

Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Task 16: Tourism Opportunities

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
Coordinating the Visitor Experience	1
Overview	2
2. Guidelines for Visitor Experience	3
Simplify the Ecological Message	3
Amplify and Clarify Subtleness	3
Emotional Experience – Remoteness and Peace	3
Relevance of Environmental Message	4
Coastal Areas along the Byway as Counterpoints to the Pines	4
Universal Accessibility	4
Connecting Human Heritage to Natural Heritage	4
Embracing Unrelated Topics	4
3. Opportunities for Linking Tourism and Economic Development	6
Bringing the Environmental Experience into Community Centers	6
Bringing an Artisan Flair to the Byway	8
Capitalizing on High Traffic Volumes at the Edges of the Pinelands	9
Create More Guided Pinelands Experiences	9
Encourage and Promote Local Businesses that Provide Goods and Services Related to the Visitor Experience	10
Coordinate with Other New Jersey Heritage Trails	11
4. Interpretation and Tourism	12
Primary Interpretive Center	12
Resource-Based Visitor Centers	13
“Center” Visitor Facilities	17
Experience Sites – Places to quietly slip into the wild	20
Local Heritage Sites – Places to Connect to the Byway’s Human Heritage	21
Scenic Views – Appreciating the Byway’s Natural and Historic Vistas	22
Interpretive Materials and Collateral	24
5. Recreation and Tourism	26
Access	26
Information	27
Services	29
Supportive Environment	30
Appendix: Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Businesses and Organizations that Serve Visitors	31

1. Introduction

The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Scenic Byway is close to an area that receives millions of visitors a year – Atlantic City and the Southern Jersey Shore – and yet it has a very small tourism economy. One might assume that if the region had natural tendencies towards tourism, the market would have found them and, therefore, that the lack of tourism implies that the prospects for tourism growth are poor. We do not believe this to be the case. Rather, the route's proximity to a large potential market offers an opportunity for the byway to pursue travelers whose interests mesh with those of the byway.

However, it should also be noted that there is little appetite within the Pinelands communities for tourism growth similar to what one finds along the coast. Indeed, to a large degree, the parameters of the Pinelands Act prevent that type of development from expanding along the byway.

Coordinating the Visitor Experience

A key challenge for the byway communities will be determining how to benefit and grow the local economy by linking to the visitor experience. There is currently a weak connection between the main reason why people will travel to the Pinelands (i.e., the environment) and the places where economic benefit is needed (i.e., the villages and town centers).

1. The core reason why people will visit the Pinelands is the unusual environment and its related experiences.
2. The primary theme for promoting the byway and for most planned interpretation is the unusual environment.
3. If people come to the byway to pursue this theme and these resources, they will go to a variety of locations along the byway, but the vast majority of these environment-oriented locations are outside of the villages and town centers.
4. Yet the vast majority of existing businesses are in the villages and town centers, and future development will generally be directed to and preferred to these areas where the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan permits growth, where there may be wastewater capacity and where there are the greatest opportunities for building reuse.
5. There are very few environment-oriented experiences in the villages and town centers. There are also very few major visitor information and orientation services. The villages and centers also vary widely in their physical design and visitor services and thus vary as to how appealing they are for visitors. Most villages and centers provide basic services like gas and some food. Most have limited lodging, limited easy parking, few attractions and generally do not cater to visitors.

Therefore, the byway program should place a major emphasis on finding ways to link the villages with the general byway experience and *vice versa*. Byway visitors should see these centers as critical links in the overall chain of experiences that define the byway.

Thus, this byway strategy is designed to direct visitors both to the special environmental experiences of the region and to the existing businesses, which exist primarily in the villages.

This plan places a strong emphasis on the idea that all visitors should be directed to the villages and to use them as “base camps” from which to venture into the region.

The plan is also designed to find opportunities for increasing the number of visitors and their lengths of stay largely within the parameters of the existing lodging base. Given the seasonality of Pinelands tourism, it is unlikely that new lodging establishments will prosper solely from Pinelands travelers. Instead, Pinelands travelers can enhance existing establishments and perhaps encourage the opening of B&B’s or other part-time, small scale lodging properties.

Therefore, the byway program needs to create and promote compelling reasons for visitors to go to the villages. Those reasons fall into the following categories:

- Byway information and interpretation
- Village-specific experiences related to heritage and nature
- Lodging
- Food
- Other services

In addition, it is just as important to ensure that the environmental-related experiences and information that the visitor finds in the outlying, non-village areas is of the highest quality. A large number of recommendations relate to improving these facilities and creating new activities that enhance visitors’ environmental education and experiences.

Overview

This tourism opportunities narrative discusses the following:

- A set of guidelines for designing and managing visitor experiences along the byway.
- Ideas on how the intrinsic qualities within the corridor and neighboring areas provide opportunities for heritage tourism and economic development, including opportunities for artists and artisans. As noted, the *community-environment* link is emphasized.
- Location of potential interpretation centers and an overall interpretive structure for the byway. This includes locations for trailhead kiosks, interpretive information, and roadside pull-offs. The *community-environment* link is central to this section as well.
- How recreational opportunities along the byway might be more fully developed in order to encourage tourism and economic development, including recommendations regarding trails and pedestrian bridges along the byway.
- Location of vistas and roadside pull-offs along the byway as well as general improvements that can be made to the road-edge and the driving experiences.

2. Guidelines for Visitor Experience

The experience of the visitor to the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Byway should be characterized by guidelines that help to consistently shape the interpretive approach and the experience of the byway. First, the experience of this place must be simplified. Most people take away from a destination only the broadest, most obvious facts and knowledge about the place – how big are the mountains, why is the water so blue, who won the battle at this site, etc. When a destination offers a more complex, subtle set of messages like the Pinelands, the message must be condensed. Here are some guidelines for the byway with a focus on simplifying the message.

Simplify the Ecological Message

The Pinelands offers a dizzying array of unusual plants, birds and subtle habitats. Develop a simple message about the place that focuses on a few ideas for each element.

Key Natural Elements

Together, these four “elements” make a great set of symbols-- water, sand, pine and fire.

- *Water* - salt and fresh; aquifer and ocean; streams and intertidal areas; moving and still
- *Sand* – porous, water-filled or dry, nutrient poor
- *Pine trees* – adaptable, ancient, resilient, short and tall
- *Fire* – defining element of nature in the region, a dramatic, dangerous element

When combined, the elements create very tangible substances that can be seen, felt, smelt and known: smoke from fire and pine; steam from fire and water; a range of textures from sand and water, a growing tree from water, sand and pine, fire contained by sand and water.

Interesting Animals and Plants

Introduce travelers to a limited number of fascinating creatures, a list they can remember and seek out, and qualities of creatures that connect to the qualities of the place. The animals and plants should relate to and be representative of water, sand, pine and fire.

Amplify and Clarify Subtleness

There is a sameness to the Pinelands landscape to the untrained eye. Therefore, the byway must seek ways in which difference can be appreciated and small differences amplified. For example, exploring the oak-pine forest system might be clarified by providing images and models of the pygmy pine forest system. Ways should be found to see, hear, touch and understand the differences. Present interpretation that clarifies the distance to groundwater or the depth of the aquifer beneath one’s feet. Smell the moss, taste the water, see the difference between land that has burned and land that has not burned. Many of these ideas are explored well at the Batsto Visitors Center but can be expanded in other interpretative locations.

Emotional Experience – Remoteness and Peace

A central aspect of the Pinelands is that if one enters the heart of the place, one is removed from everyday life. One need only drive a half mile on a sand road to lose sight of civilization.

