PRESERVING NEW YORK STATE SCENIC ROADS

A Guide to Designation

New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation

MARIO M. CUOMO, Governor
THOMAS C. JORLING, Commissioner
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This publication has been prepared for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, School of Landscape Architecture at Syracuse. Deborah Shanahan, principal writer and researcher and Dr. Richard Smardon are due a special note of gratitude.

The following people have contributed photographic materials: Michael K. Barylski, John Goerg, Linda Kashdan-Schroon and Deborah Shanahan.
## Table of Contents

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 1

- Purpose and Goals of the Scenic Roads Program ......................................................... 1
- Benefits and Limitations of the Scenic Roads Program ...................................... 1
- The Manual's Purpose ................................................................................................. 1

**Nominating and Designating Scenic Roads: an Overview** ........................................ 2

- Nomination .................................................................................................................. 2
- Designation ................................................................................................................ 2

**The Nomination Process** .............................................................................................. 3

- Functions of the Nominating Group ........................................................................... 3
- Selecting the Candidate Roads .................................................................................. 3
- Explanation of the Local Landscape Context .............................................................. 3
- The Narrative Description ........................................................................................... 3
- Understanding the Road Survey ................................................................................. 4
- Performing the Road Survey ....................................................................................... 5
- Nominating the Roads ................................................................................................. 6

**Scenic Road Management and Protection** ................................................................... 8

- Local Responsibility .................................................................................................. 8
- Using other State and Local Acts and Programs ...................................................... 8
- Other Uses of the Inventory ....................................................................................... 8

**Scenic Road Re-evaluation** .......................................................................................... 9

**APPENDICES** .............................................................................................................. 11

A A Meeting to Kick-Off a Scenic Roads Project ............................................................ 13
B Sample Narrative ........................................................................................................ 14
C Scenic Roads Evaluation Form .................................................................................... 15
D Glossary ........................................................................................................................ 19
E Sample Inventory Map ................................................................................................ 23
F Sample Resolution of Support .................................................................................... 24
G Bibliography of Road Management and Protection of Information ....................... 25
Introduction

Purpose and Goals of the Scenic Roads Program

When “America’s Most Scenic Highway Award: 1966 to 1967” went to a twenty-three mile stretch of Highway 87 in New York, it practically guaranteed the preservation of the spectacular sights along that road. Other beautiful roads, rich in historic and cultural resources, weave through the state; but their lack of recognition makes them vulnerable to development pressures. In order to protect them, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) created the Scenic Roads Program as authorized by Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The goals of the program are to:

- Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and man-made scenic beauty of New York state;
- Promote a greater awareness and appreciation of the state’s scenic, ecological, cultural and historical attributes; and
- Provide economic benefits by stimulating tourism.

Benefits and Limitations of the Scenic Roads Program

A designated scenic road can focus proposed activities of state, local, or private parties toward shared objectives, encouraging mutual benefits. Participation in the Scenic Roads Program provides municipalities with technical assistance in the assessment of scenic resources and preservation techniques. The program does not add any restrictions to land use in or beyond the highway corridor. Preservation of scenic quality depends upon the commitment of local governments and private property owners.

The activities of other state agencies — such as the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Commerce, or the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation — may have a positive or negative effect on the scenic quality of designated highway corridors. DEC will encourage them to consider the character of any scenic road that their projects might affect.

Because DOT has the responsibility for management of all state highway rights-of-way, it must approve all proposed guidelines for design and maintenance procedures along scenic roads. It will apply those procedures within the limits of its budget. DEC will also provide DEC with reports and plans on major projects in order to get its comments early in the design process.

The Manual’s Purpose

What makes a road scenic? Is it a view of a city skyline or of placid lakes reflecting rising hills? Is it a glimpse of quiet places evoking memories? Is it its roadway itself? How does a town choose its best scenic roads; how does it preserve them?

This manual contains a visual assessment system that utilizes identifiable landscape components. Essentially, the system evaluates all candidate roads uniformly, giving individuals and local officials an impartial method of comparing the scenic quality of each before deciding which ones to nominate. The manual also provides an example of the required narrative description, and guidance for writing one. Finally, it explains how to survey a road corridor using the enclosed evaluation form, which has principles of aesthetic quality perception built into it.
Nominating and Designating Scenic Roads: an Overview

Nomination

The responsibility for nominating scenic roads rests primarily on interested local citizens and their officials. They should publicize the program before deciding whether or not their village, town, county, or region will participate in it. These individuals may become the official “nominating group” at the first meeting, or they may pass that function on to others.

