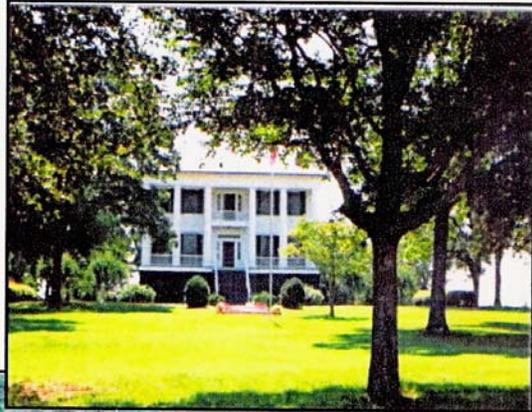


# *Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway*

## *Corridor Management Plan*



**Hancock & Putnam Counties, GA**

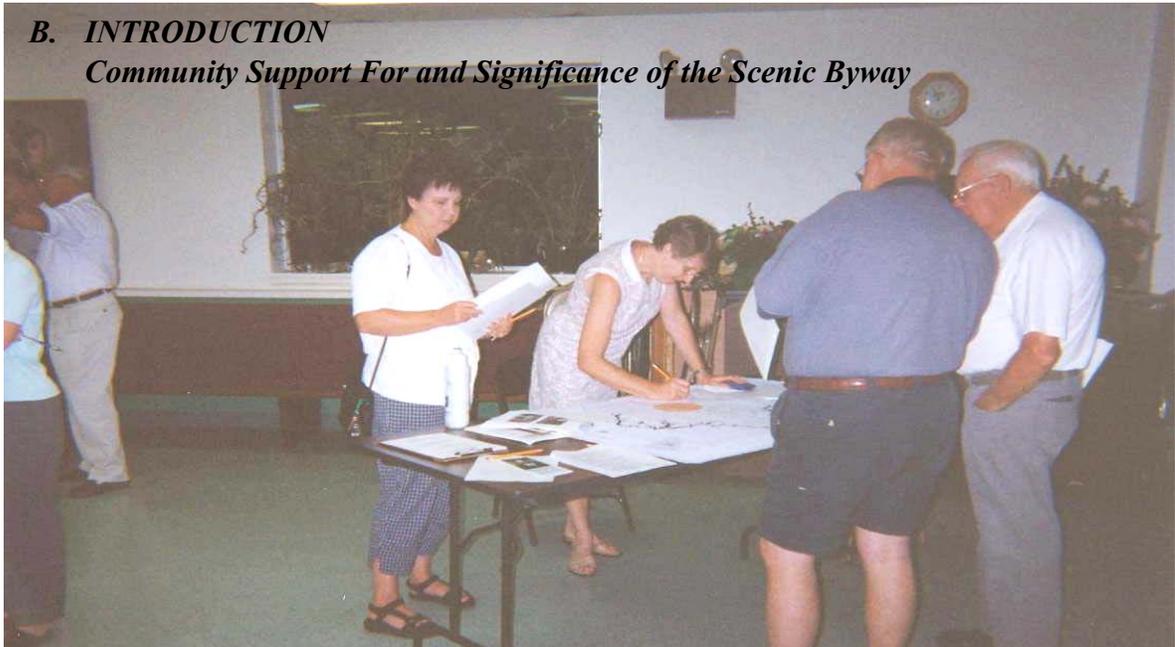
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

A. Introduction	1
Community Development and Support for the Byway	1
Corridor Management Plan	2
Planning Process	2
Information Collected	4
Proposed Routes	4
Origin and History of the Roads	5
B. Vision and Related Community Statements	8
C. Financial and Legal Responsibility	10
D. Federal Requirements Regarding Outdoor Advertising	10
E. Inventory of Intrinsic Qualities	11
Scenic	12
Natural	15
Historic	16
Cultural	20
Archaeological	22
Recreational	23
F. Corridor Management Issues	25
Land Use, Zoning and Development Regulations	25
Transportation	29
Tourism, Economic Development and Marketing	32
G. Implementation	
Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corp. (HPSBC) Administers Byway	38
Community Support	41
Byway Evaluation	41
Byway Expansion and National Designation	41
Property Rights	42
Local Control of Scenic Byway	42
Implementation Timetable	42
H. Conclusion	50
I. Appendices	
Appendix I -Public Participation Process	51
Appendix 2- Local News Articles on the Scenic Byway	88
Appendix 3- Letters of Support	100
Appendix 4- Historic Resources	130
Appendix 5- Tourism Resources	156

Appendix 6- Funding	166
Appendix 7- Bylaws, Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corp.	188

**B. INTRODUCTION**

*Community Support For and Significance of the Scenic Byway*



Hancock and Putnam Counties form the heart of Georgia’s scenic, historic piedmont region. In addition, these two counties complement each well with a wealth of archaeology, culture and internationally acclaimed recreation opportunities. The rolling hills of the byway either pass through or are very close to national forests, wildlife management areas, farmland, rivers, historic buildings and mills, cemeteries, archaeological sites, recreation lakes, and championship golf courses.

Residents of Hancock and Putnam Counties have been working on the proposed Scenic Byway since mid-year 2000. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) representatives visited the proposed Byway during 2001 and early 2002 and met several times with local byway committee members. The Middle Georgia and Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Centers (RDC) provided substantial support throughout the process. The Department of Industry, Trade & Tourism (DITT) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) also attended meetings and offered guidance. The DCA also delivered presentations at public workshops and meetings. Approval of the application was received from GDOT in April 2002.

Residents of the two counties believe a Georgia Scenic Byway designation will allow for planned growth, bring economic benefit to the area, protect the historic rural culture and enhance the overall quality of life in the area. The counties’ development plans, will become more comprehensive upon receiving this designation (Fig 1).



**Figure 1: Committee member of the Monticello Scenic Byway explains development benefits in Putnam.**

For local jurisdictions, there are a number of benefits to being designated a scenic byway. Designation allows more local control over management of the byway route. Designation also places the byway on state maps and in travel magazines, which can attract travelers who would otherwise use an alternate route. Finally, local jurisdictions with byway status have the opportunity to access additional state, federal, and private funding sources for programs and projects.

### **The Corridor Management Plan**

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) provides a comprehensive long-term vision of the byway and an understanding of the byway’s importance to the surrounding areas. The CMP provides a description of the planning process, and goals and objectives for the byway. Further, it lays out management strategies to promote economic development in the corridor while balancing preservation of valuable resources. It should be noted that the CMP is not a regulatory document and has no legal standing in itself. Local authorities are solely responsible for Scenic Byway regulations within their jurisdictions and not state agencies. Byway projects are initiated and implemented by the local community. The CMP is intended to be a flexible tool, subject to annual reviews and updates. Three important principles guide the development of this CMP:

- The byway plan is designed for voluntary implementation on the part of local jurisdictions. CMP guidelines that are not local regulations are voluntary.
- The byway plan will be controlled by local jurisdictions. See page 42 for details.
- Private properties and privacy will be preserved as part of any implementation options. See page 42 for more detail.

### **The Planning Process**

Beginning in June 2000, a partnership of Putnam and Hancock County residents met to discuss the potential of a scenic byway project. Shortly after, the group toured the byway surveying the myriad of historical, scenic, cultural, natural, and archeological resources. Several meetings were held with GDOT and the RDCs to get route approval and begin the public consultation process. A Scenic Byway Commission was formed soon after to manage and coordinate the planning process.

It is the view of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Commission that an effective Corridor Management Plan is shaped by local values. The primary purpose of byway planning is to represent the needs, concerns and desires of local entities, and byway residents and property owners regarding the use and management of the scenic byway. To that end, an extensive public consultation process was initiated (Fig 2).



**Figure 2: Putnam County resident feeding horses while providing views on the scenic byway project to Byway Chairman Larry Moore.**

Various attempts were made by the Scenic Byway Commission to gather public input and support for the byway. Property owners along the byway were sent written invitations to attend public meetings, dozens of individual meetings with property owners were held, and local civic groups and local jurisdictions were personally addressed by members of the Byway Commission (see Appendix 1). Newspapers ads and meeting notices were distributed publicizing public meetings and local newspapers had several articles dealing with some aspect of the scenic byway (see Appendix 2).

Four public meetings were held, two in Hancock County and two in Putnam County. The first public meeting was held in August 2002 to introduce the byway and to receive public input on the direction of the plan and how to proceed (Fig 3). The Byway Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs introduced the project and gave a slide presentation. The presentation focused on introducing the Georgia Scenic Byways program and resources along the byway.



**Figure 3: August 6, 2002 public meeting in Eatonton.**

Included in the presentation was:

- a review of the project’s purpose,
- a discussion of resources along the byway, and
- a draft vision statement and potential goals and strategies for the CMP.

After the team concluded its presentation, meeting attendees discussed the corridor’s vision and goals. The team then revised the draft vision and goals based on input from that discussion.

A second set of public meetings was held in November 2002. Following a brief review of the byway’s purpose and resources, attendees were asked to provide input into specific projects recommended in the earlier public meeting and by the Byway Commission (Fig 4). Opportunities for comments, concerns, and recommendations on specific byway management issues were also available and the results were incorporated in the CMP.



**Figure 4: Meeting attendees discuss project selection at a November 4, 2002 meeting in Sparta.**

A copy of the CMP was made available in three public locations (announced in the newspapers) in each county for public review and comments for a 30-day period. Over the past 15 months the Byway Commission met with elected officials representing both counties at least three times each (Boards of Commissioners, City Councils, State Representatives and State Senator) to keep them informed and to seek continued support. The last series of meetings with elected officials were held after the public forums and CMP review

The Scenic Byway has been broadly discussed by a variety of government and citizens groups and the application has been unanimously endorsed by County Commissioners, City Councils, and State Representatives as well as a variety of local civic organizations (see Appendix 3).

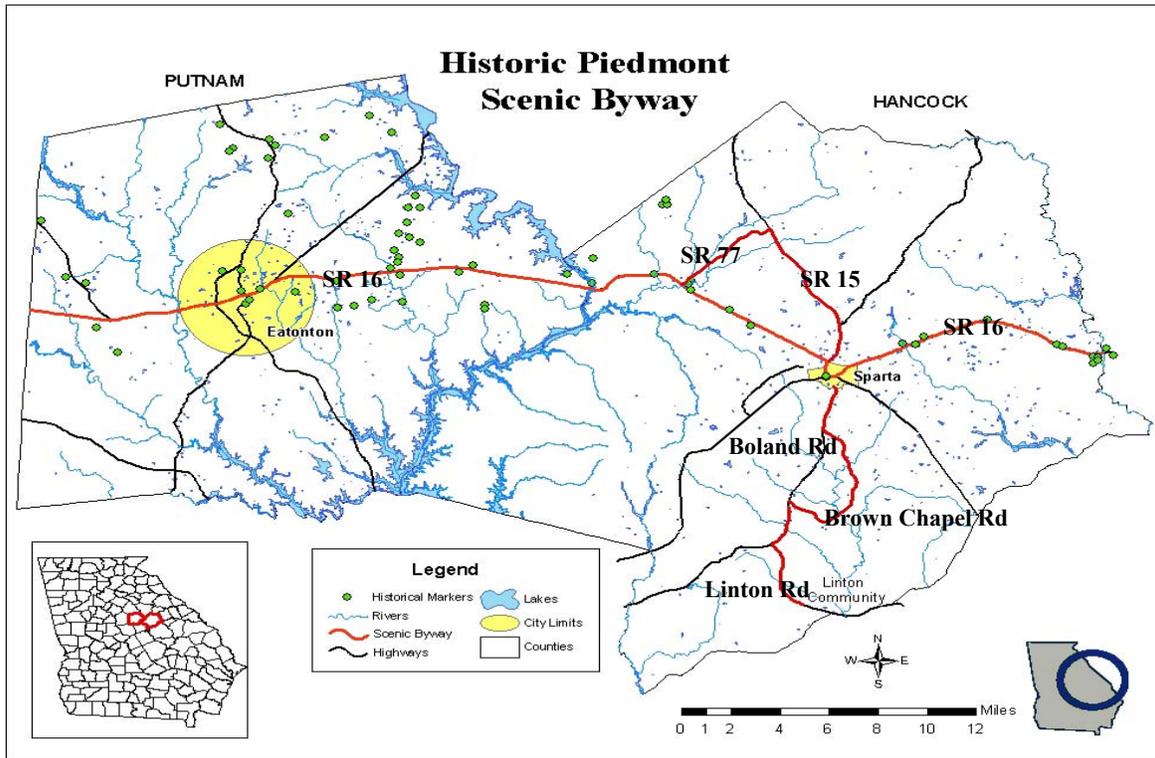
### **Information Collected**

The Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Commission relied heavily on technical assistance provided by the CSRA and Middle Georgia RDCs. The RDCs reviewed both counties comprehensive plans for land use planning, references to the byway route, and tourism and historic resources. Specific zoning ordinances for local jurisdictions were also reviewed. This information assisted in compiling an inventory of resources along the byway.

