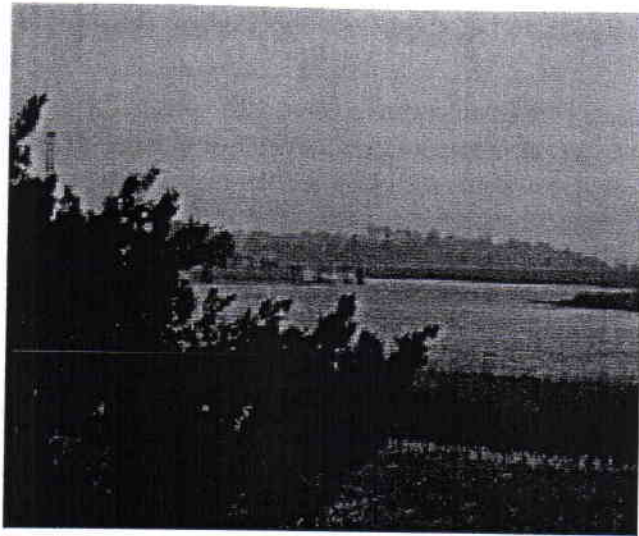
The intrinsic scenery of the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway is outlined in detail in the Natural, Historic and Archaeological Qualities sections that follow. The interwoven characteristics of each intrinsic quality provide for a unique opportunity to experience the best of Coastal Georgia. It should be noted that at this time, some of the privately held property along the corridor might not be considered "scenic" in nature.



Several of the most scenic resources are located a few hundred feet off the main byway on side roads. Currently, these resources are noted by historic markers. The scenic vistas are noteworthy on their own for anyone with an appreciation for natural beauty, but discreet interpretative signage will provide information for those wishing to learn more about the unique environment through which the byway travels.

The vistas from Highway 17 through Darien and into Glynn County are incomparable in the United States. Coastal Georgia is home to one third of all marshland on the east coast of North America, much of which is visible from the scenic byway. From the Highway 17 bridge out of Darien onto General's Island (a relative high point in Coastal Georgia) is an expansive view of the famous Darien shrimp fleet, the northernmost branch of the Altamaha River Delta, and hundreds of acres of marshland. Continuing south along the route from Darien, the traveler will cross through the marsh itself on a series of bridges and causeways (man-made "dry land" created for the purpose of a road). On any given day, one may see osprey, bald eagles, great blue herons, red tailed hawks and owls, in addition to whatever migratory birds may be passing through at the time. After crossing the bridge over the South Altamaha River into Glynn County, the byway seems to close in on itself. This perceived narrowing is due to the road leaving the Delta and returning to mainland on which grows the remains of a once towering maritime forest. (See the Natural Qualities section for a complete overview.) The terminus of the byway is the Needwood Baptist church and school, a classic example of late 19th century southern religious architecture.





Natural Qualities

McIntosh County is a naturalist's paradise. Located halfway between Savannah and Jacksonville, Florida, this scenic county is rich not only in history, but in natural and environmental quality as well. Surrounded by marshlands, maritime forests and the mighty Altamaha River, the proposed byway is full of natural beauty.

From the northern route of McIntosh County at the Sapelo Island Visitors Center, salt marshes exude the essence of coastal Georgia. Encompassing over 475,000 acres through coastal Georgia alone, salt marshes and their adjacent rivers and creeks play a critical role in the recreation, economy and quality of life of the community. Salt marshes function in the filtration of pollutants from inland sources while tidal creeks (often called nursery grounds) support the microorganisms, fish and invertebrates on which this local economy has traditionally been based. The vast marshes and waterways provide recreational activities such as fishing, canoeing and kayaking as well as bountiful habitat for wildlife. In May, Georgia's state flower, the Cherokee Rose, blooms profusely across Sapelo Island.

The Altamaha River, the largest river system in Georgia, meets the sea in McIntosh County. Depositing thousands of gallons of water per second into the ocean, this river system supports a unique habitat. From fresh to estuarine waters, the river supports numerous species of fish, invertebrates, reptiles and birds. The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) has designated the Altamaha River delta as a critical stopover site for migratory shorebirds such as the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*). Some research estimates that nearly three quarters of all migratory waterfowl in the Western Hemisphere spend time in the Altamaha River delta each year.

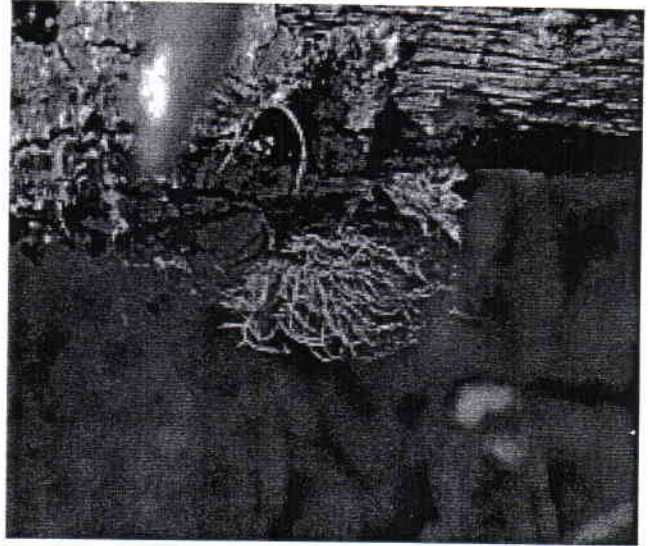
The maritime forest represents the last stage of forest growth succession. Also known as the climax forest, this habitat is dominated by large live oak trees (*Quercus virginica*). Acting much like a rainforest canopy, live oaks filter sunlight and rain to provide a shaded understory that contains American holly, Yaupon holly, magnolia, and saw palmetto. These species provide viable habitat for animals such as deer, songbirds, rabbits, squirrels owls and snakes. The leaf litter from

the forest floor provides habitat for decomposers such as fungi and insects. Established trails through the maritime forests, such as those at Howfwyl-Broadfield Plantation and Fort King George, offer a wonderful opportunity for a relaxing stroll while enjoying natural beauty.