Step One: Forming a Nominating Group

The Nominating Group, which will coordinate the collection of the necessary data, can be any individual, group, or organization representing a local government with an interest in designating scenic roads. Its size is optional, but three members usually suffice.

Step Two: Preliminary Tour of Roads

The nominating group will tour the roads within its area of interest and compile a list of scenic road candidates.

Step Three: The Narrative Description

Following the tour, the group will prepare a narrative description of the pre-eminent cultural, historic, and natural features of the local landscape.

Step Four: Road Evaluation

The nominating group will solicit volunteers to survey the candidate roads using the system in this manual.

Step Five: The Nomination File

After completing the survey, the nominating group will compile the Nomination File consisting of: a list of nominated roads together with the survey information and a resolution of support. It will send the file to the DEC.

Designation

DEC’s Criteria

DEC will review the nomination file, and assess the road corridor(s) using the following three criteria:

First Criterion: Road Condition — The road, immediate right-of-way, and views from it, should exhibit “exceptional compositional merit”. DEC will utilize the data collected in Step Four of the nomination process to determine the degree to which each candidate road satisfies this criterion.

Second Criterion: Regional Attributes — The road should provide travellers with a substantial opportunity to view and appreciate the distinctive cultural, historic, and landform features of the region which it traverses. DEC will utilize the information in the narrative description to determine the degree to which each candidate road satisfies this criterion.

Third Criterion: Local Support — The Nomination File must show evidence of significant public support, including that of affected local governments, landowners, and constituent groups. A resolution of support (see Appendix F) from county or local government(s) with jurisdiction in the area encompassing the proposed scenic roads, can demonstrate that support.

DEC’s Formal Designation Process

After evaluation, DEC will make one of the following recommendations on the candidate road:

- Approve designation — The road will become part of the Scenic Roads Program.
- Defer designation — This status may be given because additional information may be needed before a final determination can be made. For example, the quality of some views will vary greatly with seasonal changes. Therefore, a foliate and non-foliate field review may be necessary before a final decision can be made. Also, designation may be contingent on the removal or mitigation of detracting elements such as junk car yards, dilapidated buildings, or numerous signs.
- Deny designation — Review of the candidate road indicates that it does not meet the criteria.

The Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation makes the official designation of any segments of state, county, or local roads as “Scenic Roads” and incorporates them in the Scenic Roads Program.
The Nomination Process

Functions of the Nominated Group

A large corps of volunteers makes the task of evaluating an entire town road system an interesting, pleasant project. But to start with, the nominating group needs only three members. It acts as a coordinating committee to carry out the following tasks:

- notify the DEC Scenic Roads Program Manager of the town’s interest in conducting a scenic roads survey (NYSDEC, Division of Lands and Forests, Room 404, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12233);
- obtain assistance and equipment such as evaluation forms and manuals from the DEC;
- plan and conduct the kick-off meeting to explain the program and solicit volunteers (see Appendix A for a sample agenda);
- drive along the local roads to compile a list of candidates;
- prepare the narrative description (Appendix B);
- develop a timetable for conducting the survey during a time of year when scenic components are most visible and local roads passable (summer and fall are best);
- assign candidate roads to volunteers, and supply equipment (see Appendix C);
- collect and analyze the completed Evaluation Forms (see Appendix D);
- inform town councilmen which town roads are worthy of scenic designation and solicit a resolution of support (see Appendix G);
- compile the nomination file and send it to DEC.

Selecting the Candidate Roads

Towns can use one of two methods for compiling a list of candidate roads (Step Two of the nomination process).

1. They can rely on the experts, such as the nominating group, to select roads during a preliminary tour of the area of interest. During this tour, the nominating group will also determine the characteristics of the local landscape unit to include in the narrative description.

2. At the “kick-off” meeting the nominating group can solicit suggestions from the public.

The town can also use a combination of both methods for selecting candidates. Residents should understand that there is no permanent deadline. Roads not suggested in time for the first year’s survey can be included in the future.

Explanation of the Local Landscape Context

As a traveller drives along the scenic roads of an area, he should become aware of the various resources and relationships that characterize the local landscape.

Generally a few combinations of landscape components, such as forest-town or lake shore, will typify an area; outside this so-called “landscape unit” there will be a different combination of components. The compositional elements will also differ in importance from one area to another. For example: in rugged terrain, landform relief may determine the quality of the landscape composition, whereas in level regions, vegetative patterns and edges may have more influence. It is important, therefore, to evaluate the scenery within its local context.