Maps were produced using data from both RDCs. Road conditions were surveyed by the RDCs and the Putnam County Planning and Engineering Department, supplemented by GDOT traffic counts.

### **Proposed Routes (Updated 8-03)**

The Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway consists of three State Highways and two Hancock County Roads for a total of 82 miles (Fig 5.). The Scenic Byway begins at the intersection of SR 142 with SR 16 in Putnam County and continues east along SR 16 in Putnam through Eatonton, crossing the Oconee River into Hancock County, through Sparta to the Hancock/Warren County line at Jewell. There are also northern and southern Scenic Byway sections in Hancock County. The northern section begins in Sparta with SR 15 heading north to SR 77 and south to SR 16 at Shoulderbone Creek. Including the SR 16 section this forms a complete loop from Sparta. The southern section begins in Sparta with the intersection of SR 15/16 and Boland Road, travels south to Brown Chapel Road to the second intersection with Linton Road, then goes towards the Linton Community. For the most part, the route is rural and zoned agricultural with some residential, and passes through national forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). The rural character blends smoothly and enhances the area's history, archaeology, natural beauty and recreational opportunities that serve citizens and tourists well.



**Figure 5: Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway**

**Origin and History of the Roads**

SR 16 follows the approximate route of an early trail shown on maps from about 1715 to 1755, and was utilized long before 1715 by prehistoric peoples (Fig 6). The prehistoric trail connected what is now Augusta with the Mississippi River and was known as the Okfuskee Trail because one of the Upper Creek central towns was Okfuskee Town on the Tallapoosa River in Alabama. Connecting trails led to the Chickasaws, Choctaws and other Native-American groups. In 1540 when Hernando De Soto and his Spanish conquistadors entered the Oconee River Valley, they crossed this Indian trail near the Shoulderbone Mounds of Hancock County. In the seventeenth century as the English established the colony of Carolina, Native-Americans carried deer pelts through Putnam and Hancock Counties along the route of today’s Georgia 16. The trail was mentioned in William Bartram’s travels and became the historic colonial Upper Trading Path. As Hancock and Putnam developed in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the trail became a major travel route. Fertile land in Georgia proved the magnet that attracted thousands of people dislodged by the American Revolution. Scores of families from Virginia and the Carolinas moved along the old Indian trail of today’s Georgia Highway 16 as they cleared land in the newly formed counties of the piedmont (Fig 7). Eatonton Turnpike Company was organized for making Eatonton the midpoint on this road from Sparta to Monticello.

Sherman’s troops, in the march from Atlanta, traveled down today’s SR 16.

Figure 6: Early use of SR 16

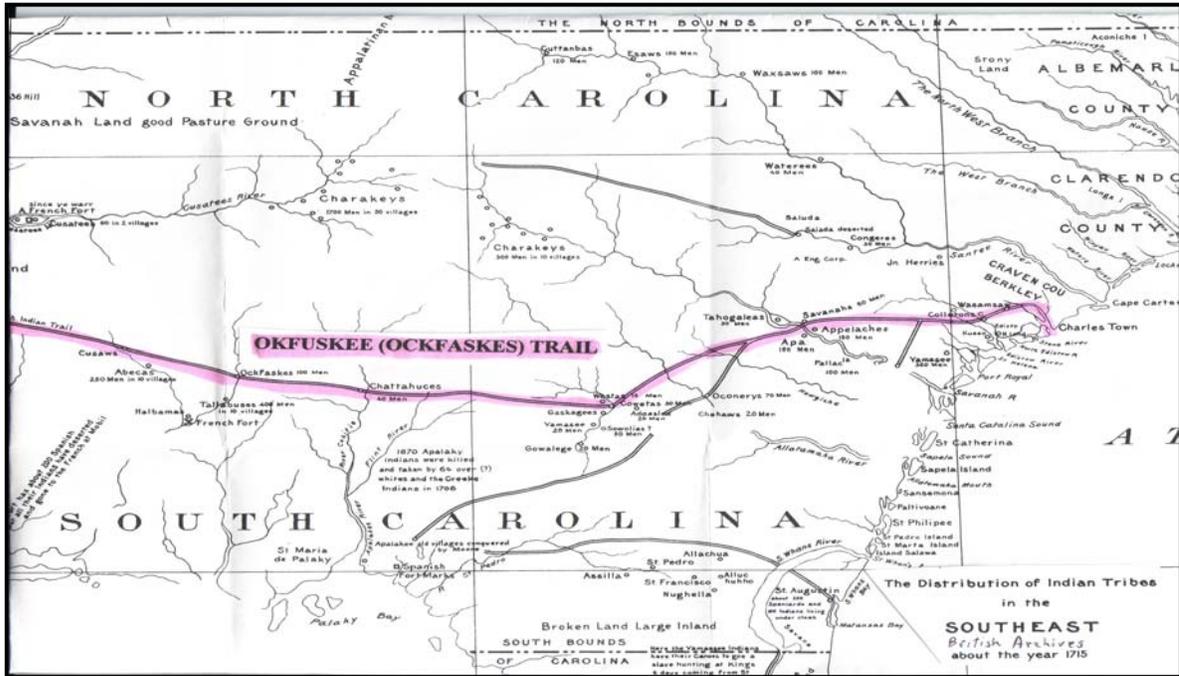
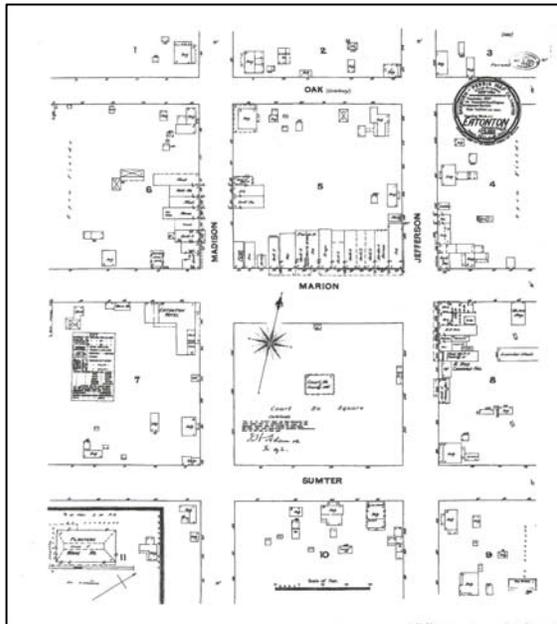
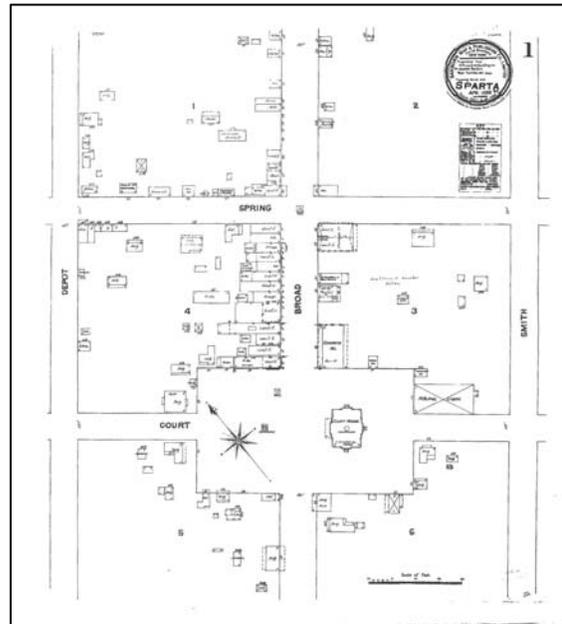


Figure 7: Early development of Eatonton and Sparta centered around SR 16.



SR 16 in Eatonton, 1890 (UGA Archives)



SR 16 in Sparta, 1889 (UGA Archives)

SR 15 in Hancock is the old Sunbury Road which began in Sunbury, GA on the Midway River (near St. Catherine's Island on the coast just south of Savannah) and ran to Greensboro, GA. The route was established by the Georgia Legislature just after the Revolutionary War.

During the revolutionary war there was a soldier identified only as Trawick. Soldier Trawick was injured in the war and was therefore given land of his choosing. He chose land at Indian Springs along Buffalo Creek in Hancock County and the settlement of Buffalo Creek was started with its long road to the settlement of Sparta, GA. As time wore on and Soldier Trawick's children continued to live in Buffalo Settlement, nearby a school was built called the Washington Institute in about 1850. A town grew around this school. The road from Sparta through Buffalo Settlement continued on to this new town. At some time around the Civil War, the new town around Washington Institute became known as Linton after Linton Stephens who was Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy. The road became known as the Linton Rd.

***B. VISION AND RELATED COMMUNITY STATEMENTS***  
***Support for the Scenic Byway***



***Goals***

- Preserve the rich historic, cultural and natural resources of the region.
- Provide sustainable tourism and economic development opportunities.
- Enhance the quality of life of residents.

The community's vision is to ***preserve, enhance and display the history, culture and natural beauty of this rural route while opening the economic and tourism potential of a serene area*** close to the four major urban areas of Athens, Atlanta, Augusta and Macon (Fig 8). The experience of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway area will help hearts and minds travel through time beginning with the creation of the Rock Eagle effigy. The journey continues through the once dominant culture of the Creeks when today's SR 16 was the Okfuskee Trail, DeSoto's adventures in 1540, pioneer settlements after the Revolutionary War, Uncle Remus, King Cotton, the Civil War, the plight of Reconstruction, Amanda America Dickson, Alice Walker, and the development of dairy farming (Fig 9). This journey is enhanced today by the remaining historic sites (homes, churches, cemeteries, mill sites and Native American artifacts), natural beauty of the forests, farm lands, rivers and streams, and internationally recognized recreational opportunities. We will continue to fulfill our vision into the future as the uniqueness of this expanding



**Figure 8: The above picture is taken at the Wallace Dam Overlook in Putnam County looking east at Hancock County.**

experience and the spirit of the Byway’s intrinsic qualities are felt by visitors as well as our diverse community. The vision of the byway includes economic development for the two counties and enhancement of the overall quality of life for residents.



**Figure 9: Dairy farming is a large industry in Putnam County.**

Community statements gathered from public meetings also include:

- Develop well-lit scenic, historic, and recreational loops that include the Scenic Byway, connecting roads, and trails for hiking, biking and driving. Parks, scenic, and historic pulloffs could be strategically placed along the routes with benches and picnic tables.
- Maintain a scenic buffer along the Byway. Keep a timber buffer and maintain scenic view sheds.
- Use development of the Byway to improve economic development, tourism, and quality of life for residents.
- Place historic markers along the route and restore historic and archaeological sites.
- Use landscaping, litter control, eyesore cleanup, and wildflowers to enhance the beauty of the route.
- Highlight African-American heritage with a walking tour and museum (Fig 10).
- Have a one-time, free clean up of eyesores along the Byway (junk cars, abandoned trailers, etc.). After the one-time clean up it should be up to property owners/stakeholders to keep it scenic.
- Provide more public restrooms along the Byway.
- Add lighting and emergency phones along the Byway.
- Use grant money to provide a facelift for the downtown areas and attract more new businesses.
- Have entertainment and educational programs in the towns every week.
- Encourage motel chains to locate in Sparta and Eatonton.
- Involve schoolchildren in historic and scenic projects. Use “Foxfire” approach (bestseller books from the 1960s based on interviews



**Figure 10: This church began as a place of worship for slaves on Glen Mary Plantation.**



**Figure 11: View of Rock Eagle Mound from the observation tower. Rock Eagle and the Rock Hawk are the only stone zoomorphic effigy mounds located east of the Mississippi River.**

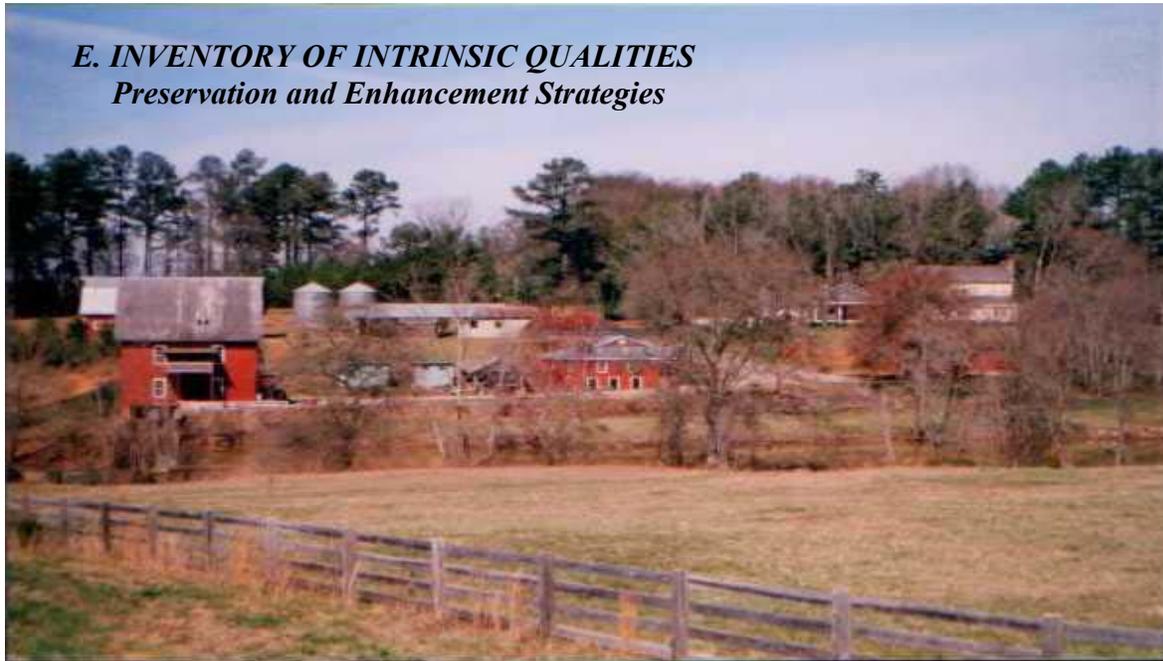
- conducted by young people of Georgia's mountains to preserve the history and culture of that area) so that school-age children and college students can help preserve the history and culture of the area.
- Improve unsafe intersections and bridges along the Byway, like SR 16, SR 44 and Rooty Creek.
- Develop Native American driving and biking tour beginning at Rock Eagle, passing through the museums, Rock Hawk, and the Shoulderbone Mounds (Fig 11).
- Add a truck bypass in Sparta.
- Add a state park on the Oconee River.