The freshwater marshes that exist between Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation and the Darien River are relics of the rice cultivation era along Georgia's coast. The fields were purchased by the Georgia Department of Natural Resource to be maintained as a waterfowl management area. This rich area contains cattails and bulrushes as well as freshwater needlerush.

Directly south of McIntosh County is Glynn County, through which meander four miles of the proposed Scenic Byway. This area consists of maritime forest and regrowth. The maritime forest across from the Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation is characterized by ancient live oak canopy with yaupon holly, gallberry, magnolia and scattered pines throughout. The east portion of Glynn County surrounding Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation contains one of the last remnants on the Georgia coast of a longleaf pine-wiregrass forest. These open, parklike forests once covered millions of acres across the Southeast. Today less than three percent remains. Longleaf pine forests harbor tremendous diversity. They are home to hundreds of plant and animal species, including the gopher tortoise.

Further south on the route, the mixed pine and hardwood regrowth forests across from Needwood Baptist Church and School wed permeable sand ridges with nutrient rich soils of pine trees and young hardwoods. Yaupon holly, gallberry and saw palmetto are spread throughout. This regrowth forest offers plenty of opportunity for wildlife viewing as it supports habitat for many species of songbirds, mammals and reptiles.



Wildlife Viewing Areas along the Route:

- Sapelo Island
- Sapelo Island Visitors Center
- Fort King George State Historic Site
- Howfwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site
- Georgia Colonial Coast Birding Trail sites
- Altamaha River Waterfowl Management Area
- Ansley Hodges Memorial Site
- Williamson Park

Historic and Cultural Qualities

History of the Altamaha Byway Route

In 1736 General James Oglethorpe employed 100 Scottish highland rangers to build a road "wide enough for carts to pass" through the forests and swamps between Savannah and Darien. Following closely the present day route of U.S. 17, "The King's Road" was the first major thoroughfare to be built in the new Georgia colony. With the southern extent of the King's Road ending at the Darien River, the marshes and rivers of the Altamaha River delta would present an engineering obstacle that would not be conquered until 178 years later!

The "Shell Road," constructed many years before the Civil War, approximated the present route of Georgia Highway 99 in McIntosh County. Originally a dirt horse-and-buggy lane, sections of the road from Darien to The Ridge were covered with oyster shells and in 1897 were completely "paved" with shells obtained from the county's canneries. As more shells became available this unique highway extended all the way to Meridian, the northern terminus of the byway route. From 1936 to 1938, the state highway department paved this road, ending the era of coastal Georgia's "Shell Road."

In 1906 the Georgia, Coastal & Piedmont Railroad (commonly known to the public as the "Gopher, Coon, and Possum, and in later days "Get a Crowd and Push") was built and followed the Shell Road before turning westward at Crescent. The line left Darien at 9:40 in the morning and made stops at the Ridge, Hudson and Meridian before traveling to its northernmost terminus at Collins near Reidsville, in Tattnall County. The original railroad bed still exists along the byway route, obscured by trees and shrubs. In 1914 the GC & P line was extended to Brunswick crossing four of the rivers on the Altamaha River delta. An automobile shuttle was added and Darienites could ride the shuttle all the way to Brunswick or they could choose to leave the shuttle at the "automobile transfer" at Broadfield near the Hofwyl Plantation site on the present day byway route. Before completion of this rail line, Darien citizens depended on the river steamer HESSIE for access to Brunswick.

In 1921 a steel bridge was built over the Darien River and a new highway built over the rail trestle through the marshes between Darien and Broadfield. The railroad bridges were planked over for automobile

traffic but the wood trestle eventually decayed. In order to create a permanent, lower maintenance road, laborers excavated dirt from the Broadfield area and moved it on a "dirt train" to build a causeway through the marsh. In 1926 the road between Darien and Brunswick was paved in asphalt and was dedicated in 1927 as the Atlantic Coastal Highway, U.S. 17.

The growing popularity and availability of the automobile made sunny Florida's East Coast popular for tourists escaping the frigid winters in the north. In years following 1927, U.S. 17 became known as the "Dixie Highway" and was the major thoroughfare for tourists traveling to Florida. With the completion of I-95, paralleling U.S. 17, during the 1970s, a majority of travelers chose the quicker and easier route to Florida. Hundreds of businesses that had thrived from tourist traffic along Highway 17 closed. Only recently have local governments planned projects to attract tourists back to U.S. 17 and Georgia Highway 99. The Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway is a major step toward accomplishing the goal of providing the traveler a pleasant experience in this unique region of the country.

The epicenter of the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway, Darien, is the second oldest existing town in Georgia founded by Scottish Highlanders in 1736. On the eastern perimeter of the town, on a loop of the byway, is Georgia's oldest fort, Fort King George. A major portion of the town, including Vernon Square, Columbus Square, and the historic waterfront are included on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition The Ridge, Fort King George Historic Site and Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Historic Site are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

African-American history flourishes in the region. Historic churches constructed by freed slaves synchronize the past, present and future for African-Americans. Historic sites such as Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation and Butler Island Plantation enhance the traveler's African-American experience, offering a glimpse into plantation life in a bygone era. Families whose ancestors, too, worked and lived here own much of the residential property along the entire route.