The Narrative Description

The required narrative description of the landscape (Step Three of the nomination process) establishes the visual context of the road. Since an interest in scenic roads designation will most often arise at the local or county level, the narrative should usually describe an area no larger than one county.

When writing the narrative, avoid the words “natural” and “man-made”. These ambiguous terms describe conditions that are often the result of both natural and human processes. Instead, describe the qualities of the visual components in the landscape: topography, water, vegetation, sky, human or animal activities, structures, and the patterns or rhythms created by them. Include highlights of one or two historic events or local characters. The sample narrative in Appendix B describes part of the Chenango Valley countryside.
Understanding the Road Survey

The system for surveying the roads comprises Step Four of the nomination process. In the preliminary phase, the rating team drives each road in both directions in order to identify specific scenic elements along its length. At the end of each mile, the team stops, discusses what it has seen and uses the single column on the evaluation form to check off the visible components. Appendix D contains a sample filled-in form.

After the team has travelled the entire length of the road in both directions, it must decide if the quality of the scenery on the road is high enough to justify a formal designation as “scenic.” If the road has an average of ten or more positive scenic components in each mile, it is probably worth further consideration. Occasionally, however, roads with fewer than ten per mile are worth designating. These special cases require further explanation on the evaluation form. The team must describe its reasoning, noting those components which contribute most to the road’s scenic quality.

The next phase, the detailed inventory, considers only those roads that the team feels have sufficient scenic value for designation. Now the rating team travels each road in both directions again, at a much slower pace. With the help of the evaluation form, the team members catalogue those scenic elements which occur in each tenth of a mile.

The teams should stop as often as necessary to mark the wide grid on the evaluation form, to take notes, and to discuss what they are observing. What makes this one-tenth of a mile special? Would its alteration be a serious loss to the area? If so, why?

This inventory will serve as the basis for both the public decision on designating the road as scenic and, in subsequent years, for road management.

The Evaluation Form

The evaluation form in Appendix D serves two purposes: It provides a checklist of the scenic elements for which evaluators are searching as they travel their assigned roads. It also provides an organized means of cataloging scenic features for future reference.

The scenic components are divided into positive and negative groups. Each item in the positive list may enhance the scenic quality of a road’s setting. As it encounters each item, the evaluation team must judge whether, by itself or in combination with others, it contributes to the quality of the landscape. Each item in the negative list has the potential for detracting from scenic quality. Whether or not it does depends on the nature of the item itself (Is it an “eyesore”?) as well as its setting (Is it a “misfit”?). While most components are self-explanatory, a few have been defined in the glossary in Appendix E.

In addition to listing positive and negative criteria, the evaluation form can be used to record other useful information:

- As part of a general inventory, the recorder can indicate points of historical or natural significance in the REMARKS box, whether or not they are visible.
- To help in mapping the data, the recorder should use the REMARKS box to list the mile tenth containing special landmarks (town halls, intersections, etc.).
- The REMARKS box can also be used to list “sequences”: features that are glimpsed from different angles and in different positions for several miles.
- When brush hides potential views, the recorder should indicate the need for selective trimming by circling the check mark in the proper grid box.
- When the presence or absence of seasonal foliage will have a major impact on the view, make a comment in the REMARKS box.
- When the scenic component appears in the right-of-way, the recorder should mark the appropriate box with an asterisk.

The steps of the survey and inventory process are outlined on the back of the evaluation form.

The Role of Rating Teams

Volunteers in teams of three will carry out the two-phase process of road evaluation. Team members will have the following tasks:

The driver, in addition to driving the car, should keep one eye on the odometer and call out mileage, at one mile intervals in phase one, and at one-tenth of a mile intervals in the second phase; he or she may also be able to look for scenic components in the passing countryside.

The front seat passenger will be the primary appraiser, scanning the scenery in front of the car and in as wide an arc as possible on both sides of the road.

The recorder will check off on the evaluation form all
of the scenic components identified by the appraiser. During the first phase, he or she will record components at the end of each mile and during the second phase, each tenth of a mile. The recorder will also write comments on the evaluation form.

Team members should change duties and positions at some pre-determined interval. This will enable all three to become familiar with the whole process of road evaluation and ease the strain on the recorder.

**Last Minute Tips**

When the evaluators feel familiar with the system and are ready to begin, the following tips should prove useful in getting them off to a good start:

- Assemble the necessary equipment (Appendix C).
- Pick a day and time when the weather is sunny and there is a minimum of haze so that visibility is at its best.
- Plan to evaluate scenery for no more than three hours each day to avoid fatigue and resulting inaccuracies.
- For the first run, pick a lightly travelled road so that team members can become accustomed to the rating process without obstructing traffic.