**C. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY**

State Highways 15,16, and 77 are under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Department of Transportation. However, GDOT assumes no financial or legal responsibility as a result of these roads being designated a Scenic Byway. Further, GDOT assumes no responsibility for any additional maintenance or special design requirements.

**D. FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING OUTDOOR ADVERTISING**

New billboard construction is prohibited along designated scenic byways that are interstate, National Highway System, or federal-aid primary highways. Existing billboards may remain and continue to be maintained along designated scenic byways. On-premise signs are unaffected by scenic byway designation (see page 28 for local sign regulations)



***E. INVENTORY OF INTRINSIC QUALITIES***  
***Preservation and Enhancement Strategies***

**Preservation and Enhancement Strategies**

One major strategy potentially involves all the intrinsic qualities. Although the viewshed of the Scenic Byway itself contains all intrinsic qualities, connecting roads and trails can form scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, cultural and recreational “loops” for biking, hiking as well as driving. The short side trips (“loops”) will begin and end with the Byway. This strategy maximizes opportunities for visitors and encourages off-highway hiking and biking.

Parks and historic and scenic pulloffs can be strategically placed along the Byway and associated “loops” with benches and picnic tables. Some loops would have paved biking/hiking paths along the right-of-way. One example would be tour loops through the historic districts of Sparta and Eatonton. Another example of this type of loop would begin with a new pulloff at the corner of SR 16 and old Phoenix Road, at the site of the first Baldwin County Courthouse (Putnam was formed from Baldwin in 1807) which could also serve as a parking area for hikers and bikers. Traveling north on Old Phoenix Road the visitor passes wooded areas and a dairy farm before reaching the oldest building and church in the county, Crooked Creek Primitive Church (1807). The church has the original minutes from meetings dating back to 1808. After more fields, woods, old farm houses, horse stables (horseback rides available) and dairy farms, one reaches Turnwold Plantation, once the home of renowned writer Joel Chandler Harris. Continuing on past the same type of scenery to Wards Chapel Road and right to renowned writer Alice Walker’s church, old home site, birthplace and scenic fields, horses, a goat farm, the visitor travels right at New Phoenix Road past the Philadelphia United Methodist Church (1857), more horses and fields to Old Phoenix Road, turns left and returns to SR 16.

Other potential loops are Beaver Dam Rd, Willard Community, Godfrey Rd/Rock Eagle, Oconee Springs/Rockville, Wallace Dam, Rock Hawk, SR 15/77 in Hancock (already on the byway), Linton Community (already on the byway), Fulsome Creek and Jewells Mill.

It should be noted that the intent is to involve the entire community in the Scenic Byway. Of special note are the children of school age and college students. School children, children involved in Family Connections, and those involved in Department of Juvenile Justice projects plan to participate in Scenic Byway projects evolving from the preservation and enhancement strategies covered here.

## INTRINSIC QUALITIES

### 1. Scenic Qualities

The rural character of the byway from beginning to end is evident by pastoral beauty with woodlands, pasturelands, and historic farmhouses around every curve. The Scenic Byway passes tree-lined residential streets, historic landscapes, and historic residential districts in the small communities. The corridor extends easterly through rolling hills that offer the traveler varied and distinctive viewsheds. Most of the landscape is either forest or pastureland, offering aesthetically pleasing qualities that contribute to the road's rural character (Fig 12). The rural corridor is framed with pristine woods, natural creeks and rivers, and rolling hills.



**Figure 12: Picturesque rolling pastures with farmhouse in background along Brown Chapel Road about 1/4 mile south of SR 16.**

Along the corridor is evidence of the rich farm activity that has shaped the region. Historic farm sites, mills, historic homes, quaint churches and communities can all be seen as the route winds through areas that have had very little commercial activity to disturb the scenic qualities of the region. The narrow roadways travel through tunnels of trees along some stretches and through wide-open farmland along others. Historic Eatonton, Sparta and the smaller communities provide outstanding opportunities for travelers to gain a glimpse of the charm of the Piedmont region.

*State Route 16 in Putnam County* - The Byway begins at the Jasper County line and continues east through the Oconee National Forest passing over Beaver Creek Dam to the scenic rural farming community of Willard and then over the Little River to Eatonton. This section is almost entirely scenic wooded areas or farmland. The Byway passes through the Eatonton Historic District and through the scenic courthouse square. Outside of Eatonton the route becomes rural again passing mainly wooded areas and farmland and passing by scenic old churches and historic homes (such as the 1830s Spivey House) on to the natural boundary with Hancock County, the Oconee River.

*State Route 16 in Hancock County* - Again highlighting the rolling landscape of Hancock County, SR 16 north of Sparta crosses Shoulderbone Creek and the Oconee River. The Shoulderbone Creek bridge is an attractive old bridge dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and from it is visible Millmore gristmill, and the Vinson-Harris-Lovejoy house. Most of the landscape is wooded along the Hancock section of SR 16 (Fig 13). The route travels through Sparta and east to Jewel. This is farmland, picturesque in the late summer and early fall as hay fields. Wildlife includes much turkey and deer.



**Figure 13: Scenic section of SR 16 through heavily forested area.**

*State Route 15 in Hancock County* - The rolling landscape of Hancock is particularly evident in the pasturelands and wooded areas representative of this part of Route 15 (Fig 14). Ponderosa is a hunting preserve, with a rustic wooden fence bordering the highway, and well-kept pastures broken up by wooded sections. A few historic houses are visible along the way, still bordered by cleared land, with nice viewsheds. Closer into Sparta is Johnson’s Pond, a farm with horse pastures. Livestock graze peacefully in the pastures. It is common to see deer and wild turkey dash across the road.



**Figure 14: SR 15 view from Hancock County Courthouse.**

*State Route 77 in Hancock County* - connects 16 to SR 15 to form a loop. This road is bordered on both sides by wooded land, with visible residences. It curves nicely, giving some variety to the views, and is only lightly traveled (Fig 15).



**Figure 15: Driving south along SR 77. The road is lined with beautiful trees and farmland.**

SR  
few

## Scenic Preservation and Enhancement Strategies

To preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the scenic byway the Commission will:

- Promote cluster and planned unit development alternatives to discourage sprawling housing developments.
- Investigate new incentives for a central location for commercial development.
- Evaluate a higher level of design review along the corridor to improve quality of existing views. The Commission will seek city and county approval for a Committee member to review potential changes in the viewshed, including historical, cultural and archaeological sites, and make recommendations to city councils and county commissions.
- Investigate land acquisition and easements as a means to preserve views.
- Pursue voluntary agreements with property owners on byway-friendly construction.
- Create vantage points and other amenities, and use of vegetation management to preserve open vistas of the pastures.
- Prepare landscaping plans to preserve viewsheds.
- Encourage and promote best management timber practices to maintain an appropriate buffer on the byway.
- Propose to city councils and county commissions to update sign ordinances to regulate new billboards and set reasonable standards within federal and state guidelines along the scenic byway.
- Evaluate cost and practicality of billboard amortization.
- Work with GDOT to maintain or improve scenic impact of road projects and, where possible, tie in a Scenic Byway project.
- Establish a wildflower planting program.
- From an initial grant allocate an amount for a “one time cleanup” of locations along the byway (with property owner concurrence) that would not adhere to scenic standards such as old abandoned cars and trailers, junk pile, etc.
- Initiate and coordinate a “Keep the Byway Beautiful” campaign using GDOT, prison labor, Adopt-A-Mile volunteers and use clubs and individuals to form a “SWAT” team to keep the Byway clean and free from liter at all times (Fig 16).
- Develop scenic and historic design guidelines for property owners and the general public.
- Work with Hancock County to adopt a cellular tower ordinance similar to the one planned by Putnam and already passed by Eatonton.



**Figure 16: Student volunteers for “SWAT” byway cleanup team.**

## 2. Natural Qualities

The proposed Scenic Byway passes through a variety of natural resources, including the shoals of several rivers and creeks (Fig 17). The Oconee National Forest in Putnam provides a picturesque sylvan landscape in which the route is flanked by pine and hardwood forests. Dairy pastures and other farmland attest to the agricultural heritage of the area, while the unspoiled rural character of the rolling countryside near Lakes Oconee and Sinclair alerts the traveler to the area's numerous recreational opportunities. The corridor offers opportunity to view a variety of wildlife including deer, fox, bobcats, wild turkey, geese, ducks, raccoon, skunks, hawks and Bald Eagles.



**Figure 17: Waterfall at Glen Mary Plantation in Linton.**

### **Natural Preservation and Enhancement Strategies:**

To preserve and enhance the natural qualities of the scenic byway, the Commission will:

- Work with the appropriate governmental bodies to update the Putnam and Hancock land use maps to include a more intensive inventory of sensitive lands such as wetlands, flood plains, wildlife habitats and unique ecosystems and address protection of these areas in all participating governments' comprehensive plans and development regulations.
- Work with the governmental authorities to protect the watersheds along the byway.
- Develop and promote nature preserves and bird trails throughout the byway, including planting native plant materials that will attract birds, butterflies and other species to viewing areas along the corridor.
- Work with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on a wildlife habitat protection strategy for the byway including identifying natural areas used for wildlife breeding and foraging, and ensuring that these are connected by protected migration corridors.

## 3. Historic Qualities

Long before the state of Georgia existed, when prehistoric peoples were dominant, a trail stretched from present-day western Putnam County over towards Eatonton and then on to Sparta similar to today's Georgia Highway 16. Putnam County's famous bird effigies of Rock Eagle and Rock Hawk are



**Figure 18: Bronson House (c1820s), headquarters of Eatonton-Putnam County Historical Society, houses many artifacts.**

reminders of this ancient presence. In 1540 when Hernando De Soto and his Spanish conquistadors entered the Oconee River Valley, they crossed this Indian trail near the Shoulderbone Mounds of Hancock County (Fig 18).

During the seventeenth century as the English established the colony of Carolina, Native-Americans carried deer pelts through Putnam and Hancock Counties along the route of Georgia 16 that became known as the Okfuskee Path or Upper Trading Path/Seven Islands Stage Coach Route. By the end of the colonial era, settlers reversed the flow of the trail as they moved deeper into Indian territory. As more colonists entered the upper Piedmont, Native-Americans fell back further west. The Treaty of Shoulderbone Creek negotiated between an independent Georgia and 59 Creek leaders in 1786 ceded the lands east of the Oconee River to Georgia. Soon this land was carved into counties for orderly settlement. As their names suggest, the Age of the American Revolution gave birth to the two counties of Putnam and Hancock as well as the county seats of Sparta and Eatonton. While sharing a common heritage, the two counties and their seats of government are among the oldest in Georgia.

Fertile land in Georgia proved the magnet that attracted thousands of people dislodged by the American Revolution. Scores of families from Virginia and the Carolinas moved along the old Indian trail of Georgia Highway 16 as they cleared land in these new counties. In these years yeoman whites and slaves cleared the wilderness and brought the rich piedmont soils under cultivation. The more successful built plantation, plain-style houses framed out of heart pine using mortise and tenon joints in a fashion that they brought from Virginia. In the waning years of the Early Republic, soldiers of the Revolution traveled along the old route of SR 16 to witness the taming of the frontier and the refinement of Piedmont civilization. In 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette toured America and traveled down to Georgia, crossing the countryside through Hancock and Putnam before heading south to the capital at Milledgeville.

As the state lotteries opened new Indian territories, many smaller farmers sold out and moved west while others bought up the arable acreage and increased their holdings. With the development of the cotton gin and the cultivation of cotton throughout the Piedmont, the African American population increased as plantations expanded. In time the populations of the two counties showed a black majority.