Take one turn around a river bend and all development disappears. The feeling of being surrounded by nature is central to the Pine Barrens. The most dramatic sights and experiences of each natural resource destination along the byway should be highlighted for the traveler. Whether that is a beautiful view of a tidal marsh or the enclosed, silent experience of navigating a river, the visitor needs to be strongly encouraged to have that feeling or encounter that experience.

Excitement, thrills, adrenaline...these are *not* the experiences one will find in the Pinelands (Nearby, Atlantic City offers plenty of that for those who need some stimulation.) Instead, the message for visitors should be one that conveys the degree to which peace, silence and serenity will be found in this region. Therefore, each destination should clearly indicate the way in which one can step into that Pinelands peace.

Relevance of Environmental Message

Find a few key connections between the environmental stewardship of the Pinelands and the everyday lives of visitors. Examples might include water quality, new medicines from rare plants, or engineering discoveries from observing birds in flight or other connections. Aside from the philosophical or spiritual responsibility of humans to protect the earth, what are the practical reasons to do so? How does the Pinelands represent a model worth considering in other places?

Coastal Areas along the Byway as Counterpoints to the Pines

Jakes Landing, the Tuckahoe WMA nature drive, the marshes at the rivers, the Edwin Forsythe Nature Drive and downtown Tuckerton – these areas offer long views, fresh sea air, wind, open skies. Provide ample ways for visitors to learn and linger in these locations. Also, offer clear information and directions on the engaging experiences back in the pines that lie nearby.

Universal Accessibility

Boardwalks, trails, sidewalks, easy equipment rentals, motorized scooters and golf carts, cycling routes, canoeing routes, guided tours, audio tours, Braille signage, multi-language interpretation, music of the place...find every potential way to encourage people to get out of their cars and feel and touch the Pinelands. Send a message of this byway being accessible and enjoyable for people of all ages and physical abilities. If people feel the peace of the place, they will stay longer and return.

Connecting Human Heritage to Natural Heritage

A central aspect of the themes for the Pinelands Interpretive Plan is telling the stories of how people relate to the natural landscape of the region. All of the above guidelines should apply to these concepts and should seek ways to integrate the people-nature connection.

Embracing Unrelated Topics

While it is perhaps appealing to imagine a byway that somehow presents every aspect of its character within a very tight, consistent framework, every place has a variety of “story-lines” and activities. For the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail, Woodbine’s Jewish heritage, the railroad in Tuckahoe and related railroad activities in Buena, the Belcoville Munitions history,

and the Renault Winery are examples of byway stories that can be related to the environment with some effort, but also just stand on their own as interesting experiences and topics. These should all be embraced within the byway program, not left out if they do not neatly fit within the main environmental or people-environment message.

Each of these concepts will be explored below.

3. Opportunities for Linking Tourism and Economic Development

Bringing the Environmental Experience into Community Centers

When visitors come to the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail, they will primarily be seeking an environmental experience – canoeing, hiking, bird watching, nature education, fishing, hunting, botany, foliage viewing and similar activities. At times they will come because of an event and some may pursue a very specific cultural-heritage interest such as Batsto Village or the Museum of Woodbine Heritage. One exception may be Tuckerton Seaport with its maritime focus; this draws and will continue to draw people with an interest in sailing history. However, in general, the environment will be the focus of most visitors' interests and activities.

If we are seeking to bring visitors into the villages and town centers, what we will refer to as “centers” in order to maximize economic impact, then the centers must participate in this environmental experience, or at the very least, offer information and services that encourages all visitors to stop in the centers. While the centers will not offer the pristine solitude of a sand road or the views of a walk along the marshes, they must be connected to the reason why people come to the Southern Pinelands byway.

As noted, the potential ways this can be accomplished fall into the following categories:

- Byway information and interpretation
- Center-specific experiences related to heritage and nature
- Lodging
- Food
- Other services

Each center should go through a planning process to create an environmental experience within their community. Some simple examples might include:

- A walking tour that integrates historic architecture with aspects of the immediate natural world.
- A walking tour that focuses on interesting people who made their living from the land or the culture of “working the cycle”.
- A nature trail that explores some aspect of the land upon which the center was built.
- An audio tour that can be downloaded to iPods at each local visitors center.

A good example of locally oriented interpretation is the set of oyster panels in nearby Maurice-town. They provide old photographs and good information and are appropriately located by the dock.

A very important part of this project should be the coordination along the byway so that communities do not replicate the same stories and experiences. The centers should work cooperatively with the eventual objective of creating a brochure and map that would list all of the “center environmental experiences” and offer such a broad variety that some visitors would choose to travel between centers just to enjoy these activities.

Characteristics and Opportunities by Centers

Port Elizabeth

Create a trail along the Maurice River. The signage at the bridge announces in very large letters that the river is a National Scenic and Recreational River. There should be an experience associated with that message.

Dennisville

The historic character of this village with the surrounding marshes lends itself to a walking tour that discusses the ways that early settlers lived as close to the water as possible and farmed the land and lived an existence that straddled the salt and freshwater ecosystems. The Dennisville Museum should be examined for items in the collection that can be repurposed to connect with the center-environment theme.

Woodbine

This center is the only truly inland center along the byway; all other centers exist immediately along a river or adjacent to the coastal marsh systems. This is also the most upland of the centers. The Heritage Museum's discussion of farming in the Pines is a good jumping off point for some type of nature trail that passes through old fields or discusses the nature of the soils and land.

Tuckahoe and Corbin City

These communities lie right on the Tuckahoe River. Walking and cycling along the marshes and river will be a very pleasant experience.

Mays Landing

Mays Landing has the most substantial urban character of the central segment centers. It offers sidewalks, historic buildings, and the harbor. A walking tour must be developed that is more substantial.

Elwood

Develop a walking trail into the surrounding woodlands or enhance the existing park with a visitor kiosk.

Port Republic

Enhance an existing park with interpretation and/or visitor kiosk.

Smithville

Install interpretive information and a walking trail at the old church or another historic site.

New Gretna

Create or enhance a park in the center with interpretive information.

Tuckerton

Create ways for people to be close to the water or walk along the water.

Wayfinding and Interpretation for Each Center

As discussed in the *Interpretation and Tourism* section of this report, the byway must strike a balance between interpretive investments located at the environmental sites (e.g., Belleplain State Forest, MacNamara WMA, the other state wildlife management areas, Estell Manor, Batsto, Bass River State Forest and Edwin Forsythe NWR) and the centers. Interpretation at the

environmental activity locations brings the interpretive message closest to the experience. Interpretation in the centers brings the message to the places where people will be dining, shopping, lodging and seeking information.

It is recommended that all centers contain some type of information, interpretation, and way-finding facility that will draw most visitors. These facilities should be seen as “must-stops” for travelers in order to maximize the chances of people spending time in all the villages.

Concept to Consider

Develop a standardized – though somewhat customizable – information and orientation kiosk that can be installed in each village. These kiosks should be designed to be accessible 24/7 and very visible from the highway. Some byways have enlisted local vocational-tech schools to assist with the construction of these kiosks in every town along the byway (i.e., the Eastern Kentucky National Scenic Byways - Country Music Highway, Red River Gorge Byway and the Wilderness Road Byway).

There should be some aspect to these kiosks that offers a sense of fun, something that draws people to find them. For example, many areas use “passport” programs to encourage families with children to travel to multiple sites within an area and collect stamps and stickers. Other ideas include:

- Geo-caching directions, clues and rewards
- Full visitation to all kiosks – or similar search-and-find sites- could translate into a free meal at a local restaurant or a discount on a canoe rental, etc.

Bringing an Artisan Flair to the Byway

There are a number of artists and artisans along the byway or generally in the Southern Pinelands. In a way, a byway is a linear experience of education and opportunities through a region. The region’s resources should be condensed along the byway so that people can taste the full flavor of the place. Several ideas flow from this concept.