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### Performing the Road Survey

#### The Preliminary Evaluation

After choosing its first road, the team should proceed to a discernible landmark (town line, road intersection) at one end. The recorder will prepare as many evaluation forms as necessary (two times the anticipated number of miles and any fraction of a mile) by filling in the following information:

- name of the town;
- date;
- weather;
- name of the road or, if none, identifying number or description;
- direction of travel;
- mile of travel (1, 2, etc.);
- names of team members.

The team should drive slowly down the road, scanning the countryside for the specific scenic elements listed on the evaluation form. After each mile, stop the car so that the recorder can check the appropriate component boxes in the single column. Ignore the wide grid; use it only for the detailed evaluation (phase two). When a scenic component appears to be in the road right-of-way, the recorder should use an asterisk rather than a check in the box. Where selective thinning of vegetation will reveal a view, circle the check mark. Record any comments in the REMARKS box or on the back of the form.

Repeat this process for every mile down the entire length of the road. Use a separate evaluation form for each mile, and for the last segment, even if it is less than a mile. Count the miles and enter that number on the line following “OF” in the upper right of all the evaluation forms.

When the team completes the final road segment, the preliminary evaluation is only half done. Now the team must turn around and survey the road from the opposite direction. This reverse survey is very important: often travellers cannot see views when going in one direction, but can see them when going the other way.

Be careful! Match the evaluation forms for each segment of road on the first leg of the trip with those for
the same segment during the return trip. For instance, if the last portion of a road is seven tenths of a mile long, then on the return trip the team should record only the first seven-tenths mile on the first evaluation form; the result will be a pair of matching evaluation forms for each segment of the road.

After surveying a road in both directions, the team should review the checked components and the comments on the sheets. They must then judge whether the road is of sufficient quality to merit formal designation as “scenic.” As a guideline, a road should have at least ten scenic elements (positive elements minus negative elements) per mile to merit designation. If the evaluators feel that some roads averaging less than ten elements per mile are overwhelmingly scenic, they should describe their reasoning in the REMARKS box, or on the back of the form, listing those components which contribute most to scenic quality. If the road is not judged to be worthy of designation, the team can use the REMARKS space to summarize the main scenic features of the road.

The Detailed Inventory

In this phase of the process, tour each road considered worthy of “scenic” status and catalog all of its scenic elements. The driver should proceed to the same landmark used in the preliminary evaluation. The recorder will reuse the same forms, in the same order.

Travelling slower than before, team members will scan the corridor and call out scenic components as they occur. Instead of waiting until the end of each mile to record them, the recorder will use the expanded grid to check the appropriate boxes every tenth of a mile. If a component remains visible along the road for a distance, record it in the appropriate number of tenth-mile boxes. When a view contains several different scenic components, record all of them. Continue to use the survey code for screened views and for views in the right-of-way.

Because this phase is more detailed, the recorder may want the car stopped after every few tenths of a mile so he or she can keep up with the appraiser.

Repeat the inventory process over the entire length of road in both directions. When this phase is completed, two sets of evaluation forms (one for each direction of travel) will describe in detail the scenic characteristics of each road. The recorder should clip the forms together in order, and return them to the nominating group.

Nominating the Roads

Organize the Data

After volunteers complete the town road surveys, the nominating group will collect and organize the evaluation forms from each team, review them, and decide which roads in the town system to recommend for nomination. The group should arrange the evaluation forms alphabetically by road name in a ring binder, thus making them more useful to councilmen, planning officials, and road commissioners. Preserve even the surveys of roads with low scenic values, since they may have some features worth retaining or improving.

Photocopy the evaluation forms for the roads which teams rated as highly scenic. Map them as a further aid in decision making. The maps will subsequently aid the public and the town council in taking action on the recommendations. This may be done simply with a separate “strip” map of each road under consideration, (see Appendix F), or with a single, large-scale town map showing all such roads at once. By using symbols to represent elements checked on the evaluation forms, areas of scenic significance can be plotted for each road. Put the photocopies and the map strips, if used, together in another binder.

Choosing the Roads

Ultimately, local officials must decide which of the roads with high scenic value should be officially nominated. They may simply decide that all roads with a net number of ten positive components per mile should be declared scenic. If they wish to be more selective, they can raise this cut-off score to 12 or 15 scenic elements per mile. They may also choose a sampler approach: preserving a few roads which represent different examples of local landscape. The sampler might include a forest road enclosed by stone walls and mature trees, a road featuring distant views of a river valley and mountains, and a road winding through farm and pasture lands and past historic houses.