By the 1830s, the plantation system of the Old South was fully entrenched in Putnam and Hancock Counties. As King Cotton waxed and waned in the late antebellum period, the wealth derived from its cultivation by slaves created a distinct southern civilization. Planters built new mansions in the popular Greek Revival style that they felt symbolized their republic. Some Greek Revival houses still stand in the countryside, looking like ancient, white temples on hilltops, while most Antebellum houses are located in the three National Register Districts in Eatonton and



**Figure 19: Putnam County Courthouse – Focal Point of the Eatonton National Register Historic District.**

Sparta. The result is a distinctive architectural legacy throughout the area that is unparalleled throughout the state (Fig 19). Although the distance between the big house and the slave quarters might seem great, in reality, both black and white shared a bi-racial southern culture as demonstrated through food, crafts, cultural expression, and folk customs.

Both black and white attended evangelical Christian institutions reflected in the separate black Masonic lodges, churches, schools, and professional offices that served the black community and mirrored their counterparts in the white community.

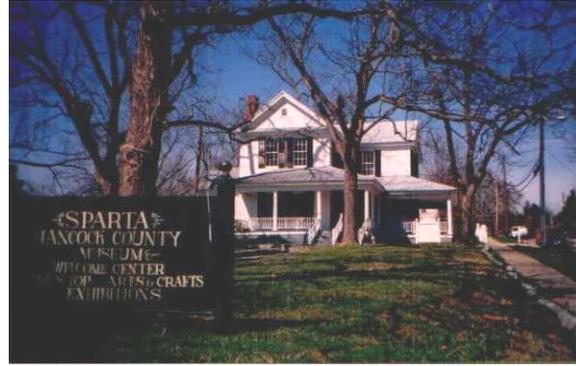
The cotton economy also allowed some diversification as industries developed along the shoals of the rivers. A cotton mill stood on the Ogeechee River at Jewell in the 1840s. The Eatonton Factory once used the waters of the Little River for power. The ferries that crossed the Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Ogeechee Rivers became important community institutions. During this age the area enjoyed its greatest prominence in state affairs as it produced many political leaders including Georgia governors William Rabun, Charles James McDonald, William J. Northen, and Nathaniel E. Harris, and U.S. Senators Benjamin Harvey Hill and Albert Cuthbert.

Following the Civil War cotton cultivation resumed. Despite unfavorable terms set by northern credit sources, the cotton-based economy of the region did allow for some luxuries. The more prosperous land owners and merchants built new houses in the latest architectural styles, with Folk Victorian and Queen Anne styles predominating, while others simply modified the old Piedmont plain-type houses with Victorian-era wrap-around porches and ornamentation. While cotton consumed most farmers, there was enough interest in crop diversification that some land owners began experimenting in raising dairy cattle. The successes of Dr. Benjamin Hunt in Putnam convinced farmers in Hancock and many other Georgia counties to add Jersey cows to their livestock. Soon these counties exported large quantities of butter and milk. Georgia's dairy industry rooted itself in these Piedmont Counties.

For African American sharecroppers during the decades of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, life offered little more than the hard labor of growing cotton, as reflected in the songs of blues singers such as Peg Leg Howell of Eatonton. As with the rest of Georgia and the South, the boll weevil had devastated crops in both counties by the end of the 1910s, ending the reliance on cotton as a cash crop in the region. By the 1930s several farmers had moved away or turned their fields into pastureland for cattle. During this period Putnam and Hancock Counties lost almost a third of their population.

The intervention of the Federal Government during the Great Depression hastened the end of the old paternalistic system while introducing new land policies still in place today. The Department of the Interior bought up played-out and eroded fields and allowed them to return to forest, in time reintroducing white-tailed deer to lands that had not seen this game for decades. The Oconee National Forest, the Cedar Creek and Ogeechee Wildlife Management Area suggest one way the federal government recreated the landscape. Damming of the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers proved another successful way of redesigning the countryside and increasing the value of worn out farmland.

Many existing structures and artifacts allow visitors to relive the history of this area (Fig 20). Old mansions and homes such as the Bronson House in Eatonton (c.1820s) which now houses the Eatonton-Putnam Historical Society, and the Roundtree-Hollis House off SR 15 in Hancock (1798), whose front yard contains a revolutionary soldiers' grave, are located throughout the area. Turnwold Plantation, where Joel Chandler Harris lived, worked and wrote, and Cedar Green Plantation, both close to SR 16, evidence life from their time



**Figure 20: Sparta, Hancock County Museum and Welcome Center houses many artifacts.**

The Uncle Remus Museum in Eatonton houses many artifacts. Picturesque churches, such as Crooked Creek in Putnam County (1807) and Knowles Chapel Church in Hancock (1872), located on Brown Chapel Road on the Sparta-Linton corridor, are located throughout both counties. The Millmore gristmill at SR 16 and SR 77 in Hancock County turned millstones, grinding corn and wheat for two centuries. The Rock Eagle Effigy (c. 4000BC) and the nearby Rock Eagle Natural History Museum continue to draw crowds. Sites dot the area that are included in the National Register of Historic Places.

*State Route 15* – There are about 7 state historic markers along the proposed section of SR 15. These range from old Indian trails, to the birthplaces of Governors. Significant sections of the road include the Mt. Zion community, now vanished. Once a thriving educational and religious community with a male academy, all that is left of the 1820 settlement now is Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church with its New England style churchyard. Nathan Beman was the headmaster at the academy. Beman went on to found the Rensslear Institute in New York following the Civil War. Mt. Zion Baptist Church, an African-American church built around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, stands just down the road. Its cemetery contains graves dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The old wagon road is still visible in several places near the current highway. This was the main road to Greensboro.

*SR 77 and SR16* – At the junction of these roads, a marker stands to commemorate the Oconee Treaty with Native-Americans. Across the road is the 1820s Vinson-Harris-Lovejoy house, and Millmore gristmill. A mile closer to Sparta is Cedar Green Plantation, another 1820s house. It is restored and often open for tours. An intact farm from the 1830s, many of the house's outbuildings are original. Current owners have planted grapes and plan to open a winery, Chateau Shoulderbone, in the near future.



**Fig 21: Newly renovated downtown historic district in Eatonton.**

Approximately 50 old homes in Hancock and Putnam have recently been or are currently being renovated. Many office buildings in Eatonton have been renovated (Fig 21). The Historic Preservation Division of DNR last year completed a comprehensive detailed inventory of historic resources in Hancock County (see Appendix 4 for more detailed information on historic resources).

SR16 from Sparta to Jewel travels the old road that once connected Sparta to Augusta, and the stage route Lafayette probably took on his 1825 visit to Sparta. Restored nineteenth century plantation houses are easily visible or accessible by a short drive off this road. One of the more famous is Rock Mill. The village green in Jewel is graced by Victorian homes, a Methodist church and a nineteenth century schoolhouse.

### **Historic Preservation and Enhancement Strategies:**

To preserve and enhance the historic qualities of the scenic byway the Commission will:

- Encourage the formation of a Putnam-Hancock Regional Historic Commission.
- Adopt region-wide historic preservation plan and ordinance.
- Conduct additional inventory research into the major and more obscure historic sites as a basis for interpretive materials and programs.
- Apply for property improvement facades grant and restoration programs for historic structures along the byway.
- Develop plans and action programs for enhancing city entrances.
- Seek Better Hometown status for Sparta.
- Educate owners of historic properties through workshops on potential tax incentives.
- Seek city and county approval for the Byway Committee to review potential changes in the viewshed, including historical, cultural and archaeological sites, and provide recommendations to city councils and boards of commission.
- Develop historic recreations for tourists. Add history related ferry crossings at park locations.
- Restore and protect historic sites such as Sparta Visitors Center, Old Wesley Chapel Church, Alice Walker's family church, Enterprise mill, Turnwold Plantation, Rockville School, H.M. Ralston Farm house and Tompkins Inn. Also reconstruct 1850s log cabin on old Baldwin County Courthouse site
- Add historic markers on designated byway locations as well as loops.

### **4. Cultural Qualities**

The City of Eatonton was incorporated in 1809 and by the 1830s was established as a regional center for commerce, education, culture, and banking. Putnam County (formed in 1807), like so many of Georgia's counties, relied on a cotton-based economy well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the county's reliance on cotton, the seeds of a new industry were planted in the late 1880s with the introduction of Jersey cows to the area.

Following the collapse of the cotton industry during the 1920s from the devastating effects of the boll weevil, farmers in Putnam County turned to dairying as their principal crop. Today Putnam County is acknowledged as the Dairy Capital of Georgia. The establishment of Lakes Oconee and Sinclair as recreational centers is also an important staple in the county's economy.

Putnam County has a rich literary tradition of national importance. Joel Chandler Harris based his "Uncle Remus" on his experiences as a writer's apprentice while living and working among slaves on the Turnwold Plantation. The Uncle Remus Museum is a popular destination for visitors to the Eatonton area. Flannery O'Connor, while recovering from lupus, wrote a series of acclaimed short stories and the book *Wise Blood* while residing at the dairy farm, Andalusia. And native Putnam Countian Alice Walker set such early works as *The Third Life of Grange* and *The Color Purple* among the sharecroppers' shacks, dairy farms, and cotton fields near SR 16 where she was raised.

The annual Georgia Literary Festival celebrates these traditions with food, discussion, and tours. The Georgia Literary Festival rotates annually among Sparta, Eatonton and Madison, and is attended by hundreds of visitors and residents (Fig 22). Putnam County is also the home of sharecropper-turned-blues singer, Peg Leg Howell, who also drew inspiration from the dissolute life of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Piedmont Georgia.



**Figure 22: Georgia Literary Festival in Sparta.**

Putnam County has a history of artists going back thousands of years as evidenced by a variety of designs on early pottery and other artifacts. The Rock Eagle effigy can certainly be considered art. Nineteenth century residents contributed everything from drawings to the very creative work of that period's seamstresses. In the Depression era of the 1930s the federal government paid local artists for murals as part of the Works Project Administration (WPA) recovery program. Rock Eagle Park itself was a WPA project. More recent artists have included Dorie Neligan (oils), Florence Copelan Baugh (Putnam County landscapes---a picture of her *Oconee River* is the frontispiece of Katherine Walter's book, *Oconee River, Tales to Tell*) and Travis Hicks. Ann Hanson Copelan, an impressionist and painter, has had her works exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Atlanta among other cities.

Putnam County is in the later stages of renovating an old school behind the new Plaza to serve as a Community Center and Museum (Fig 23).



**Figure 23: Putnam Community Center and Plaza is the site of frequent concerts and farmers markets.**

Founded in 1793, Hancock County's population is over eighty percent African-American. The biracial culture goes back to a dependence on a cotton economy but is alive today and recorded in public memory through crafts and oral tradition. The story of the life of Amanda America Dickson has been captured in a book titled *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege*. Ms. Dickson's story was the basis of a TV movie and is still of interest to residents and tourists.

The Sparta-Hancock County Museum offers cultural attractions such as rotating exhibits and local crafts displays. Sparta holds an annual Pine Tree Festival each October to celebrate the contribution of pine tree farming to the area. The vast acres of pine trees lining the roadways in the county are a reminder of the economic drive this crop has in the area. The Linton community hosts an annual Cane Syrup Making Festival and a Christmas tour of homes during which many antebellum homes are open to the public.

The Hancock routes are dotted with historic churches, illustrating the strong religious foundation in both the white and African American communities. Knowles Chapel was built in 1872 with Zebulon Church and Brown Chapel following soon after. Glen Mary Plantation, with a plantation home, terraced cotton fields, old mill site and Glen Mary church, reflects a culture of the past.

As a designated Scenic Byway, expanding current interpretive displays and tours could help visitors gain a better understanding of the culture of Putnam and Hancock Counties.

### **Culture Preservation and Enhancement Strategies**

To preserve and enhance the cultural qualities of the scenic byway the Commission will:

- Develop and promote African American Tours and museum additions that emphasize Amanda America Dickson, Alice Walker, Joel Chandler Harris, old churches, cemeteries and plantation sites such as Turnwold.
- Expand, enhance and promote more widely the Dairy Festival, Pine Tree Festival, Literary Festival, Cane Syrup Making Festival, various concerts, square dancing events, tours of homes and other local cultural events.
- Work with University of Georgia (UGA) Small Business Center and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Micro Loan Program to assist individual property owners in establishing or improving the appearance of Byway fruit stands, small restaurants, gift shops, museums, biking/hiking stores and others.

### **5. Archeological Qualities**

SR 16 follows the route of an early trail mentioned in William Bartram's travels and utilized by the prehistoric peoples that inhabited the Piedmont region. The trail became the historic colonial Okfuskee Path or Upper Trading Path/Seven Islands Stage Coach Route. The prehistoric people left two distinct zoomorphic rock mounds in Putnam County, one of which is the Rock Hawk Effigy, off SR 16, and is thought to be over 6,000 years old. These people built mounds throughout the area, notably the Shoulderbone Mounds off SR 77 near Shoulderbone Creek.