Opportunities

- Create an Open Studios program for the byway, wherein the byway helps to promote open access to the commercial and home studios of the region’s artists and artisans.
- Create a brochure and map of the studios.
- Promote via the web and with journalists seeking stories on travel and art.
- Feature photographs and samples of artisan work in local shops and information centers.
- Encourage artists to interpret specific environmental themes each year.
- Sponsor a competition for a Byway poster and use the winning painting/graphic.
- Offer a range of locally produced art and crafts goods in local byway stores.

The Atlantic County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs publishes an Artist Directory¹ (last updated in 2007) listing local artists and artisans in Atlantic County. This may provide a good model to adapt for a byway-wide guide to local artists and artisans along the byway. The Directory required artists to fill out an application form in order to be included and provides

¹ <http://www.aclink.org/culturalaffairs/artistdirectory/>

information about the gallery or studio location, contact information, web page and types of art available. It groups artists by type (Visual, Performing and Literary) and then by name. A byway-wide guide might be more appropriately sorted by location.

Capitalizing on High Traffic Volumes at the Edges of the Pinelands

While we hesitate to suggest this given the scenic landscape management orientation of the Pinelands Commission, a marketing program along Route 55, Route 9 and the Atlantic City Expressway and/or creative promotional signage along Route 47 will literally reach millions of eyes every year with a message about the reasons why someone should venture off the beaten path and explore the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Byway. These auto travelers have already demonstrated a willingness to travel into South Jersey. They like what lies just beyond the Pinelands – Cape May, the ocean, the beach – and may like what the Pinelands offers too. They will view the promotional signage for extended periods of times during traffic slow-downs and traffic jams. They will find themselves in a situation that begs for the serene, uncrowded experience of the Pines. They will be classic consumers in a frame of mind that is open to inquiry about your product – the byway.

Opportunities

- Enlist the services of a local advertising firm to explore the possibilities for a signage-oriented promotion program. Also consider murals on barn walls, using small scale sequential signage (think “Burma-Shave”).
- Install a series of low power radio stations with awareness signage along these routes so that people can tune into byway-specific messages.
- Develop a series of information panels and promotional brochures for visitor service centers along the major routes that frame the Pinelands.

Create More Guided Pinelands Experiences

Increasingly, there is a willingness by travelers to pay for personalized guiding services at destinations. These “concierge services” allow people to pay a fee and have personal guiding through a region. The experience is like hiring a National Park Service ranger to give you a personal tour for a day. The information content is high. There may be easier access to less-visited locations or sensitive sites. The access to a specialized vehicle opens up new areas to the casual visitor. While the Pinelands currently supports some guide businesses, they are not well promoted and they are not seen as a formal part of the tourism program. Promote the idea of personalized trips as a part of what makes this byway special.

Opportunities

- Develop specific itineraries that mesh with current or easily developed guide services. Promote in collateral and on the web.
- Work with local community colleges to create a Pinelands Certified Guide training program so that those with the interest in becoming guides can learn the ropes. Eventually, the region may want to limit its promotional support for guiding services to

those that are “certified guides.”

- Use the resources of the regional tourism and byway group to seek out travel journalists and offer them a free multi-day guided experience.
- Identify artists, artisans, liveries, canoe businesses and other local experts who can offer a personalized experience to the visitor. Promote these people on regional websites. Encourage other businesses to develop “personal interaction expertise” so that they can be promoted in the same category. This might include musicians, restaurants, storytellers and other people who might not typically think of promoting themselves individually.

Encourage and Promote Local Businesses that Provide Goods and Services Related to the Visitor Experience

There is a need for more regional-product shopping opportunities along the byway. Entrepreneurs face the classic chicken-egg problem of insufficient current numbers of visitors to support opening new gift shops. Yet the shopping experience is one of the best ways to draw visitors into the character of a place. Browsing and learning about local art, crafts, books, clothing, jewelry, food and other items sends a message of sophistication (i.e., “This place is sufficiently compelling to have both a heritage of traditional crafts and goods and a place that draws creative people who live here.”) Shopping results in people taking things home with them. Items of beauty evoke conversations back home about the trip and the place. Some local items are for sale at the gift shops at Batsto Village and Tuckerton Seaport.

In addition, there is an opportunity for businesses that can provide services to visitors (guided tours, equipment rental, accommodations, and food) to market themselves as part of a coordinated byway-wide effort. An inventory of existing businesses that provide related services along with a list of existing organizations that can assist with coordinating the marketing and promotion of byway businesses is included in the Appendix.

Opportunities

- Create a Byway Retail Program that will seek to accomplish one or more of the following:
 - Identify all potential Pinelands-related products
 - Act as a wholesaler/warehouse of these products. An economic development oriented organization can use public funding to purchase the goods, store them and sell them at cost-plus-service-fee to local retail shops.
 - Organize a group of existing retail shops to broaden their offering of Pinelands goods.
 - Organize local artisans and crafts people to adopt a branding program for the byway. Create or use the Pinelands logo on these goods. Perhaps return a portion of the proceeds to an art or crafts-oriented program along the byway.
 - Work with visitor information and orientation centers to create a small retail space within their buildings to broaden the retail outlets on the byway.
- Sell local Pinelands goods through a Pinelands Products web portal. Use an existing internet store such as Amazon or E-bay to process the orders. Use a public economic development organization to sponsor this site. Link to all major Pinelands sites.
- Seek a limited number of local craftspeople who can offer do-it-yourself arts and crafts projects on specific weekends.

- Use the heritage of the Pinelands to offer full “earth-to-art” programs. Participants would dig clay and make pots, use sand to make glass, cut wood to then carve, etc. This is an important part of the cultural heritage of this place – use it to create fresh, new participatory tourism programs.
- Promote diners – highlight the collection of locally owned diners that are unique to Southern New Jersey. People love to eat. Make a big deal about these diners. Map them, promote them, feature them on the regional websites, create an “Eat Your Way through the Pinelands” program.
- Develop a coordinated business marketing effort. Produce a brochure that features businesses along the byway that provide goods and services related to the byway theme.

Coordinate with Other New Jersey Heritage Trails

NJ Division of Travel and Tourism identifies three “Heritage Trail” locations in New Jersey. These include NJ Coastal Heritage Trail (managed by the National Park Service), Cape May Historic District and the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, and the Heritage Trail of Somerset County (a private non-profit organization). The first two present opportunities to coordinate on tourism and marketing as they are located near the byway route. The second and third also provide possible models for managing and marketing the interpretive sites in a coordinated effort through a non-profit entity.

The NJ Coastal Heritage Trail begins in Perth Amboy, continues south to Cape May, and west to Deepwater at the Delaware Memorial Bridge. It follows the coast line to the east of the Pinelands area. Both Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area and the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge are located within the NJ Coastal Heritage Trail region. There are road links between the NJ CHT and the SPNHT via the Garden State Parkway, Route 9 through Port Republic to Oceanville, and Route 557 through Tuckahoe and Marshallville. Any efforts to enhance the tourism services or interpretation sites along these areas should be coordinated with the NJ Coastal Heritage Trail, which has identified five interpretive themes for the various sites along the Trail – Wildlife Migration, Coastal Habitats, Historic Settlements, Maritime History, Relaxation and Inspiration. The Trail also has an extensive “trail blazer” program, located along the highway to point the way to interesting sites.

4. Interpretation and Tourism

As outlined in the Task 14 report (Interpretive Plan) the previous Pineland Interpretive Plan (1998) suggested that the significant environmental qualities of the Pine Barrens be the focus for the region's interpretive theme. Within that broad theme, the plan also recognized the important role that cultural heritage should play, but those stories would be within the context of the environmental theme.

