ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991, recognizes historic, scenic, and culturally important roads, all of which promote economic development and tourism in communities around the U.S. There are more than 1,200 byways in all 50 states.

Alaska began its Scenic Byways Program in 1993 to help showcase the state’s most memorable and spectacular landscapes. Alaska is home to 5 national scenic byways, 2 of which—the Alaska Marine Highway and the Seward Highway—are designated as All-American Roads, the gold standard of national scenic byways. Alaska is one of the country’s top destinations for natural beauty, and scenic byways play an important role in emphasizing the state’s scenic, historic, and cultural appeal, playing an integral role in supporting Alaska’s tourism industry.

KEY POINTS

- Alaska is home to 5 national scenic byways and 10 state scenic byways.
- National parks, accessible via byways, generated $2.2 billion in total economic output in gateway communities in 2019, supporting 19,600 jobs and $730 million in labor income.

Images: Haines Highway (top), Dalton Highway (right column – photo credit Alaska.org)
All scenic byways exhibit one or more of six core intrinsic qualities — scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural. For a road to be named a national scenic byway, it must first be designated a state, tribal, or federal agency scenic byway. Once achieving that, a road may apply for national scenic byway designation, but its intrinsic quality must be of regional significance. All-American Roads are the very best of the national scenic byways, demonstrating at least two intrinsic qualities of national significance.