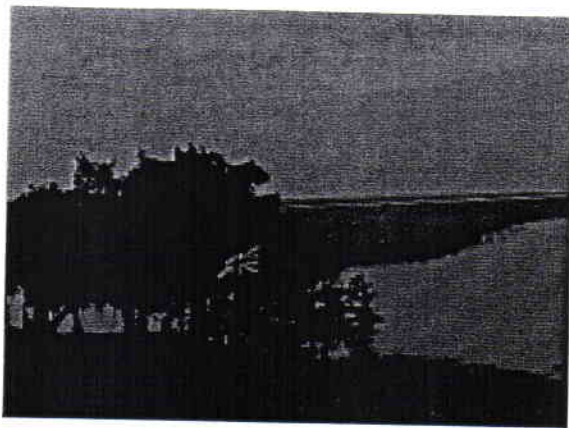
Ruins and archaeological sites abound along the Altamaha Historic Scenic byway route, a testament to Native Americans, Spanish missionaries, English and Scottish settlers, military expansionists, entrepreneurs, agriculturists, opportunists. Nowhere is more evidence

of our early history and life on the tidewater coast than the historic and archaeological sites along the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway.

Historic Sites

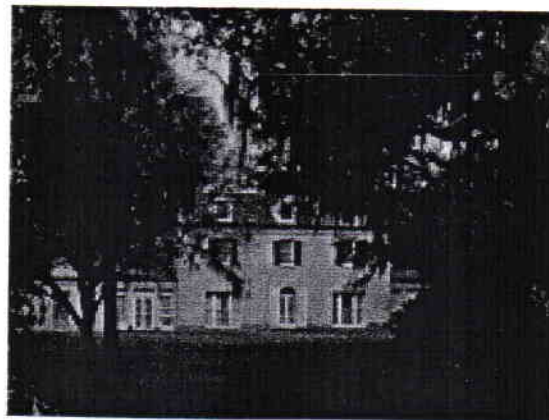
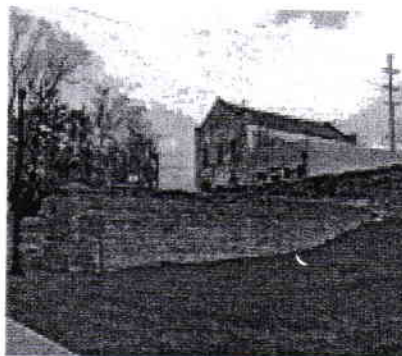
Early Colonial

- **Fort King George State Historic Site:** Here the various cultures and periods of history of the area are encapsulated in a relatively small and clearly defined landscape. Fort King George was Georgia's first fort built by the British in a period when three European powers; France, Spain and Great Britain, struggled for control of the Altamaha River delta. The fort, built originally in 1721, has been carefully reconstructed using old records and drawings from the British Public Records Office. Ruins and artifacts of a huge sawmill complex are visible on the site and the museum interprets the various eras of history represented there, the Guale Indians, the Spanish mission Santo Domingo de Talaje, Fort King George, the Scots settlement of Darien and the Sawmilling period.



Antebellum Architecture

- **Darien Waterfront:** Ruins of cotton and rice warehouses as well as the Adam Strain ships chandlery (c.1804) stand as reminders of Darien as a major seaport. Along the waterfront grew Georgia's second oldest existing town established by Scottish Highlanders in 1736. Hundreds of descendants of these first settlers still live in the Darien area today and display a great sense of pride in their family identities.
- **The Thicket:** A historian and archaeologist's delight, the ruins of William Carnochan's sugar and rum distillery (c. 1816) and four slave cabins are well preserved on private property, part of the Tolomato Subdivision.
- **Ashantilly:** Thomas Spalding, owner of Sapelo Island, built this magnificent mansion for his mother in 1804. The mansion burned in the 1930s but was rebuilt by its owner William G. Haynes who later turned it over to a group to promote education and preservation.



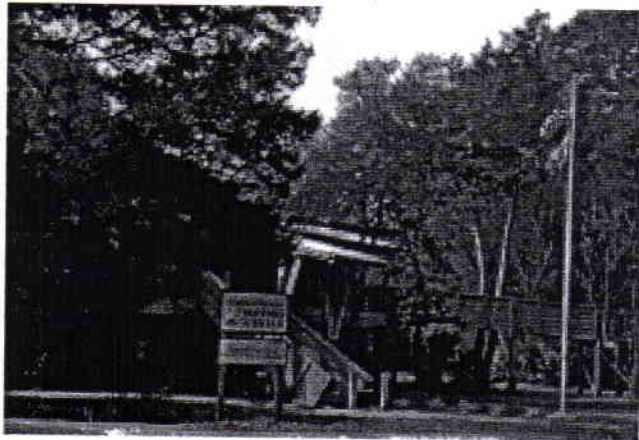


- **St. Andrews Cemetery:** Originally the Spalding family burial plot, the land for St. Andrew's cemetery, adjacent to Ashantilly, was deeded to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in 1870 for a community burial ground. This cemetery effectively tells much of the history of McIntosh County. Here is the resting-place of Thomas Spalding as well as members of several well-known families.



- **The Grant House:** The only residence to survive the burning of Darien by federal troops under Colonel Robert Shaw in 1863, the Grant House was constructed in the late 1830's by John Mabry. It later became the home of the late Professor James L. Grant, former principal of Todd-Grant School, today the Todd-Grant Elementary School. Descendants of Professor Grant continue to live in the home.

