

Corridor Management Plan



Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Route



Road to Rainier Scenic Byway

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Introduction

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway offers travelers distinct pleasures:

- a route that winds through forested mountains and verdant pastures with stunning views of Mount Rainier;
- six quaint, historic communities, each with its own character;
- an abundance of unique, established visitor attractions including a vast wildlife park, a pioneer farm and native tribal village, a vintage steam train, a museum of Northwest art, and a sculpture park using recycled iron;
- nearby public trails that entice visitors to experience the lush Pacific Northwest up close on foot, by bike, or on a horse;
- the main entrance to one of our country's most spectacular places, Mount Rainier National Park. This active volcano rises 14,410 feet from sea level and is Washington State's dominant, beloved icon.

This Corridor Management Plan describes the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway in detail, providing a basis on which a program for Byway marketing, public outreach, funding, and oversight can be developed, implemented, and maintained. It is designed as a living document that will be adapted

to changing circumstances as needed. The plan intends to convey the values of the Scenic Byway communities and create a vision for how the Byway can benefit those communities while offering visitors a unique, informative, and exceptional experience.

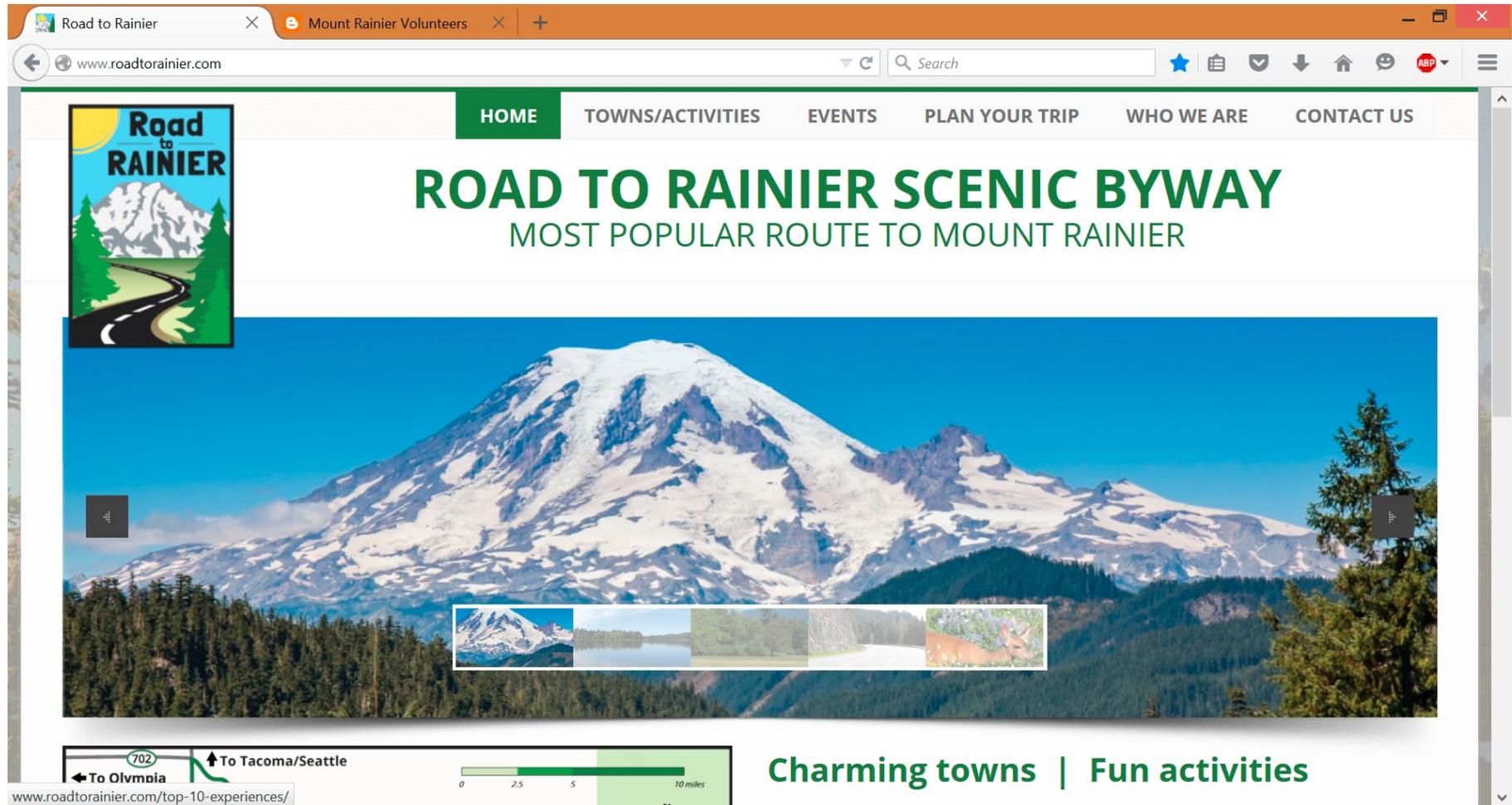
The CMP is designed in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byways Program using the 14-point list from the FHWA's 1995 interim policy establishing criteria for National Scenic Byways. This CMP also meets guidelines for Washington State's Scenic and Recreational Highways Program under Washington State's Dept. of Transportation, Local Programs. *The Washington State Scenic & Recreational Highways Strategic Plan for 2010–2030* has been used as reference.

Further direction has been sought and given in personal consultation with the National Scenic Byways Foundation and through use of their online resources for corridor management planning. Several CMPs have been studied, including those for the nearby White Pass and Chinook National Scenic Byways.



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Website



roadtorainier.com

Because internet presence is a vital factor in tourism marketing, a robust and informative website is already online and is regularly updated. The website is designed to be traveler-friendly while showcasing the scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, history, and culture of the Byway area.

Community Involvement

Local participation has been essential to the creation of this plan. The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Committee represents the diverse population and interests of the Byway area.

Public meetings solicited citizen input. A public open house prior to plan development helped determine the Byway's assets and branding. Public meetings after creation of a draft CMP assured the plan met community needs, values, and viewpoints.

To broaden the perspective of this CMP, plans created through community input have been used as resources. These include *Eatonville Regional Trail Plan* (2009), *The Nisqually Road Corridor Charette* (2001), *The Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* (1999–2000), *Trail with Rail Feasibility Study* (2007), and *The Upper Nisqually Heritage Trail* (2005). Additional research includes numerous online resources as well as information provided by The Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum (2015 to present).

Private and governmental agencies that are CMP project partners are influential in critical and wide-ranging ways to the Byway area. A list of those is provided following **Mission & Goals** below.

Scenic Byway Committee

Representatives with extensive community involvement and expertise comprise the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Committee:

Rick Adams, Friends of the Upper Nisqually

Rob Allen, Pierce County

Meilee Anderson,
Mount Rainier Railroad & Logging Museum

John Bratholm,
Eatonville Chamber of Commerce

Lisa Breckenridge, Nisqually Indian Tribe

Jeremy Foust,
Visit Rainier/Whittaker Mountaineering

Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation

Kathy Hatcher, WSDOT

Pam Painter, Mount Rainier Visitor Association

Steve Pruitt, Ohop Grange/Pioneer Farm

Gennie Reynolds, Eastcreek Campground

Sarah Scott, Developer,
Corridor Management Plan,
Road to Rainier Scenic Byway

Mission & Goals

Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Mission

to enhance the region's cultural, historical, and recreational amenities while creating a memorable experience for visitors from around the world.

Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Goals

1. Introduce visitors to the rich experiences (scenic, recreational, cultural, historical/archeological) unique to the Scenic Byway and help them fully enjoy their experiences.
2. Protect, preserve, and enhance the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway's natural habitat, scenic beauty, and cultural heritage.
3. Promote the Scenic Byway with a dual focus: as a worthwhile travel experience on its own and as the main link to Mount Rainier National Park.
4. Strengthen the economic foundations and tourism activities of local Scenic Byway communities.
5. Increase tourism during non-summer months (the shoulder season) when traveler accommodations and attractions are underutilized.
6. Provide effective support and oversight to the Scenic Byway organization.

Project Partners



Nisqually Land Trust and its partners have spearheaded development of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Nisqually Land Trust is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to acquire and manage critical lands for the permanent benefit of the water, wildlife, and people of the Nisqually River Watershed. In its 27 years, the Land Trust has become a critical protector of thousands of acres of forests and viewsheds along the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. It has an active volunteer corps: in 2015 alone, 349 volunteers donated 3,901 hours to improve wildlife habitat on Nisqually Land Trust properties.

In 2013, Nisqually Land Trust was awarded national accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a mark of conservation excellence achieved so far by fewer than 15 percent of land trusts nationwide.

Mount Rainier Visitor Association, one of the Land Trust's project partners for this management plan, is the primary nonprofit organization that would oversee day-to-day

management of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. MRVA represents approximately 50 tourism-related businesses on or near the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, and it offers comprehensive visitor information to travelers worldwide.

Additional project partners for the development of this Corridor Management Plan:

Mount Rainier National Park
Nisqually River Council
Pierce County, Washington
Puget Sound Regional Council
Town of Eatonville, Washington

CMP Funding

Funding for the creation of this Corridor Management Plan is generously aided by:

Federal Highway Administration
Pierce County, Washington Lodging
Tax Advisory Committee
The Russell Family Foundation

Project Developers

Joe Kane, Executive Director of the Nisqually Land Trust, is CMP project director and editor. He is active in many organizations in the Scenic Byway region including the Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum and has served as Vice President of the Washington Association of Land Trusts.

Sarah Scott, as CMP developer, researched and wrote content as well as took many photographs for this document and the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway website. She resides in Ashford, WA, one of the Byway communities. Sarah is past President of the Mount Rainier Visitor Association Board of Directors, former Chair of the Upper Nisqually Community Forum, a participant in the Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum, and a writer by profession.

Graphic design for this CMP is by Sarah Kellington, Skellington Art. Webmaster for the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway website is Tobyn Smith, Atomic Cricket Design. Initial website design is by Kendra Albrecht, Parachute Technology. All are based in Olympia, Washington.



Corridor Description

The Scenic Byway Route

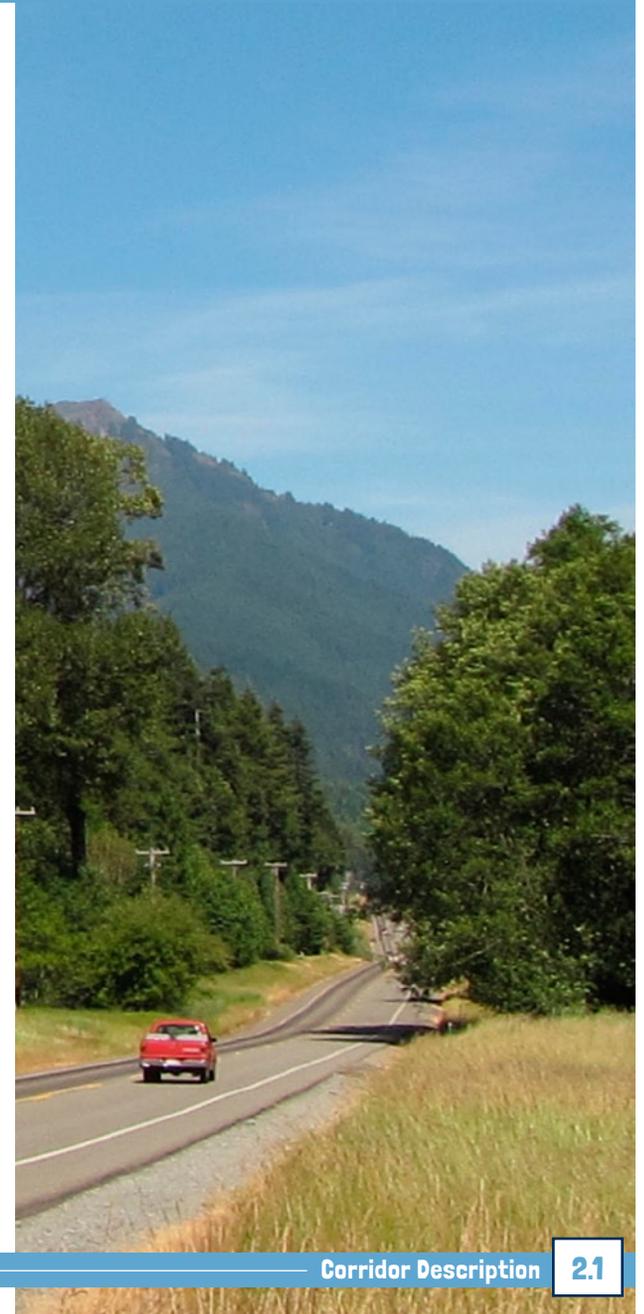
For travelers, the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway offers unique recreational activities and striking landscapes. The State Route 706 portion of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway was named one of the “Top 10 Picturesque Drives in America” by *Country* magazine in its November 2013 issue.

Each year 1.7 million visitors come to Mount Rainier National Park, many of them from all over the world. Most of those travelers use this Scenic Byway to reach the park. The Byway’s eastern portal is the park’s main entrance, the only one open year round.

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is a continuous route that has the added benefit of forming a loop for a portion of its route. This allows travelers to experience the Byway’s full range of attractions by driving one segment of that loop toward the park and the other leaving the park.

It is important to note this Scenic Byway’s features provide an experience rich enough to warrant driving it as a destination unto itself. All visitor attractions and recreational opportunities addressed in this plan lie along the Scenic Byway or within a few miles’ drive. In the latter case, the Scenic Byway is the route providing easiest access.

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is entirely in Pierce County, WA except for the spur that goes to Mineral and back. After crossing the Nisqually River in Elbe, that segment is in Lewis County.



Location Boundaries

Western & Eastern Portals

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway's western portal is on WA Highway 7 (also called Mountain Highway) at the stop-lighted crossroad of WA Highway 702/Eatonville Cutoff Road. SR 702 runs from McKenna to this point. Beyond the intersection with SR 7, that road becomes Eatonville Cutoff Road and approaches Eatonville.

The eastern end of the Scenic Byway is at the Nisqually entrance to Mount Rainier National Park.

Scenic Byway Loop Segment

The western entry is where the loop portion of the Scenic Byway starts. The north part of that loop reaches Eatonville via Eatonville Cutoff Road and SR 161. The southern portion stays on SR 7, also called Mountain Highway. The two loop portions join at SR 7 by Alder Lake. From there traveling east are the historic hamlets of Elbe, Mineral, and Ashford.

These two loop segments, north and south, more precisely run northwest to southeast for most but not all of their distance with each changing direction several times. For clarity they are referred to as north and south on Byway references, with north going through Eatonville and south staying on SR 7. After they join at Alder Lake, the rest of the Scenic Byway is due east to the national park entrance.

Travelers — whether park-bound or just out for a beautiful, interesting drive — can make the most of what the Scenic Byway offers by driving eastward via the north or south loop and returning westward using the other segment. Distance and travel time are similar, but each has its advantages.

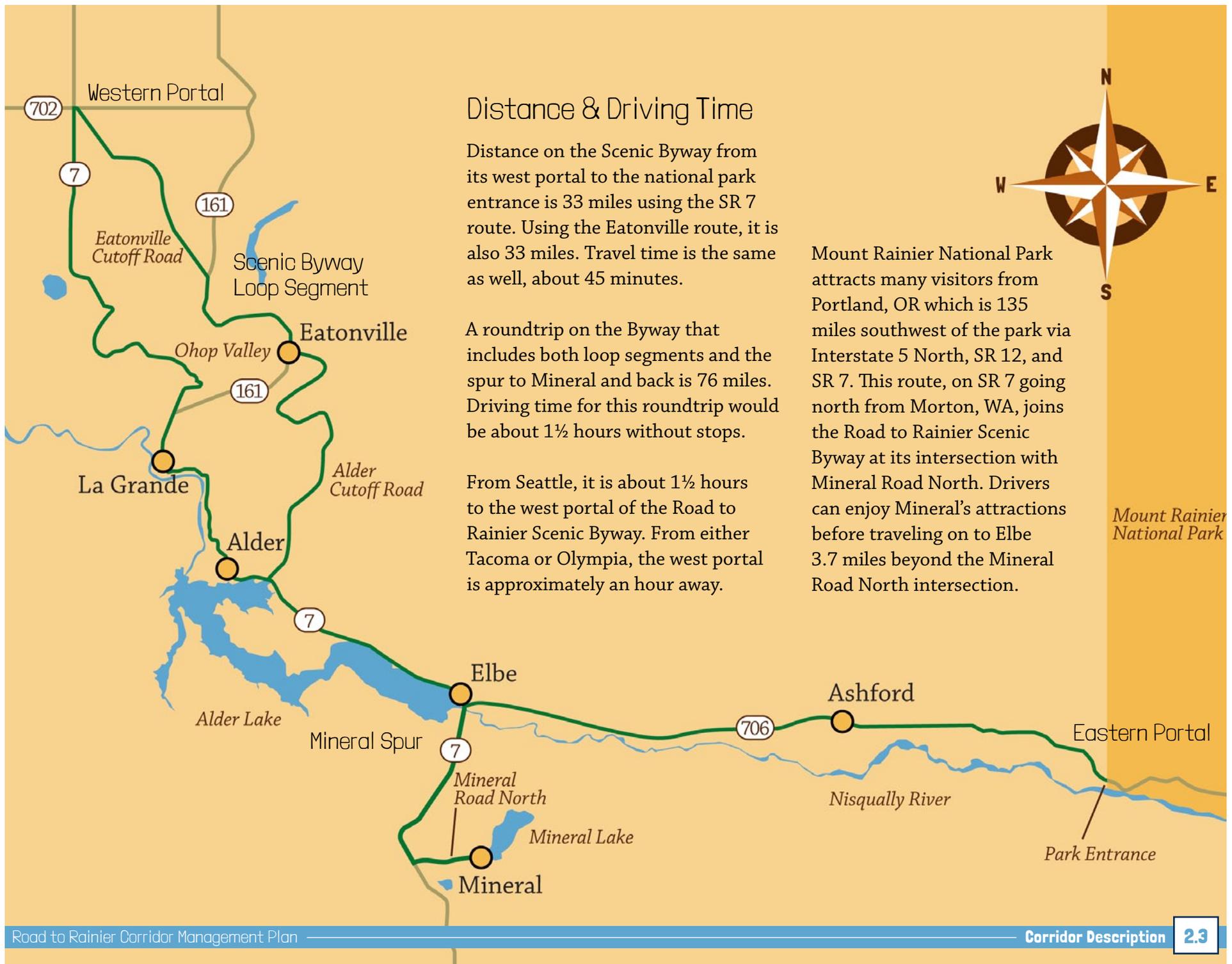
Eatonville has a full range of visitor services and several attractions in or near town. SR 7 is a winding drive through mountain terrain that passes by Alder Dam, La Grande, and the University of Washington's Pack Forest. There are scenic pullovers along both routes, and both offer postcard views of Mount Rainier.

Mineral Spur

From Elbe, a 5.2-mile drive to Mineral forms a spur of the Byway accessed by veering right on SR 7 South toward Morton. This forested road crosses the Nisqually River, the region's major waterway, and enters Lewis County at this point. After 3.7 miles on SR 7 South, travelers turn left on Mineral Road North into Mineral. The Byway returns to Elbe by the same route. Roundtrip distance on the spur is 10.4 miles.

East to National Park Entrance

In Elbe, the Byway eastbound veers left off SR 7 onto SR 706. After 7 miles, SR 706 enters Ashford. The Byway ends at the national park's Nisqually entrance, 6 miles east of Ashford.

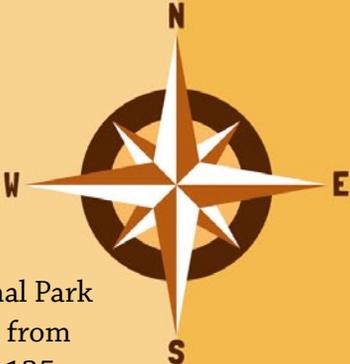


Distance & Driving Time

Distance on the Scenic Byway from its west portal to the national park entrance is 33 miles using the SR 7 route. Using the Eatonville route, it is also 33 miles. Travel time is the same as well, about 45 minutes.

A roundtrip on the Byway that includes both loop segments and the spur to Mineral and back is 76 miles. Driving time for this roundtrip would be about 1½ hours without stops.

From Seattle, it is about 1½ hours to the west portal of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. From either Tacoma or Olympia, the west portal is approximately an hour away.



Mount Rainier National Park attracts many visitors from Portland, OR which is 135 miles southwest of the park via Interstate 5 North, SR 12, and SR 7. This route, on SR 7 going north from Morton, WA, joins the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway at its intersection with Mineral Road North. Drivers can enjoy Mineral’s attractions before traveling on to Elbe 3.7 miles beyond the Mineral Road North intersection.

Mount Rainier National Park

Reasons for Chosen Boundaries

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway encompasses a specific bioregion, the Upper Nisqually River Watershed. The Byway communities are interdependent and all face toward Mount Rainier for a significant part of their identity.

It is from the Nisqually glacier on the mountain that the river forms and shapes the quality of life alongside it, as it has for thousands of years. The Mashel River, the main tributary of the Nisqually, is of particular importance to the Eatonville area along the Byway.

The western portal of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is where this regional sensibility takes hold: at the intersection of SR 7 and SR 702 / Eatonville Cutoff Road.

The Byway's eastern portal is Mount Rainier National Park's primary entry and the only one open year round, the Nisqually entrance.

The eastern end of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway offers the most direct route to the park's top destination, Paradise, with its large visitor center, historic lodge, extensive network of trails, and unmatched wildflower viewing. A few miles before Paradise, using this entrance, is history-filled Longmire with its visitor facilities and trails. This entry from the Byway also provides the closest access to many of the park's most popular outdoor sites including Comet, Christine, and Narada Falls, Cougar Rock Campground, and numerous trails.

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is situated in an area exceedingly dependent on tourism for economic stability. It is the aim of this Corridor Management Plan to strengthen and broaden tourism activity in these Byway communities through coordinated planning, marketing, and enhancement of the area's assets.

Because of the tourism focus of the corridor area, it already includes an abundance of well-developed recreational, scenic, historic, and cultural opportunities. Several new projects that are in the planning stage will add to the visitor experience in exciting ways, and these are included in this document along with established sites.

While tourists aplenty flock to the park during the high season of summer, both the park and the attractions along the Scenic Byway are underutilized the rest of the year, during what is referred to as the long "shoulder season." Even in summer, many park visitors are "day trippers" who travel to the park and back in one day. It is the intent of this management plan to encourage longer visits and overnight stays that include a richer enjoyment of the Byway's offerings.

State Designation

Much of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is a designated WA State Scenic and Recreational Highway. Washington State created one of the first Scenic Byway programs in the country, one that predates the national program by 24 years. Our state program, begun in 1967, has as its inspiration Lady Bird Johnson's 1965 Highway Beautification Program.

The original designated state Scenic Byway route for our corridor has been modified through locally-based design in defining the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. This accomplishes two priorities: to enhance the traveler experience and to support local communities. Those communities are Eatonville, Elbe, Mineral, and Ashford, as well as the smaller locales of Alder and La Grande. More information on these places is in the **Communities** section of this Corridor Description.

Nearby Scenic Byways

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is near but not adjacent to two National Scenic Byways in the Mount Rainier region: White Pass Scenic Byway and Chinook Scenic Byway.

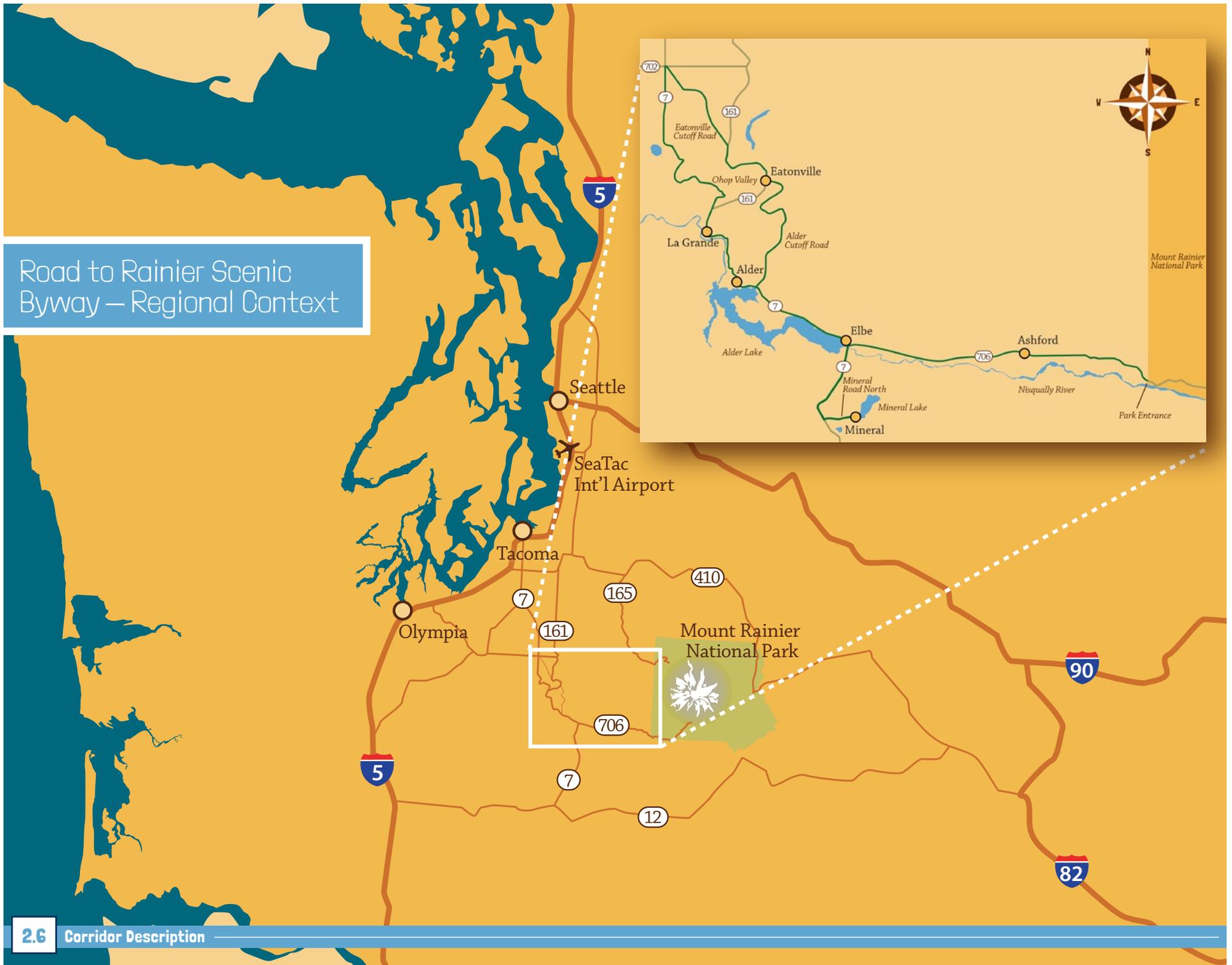
The White Pass Scenic Byway goes through Morton, WA. From Morton, it is a 17-mile drive north on SR 7 to the Mineral spur of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. This is the turnoff to Mineral via Mineral Road North. Also from this point, staying on SR 7, it is a 3.7 mile drive on the Scenic Byway into Elbe.