Other mounds from early tribes in Hancock County still exist off SR 15. There are multiple Native American dwelling and tool-making sites, many of which are difficult to access today. Some artifacts dated over 10,000 years old (a clovis point and other items from the Paleo and Archaic periods) have been found. Many of these archeological finds will be on display at the new Putnam-Eatonton Community Center museum and in the Putnam County Historical Society, both of which are within two blocks of SR 16 in Eatonton. A Visitors Center Museum is planned for Sparta on SR 16 that will also display artifacts.

The current archeological survey of the Oconee National Forest is half complete and has identified hundreds of sites. It is highly probable that multiple unidentified archeological sites exist in areas located next to the road's right-of-way, private homesteads, and federal lands (Fig 24). Funding will be sought to develop some of these sites for public access. In addition to prehistoric resources, the ruins sites, both maintained and abandoned, of several cemeteries, factories, mills, and ferry crossings are located along or in the vicinity of SR 16. Native-American trading trails are highlighted on historical markers about the early life of the Shoulderbone area. Mounds from the early tribes still exist intact on private lands between SR 15 and SR 77.



**Figure 24: Artifacts from banks of Oconee River.**

Many artifacts from the area are now located at the Riverbend Archeological Laboratory, University of Georgia, and are available to researchers. The artifacts were generated by fieldwork conducted in the 1970s as part of a systematic archeological investigation of the Wallace Reservoir just prior to the construction of Lake Oconee by the University of Georgia.

### **Archaeological Preservation and Enhancement Strategies**

To preserve and enhance the archeological qualities of the scenic byway the Commission will:

- Negotiate easements or purchase property where Shoulderbone Mounds are located to preserve, enhance and display to visitors.
- Work with UGA to enhance and promote the Rock Hawk effigy near the Oconee River.
- Work with RDCs and UGA to identify Native-American sites, cemeteries, mills, factories and other archaeological sites for preservation, enhancement and public access.
- Place archaeological markers along the byway and associated loops.

## 6. Recreational Qualities

There are numerous recreational opportunities afforded travelers along the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway (Fig 25). These include equine activities, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, biking and hiking, as well as access to excellent facilities such as championship golf, tennis, basketball courts, baseball and soccer fields, shuffleboard and billiard facilities. Putnam County has two of the top-rated golf courses in the country (Great Waters and Cuscowilla). Roads and trails are available for hiking and biking. Funds will be sought to add biking lanes to SR 16.



**Figure 25: President George Bush (center) and Ambassador to Switzerland Mercer Reynolds (right) fishing with Putnam County guide on Lake Oconee.**

Amenities that are immediately accessible off SR 16 include the Oconee National Forest, Cedar Creek Wildlife Management Area, and the Lawrence Shoals Public Recreational Area on Lake Oconee. Nearby recreational sites include Lake Sinclair, Rock Eagle 4H and Conference Center, Oconee Springs Park, fishing and wildlife viewing along Shoulderbone Creek. Public access to Shoulderbone Creek, including a boatramp and fishing dock, is located off SR 16 (Fig 26).



**Figure 26: Oconee River Public Fishing Pier just off SR 16.**

For the last several years the annual Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (BRAG) has included a section of SR 16 in Putnam County as a leg of their route. In addition to BRAG, planned scenic bike rides through Putnam County are organized through the Eatonton/Putnam County Chamber of Commerce on a regular basis. Other seasonal or periodic activities include regional and national fishing tournaments on Lake Sinclair and Lake Oconee.

Annual festivals such as the Sparta Literary Festival and the Sparta Pine Tree Festival are recreational events offered along the proposed byway.

Johnson's Pond on SR 15 hosts trail rides, and sheep and hunting dog trails four times a year. Each year a wagon train travels through Georgia, and Johnson's Pond is one of the featured stops.

**Recreational Preservation and Enhancement Strategies**

To preserve and enhance the recreational qualities of the scenic byway the Commission will:

- Improve entrances to public recreational sites on Lakes Oconee and Sinclair, and Little River.
- Promote and develop bicycling, equestrian, hiking and birding trails along the byway as well as adequate camping facilities.
- Inform and educate private sector investors about the kinds of recreational attractions and development communities wish to attract along the byway.
- Work with UGA and various State of Georgia Departments to develop a dual park on each side of the Oconee River Bridge, including walking and biking trails.



**LAND USE, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

***Goals***

- Promote land use patterns that preserve the rural character of the historic piedmont region.
- Encourage development regulations that protect the intrinsic qualities of the byway route.

Most of the non-urban areas adjacent to the scenic byway are zoned agriculture (Fig 27). Aside from an occasional single family lot, most lots are 50+ acres in size, with Putnam County requiring agricultural lots to be 5 acres minimum. Due to the lack of water and sewer infrastructure, planned residential communities will develop in an extremely slow fashion, if at all, along the Byway. Comprehensive land use plans for both Putnam and Hancock Counties call for the corridor along the Scenic byway to remain predominantly agricultural in character with only main intersections being developed in some commercial manner. Along the proposed scenic byway corridor, which passes through the cities of Sparta and Eatonton, existing commercially developed areas already exist.

The comprehensive land use plans for both Putnam County and Eatonton recommend a scenic byway and it is expected that a scenic byway recommendation will be added to the next Hancock County comprehensive plan update.

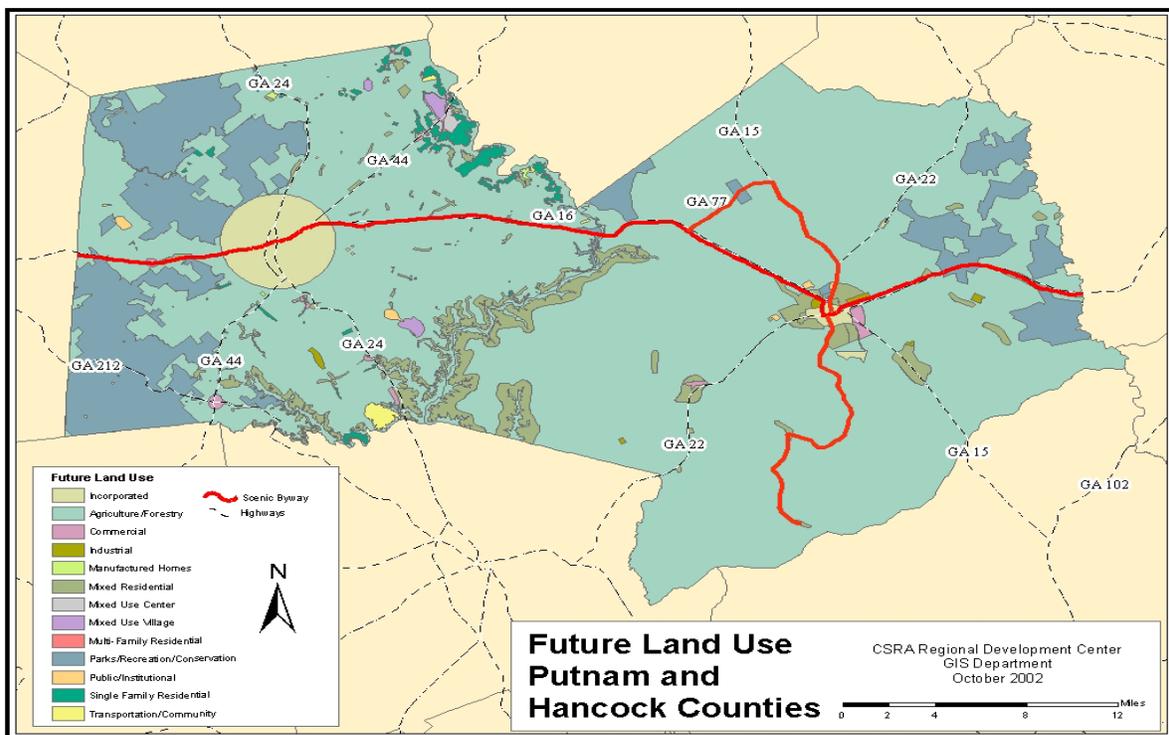
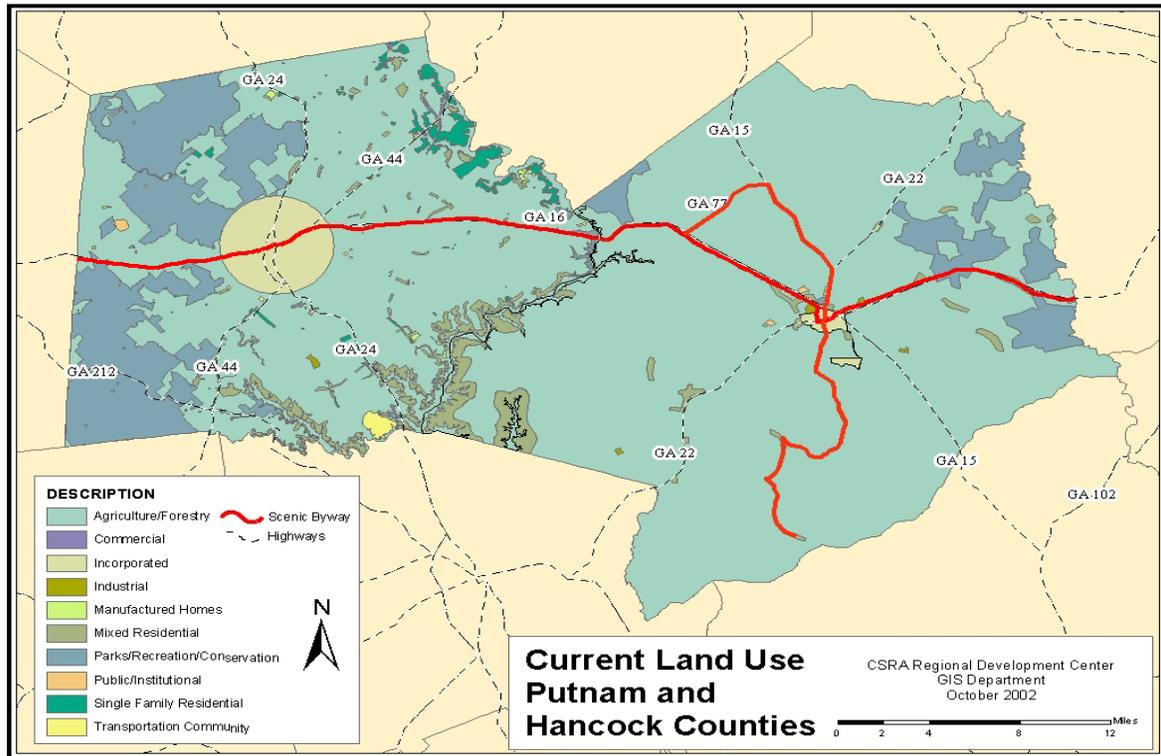


Figure 27: Current and Future Land Use, Putnam and Hancock Counties.

Within Putnam County, the Planning and Zoning Commission has passed setback requirements off State and U.S. Routes. Any new division of property shall be established such that lots will accommodate a 150 foot setback from the roads. This would apply to the scenic byway as it is along SR 16. As another means of ensuring safety, subdivisions planned along State and U.S. Routes are to be designed with internal road systems to limit the number of outlets directly onto these roads. Additional byway initiatives need to be added to the comprehensive land use plans and ordinances in a consistent manner for both counties. The Byway Commission has already begun to prioritize ordinances and regulations that are required to protect the rural and historically significant character of the byway and its associated features. Additionally public education programs are to be implemented to ensure adequate protection of the byway.

The Byway Commission will provide technical and development assistance to property owners along the scenic byway. Local Planning and Zoning Departments will be provided assistance with the development of ordinances aimed at preserving the integrity of the scenic byway. Code enforcement officers will be assisted as necessary by members of the Commission to ensure that developments comply with the essence of the byway development guidelines. GDOT district offices will be called upon to help maintain the scenic byway as the byway is along a State Route.

With regard to the preservation of land along the Byway, conservation and/or protective easements will be sought and negotiated with property owners, coupled with some form of tax incentives for landowners. In some cases, land will have to be purchased in order to preserve and protect its significant quality. Initially, the Commission will prioritize areas by order of importance in scenic and historic value, and then by the possibility of endangerment due to development. The Commission will then make a concerted effort to protect these areas without overstepping any legal boundaries. An effort will be made to protect these vital assets with the cooperation of property owners and with the assistance of the Commission as required.

Local laws should be amended to protect and preserve view corridors. One misplaced or insensitive structure can jeopardize the entire corridor experience. Properly drafted preservation standards for historic and cultural sites can assist in the protection of specific byway sites.

Protection of the view corridor applies to foreground, middle ground and background areas. Road building and infrastructure development should minimize visual impacts along the byway. Future installations of overhead power lines and other infrastructure projects along the byway should be minimized. In cases where disturbances to the byway are unavoidable, The Commission will seek funds to incorporate vegetation screening to hide and blend the disturbance with its surrounding landscape.