Plantation Life and African-American Culture

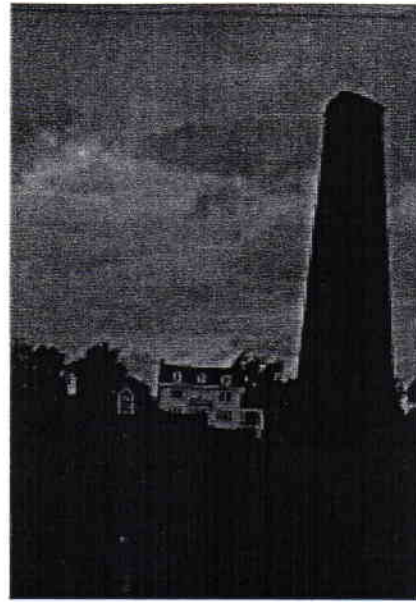


- **Sapelo Island** is the last intact Gullah/Geechee community in the Sea Islands of Georgia. It is still inhabited today by the direct descendants of slaves that were brought to the island in 1802 to work the plantations that were established there. The Gullah/Geechee people on Sapelo Island still maintain many elements of the unique West African culture, language, and traditions brought over from the "Rice Coast" of Africa by their ancestors. The Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society, Inc., founded in 1993, works to preserve and revitalize the culture of this unique community.



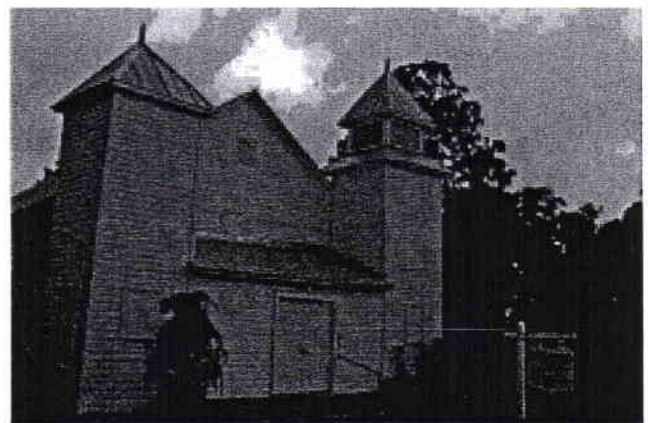
- **Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site:** In 1807 William Brailsford of Charleston began carving a rice plantation from virgin cypress swamps along the Altamaha River. Visitors can tour the overseer's residence built by slaves complete with original furnishings and artifacts. The museum and film tell the story of the life of plantation slaves as well as the plantation's owners and descendants.

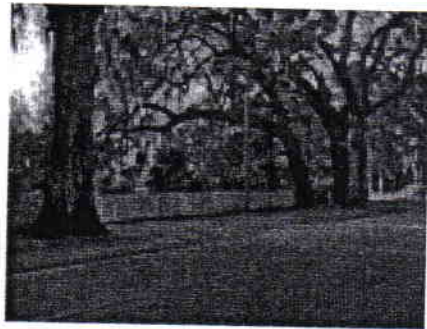
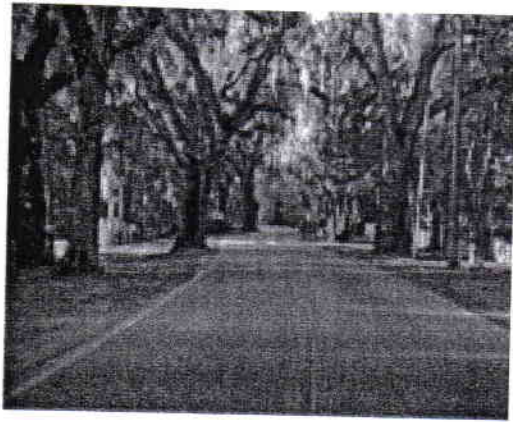
- **Butler Island Plantation:** Now part of the Altamaha State Waterfowl Refuge, Butler Island was owned by Pierce Butler who married the English actress Fanny Kemble. While visiting this plantation Kemble wrote *A Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, her account of life on this plantation. Abandoned canals, ditches and embankments, punctuated with the rotted remnants of trunks and tidegates, are still visible. The brick chimney of the old rice mill still stands. Colonel T. L. Houston, owner of the New York Yankees in the 1920s, built the house that still stands on the property, which is now the headquarters for The Nature Conservancy's Altamaha River Bioreserve.



Post-Bellum African-American Culture

- **St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church:** Freed slaves from Butler Island built this tabby church in 1876 for their own house of worship. Many descendants of those church-builders are now members of today's congregation.
- **Needwood Church and School:** This site symbolizes the post-Civil War Reconstruction era when freedmen founded religious movements with their own congregations and houses of worship. Needwood Church represents the transition from plantation slavery to a new time of freedmen embarking on a path toward development of their own destinies.





Timber Boom Era

- **The Ridge:** In the late 1800s when Darien was a leading timber exporter, bar pilots and timber barons built Victorian homes here replacing houses built by plantation owners and their families looking to escape malarial fevers.
- **Vernon Square and Columbus Square:** Following the concept of town planning laid out by James Oglethorpe, these squares are two of the planned squares in the Darien community. Throughout the 19th century Vernon Square was the center of the business, cultural, social and religious center of Darien. The railroad station was located in Columbus Square. A number of surviving historic homes built during that era surround the squares today.



Existing Historic Markers:

- The Thicket
- St. Andrews Cemetery
- General's Island
- Butler Island
- St. Cyprian's Church
- Needwood Church