Alternately, the White Pass Scenic Byway can be reached from the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway by entering Mount Rainier National Park's main (Nisqually) entrance, driving east through the park to turn south on SR 123. From SR 123, the White Pass Scenic Byway is accessed at SR 12. This Scenic Byway is entirely on SR 12. Its westernmost point is near the towns of Centralia and Chehalis, WA, and the eastern entry point is Yakima, WA.

The Chinook Scenic Byway, which has obtained the higher designation of an All-American Road under the National Scenic Byways program, also can be accessed by traveling east through the national park and going north on SR 123. From SR 123, drivers take SR 410. The Chinook Scenic Byway is on the portion of SR 410 that runs from Enumclaw, WA at its northwest portal to Naches, WA at the farthest point southeast. A significant portion of the Chinook Scenic Byway is within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park.

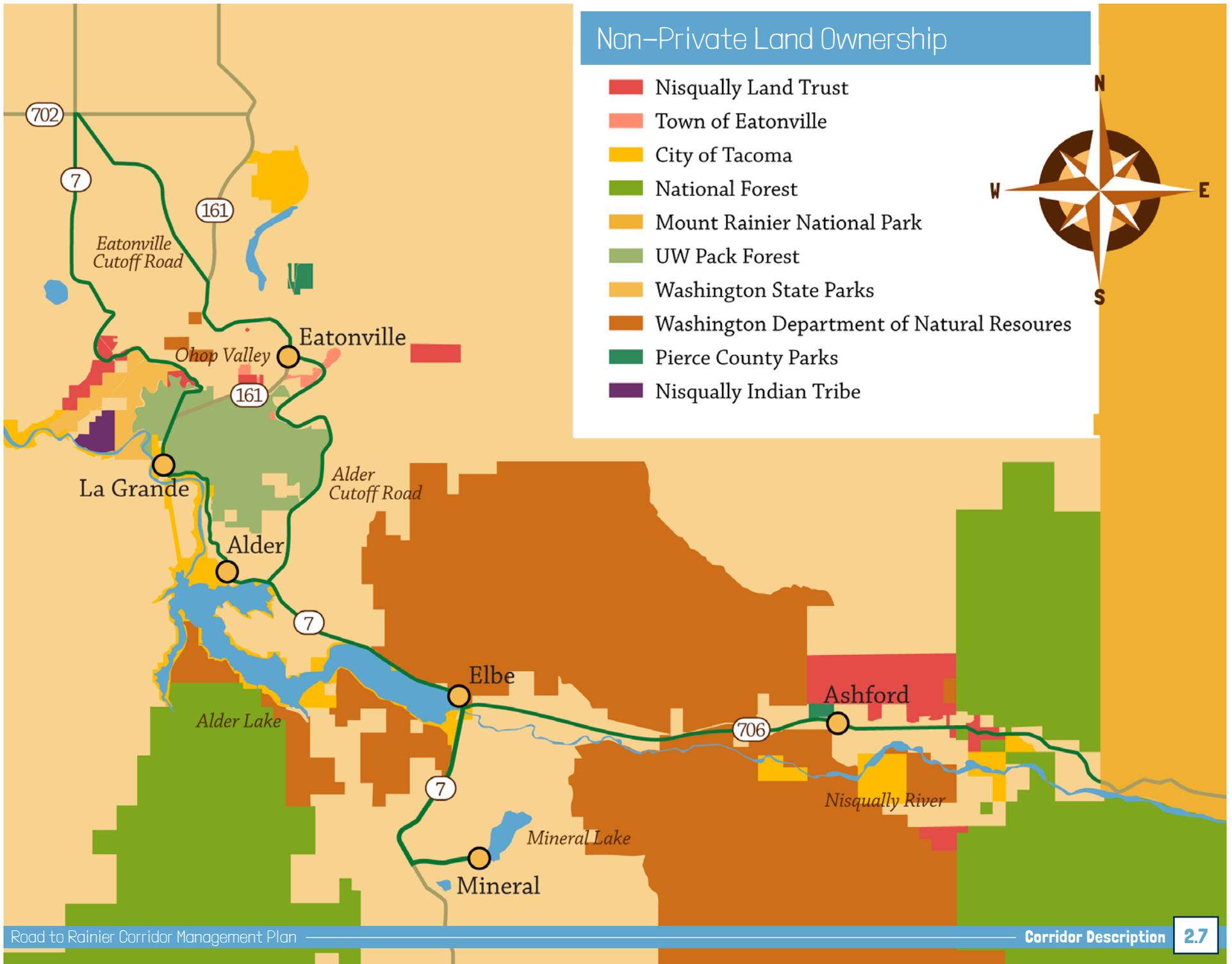
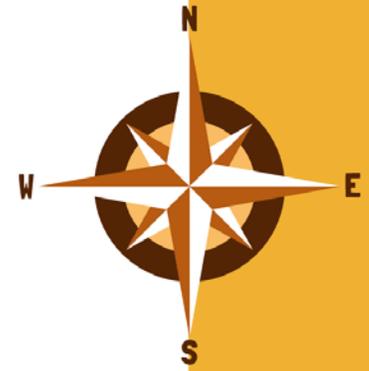
These two Scenic Byways adjoin in Naches, WA where SR 410 intersects SR 12.

Road to Rainier Scenic Byway – Regional Context



Non-Private Land Ownership

- Nisqually Land Trust
- Town of Eatonville
- City of Tacoma
- National Forest
- Mount Rainier National Park
- UW Pack Forest
- Washington State Parks
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Pierce County Parks
- Nisqually Indian Tribe

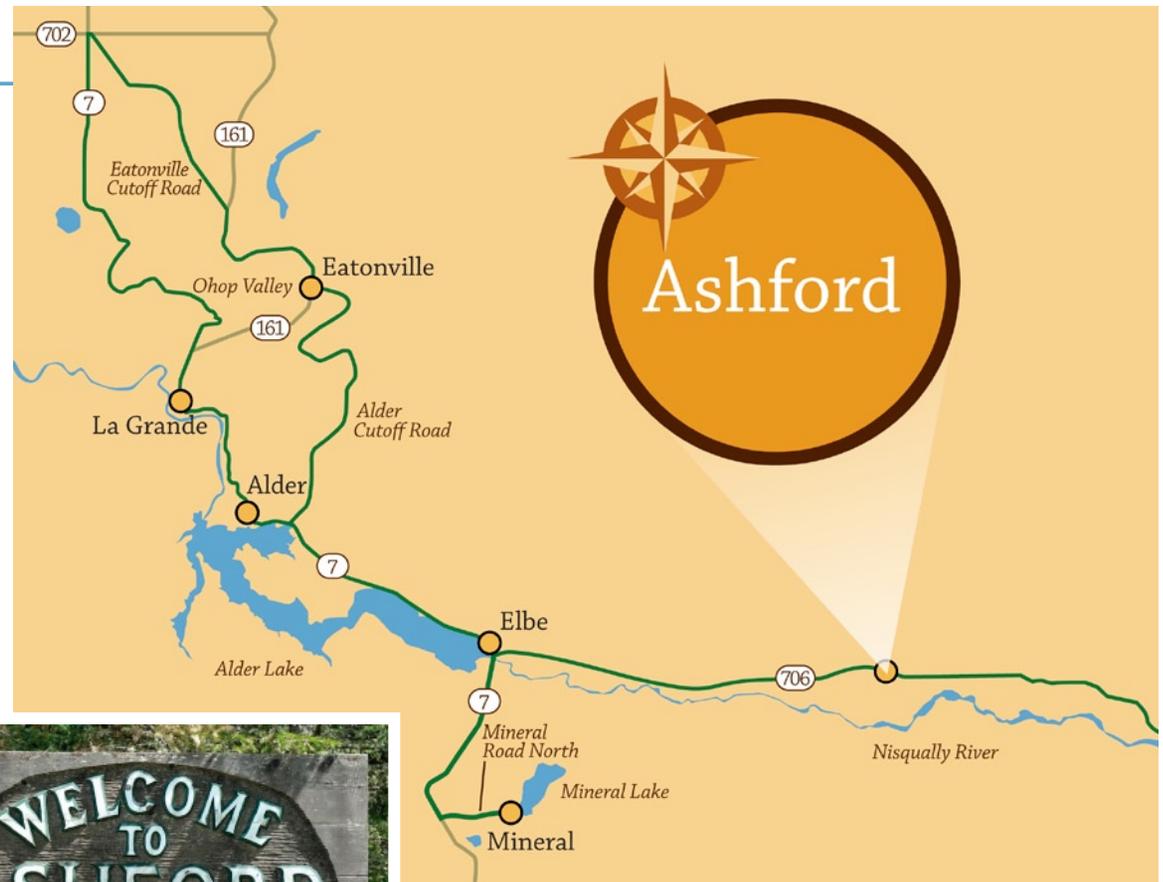


Communities

Ashford

On the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, Ashford is the closest community to the main entrance of Mount Rainier National Park. The Scenic Byway is on SR 706 through Ashford which lies 7 miles east of Elbe and 6 miles west of the park's Nisqually entrance. This park entrance marks the eastern end of the Scenic Byway.

Because of its longstanding status as the primary gateway community for the park, Ashford has an abundance of established visitor amenities. These include dozens of lodging accommodations from camping to fully furnished cabins, and from luxury yurts to historic lodges.



Diners have several restaurant options right on the Scenic Byway, including historic Copper Creek Restaurant; Alexander's, in a Victorian-era lodge; and Wildberry, run by a Sherpa family from Nepal. Shops, galleries, spas, a museum of Pacific Northwest art, and an outdoor gear store are in Ashford. Also located here are a century-old general store, a tavern, a convenience store selling gas and propane, and a post office. Ashford County Park offers travelers a restroom, playground equipment, trails, and an outdoor amphitheater.



Nearby attractions include Mount Tahoma Trails Association's extensive network of trails for skiing and hiking, horse trails run by the WA Department of Natural Resources, and the Recycled Spirits of Iron — Ex Nihilo Sculpture Park.

Two highly respected international climbing companies have headquarters here, Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. and International Mountain Guides. These businesses are headed by world-famous climbers, RMI's Lou Whittaker and IMG's Eric Simonson, and conduct expertly-guided climbs to the summit of Mount Rainier.



The Mount Rainier Visitor Association, representing 50 tourism businesses in Ashford, Elbe, and Mineral, is based here and operates a staffed visitor center. The center is prominently located on the left as eastbound travelers enter Ashford. Both the visitor center and MRVA's website provide up-to-date information about lodging availability and the full range of visitor attractions in the Upper Nisqually Valley as well as throughout the Pacific

Northwest region. Their website's Trip Planning section includes a link to the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway's website, and our website links to the MRVA website in several relevant sections.

Greater detail about Ashford's history and visitor attractions can be found in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan.

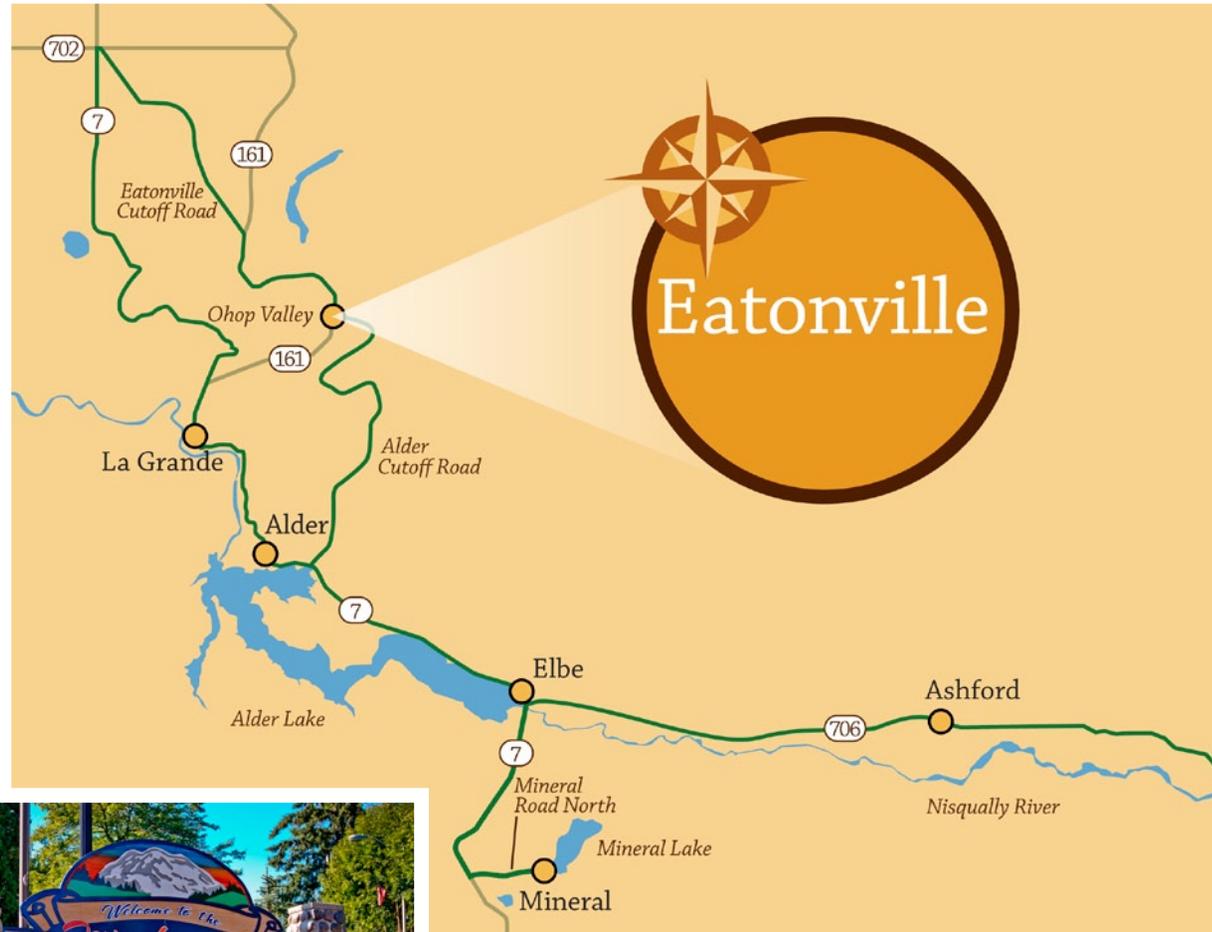
Eatonville

Eatonville is the largest community on the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway and the only incorporated area. It lies along the northern part of the Byway's loop portion. From here, the main entrance to the park is a 35-minute drive east. Eatonville is 59 miles south of Seattle and 31 miles southeast of Tacoma. Mount Rainier's

grandeur can be viewed from numerous places in town.

Residents of the other, smaller

Byway communities often come to Eatonville for services not found where they live. They drive in to the town's full-service grocery, drugstore, organic food co-op, feed store, bank, library, high school, weekly



newspaper, hardware/lumber store, hair salons, liquor store, an automotive parts store, and a vehicle repair business.

This full range of services is helpful to visitors traveling the Byway, as is the seasonally-operated Eatonville Visitor Center at 320 Center Street East. The town hosts several events of interest to tourists

and residents including an arts festival each August. The Greater Eatonville Chamber of Commerce lists events as well as visitor information among the postings on its website.

Two parks and a trail are within the city limits, Mill Pond Park, Smallwood

Park, and the new Bud Blancher Trail which makes an excellent stretch-your-legs break for drivers. It is a 2.3-mile trail one way, wide and wooded, that adjoins the University of Washington's Pack Forest and its 40 miles of trails. The vehicle entrance to Pack Forest is on SR 7 along the Scenic Byway's southern loop portion. From Eatonville by car, this vehicle entrance is 3.4 miles away via SR 161.



Eatonville is only a 10-minute drive to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, the Pacific Northwest’s premier wildlife and adventure park. Attractions near Eatonville that lie alongside the Scenic Byway are Pioneer Farm Museum & Ohop Indian Village, and Stringtown Cellars Winery & Lavender Farm.

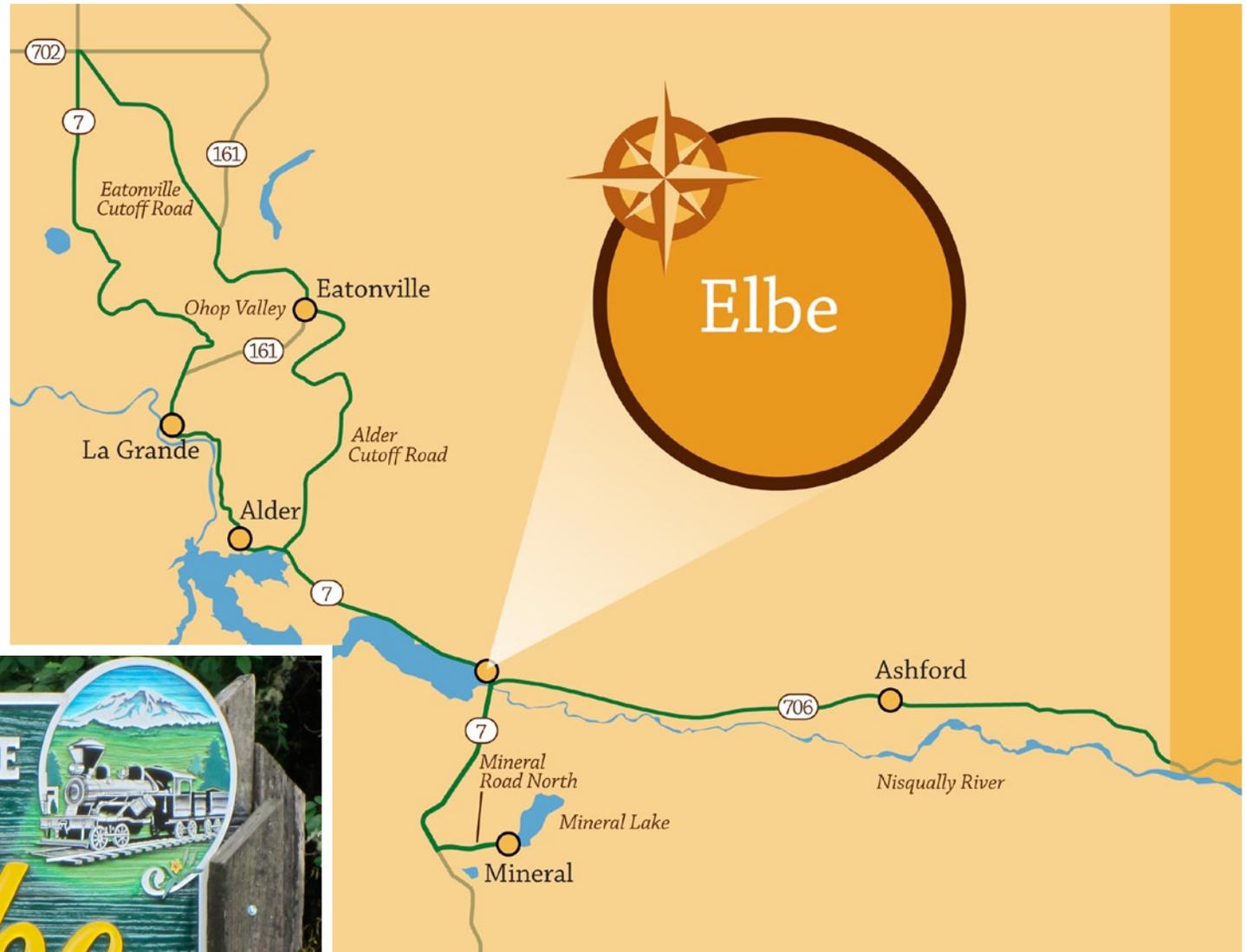
Tiny Dogwood Park is 4.9 miles from the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway’s western portal and 2.4 miles northwest of Eatonville on WA Highway 161. The park gives travelers a safe and easy place to pull off and marvel at Mount Rainier.

Eatonville’s history and visitor attractions are described in more detail in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan.



Elbe

Elbe is entered on the west from WA Highway 7 along the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. At the east end of Elbe, the Scenic Byway veers left onto SR 706 toward Ashford and the main (Nisqually) entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. Ashford is 7 miles away, the park entrance 13 miles. A state-run rest area is on the left as eastbound travelers enter Elbe.



From Elbe, Scenic Byway travelers are encouraged to take a short side drive on the Byway's spur to Mineral. This is done by driving SR 7 South as it crosses the Nisqually River into Lewis County. Mineral is 5.2 miles south of Elbe and is reached by turning off SR 7 South onto Mineral Road North and returning to Elbe the same way.



Befitting its small size, Elbe is the location of the tiny (18' x 24') Little White Church, an Evangelical Lutheran Church built in 1909 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is still used for services and weddings.

At the depot in Elbe, tourists can board an antique passenger train operated by the Mount Rainier Railroad. They are hauled by a 100-year-old steam locomotive to Mineral and the Logging Museum affiliated with the railroad before returning to Elbe.

The sole guest accommodation in Elbe is the Mount Rainier Railroad Dining Co. and Hobo Inn. Guests stay overnight in vintage rail cars, and the restaurant is located in an antique dining car.

Other businesses in Elbe include a seasonal drive-in serving burgers, a convenience store/gas station that also sells hardware and fishing tackle, a historic general store, espresso stand, tavern, and post office.

Information about Elbe's history and more detailed descriptions of its visitor attractions can be found in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan. Mount Rainier Visitor Association includes Elbe in its primary service area.

Mineral

In Elbe, a short spur of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is accessed to reach Mineral. This spur veers south on SR 7 and crosses the Nisqually River into Lewis County. After 3.7 miles on SR 7 South, the Scenic Byway turns left on Mineral Rd. North for a 1.5-mile drive into Mineral, WA. This spur also provides another entry point to the Scenic Byway, because Morton is the southern terminus of SR 7. Morton is 17 miles from SR 7 South's intersection with Mineral Road North. White Pass Scenic Byway runs through Morton on SR 12.

Diminutive Mineral has much to offer. The history-rich Logging Museum

in Mineral is at the end of the line for Mount Rainier Railroad, a vintage steam train. The run goes from Elbe to Mineral and back with a visit to the museum.

Mineral Lake Lodge is on the National Register of Historic Places. Other overnight accommodations include campsites and a fishing resort. Mineral School, built in 1947, is now an arts venue and retreat for writers and artists.



Many visitors come here to enjoy beautiful Mineral Lake, a popular

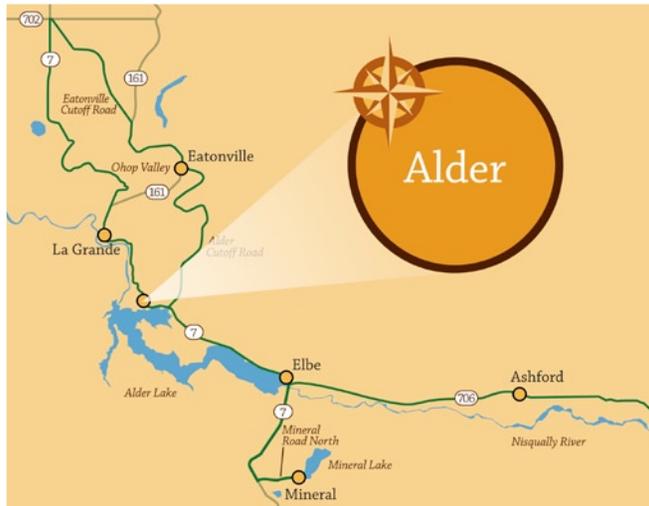
fishing destination with Mount Rainier as its jaw-dropping backdrop. Mineral Lake is stocked yearly with rainbow, cutthroat, and brown trout, as well as largemouth bass. In spring, during opening weekend of the fishing season, the town's population triples with anglers hoping to catch one of the lake's storied 10-pound trout. Fishing is done from public fishing docks and boats.

After leaving Mineral and returning to Elbe on the same route, drivers take SR 706 if going east on the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. Seven miles farther is Ashford; 13 miles east of Elbe is the park entrance.