**Building Improvements**

The City of Eatonton’s Better Hometown program currently has in place a facade improvement program whereby downtown business owners are able to obtain matching grants to improve storefronts. Other funds are being raised for landscape enhancement. The University of Georgia’s School of Environmental Design provides outreach consultations and design work for private businesses and property owners in local communities. The City of Sparta has received design consultation but will require funding to implement recommendations from the consultation.

**Sign and Cellular Tower Standards**

Putnam County recently changed its sign ordinance to agree with the State of Georgia regulations for Scenic Byways.

The City of Eatonton recently approved a comprehensive sign ordinance that is consistent with the State of Georgia regulations for Scenic Byways.

Both the City of Sparta and Hancock County are in the process of adopting resolutions that will be consistent with State and Federal Scenic Byway guidelines for signage (Fig 28). The City and County will be encouraged to adopt a formal sign ordinance.



**Figure 28: Acceptable sign in Putnam County.**

The Byway Commission, through the respective Boards of Commissioners and City Councils, will seek the assistance of the Central Savannah River Area and Middle Georgia RDCs with respect to developing any necessary ordinance amendments. Grants and other funding sources will be sought to buy billboards deemed inappropriate.

With respect to scenic byway signs, the Commission will work with district GDOT offices to place directional signs along designated routes. Additionally, the Commission will request signs be placed along Interstate 20 at exits for US 441, SR 44, SR 16, and SR 15 to advertise the byway to travelers.

The City of Eatonton has passed a comprehensive Cellular Tower ordinance and a similar one (same setbacks, size limitations, etc.) is planned for Putnam County. A proposal is currently being made to Hancock County and Sparta to adopt a similar ordinance.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Goals**

- Provide a range of good experiences to the traveling public.
- Ensure safety for movement along the byway.

**Existing Road Conditions and Future Projects**

The total length of byway is 85 miles. The byway is compromised of 3 legs. The primary leg, SR 16, extends from western Putnam County to the Warren County line, consists of a two-lane, two-way roadway line and provides a roadway width of 12 feet.

The second leg, SR 15/SR 77 just north of Sparta, consists of a two-lane, two-way roadway line and provides a roadway width of 12 feet.

The third leg is Boland, Linton and Brown Chapel roads, just south of Sparta, consisting of two-lane, two-way local roadway lines with roadway widths of between 10 and 12 feet.

A survey was conducted to examine the condition of the byway route. As a whole the route is in fairly good condition with the following notable exceptions:

- SR 16, from milepost 10.6 to 24.2 (Oconee River Bridge) needs to be resurfaced. GDOT has this project scheduled for 2003.
- A 200-yard stretch of SR 15 just north of Sparta will require resurfacing. GDOT is planning a maintenance project (STP-0003-00 (622), P.I. 0003622).
- A 100-yard stretch of Boland Road, between Hancock Road and the Hancock Memorial Hospital, will require resurfacing as there is severe degradation.
- Portions of Brown Chapel Road, between Boland Road and Linton Road, will require landscape maintenance to keep grass off the road surface.

As of the April 10, 2002 GDOT Construction Work Program Update, there were six projects listed along the primary Scenic Byway Corridor and one listed along a secondary corridor of the Scenic Byway. Five of the projects are slated along SR 16 in Putnam County while the sixth is set for Hancock County. Three of the projects involve bridge replacements for bridges over the Oconee River, Rooty Creek, and Crooked Creek (Fig 29).



**Figure 29: The Oconee River bridge in Hancock County looking west at Putnam County.**

Shoulders meet current design criteria; however, to accommodate bike paths, widening activities will need to be undertaken. Secondary routes, particularly in Hancock County, will require upgrades in light of the anticipated additional traffic volumes.

The bridge replacement over the Oconee River is such that a walkway/bike path can be accommodated, and the bridge replacement over Rooty Creek has been designed to accommodate a walkway and bike path. Two of the projects are for road paving and safety improvements. The final project involves the development of a bypass around Sparta. Some maintenance and resurfacing is being planned for a section of SR 15 in Hancock. An additional project calling for the resurfacing of SR 16 from the Putnam County High School area to the Hancock County line is being contemplated by GDOT and may be scheduled for implementation as early as 2003.

### Traffic Management

Traffic along the proposed Byway is currently light to moderate with the highest recorded daily traffic count coming within the City of Eatonton at 13,680 vehicles and the lowest on SR 77 in Hancock at 260 vehicles per day (Fig 30). Neither GDOT nor the local jurisdictions are aware of any major safety issues out in the rural areas of the byway. One safety concern exists in Eatonton where Oconee Street, Main Street, and SR 16 intersect. However, a GDOT safety project is planned for this intersection in 2004. In the future, should traffic volumes increase, turning lanes and deceleration lanes may be required.

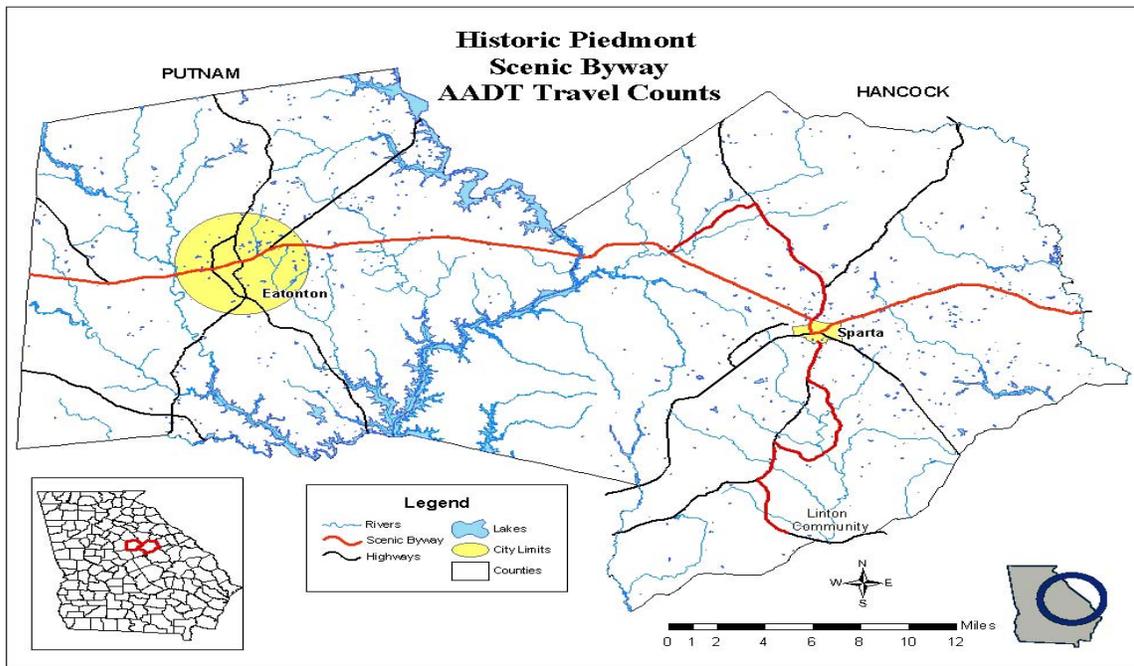


Figure 30: Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts Along the Byway.

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation Annual Average 24-Hour Counts, 2000.

The byway routes are operating well below capacity and have few significant safety problems according to evaluations by GDOT. However, the increased traffic anticipated after byway designation and potential roadway conflict between trucks, which rely on the routes for high speed transportation, and visitors, who prefer lower speed scenic drives, may pose safety concerns in the future. The Commission will monitor traffic levels and coordinate with GDOT on programs and projects should this occur.

**Maintenance of Roads, Right-of-Way and Viewshed**

The entire scenic byway route except for the short Linton/Browns Chapel section in Hancock County is Georgia State highway under the jurisdiction of GDOT. Hancock County will maintain the Linton/Browns Chapel route.

Putnam County has substantially upgraded its solid waste, litter, and public nuisance code, and received a Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) grant in 2002 to fund an Environmental Compliance Officer. The Officer’s objective is to rid the county of its waste management problems by educating the public (poster campaigns, school involvement, volunteer Adopt-A-Mile program) and enforcement (fines of \$200 to \$750 among other punishments).

The Adopt-A-Mile program has begun and requires that designated roads be cleaned at least once a quarter. The Officer supports a variety of volunteer efforts such as Operation Clean Sweep (to keep litter off the right-of-way) by providing 400 trash bags and having filled bags picked up from the roadside. Operation Clean Sweep utilizes other volunteer groups such as Mothers Against Crime, and Family Connections as well as other community service clubs and churches. In addition the Officer has arranged for GDOT to remove litter from SR 16 as frequently as possible beginning November 15, 2002. The “Keeping Putnam Beautiful” poster contest in the school system (currently in its second year) and the resulting “Keep Putnam Beautiful” calendar are supported by the Chamber of Commerce and the Officer (Fig 31). Prizes for this contest are furnished by community merchants. All these activities help to fulfill scenic byway objectives for SR 16 through Putnam County.



**Figure 31: “Keep Putnam Beautiful” members.**

Recommendations are being made to Sparta/Hancock County to develop a similar program seek a state grant for an Environmental Compliance Officer.

**The Traveling Experience**

GDOT district offices have shown great cooperation with the Byway Commission in the past and there is no reason that this will not continue in the future. Slight additions to existing projects will be requested so as to enhance features along the byway. A roadside pull-off area is to be requested at the intersection of Old Phoenix Road and SR 16 in conjunction with the bridge replacement over Crooked Creek.

Paved parking facilities are also needed at select locations. Insufficient parking results in unsafe choices. Future parking projects will need to accommodate both regular size and larger vehicles such as tour buses and recreational vehicles. The Commission will work with GDOT to analyze future demand and identify potential sites for improvements.

Much of the byway is within a beautiful area with scenic vistas and low vehicular traffic volumes. Both of these make the byway route desirable for recreational cyclists. Shoulder widening along portions of SR16 in Putnam and Hancock Counties, will be requested to accommodate bike lanes in conjunction with the Oconee River bridge replacement project and other road paving projects.

As for secondary byway routes, these road projects have not been identified for presentation to local governing authorities. Private sources will be sought to fund these projects, which may include entrance improvements, roadside park developments and land purchase.

**TOURISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING**

***Goals***

- Increase the number of visitors to the byway.
- Increase visitor length along the byway.
- Promote education on the need for resource protection and preservation.
- Promote sustainable economic development and tourism management.

The historic piedmont region remains one of Georgia’s best-kept secrets. The region is not known outside the state or even its in own region and the corridor has little visibility as a tourist destination. A coordinated and focused effort between partners within the corridor can dramatically increase the effectiveness of marketing efforts.

The strength of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway lies in strong and creative development of tourism assets to further economic development consistent with the rural integrity of the route. It

is also important to establish an atmosphere that is attractive to tourism related businesses along the byway.

Both Hancock and Putnam Counties contain an abundance of tourism assets and potential assets in heritage tourism, eco-tourism, and recreational tourism. Development of such assets has a two-fold purpose. One is to help foster and promote historic preservation. Buildings and sites that are of interest to visitors and that generate income are more likely to be preserved than sites that lay empty. Attention focused on the sites by the promotion of the byway will stimulate a desire to preserve the past.

The Byway Commission will create plans to help preserve important historical tourism assets as a part of its overall work plan. In addition, the Commission will work with other heritage organizations to preserve historic structures and sites.

The other purpose of developing tourism assets is to stimulate economic development projects such as lake area activities (Fig 32). Tourism is economic development. It brings money into a community directly through the dollars spent by the visitors and by the jobs created. Visitors need restaurants, hotels, gas stations, grocery stores, and campsites to enjoy the traveling experience (see Appendix 5 for more detailed tourism inventory). The byway must be seen as an economic engine and supported as such.



**Figure 32: Pro golf player Jerry Pate (left) on lakefront golf course in Putnam.**

Putnam County boasts the Uncle Remus Museum which is made up of two slave cabins similar to the ones from the time of Joel Chandler Harris, the person who committed the African Folk Tales to paper and developed the stories to tales told by Uncle Remus. The museum is filled with memorabilia related to Harris, who was a significant figure in the early years of the county. Putnam also has a natural history museum at Rock Eagle which is run by UGA. A culture and history museum is also planned at the new Visitors Center in Eatonton.

Hancock County has a museum of the history of the county and a display dedicated to Amanda America Dickson, daughter of a wealthy white plantation owner and his slave. Dickson inherited her father's property upon his death and went on to embrace both sides of her heritage openly.

Both communities have developed and printed guides of historic areas in their towns that treat visitors to a glimpse into the antebellum past when cotton was the main industry. The guides move visitors through the earliest days of the communities up through the turn of the last century. Both counties contain structures that are historically and architecturally significant at both a local and national level.

Both counties provide many recreational opportunities as well. Fishing and hunting are popular pastimes for visitors and residents alike. Putnam County contains acres of national forest land and Hancock County has numerous hunting plantations. The Oconee River, which has been dammed to create Lake Oconee, geographically separates the counties; they also share shoreline on Lake Sinclair, providing lake recreation.