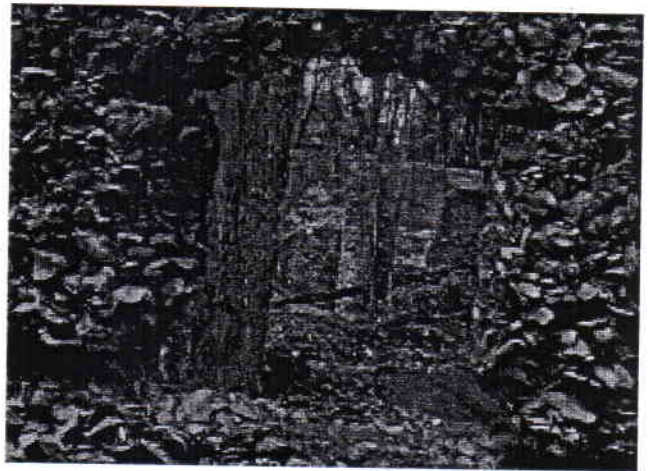
Archaeological Qualities

Site Inventory

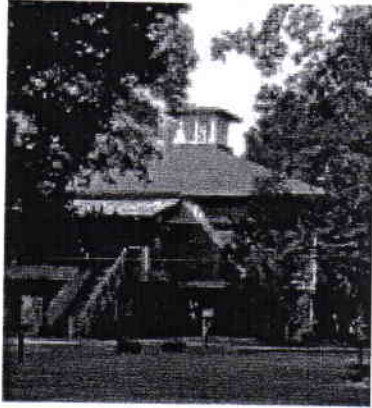
The area along the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway is a tapestry of history, spanning the Guale Indians, 16th and 17th century Spanish missionaries, pre-colonial occupation of Fort King George, Scottish Highland colonists and soldiers, and rice and cotton planters whose agricultural empires were carved from the rich Altamaha River bottomlands and surrounding Tidewater. African slaves, many of whose descendants now make their homes along the byway, built the nineteenth century plantations whose names still linger in the local dialect. Their folk life is preserved in large degree by the black communities scattered along the byway and on Sapelo Island where a Geechee community struggles to survive. Descendants of the 177 Scottish Highlanders who first settled Darien still live throughout McIntosh County. Cemeteries in Glynn and McIntosh Counties are full of the European and African settlers who tamed the Altamaha Delta. This byway blends its rich history, enhanced by the archaeological remnants of a bygone era, with the ecological beauty of the present.

- **The Thicket:** Tabby ruins of a well-preserved sugar and rum distillery owned by William Carnochan of Jamaica (built 1816). In addition there are four well-preserved slave cabins nearby.
- **Fort King George State Historic Site:** Various archaeological excavations have yielded evidence of a large Guale Indian village, the Spanish mission Santo Domingo de Talaje, Carolina rangers, Scottish Highlanders and nineteenth century sawmill ruins.
- **Butler Island Plantation:** Studies of slave settlements at Butler Island reveal a greater understanding of slavery and plantation dynamics for historians. Visible is the brick tower of an old rice mill chimney.

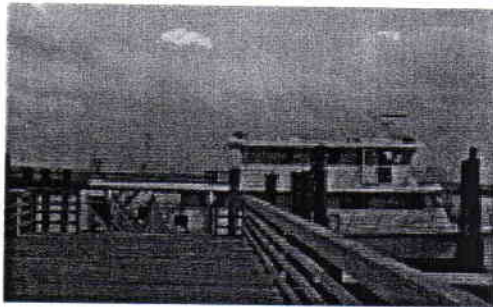
- **Darien Waterfront:** Tabby ruins of cotton and rice warehouses and the Strain building chip chandlery (c. 1804). Archaeological digs here have yielded artifacts from various businesses from Darien's early years as a major seaport and exporter of timber, cotton and rice and naval stores.
- **Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site:** Archaeologists have uncovered foundations of the original plantation house as well as various implements utilized by slaves who worked a vast 19th century rice plantation.



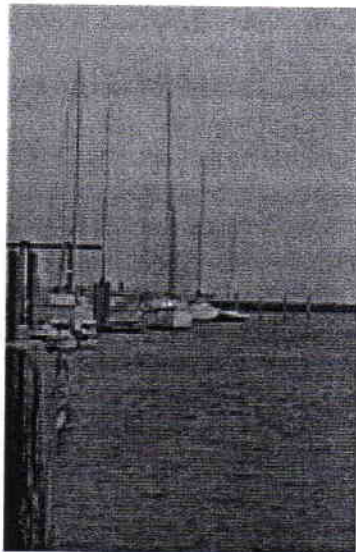
Recreational Qualities



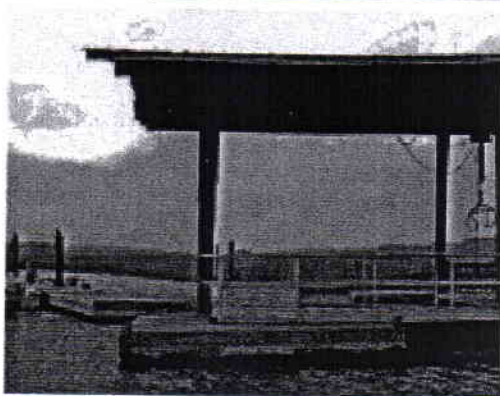
The sites inventoried in the Natural, Historic and Archeological sections provide a wealth of educational recreation experiences. For those with an interest in active recreation, many resources along the byway provide hours, days, or even weeks' worth of opportunities.



- **Sapelo Island Visitors' Center:** In addition to interpretation of marsh ecosystems the center offers a glimpse of local Gullah/Geechee culture. A 30-minute ferry ride from the center to Sapelo Island takes one to Hog Hammock, a community that offers one of the few remaining glimpses of traditional Gullah/Geechee culture remaining in the southern tidewater region.



- Nearby **Sapelo Island** is one of only two barrier Islands in Georgia with ferry service. A guided tour encourages visitors to experience the Gullah/Geechee community of **Hog Hammock**; the **R.J. Reynolds' Mansion**, a natural undeveloped coastline and a view of some of the most extensive estuaries on the East Coast. The wealth of cultural, historic and scenic treasure on this out-of-the-way treat makes a day here an unforgettable experience for all. The **Hog Hammock** community is one of the last intact Gullah communities in the United States. Here, the interested may purchase **hand woven sweet grass baskets**, shop for selected amenities in **BJ's Concession Store**, dine with locals at **George and Lulu's Kitchen**, or enjoy the local ambience at **The Trough Beer Joint**. Overnight accommodations are available through **The Wallow Bed and Breakfast**, **George and Lulu's**, or **The Weekender**. The **Sapelo Lighthouse** is a standing reminder of the maritime history of Coastal Georgia.