Local officials must make another set of decisions. Should a whole road be declared scenic or only portions of it? What are the size limitations — is a seven or eight mile road too long to be designated, especially if it contains non-scenic sections? Is a stretch of road extending only one or two tenths of a mile too short? How many miles and how many roads should be designated in one town?
Remember that the scenic road serves the traveller. His impression of the road is influenced by his comprehension of sequence and movement. Piecemeal preservation of isolated elements produces a distracting "catalog" effect with no chance to experience relationships between the road itself and the changing images of the landscape.

Also consider the implications that the decisions will have for future maintenance and planning. A series of short stretches of road may make it difficult for the highway crews to maintain the roads efficiently. It might be best to choose lengths of road which have definite beginning and destination points and protect isolated scenic views by some other means, such as designating them as critical environmental areas (under the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act). On the other hand, nominating too many miles of scenic roads can mean that many landowners may not cooperate, thus jeopardizing the entire program.

Initially, aim for conservative stretches of road, from two to five miles. In the future, as landowners see the success of the program, the segments may be linked together by nominating the intervening road sections.

The Nomination File

Once the local government has decided which roads to nominate, the nominating group must then compile a nomination file consisting of: the list of road nominations, the narrative description, the completed evaluation forms, and a resolution of support from the appropriate local government (see Appendix G). This file will be reviewed by the DEC staff in Albany.
Scenic Road Management and Protection

Local Responsibility

After DEC designates a scenic road, local governments will have a major role to play in its management. While not expressly required, DEC encourages the preparation of a management plan and will cooperate in its preparation and implementation. Such a plan may be prepared by a local agency on its own, or with assistance from county agencies, consultants, or the contributed services of private groups and organizations. The DEC will approve those management plans that contain the following information and components:

1. An inventory of the significant natural, cultural, and scenic resources;
2. An inventory of existing land uses;
3. A listing of the management goals and objectives for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the resources on which the scenic roads designation is based;
4. A listing of existing and potential management issues, problems and needs;
5. A detailed corridor management program, including:
   • an action plan for both short and long term responses to development pressure;
   • a description of the specific existing and proposed legal authorities and methods that will be used to implement the program;
   • a schedule for its adoption and implementation;
6. Appropriate illustrations including maps, photographs, and other graphic representations necessary to clarify and enhance understanding of the plan.

NOTE: Appendix G contains a bibliography of information on road maintenance and protection.

Using other State and Local Acts and Programs

If local residents understand, support, and accept the Scenic Roads Program, that will help assure its success. The nominating group cannot handle the management of scenic roads alone. It should encourage landowners and civic groups to participate in maintaining and improving both private property and the whole community. This can be augmented by coordinating existing programs and regulatory authority at both state and local levels and focusing them on scenic roads.

Some examples of the state, county, and local authority and programs which can be used in the Scenic Roads Program include:

• Local land use ordinances;
• County planning board authority to review certain municipal zoning actions;
• Conservation easements;
• State Environmental Quality Review Act;
• Freshwater Wetlands Act;
• Coastal Zone Management Program;
• State Highway Law.

Other Uses of the Inventory

Use of the scenic road inventory does not end when a few roads have been designated. The survey information provides planning officials, councilmen, and road commissioners with a permanent and valuable planning and management tool.

Maintenance

The inventory pinpoints areas on all roads that are worthy of special treatment. When road work is planned for highly scenic areas — whether or not they are on designated scenic roads — town crews will be forewarned that special maintenance practices might be needed. For example, a road widening project may be slated for a road lined with old stone walls. If the town road commissioner habitually checks the scenic road inventory before beginning such work, he will notice the presence of stone walls and take precautions to insure that they are not disturbed. The inventory might also be used to locate areas in need of periodic brush cutting to preserve scenic views.

Planning

A town may be interested in building roadside picnic tables and scenic turnout. Appropriate areas featuring panoramic views and a pleasant setting can easily be identified by using the evaluation forms.
The scenic road inventory may be useful when drafting town plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision controls. The inventory can be used to help a plan express the importance of the town's scenic character, because it will highlight some of the important issues. It can help create policies to preserve that character through road management or other techniques, such as creating design control districts, purchasing scenic easements, or establishing lot size, setback, and landscaping requirements along scenic roads. Town officials can work creatively with property owners to reduce the effect of negative components observed while taking the scenic road inventory. They may suggest vegetative screening, or use of HUD loans or grants to improve the appearance of buildings.

