Colorado

The National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991, recognizes historic, scenic and culturally important roads and promotes tourism and economic development in nearby communities. Colorado established the Scenic and Historic Byways Program in 1989 and is considered one of the oldest scenic byways program in the country. In 2019, the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program celebrated its 30th anniversary, and over the span of three decades have designated 26 routes showcasing the state’s exceptional scenic, ecological, cultural and historic attributes. Nominations are made by the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission, and in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) seeks to support and sustain byways for future generations. Colorado Byways provide access to the state’s most spectacular public lands, including four National Parks, 23 State Parks, 13 National Recreation Trails, eight National Forests, and eight National Monuments.

Key points:

- Direct travel spending in Colorado in 2017 was over $20.9 billion.
- The industry directly impacts the employment of 171,000 Coloradans and $6.3 billion in wages.
- Total grants from the National Scenic Byways Program for Colorado in 1992 through 2012 is totaled at $17,945,194.
- A 2016 economic analysis of the state’s economy determined cumulative impact visitor spending while traveling the byways from 2009 to 2014 at nearly $4.8 billion, or nearly $800 million annually.
- A recent National Scenic Byway Foundation survey showed that 44 state scenic byways in 24 states are prepared to seek designation as a National Scenic Byway.

Located along San Juan Skyway, historic downtown Ouray is a popular destination among locals and tourists alike.
Scenic Byways in Colorado

--- National Scenic Byways in Colorado:

Colorado River Headwaters Scenic Byway (1)
Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway (2)
Frontier Pathways Scenic and Historic Byway (3)
Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway (4)
Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway (5)
Lariat Loop Scenic and Historic Byway (6)
San Juan Skyway (7)*
Santa Fe Trail (8)
Top of the Rockies (9)
Trail of the Ancients (10)
Trail Ridge Road-Beaver Meadow Road (11)

--- State Scenic Byways in Colorado:

Alpine Loop (12)
Cache La Poudre-North Park (13)
Collegiate Peaks Byway (14)
Flat Tops Trail (15)
Guanella Pass Scenic and Historic Byway (16)
Highway of Legends (17)
Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic & Historic Byway (18)
Mount Evans Scenic and Historic Byway (19)
Pawnee Pioneer Trails (20)
Peak to Peak Scenic Byway (21)
Silver Thread (22)
South Platte River Trail (23)
Tracks Across Borders (24)
Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic & Historic Byway (25)
West Elk Loop (26)

Map Key:
The numbers following each byway name above match with the respective byway’s numbered location on the map.

Asterisk denotes an All-American Road.