Cycling has increased in popularity in recent years and both counties offer extensive road cycling through beautiful rolling hills and tree-lined roads with relatively little automobile traffic. Extensive off-road potential exists for mountain biking enthusiasts (Fig 33).

Equestrian events are also popular in both counties through facilities such as the Manley Arena, located less than two miles from the byway in Putnam County. Minchey Farms and other locations offer horseback riding, boarding and training.



**Figure 33: Group tour biking Rock Eagle area.**

Native American activity from bygone eras is also well documented in both counties. Putnam County has two bird-shaped rock mounds created thousands of years ago, Rock Eagle and Rock Hawk. Rock Eagle is accessible to visitors in a developed park and Rock Hawk has the potential for development. Hancock County has ancient mounds created by Native-Americans many generations ago near Shoulderbone Creek.

Due to the rural nature of Hancock and Putnam Counties, wildlife viewing is popular in the area. Wild turkey, deer, fox, coyotes and other animals are frequently seen on SR 16. Less traveled roads provide even more opportunities for viewing wildlife. There is a public wildlife trail and viewing area just off SR 16 at the Oconee River in Putnam County. Bald Eagles are often seen over Lakes Oconee and Sinclair. The area also has an abundance of flora that is noteworthy.

The Commission will develop tourism assets and improve them. Hours of operation should be as consistent as possible. It is important for staffed sites to be open seven days a week if possible, with weekends and the second half of the week as priorities. It is planned that the in-process Visitors and Community Center in Eatonton and the planned Visitors Center on the square in Sparta will be open seven days a week and offer public restroom facilities. Public restroom facilities will also be available at the County Courthouses and Libraries in both towns.

A park with 100 parking spaces, restored old jail, and public restrooms is being planned in Eatonton one block from the courthouse square. The park will contain signs with maps for walking tours of the historic district and other points of interest in the city, such as the Uncle Remus Museum. The potential assets need to be developed as well to round out the tourism experience available to visitors.

The Commission has already begun work toward the goal of tourism asset development (Fig 34). Cycling routes and brochures are being developed with the help of local cyclists. An African American Heritage Walking Guide is in development in Putnam County with the scenic byway as the anchor. The guide will be put together by local students. They will learn how to use primary documents to draw conclusions about life in the past and then use those documents and conclusions to create the guide.



**Figure 34: Longshoals Park on Lake Oconee.**

An outline for five themed tours is under development in Hancock County that covers African American heritage, the development of religion and education, cotton culture, post-revolution, and early nationalism. The same will be done for Putnam County and the two will be merged to create a single, bi-county tour.

The Commission is also researching topics and locations for interpretive historic markers complete with parking and landscaping. Since history is the primary theme of the byway, historic markers will list sites in a manner that will tell a story of the region's heritage and culture, as well educating visitors about the ways to help preserve the byway.

A detailed inventory of the assets and potential assets in both counties will be created. The Commission will work closely with the Chambers of Commerce to understand and define the resources and info they plan to share with travelers. From that inventory, a long-term plan for future tourism asset development will be developed.

Assets identified thus far include:

- Rock Eagle Effigy
- Rock Eagle Museum
- Uncle Remus Museum
- Alice Walker Driving Tour
- Oconee National Forest
- Heritage Tour Self-Guided
- WMA hiking trails and viewing areas
- Oconee River wildlife viewing area
- Lawrence Shoals
- Oconee Springs Parks
- Lake activities
- Fishing and shooting areas
- Hunting
- Golf courses
- Horse Barrel Races
- Bronson House
- Civil War Heritage Trail sites
- Historic Eatonton walking tour
- Sparta Hancock Museum
- Historic Sparta Guidebook
- Rockville school and church tour
- Ogeechee Grist Mill

Potential assets include:

- Rock Hawk Effigy
- Alice Walker sites
- Bledsoe-Greene House
- Old Baldwin County Courthouse
- Road and off-road cycling routes
- African-American heritage walking tours
- Unexplored Civil War sites
- Native-American sites
- Education and religion development sites
- Walking trails along Lake Oconee/Sinclair
- Ferry rides
- Canoe rides
- Architecture tours
- Shoulderbone Indian Mounds
- Wildlife viewing
- Millmore Mill
- Rock Mill in Jewell
- Community Center weekly entertainment events

### **Marketing Efforts**

Marketing efforts will be broad and all encompassing. Promotions will be incremental, expanding first to the region, the rest of the southeast, and the rest of the U.S. Several tourist markets were identified during the public consultation process. These include residents along the byway, visitors to the area, and heritage tourists. With proper and coordinated marketing, all tourist markets can be reached.

Close coordination with local community groups is critical to developing an effective byway marketing program. The Commission will work closely and coordinate with the Chambers of Commerce to develop strategies aimed at all tourist segments. In particular, the Commission will provide local organizations and businesses with information and resources about the byway to be incorporated in their promotional materials. These will include printing placemats for local restaurants to encourage travelers to tour the byway and distributing byway brochures to local businesses around town. The Commission will also partner with cycling clubs, hiking clubs, and outdoor activities groups to promote events along the byway, and encourage local school districts and church organizations to organize field trips along the byway.

The Commission will also work with DITT on a variety of projects aimed to promote the byway to out-of state tourists, including developing a special scenic byway segment on “Georgia on my mind” publications and videos and attracting film shoots.

Other marketing activities will include contacting media outlets to promote the byway. The Commission will create press releases for local newspapers and radio stations, develop a regular newspaper series on the resources and opportunities available along the byway, and generate familiarization tours for journalists and travel writers to highlight the byway. Examples of this are Turner South’s *Southern Living* television series, which offers small communities exposure on a regional level and The American Automobile Association’s *Travel Magazine*.

The Commission is in the process of developing a website highlighting all the sites and activities available to visitors. The Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway brochure will be available as a printable document from the website to make it as accessible as possible. The website will be linked to other tourism websites in the two counties and others deemed relevant. Brochures will also be available through traditional information centers and key locations along the byway.

### **New Development**

Byway residents generally agreed that development should be allowed along the byway. However, residents also agreed that development should balance economic objectives with preservation of the byway qualities, and to maintain the character of the community. In light of community sentiment over development, the Commission will support the creation of information on investor opportunities along the byway while providing information to potential businesses interested in locating along the about low-impact design options.

**G. IMPLEMENTATION**  
*Responsibilities and Funding*



**Goals**

- Implement the Corridor Management Plan.
- Inform and involve residents in the byway's development.

**Scenic Byway Commission**

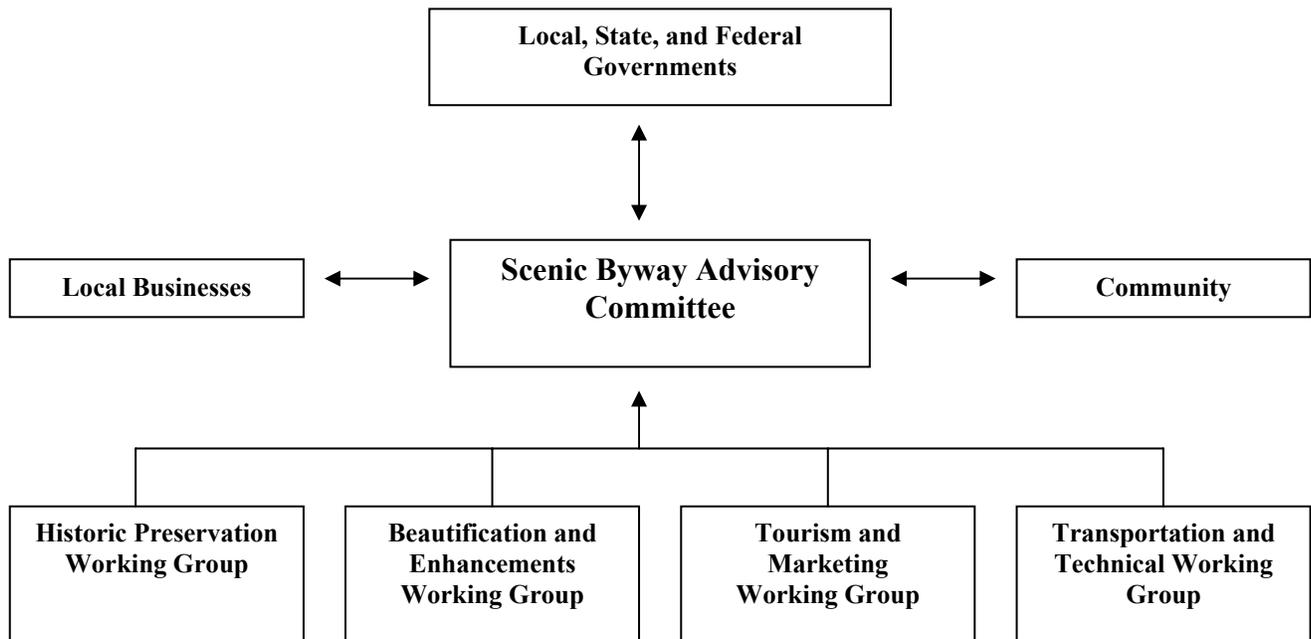
The vehicle to create, implement, and maintain the Corridor Management Plan is a two-county, 13-voting member Scenic Byway Commission (Fig 35). The Commission will be chaired by local resident Larry Moore and will consist of a 5-member advisory board and four, 8-member working committees. The Commission is currently in the process of obtaining 501(c)(3) non-profit status. One advantage of being designated a non-profit is that the byway becomes eligible for funding from organizations that contribute only to non-profits.



**Figure 35: Members of the Scenic Byway Advisory Committee meeting in Eatonton.**

The advisory board will serve to establish byway goals and strategies, recruit working committee members, and serve as coordinator with local, state and federal bodies. Advisory board

membership (two-year terms) will include representatives of both counties and will consist of byway residents (3-5 members), stakeholders, local government officials, civic groups members, and non-profit organization members to ensure coordinated and balanced management of the byway. A nominating committee will be appointed by the chairperson to nominate new board members. Appointments will require a majority vote by the board. Working committees will be organized to represent historic preservation, beautification and enhancements, tourism and marketing, and transportation (Fig 36). It is expected that state agencies, particularly the RDCs, will continue to support the Commission with technical assistance.



**Figure 36: Byway Commission Structure and its Relation to Other Bodies.**

**Responsibilities of the Scenic Byway Commission**

1. Implement the CMP.
2. Keep residents informed and involved in the byway.
3. Serve as clearinghouse and public education provider for all corridor related initiatives.
4. Advise local planning and zoning boards on corridor issues.
5. Administer private foundation grants and assist local governments in administering state and federal grants.
6. Work with the new Visitors Center and Chambers of Commerce to include appropriate scenic byway presence.
7. Advise local governments to set land priorities and public investments in byway initiatives.
8. Monitor the byway corridor for development changes and improvement projects.
9. Review all major development proposals within the corridor management zone and make recommendations to appropriate government bodies.
10. Monitor litter control with Adopt-A-Highway and other groups.

11. Coordinate and negotiation with property owners on meeting billboard requirements.
12. Select strategic locations for scenic easements.
13. Oversee design of trails, corridor landscaping, scenic and historic pull offs, and wildflower programs.
14. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate land use, signage, and development to protect gateways.
15. Coordinate with neighboring counties to extend the byway.
16. Submit annual reports to the Georgia Scenic Byway Coordinator.

### **Other Agencies**

*Local Jurisdictions:* As the largest local governing entities along the byway, the counties have the broadest responsibilities for management of land uses adjacent to the byway. The application of existing ordinances and regulations consistent the goals and strategies of the byway plan should be supported.

As the primary service centers for byway travelers, cities have the ability to define and create conditions conducive to lengthier byway stays. It is expected that both Eatonton and Sparta will focus on the necessary beautification and enhancement projects needed to attract travelers.

*State Agencies:* The roadway is administered and managed by GDOT. As such, any improvements to the roadway such as widening, construction of turn lanes, roadway re-alignment, and speed limits will primarily be the responsibility of GDOT. GDOT will provide technical assistance on matters such as road construction standards, safety, parking facilities, and alternative transportation modes.

DCA provides comprehensive planning, technical and research assistance to local governments. The agency, along with the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design, currently supports projects in both Hancock and Putnam Counties. It is expected that design and planning support will be extended to byway projects.

With an abundance of natural resources in the Historic Piedmont region, DNR will be expected to provide technical support and to determine appropriate design of byway improvements to minimize negative environmental impacts.

*Regional Agencies:* The Regional Development Centers laid the foundation of the planning process for this CMP and provided technical support throughout this process. It is expected that the Commission will continue to draw upon the resources and technical expertise of the RDC to implement the CMP.

*Local Businesses:* Local businesses are important to the implementation of the byway plan in providing needed traveler services such as motels, restaurants, and shops. Their role could be to support related activities of the byway plan provided it meets their business needs.

Local businesses also include larger companies that operate along the byway such as logging companies and Georgia Power. It is expected that such businesses will inform the Commission of significant changes that may alter or threaten the byway's intrinsic qualities.