Information about Mineral's history and more detailed descriptions of its visitor attractions can be found in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan. Mount Rainier Visitor Association includes Mineral in its main service area.

Alder

Travelers on the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway reach Alder after traveling east 13.8 miles from the Byway's west portal via SR 7, the Byway's southern loop segment. Alder is 4.2 miles southeast of Alder Dam and 5.2 miles northwest of Elbe.



This settlement is recognized from the Byway not only for the entrance to Tacoma Power's Alder Lake Park but also for the quaint Alder meeting hall where residents have long gathered for events. The little community's focus is on recreational visitors to the lake and the park's campgrounds. The lake forms a 7-mile-long stretch

Alder's history and attractions are described in greater detail in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan.

between Alder and Elbe. It's a popular site for swimming, boating, and fishing.

La Grande

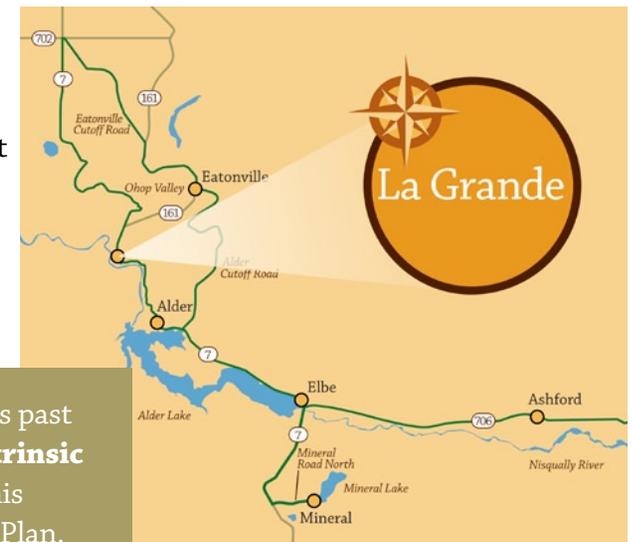
Like Alder, La Grande is small even by hamlet standards. Drivers on the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway arrive in La Grande using SR 7 (Mountain Highway), the southern loop portion of the Byway. La Grande is 10 miles from the Scenic Byway's west portal, 0.8 miles southeast of UW's Pack Forest, 0.4 miles northwest of Alder Dam, and 3.8 miles northwest of Alder.



Tacoma Power's LaGrande Dam, spelled differently from the town, is located in this community. It is smaller than Alder Dam but coordinated with it. Unlike Alder Dam, the reservoir LaGrande Dam creates is not open to the public. The quaint La Grande Post Office is always a smile-inducing sight for Byway travelers.

We do not have an answer to the question that presents itself: Did someone with wit and at least a little familiarity with French name this dam? La grande dame is the French term for a great lady.

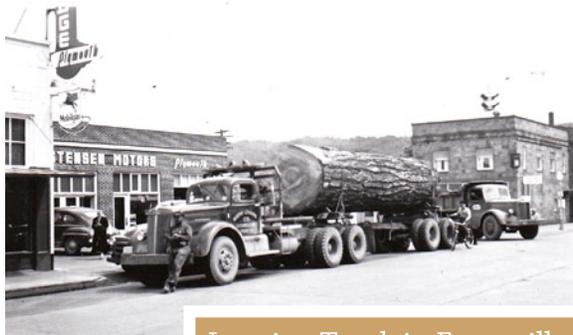
More about La Grande's past can be found in the **Intrinsic Qualities** section of this Corridor Management Plan.



Regional Economy & Demographics

Economy – Past & Present

All the communities of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway have a common history as logging towns. The centuries-old behemoths growing here attracted high-volume logging and sawmill operations. As the supply of these great trees which once seemed endless began to dwindle, mills designed for the trees' wide girth shut down. In the middle of the 20th century, every one of these communities was hit hard when the logging companies and mills which had moved in no longer found it financially feasible to stay.



Logging Truck in Eatonville

The logging boomtown of National at the west edge of Ashford came to an end. Mineral had hoped to become a mining boomtown before logging operations moved in, but it never had success with this

endeavor, so there was no option to return to what had given the town its name.

For the last several decades, these communities have had a different shared focus: tourism. The primary reason is as obvious as that big volcano. For 2015, Mount Rainier National Park tallied more than 1.2 million visitors spending \$45.7 million in communities near the park with a net impact to local economies of \$58.3 million. The park's report notes that those visitors supported approximately 600 jobs in the local area, not including 100 permanent park employees, 180 seasonal park workers, and 450–500 commercial concessions service employees working in or near the park. Park visitation the first two months of 2016 exceeded the same period in 2015 by 30 percent. For 2016, the centennial year of the National Park Service, several celebrations and events gave added reason to visit Mount Rainier.

The park's presence has been the catalyst for business and recreational ventures through the Byway corridor.

In Eatonville, the emphasis on tourism isn't new except in degree. That town has welcomed tourists as a waystation since the late 19th century when visitors began journeying to Mount Rainier. Currently, Eatonville is positioning itself more strongly than ever as a place where Mount Rainier's visitors, as well as visitors to other nearby attractions, can find a full range of services.

Ashford in the second half of the 20th century turned its attention more intently to visitors heading to Mount Rainier. It's a logical choice for this community closest (6 miles) to Mount Rainier National Park's Nisqually entrance, the most popular entry point and the only one open all year. The seasonality of park visitation strongly affects Ashford's economy.

Elbe, Mineral, and Alder share this priority of having and nurturing tourism-based economies. La Grande, site of Tacoma Power's Nisqually River hydropower facility, is less focused on tourism. For Alder, the recreational opportunities offered by Alder Lake are the foundation of its economy.

Demographics

Demographic statistics are derived from the 2010 US census and the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey of 2013. For unincorporated communities, reporting boundaries are determined by the bureau's category of Census-Designated Place (CDP).

In the Scenic Byway communities, the majority of residents identify their race as White. Far fewer numbers identify as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Latino, African American, or representing two or more races.

Ashford

The CDP population of Ashford is 217 within the 2.1-square-mile area designated by the 2010 census. This is down from the 2000 census population of 267. The median age of residents in 2013 was 53.

Of 270 workers age 16 and older in 2013, 94 are in “accommodation and food service” which we can credit to the many lodging operations in Ashford along with a few restaurants. Another 13 are in the “retail trade,” in shops and stores catering to tourists. The “real estate and rental and leasing” category with 36 people is, at least in large part, related to vacation accommodations.

The National Park Service is a significant employer in the area as is Rainier Guest Services (formerly called GSI), a private, authorized concessioner providing food and lodging services and service workers to the national park. It is likely that many of the 63 adults in “public administration” and 12 in “information” work for one of these entities.

Median household income was \$36,645 in the 2013 survey. As with many tourism-based towns, an economic gap exists between business owners and those in service jobs working for these owners. Work also is seasonal in many cases. During the high season of summer the national park, as well as Rainier Guest Services and other private businesses, enlarge their staffs using temporary workers.

The 2013 American Census Survey found that 87.7% of Ashford residents were high school graduates or above that level of education.

Eatonville

As the largest and sole incorporated town in the Scenic Byway region, Eatonville's population is far ahead of the other communities: 2,758 as of 2010. The city limits cover 1.82 square miles of land.

Eatonville was incorporated in 1909 and has a mayor-council form of government with five council members, each serving four-year terms. The city also has police, fire, utility, planning, building, and parks departments, a community center, municipal court, the only high school in the Scenic Byway region, and a branch of the Pierce County Library System.

Eatonville has an active website for its citizens (eatonville-wa.gov). The Greater Eatonville Chamber of Commerce manages a website as well (eatonvillechamber.com) that includes a visitor guide, event listings, and information on local services.

In 2013, the median age was 31.7. The majority of workers are in service industries (public and private), construction, and retail sales. Median household income in 2013 was \$60,313.

The 2013 survey for education reports 93.7% of the population of Eatonville had attained at least a high school degree. As previously noted, the only high school in the Scenic Byway region is located here.

Elbe

The Elbe CDP in 2010 had a population of 29 and a median age of 45.5. The population reached its peak a century ago, after the Tacoma Eastern Railroad came in 1904 and before it ended service in 1924. Those who had arrived for the logging boom that the rail line made possible left too, and Elbe's population dwindled to its current size.

Income information is not available from the US Census of 2010 or the ACS of 2013, but median household income in 2000 is listed as \$13,750. No statistical information is available from 2000, 2010, or 2013 as to what types of employment are dominant. Even a non-stop drive through Elbe, however, suggests tourism as the economic base.

No educational data was available for Elbe on the US Census Bureau's website.

Mineral

202 residents lived in Mineral in 2010, and in 2013 their median age was a rather creaky 69.7. That helps explain why, in 2013, of 152 people age 16 or older, only 29 were in the workforce.

According to the 2013 report, all working adults identified as "self employed" in the category of "administrative and support and waste management services." Median household income was \$32,069.

The 2013 survey reports 80.9% of Mineral residents had at least a high school degree.

Alder

The Alder CDP population in 2010 was 227. In 2013 the median age was 23.6. Median household income in 2013 was quite high for the Byway region, \$63,357. Chief occupations in 2013 were transport-related "material moving" (46 people); "construction and extraction" (35); "education, training, and library" jobs (30).

In the 2013 survey, 70.1% of Alder's population had at least a high school diploma.

La Grande

No US Census Bureau data could be found for La Grande, WA.

Zoning & Land Uses

Information for this section is based on data from Pierce County Planning & Land Services as well as the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*, a comprehensive plan developed by local citizens working with the county. The plan was adopted in 1999, most recently amended November, 2013, and adopted by the county May, 2014. Information for Lewis County is from Lewis County's Comprehensive Plan.

Within Pierce County, except for Eatonville, the great majority of the land along the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is either zoned Rural or Designated Forest Land.

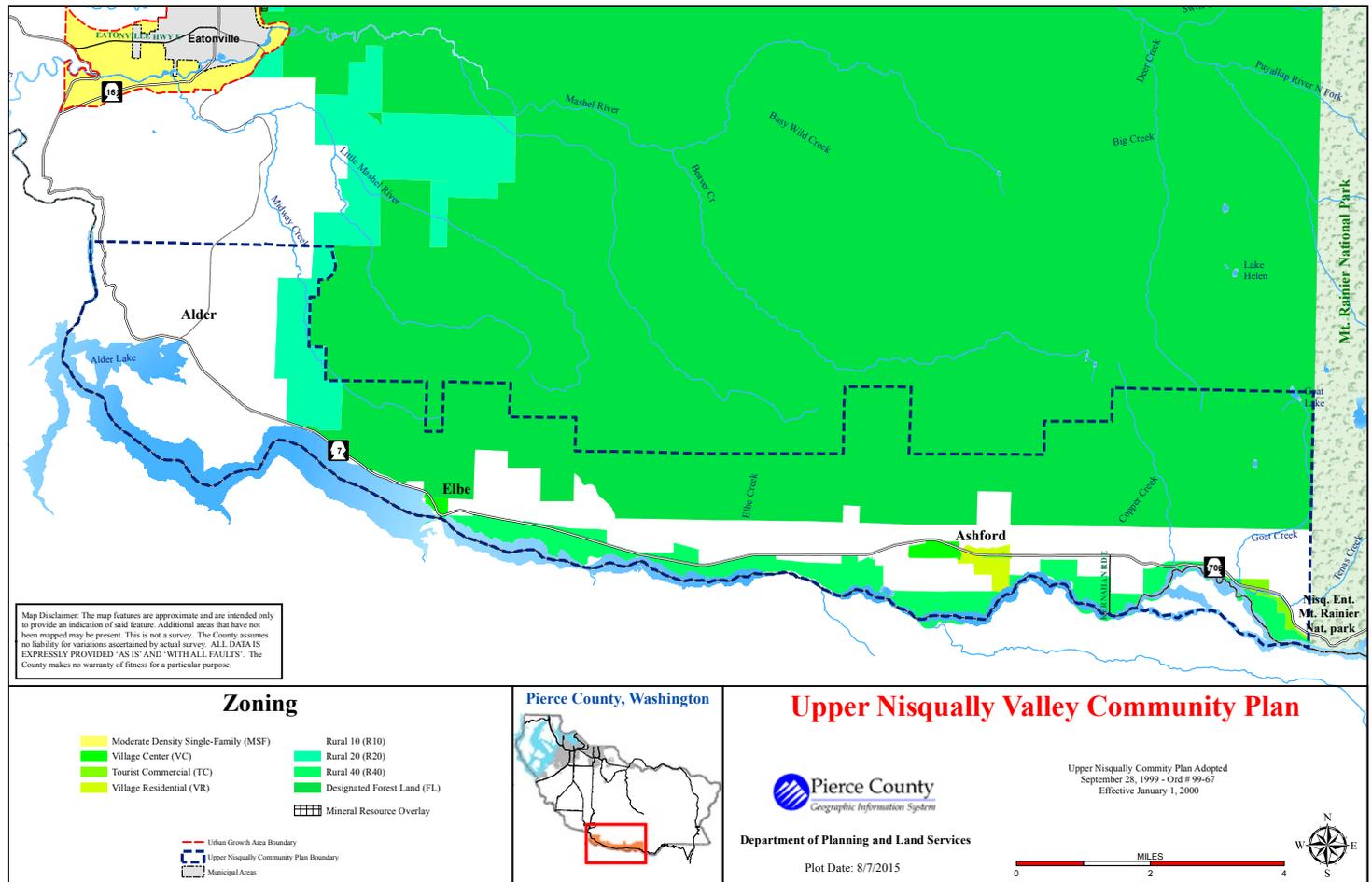
Washington State's Dept. of Natural Resources oversees Elbe Hills and Tahoma State Forests, and the National Forest Service manages Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Privately owned forested areas are also listed as Designated Forest Land,

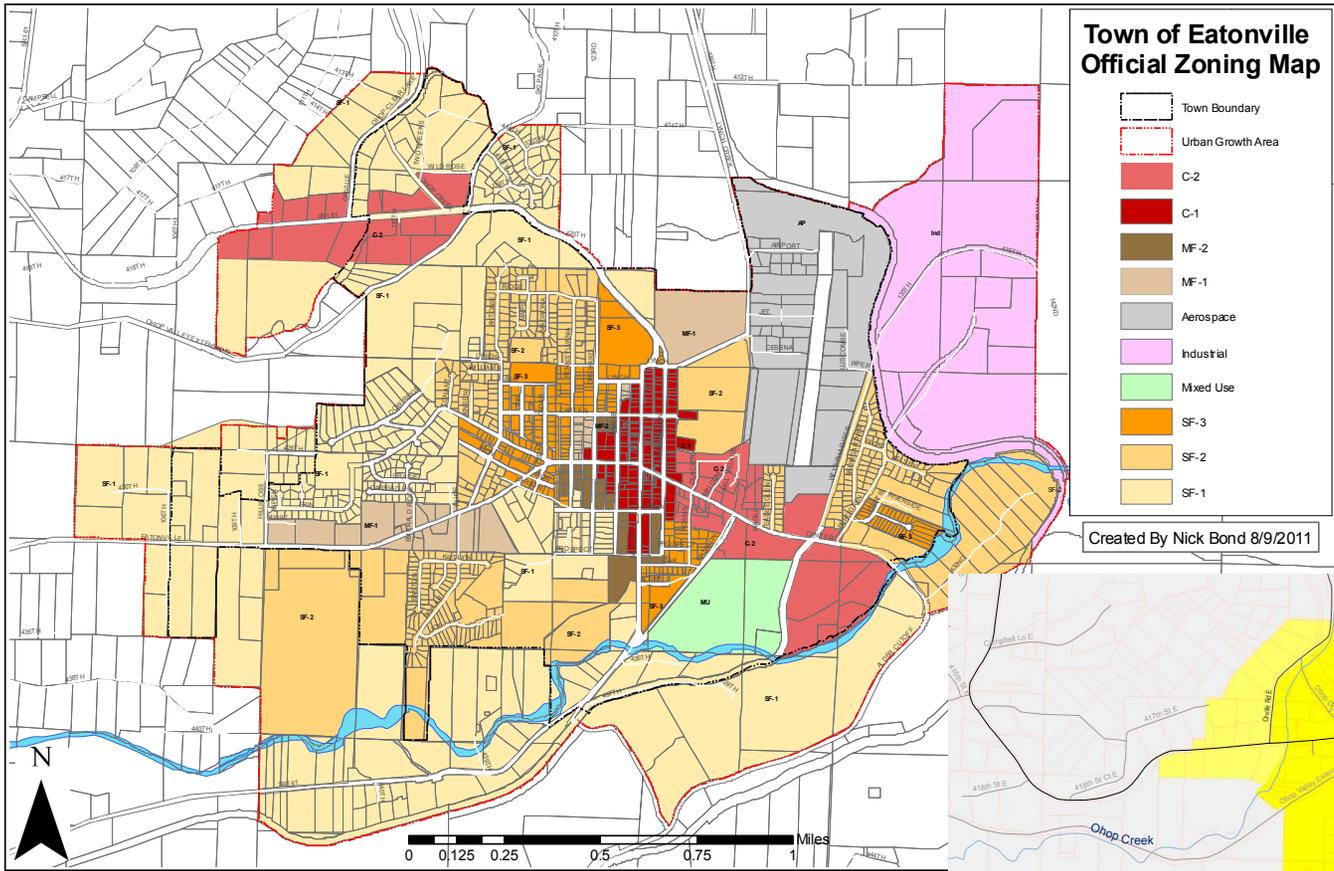
and this includes both small landowners and large timber holdings.

Land in the Upper Nisqually Valley (including Ashford, Elbe, Alder, and La Grande) that is not forestland is primarily

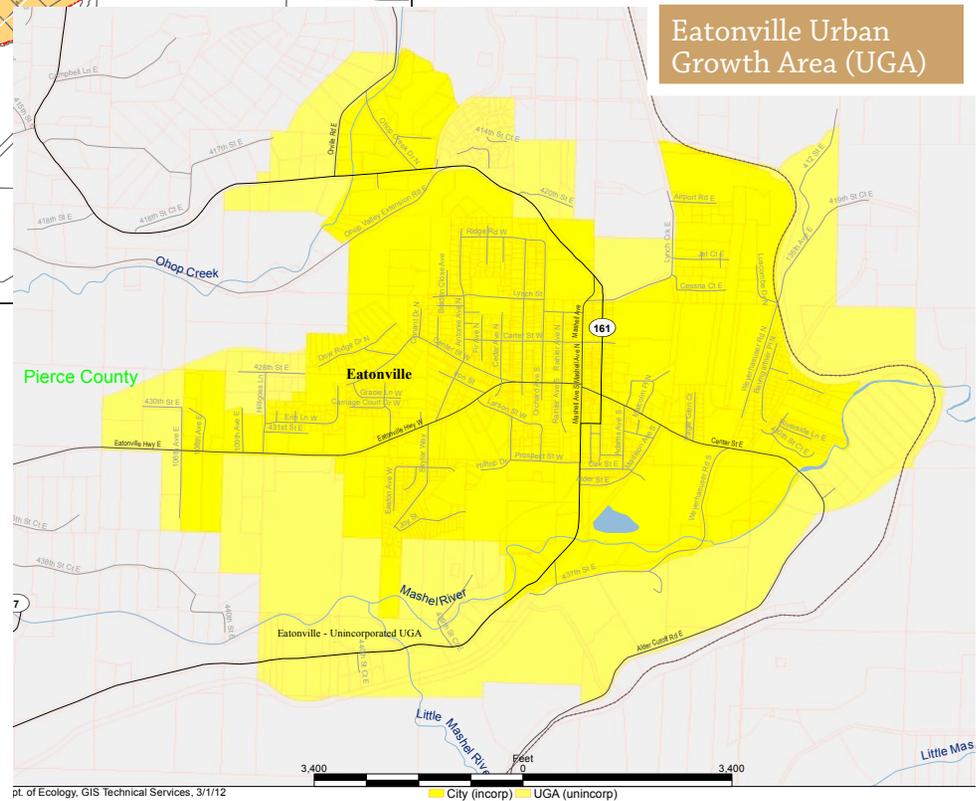
Rural (R10, R20, R40), especially along SR 7 and SR 706. Much of Ashford is zoned Village Residential.

Eatonville lies within a state-designated Urban Growth Area. The town is zoned



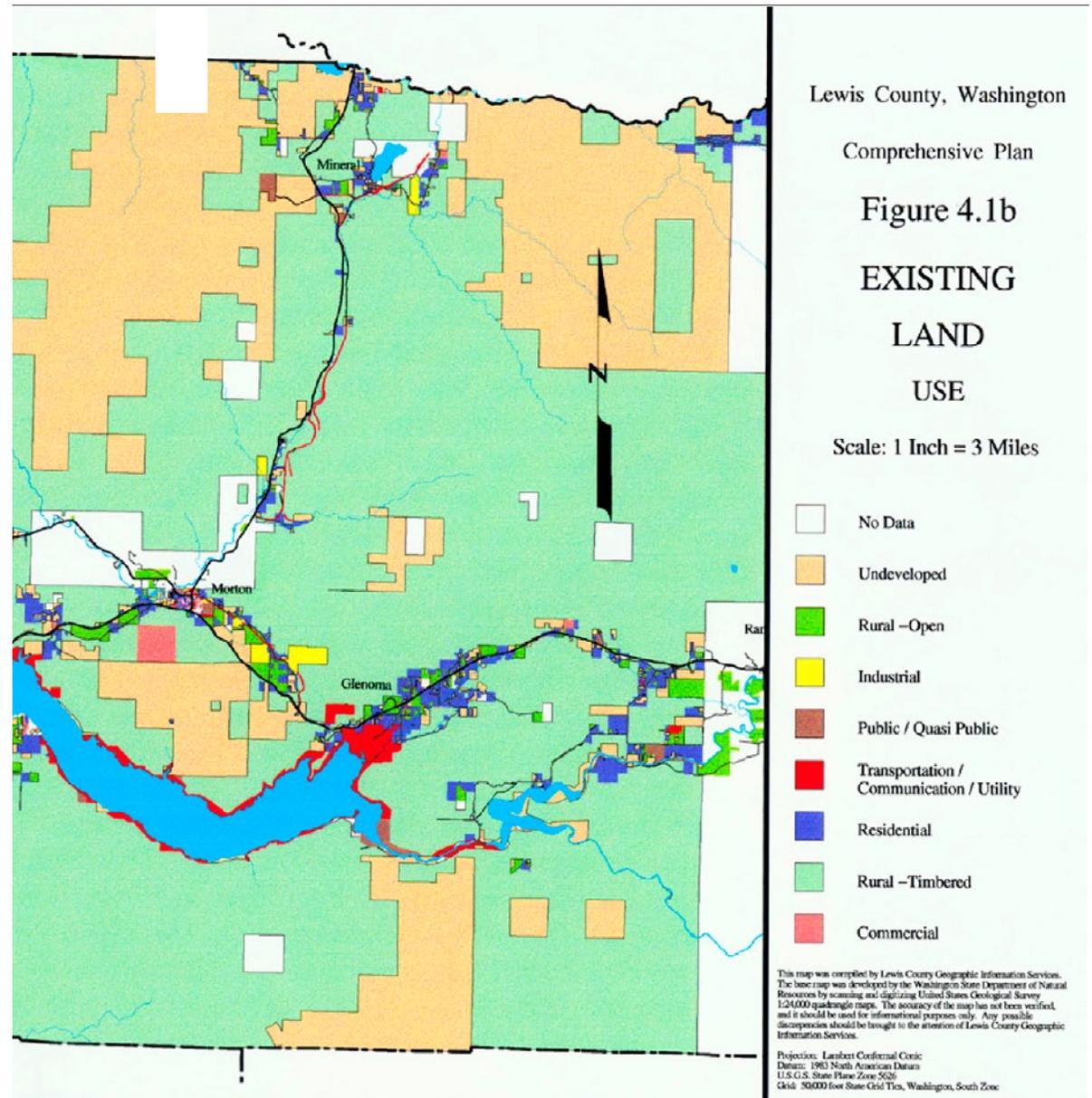


Swanson Field, operated by Town of Eatonville.



mainly as Single Family (SF1, SF2, SF3) with smaller areas listed as multifamily (MF1, MF2). The town's business core is Commercial C1 with two other, somewhat larger areas C2. On the west side, both industrial and aerospace zones comprise a large part of the land, with the aerospace designation referring to town-owned Swanson Airport. This is the only airport for public use within the Scenic Byway corridor.

The Byway corridor is in Lewis County for the spur that goes to Mineral and back via SR 7 South (from Elbe) and Mineral Road North. The large majority of that land along the Byway route is designated Rural-Timberland by Lewis County with a significant part of Mineral zoned Residential.



Scenic Features & Their Preservation



Landscape & Geology

Mount Rainier's magnificent rise to 14,410' towers over and defines the landscape of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. It is a mountain of fire and ice, because underneath this glacier-streaked pinnacle is the molten lava core of an active volcano. Portions of the Road to Rainier Scenic

Byway are on the volcano evacuation route and are marked as such.

Over time, the Mountain has changed in shape and size innumerable times from volcanic activity and other geologic movements. Over the past half million years or more, it has erupted many times with the last eruption occurring in the 1890s. Mount

Rainier's eruptions alternate between quiet lava-producing episodes and explosive debris-producing blasts. The eruptions have built up layer after layer of lava and loose rubble to eventually form the tall cone that characterizes composite volcanoes such as this one. In addition to eruptions, the Mountain has experienced the slough-off action of lahars in which rock, debris, and water rush unexpectedly down a side slope into glacial river valleys below.