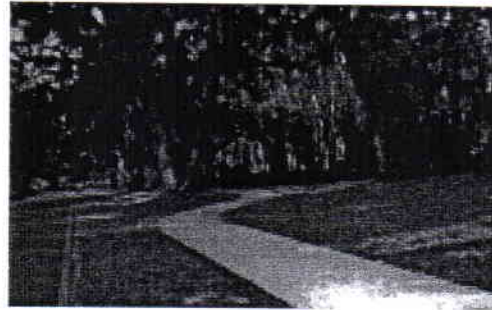


- Novices and "old hands" alike can pick up new skills at **The Blackbeard Sailing School**, located at the **Blue'n'Hall Marina** near the Ridge. Also available at the marina are boat slips, ice, bait, sundries and fuel.

- The new **Trailhead/Darien Welcome Center** is near the midway point of the byway and is located in an 1870 restored Vernacular style house. The center, restored with ISTE A funds, will offer travelers information on area resources, brochures, and a place to park cars or bicycles while touring the area. The center will be staffed with full time welcome center and chamber personnel trained to answer questions and give recommendations on area activities.



- Biking is a growing sport nationwide. **Darien's eight-mile bike path** encompasses the historic district and links Darien to the Fort King George Historic Site. This pedestrian corridor/bicycle route is connected to the Trailhead/Welcome Center.



- Highways 17 and 99 pass through areas of the **Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area**, second largest waterfowl management area east of the Mississippi, offering refuge to alligators, bobcat, raccoons, herons, egrets, ducks and other wading birds. The area provides recreation to fisherman, hunters, birders, and naturalists.

- **Outfitters** offer boat rentals for guided trips through the towering bald cypress trees in the river swamps and pine and hardwood trees along its banks. Boaters and road travelers alike can see the remnants of late 1700's rice fields along the freshwater marsh near Butler Island.

- **The Two-Way Fish Camp** sponsors a number of sport-fishing tournaments throughout the year. Great **inshore and offshore fishing**, with countless miles of creeks and rivers and the close proximity to the ocean, has earned the area the name "The Fisherman's Paradise."



- **The intra-coastal waterway** is approximately 8 miles down the Darien River from the **Darien Waterfront Park**. Navigational markings are in place to guide boaters to the downtown park's two 250-foot docks. The facility is within walking distance to Darien's historic districts, several restaurants, and stores. Picnic tables and playground equipment provides ample accommodations for visitors in a beautifully landscaped setting overlooking the Darien River.



Annual Events

Fort King George Historic Site:

- Scottish Heritage Festival, late March
- Scottish Heritage Days, late March (Activities celebrating Scottish history)
- Cannons Across The Marsh, July 4
- The Fort by Candlelight, mid-October
- Drums Along the Altamaha, Veterans' Day weekend (Colonial Encampment, Crafts)

Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation:

- Black History Program, last Saturday in February
- Christmas Plantation Tour, first Friday and Saturday in December

Sapelo Island:

- Sapelo Food and Jazz Festival, Sapelo Island Visitor's Center, third or fourth Saturday in March. Sponsored by SICARS, this festival is a celebration of Gullah culture, food, arts and crafts and music
- Sapelo Island Beach Party, sponsored by SICARS, second Saturday in June
- Sapelo Cultural Day, sponsored by SICARS, third Saturday in September
- Christmas Tour, second and third week in December
- The Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve sponsors year round events, such as the Sapelo Oyster tour and roast, extended North end tours, a Tabby Tour, and Maritime History Tour.

Darien:

- McIntosh County Rotary Club Tour of Homes, first Saturday in March
- Blessing of the Fleet, Held on a weekend in April or May (determined by the tides) Celebration of area's largest commercial fishing industry includes a street parade, boat parade, fireworks, arts and crafts, antique show, Art in the Park.
- Tunis Campbell Festival, fourth Saturday in June. A celebration of African American culture, music, food, and arts and crafts
- A Day in Darien, second Saturday in November, antique show, Books and Authors, antique car show

- Christmas, Santa arrives on a shrimp boat in early December
- Christmas, first Sunday evening in December, McIntosh County Leisure Services hosts a Luminary Service, including lighting more than 5,000 luminarias between Columbus and Vernon squares, carolers, actors, and local church services.
- Ida Hilton Public Library hosts a full itinerary of story telling, book signings and foreign films year round.

Overnight

Accommodations:

- Open Gates Bed and Breakfast / Darien
- George and Lulu's / Sapelo Island
- The Wallow Bed and Breakfast / Sapelo Island
- The Weekender Bed and Breakfast / Sapelo Island

Restaurants:

- George and Lulu's Kitchen
- BJ's Concession Store / Sapelo Island
- The Trough Beer Joint / Sapelo Island
- B and J's
- Lighthouse Cafe
- Archie's
- Darien Restaurant
- Mudcat Charlies
- Jones Cafe

Public Restrooms

- Sapelo Visitors Center
- Blue'n'Hall Marina
- Fort King George
- Ida Hilton Library
- Darien Trailhead Center
- Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation

Corridor Management Issues

The Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway corridor management committee represents three governing bodies and three distinct communities with a common goal: the preservation and enhancement of the historic, cultural, natural, archeological and recreational qualities along the byway. The Georgia Scenic Byway application and the corridor management plan process have given us the focus necessary to assess the areas along the route and inventory our assets. It has been an extremely beneficial process.