In addition to these parts of the interpretive framework presented in the 1998 Pinelands Interpretive Plan, this corridor plan also introduces two other critical elements:

- **Experience Sites**

A series of sites that take visitors out into the Pinelands environment, though less interpretative investments might be made at these locations than at the other types of sites presented in the 1998 framework. An application for a Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Water Resources Access Facilities Plan was developed in 2008. If funded this project will investigate ways of providing access to the wildlife and natural systems along the byway so that the traveler can gain awareness, appreciation and knowledge of the importance of the Pinelands. The project would identify all sites along the route that can provide access to the resources without disturbing habitat or causing harm to the area, explore ways of allowing users to gain access and develop a recommended standard for design of any facilities.

- **Internet-Based Interpretive Strategy**

To a large degree, pre-visit image and knowledge about a place are gained through Internet searching and reading. If the region wishes to put visitors in a specifically environment-conscious frame of mind, the Internet is the place to start.

Another critical addition to the ideas developed in the 1998 Interpretive Plan is that of **routing**. The byway offers a specific pathway for visitors to follow. This concept was absent in the 1998 Plan and it has great significance for a large region like the Pinelands. The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail organizes the resources of the southern end of the region and creates a road network hierarchy that is very important in an area with so many side roads. Not getting lost is an important challenge for visitors. Wayfinding must play a central role in the overall byway plan and the ensuing experience.

Primary Interpretive Center

Batsto Village

Batsto Village is the primary place where one can learn about the whole region and experience state-of-the-art interpretation. The combination of the historic village surrounded by the pristine pine forests and Mullica River make for an exceptional experience. The presence of trained state park staff ensures quality visitor services. The gift shop is a good model for the types of shops that should be available all along the byway.

Batsto Village should clearly be the flagship interpretive and visitor information facility along the byway. The existing facility is excellent; the recommendations in this plan are limited to ways to incorporate byway awareness into the installation.

Opportunities

- The visitor center will need to install some information about the byway. Consideration should be given to room for a large (e.g., 36"x48" panel map that shows the entire byway and illustrates how the byway helps to tell the stories portrayed at the visitor center. A prominent display for the byway will be important for the byway program. Many visitors will go to Batsto Village with no awareness of the byway. The byway should be presented at this site in a manner that will encourage people to explore the route further; otherwise they may leave with no awareness of the byway or with no interest in driving the route.
- Additional room will be needed for brochures, maps and other information relevant to the byway. Itinerary brochures with suggested activities branching out from Batsto will be important.
- Connecting to the Byway Experience Guidelines
 - Elements: Via a map panel that describes the overall byway program, introduce the byway's ideas about water, sand, pines, fire and living creatures. As the main interpretive center, visitors should be both introduced to and enticed by the byway's program for helping them understand the region.
 - Subtleness: The current interpretive facilities do a good job of explaining the nature of the Pinelands.
 - Emotion: This is offered by the current facility.
 - Quiet: This is offered by the current facility.
 - Relevance: This is offered by the current facility.
 - Respite: The village and open fields offer respite.
 - Accessibility: This is offered by the current facility.
 - Human to Natural Heritage: This is offered by the current facility.
 - Embrace Unrelated Topics: Promotional material and itineraries for nearby activities will accomplish this objective.

Resource-Based Visitor Centers

These centers augment and expand on the interpretive themes for the byway. Each presents a different aspect of the byway experience guidelines. They provide information that dives more deeply into specific issues related to that site. These facilities offer face-to-face contact with experienced visitor service professionals who can help orient and direct travelers as well as provide information about the site and the region.

These four sites – Belleplaine State Forest, Estell Manor, Bass River State Forest and Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge - offer a good opportunity to creatively present and interpret the core elements of the byway – water, sand, pines and fire – and a selected group of plants and animals that exist because of these elements. There are a large number of potential approaches that might be taken with these concepts.

- Choose one of the elements to expand on for each site. Create interpretive displays that dive into the water subject at one site, dig into the sand topic at another, alight visitor interest in fire at another, etc.

- Commission large public art pieces on the four elements and place one at each Resource Visitor Center.
- Explore each of the four elements at each site but from different perspectives. For example, Belleplaine could review the upland higher pines species, Bass River SF could focus on the pygmy pine species, Estell Manor could explore the wetland conifer species and Forsythe could present the coastal species and related issues. Water: fresh, brackish, surface and aquifer. Sand: glaciers, ocean action, as a habitat, used in glass. Fire: film of wild fires, speed-action film of subsequent reforestation, what holds a fire within certain boundaries. Rivers, wetlands, etc.
- Use the four elements as the backdrop for exploring just a few unusual, interesting plant and animal species at each site. How do these and other features result in the habitats necessary for these species? How can they become unbalanced?
- The guidelines also relate to solitude, emotion and other factors. Each site might specifically think about how to provide people an opportunity for solitude or for a respite from the enclosure of the pines. Each site might explore some issue that brings a modern day relevance to the resources of the Pinelands. Each site might focus on the life of an interesting person who lived in the Pinelands.

Belleplaine State Forest

Belleplaine State Forest is an exceptional property with dense stands of pine and oak forest and a variety of recreation resources, including Lake Nummy. It is, however, in need of funding to bring its interpretive facilities up to date. The staff provides very good interpretation to the public, but they are working with dated equipment and materials. Byway funding should be sought to assist with these upgrades.

The State Forest offers a great mixture of established sites for learning, camping and various activities combined with hiking trails and auto drives that go through dense Pineland forests and wetlands. A few existing interpretive wayside signs are in place. While the man-made lake is present, river or coastal habitats are not present. Therefore, Belleplaine State Forest should be at least one location along the byway that focuses on the upland Pinelands ecosystems and the ways that the interpretive elements interact in this setting.

Opportunities

- Seek byway funding for upgrades to the interpretive center near Lake Nummy. Ideally, a new structure should be built, but in the short run, new materials and new audio/visual materials could be developed.
- Consider expanding the current welcome center/information center at the entrance off Route 550. The site would offer a very good overview for the State Forest and for the region. The area appears to be large enough to sustain a building expansion.
- Identify one to three unusual local animal or plant species that represent life that has adapted to the pine/oak forest environments. Focus in-depth interpretation on these species.
- For all Centers: The Visitor Center should be linked to the other facilities along the byway and to the Village Centers via clear maps, brochures and programming (e.g.,

each site should know about lectures and activities that are occurring at other sites along the byway.)

- For all Centers: At a minimum, a 36" x 48" map panel and/or a computerized kiosk should be installed at the current welcome center with software that focuses on the byway and helps to make people aware of its resources and programs.

Estell Manor, Atlantic County Park System

Estell Manor has completed a master plan and will be moving ahead with projects to upgrade trails, interpretation, make repairs to structures and improve overall visitor services. Estell Manor offers the best resource site along the byway to explore the issue of rivers and wetlands in the Pinelands. The nearby Great Egg Harbor River and various canoe launches make for a great setting to talk about how the elements of the Pinelands come together in this site. The existing boardwalk through a wetland is a great example of an accessible, restful type of facility for exploring a portion of the Pinelands.

In addition, no other Resource-Based site explores the nature of sand and the interaction of sand and water and plant life. This might translate into a very engaging, fun interpretive/play ground project. Of the four Resource-Based sites, Estell Manor is most closely engaged with elementary education programs. Large sand dunes, an area that mixes sand and water, sand castle building, columns of sand that fill with and emit water – all of these might be both educational and sufficiently fun and interesting to draw families with children.