Volcanic activity is detected through seismic monitoring by the University of Washington that began with the 1980 eruption of Mount Saint

Helens. Lahars can be anticipated to some degree by locating and monitoring older, weaker rock zones.

Elevation in the Scenic Byway communities ranges from a high of 1,762 feet in Ashford to a low of 801 feet in Eatonville. Soil is a mixture of volcanic matter, glacial till, and sediment.

On August 13, 2015 a glacial outburst flood and debris flow occurred, prompted by hot, dry weather and glacial recession. The sudden outburst began when a portion at the terminus of the South Tahoma glacier broke off and quickly released water stored in the glacier. As the outburst flood moved down Tahoma Creek's valley, it carried the debris of sediment, rocks, and uprooted trees, damaging the park's Westside Road.

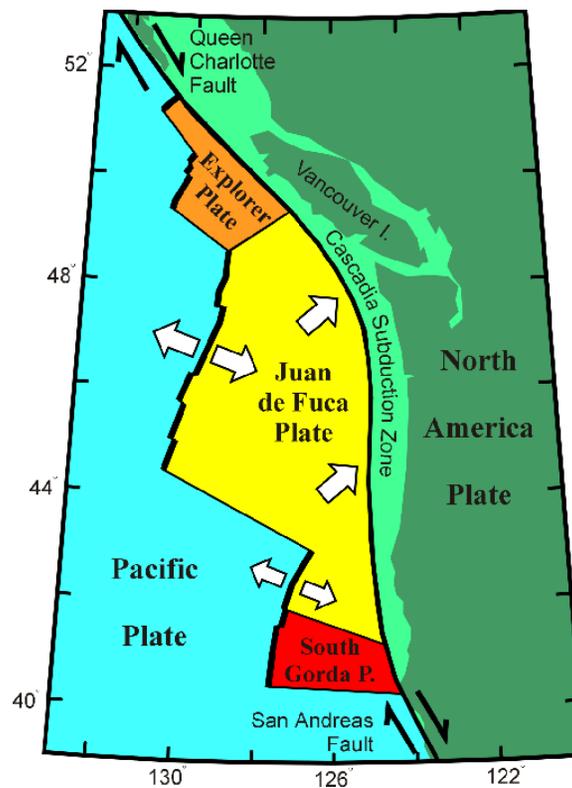


Glacial Outburst Flood, August 2015

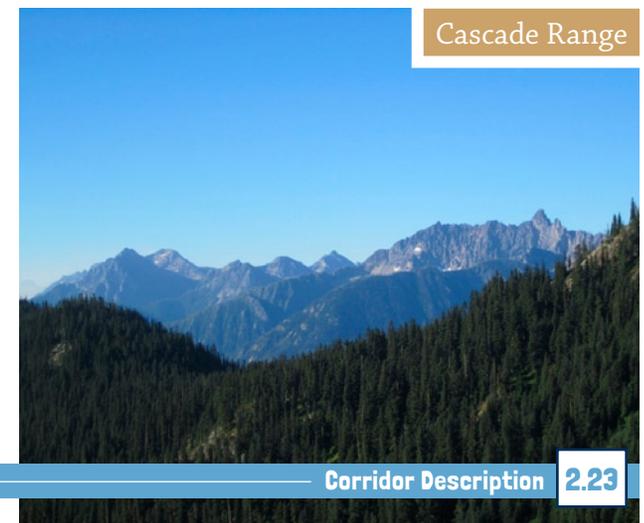
Earthquakes pose another potentially disastrous geologic threat. A Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake could not only cause widespread destruction but could provoke a volcanic eruption of Mount Rainier. The Mountain sits on a subduction zone that includes the Puget Sound region. In this zone, the Juan de Fuca tectonic plate is slipping beneath the North American tectonic plate, and the pressure occasionally

causes quakes. The last "full-margin" quake occurred January 26, 1700, a magnitude-9.0 that caused extensive devastation and death as well as a major tsunami in Japan.

Mount Rainier is one of the Pacific Ring of Fire volcanoes that range from lower South America's west coast, up along North America's west coast, across the Aleutian Islands, and down along the Asian coast with a final swing east through New Zealand.



Non-volcanic mountains in the Scenic Byway region are part of the Cascade Range with its sharp granite peaks. These help visually define the region and contribute to its outstanding scenic beauty. Most of the flat land to be found in the Scenic Byway region is due to glacial river valleys. Large, rounded granite boulders left from the retreat of the great Ice Age about 10,000 years ago dot the land.



Hydrology

As with landscape and geology, it is Mount Rainier that shapes the hydrology of the Scenic Byway corridor.

The Nisqually Glacier, one of the Mountain's major glaciers, becomes the Nisqually River as it transforms from ice to water and flows down through the Byway area and beyond. The river's terminus spills into Puget Sound at the Nisqually Reach near Olympia.

Especially in the Upper Nisqually Valley, the river shows the strong characteristics

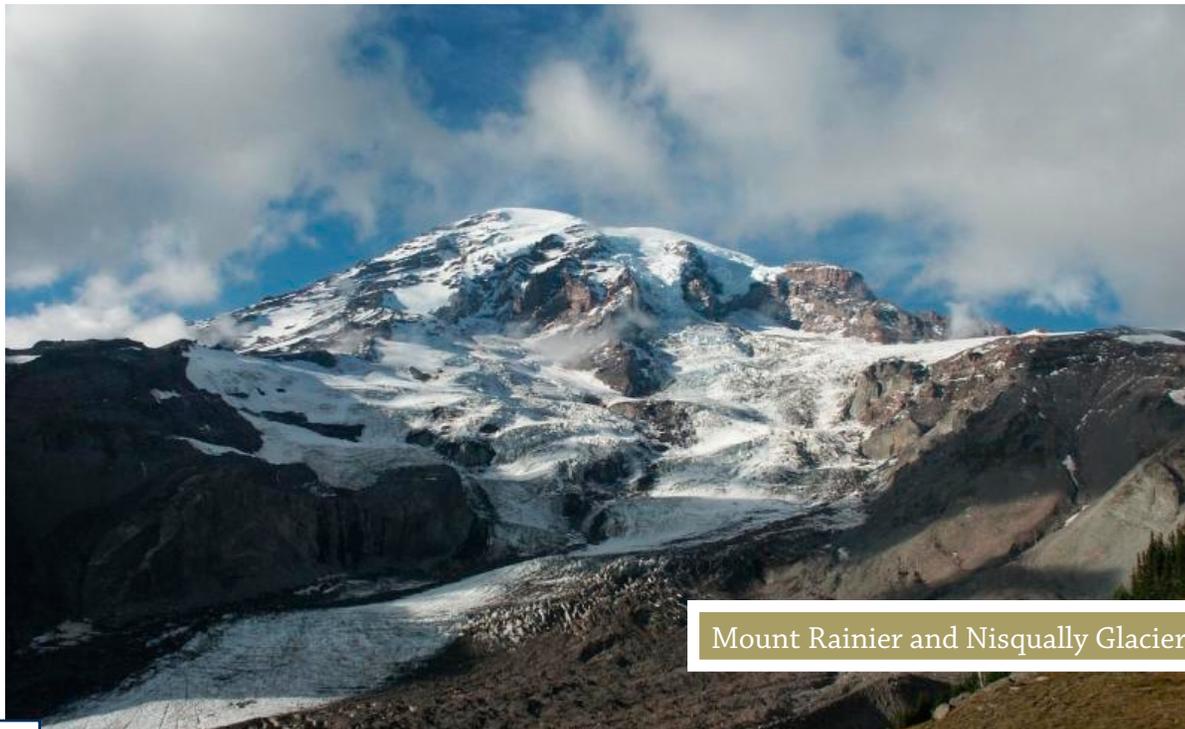
of a river originating with a glacier: an oft-changing, braided path and grayish water from glacial till. The Nisqually also bears evidence of floods. The epic flood of November 2006 left the river's upper portion strewn with tall, downed trees as have previous flood events. Erosion from logging also has altered the river, causing aggregation and loss of river depth.

The Nisqually empties temporarily into Alder Lake when it reaches Elbe, runs through Alder Dam, then LaGrande



Dam. These hydroelectric dams, operated by Tacoma Power, provide electricity to an estimated 40,500 homes in Pierce County.

The Nisqually's main tributary is the Mashel River which begins as a small, unnamed lake 5.1 miles southwest of Mount Beljica near Ashford. Busy Wild, Beaver, and Little Mashel Creeks all feed into the Mashel. The Mashel is a central feature of Eatonville's landscape, running along the town's southern limit. The Mashel flows into the Nisqually River at mile 39.6 on the Nisqually.



Climate & Global Warming

The climate throughout the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway corridor is designated warm-summer Mediterranean. Historically, that has meant temperate summer days with highs in the 70s. Winters generally are not severe, but exceptions occur, and even the mildest winter is likely to have one or two periods of extreme cold and/or snow.

This is the Pacific NorthWET, and most years the Scenic Byway region lives up to its name, especially in November, December, and early spring. Frequent rain is what makes possible the corridor's lush variations of green. This abundance of moisture also creates a crowded habitat in which a seedling often takes root on the



bark of a toppled tree, its “nurse log,” which eventually rots away beneath it. Travelers to the corridor, especially those from

drier climates, are often spellbound by the forested world they find here.

With elevation gain, going eastward on the Byway, comes cooler weather, so Ashford tends to receive more snow and chillier winter temperatures than Eatonville. Due to mountainous terrain, microclimates abound, causing temperatures, snowfall, and rainfall to vary, sometimes significantly, within small geographic areas.

A lucky pattern that often occurs several times a year is an inversion: a high pressure system overlays a low pressure zone beneath it, trapping cool marine air along Puget Sound. When that happens, the Upper Nisqually Valley — sometimes as far down as Eatonville — can be unusually warm and sunny even in winter, while residents closer to Puget Sound are stuck in stagnant, polluted, foggy skies. When that happens, the weather forecasters start telling people to “head for the hills.”

Global warming, with its extreme weather events, is expected to cause hotter, drier weather, such as this region experienced in 2014 and even more strongly throughout 2015. The Carlton Complex forest fire in the summer of 2014 is the largest single fire

in state history, destroying 400 acres and surpassing the 1902 Yacolt Burn. The 2014 fire season's toll for all wildfires statewide eventually totaled over 550 square miles, mainly in northcentral Washington.



2014 Carlton Complex fire

2015 was three times as bad. Within a total burn area of approximately 1500 square miles, almost one million acres scorched. Immense fires in northcentral WA and elsewhere in the state caused thousands of people to evacuate, destroyed homes, killed three firefighters and untold numbers of wildlife, and ravaged an astonishing portion of the state. The Okanogan Complex, the largest group of several close-together fires in 2015, burned more than 300,000 acres but never merged into one fire as did the previous year's Carlton Complex.



2015 Fires, Washington



of Defense sent more than 200 active-duty soldiers, and late August saw the arrival of crews from Australia and New Zealand.

Within the corridor, a fire in the summer of 2015 burned 280 acres above Alder Lake. The fire was across the lake from the Scenic Byway on SR 7 west of Elbe. The fire likely began from a lightning strike late July, then fanned into a noticeable wildfire two weeks later. The Alder Lake Fire mainly was on very steep terrain within Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Alder Lake Fire, August, 2015

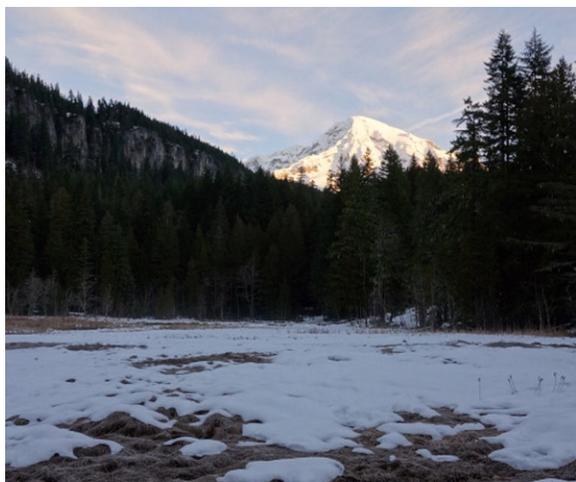
Washington Governor Jay Inslee on Aug. 20, 2015 called the lightning-sparked fires raging across the state “an unprecedented cataclysm” and said the fires “have burned a big hole in the state’s heart.” For the first time in state history, the WA Department of Natural Resources began accepting volunteers to fight fires and donate equipment. The US Department



The fires in northcentral WA created a smoke cloud with its acrid smell that spread through the Byway corridor and as far west as Puget Sound when the winds blew from the east. In August, winds from the west and northwest carried the Alder Lake Fire's smoke and smell to the Upper Nisqually Valley. In both instances, air quality was compromised. And in June, 2015, huge burns in California, Alaska, and Canada caused hazy skies in the Scenic Byway region.

Nonetheless, given what climate change could bring in coming years, University of Washington meteorologist Cliff Mass and others in his field speak of the potential for “climate refugees.” This refers to people relocating here from even hotter climates in southern and southwestern US.

January 2015 record low snowfall, Longmire, Mount Rainier National Park



Paradise Ice Caves, 1958, now melted away (left), and the Emmons Glacial Retreat (right).

The Mountain's glaciers have been retreating since the Little Ice Age ended 250 years ago. During that period, glaciers ran much farther down Mount Rainier than they do now. Recent warmer weather has only exacerbated this trend of receding. The Paradise Ice Caves, a popular hiking destination above Paradise, created tall, wide, long caverns of bluish ice. Due to the retreat of the Paradise Glacier, the caves have melted and no longer exist.

Both the National Park Service and the US Geological Survey have made systematic measurements of Mount Rainier's glaciers since the late 1890s, creating one of the longest, most detailed records of glacial change in the country. Of particular interest to the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway region is that the National Park Service in 2000 initiated a long-term monitoring program for the Nisqually and Emmons glaciers.

The winter of 2014–2015 broke the record for lowest snowfall in a year for Mount Rainier with only 266 inches, roughly 1/3 of normal. The previous minimum record was 313 inches of snow the winter of 1939–1940. Average annual snowfall for Mount Rainier is 643 inches, and annual snowfall totals have been recorded since 1920.

Recent fire seasons give added impetus to promoting travel on the Scenic Byway during the “shoulder season,” the eight or so months of the year when tourism is down, lodging is readily available, and fire danger is minimal.

Vegetation

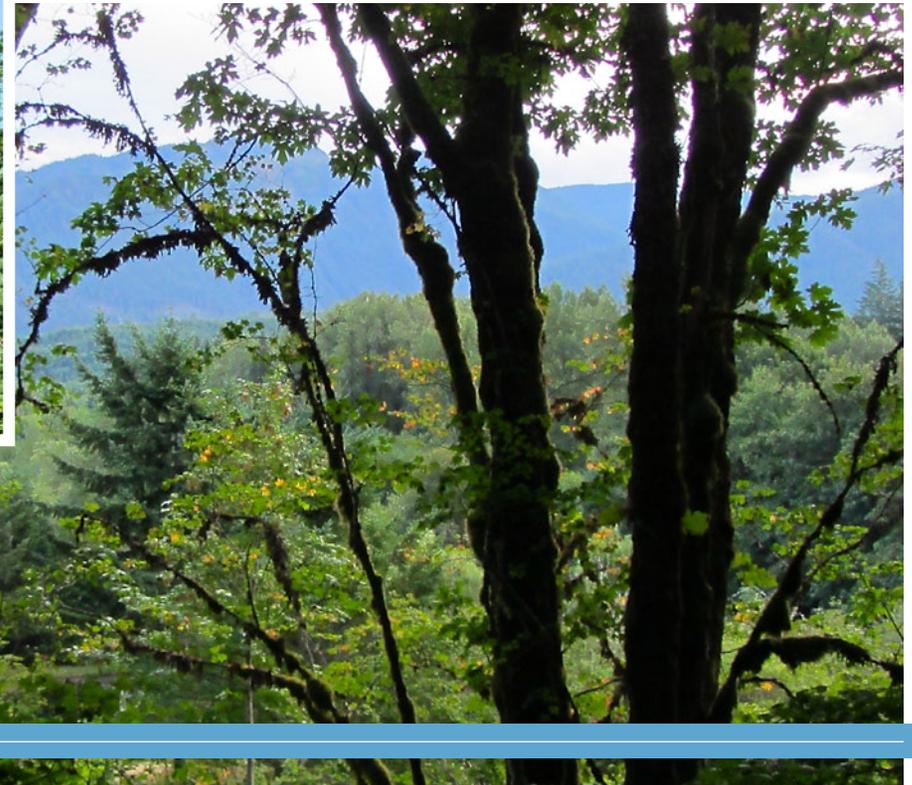
Most of the huge Douglas Firs and Western Red Cedars that flourished in the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway region were logged out in the first half of the 20th century. It is fortunate that Mount Rainier National Park, at its lower elevations, has proven to be a haven for these giants and the mature, diversified forests that grew around them. Some of the trees in the park are a thousand

years old. Hemlock, alder, and cottonwood are also prevalent native tree species.

In many areas in the Scenic Byway corridor, logged old-growth was replaced by monocultures of second-growth Douglas Fir designed for later timber harvesting. Other clear-cut areas along the Byway have been left to develop their own diversity. If unplanted, the first trees to mature are usually tall, fast-growing alder with a life span averaging 40 years.

Low-growing native vegetation includes sword ferns, salal, nettles, and Oregon Grape. Plantain thrives even closer to the ground, along with oxalis and other native species. In summer, prickly bushes and vines offer treats to birds and humans: thimbleberries, blue and red huckleberries, salmonberries, raspberries, and Pacific Blackberries. All these plants had culinary, nutritive, and medicinal uses for the native Nisqually. Salal berries also provided a dark purple dye for fabrics worn by tribes.

Grove of the Patriarchs,
Mount Rainier National Park

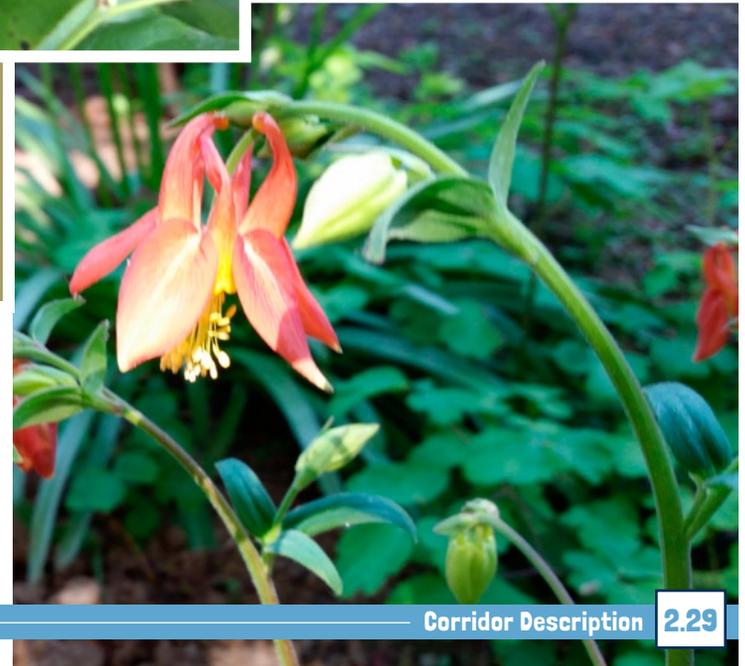


The Scenic Byway region is not immune to invasion by plants. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Blackberry are widespread culprits. The Pierce County Conservation District and Nisqually Land Trust have implemented intensive, successful programs using volunteers to eliminate knotweed in areas within the Scenic Byway corridor.

No description of vegetation in the Scenic Byway area would be complete without mention of the abundant fungi. There are innumerable types of mushrooms that thrive in this area, especially on forested slopes, and many have culinary, nutritive, medicinal, and in some cases hallucinogenic qualities depending on the type of mushroom. In autumn, the locals stand ready to forage after a good rain has lured the mushrooms up from their vast underground networks. Favorite varieties within the Byway corridor are chanterelles, King Boletes (porcini in Italy), oyster, and lobster mushrooms. Professional pickers scour these woods too, so when a local resident finds his or her secluded spot for picking, even a trusted friend might not be let in on the secret. The same is true of thimbleberry and blue huckleberry finds in summer. Many people living outside the Scenic Byway corridor also make fall pilgrimages to their favorite mushroom-hunting grounds in this area.



Clockwise from upper left: black twinberry, sword fern, chanterelle mushrooms, western columbine, and salal berries.



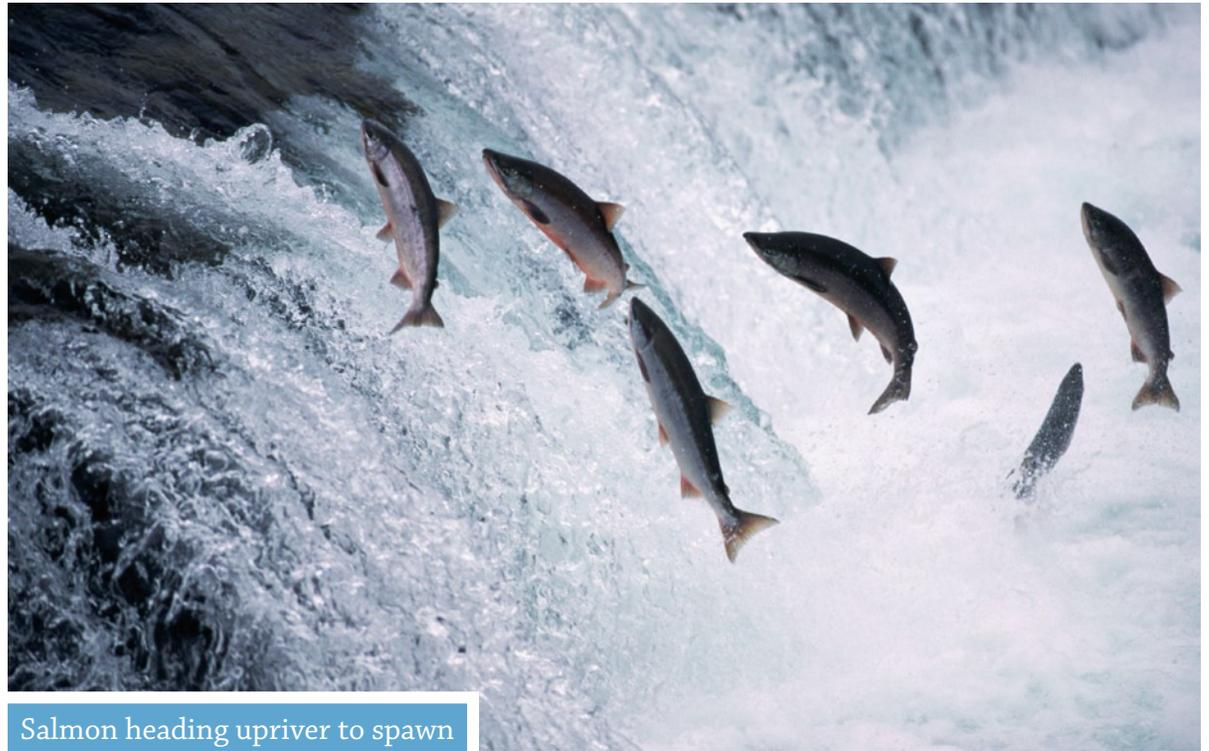
Fish

Only Mount Rainier trumps wild salmon as the iconic image of the Pacific Northwest. Salmon's importance certainly applies to people living within the Scenic Byway corridor. To the Nisqually, salmon equals life. It once thrived in far greater numbers in the waterways of the Scenic Byway. The Nisqually still fish for fresh salmon in warm months, and they smoke it over fires for winter consumption, a preservation method used for millennia.



Salmon gave the tribes of the Coastal Northwest art as well as life. Smoked salmon provided meals that didn't have to be procured in the wild, so people had time in winter to develop their distinctive art with its stylized, bold imagery, often of animals and in red and black.

Wild salmon are almost mythic in their quest to survive. All wild salmon are anadromous, migrating from the ocean to freshwater streams to deposit their eggs back in the waters where they were born. They use olfactory memory to find those places. True to folklore, tracking has shown that in most cases they do indeed return to the same spot where they began life.



Salmon heading upriver to spawn

Varieties of wild Pacific salmon include Chinook (a.k.a. King), Coho, Chum, Pink, and Sockeye. Steelhead trout, in the salmonid family, is another native fish that has anadromous behavior, unlike its native freshwater relatives, rainbow and cutthroat trout. Steelhead trout are listed under the Endangered Species Act due to sharp declines in their populations.

Some wild salmon and steelhead runs face the peril of becoming nothing more than myth. Their populations have declined radically in the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway corridor and throughout the Pacific Northwest. From the early 1900s until

fairly recently, commercial fishing took massive numbers of these fish. Other threats are numerous: river channelization and channel clearing, extensive land clearing, major water diversions, livestock grazing, logging and logging road-associated erosion, filling and diking of wetlands and estuaries, hydro-electric dam development, runoff, water and sediment contamination with toxicants, and acidification of ocean and fresh water.

Information about specific efforts to protect salmon and steelhead habitat is in the **Preservation & Restoration** section below.

The Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife is forceful in stressing the importance of a healthy ecosystem that supports salmon:

Salmon act as an ecological process vector, important in the transport of energy and nutrients between the ocean, estuaries, and freshwater environments. The flow of nutrients back upstream via spawning salmon and the ability of watersheds to retain them plays a vital role in determining the overall productivity of salmon runs. As a seasonal resource, salmon directly affect the ecology of many aquatic and terrestrial consumers, and indirectly affect the entire food web. The challenge for salmon, wildlife, and land managers is to recognize and account for the importance of salmon not only as a commodity resource to be harvested for human consumption, but also for their crucial role in supporting overall ecosystem health. It is also important that a naive view of wildlife as only consumers of salmon be abandoned. Many species of wildlife for which hard-earned environmental laws and significant conservation efforts have been established (e.g., grizzly bears, bald eagles, river otters, killer whales, beaver), play key roles in providing for the health and sustainability of the ecosystems upon which salmon depend. As the health of salmon populations improves, increases in the populations of many of the associated wildlife species would be expected. Salmon and wildlife are important co-dependent components of regional biodiversity, and deserve far greater joint consideration in land-management planning, fishery management strategies, and ecological studies than they have received in the past.

Excerpted from WDFW's *Special Technical Report: Pacific Salmon & Wildlife — Ecological Contexts, Relationships, and Implications for Management*

Wildlife

Extensive forestlands and waterways in the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway area provide food and shelter to many four-footed natives. Cougars, black bears, coyotes, bobcats, and mountain goats are among the largest.



The mountain goat is native to the Cascades but not the Olympics where it was introduced in the 1920s. The striking mountain goat is the only genus and species of its kind in the world and is unrelated to the domestic goat. Mountain goats, with their padded, flexible hooves, prefer steep, high-elevation cliffs. They are often spotted on Mount Wow, a sharp peak easily seen from WA Highway 706 along the Scenic Byway. They also live on the open cliffs within Mount Rainier National Park.

There are far too many ground-based creatures in the Scenic Byway to list, but their ranks assuredly include the ubiquitous slug.



Raven

Airborne life also is abundant, its most majestic representatives being bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and ravens. The raven, like the salmon, is a central figure in Pacific Northwest tribal storytelling, perhaps due in part to its keen intelligence, including a documented ability to fashion tools. It also is pretty clever about dropping a nut just where a car's tire on the pavement can roll over it and do the hard work of crushing, a display that makes for one of the Scenic Byway's most serendipitous roadside attractions.

Smaller native birds include the varied thrush with its one-noted call in various pitches, as well as robins, Steller's Jays, and

several others. An early summer walk along Eatonville's Bud Blancher Trail comes with a soundtrack from end to end: Swainson's Thrushes whose lilting song closes on an up-note. A particular favorite among birdcalls in the Byway area is that of the Pacific Wren (once grouped with the Winter Wren but designated in 2010 as its own species). This tiny crooner 4 inches long has one of the most complex songs in all of birdland, certainly on this continent. Studies that slowed recordings of the Pacific Wren's long melody show it actually inhales and exhales during its song.

The Northern Spotted Owl is native to the Scenic Byway corridor's remaining old-growth tree stands and ancient forests



Pacific Wren



Northern Spotted Owl

within the park. Logging began in earnest in the early 19th century with only 5–20% of old growth remaining. This species was listed as threatened by US Fish & Wildlife in 1990, and it remains imperiled by logging and the invasive Barred Owl, a migrant from the Great Plains. Only 4000 Northern Spotted Owls are estimated to exist now. US Fish and Wildlife Service announced in April 2015 that there is enough new scientific information to warrant a review of whether the owl's listing should escalate from threatened to endangered. The review is expected to be complete in 2017.

Preservation & Restoration

Endeavors to preserve and restore the environment of the Scenic Byway corridor are increasing. Government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and individuals are working toward this common aim, motivated by a sense of urgency about the health of our planet and this part of the planet they call home. The goal is to safeguard forestland, waterways, and habitat for wildlife and fish while promoting economic and environmentally sustainable communities for the Scenic Byway's human population.

It is important to note that while projects below are listed under single organizations, an outstanding factor in the success of conservation efforts in this area is that of cooperative partnerships. The National Park Service, US Forest Service, Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Nisqually River Foundation, Town of Eatonville, Pierce County, tourism-focused groups, and volunteers frequently work collaboratively, often with additional partner agencies and businesses.



Wetlands Reserve Sign & Mount Rainier, Ohop Valley

Mount Rainier National Park

Mount Rainier National Park has an active program aimed at environmental sustainability. Its involvement with the Climate Friendly Parks program, sponsored by the National Parks Conservation Association, helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions from park operations 30% from 2006 to 2014, a factor which affects air quality along the Scenic Byway corridor. The park's rebuilt Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center which opened in 2008 was designed for LEED certification with high environmental standards.



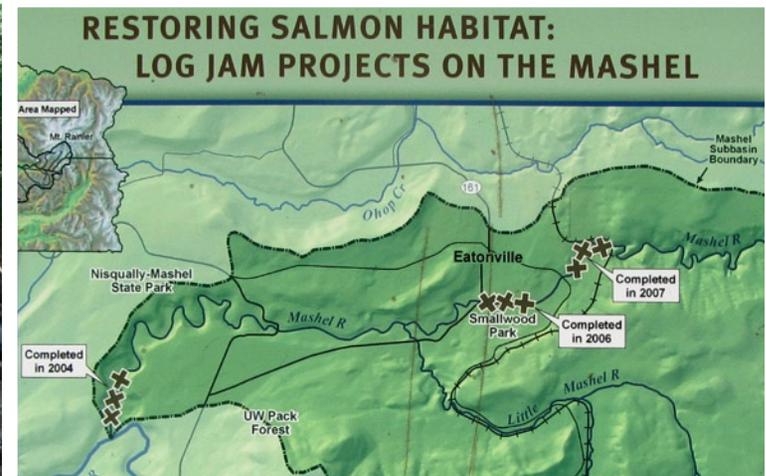
Eatonville

The Town of Eatonville, the only incorporated community in the Scenic Byway corridor, has taken its own steps toward sustainability with a particular emphasis on rain gardens and on the aquatic life and health of the Mashel River's waters.

In Eatonville's Smallwood Park, logjams were installed to create a nurturing, sheltering habitat for native salmon.



The new Bud Blancher Trail has two bridges over the river where trail users can watch salmon spawn in season.



Nisqually Land Trust

The nonprofit Nisqually Land Trust has initiated or partnered with other agencies on projects spread all along the Scenic Byway corridor. The Land Trust is the primary reason much of the viewshed along the Scenic Byway has been spared from logging, making sure the Byway merits the name “scenic.” In its 25 years, the Land Trust has acquired and now protects thousands of acres of critical habitat in this area. This includes a 2500-acre wildlife corridor called the Mount Rainier Gateway Reserve within the Byway corridor. The Land Trust's Mashel Shoreline Protection Initiative preserves a 2.75-mile river corridor through the heart of Eatonville along the town's much-used Bud Blancher Trail.



Nisqually Land Trust also regularly schedules cleanups with volunteers who rid critical sites of invasive plants and trash. In 2015, more than 350 volunteers planted more than 10,000 native trees and shrubs. More than 900 schoolchildren had the opportunity to be on Land Trust land as an outdoor classroom.

Nisqually Land Trust's conservation proposals in 2015 ranked number one at national, state, regional, and county levels. The Land Trust that year secured funding to acquire an additional 2,400 acres and over 9 miles of shoreline and salmon habitat. Much of this is within the Scenic Byway corridor.

Nisqually Community Forest

This community forest, a first for Washington State, is a major initiative of Nisqually Land Trust. Nisqually Community Forest incorporated as a nonprofit entity in 2014, the first community forest in the Puget Sound region. The forest's board of directors is dedicated to building an “economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable” community-owned working forest at “landscape scale” of at least 10,000 acres. As befits its community focus, meetings were held in Ashford and Eatonville with local residents to share information and solicit suggestions.

The impetus for a community forest is this: In the current marketplace, large timber investment companies own much of the forestland in the Scenic Byway corridor, and their priority is return on investment for their global shareholders. The community forest prioritizes the long-term interest of local communities. The community forest's proposed initial purchase of more than a mile of Busy Wild Creek and its adjoining land will aid a native population of steelhead that has dwindled dramatically to about 400 spawning adults, or less than five percent of the historic population. The Busy Wild feeds into the Mashel River near the Mashel's headwaters.

Nisqually Carbon Project

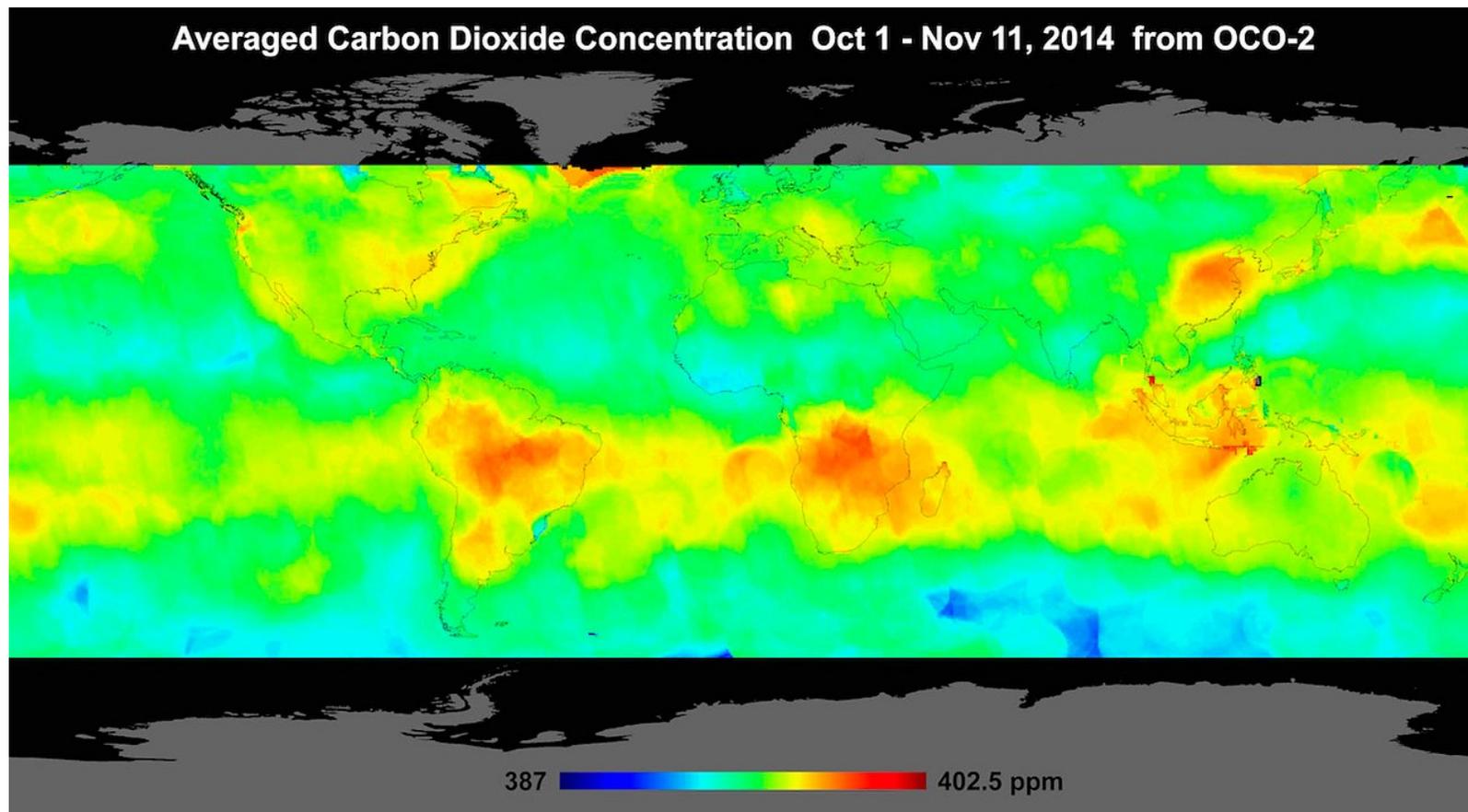
Another first: In late 2015, Nisqually Land Trust, Microsoft, and Washington Environmental Council partnered for the first carbon credit purchase in Washington State. This is exciting news for the Scenic Byway corridor, because the forest used for these credits is just above Ashford and is visible from the Byway's SR 706.

Microsoft's purchase of at least 35,000 carbon credits helped provide the funding for Nisqually Land Trust to purchase a 520-acre forest tract and protect it from commercial timber harvest.

Nisqually Land Trust will manage the forest for ecological restoration, so trees 50–100 years old will be left to grow alongside

younger trees. The land also provides habitat for endangered spotted owls and marbled murrelets. The venture is part of Washington-based Microsoft's determination to be carbon-neutral worldwide.

Verification was done under California's rigorous carbon offset standards and includes long-term monitoring and reporting.



Nisqually River Council Stream Stewards

Nisqually River Council is another major player, like Nisqually Land Trust, in habitat protection. NRC has its Nisqually Stream Stewards program that is very effective in hands-on work to protect and restore habitat in the Scenic Byway corridor. Nisqually River Council is the oldest river council west of the Mississippi, and its work is coordination, advocacy, and education within the Nisqually River watershed. NRC's aim is “to integrate the history, culture, environment, and economy of the watershed into a healthy and sustainable future.”

NRC's Stream Stewards are trained as citizen scientists who do field work and research to help natural resources professionals. The stewards receive 40 hours of instruction before volunteering 40 hours of time with community organizations such as the Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Nisqually River Education Project, and others.



A favorite activity of children who help with Stream Stewards is salmon carcass tossing. This project regularly jumpstarts the depleted nutrient base of the Nisqually and Mashel Rivers by distributing salmon carcasses from the Nisqually Indian Tribe's hatchery. Juvenile salmon feed directly on salmon carcass flesh as do many aquatic macro-invertebrate species.



Washington Trails Association



Washington Trails Association is the nation's largest statewide nonprofit dedicated to hiking. Besides promoting hikes all over Washington, WTA's dedicated volunteers are out in the woods year round for work parties that maintain and improve trails, including those in the Scenic Byway corridor. With staff cutbacks to federal and state parks and forestland, WTA's work helps keep many hiking trails open and safe. The organization began in 1966 and now has more than 13,000 members. In 2015, nearly 4000 WTA volunteers came to the aid of 139 trails with almost 125,500 hours of work. It's no wonder Gov. Inslee in 2013 began a tradition of declaring an annual "Washington Trails Day" in recognition of WTA's work.

Elbe Hills State Forest

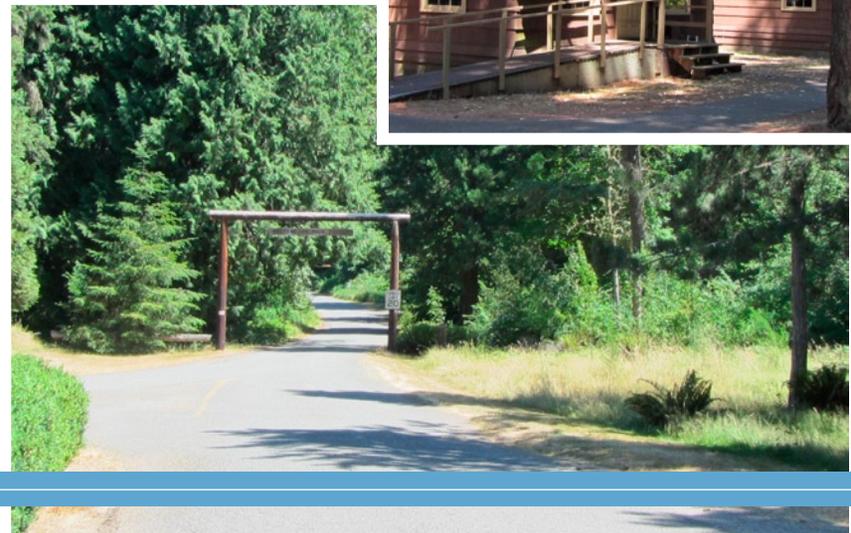
Elbe Hills State Forest is a green-certified state forest under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. Access to this forest and its recreational opportunities is adjacent to the Scenic Byway as eastbound travelers enter Elbe.



Center for Sustainable Forestry

The University of Washington's Pack Forest is home to the Center for Sustainable Forestry with its 4,300 acres of working forestland. The purpose of the center is "to discover, teach, and demonstrate the concepts of sustainable forestry, with a special focus on advancing the strategic themes of the University of Washington's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences. The center aims to provide internationally recognized leadership for sustainable forestland management through research, demonstration, and technology transfer."

UW's Pack Forest
Entrance & Buildings



Corridor Roads

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway incorporates several roads into its continuous route. Highways 7, 706, and 161 are managed by Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT) through its Olympic Region office. No WSDOT Route Development Plan (RDP) exists for SR 7 or 706, nor is there one for SR 161 within the Byway corridor portion of its route.

Pierce County maintains Alder Cutoff Road and Eatonville Cutoff Road. Lewis County has oversight of Mineral Road North.



The state's highway system has an active and long-established Adopt-a-Highway program in the Scenic Byway corridor. Several local sponsors are involved in this program to “promote pride and local ownership.”



Current Road Conditions, Modifications, & Safety



WA Highway 7

More of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is on WA Highway 7 than on any other road, from the Byway's western portal at SR 702/Eatonville Cutoff Road to its spur on SR 7 South from Elbe to Mineral. The segment from 702 to Elbe lies within Pierce County, while the 5-mile stretch from Elbe to Mineral is in Lewis County and on the other side of the Nisqually River. All of the Scenic Byway is two-lane road.

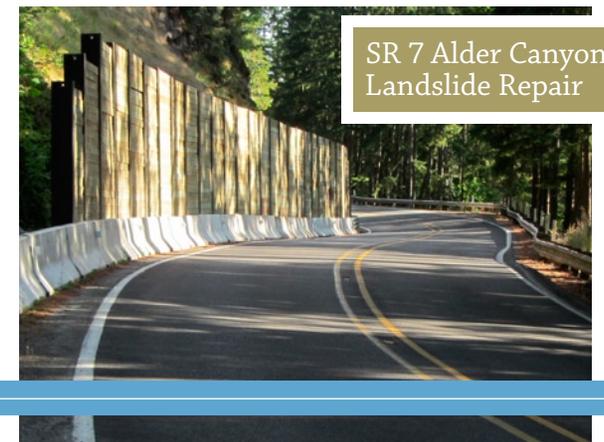
The part of SR 7 that begins at 702/Eatonville Cutoff Road intersection and leads toward Mount Rainier National Park also carries the name Mountain Highway and is marked as such at the 702 intersection. In 2010, a much-needed traffic light was installed at that intersection which is busy year round, even more so in summer.

WSDOT's Annual Traffic Report 2014 shows a decrease in SR 7 volumes from 2011 through 2014. The heaviest traffic in the Byway corridor for SR 7 is between Alder Cutoff Road and SR 706 at Elbe. The average daily traffic count for 2014 in that area was 3,500, down from 3,900 in 2011 but higher than 2013's count of 3,400. Going west, volumes drop after Alder Cutoff Road, because some vehicles choose that route instead of staying on SR 7. The final westbound stretch of the Scenic Byway toward the juncture with Eatonville Cutoff Road/SR 702 had an average daily count of 2,800 in 2014, down from 3,000 in 2011, but up from 2,700 in 2013. SR 7 is the most heavily traveled portion of the Byway corridor for through traffic.

Because much of SR 7 runs through mountainous terrain, landslides can be a

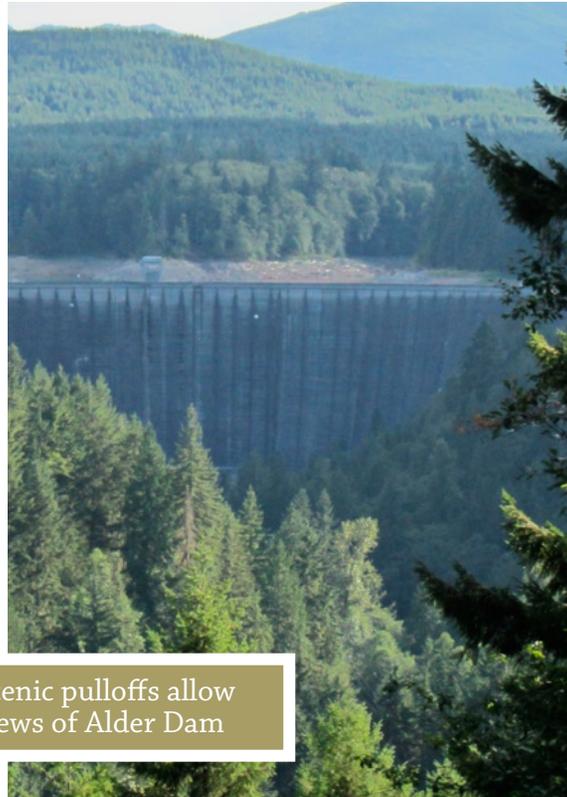
problem on its steep hillsides with western Washington's reputation for rain. State highway crews have remedied slide damage and taken protective and preventive measures as needed. In particular, two locations along SR 7 are worth noting for their recent work.

In April 2012, heavy rains and unstable terrain caused a landslide on SR 7 west of Alder and above Alder Canyon. In June, after more rocks and debris fell, the road was closed, and WSDOT crews began removing 300 cubic yards of loose rock and material. Four months later the highway reopened, after temporary repairs, as a one-lane road in the slide area. By July 2013, WSDOT finished stabilizing a five-mile stretch of hillside above SR 7 to reduce the potential for slide-related closures. Final work was completed October 2013, and no additional work is planned.



In 2015, a section of SR 7 that is on a hillside overlooking the Ohop Valley was stabilized. Remedial work for the Ohop Slide is not visible to travelers; it was on land above the road. While no further slide prevention work is planned on the Mountain Highway at this time, WSDOT continually monitors this route for any developing threats to driver safety.

The Mountain Highway, as its name suggests, winds through terrain that gains in elevation going southeast and east toward the park. From La Grande to Alder drivers encounter the curviest section aided by pulloffs for slow vehicles and scenic pulloffs to safely enjoy the mountain views down Alder Canyon toward Alder Dam.



Scenic pulloffs allow views of Alder Dam



A sign on SR 7 west of Elbe notifies travelers that park-related road information is available on AM 530 radio. This sign also functions as a traffic warning with flashing lights when a traffic advisory is in effect.



WSDOT has procured funding for the following SR 7 projects:

- Slope stabilization north of Pilgrim Road two miles west of La Grande in the WA State 2018–2019 biennial transportation budget;
- Alder area: More rock scaling for preservation, to remove loose rock, and to prevent rockfalls at milepost 23.6 west to 25.22, targeted for WA's 2019–2021 biennial transportation budget;
- Roadway realignment from Ohop Valley Road to north of 416th at milepost 31.25 west to 31.8, budgeted for the 2021–2023 biennium.

WA Highway 706

SR 706 is on the Scenic Byway for its entire length which runs from Elbe through Ashford to end at the main entrance of Mount Rainier National Park. For safety, this route has a slow vehicle turnout approaching Ashford. This is especially helpful given the numbers of visitors who travel the Byway corridor in RVs. WSDOT reports no modifications are planned to SR 706 through at least 2021.

As could be expected, daily traffic volumes were heaviest for the populated Ashford portion of SR 706 with an average daily count of 2000 in 2014, 1900 in 2013, and a high of 2300 in 2011 for that four-year span. From Ashford to the national park entrance, daily traffic averaged 600 vehicles in 2014, a figure that would vary greatly based on the time of year with most traffic occurring in summer.



WA Highway 161

The section of SR 161 that is part of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway runs from its intersection with Eatonville Cutoff Road at Barney's Corner to the center of Eatonville. From there the Byway uses Center Street/ Alder Cutoff Road east out of town. WSDOT plans no modifications to this route at this time. No traffic count is available for this segment of SR 161.

Pierce County – Eatonville Cutoff Road & Alder Cutoff Road

Pierce County's Eatonville Cutoff Road and Alder Cutoff Road are entirely on the Road to Rainer Scenic Byway.

The Eatonville Cutoff Road runs from the Byway's western portal to SR 161 at Barney's Corner. SR 161 is the Byway route from that point to Eatonville. The road is used by local traffic as well as park visitors. County transportation staff report no recent changes to Eatonville Cutoff Road and no planned modifications.

Alder Cutoff Road begins as Center Street in Eatonville and ends at WA Highway 7 by Alder Lake. Byway travelers using this route

to Mount Rainier National Park go east on SR 7 from this juncture. The road begins a climb as it leaves Eatonville. Several curves later, it drops down to SR 7 at Alder Lake.

In summer, 2015 Pierce County road crews installed needed guard rails in several places on Alder Cutoff Road although not in one critical section at the west end of the bridge over a trestle. The bridge's location is 5.2 miles from the Alder Cutoff Road intersection with SR 7 and 1.4 miles from the eastern boundary of Eatonville.

A grader patch was completed in September 2015 near the trestle and added protection was installed on either side of the road above the trestle. But for at least a couple of hundred feet immediately west of the trestle, there remain steep dropoffs above the canyon with no shoulder, no lane striping at all, and an uneven road surface from washouts. A warning sign before either end of the trestle alerts motorcyclists to use caution. The county road department reports it currently has no further modifications scheduled for this route.

Lewis County — Mineral Road North

The only portion of the Scenic Byway that is a Lewis County road is Mineral Road North which runs from SR 7 South at its start in Elbe to Mineral. (SR 7 continues to Morton after the Mineral turnoff.) Although this road currently is in good condition, its shoulders are quite narrow. Lewis County transportation staff report no planned changes to this road or its signage, and the road is not listed in Lewis County's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2015–2020.

Mount Rainier National Park

The roads in Mount Rainier National Park are not part of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, but the Byway's eastern terminus is at the park's main, most popular entry. This is the Nisqually Entrance leading to Longmire and Paradise. Given that connection, the park's road system and its condition are critical to the Scenic Byway.

