



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary Williamson
Dir. of Development & Communications
maryw@essexheritage.org
978-740-0444

Annie Harris
Executive Director
acharris@essexheritage.org
978-740-0444

ESSEX HERITAGE SCENIC BYWAY DESIGNATED

ENHC Launches Regional Planning Effort

For Immediate Release (Salem, MA) ... Travelers along the 64-mile Essex Heritage Scenic Byway experience much of what New England has to offer: historic seaports, colonial era farms, village and city centers, and a wealth of period architecture. Designated by the Commonwealth as a state scenic byway for its significant scenic, historic and natural resources, the byway traverses 13 communities set against the backdrop of the rocky coast and The Great Marsh, New England's largest salt marsh. The byway is anchored at each end by the gateway cities of Lynn and Newburyport, and passes through the Essex National Heritage Area communities of Swampscott, Marblehead, Salem, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Beverly, Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, Ipswich, Rowley, and Newbury.

On June 3, the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) launched a byway planning initiative with a meeting at the Beverly Public Library hosted by state representative Mary Grant. Utilizing funds from the National Scenic Byway Program and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, the ENHC has contracted with an experienced byway planning team, led by Taintor & Associates of Newburyport, to assist with preparation of a corridor management plan for the byway.

Developed with substantial community involvement, the corridor management plan will identify strategies for preserving and enhancing the byway's scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and natural qualities, and for promoting and marketing the byway. In addition to being a useful tool for the communities, a corridor management plan is a prerequisite for attaining designation as a National Scenic Byway, which will bring added recognition and possibly additional federal funding to the route and the region. Advisory groups, with representatives from each of the

communities along the byway as well as regional stakeholders, will help guide the 21-month planning process, which is expected to conclude by March 2011. A series of public meetings will be held to solicit community input throughout the planning process.

Together, the 13 byway communities contain over 8,700 properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as several National Historic Landmark properties. The region's unique story is chronicled by the numerous historical societies and house museums found along the byway. Easily accessed from the route are a national wildlife refuge, two state wildlife management areas, and numerous beaches, trails, and parcels of conservation land open to the public.

ENHC visitor centers in Lynn, Salem, Ipswich and Newburyport can help the byway traveler discover the region's rich history and culture by car or bicycle.

Images of Essex Heritage Scenic Byway communities are available upon request.

For additional information, please visit: EssexHeritage.org

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