Opportunities

- As a part of the master plan project development process, integrate planned improvements with the overall byway plan.
- Consider the development of a larger interpretive installation that focuses on the river and wetland systems of the byway region. Consider a scale model of the river and wetlands systems along the route with information that indicates the designated trails, canoe put-ins, and other recreational resources.
- Identify one to three unusual local animal or plant species that represent life that has adapted to the river and wetlands environments. Focus in-depth interpretation on these species.
- For all Centers: The Visitor Center should be linked to the other facilities along the byway and to the Village Centers via clear maps, brochures and programming (e.g., each site should know about lectures and activities that are occurring at other sites along the byway.)
- For all Centers: At the minimum, a 36" x 48" map panel and/or a computerized kiosk should be installed at the current welcome center with software that focuses on the byway and helps to make people aware of its resources and programs.

Bass River State Forest

This state forest needs to be seen as complementary and different from the environmental messages at Batsto. While Batsto provides the overview; Bass River needs to provide more

detail. Expanded interpretation is recommended both in the central parking and service area and also along some of the trails.

Opportunities

- The pygmy pine forests in the West Pine Plains Natural Area and the related story of fire are integral and unique to this site. These should be the points of focus for this visitor center. Invest in more extensive interpretation of these topics. Give visitors a sense of what it feels like to be in the pygmy pine area after a fire. Interpret the many ways in which fire revitalizes these forests and ecosystems.
- Choose a couple of plant and animal species and concentrate interpretation on these representative species.
- For all Centers: The Visitor Center should be linked to the other facilities along the byway and to the Village Centers via clear maps, brochures and programming (e.g., each site should know about lectures and activities that are occurring at other sites along the byway.)
- For all Centers: At the minimum, a 36" x 48" map panel and/or a computerized kiosk should be installed at the current welcome center with software that focuses on the byway and helps to make people aware of its resources and programs.

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

This site offers the most dramatic views and open landscape along the byway. Its population of birds is impressive and the ocean breezes are refreshing. The ability to drive out through the ponds and see so many birds so closely is unusual and appealing to most travelers. Even travelers who do not stop and linger will still enjoy driving the nature tour.

This site has existing interpretive panels at the entrance and a very small visitor center. There is adequate room for more panel installations. The focus of the site and its interpretation is birds, specifically coastal birds.

Consider seeking funds to install additional panels that discuss the byway and the interaction between the fresh water rivers and aquifer system and the coastal habitats seen at the Refuge.

Opportunities

- Of the basic elements for this byway – water, sand, fire, pines and unusual species that thrive on these elements – the most relevant for this site are water, sand and bird life. Seek ways to integrate these messages into new interpretation and to offer information that ties this site to the inland portions of the byway.
- While a variety of interesting bird species are interpreted in the existing panels, consider choosing one or two that have some type of connection with the inland ecosystems as well as the coastal ecosystem. Or look for connections between inland and coast. Find a way to not only celebrate the coastal environment, but make a meaningful connection to the inland areas that comprise the majority of the byway.
- For all Centers: The Visitor Center should be linked to the other facilities along the byway and to the Village Centers via clear maps, brochures and programming. Each site should know about lectures and activities that are occurring at other sites along the

byway.)

- For all Centers: At the minimum, a 36" x 48" map panel and/or a computerized kiosk should be installed at the current welcome center with software that focuses on the byway and helps to make people aware of its resources and programs.

“Center” Visitor Facilities

These facilities are likely to vary from center to center depending on the resources and interest of the communities. The major interpretive installations will be at the Main Center and the Resource-based sites. The two current exceptions to that statement, however, are Tuckerton Seaport and the Museum of Woodbine Heritage. Both are professionally designed facilities and stand on their own as destinations.

The other center facilities might be tourism offices, museums, a park, or a trailhead. The purpose of this component of the strategy is to make the information and experience at this site sufficiently necessary and/or compelling to draw visitors to stop in villages and town centers.

Using a Distinctive Byway Information Kiosk in all Villages and Town Centers

Please note, as discussed in the previous section on tourism, one option is to install a series of information/orientation kiosks in all centers along the byway (the Kentucky byways were mentioned as an example of pursuing this approach). This idea would apply to all centers and perhaps to all resource-based sites as well. If well-designed and offering interesting information at each site, they could be one small incentive to encourage visitors to find each of the kiosks.

Making Centers More Visitor Friendly

There is also a need for the byway centers to create physical environments that welcome and serve visitors. Common issues that should be addressed include the following:

- Difficult to find public bathrooms or no public bathroom exists
- Visitor/tourism parking is either not available or not well-marked
- Poor directional signage to find existing points of interest
- Inadequate parking at pocket parks
- No historic markers or interpretive signage along walking tours
- No facility to orient the visitor or provide maps and brochures of the region
- No sidewalks or pathways available for moving around the village
- No parking provided at historic cemeteries. Unclear parking provisions near historic churches or in historic neighborhoods.
- This is clearly a market issue, but in some villages it is difficult to find a cup of coffee, a soda or a meal. Travelers move on through areas like that.

Using the Experience and Interpretive Guidelines

Do the guidelines make sense for the centers?

- Elements: Water, sand, fire, pines and species...does it make sense to bring these concepts into the centers? Are there interesting ways to link these ideas to the broader byway? Each center should think about projects such as themed playgrounds; park

interpretive installations; interpretive panels along waterways or special environmental areas; murals on the sides of barns and commercial buildings; public art; events and festivals that celebrate these issues; interpreting people and lifestyles that relate to the Pinelands, the byway and the elements; and creating spaces to install element-oriented interpretive panels. Local nurseries might feature displays of native plants that are appropriate for purchase and planting at home. School children might create projects that examine these topics with the result being displays, photographs or other public projects.

- **Subtleness**: An important way that centers can assist in helping people to understand the subtle differences and qualities of the Pinelands is by acting as base camps and interpreters for the surrounding landscape. Each center should look 360 degrees around it and think about how visitors might the community, encounter information that would send them on an excursion and then draw them back to spend time. A part of this process is giving the visitor itineraries that loop back to the center and providing information that clarifies what the visitor should do and look for during the loop tour.
- **Emotion**: Dramatic, compelling stories of people and the Pines are the best way to trigger emotions in the centers.
- **Quiet**: There might be a tendency among some readers to assume that all visitors seeking peace and quiet will find it most readily out among the isolated forests of the region. These settings may not provide peace and quiet for many people unaccustomed to nature. A nice park bench with some shade and an iced tea looking out over a marsh or harbor may be the ideal break for many visitors. Centers can provide this. Seek out where your community can provide this service for visitors.
- **Relevance**: Again, the “civilized” setting of the centers would be an ideal place to provide interpretation on the application of some aspect of the surrounding natural Pinelands world. Tuckerton Seaport does this.
- **Respite**: A cool, air-conditioned restaurant or café can provide respite. A genealogical section in a local library can too. A local swimming pool or fountains that invite children to play among the spouts is a respite for both children and parents. Look at your community and think about how it can provide respite.
- **Accessibility**: Local citizens and businesses should consider how well their communities welcome and accommodate people with movement, vision, hearing or other challenges. In a related way, does your community welcome people who may not speak English well?
- **Human to Natural Heritage**: Centers are places of human settlement and human history. The centers are the natural places where the interactions between the Pinelands natural world and people should be explored. Tuckerton Seaport and the Museum of Woodbine Heritage are perfect examples of this concept.
- **Embrace Unrelated Topics**: The centers are natural places for information to be provided on all the fun activities within a 15 minute drive of the center. All activities should be included, not just those that are related to the environmental themes.

Opportunities in the Various Centers

The following are more specific ideas to consider in specific centers.

Port Elizabeth

- This center needs a place for people to go, get oriented, get information and then venture forth. Port Elizabeth is a gateway community for the byway, but it currently offers no services for the visitor. A location should be found for, at the minimum, an outdoor information/orientation kiosk.
- Visitors will ask “Where is the port?” Answer this question with interpretation.
- The presence of the Maurice National Wild and Scenic River begs for a walking trail and interpretation.
- Install signage to direct visitors to parking and some basic information. The center is hard to read relative to parking. Travelers move through the center quickly and then the opportunity is lost.
- Mauricetown offers a nice excursion with good views of the Maurice River marshlands.