### **Community Support**

Throughout the extensive public consultation process, the Commission has endeavored to maintain a community-driven planning process. The Commission will continue to expand this process by:

1. Implementing an ongoing community participation program by promoting partnerships between community organizations, businesses, and local governments.
2. Sponsoring public events for the byway's planning and administration by holding public workshops and meetings prior to byway enhancements.
3. Coordinating with various media outlets, such as newspapers, radio and internet sites, to keep the public informed.

### **Byway Evaluation**

The implementation of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway project is a long-term task. As such, the Commission, through the working groups, will evaluate the byway to determine whether the goals and strategies have been successful. The Commission intends to survey visitors to identify visitor satisfaction/dissatisfaction with services and attractions, and conduct evaluations to determine local economic impacts of the byway.

An annual report will be prepared by the Byway Commission and will be provided to interested governments, agencies, and interested individuals. It will address the success of implementation tasks, funding, visitors, local involvement and other indicators the community defines.

### **Byway Expansion and National Designation**

Participants in the planning process discussed future strategic expansion of the byway. Generally, it was felt that the byway could benefit from an additional link into Warren, Jasper and Green Counties. The Commission will pursue expansion possibilities with neighboring counties. Some participants also identified national designation as a way of expanding the byway. While the consensus of the Byway Commission is not to pursue national designation immediately, should residents desire such designation, the Commission will pursue the objective.

### **Property Rights**

A significant concern expressed by residents along the byway was the protection of their property rights. It was felt that designation of the byway must occur only with the protection of property rights. Any implementation options identified in this plan should only be considered

following a review by local jurisdictions of the potential effects to property rights. Any property sought for a Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway project must be negotiated for and the owner can, of course, refuse.

**Local Control**

The right of state DOT eminent domain and the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway are independent issues. Even though the Scenic Byway is a state approved designation (such as Better Hometown) it is a locally controlled project. The objectives and guidelines and any associated zoning or ordinances are developed by the community and appropriate local authorities (not DOT) and included in a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) which is agreed upon by the GDOT (all GDOT board members vote). Scenic Byway projects (such as trails, Scenic and historic pulloffs, historic restorations, etc.) are identified, planned and implemented by local control not by the DOT or other state agency. Since the Scenic Byway projects are initiated and controlled locally there is no power of eminent domain from the state. However, the community may seek help from State agencies for local projects.

**Implementation Timetable**

The following project list and timetable prioritizes tasks (see relevant CMP sections for more complete description) and sets forth proposed start and finish dates, responsible parties, estimated costs, and potential funding sources (Fig 37, 38). While real world events (such as failure to obtain grant funding) may affect the actual implementation schedule, the worktable will provide work program guidance to the Byway Commission. It will be regularly updated and sent out to elected officials and interested parties as events unfold.



**Figure 37: Members of the Implementation Committee meeting in Eatonton.**

**Priority Projects** (updated 7-03, changes shown in *italics*)

1. Apply for 501-©-3 non-profit status as the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Commission. This allows Byway Commission to seek private funding sources as an independent body. *State and federal status was established by 4-3-03.*
2. Appoint Scenic Byway Commission. Publish list of nominees in local papers to give interested parties a chance to comment before finalizing. *The Commission became the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corp. on 4-03-03 with board members filed with the IRS..*
3. Select members for working committees: Beautification and Enhancements, Preservation, Tourism and Marketing, and Technical support. *Ongoing with projects required.*
4. Seek City and County approval for the Scenic Byway Commission to review potential changes to viewsheds, including historical, cultural and archaeological sites, and make recommendations. Seek approval to have a Scenic Byway Commission member serve on the Planning & Zoning Board for Putnam County and work with the Historic Preservation Committee for Sparta-Hancock County. *Request made in June, 03.*
5. Hold training sessions with the RDCs to help to train members on mission and duties. *Ongoing.*
6. Apply for grant to allocate funds for a “one time cleanup” of locations along the byway that would not adhere to scenic standards, such as old abandoned cars and trailers, junk piles, etc. After the one-time cleanup property owners and stakeholders would be expected to keep the property scenic. Develop specific “Keep the Scenic Byway Historic and Beautiful” plan and guidelines for property owners and the general public. *Under review.*
7. As part of the “Keep the Scenic Byway Beautiful” plan, initiate and coordinate a campaign using GDOT, prison labor, Adopt-A-Mile volunteers. Use clubs and individuals to form a “SWAT” team to keep the byway route clean and free from litter at all times. *Planning underway.*
8. Work with RDC and UGA to create a more complete inventory and interpretation of historic, archaeological and cultural features. Develop a plan to preserve, enhance and display priority items in the inventory. Incorporate this plan into larger Master Plan for the area. *UGA to complete by 8-03.*
9. Work with GDOT and the RDCs to plan scenic/historic turnoffs and safety improvements, and work with GDOT on projects with the potential to impact the byway. *Planning underway.*

10. Contract with a landscape architect to develop a Master Plan for the byway which will include (*review for funding underway*):
  - Historic, cultural, scenic and recreational biking, hiking, equestrian and driving tours (“loops” utilizing the byway and taking advantage of adjacent roads and trails) and trails.
  - Turnoffs and parking for historic, scenic and cultural sites, with markers, restrooms and picnic tables, which can serve as starting and stopping points for loops and promote the sale of locally made crafts.
  - Screening for unsightly elements.
  - Planting trees and flowers at key locations.
  - A greenway plan.
  - Developing and promoting nature preserves and bird trails throughout the byway, including planting native plants that will attract birds, butterflies and other species to viewing areas along the corridor.
  - A wildlife habitat protection strategy for the byway, including identifying natural areas used for wildlife breeding and foraging, and ensuring that these are connected by protected migration corridors.
  
11. Negotiate easements, seek donations or purchase property for strategic areas to be used for historic, scenic and cultural pulloffs, hiking and biking trails, and parks and recreation areas. Currently identified locations include:
  - Access to Rock Hawk. (*Phase I grant for trails & parking won 7-3-3. Phase II grant for viewing tower being applied for.*)
  - Purchase building for Sparta Visitors Center. (*grant being applied for by 9-03*)
  - Dairy and Rural Transportation Museum (*grant & planning under review*)
  - Shoulderbone Mounds in Hancock County.
  - Site of the original Baldwin County Courthouse at the corner of SR 16 and Old Phoenix Road for historic pulloff and parking area.
  - Biking and hiking path beginning at the site of the Baldwin County Courthouse, along Old Phoenix Road and Wards Chapel Road off SR 16.
  - Biking and walking path through the historic district in Sparta.
  - Pave Texas Chapel dirt section to create Rockville hiking and biking loop. Add hiking and biking paths on road shoulders.
  - Land near Rockville School for historic pulloff and parking area.
  - Biking shoulders on sections of SR 16 to complete biking and hiking loops.
  - SR 16 and Oconee River in Hancock and Putnam Counties for a park and trailhead. (*can tie into section of old bridge left over Oconee and Rock Hawk project above*)
  - Alice Walker’s Childhood Home. (*Owners renovating building as of 7-03*)
  - Alice Walker’s Church. (*under review*)
  
12. Restore and protect historic, archaeological, and cultural sites along the byway and loops, including:

- Rock Hawk (*see above*)
  - Old Wesley Chapel Church (*torn down*)
  - Alice Walker's Church (*title in question*)
  - Alice Walker's childhood home (*see above*)
  - Putnam Cemetery Book (*being planned , grant being applied for*)
  - Reconstruct 1850s log cabin on old Baldwin County Courthouse site
  - Enterprise Mill
  - Turnwold Plantation
  - Rockville School
  - H.M. Ralston Farm House
  - Eatonton Depot Ruin
  - Tompkins Inn
  - Sparta Visitors Center
  - Shoulderbone Mounds
13. Work with local jurisdictions to update sign ordinances to conform with federal byway guidelines. (*Putnam sign ordinance passed 11-03*)
14. Negotiate to buy out current billboard contracts along the byway.
15. Work with local jurisdictions to update and implement comprehensive plans and land use regulations to protect and enhance the byway.
16. *Encourage and promote best management forestry practices in order to maintain a naturally scenic viewshed along the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway. The Georgia and federal laws and guidelines stated in the Best Management Practices for Forestry, issued by the Georgia Forestry Commission in January, 1999 shall apply to the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway in Putnam and Hancock Counties as well as the Level #3 (most sensitive) guidelines in the Forestry Aesthetics Guide issued by the Forest Resources Association and the Georgia Forestry Association. In addition a timber buffer of 50 feet or more along the Scenic Byway right-of-way shall be maintained. Rotating buffers are acceptable (harvesting behind a buffer until adequate new growth can form what would become a new buffer before harvesting the initial buffer) and "thinning" of the buffer is permissible as long as the viewshed is maintained. It is preferable to maintain a timber buffer but for those landowners who own and manage a timber resource along the Scenic Byway and whose tract or stand of timber does not exceed ¼ mile (or 1,320 feet) along the Byway and the tract is less than 10 acres then no buffer will be required as long as the best management forestry practices and aesthetics guide lines above are followed. The harvesting practice would involve cutting trees as close to the ground as possible, cleaning all debris immediately and promoting regrowth of vegetation as soon as practical.*

17. Work with Chambers of Commerce and the new Putnam Community Center Committee to include a section on the scenic byway and add to existing web pages. (*Marketing grant being applied for*)
18. Work with the Development Authorities and UGA for a new enhanced facelift for downtown Eatonton and Sparta. Based on the UGA recommendations and the “Strengthen the Façade” scenic improvement program, assist businesses with exterior repairs, cleanup and removal of dilapidated buildings along the byway.
19. Work with UGA Small Business Center and USDA Micro Loan Program to assist property owners in establishing or improving the appearance of tourism related attractions along the byway (i.e. fruit stands, small restaurants, gift/craft shops, etc.).
20. Work with UGA and various State of Georgia Departments to develop a dual park on each side of the Oconee River Bridge, and include a walking and biking lane. The park can include a fishing pier, access to Rock Hawk effigy, picnic areas, and be the starting/ending point for hiking and biking trails. (*see #s 11, 12 above*)
21. Work with GDOT to study the feasibility of a truck bypass for Sparta. (*complete*)
22. Develop brochures and a video highlighting the byway and its attractions. (*see #17 above*)
23. Host annual Scenic Byway Conference and host other public meetings to educate citizens and developers about benefits of ecotourism, conservation, and best management practices.
24. Develop Native American and African American biking, walking and driving tours. A Native American tour can link Rock Eagle effigy and museum, to museums in Eatonton, and Rock Hawk by the ancient Shoulderbone mounds to the museum in Sparta. (*Rock Hawk underway with museum—see #s 11, 12 above*)
25. Coordinate with adjacent counties on applying for a RAP grant to promote regional tourism, improve the byway and eventually extend its boundaries. Work with Lake Country Marketing Cooperative and DITT. (working with Warren and Jones Counties)
26. Work with RDCs to update Putnam County and Hancock County land use maps to include a more intensive inventory of sensitive lands such as wetlands, flood plains, wildlife habitats and unique ecosystems, and address protection of these areas in all participating governments' comprehensive plans and development regulations.
27. Work with local and state governments to protect watersheds along the byway.
28. Encourage the formation of a Putnam-Hancock Regional Historic Commission and adopt region-wide historic preservation plan and ordinance.

29. Develop comprehensive plans for upgrading and promoting the historic districts in Sparta and Eatonton as major tourist attractions. The plan should include specific details for the community/visitor's centers and improvements in historic and cultural resources.

### **Funding**

The bulk of funding available for scenic byway related projects comes from TEA-21, a federal transportation program aimed at encouraging a balanced transportation system. *National Scenic Byways* funds are intended to support projects to improve the quality of visitors' experience along scenic byways, attracting more visitors or enticing them to stay longer. Proposed project funding under this grant program includes up to 80% of the cost of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, pull off and shoulder improvements, recreational area access enhancements, easements, and marketing.

*Transportation Enhancements* funds support transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation's intermodal transportation system. Eligible activities under this program include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, acquisitions of scenic and historic easements and sites, tourist and welcome centers, landscaping and beautification, historic preservation, control and removal of outdoor advertising, and archeological planning and research (see Appendix 6 for more detailed information on available state and federal grants and programs).

A range of private funding sources are also available for scenic byway-related construction, facilities, and educational programs. While smaller in sum than federal and state funds, they require no local match and in many cases can serve as the local match for a *National Scenic Byways* or *Transportation Enhancement* grant.



The citizens of Hancock and Putnam Counties have united over the proposed Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway and have already taken steps to protect this valuable resource. Local governments have strongly supported the routes through zoning and land use plans. The designation of the route and the regular GDOT review will act as a catalyst to maintain direction and purpose behind the local covenants.

The Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway will be a shining example of cooperation on a local, regional and state level working to fulfill the wishes of the people of the two counties and through this important project. It is hoped this will inspire other local jurisdictions throughout Georgia to work together to protect and promote the intrinsic qualities along their scenic roads.