Scenic Road Re-evaluation

Every four years (or more often, if necessary) DEC will re-evaluate each designated Scenic Road and the implementation of measures to ensure preservation, protection, and enhancement of its scenic qualities. This re-evaluation will determine whether or not the road still meets the criteria for designation. The Commissioner of Environmental Conservation may eliminate any road from the Scenic Roads Program if it ceases to meet the original criterion established for its acceptance.

DEC will attempt to identify the local, county, or state government or authority most responsible for allowing degradation of the scenic road corridor, and encourage it to correct the problem. It may also identify additional management problems or issues needing attention.
APPENDICES
A Meeting to Kick-Off a Scenic Roads Project

Prior to the Meeting:

- contact a number of potential volunteers and give each a manual (obtain copies from DEC) to read before attending the meeting;
- publicize the meeting in local newspapers, on radio, and on TV;
- obtain large-scale maps, showing all town roads, from the Department of Transportation District Office;
- obtain copies of this manual from DEC;
- select a meeting place large enough to hold the anticipated crowd.

At the Meeting:

- introduce members of the coordinating committee and any other speakers;
- outline the objectives of the meeting and of the scenic roads program;
- conduct a discussion to develop strategy for road evaluation;
- split the volunteers into groups of three, distribute manuals, a small-scale map, and several hundred inventory forms to each team;
- assign each team a portion of town roads to survey (refer to large maps posted on walls), and have each team mark its area on the smaller maps;
- arrange for a convenient drop-off point for the completed evaluation forms, and distribute phone numbers of members of the coordinating committee to members of the survey teams;
- set a deadline for completing the scenery project.

After the Meeting:

- monitor the progress of each team at regular intervals to answer questions and assure meeting the deadline.

Sample Agenda

1. Opening comments and introductions
2. DEC Scenic Roads Program
   a. History and objectives
   b. Present status
   c. Significance of designation
   d. Local options
3. Scenic Road nomination process
   a. Formal recognition of existing or new nomination group
   b. Initial identification of roads
   c. Local landscape character and context
   d. Road survey
   e. Nomination Document
      • Narrative description
      • Photocopies of road surveys
      • Maps
      • Photographs
      • Local support Resolution
4. Sign up additional volunteers and form teams
5. Visual Assessment training session
6. Assignment of roads to teams
7. Questions and closing comments
Sample Narrative

The following description concentrates on the visual aspects of the valley. Ideally, nominating groups should be familiar enough with their locality to be able to include a short vignette highlighting one or two historic events or local characters. This would give the evaluators and DEC a better feel for the “flavor” of the area.

Chenango Valley

Gently rolling hills frame a wide glacial valley. The mosaic of fields, woods, and small settlements provides variety, with no long stretch of any one type of vegetation cover or land use. Abandoned fields are the most common land use.

Views to each side of the road usually differ: hill on one side, field on the other; woods on one side, field on the other; woods on one side, settlement on the other, etc. There is constant change, but the scenery is always “country,” even within villages.

Visibility distances have an irregular rhythm—mid, close, mid, close, long, close—changing rapidly from one to another. In general, landforms determine the length of the view, but occasionally vegetation or buildings enclose or block a view. The sky is visible throughout the entire length of the road, i.e., no overhead canopy of large trees, tunnels, or bridges.

The two-lane road rarely dominates. It curves around and over hills. When climbing a hill, the road does dominate, but arrival at the crest often reveals a panoramic view directly in front of the driver.

The villages contain many Greek Revival homes. There are a few scattered industrial or commercial land uses at village edges or in old fields, such as pharmaceutical companies, gravel mines, junk yards, or fast food establishments.

Checklist

Try to include the following items in the narrative:

- Historic sketch
- Landform characteristics
- Visibility and view distances
- Road character
- Villages or cities
- Land use patterns
- Architecture
- Vegetation
- Scale
### Scenic Roads Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE COMPONENTS</th>
<th>NEGATIVE COMPONENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. WATER &amp; LANDFORM FEATURES</td>
<td>A. LANDSCAPE SCARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lake, Pond, Marsh or Wetland</td>
<td>1. Obtrusive Lumbaring Scar or Slash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. River or Brook</td>
<td>2. Erosion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Waterfall</td>
<td>3. Gravel or Sand Mining Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cliff, Boulder, or Rock Outcrop</td>
<td>4. Utility Line, Corridor, or Substation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hill or Mountain</td>
<td>5. Angular Road Cut or Fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other, or Special Regional Feature</td>
<td>B. STRUCTURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Strip Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Incompatible Bldg in Town (Style, material, lot size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Incompatible Rural Bldg (Non-farm, non-residential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Incompatible Fence or Gate (Scale, style, material)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Dilapidated Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Dilapidated fence or wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Gas Station or Auto Repair Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. LANDSCAPE COMPOSITION &amp; EFFECTS</td>
<td>8. Outdoor Auto Sales or Large Parking Lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Framed, Enclosed, or Valley View</td>
<td>9. Junkyard or Landfill</td>
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<td>10. Storage Tanks</td>
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<td>4. Transient Effect (Ice formations, brilliant foliage)</td>
<td>12. Stark Drainage System (Straight rows of rip-rap, protruding culvert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other Natural Effect</td>
<td>C. OTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1. Litter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Heavy Traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. VEGETATION</td>
<td>3. Polluted Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. City or Town Park</td>
<td>4. Structures Blocking View</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. Agricultural Pattern (orchard, contour plowing)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Field &amp; Forest Edge</td>
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<td>4. Woodland, or Tree Pattern (Species mix, hedgerow)</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. STRUCTURES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Picturesque Farmstead or Unusual Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Historic Structure or Archaeological Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. ROAD CHARACTERISTICS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Road Conforming to Landscape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Road Pattern (Cobblestone, brick, gravel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rustic Drainage Mechanism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey Code**
- Visible component
- Vegetation screens component
- Component is in right-of-way

**Remarks:**

**Positive Sub-Total**

**Negative Sub-Total**
Equipment Checklist

1. Automobile accessories:
   - working odometer for accurate distance recording;
   - emergency road flashers.
2. Evaluation forms:
   Since each form is good for only one mile and one direction of road, take along enough forms to record twice the number of miles you plan to survey; remember each road must be travelled once in each direction.
3. Clipboard: to hold evaluation forms for marking.
4. Pencils with erasers.
5. Manual and sample inventory form for each member’s reference.
6. Small road map of the town.

Evaluation Form

Instructions

Prepare as many forms as needed before starting on the road, by filling in the information (town, date, etc.) on the upper right-hand side. You will need two separate forms for each mile, plus the last fraction of a mile of the road.

Phase one

Start from a discernible landmark and proceed along the road, stopping at one mile intervals to discuss and mark the scenic positive and negative components along the route. Use the single column only, and the marking code printed on the form. If there are relevant negative items that do not appear on the form, add them in the “OTHER” section.

Count the miles and enter that number in the space following “OF”, on the upper right of the form.

Travel the same stretch in the opposite direction, making sure that the evaluation forms correspond. That is, if the last part of the trip out was seven tenths of a mile long, then the first part of the return trip must be seven tenths of a mile long.

Subtract the negative from the positive sub-total on each sheet. Decide if the road will qualify as scenic based on the average number of scenic components identified per mile (ten is recommended) and on the team’s written comments.

Phase two

Redo those roads that might qualify for scenic designation. Start from the same initial landmark, reuse the forms, this time marking the wide grid. Fill out the form as you travel, or at least every tenth of a mile. Stop as often as necessary to write comments.
# Scenic Roads Evaluation Form

**Survey Code**
- ✔ Visible component
- ○ Vegetation screens component
- ☒ Component is in right-of-way

**Positive Components**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Water &amp; Landform Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lake, Pond, Marsh or Wetland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. River or Brook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Waterfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cliff, Boulder, or Rock Outcrop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hill or Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other, or Special Regional Feature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Landscape Composition &amp; Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enframed, Enclosed, or Valley View</td>
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<td>3. Ephemeral Effect (Sunset, mist, reflection)</td>
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<td>4. Seasonal Effect (Ice formations, brilliant foliage)</td>
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<td>1. City or Town Park</td>
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<th>E. Road Characteristics</th>
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<td>1. Road Conforming to Landscape</td>
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<td>3. Rustic Drainage Mechanism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Positive Sub-Total** 11

**Negative Components**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Landscape Scars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Obtrusive lumbering scar or slash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Erosion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gravel or Sand Mining Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Utility Line, Corridor, or Substation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Angular Road Cut or Fill</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>B. Structures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strip development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Incompatible Bldg in Town (Style, material, lot size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Incompatible Rural Bldg (Non-farm, non-residential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Incompatible Fence or Wall (Style, material)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dilapidated Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dilapidated fence or wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gas Station or Auto Repair Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Outdoor Auto Sales or Large Parking Lot</td>
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**Negative Sub-Total** 1
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direction of road, take along enough forms to record
twice the number of miles you plan to survey;
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road, stopping at one mile intervals to discuss and mark
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route. Use the single column only, and the marking
code printed on the form. If there are relevant negative
items that do not appear on the form, add them in the
"THE END" section.