Dennisville

- The existing Dennis Township Museum and History Center is a good spot to provide information about the byway.
- Use Dennisville as the starting point for excursions to the Eldora Nature Preserve and to Jakes Landing.

Woodbine

- The Museum of Woodbine Heritage is a well-done facility that offers good information. Integrating byway information into the Museum’s overall services will be relatively easy.
- Consider an effort to make Woodbine the starting point for exploring the Great Cedar Swamp Refuge.

Tuckahoe/Corbin City

- The South Jersey Railroad Museum and Tuckahoe Railroad station is a natural spot for a designated visitor information center.
- Use Tuckahoe as the starting point for a loop tour along Aetna Drive to Head of River Church, then to Marshallville and then back to Tuckahoe.

Mays Landing

- Mays Landing has one of the byway’s more well-preserved historic districts, but the center is generally not well signed or designed for visitors. Parking is hard to find – especially at the park near the water. There is no clear place to find information about the center. Local businesses are scattered along the route and therefore a good brochure indicating business locations would be very helpful.
- The center should consider where and how byway information can be disseminated.
- Mays Landing is a natural starting point for an exploration of Belcoville, the Atlantic County Parks system and nearby wildlife management areas.

Elwood

- Elwood is a quick stop along the byway and yet it is one the main gateways onto the byway from the Atlantic City Expressway.
- Consider providing visitor information at the town hall.

Port Republic

- The center should identify a good location for visitor information, whether it be staffed or a self-service kiosk.
- This scenic center is easy to pass by while driving on the byway. Provide better signage to points of interest.

Smithville

- Work with historic Smithville to identify a location within the district where byway information can be distributed.
- Smithville is a good location to start a loop tour through the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

New Gretna

- The center should identify a good location for information provision. Perhaps at the town hall.
- New Gretna is a good starting point for an excursion to the Renault Winery and to Bass River State Forest.

Tuckerton/Tuckerton Seaport

- This is the most well-established center visitor facility along the byway.
- Plans will be needed to integrate byway-specific information into the Seaport and Jacques Cousteau installation.

Experience Sites – Places to quietly slip into the wild

This plan also believes that it is important to provide a few spots where the unadventurous can still find a relatively undeveloped trail or sand road and can safely move back into the Pines to experience the quiet and separation of these wild places. Experience Sites will be signed and will provide primitive parking facilities, but little or no other signage or interpretation will be installed. These sites can be indicated on maps and in brochures and the expectations of visitors appropriately shaped.

The following are potential general locations for these Experience Sites. Public land managers will need to examine this concept and consider its appropriateness for each property.

Northern Loop

- Port Republic WMA
- Bass River State Forest
- Some location along the Mullica River – perhaps near the planned New Gretna visitor area near the Parkway; perhaps at Batsto

Central Segment

- Makepeace Lake WMA
- Great Egg Harbor River
- Less used portions of Estell Manor County Park

Southern Loop

- Belleplain State Forest
- Jakes Landing
- Peaslee WMA
- Cape May National Wildlife Refuge

- Tuckahoe WMA

Local Heritage Sites – Places to Connect to the Byway’s Human Heritage

Much of the discussion in this section is on the environment and this is fitting given the chosen themes for the byway. But, one of those themes relates to human interaction with the Pinelands environment. There are fascinating stories regarding African-American villages, pirates, the Revolutionary War, Native Americans, bog iron, glass-making, farming, Jewish settlers, fishing, ship captains, Quakers, bootleggers, and pineys in general. Some of these stories are told; others are not.

Visitors to the byway should find a variety of ways to learn about these human heritage stories.

Consider identifying a minimum of three local heritage sites in each segment of the byway and focusing investment at those sites. Ensure sufficient parking and staffing. Consider meshing this concept with the village strategies discussed above. Generally, these stories will not merit extensive interpretive centers, but rather they are the important bits and pieces of the background that gives the region its character.

Use Technology to Tell these Stories

At many heritage sites, there will be insufficient visitation to merit elaborate interpretive installations. Indeed, in many of these areas, visitors will be encouraged to walk or drive to several small sites. Use cell phone audio guide programs, low power radio, audio CD’s and occasional video presentations to tell these stories. Invest in approaches that move people around the byway and bring them to the villages.

Potential Local Heritage Sites

Identify the following areas on byway maps as Local Heritage Sites. Develop information to support their stories and develop itineraries to encourage people to explore each byway segment.

Northern Loop

- Batsto – This is clearly the leading human heritage site along the byway and provides several models for how to interpret the past, including landscape management and audio tour technologies.
- Port Republic Village – Develop walking tours and driving loop tours that extend out from the village to sites like the Civil War cemetery.
- Smithville – Historic Smithville is not fully “historic” but it does offer an experience that is fun and has authentic historic elements.
- Tuckerton Village – Expand the information and walking tours of the village.

Central Segment

- Weymouth Church – Develop an audio tour for the property and cemetery with an emphasis on the lives of interesting people buried in the cemetery.

- Weymouth Furnace – Complete work on the furnace remains and install new interpretive panels at the site.
- Estell Manor – Complete restoration of the Manor house. Create audio tour program.
- Belcoville – Complete site improvements to and around the site. Complete stabilization efforts at the factory and related buildings sites. Create an audio product on Belcoville to bring this bit of history to life.

Southern Loop

- Head of the River Church – Develop audio tour program for this general area, including the history of the church and its members
- Museum of Woodbine Heritage – Continue to support this facility. Find ways to expand the museum’s offering to link with the byway.
- Dennisville – Create an audio tour program for walking around the village.
- Tuckahoe Village – Work with the railroad to invest more heavily in the station and nearby area. Provide materials to encourage more village browsing from the train station.

Scenic Views – Appreciating the Byway’s Natural and Historic Vistas

As visitors drive the byway route, there are opportunities to experience the byway’s natural beauty and unique natural features without even exiting the car. An inventory of scenic vistas from the byway was completed as part of Task 3 and the vistas are identified on the map below.

Natural Vistas along the Byway

The following scenic natural vistas were identified during the intrinsic qualities inventory as part of Task 3. These vistas are listed on the map below.

Map ID	Description	Location	Municipality
A	Garden State Parkway Bridge over Mullica River	Garden State Parkway	Port Republic / Bass River
B	Nacote Creek Bridge	N. New York Road (Route 9)	Galloway / Port Republic
C	Bridge and scenic cedar stand	Stage Road (Route 654)	Bass River
D	Wading River Bridge	Pleasant Mill Road (Routes 542 and 653)	Washington / Bass River
E	Scenic view of Mullica River	Pleasant Mills-Weekstown Road (Route 643)	Mullica
F	Scenic view of Mullica River	Pleasant Mill Road (Route 542)	Washington
G	Lake Nescochaug	Route 543 and 643	Mullica
H	Blueberry fields	Nesco Road (Route 542)	Mullica
I	Hammonton Creek crossing	Columbia Road (Route 658)	Mullica

Map ID	Description	Location	Municipality
J	Scenic views of Tuckahoe River	Aetna Drive	Corbin City
K	East Creek crossing	Delsea Dr. (Route 47)	Dennis
L	Ludlam's Pond	Delsea Dr. (Route 47)	Dennis
M	Rte. 50 bridge over Tuckahoe River	Route 50	Upper / Corbin City

Map 1 : Scenic Natural Vistas along the Byway



Opportunities

- Identify potential locations where people can climb up and see the Pinelands from a viewing platform.
- Locate road-side pull-offs where people can enjoy scenic views of the Mullica River.
- Explore possibility of providing parking near bridges.