The park currently has a major project underway to improve the Nisqually to Paradise Road used by many Scenic Byway travelers:

The Nisqually to Paradise Road Rehabilitation Project is repairing 17.6 miles of road between

the Nisqually Entrance and the developed area at Paradise in Mount Rainier National Park. The project will take place in two phases, each taking up to two years. Phase 1 included the installation of in-road buried conduits and junction vaults, as well as improvements to the road's substructure and drainage between the Nisqually Entrance and Longmire. This includes paving and substructure work on Ricksecker Point Loop and Paradise Valley Road. Phase 2 should begin in 2016 at Longmire and end at Paradise in 2017.

The project is needed to address deteriorating road conditions that are due to many factors including abundant precipitation, structural and design deficiencies, large traffic volumes, and normal wear. The road work is designed to protect adjacent natural and cultural resources,



will replace culverts to improve aquatic conditions and will preserve the character of the National Historic Landmark District.

— Mount Rainier National Park

Drivers who have traveled the Nisqually to Paradise Road in recent years now experience a marked improvement in the drive from the Nisqually Entrance to Longmire. That section had many washouts and uneven surfaces, much of that from damage caused by the epic flood of 2006. The higher elevation Longmire to Paradise section received less damage.

Recommendations

WA State Highways

Although WSDOT policy generally is not to install bicycle lanes on rural state highways, the recommendation of this Corridor Management Plan would be to have such lanes wherever possible on SR 7, 706, and 161. For safety, the lanes should not be part of the same roadway but should have a grass strip several feet wide between the highways and bike lanes. In lieu of this ideal, the recommendation is to install Bikes on Road or Share the Road signs so drivers are alerted that bicycle traffic might be present and that bicyclists should be given a safe berth.

Signage improvements recommended for SR 7



Clearer stop signs are needed for SR 7 traffic entering Elbe from Mineral and Morton. This stop is at the intersection of highways SR 7 and SR 706 and is heavily traveled in summer. The sign before the bridge indicating a stop ahead needs to be larger and more prominent. The stop sign at the stop itself cannot be seen until very close to the intersection, because the bridge's metal supports block the view.



SR 7 into Elbe. Stop sign immediately after bridge not visible.

Signage improvements recommended on SR 161 for Dogwood Park

On SR 161, the approach to Dogwood Park from both directions needs better directional signage. The park is very small but useful in providing travelers a safe place to enjoy a stunning view of Mount Rainier. The park cannot be seen from the road; drivers are not aware they are approaching it. There is a sign now for westbound traffic noting Dogwood Park is ahead, but that sign is approximately a mile before the

park with nothing closer. An additional sign near the park turnoff, e.g., Dogwood Park Next Right, would be very helpful to motorists unfamiliar with the park. Eastbound drivers need a directional sign just after the turn onto SR 161 at Barney's Corner. Also, the sign at the park's easily overlooked entrance is faded and scratched. A replacement is recommended.

Signage improvements recommended on SR 706



The approach to Recycled Spirits of Iron — Ex Nihilo Sculpture Park, 22410 State Road 706 needs signs from both directions. This is a safety issue and not merely to promote this

unique Byway location. The sculpture park is eye-catching, to say the least. Many motorists who drive by it at highway speed want to stop and pull in, but they have no safe, easy way to do so. This can be a very busy stretch of highway in summer. A local resident installed a sign on the private road next to the sculpture park warning eastbound drivers that no turnaround is allowed. Westbound drivers cannot even see the park until they are alongside it, again too late for a safe and easily accessed turnaround. It is recommended that signs be installed well ahead of the sculpture park in either direction to alert and guide motorists. A second sign in each direction by the sculpture park would indicate that either a left or right turn is needed.



Mount Rainier from Scenic Byway at Dogwood Park

Pierce County

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway has a section of Alder Cutoff Road that has long posed a danger to travelers. It is strongly recommended that safety improvements be made as soon as possible to the roadway by a bridge over a trestle. As noted earlier, this location is 5.2 miles from the Alder Cutoff Road intersection with SR 7 and 1.4 miles from the eastern boundary of Eatonville.



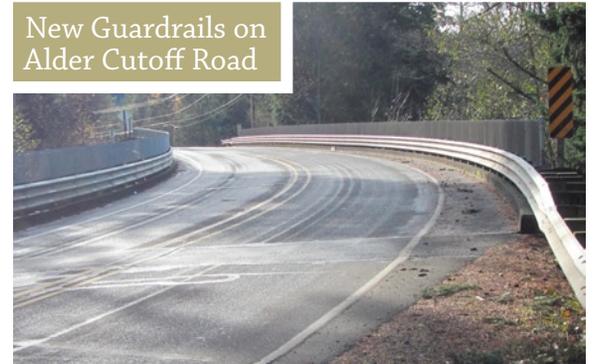
Near the trestle on Alder Cutoff Road

Washouts on this section of Alder Cutoff Road make the surface very uneven, and motorcyclists are cautioned with a sign at either end. There is little or no shoulder in this area despite a steep drop-off from the roadside to the valley far below for eastbound travelers and another, lesser dropoff on the westbound side by the railroad gulch.

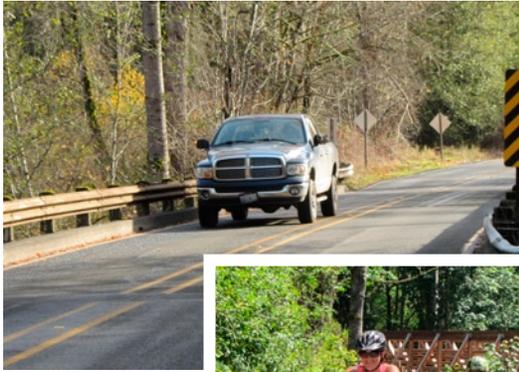
Several needed guardrails were installed at various sites along Alder Cutoff Road in the summer of 2015. Additionally, guardrails and protective fencing were installed on both sides of the trestle bridge itself. These were important safety improvements to the road, but no guardrails were installed on the west (Eatonville) side of the trestle bridge. This is a critical section above a steep ravine. Pierce County's transportation department reports no further modifications beyond those made in 2015 are scheduled.

Near this section of road is a parking area used by those accessing a trail down to Little Mashel Falls. This is a treacherous trail, especially when slick from rain, and fatalities have occurred. It is recommended that Pierce County either construct a safe access to the falls or close off the trail and its parking area completely.

New Guardrails on Alder Cutoff Road



Another recommendation for Alder Cutoff Road is to widen or replace the old, very narrow bridge over the Mashel River in Eatonville. This is at the point where Center Street becomes Alder Cutoff Road.



This Corridor Management Plan strongly recommends the implementation of bicycle-pedestrian trails adopted by the Town of Eatonville in 2009 in its Eatonville Regional Trail Plan. This is an extensive network of proposed paths that would heighten the Scenic Byway experience and provide options for exploring the corridor by bike and on foot. This plan was created through public participation in partnership with the National Park Service.

Signage improvement recommended on Eatonville Cutoff Road. Better signage is warranted for the approach to Stringtown Cellars Winery & Lavender Farm, 39610 Eatonville Cutoff Road. Signs indicating the winery/farm are needed from both directions. Signage would be similar to that now used for the approach to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Pioneer Farm. This improvement would be for safety as well as wayfinding for Byway travelers.



Lewis County

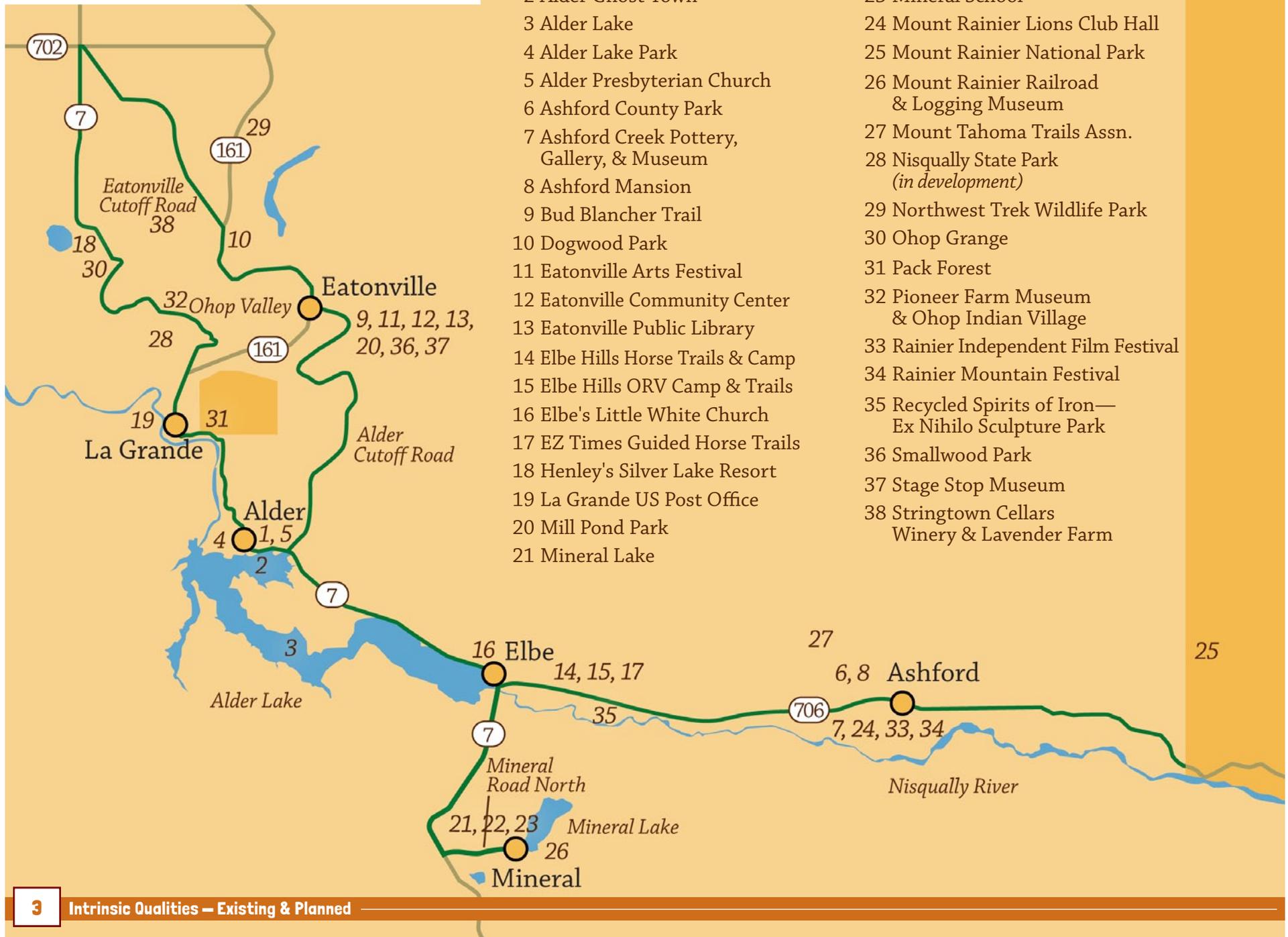
For safety, this CMP's recommendation is to widen both shoulders of Mineral Road North if feasible. Although the road's surface condition currently is good, the shoulders are very narrow with ditches alongside. This road, however, is in much better condition than the alternate route of Mineral Hill Road. For safety reasons, that road is not part of the Scenic Byway.



Signage improvement recommended for Mineral Road North

Mineral Lake Lodge is on the National Register of Historic Places, but there are no signs indicating drivers are approaching a historic landmark. With the property owner's permission, it is recommended that signs be posted to help Scenic Byway travelers find this attraction.

Map of Intrinsic Qualities



- 1 Alder Community Club
- 2 Alder Ghost Town
- 3 Alder Lake
- 4 Alder Lake Park
- 5 Alder Presbyterian Church
- 6 Ashford County Park
- 7 Ashford Creek Pottery, Gallery, & Museum
- 8 Ashford Mansion
- 9 Bud Blancher Trail
- 10 Dogwood Park
- 11 Eatonville Arts Festival
- 12 Eatonville Community Center
- 13 Eatonville Public Library
- 14 Elbe Hills Horse Trails & Camp
- 15 Elbe Hills ORV Camp & Trails
- 16 Elbe's Little White Church
- 17 EZ Times Guided Horse Trails
- 18 Henley's Silver Lake Resort
- 19 La Grande US Post Office
- 20 Mill Pond Park
- 21 Mineral Lake

- 22 Mineral Lake Lodge
- 23 Mineral School
- 24 Mount Rainier Lions Club Hall
- 25 Mount Rainier National Park
- 26 Mount Rainier Railroad & Logging Museum
- 27 Mount Tahoma Trails Assn.
- 28 Nisqually State Park (in development)
- 29 Northwest Trek Wildlife Park
- 30 Ohop Grange
- 31 Pack Forest
- 32 Pioneer Farm Museum & Ohop Indian Village
- 33 Rainier Independent Film Festival
- 34 Rainier Mountain Festival
- 35 Recycled Spirits of Iron—Ex Nihilo Sculpture Park
- 36 Smallwood Park
- 37 Stage Stop Museum
- 38 Stringtown Cellars Winery & Lavender Farm

Intrinsic Qualities

Intrinsic qualities are features that are “representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area.” The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway abounds in these. These intrinsic qualities are why experiencing this Scenic Byway corridor is a pleasure like no other, one sought by travelers worldwide.

For this Corridor Management Plan, these intrinsic features are grouped as Scenic, Recreational, Cultural, and Historic/Archeological Features. Both existing and planned qualities are described where appropriate.





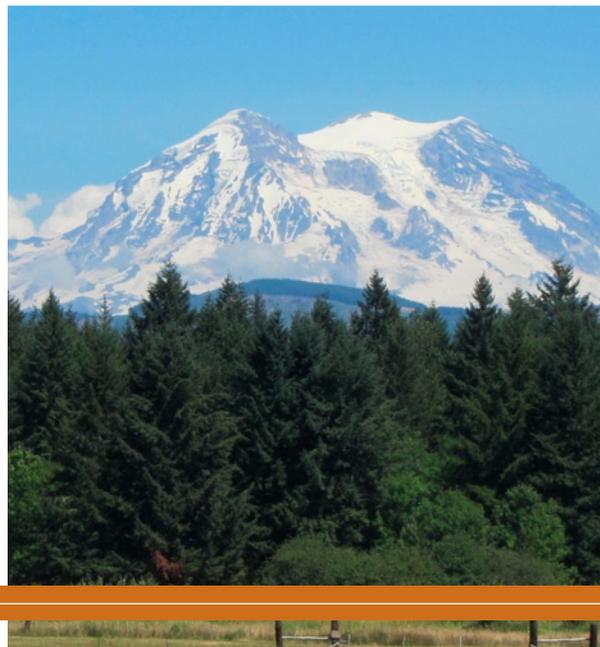
The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is indeed a *Scenic* Byway, from its west portal near Dogwood Park to its eastern end.

Scenic Qualities

Those traveling eastward on it delight in the times **Mount Rainier** pops into view, often across wide, verdant fields. The Mountain's lure increases as drivers near it and watch it rising larger and closer. This enticement never ends, even for longtime residents of the Byway communities.

Those traveling eastbound toward

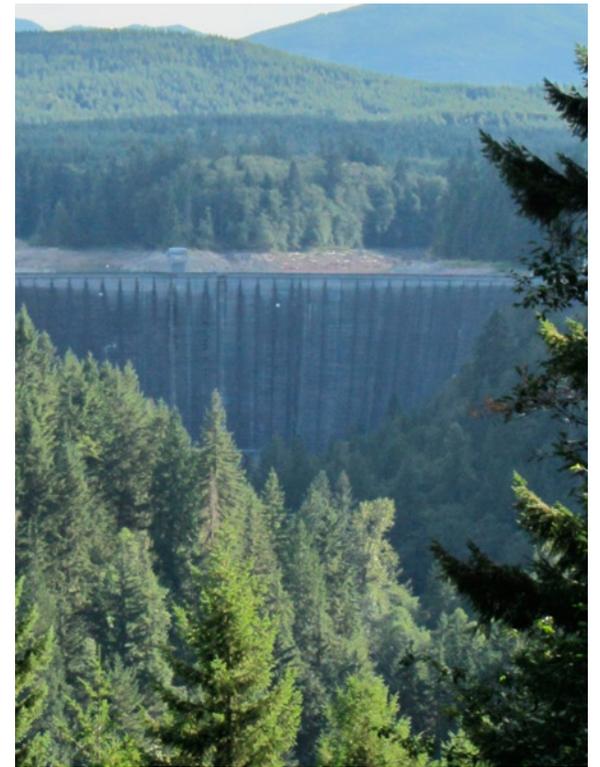
Eatonville can pull into tiny **Dogwood Park** just after turning onto SR 161 for a huge vista of Mount Rainier. This state park was created for Washington's centennial in 1989 to give motorists an easy, safe pull-



off to enjoy the view. This park also is the location of a historical marker denoting the route as a Blue Star Memorial Highway.



Those travelers choosing the Scenic Byway's southern loop on WA Highway 7 (Mountain Highway) enjoy the scenery of that route's winding path through forested hills. Pullovers on both sides of this stretch of SR 7 offer views of Alder Dam and the steep hills above Alder Canyon.





Beyond these mountainous curves and the town of Alder is **Alder Lake** formed by the dam. There are several places along the length of the lake where drivers can turn into Tacoma Power Parks property to better see the lake and enjoy its recreational opportunities. The lake is visible



Tacoma Power Parks on Alder Lake

Mineral Lake and Mount Rainier



alongside the road for much of the way between Alder and Elbe. For drivers using the northern loop through Eatonville, Alder Lake's east end is beside the road at the intersection of Alder Cutoff Road and WA Highway 7.

The Mineral spur of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, accessed from Elbe, takes visitors to Mineral and serene **Mineral Lake**. This 277-acre lake has a dramatic view of Mount Rainier as its backdrop. Both Mineral and Alder Lakes are included in the following **Recreational** section of Intrinsic Qualities.

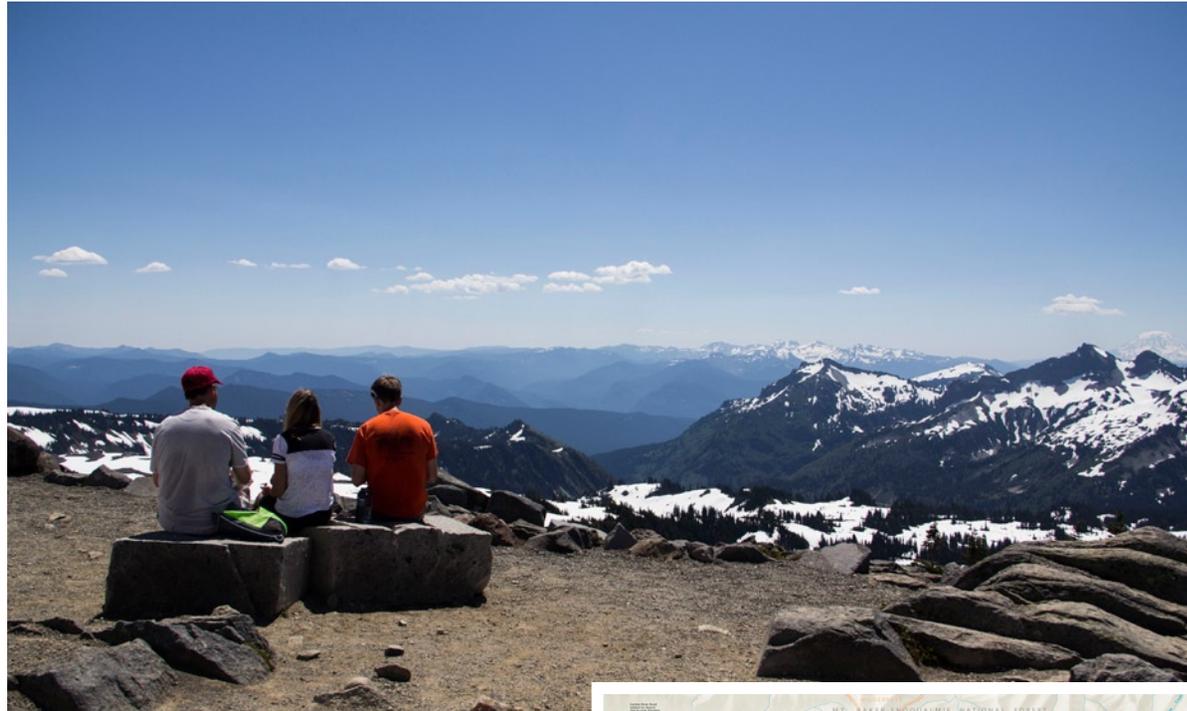
Recreational Qualities

Existing Recreation

It is hard to imagine a Scenic Byway corridor with more recreation opportunities than the Road to Rainier. Many of these are well-established and have drawn visitors for decades or longer, such as Northwest Trek Wildlife Park near the west portal of the Scenic Byway and Mount Rainier National Park at its east end. Plans for future recreational adventures in the Byway corridor are exciting and far-reaching.

For recreational users who don't have camping in their plans, there already are many accommodation choices. Instead of national motel and hotel chains, the Byway corridor offers the opportunity to stay in charming, uniquely styled cabins, lodges, and yurts. Although the high season of summer keeps these places busy, for much of the year, during what is called the shoulder season, vacancies are frequent and prices often are lower.

Mount Rainier Visitor Association has up-to-date listings of what is available, especially in the Upper Nisqually Valley, and offers that information at its visitor center in Ashford and on its extensive website. Visit Rainier also maintains an information-rich website. Greater Eatonville Chamber of Commerce's website has content specific to Eatonville as well as the broader region, and the city operates a seasonal visitor center in downtown Eatonville.

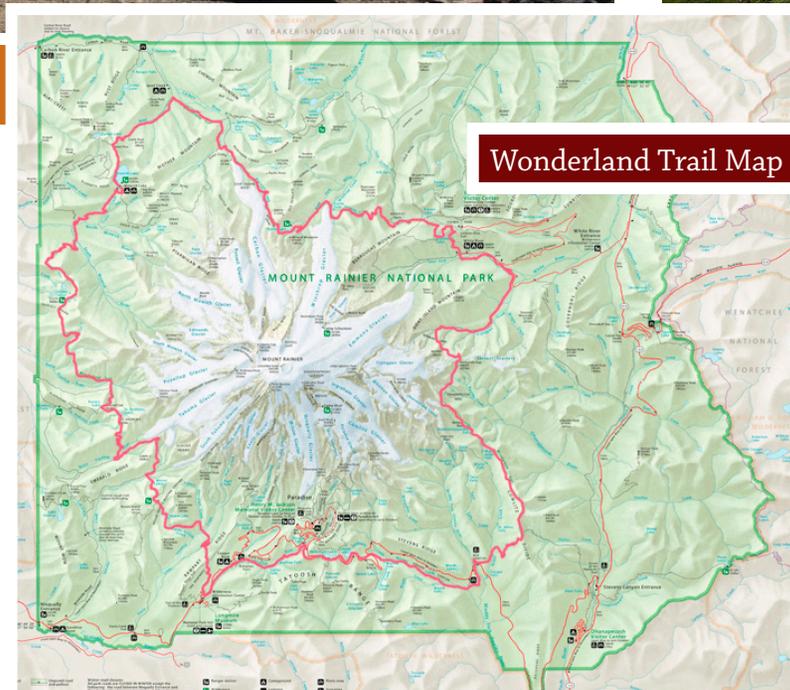
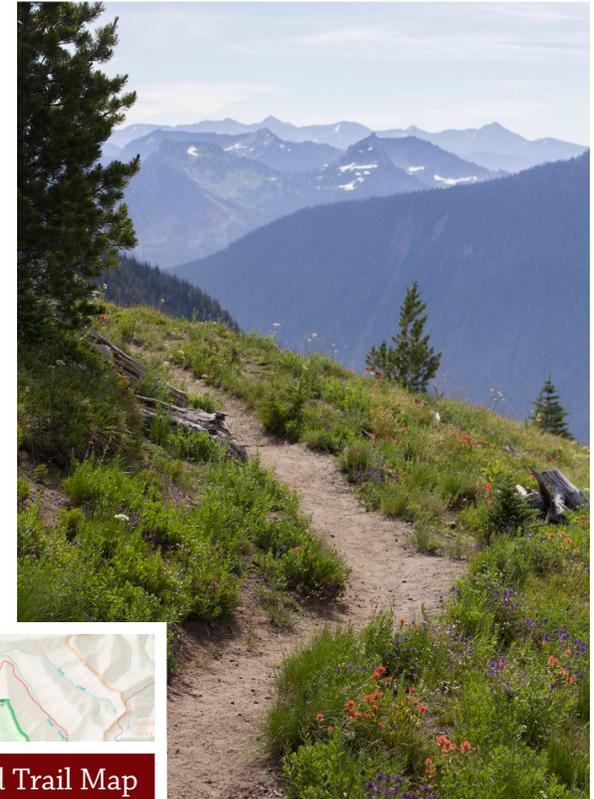


Hiking Trail, Mount Rainier National Park

Hikers at Panorama Park, Paradise, Mount Rainier National Park

Mount Rainier National Park has international significance and is a top reason visitors journey to Washington State. A common experience in the park is to hear a variety of foreign languages spoken by hikers on the trails. Their awe speaks a common tongue.

Hiking amid spectacular scenery is one of the major draws of Mount Rainier National Park. The park's extensive network of trails ranges from short strolls to the 93-mile **Wonderland Trail** that circles the park. It usually requires 9 to 11 days to



complete its up-and-down route through lowland forests and high vistas. A number of hikers like to explore a different section of it each year. In 1981, the Wonderland Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail and is part of the National Trails System.