Organizational Structure for CMP Implementation

Members of the Byway Commission will include representatives from:

- Darien Downtown Development Authority
- Darien Better Hometown Community
- Needwood Community resident
- Sapelo Island Community resident
- Glynn County Board of Commissioners
- McIntosh County Board of Commissioners
- Fort King George
- DNR – Wildlife Resources Division
- A byway resident appointed by each participating jurisdiction

Historic Darien, Inc., an existing 501-c (3), is an education and preservation arm of the Darien Downtown Development Authority. This nonprofit organization has agreed to serve as fiscal agent to receive private funding that may be available for preservation and enhancement activities along the byway. We anticipate that the local governments along the byway will be the applicants for and recipients of federal and state grant funds, and thus will manage all funds in accordance with the State of Georgia's Uniform Chart of Accounts and program guidelines of the granting agency.

In addition to the Byway Commission, we will form The Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway Advisory Council. This group will be open to byway residents and other interested parties and will make

recommendations to the Byway Commission on issues relevant to the preservation and enhancement of the byway.

In order to achieve our vision for the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway, we must plan the implementation process for our byway carefully. The key elements will be as follows:

Preservation

- The Needwood Community, The Ridge, Fort King George, the east and west side of Darien, and Howfyl are on the register at this time. Also the DNR owns much of the marsh and significant land along the route including two historic sites and Butler Island. Individual homes along the byway that would qualify will be identified and homeowners informed.
- Preserve existing historic buildings along the route. Funding sources will be sought for restoration of the SI Reames store in Ridgeville, the Grant House in Darien, the historic Petersville Cemetery and the Needwood School in the Needwood community.
- Work with the Darien Downtown Development Authority to maximize use of the existing Façade Grant Program for eligible business owners within the city.

Interpretation

- Develop educational kiosks to provide biological and ecological information to visitors
- Creation of an interpretive map outlining areas of interest and the interconnectedness of the intrinsic qualities along the byway
- Creation of a driving tape that will provide commentary and background information for the traveler
- Create a distribution point for interpretive materials on the south end of the byway at the Needwood Church
- Create a free multimedia CD to provide statewide at welcome centers with a short video on the history and attractions of the byway and other written interpretive information and interactive materials. This would work in car cd players (audio portion) or on home computers

Enhancement

- Fort King George State Historic Site has doubled its visitorship in recent years, Although nearby property is undeveloped and available, the state Department of Natural Resources has not secured funding to purchase additional land. The Byway Commission will seek appropriate funds for land acquisition adjacent to the present historic site that may be used for nature trails and passive greenspace.
- Establish wildflower beds along the corridor to enhance roadside beauty while providing wildlife habitat
- Establish a passive recreation greenspace the along the bridge near Butler Plantation for visitors to enjoy.
- Strengthen the liaison with the Altamaha River Partnership, which works to promote economic development along the river by fostering sustainable nature-based tourism efforts
- Pursue creation and implementation of a streetscape plan for the City of Darien
- Develop tree plantings in appropriate areas along the route that will provide tree canopies to future generations
- Provide information to property owners along the byway regarding state and federal loan programs for residential property
- Work with the Department of Community Affairs to reestablish the Keep McIntosh Beautiful program to eradicate litter
- Work with Keep Brunswick and the Golden Isles Beautiful program to eradicate litter

Enhancements Currently Underway:

- Fort King George State Historic Site is completing an ambitious plan to reconstruct several buildings on or near their original sites
- Historic Grace Baptist Church on SR 99 in Darien will be converted into an art gallery featuring local artists
- The City of Darien purchased the 1870 Delegal-Woodward House for restoration. Local history

holds that this house was the first re-built after Darien was burned by Federal troops in 1863

- The Tri-State Highway 17 Heritage Corridor Plan is being developed from Charleston to St. Augustine. Glynn County, McIntosh County, and City of Darien elected officials, and representatives from public and private sector have been actively involved with the CGRDC in the development of the US 17 Heritage Corridor Project. The Heritage Corridor Project has five stated goals: Establish a Heritage Corridor, Effective Wayfinding Strategy, Promote Ecotourism, Create Urban Centers, and Utilize Smart Growth Principles The US 17 Heritage Corridor Project recognizes the five intrinsic qualities identified in the BYWAY program. The two projects will enhance one another.

Future Road Projects:

This Corridor Management Plan calls for the Byway Commission to stay informed by DOT on all proposed future road projects along the Byway. The Commission will propose that, to the greatest extent possible, future improvements be constructed using the alternate highway design standards established in the Federal Highway Administration's publication, Flexibility in Highway Design.

Sign Standards:

No single issue is as critical to preserving the natural and historic character of the byway as control of outdoor advertising. The two counties and the city sponsoring the byway acknowledge that designation of the route as a scenic byway will subject the route to outdoor advertising restrictions as specified in federal statute 23 U.S.C. 131(et. seq.). Currently there are no billboards along the route. The City of Darien has a comprehensive sign ordinance and the byway Commission will work with Glynn and McIntosh Counties to ensure that local ordinances are adopted to prohibit billboards along the byway.

Enhancing the interconnected assets of the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway is the primary goal of the Byway Commission. A wayfinding program will be necessary to identify critical connecting links for the byway. These "links" will connect the natural, historical and recreational features that create the unique byway

experience. Appropriate wayfinding measures will allow visitors to enjoy a sense of the matchless beauty and history of McIntosh and Glynn Counties.

The Byway Commission will work with the Georgia DOT to place scenic byway signs along the route. The community will also request that byway signs be placed on Interstate 95 at exits #58, #49, and #42.

Land Use and Development Issues

The Byway Commission will develop a partnership with the Department of Community Affairs and promote meetings with individual property owners who might be interested in learning about the low interest loan programs managed by the Department. The Byway Commission will work with the Better Hometown Program in the City of Darien to educate, promote, and help fund the existing Facade Grant Program for commercial properties along the route.