Appreciation of local architecture and historic centers

Many of the byway's villages and towns provide a glimpse into the region's past through their historic architecture and layout. Mays Landing and Tuckerton are two examples where a concentration of historic buildings and scenic views provide an opportunity to get a sense of the byway's heritage.

Opportunities

- Provide areas for people to park conveniently and stroll through the historic areas.
- Provide self-guided walking or driving trail brochures focusing on the historic resources in these areas.
- Link historic architecture to themes about the history of the Pinelands

Scenic experiences just off the byway

In addition to the views from the byway route itself, there are opportunities to access natural vistas by taking minor detours off the route.

- Jakes Landing, coastal views
- Bridge at Maurice Town, views of the marshes
- Tuckahoe WMA Auto-Nature Drive
- Great Bay Boulevard

Interpretive Materials and Collateral

Tourism Information and Fulfillment

- Designate one existing organization to assume the job of the official tourism promotion and information fulfillment group for the byway. Provide one phone number, have knowledgeable staff available to answer questions, send out mail packages promptly and coordinate web site management.

Byway Map and Brochure

- Based on information from this project, develop a visitor-ready byway map and brochure. Distribute all along the byway and regionally.

Themed Brochures

- Develop a series of themed brochures that will offer itineraries and background information on specialized topics including the following:
 - 1-2 hour excursions from each village that will encompass activities near each village
 - Heritage-themed brochures and itineraries including:
 - *The Settlements of the Pine Barrens*
 - *Working the Cycle in the Pinelands*
 - *Interesting Tidbits of the Pineland*
 - *The Pinelands: An Inland Extension of the Sea – leaving no tracks for the authorities, piracy, living off the region's natural bounty, and boat building in the region*
 - Scenic tours

- Recreation-specific itineraries for canoeing and kayaking, fishing, hiking, birding and other activities

Byway Website

As noted above, it will be crucial to have a byway website that consistently places high in the search engine rankings so that it is one of the first sites that visitors see. While important in their own right, websites about the Pinelands National Reserve, the Pinelands Commission or other “public agency mission-oriented” sites should fall behind a visitor-oriented website for the byway and the region.

Audio Tours and Site Audio Interpretation

As noted above, seeking funding to develop a broad array of audio products that can be accessed via cell phone, CD’s, websites, iTunes podcasts and through hand-held audio tour devices. Work with local colleges and history departments to develop these products.

5. Recreation and Tourism

Recreational opportunities are well established within the Southern Pinelands as thousands of visitors each year look to the area's natural resources to provide the backdrop and infrastructure needed for active outdoor experiences including hiking, paddling, fishing, biking, hiking, and observing. This plan makes recommendations on how the growing recreation industry can provide opportunities for enhanced tourism in the corridor, helping to create a stronger regional identity and expand the local economy. The recommendations generally relate to four elements: access, information, services and a supportive environment.

Access: Create access to the resources needed through improved infrastructure including improved and additional boat launches, bike lanes, trails, boardwalks, viewing platforms, pedestrian bridges, parking and other facilities.

Information: Improve the amount and accessibility of information available on recreational opportunities and related services along the corridor through strategies that include enhanced and linked web sites, signage, and integrated marketing materials and events.

Services: Support the development and sustainability of businesses that provide goods and services for recreation tourists including guides, food, lodging, equipment, repair services and others.

Supportive Environment: Create an environment that supports tourists throughout the corridor including at and along the recreational sites, along roadways and within centers.

Access

Waterways along and accessible by or near the byway are the principle natural resources that support recreational activities along the byway corridor. While their protection and preservation is vitally important, the Pinelands Commission also seeks to celebrate these resources, in part by making them more visually and physically accessible as recommended by the CMP .

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Pinelands Commission has drafted an application for a Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Water Resources Access Facilities Plan that will create a comprehensive plan for resource access to wildlife and natural systems along the byway. The access plan will identify and prioritize the location and type of facilities considered important for improving access, identify interpretation opportunities, identify review and approval requirements, and establish construction standards and costs.

The following are some locations this report recommends be considered for improvements to or additions of boat, canoe or kayak launches:

- Port Elizabeth: Evaluate desire for launch on Manumuskin Creek
- South River where a new trail and pedestrian bridge will link the trail system at Estell Manor Park to the WMA.
- Green Bank: Consider creating a parking/launch area on the right side of the river opposite Green Bank (i.e., on State WMA land near south end of Green Bank bridge)

- Mullica River: Consider value of a landing near Chestnut Neck site.
- East of Smithville, at the end of Oyster Creek Road (off Moss Mill Road) and Moss Creek Road (further north).
- Clark’s Landing (north of Port Republic WMA): Consider improving the parking/launch area
- Tuckahoe River: Evaluate the need for improvements upstream from Route 50 bridge (outside Tuckahoe WMA, possibly in state forest) – e.g., at end of dirt road past Etna Furnace, and/or at Route 49 bridge

The following are some locations this plan recommends be considered for new or improved trails to water resources:

- Makepeace Lake
- Mullica River: open up and improve the road that starts near the Chestnut Neck monument and leads out to an old home site with expansive views of the marshes for natural and historic interpretation and scenic views
- Maurice River near Port Elizabeth
- Boardwalks: need to identify opportunities in key wetlands and coastal areas:
- Great Cedar Swamp: Consider improvements to access points, signage, parking and trails
- NWR and WMA sites as noted in “Intrinsic Qualities Assessment” [How can the sites be adapted to make it easier for people to know where to stop, park and walk back into the upland areas?]

Visual access is equally important as views of compelling landscapes can be the trigger to lead visitors out of the cars and into an experience. Visual access to the area’s resources should first of all, be protected with appropriate land use policies, ordinances, and development and performance standards. Each municipality should identify existing vistas and viewsheds and develop strategies for their preservation. Visual access can also be improved through actual changes in the landscape such as thinning vegetation, pull offs, orientation of viewing areas, and removal of built obstacles. Preservation and improvements should be considered for the vistas identified earlier in this report, and opportunities for new viewsheds, glimpses, or other degrees of visual access should be sought.

Information

Making information easily available to visitors at all points of their experience, from research and planning to arrival and emersion will be a critical component for increasing recreational tourism. Individual and linked web sites have the capacity to provide the most information to visitors prior to their arrival. They also have the opportunity to “sell” the location and the experience, to create a desire in the researcher. Therefore sites should appeal to the emotions of potential visitors, through text and pictures that bring the region and the experience alive.

Develop a Comprehensive Web Site

Consider creating a recreational tourism website for the byway that is supported by the various land owners and managers, and facility and service providers that serve or are impacted by the industry. The site could provide information, offer downloadable maps and audio tours, list available service and retail opportunities, and market the recreational opportunities on site or through linked sites.

Comprehensively web sites will need to clarify experiences and expectations by answering basic questions for any recreational traveler:

- Where can I enjoy my recreational activity?
- What is the condition of the infrastructure if any?
- What services are readily (or otherwise) available to support my experience?
- Where can I stay? Eat?
- What weather can I expect?

Some questions to answer for specific users include:

- Fishing –what can I fish for, are guides available, what local laws apply, how do I secure a license,
- Bicycling – what are the travel options for road and trail riders, what groups are available to rides with and when, are family experiences available, is permission required for any recommended off road routes?
- Hiking –what type of trails exist (terrain, scenery, length, conditions), what can I expect to see/experience (flora, fauna, landscapes, cultural resources)? Do dangers or sensitive environments exist along the trail?
- Canoeing and Kayaking – where are launch facilities and what is their condition, parking accommodations, etc, what class of water exists on each waterway, what hazards are present, , are guides available, is instruction/training available, are family experiences available?
- Bird and Wildlife Observing – what can I expect to see and when can I see it, are guides available?

