



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SCENIC BYWAY PLANNING SPURS ACTION

Regional Coalition Promotes Economic Development Initiative

For Immediate Release (Salem, MA) ... Interest and participation in the long-term sustainability of the 85-mile Essex Heritage Scenic Byway continues to grow following a springtime series of local meetings involving 13 Essex County communities. Though a strategic corridor management plan for the entire route will not be finalized until early next year, several groups are already taking steps to address the economic underpinnings that contribute to the region's quality of life.

In Swampscott the byway discussions have inspired the Humphrey Street Revitalization Committee to start meeting again. The Gloucester Open Space Committee is using the byway existing conditions report on open space to guide revision of their Open Space Plan. Having come together on the byway local advisory group for Newbury and Newburyport, representatives of historic, cultural and natural resources groups are pushing ahead with more coordinated local efforts.

"We are thrilled that the byway is being seen as way to respond to a range of community and regional needs," said Annie Harris, executive director of the nonprofit Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage), which is spearheading the scenic byway initiative. "Having the effort to preserve and promote the region's nationally significant heritage viewed in economic terms will greatly aid the planning process and ultimately benefit residents, local businesses, organizations, and visitors in the form of increased tourism revenue, infrastructure improvements, and additional grant funding."


Community-based public meetings in the fall of 2010 will provide additional information about the corridor management plan and generate even wider enthusiasm for providing the best possible visitor experience, while enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Anchored at each end by the gateway communities of Lynn and Newburyport, the state-designated Essex Heritage Scenic byway passes through the cities and towns of Swampscott, Marblehead, Salem, Beverly, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, Ipswich, Rowley, and Newbury. The byway follows portions of Routes 1A, 129, 114, 127, 127A, and 133 as well as local roads in Marblehead, Gloucester, Newbury and Newburyport.

Developed with substantial community involvement, the corridor management plan will identify strategies for preserving, enhancing, and promoting the byway's scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and natural qualities. In addition, a corridor management plan is a prerequisite for attaining designation as a National Scenic Byway, a distinction that will bring added recognition and possibly additional federal funding to the route and the region.

Launched in June 2009 by Essex Heritage with support from a consulting team led by the Newburyport-based planning firm of Taintor & Associates, the 21-month planning process is funded with grants from the National Scenic Byways Program and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

For additional information, please visit: www.Essexheritage.org/scenicbyways

 <p>ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA</p>	<p>About the Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage</p> <p>Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a non profit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.</p>
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