The Byway Commission will make voluntary design guidelines and technical assistance available to property owners and developers along the route, but the long-range solution will likely have a regulatory component. The Commission will review all existing development regulations applicable to the route and suggest any desirable improvements to the applicable local governments. While it is anticipated that the affected local governments will be open to updating and refining local development ordinances, some matching funds from Byway Discretionary Grants or other non-local sources may be necessary to help defray the cost of amending or improving local zoning and subdivision ordinances. In addition, the Commission will set aside funds that may be necessary for the purchase of conservation easements.

The Byway Commission will work with the governments of Glynn and McIntosh Counties and the City of Darien to ensure that local ten-year comprehensive plans provide for the byway. The commission will promote inclusion of byway needs and concerns in the Land Use, Economic Development and Environmental portions of these plans.

Some Responsibilities of the Scenic Byway Commission

- Implement the corridor management plan
- Serve as a clearinghouse and public education provider for all corridor-related initiatives
- Promote regional tourism efforts
- Work with local Chambers of Commerce to market the byway regionally
- Work with the Department of Natural Resources at the Sapelo Island Visitors' Center to provide byway educational
- Provide materials and support to the McIntosh County Chamber of Commerce and provide materials to their new Trailhead Center for promotion of the byway
- Provide byway materials and support to the Brunswick Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce for the promotion of the byway
- Provide information on small business resources and housing rehabilitation programs to property owners cooperating with the byway goals and objectives
- Incorporate byway information into local and regional web sites
- Help local governments set priorities for land acquisition and public investments in corridor enhancements
- Seek private donations to support byway initiatives (managed by the 501-c (3))
- Seek regional grant funding to implement byway initiatives
- Assist local governments in administering byway related grants

Tourism and Economic Development

Tourism is the second largest industry in Georgia and a natural industry for the coastal counties. Glynn County has been very successful in marketing Brunswick and the Golden Isles as a regional destination for visitors and the McIntosh County Chamber of Commerce continues to report increases in visitation at its Welcome Center. The Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway provides a sense of connectivity between north Glynn County, Darien and McIntosh County. Promotion of the byway as an alternate to I95 will allow travelers to discover a sense of the "real" Georgia that is not so evident from the interstate.

The abundant beauty and wealth of natural resources of Darien, McIntosh County and Glynn County lend themselves to eco-tourism ventures. Our local governments have agreed to protect our assets and promote this region of the state, using the Scenic Byway designation, to assist ecotourism interests when possible.

Revitalization of the communities along the Byway and ecotourism need not be mutually exclusive items. The Corridor Management Plan guidelines will empower these coastal communities to preserve the history and aesthetic value of their most precious resource, their Coastal Georgia environment. Ecotourism is described as "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local populations". In the case of the Altamaha Historic Scenic Byway, ecotourism also encompasses historical and culturally based exploration.

Coastal Georgia must remain ecologically and culturally viable to encourage economic growth and stimulate the local economy through tourism. A comprehensive wayfinding program will connect this byway to ecotourism and encourage and accommodate all modes of travel—vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian. In addition, implementation of the Corridor Management Plan and a wayfinding program should do much to promote smart growth principles along the route.

Transportation Enhancement funding will become available in October of 2003, although the allocation amount is not known at this time. Application will be made for funds to enhance the byway.

Implementation Timetable

The CMP is not set in stone. Rather it is a general guidance document used over time to create consensus and help organize byway projects. This timetable is a general framework for short term byway enhancement and protection activities as currently envisioned, but will evolve and change as economic conditions and local priorities shift. The CMP and Implementation Strategy can be amended and will be updated over time as needed.

Year 1:

- Appoint and provide training for Byway Commission and Advisory Board
- Meet with DOT to discuss sign locations, additional sign requests and general road maintenance issues
- Provide information to property owners along the byway regarding state and federal loan programs for residential property
- Ask design staff from the Department of Affairs' Office of Downtown Community Services and DOT's regional office to help 1) prepare a tree and wildflower planting scheme for the byway, 2) help identify possible locations for scenic greenspace enhancements
- Explore funding options for a Darien Streetscape Plan
- Work with Advisory Committee to prioritize future enhancement projects and address property owner concerns
- Apply for National Byway Grant for byway enhancements (Securing significant funding during the first year of designation is considered important to building public and landowner support for future initiatives.)
- Hire a consultant to assist in developing detailed wayfinding marker design and specifications,

identify best locations for new interpretive signage, kiosks, etc. and recommend strategies for integrating or updating existing DNR signage to coordinate with new wayfinding graphic standards

- Meet with Chambers, the Altamaha River Alliance and other tourism organizations to discuss coordinating publicity strategy for byway
- Develop byway promotional and interpretive materials and continue to integrate the byway into regional tourism programs
- Work with each local government to ensure that the byway objectives are supported in their comprehensive plans and applicable development regulations
- Assist local governments in reviewing current local regulations to evaluate their impact on the byway
- Work with Glynn and McIntosh Counties to ensure that billboards are prohibited along the entire byway.

Year 2:

- Seek funding for rehabilitation of dilapidated vacant structures of historic significance
- Seek funding for voluntary design guidelines
- Work with teachers to use the byway as an educational tool in local school curriculums
- Work with county governments to implement a byway Facade Improvement Grant program for commercial businesses along the route
- Dialogue with local governments to identify appropriate, politically acceptable solutions to byway land use and environmental issues
- Seek private donations and state resources to rehabilitate and preserve historic assets along the byway
- Develop, adopt and distribute voluntary design guidelines

Year 3:

- Work with DCA to raise local awareness of applicable affordable housing assistance programs and make expanded housing resources available to property owners along the byway
- Implement voluntary design guidelines
- Identify any scenic resources along the route that need long-range protection and identify resources for preserving them
- Seek funding for future initiatives