Lupine and Paintbrush, Mount Rainier National Park

Park visitors who witness summer's vast wildflower meadows understand why Paradise has its name, although the flower show is not limited to this locale. Many of the park's higher elevation trails offer vivid displays of lupine, paintbrush, Lewis monkeyflower, mountain arnica, and a myriad of other flowers, some native only to the park.

Wildlife can be seen throughout the park, including ravens and many other birds, mammals such as black bears, deer, red foxes, and a particular favorite for visitors, the hoary marmot. Often the marmot makes its presence known with a shrill, one-noted whistle, made as it rears on its hind legs among the park's meadows and rocks. Given the landscape, flora, and fauna,

it is no surprise that the Mountain provides rich material for amateur and professional photographers and filmmakers.

Visitors enjoy winter sports when the Mountain is blanketed with several feet of snow. Park roads generally stay open all year from the main entrance which is at the east end of the Scenic Byway. Other entrances and some park facilities close in winter.

Mount Rainier National Park has several campsites as well as rustic, historic lodges at Paradise and Longmire. The main road to both lodges begins at the Scenic Byway's eastern portal. The lodge, restaurant, and gift shop at Longmire are open year round as are the historical exhibits located there.



Hoary Marmot, Mount Rainier Natl. Park





Summit Climb,
Mount Rainier National Park

Park visitors who want the challenge of **mountaineering** try summiting Mount Rainier. Two global climbing companies have headquarters in Ashford: Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. and International Mountain Guides. Both guide services were begun by world-renowned mountain climbers who are locals, RMI's Lou Whittaker & IMG's Eric Simonson. A summit attempt of the Mountain can be exhilarating but carries the dangers of high altitude, unpredictable weather, avalanche hazards, and treacherous terrain. Summit climbs can be done alone, but expert guides who know the Mountain well and have emergency training offer the best chance for reaching the top and returning safely.

Northwest Trek Wildlife Park Zip Line
Challenge Course



Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, near Eatonville and just 2.7 miles from the Scenic Byway, is the Pacific Northwest's premier wildlife and adventure park. This 725-acre park is operated by Metro Parks Tacoma and provides up-close viewing of more than 200 elk, bison, bear, lynx, mountain goats, and other species that roam here. Tram tours and walking tours take visitors into the animals' habitat. Also located here is The Cheney Family Discovery Center, a hands-on, nature-focused education center with special appeal for children. NW Trek's zip line/challenge courses explore the tree canopy on swinging log bridges, cargo nets, balance beams, and tight ropes. Five different courses vary in skill and agility with some designed for children as young as five.



Cross-Country Skiing, MTTA

Mount Tahoma Trails Association, a nonprofit organization, is North America's most extensive hut-to-hut system charging no fee. (Tahoma is based on a name the Nisqually used for the Mountain.) These trails are on the outskirts of Ashford. MTTA has 50 miles of trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, including 20 miles of groomed trails. Overnight backpackers can stay in three huts and one yurt open to day-users as rest stops. In summer, MTTA's South District trails are open for hiking and mountain biking.

Ashford County Park



Ashford County Park provides a playground, hiking trails, and an outdoor amphitheater, as well as the only public restrooms in Ashford. The park is closed in winter. Ashford County Park is well marked in advance from both west and east approaches, and it connects directly to the Scenic Byway, affording travelers quick access to a picnic table, a leg-stretching walk amid green hills, and playground equipment for the kids. In September, 2015, the first music concert took place at its beautiful outdoor amphitheater.



Bud Blancher Trail, Eatonville

Town-owned trails in Eatonville offer Scenic Byway travelers a wonderful opportunity to take a break with a close-by hike or stroll. Popular **Bud Blancher Trail** is a wide hiking and cycling path through woods and along the Mashel River. From two footbridges across the Mashel, visitors can watch fish spawn in a setting that protects threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. After 2.3 miles, at the end of the second bridge, the path connects to the extensive trail network of University of Washington's Pack Forest.

Mill Pond Park, Eatonville



Bud Blancher Trail connects to Eatonville's **Smallwood Park** and is only a short walk from **Mill Pond Park**. The trailhead for Bud Blancher is on Weyerhaeuser Road S. off Center Street which is part of the Scenic Byway. Mill Pond Park is accessed close by at Madison and Center and includes playground equipment and a skate park. Smallwood Park with its tall trees, open setting, and Kids' Pond can be reached by car from WA Highway 161 S. just past the Mashel River. On foot or by bicycle, it is down a side path near the start of Bud Blancher Trail.

Smallwood Park, Eatonville





University of Washington's Pack Forest is spread over 4300 acres of working forestland. The public is welcome to hike, bike, and horseback ride. Hunting is allowed on weekends during season. Pack Forest's 40 miles of trails include a barrier-free, self-guided trail and trails to the upper and lower falls on the Little Mashel River. The main entrance to Pack Forest is on the Scenic Byway's SR 7 route. It also can be reached from Eatonville via SR 161 S., a 3.4-mile drive.



Fishing is the big draw at **Mineral Lake** on the Scenic Byway's Mineral spur, as is the lake's stunning view of Mount Rainier. Underneath this placid lake swims an angler's dream. The lake is stocked with brown and rainbow trout, coastal cutthroat, and large-mouth bass. Decomposed timber from the old lumber mills provides nutrients to the lake and its fish. The kickoff of fishing season each spring is a celebration with a well-attended fishing derby where sometimes the catch is a 10-pound trout.

Henley's Silver Lake Resort, 40724 Silver Lake Road, is a fishing resort and campground 3.2 miles from the west portal of the Byway via SR 7. This rustic site is by a spring-fed lake with scenic views and has rental cabins, RV sites with full hook-ups, and campsites. The resort attracts anglers and boaters with its large dock, boat launch, and bait shop. Henley's is part of the WA State Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Project. In winter, approximately 30,000 rainbow trout are raised in pens before being released into Silver Lake in early April when they are at least 6" long.



Another lure for those who fish is **Alder Lake**. The dam-created lake is stocked with kokanee as well as naturally reproducing coastal cutthroat, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, black crappie, white crappie, and brown bullhead catfish. Fishing is best when the reservoir's water level is up. There are several boat ramps and good bank access along this lake.



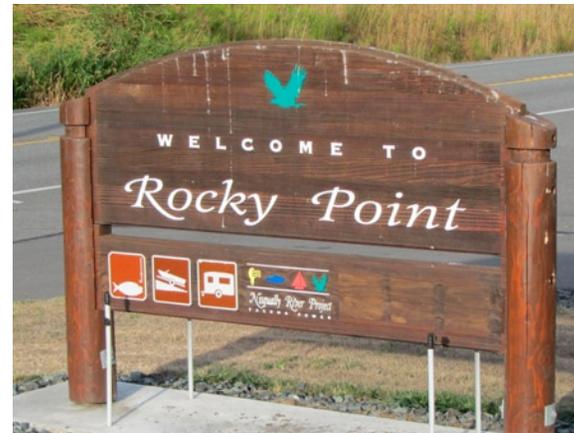
Alder Lake's facilities are the property of Tacoma Power

Parks and include opportunities for swimming and watersports. Boat launches are at Alder Lake Park and Rocky Point. Access for swimming and other watersports

is at Sunny Beach Point and Alder Lake Park.

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway has several established sites for camping in addition to the national park. **Alder Lake Park** has tent, RV, and group campsites with nearby lake access. This Tacoma Power park is located in Alder on the Scenic Byway's SR 7.

Additional campsites in the Byway corridor are in privately owned campgrounds, as well as in the national park, on state forestland, and at Gifford Pinchot National Forest's Big Creek Campground two miles off the Byway on Skate Creek Road.





Camping is one of the recreational attractions at Elbe Hills State Forest near Elbe. The **Elbe Hills ORV Campground and Trailhead** is a 20-site campground with access to 13 miles of motorized trails. It has proven to be a major attraction in this region for off-road recreational vehicle owners. A Discover Pass,



issued by the state, is required for use of Elbe Hills. Income from these passes helps fund recreational activities in state parks and forests.

Horseback riding can be enjoyed along **Elbe Hills Nicholson Horse Trail System and Sahara Horse Camp**. The camp, in a wooded setting designed to accommodate equestrians and their horses, has 20 campsites and hitching posts.

Travelers who want to explore the Byway's scenic beauty on horseback but don't have their own horses can ride at privately-run **EZ Times Guided Horse Trails** on the east end of Elbe.



Elbe Hills Horse Trail, photo courtesy Visit Rainier



For the heartiest of cyclists, there's **RAMROD**, Ride Around Mount Rainier in One Day. For 33 years, the event has followed a course that varies and often incorporates part of the Scenic Byway's route. What never varies is that it is grueling: 150 Miles with 10,000 feet of uphill runs. Nonetheless, 800 riders each year find it worth the challenge.

the river and of the grass, who developed a prosperous and sophisticated society and are now called Nisqually. In 1856, during the Puget Sound Indian War, territorial militia slaughtered families in the Mashel Massacre of the Nisqually which took place where the Mashel flows into the Nisqually, a site within the park. This story will be honored at its location and given a broader audience.

The Master Plan for the Nisqually State Park features several elements that are each worth a visit on their own merit.

A **Village Center** will welcome visitors and set the stage for programs and activities. This center, with views of Mount Rainier, will have an amphitheater, event meadow, and picnic area. On a bluff above the Mashel, visitors can stay in cabins or use tent or RV campsites.

A **People's Center** facility will be located near the summit of the park's central ridge. This site is designed to interpret the millennia-long history, culture, and aesthetics of the Coast Salish tribes, especially the Nisqually.

A wheelchair-accessible trail will lead from the People's Center to the **Observatory** at the ridge's summit with dramatic views of the Mountain, Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountains, and the Mashel Prairie. Tribal interpreters will be available at the Observatory to explain the site's significance to the Nisqually and tell stories about their history and customs.

The **Ohop Equestrian Center** in the park will be housed in the striking, century-old Milk Barn on a terrace above the Ohop Valley. It will be the starting point for trail rides on the Ohop Creek floodplain.

The East Mashel Plateau will have its own welcome center, mainly for visitors coming to make use of the backcountry horse camp. This site also will have a group campground for tents and RVs, a trail network, and a challenge course for bicyclists. This 60-acre area will cater to the many mountain bikers who are now underserved when they visit the Scenic Byway corridor.

Because Nisqually State Park will be large and diverse, an expansive trail system will accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians to help each group navigate through the park. Eight bridges will cross the park's waterways with interpretive displays and seats at the bridge approaches.

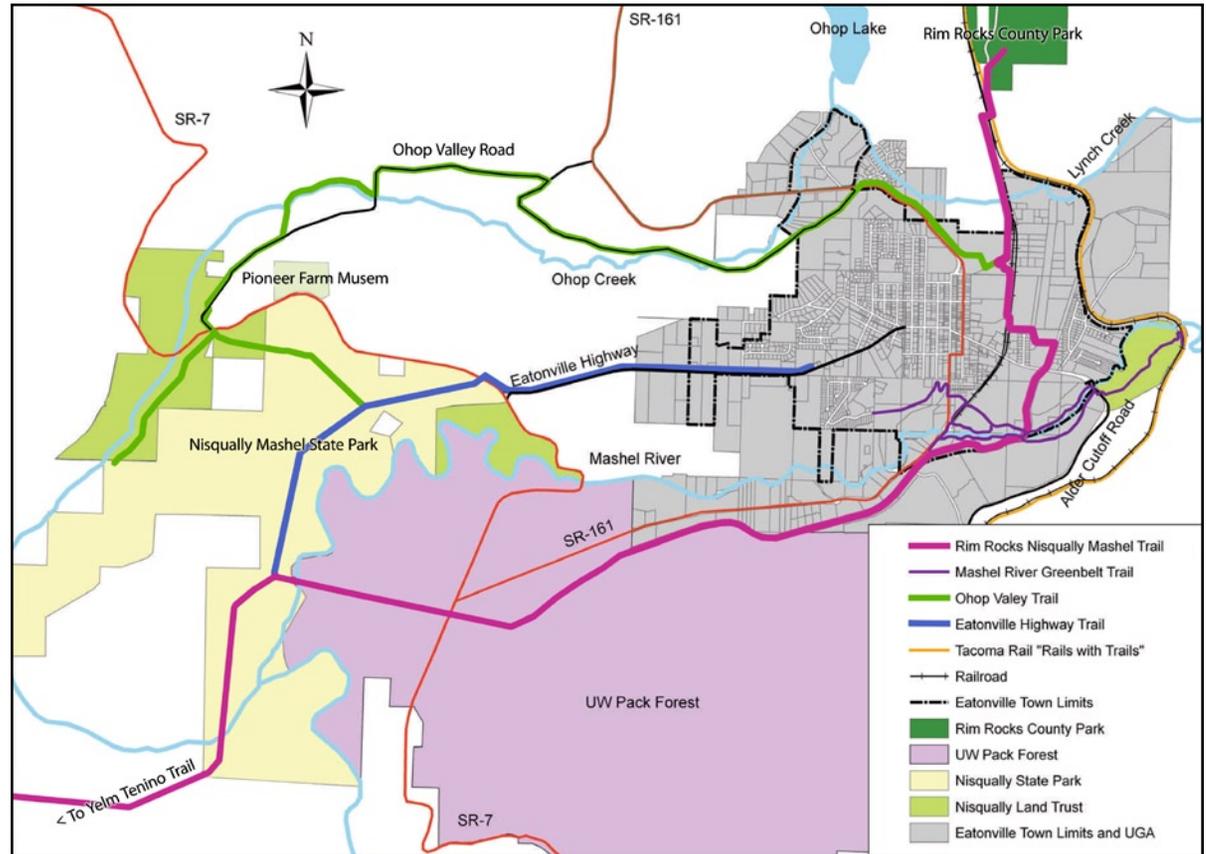
Eatonville Regional Trail Plan

Eatonville Regional Trail Plan is a network created through public participation in partnership with the National Park Service. The Town of Eatonville officially adopted it in May, 2009. The wide-ranging route includes existing trails and proposed ones such as Nisqually State Park. Some projects can more easily be realized than others, but interest is high in them all. One indication: The Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum — representing a wide cross-section of federal, state, county, city, and nonprofit agencies, plus several tourism-focused organizations — has made development of this trail network a top priority.

The Eatonville Regional Trail Plan is an extensive, multi-faceted interconnection of trails:

The proposed **Rim Rocks Pierce County Park**, just north of Eatonville, is to serve as a day-use area with picnic grounds and short nature trails. Rim Rocks will connect to other trail systems, to Eatonville, and to nearby attractions. It also will link to the in-development Nisqually State Park.

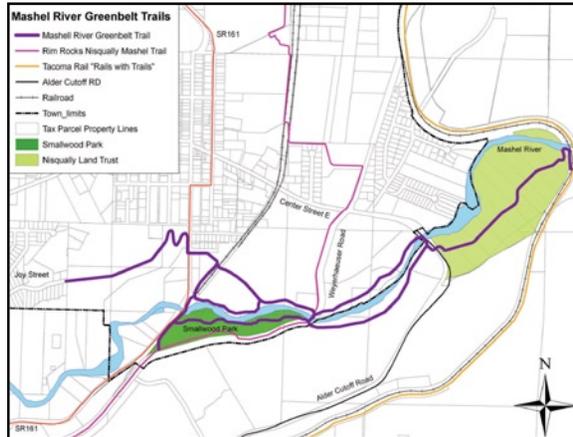
Eatonville Highway Trail is a proposed paved trail for pedestrians and bicyclists that is to run parallel to Eatonville Highway,



a three-mile road that connects Eatonville to SR 7. Eatonville Highway was constructed as a two-lane, rural highway without shoulders or sidewalks. The plan calls for separation between the paved trail and the roadway. The trail will cross SR 7 at a designated crosswalk where it will connect to the Nisqually State Park trail system.

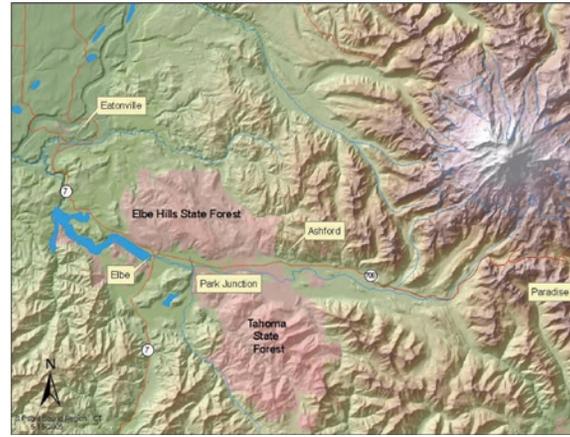
The proposed **Ohop Valley Trail** will wind through the scenic farmland of Ohop Valley just north of Eatonville. This fertile, green

valley offers dramatic views of Mount Rainier and helped provide a livelihood for many centuries for the Ohop, a Nisqually people. The trail will lie between SR 161 on the east and SR 7 on the west. It also will create a link from Eatonville and its elementary and middle schools to the future Nisqually State Park. Within the valley, it will connect to Pioneer Farm & Ohop Indian Village, an educational resource described in the **Historic** section of Intrinsic Qualities.



Mashel River Green Belt Trails will be a public greenbelt along the Mashel River from Hamner Heights at Joy Street that eventually will run as far as Boxcar Canyon. The steep, scenic canyon is on the Mashel River a mile east of downtown Eatonville. Key connections to this greenbelt include existing sites (Mill Pond Park, Smallwood Park, Bud Blancher Trail) and proposed ones (Rim Rocks County Park, Nisqually State Park, Tacoma to Ashford Rail-with-Trail).

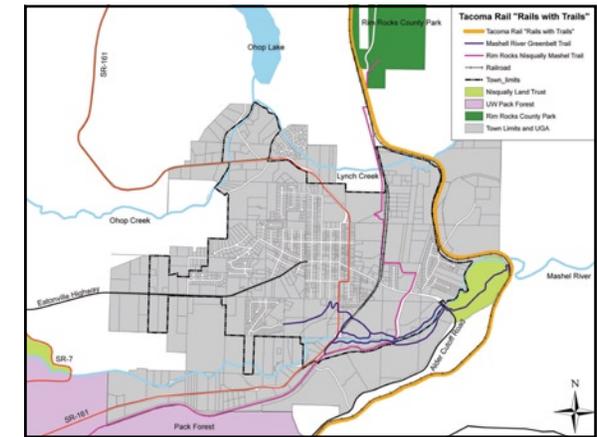
Boxcar Canyon, photo by Bob Walter for eatonvillenews.net



DNR 5 and 8 Road Trails will use existing logging roads 5 and 8 which are managed by WA Dept. of Natural Resources Elbe Hills unit. These roads are identified as bicycle routes in Pierce County's bicycle map. One access is from Scott Turner Road which is off Alder Cutoff Road, a road that is part of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. Bicycle trails would run all the way to Elbe and Ashford. They also would connect to the existing Mount Tahoma Trails Association's ski trail system which is open to mountain biking and hiking in summer. Another link will be to the future Tacoma to Ashford Rail-with-Trail route.

SR 161 Bike Lane is a long-term project that, when implemented, will create a bicycle and pedestrian route alongside WA Highway 161 from Eatonville to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Clear

Lake residential community. It will run beside the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway on SR 161 until it reaches Barney's Corner where the Scenic Byway takes a turn onto Eatonville Cutoff Road. For safety, the Town of Eatonville is lobbying the state to create a bike-and-walk lane that would be separated from the highway by a greenbelt rather than one right next to the road.



An ambitious, exciting proposal is the **Tacoma to Ashford Rail-with-Trail** which has been adopted by Pierce County. This would begin at Freighthouse Square in Tacoma and would link Eatonville and Ashford to the rest of Pierce County's trail system. Tacoma Utilities, a division of the city, owns and manages Tacoma Rail. The line is on the former Tacoma Eastern rail corridor. In the early 1900s, this logging railroad connected Tacoma to the timber

mills farther out in Pierce County such as Eatonville and now-extinct National near Ashford, as well as Mineral and Morton in Lewis County. Potentially, this project could include those Lewis County towns.

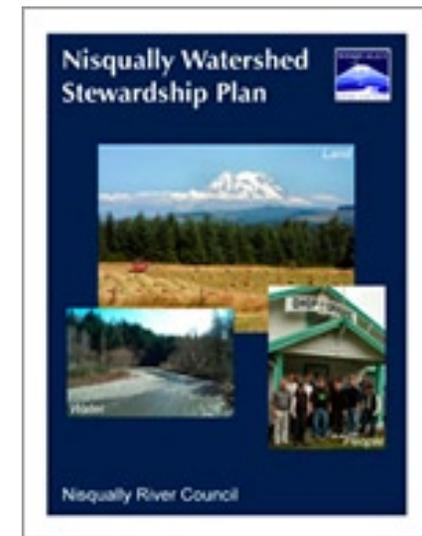
In 2007, a detailed feasibility study was made, funded by the US Dept. of the Interior and administered by Tacoma Rail. Projects partners were Mount Rainier National Park and Pierce County Parks & Recreation. The study found a paved trail running alongside the still-active rail line (a rail-with-trail) is feasible, although the cost-per-mile is substantial, and there are many property considerations. Still, the benefits were determined to be abundant enough to warrant creating this long-range project.

The recreational options are fun to consider. One could ride a passenger train one way and bicycle back the length of the long corridor, staying in one of the many inviting rental cabins or lodges in the Scenic Byway corridor. Or visitors could fashion their own hike-bike-rail combinations that would allow them to enjoy the beautiful Byway corridor in the particular way that interests them most. Byway communities and Mount Rainier National Park are keen to have alternatives to individual vehicle

traffic for those wanting to enjoy the Byway and the park, and this would be a singular way to help achieve that. Local residents also would be well served by having alternate ways to navigate within their communities and from one Byway community to another.

The proposed **SR 706 Bike Lane** is a much-needed cycling and walking route from Ashford to Mount Rainier National Park alongside WA Highway 706. Especially in summer, park traffic is heavy and hurried along this road. The bike-and-hike path would have separation from the busy road which has a speed limit of 50–55 mph for much of its route.

Nisqually Community Forest is described in this document in the **Preservation & Restoration** section under Corridor Description: Scenic Features & Their Preservation. The Community Forest is a large-scale initiative of the Nisqually Land Trust on what will be at least a 10,000-acre tract outside Ashford. The full range of recreational uses has yet to be determined but will include hiking and mountain biking. The Community Forest promises to take even local residents to previously unseen backcountry, its streams and woods, and its unique views of the Mountain.



Nisqually River Water Trail is a project of the Nisqually River Council. NRC and its partners have developed a plan for a water trail from Nisqually State Park near Eatonville to Luhr Beach on Puget Sound. Recommendations for the trail include developing new river access points, maps, guides, and interpretive materials. The plan focuses on ways that hikers, photographers, bird watchers, and others can be on or near the river. A public awareness campaign began mid-2016. The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is aiding the planning process which is expected to be completed by 2017. This undertaking seeks to implement the Recreation/Public Access/Tourism goals of the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan developed in 2003–04.

Cultural Qualities

The Scenic Byway's cultural intrinsic qualities allow visitors to enrich their travels in ways distinct to the area. An encouraging trend is that the selection of cultural offerings, already a diverse mix, is growing.

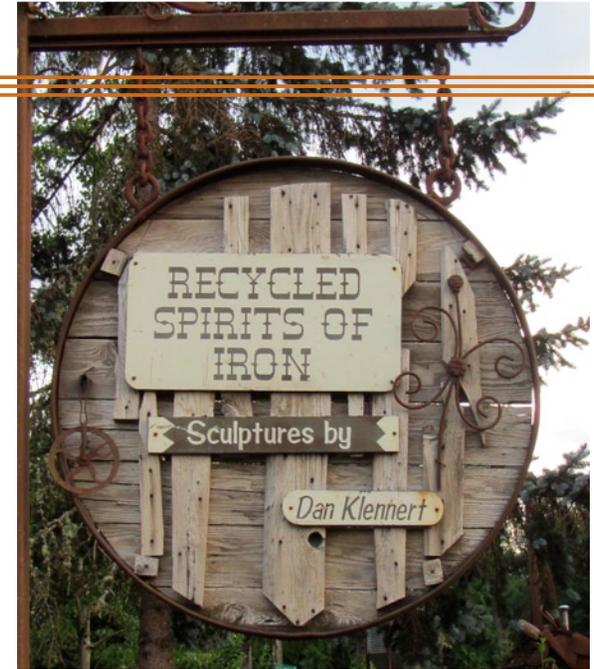


Ashford Creek Pottery, Gallery, & Museum is one of the Byway's singular charms and sits roadside on SR 706 in Ashford's center. The shop sells pottery, jewelry, photography, music, and cards, all by area artists including the owners. Books by regional authors include signed and first-edition copies. A free museum

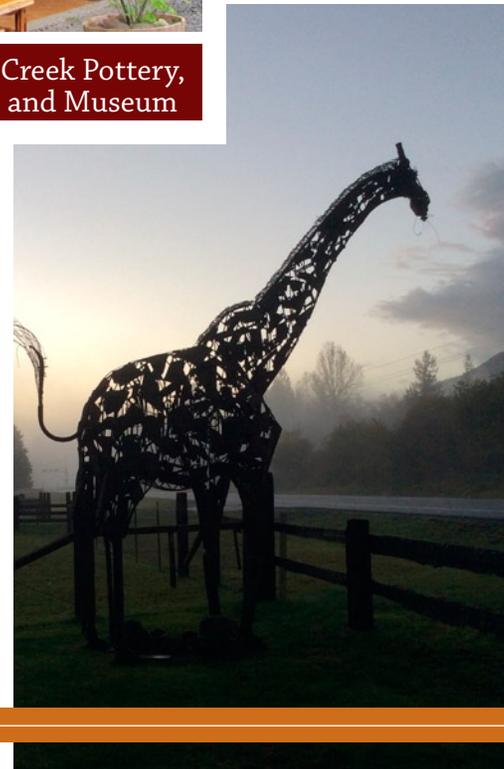
upstairs features an impressive collection of Pacific Northwest art that is not for sale but for visitors' pleasure. Original works by Kenneth Callahan, Mark Tobey, and



Ashford Creek Pottery, Gallery, and Museum



Recycled Spirits of Iron — Ex Nihilo Sculpture Park is on the Byway between Elbe and Ashford at 22410 SR 706. This place never fails to catch a traveler's eye. Large, finely wrought sculptures from rusted iron are a testament to the imagination of artist Dan Klennert. Visitors are welcome to wander among his clever creations.