Provide On-going Information to Travelers

Once visitors have decided to visit the byway, they will need continued access to information on site including along the roadways, within town and village centers where most services are found and at the sites where they will enjoy their activities. Primarily, this information will come from signs directing visitors to parks, rivers, trails, centers and other resources. It may also come from maps, brochures, and other marketing materials available at visitor centers and other contact facilities including retailers and service providers. Audio clips, tours or programs are other resources for locally accessible information.

Maximize Existing Resources for Birdwatchers

Bird watching, one of the strongest recreational tourism activities along the byway, has abundant experience sites, three centers that provide visitor services and interpretation (Eldora Nature Preserve, Forsythe NWR and NJ Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory a few miles south of Dennisville), and a network of agencies whose missions involves the protection and promotion of birds and their habitats including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the New Jersey Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy. Clearly, birdwatchers have access to exceptional information and experiences. Partnering and coordination among local sites should continue to be a priority for creating and enhancing birding experiences and monitoring the carrying capacity of the various sites.

Develop Visitor Programming for the Northern Loop

Currently, while Bastso, the Batona Trail and Bass River State Forest are all part of the larger Wharton State Forest and/or state forest system, most visitors today do not see a particular relationship between these three resources. This segment of the byway -- the Northern Loop -- provides a link between Bass River SF at one end and Batsto at the other end. The Batona Trail runs between the two. This segment, including New Gretna and Tuckerton, offers a good opportunity to develop visitor programming that provides a full one to two days of activities, learning, dining and lodging. This same approach can be applied to the Southern Loop.

From a byway tourism perspective, visitors who visit one site should be encouraged to visit the other. Likewise, visitors should be encouraged to park at one and hike the Batona to the other. Visitors should spend 2-3 hours at Batsto and then know that they will need another 1-2 hours at Bass River. Together, these offer a full day of activities. Interpretation at one should complement the interpretation at the other; each facility should whet the appetite for the experiences at the other property. Places to stop along the way should be highlighted: Green Bank State Forest, the villages themselves, any access points to the Mullica River, and historic structures. Lodging properties and campgrounds should be supported by offering programs at each facility on the same weekend so that there is clearly a reason to stay overnight in order to enjoy each program.

The portion of the byway from Batsto to Bass River State Forest provides a good example of resources that can be woven together into more substantial experience for the unfamiliar visitor.

Services

Recreational Tourism can not be expected to flourish if the basic services the users need to enjoy their activities are not provided within reasonable proximity to the recreational sites. Likewise, businesses that support recreational tourism cannot exist without a critical mass of users. For some service providers like restaurants and lodges, their services are not dependent on one user group (i.e., bicyclists or paddlers), however other businesses like bike and kayak shops rely solely on these customers. It is these latter businesses that most directly support recreational tourism and are most directly impacted by them, making them vulnerable to changes in numbers and habits of these users.

In order to encourage and increase recreational tourism the following strategies should be considered to assist or support tourism dependent businesses.

Site Signs –On premise business signs are a primary marketing tool for many small businesses. Consideration should be given to incorporating a standard identifiable logo on signs of businesses that serve the recreational tourist. This logo should also be used on the website and other printed marketing material to create a consistent image that consumers will identify with the area and experience. Standards of service should be required for use of the logo.

Tourist Oriented Destination Signs – TODS, as presented in the Signage Plan (Task 13), provide basic information to travelers and may be used to provide direction and distance to private establishments. These signs present an opportunity to provide a higher level of support to businesses servicing recreational tourism.

Marketing Assistance – Marketing the byway will take many forms, some of which may be appropriate for marketing the services along the byway as well. While users do not want to be bombarded with advertisements at every turn, they do appreciate knowing what services are available and how to access them. When appropriate, listing or otherwise recognizing businesses or groups that can enhance the tourists experience will benefit both the tourist and the service provider.

Supportive Environment

Recreational tourists, like other tourist, generally spend time away from their primary activity during the course of their stay in an area. Whether they enjoy that time or not is, in part, dependent on the environment they encounter. A pleasant environment can add to an enjoyable recreational experience and improve the probability of a return visit. A hostile environment or an environment that fails to consider, serve or welcome visitors however, may dilute an otherwise pleasant experience and cause a user to search for other destinations. This doesn't mean communities need to go out of their way to cater to people who are just visiting. Tourists enjoy the same amenities that residents do. Parks for relaxing or playing, safe and accessible crosswalks, bicycle racks, convenient parking and public convenience stations help to create an environment that supports both residents and tourists.

Appendix:

Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Businesses and Organizations that Serve Visitors

Tourism Businesses: Recreation Services and Visitor Accommodations

Business Name	Location
Adams Canoe Rental	Atsion
Al & Sam's Canoe and Boat Rentals	Newfield
Allen's Clam Bar	Tuckerton
Atlantic Blueberry Company	Hammonton
Atlantic City North Family Campground	Tuckerton
Bakers Acres	Little Egg Harbor
Bel Haven Canoes, Kayaks & Tubes	Green Bank
Blueberry Hill RV Park	Port Republic
Cape May Shore Lines	
Chips Folly Campground	New Gretna
Country Oaks Campground	Dorothy
Forest Edge Farm, LLC	Little Egg Harbor
Indian Branch Park Campground	Hammonton
J.D. Thompson Inn Bed & Breakfast	Tuckerton
Jacques Cousteau Coastal Education Center	Tuckerton
Lower Bank Tavern	Egg Harbor City
Mick's Canoe Rental	Chatsworth
Mullica River Boat Basin	Egg Harbor
New Jersey Kayak	Barnegat
Palace Outfitter	Mays Landing
Pilgrim Lakes Campground	New Gretna
Pine Barrens Canoe and Kayak Rental	Chatsworth
Ramada Inn of Hammonton	Hammonton
Renault Winery Resort	Egg Harbor City
River Beach Camp II	Mays Landing
The Paddle Shack	Mays Landing
Timberline Lake Camping Resort	New Gretna
Wading Pines Camping Resort	Chatsworth
Winding River Campground	Mays Landing
Ye Olde Mill Street Pub	Mays Landing

Tourism Resources: Visitor Information and Business Promotion

Organization Name	Location
Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority	Atlantic City
Atlantic County Chamber of Commerce	
Atlantic County Department of Public Works, Div. of Parks and Recreation	Mays Landing
Atlantic County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs	Mays Landing
Burlington County Chamber of Commerce	Mount Laurel
Burlington County Economic Development & Regional Planning	Mount Holly
Cape May County Chamber of Commerce	Cape May CH
Cape May County Department of Tourism	Cape May CH
Cape May County Office of Economic Resources & Capital Planning	Cape May CH
Cape May County Public Information	
Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May	Cape May
Cumberland County Economic Development Board	Bridgeton
Cumberland County Recreation & Tourism	Bridgeton
Dennis Township Chamber of Commerce	Ocean View
Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce	Atlantic City
Greater Atlantic City Region Tourism Council	Atlantic City
Greater Hammonton Chamber of Commerce	Hammonton
Greater Woodbine Chamber of Commerce	Woodbine
Jersey Off Road Biking Association JORBA	
Jersey Shore Sea Kayak Association	
Main Street Hammonton	Hammonton
Main Street Merchants Association	Mays Landing
New Jersey Chamber of Commerce	Trenton
NJ Dept. of State Division of Travel & Tourism	Trenton
NJ DOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs	Trenton
Ocean County Public Affairs and Tourism	Toms River
Outdoor Club of South Jersey	
PineyPower.Com	Barneгат
Shore Cycle Club	
South Jersey Bayshore Coalition	Leesburg
South Jersey Economic Development District	Millville
South Jersey Economic Development District	Millville
South Jersey Tourism Corporation	Camden
South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization	Vineland
Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce	Voorhees