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following "OF", on the upper right of the form.

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the average number of scenic components identified per
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Phase two

Redo those roads that might qualify for scenic designa-
tion. Start from the same initial landmark, reuse the
forms, this time marking the wide grid. Fill out the
form as you travel, or at least every tenth of a mile.
Stop as often as necessary to write comments.
Glossary

Positive Values

Distant village or village edge  The sharp contrast between a village and its surrounding fields and woods is most evident when seen from a distance. Creeping suburbia or extended commercial development along roads on the edge of town will destroy this effect.

Enclosed view  A view imparts a sense of enclosure when vegetation or other vertical elements in the middleground form continuous or bowl-like sides around the ground plane or central feature.

Enframed view  A picture-like quality that occurs when foreground and mid-ground vegetation or landforms cover part of the field of vision and lead the eye toward a distant view.

Field and forest edge  The interesting line between forests and fields is evident in panoramic views. Careless forest management can obscure the lines when clear-cutting or lumbering trash occurs at the edge.
Leaf tunnel effect  When a road winds through a forested area, the crowns of mature trees close to the road meet overhead to form a ceiling of leaves. This creates a cool, green tunnel, which is a pleasant contrast to the open views.

Panoramic or distant view  These views fill a wide arc in the travellers' field of vision. They usually occur at high spots in the road, where openings in the trees and brush provide a wide overlook.

Road conforming to landscape  Part of the pleasure of travelling a scenic road is the traveler's perception that he is almost a part of the landscape. When a road follows, rather than cuts through landforms, this characteristic may be recorded as a positive element.

Unusual building  Homes, churches, stores, barns, and such, alone or in pleasing combinations, may be positive elements. Include in this category round or octagonal structures, as well as those using unique indigenous materials, or with unique features, such as gables and towers.

Valley view  This type of enframed view occurs when a valley leads the eye toward a view in the distance.
Woodland or tree pattern  A mature stand of mixed hardwood and softwood trees will provide pleasant texture and color contrast in all seasons. Distinguish this positive feature from nondescript clumps of young trees and undergrowth.

Negative Values

Angular road cut or fill  Roads that do not follow the natural curves of the land must cut through hills or traverse embankments. When these man-made landforms are excessive, it is impossible to modify them enough to make them approximate or blend in with the original terrain.

Incompatible building in town  Any building out of scale with others in town, poorly sited in relation to others, or with an incompatible facade.
Incompatible rural building  Fuel tanks or power substations, though necessary, are incompatible, as are flat nondescript industrial or commercial type buildings.

Stark drainage  Rectangular strips of rip-rap (rocks laid on an embankment), or culverts and pipes visible from the road, while often necessary to prevent erosion, detract from scenic quality. Poorly designed ones can even compound erosion problems.

Strip development  Strings of poorly planned development along the roads leading to a village or city obscure the sense of arrival and community. This can be dangerous to travellers, when individual establishments permit patrons to enter the road anywhere from their property, or when there is little to distinguish the pavement on parking lots from that of the road.
1. Picturesque farmstead
2. Rock outcrop
3. Panoramic view
4. Road conforming to landscape
5. View of the Village of East Dolph and its village edge
6. Selective thinning of brush and young trees will improve this view.
7. Eroding slope in the road right of way
Sample Resolution of Support

TOWN BOARD

TOWN OF _______________________

SCENIC ROADS RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), pursuant to Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law, is empowered to designate scenic highways in the state, and

WHEREAS the public highway known as __________________ extending from __________________ to __________________ within the Town of __________________ exhibits exceptional scenic quality and passes through an area of significant regional importance, and

WHEREAS a study has been undertaken by __________________ which assesses the scenic quality of and documents the cultural, historic, and geomorphic features of the __________________ highway corridor, and

WHEREAS it is intended that the study be forwarded to NYSDEC in order to nominate __________________ as a scenic road,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board enthusiastically supports the nomination of __________________ as a scenic road and authorizes including this resolution with the nomination documents, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Board hereby requests and encourages the NYSDEC to quickly designate __________________ as a scenic road.

On the motion to adopt by Member __________________, seconded by Member __________________, and a vote of ______ ayes and ______ nays, this resolution was carried and the Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Dated:
Bibliography of Road Management and Protection Information


