Virginia

The National Scenic Byway 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. The Virginia General Assembly passed the State Scenic Highway and Virginia Byways Act in 1966. This act came to be in response to a suggestion made by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, known as the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Since its creation, over 3,500 miles of road have been designated. There are two scenic byways programs recognized in Virginia, one State and one National. The state program was established in 1999 and is managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Across the state, there are 3 All American Roads as well as over 200 scenic byways in total.

Key points:
- According to Virginia’s Scenic Resources chapter, 51% of residents who responded said that the importance of scenery/ scenic views was ‘very important’.
- In addition to its’ other programs, Virginia established the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program in 1970 to celebrate the 49,000 miles of rivers and waterways across the state.
- According to the 2017 VOD, 67% of residents who responded said they enjoyed driving as a way to connect with nature.
- 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.

The Blue Ridge Parkway journeys through mesmerizing mountains and vistas, boasting a plethora of scenic views and recreational activities such as hiking.
Virginia has a total of 227 Scenic Byways, including 5 National Scenic Byways and 222 State Scenic Byways.