Lou Whittaker, Climbers Panel,
Rainier Mountain Festival

Rainier Mountain Festival is a three-day event each September that always draws a big crowd to Ashford to hear adventure tales from top climbers such as Ed Viesturs, Dave Hahn, and legendary mountaineers Jim and Lou Whittaker. Festival-goers learn about climbing techniques and scoop up end-of-season bargains on gear and clothing sold by Whittaker Mountaineering outdoor store.



Eatonville Arts Festival

Eatonville Arts Festival is a celebration over three days in early August and is now heading into its 45th year. Work by 100 artisans from across the country, live and silent auctions, music stages, food, and a beer garden make this a popular event. All proceeds go to charitable causes.

The **Eatonville Public Library**, a branch of Pierce County Library System, is the only public library in the Byway corridor. (Ashford has a kiosk by the fire hall for book returns to this library system.) In addition to books and videos, the 4100-square foot library in Eatonville provides computers with free internet connections as well as a meeting room.



Eatonville Library
exterior & sculpture





Eatonville Community Center, owned by the town, is host to public meetings, senior activities, WIC federal assistance for women and children, a senior meal program sponsored by Catholic Community Services, and the Eatonville Family Agency. Rooms available for rent include a large multi-purpose room with kitchen as well as two smaller meeting spaces. Restrooms at the center are open to the public during operating hours. One annual event held at the community center is the springtime Barter Fair. Local farmers and gardeners barter their bounty with each other. Products must be homegrown, homemade, or homecrafted.



Stringtown Cellars Winery & Lavender Farm

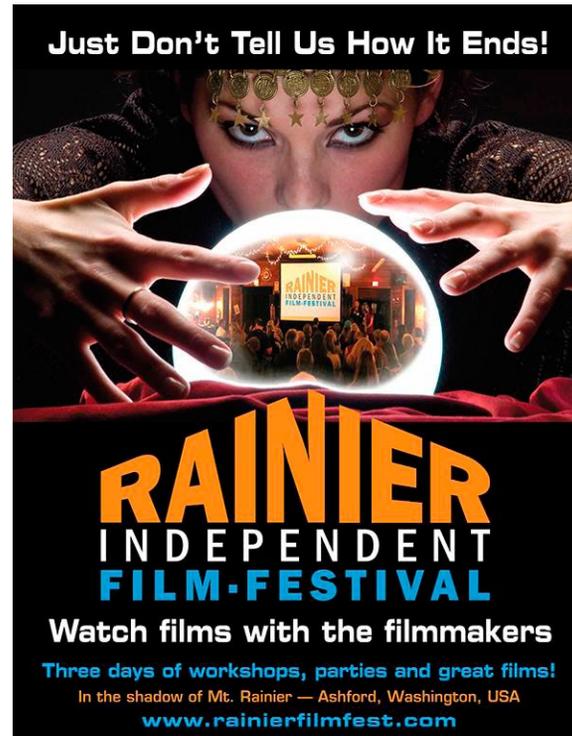
Stringtown Cellars Winery and Lavender Farm, with its fields scented by purple lavender, is the first agro-tourism attraction in the corridor. Visitors can pick their own bouquets, buy lavender plants, have a picnic, and shop for locally made lavender products including soap and honey. Wine tastings feature Stringtown's small-lot reds and whites, along with a lavender

honey wine, and smoked cheese from Buckley, Washington. Grapes are grown on the farm and in eastern Washington, an internationally respected area for wine growing. Stringtown is a certified Salmon-Safe Farm. It is at 39610 Eatonville Cutoff Road alongside the Scenic Byway, 3.4 miles from Eatonville, and 3.9 miles from the west portal of the Scenic Byway.

Ashford County Park



In September, 2015 Mount Rainier Visitor Association offered an afternoon of free music by popular area bands in the outdoor amphitheater of **Ashford County Park**. This location provides a beautiful setting for gatherings. The park is on the Scenic Byway as eastbound visitors enter Ashford.



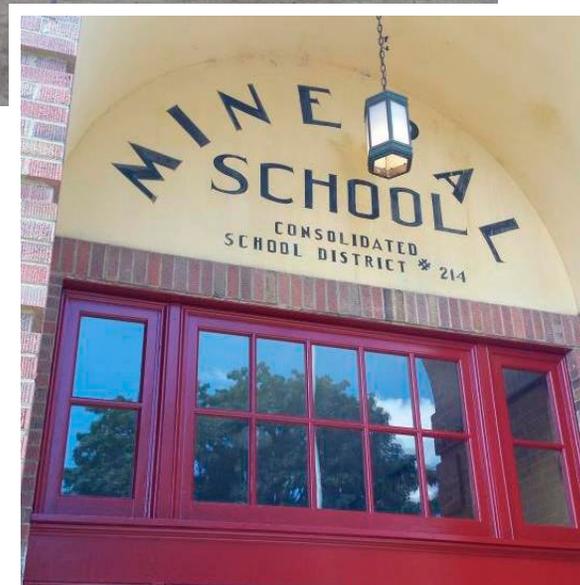
Rainier Independent Film Festival is a locally-grown event each May that screens films submitted worldwide, often with the filmmakers in attendance. RIFF's 2016 run marked its 10th year. Besides film-going, attendees can learn about the craft in workshops and mingle with industry figures — all outside the hustle and bustle typically associated with the business. Screenings and workshops are held at various local venues. A festive opening night kicks off the three-day event, and a lively awards party closes it down.

The historic meeting place of the **Mount Rainier Lions Club** is on the western edge of Ashford and is a popular local site for events including the Rainier Independent Film Festival and a blues bash in July, 2015.





Mineral School is a nonprofit arts center in Mineral's historic former elementary school. In addition to a residency program for artists, Mineral School hosts events such as an August, 2015 poetry reading by WA State's Poet Laureate Elizabeth Austen and Charlotte Austin, a writer and guide with International Mountain Guides. The school is fiscally sponsored by Shunpike, a support service for independent artists and arts groups in Washington.



While it might be an odd fit as a cultural amenity of the Scenic Byway, **Northwest Trek Wildlife Park's Slug Fest** certainly is characteristic of Byway life. Slug Fest "reigns supreme as one of the zaniest weekends of the year" at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. Its aim is to "celebrate all that is silly and slimy about the Pacific Northwest's most valuable and misunderstood mollusk, the yellow-greenish banana slug." How to do that? Make a slug tentacle headband, of course, wearable art to show off during human slug races, slug bingo, and slug story time. For grownups, master gardeners impart techniques to thwart the omnipresent plant-munchers.



The proposed **Mountaineering Museum** in Ashford is described in **Planned Historic & Archeological Projects**.

Historic & Archeological Qualities

The story of the Road to Rainier's Scenic Byway begins with, "First there were the mountains, then The Mountain." The Cascade Range is at least 12 million years old. The range's peaks and foothills shape much of the Byway corridor's landscape. Mount Rainier, a mere half million years old, is a young upstart compared to these sharp, granite ancients.

History of the Nisqually

This landscape molded the lives of the Squalli-Absch, the "people of the river and of the grass" who are now called the Nisqually and are one of the Southern Coast Salish tribes. The Coast Salish are ethnically and linguistically related indigenous people along or near the Pacific Northwest Coast in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. The earliest evidence found so far of an established settlement is 3000 BCE at Xa:ytem (Hatzic Rock) near Mission, British Columbia, so the Coast Salish can trace their ancestry back at least 5,000 years from today.

The first known smallpox epidemic was in the 1680s, arriving via travelers from Mexico. Smallpox continued to devastate



the Coast Salish as contact with Europeans increased. No Snokomish survived an 1850 epidemic. In 1862, smallpox wiped out about half the Northwest population of Coast Salish, in some tribes up to 90% or more. It is estimated the overall populations declined 66% from 1774 to 1874, much of that due to smallpox.

The Nisqually called the vast stretch from Mount Rainier to Puget Sound home. Tahoma, Talol, and Tacobet (or Tacobeh) are just a few of the names used by native tribes for what is now Mount Rainier, named for a British naval captain who opposed the American Revolution and never set eyes on the great peak. Over the

years, efforts have arisen to rename the Mountain to reflect how it was known for millennia by the Nisqually and other tribes.

Mount McKinley in 2015 was restored to its native name Denali. The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, through interpretive measures, can at least heighten awareness of Mount Rainier's much older way of being known.



Chief Leschi

The Nisqually, as did other tribes, lost most of the land where they had long thrived to whites who wanted the resource-rich territory. The Nisqually's reservation is

now less than 8 square miles in the Lower Nisqually Watershed and is situated in parts of Pierce and Thurston counties. The Nisqually were moved onto this land in 1854 with the signing of the Medicine Creek Treaty. The treaty was regarded as unfair by most Nisqually. Led by Chief Leschi, in 1855–56 they battled but were defeated by the US Army in a conflict called the Puget Sound War. On March 31, 1856, Gov. Isaac Stevens' Washington Territorial Volunteers, under the command of H.J.G.

Maxon, slaughtered a Nisqually settlement near the confluence of the Mashel and Nisqually Rivers. Women and children were murdered in what came to be called the Mashel Massacre.

The story of the Nisqually has not been adequately told and is not well known even to locals in the Scenic Byway corridor. **Nisqually State Park**, developed in partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, is now only in its initial construction, but it will help remedy that oversight. One of the park's themes is to interpret the history,



Ohop Indian Village

culture, and way of life of the Nisqually. The park is described in greater detail in this document's **Intrinsic Qualities—Recreational, Planned**.



Pioneer Farm

One site that already strives to show how both Ohop Nisqually and early white homesteaders lived is **Pioneer Farm Museum and Ohop Indian Village**. This nonprofit historic, cultural, and educational center is just off the Scenic Byway's SR 161 segment, 3.6 miles from Eatonville in the beautiful Ohop Valley.

On the Pioneer Farm tour, visitors learn hands-on how to grind grain, churn cream, card wool, milk a cow or goat, and blacksmith. A replica schoolhouse shows what it was like to sit in a classroom circa 1880. The trading post (gift shop) is in an 1887 log cabin.

The Ohop Indian Village demonstrates how native people lived during different seasons. Visitors can target shoot with a bow and arrow, braid leather, carve a slate arrowhead, chip out a canoe, weave on a loom, and play a plank drum. These and other activities at the center show how the Coast Salish tribes used games to teach their children not only skills but respect for the environment.

The historic **Ohop Grange** building on the Scenic Byway at 41608 State Route 7 is indicative of the agricultural life of the area. The building still is in use for community events.



Ohop Grange



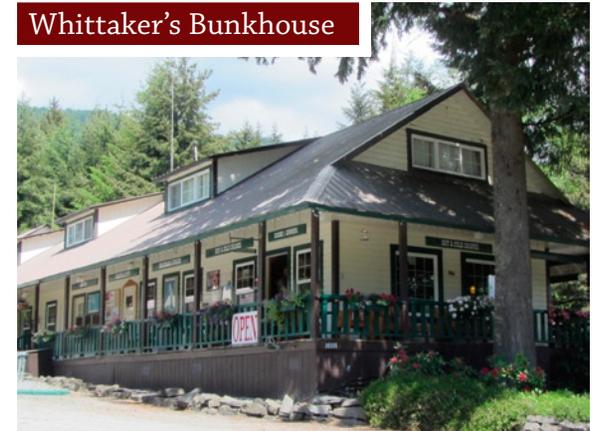
Ashford Mansion

Historic Ashford

Ashford's first homesteaders arrived in 1885: James B. Kernahan and his wife. Soon after, Yale University botany professor O. D. Allen and his family moved to the area. Allen and his sons created the first scientific record of flora on Mount Rainier, and they were instrumental in the park's early operation. W. A. Ashford and his family settled here in 1888, and he filed for a township named Ashford. The family home, called the **Ashford Mansion** and built in 1903, is on Mount Tahoma Canyon Road which adjoins the Scenic Byway. It is not open to the public but is easily viewed from the road.

The logging community of National once stood near the west end of Ashford. The Pacific National Lumber Co. founded the town as a stop for the new Tacoma Eastern

Whittaker's Bunkhouse



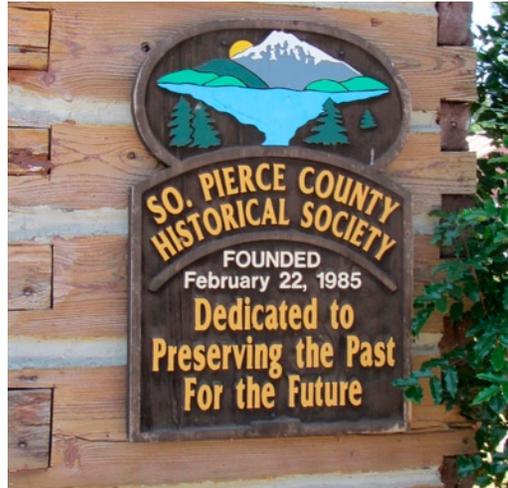
Railroad in 1905. In its heyday in the early 20th century, National boasted the largest mill west of the Mississippi River and a population of 1500–2000, including 60 Japanese-Americans. All of National's residents were dependent on the huge, ancient trees logged and milled there. The company was out of business by mid-century due to logging's toll on these old-growth forests.

There's little sign now that National ever existed. The meeting hall of the National Mill Workers Union, built in 1930, is now the local Lion's Hall. The old bunkhouse was moved and renovated to become part of Whittaker's Historic Bunkhouse Motel. Its first floor still shows grooves made by the loggers' caulk boots. The remains of the mill and other buildings were removed by the state's Department of Natural Resources in 1994.

Historic Eatonville

In 1889, a Nisqually known as Indian Henry guided Thomas C. Van Eaton to the present site of Eatonville, and the two men began an enduring friendship. Van Eaton, a successful Tacoma builder, had dreamed of starting his own town. The setting of Eatonville struck him as ideal, so he relocated and opened a trading post. Accounts from that time describe him as a generous community leader and businessman who valued education. The original Van Eaton Cabin, now the **Stage Stop Museum**, is at the corner of Alder St. and Mashel Ave. next to Mill Pond Park. The South Pierce County Historical Society opens the museum, filled with artifacts from the town's early days, on summer Sunday afternoons.

Eatonville incorporated in 1909, but from its beginning, years earlier, it has welcomed tourists heading to Mount Rainier National Park. Logging also defined the town through the first half of the 20th century. Timber operations began declining when Eatonville Lumber Company closed its mill in 1954. The town is now turning its economic gaze more toward tourism. Eatonville serves the Byway corridor well in this regard as the corridor's only full-service location.



Wagon (with mascot) at Stage Stop Museum



Historic Elbe

Elbe first had the name Brown's Junction as a settlement in the 1890s. In 1904, the Tacoma Eastern Railroad laid tracks and created a logging boomtown. The town's name later became Elbe to honor an early settler, Henry C. Lutkens, who came from the Elbe River valley in Germany. When the Tacoma Eastern Railroad ended passenger service from Tacoma to Ashford in 1924, Elbe started losing residents and shrunk to the approximate size it is today.



Elbe's Germanic heritage is charmingly captured by the **Little White Church**, an Evangelical Lutheran Church built in 1909 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Above the front door is the inscription *Ev. Luth. KIRCHE* (Evangelische Lutherische Kirche). Its nickname of Little White Church could be said to exaggerate its size, a mere 18'x24'. People still meet here for services and weddings, using the original altar and elevated pulpit. The bellows organ from long ago continues to add music to those occasions.



The town's railroad history is clear upon entering Elbe. It seems to have about as many train cars as houses. At Mount Rainier Railroad Dining Co. and Hobo Inn, Byway travelers can eat in an antique dining car and stay overnight in a vintage rail car.



At the Elbe Depot, Byway travelers board a historic train operated by **Mount Rainier Railroad** for a ride to Mineral and a visit to the Logging Museum which is partnered with the railroad. The rail line, once the early 1900s Tacoma Eastern RR, is the longest continuously operating steam train in the Pacific Northwest. The modern-day railroad runs has regular runs from late spring through fall. Special, event-themed rides include Santa Express, Pumpkin Express, Washington Wine Express, and others.

Historic Mineral

In 1857, Washington Territory's Surveyor General charted the lake now known as Mineral Lake as Goldsboro Lake. Mineral itself is named for the gold that prospectors had hoped to find but didn't. Instead, the town flourished in the early 1900s as a logging camp and sawmill. When those operations ended, the town lost much of its population, never to regain it — except on opening weekend of fishing season. As noted in the **Intrinsic**

Qualities

— Recreation

section of this plan, the stocked lake is a big draw for anglers.



Mineral Lake Lodge is a three-story log structure built in 1906 along

the lines of a German wilderness hunting lodge. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. In addition to guest accommodations, the lodge has period antiques and photographs as well as a beautiful view of Mineral Lake and Mount Rainier.



Mineral had its own **Civilian Conservation Corps camp** at the end of what is now Pleasant Valley Road, a road accessed from the Scenic Byway's SR 7

spur. These out-of-work young men were employed by the federal government during the Great Depression of the 1930s to work on natural resources lands, often forestland. They became known as “tree soldiers.” All that remains today of their encampment is a chimney from one of the CCC buildings.

In November, 2014 the arts center **Mineral School** presented a talk about the CCC in this area by Washington writer J. L. (Janet) Oakley, and local performers gave a bench reading of her one-act play. The play is based on Oakley's award-winning novel *Tree Soldier*, set in a CCC camp.



Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum has recently added greatly to Mineral's historic attractions with its expansive, well-developed museum on the outskirts of Mineral. Byway visitors catch the train at the Elbe Depot and ride to the museum to see a comprehensive collection of steam logging locomotives. Six logging camp buildings from the early 1920s help tell the area's history. Admission to the museum is included with all train tickets. Visitors driving directly to Mineral may also visit the museum.



Mount Rainier Railroad & Logging Museum
photos by Anthony Koopman

Historic Alder

The community of Alder still uses two structures from its early history. **Alder Presbyterian Church** on 50109 School Road can be seen and easily reached from the Scenic Byway. Services have been held there since 1904.



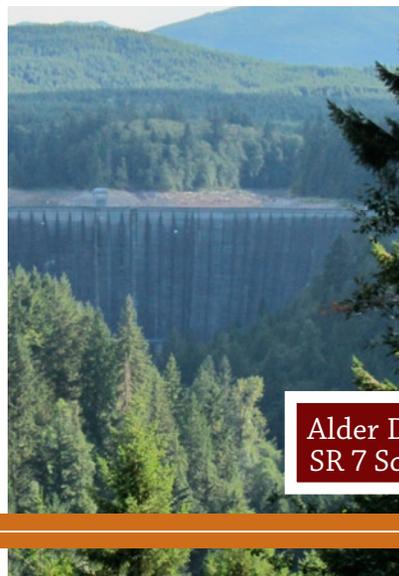
Alder Community Club also continues to be a gathering place for locals. Downstairs is a kitchen and dining area, upstairs a large open space. The building is one of Alder's



landmarks and is alongside the Scenic Byway on SR 7.



The location of the original Alder community is now Alder Lake. It was platted in 1905 and by 1909 had a population of 200 with two general stores, two hotels, a meeting hall, church, school, saw and shingle mill, and two logging camps nearby.



The second Tacoma Power dam on the Nisqually River was completed in 1945 after the first was

Alder Dam from SR 7 Scenic Pullover

built decades earlier at La Grande. Alder Dam, at the time it was built, was one of the tallest in the nation, standing 330 feet high.

With the completion of the dam, residents evacuated and relocated, and soon after the waters of Alder Lake covered their homes and businesses. The church and community club survived because they were on high ground above the lake. Today, during drawdowns of the lake by Tacoma Power, remnants of **Alder Ghost Town** can be seen in foundations, old roadway patterns, and even farm and household items left behind. Drawdowns exposing the old Alder create a favorite scouting place for amateur archeologists.



Historic La Grande

An eye-catching feature for Byway travelers is **La Grande's US Post Office** in an old, clapboard building right along SR 7. Inside, visitors can use postal services as well as enjoy historic paraphernalia.

The PO is a vestige of La Grande's early days when the first Tacoma Power dam on the Nisqually River was completed in 1912. A rebuilt dam went into operation in 1945. The town came to be because of the construction of LaGrande Dam (spelled differently from the town).



Historic Mount Rainier National Park

The history and archeology of **Mount Rainier National Park** is both human and geologic. The park celebrated its centennial in 1999, only the 5th national park named, so it has a rich past. That history is well documented and interpreted in a way that engages visitors.

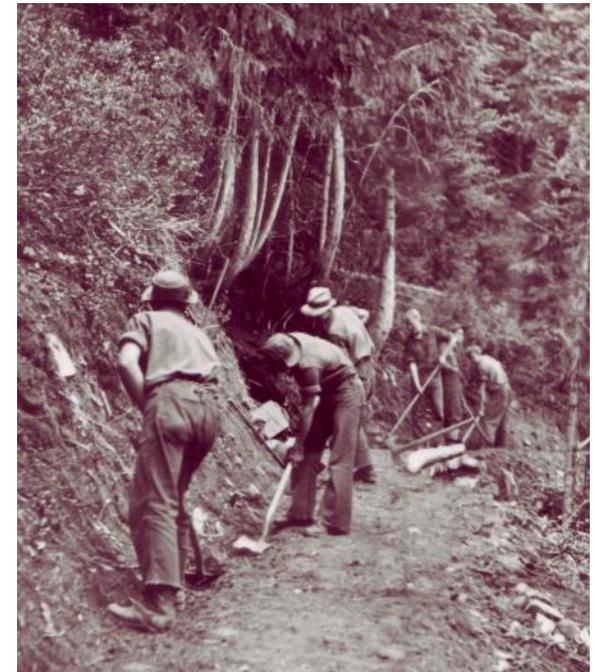
Longmire, site of the park's first headquarters, earlier had been the James Longmire family's homestead, guest lodge, and mineral springs resort. That history can be experienced during the **Shadows of the Past** program. It is one of many of the national park's annual history-focused events. As groups are led through Longmire's historic **Trail of the Shadows** at night by lantern light, they stop to hear colorful characters from the park's early



Mount Rainier National Park Administration Building, Longmire

years. Other evening talks held in the park each summer tell about Mount Rainier's violent geologic history, the Nisqually presence in the park over millennia, and how the park and its wildlife have been protected through the years.

CCC Workers on Wonderland Trail, Mount Rainier National Park Archives



During the Great Depression years 1933-1939, young men with the federal Civilian Conservation Corps did extensive work on the trail including constructing bridges and hiker shelters.



Transportation Exhibit at Old Gas Station, Longmire

Although park headquarters are no longer at Longmire, the original 1916 administration building houses a museum that tells the story of the early days of the park. A separate transportation exhibit nearby, housed in what was once the park's gas station, tells the story of roadways leading to the park and within it.



Longmire is the location of the National Park Inn which remains open all year. Paradise Lodge is the grander of the two, but due to challenging winter conditions at its higher elevation, it closes from mid-October to spring. Both lodges reflect the National Park Service's intention to construct buildings that blend with the natural environment using stone, wood, large posts and beams, and plentiful



National Park Inn, Longmire

windows to enjoy the scenery. The style also is indicative of the Arts and Crafts movement, a back-to-basics style that rejected Victorian artifice.

Paradise Lodge





Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center



That style still is honored in newer structures such as the Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, built in 2008. Like earlier

Original Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center



buildings nearby, its steep roof is designed to shed foot after foot of snow that falls in the park each year, especially up at Paradise, elevation 5400'. The park notes Paradise is "the snowiest place on Earth where snowfall is measured regularly." The record is 93.5' the winter of 1971–72. The least amount ever recorded there was the winter of 2014–15 with only 22.1'.

The new visitor center replaced an unwieldy, circular concrete structure built in 1966 that collected huge amounts of snow on its round roof. The snow had to be heated to melt it, because the building's style held it on top. The utility cost for that, and for heating the immense interior, became prohibitive. For many a visitor, the old center with its quirky, 60s style made them think of a UFO more than anything else.

Historic UFO Sighting

What better place than after the previous sentence to mention one of the most curious aspects of Mount Rainier's history, the Kenneth Arnold UFO Sighting?

On June 24, 1947 private pilot Kenneth Arnold reported seeing a string of nine shiny flying objects moving past Mount Rainier at speeds he estimated to be 1200 mph. He was flying from Chehalis to Yakima on a business trip. He had decided to make a quick detour en route to see if he could spot a US Marine Corps C-46 transport plane that had crashed near Mount Rainier. Discovery could bring a \$5000 reward. Afternoon skies were completely clear and the wind mild.

The news media including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Chicago Times*, and Associated Press reported widely on what happened after this, and Edward R. Murrow interviewed him. Several military investigations studied what Arnold claimed he saw. Both news and military accounts describe him as a credible witness who was precise in his observations.

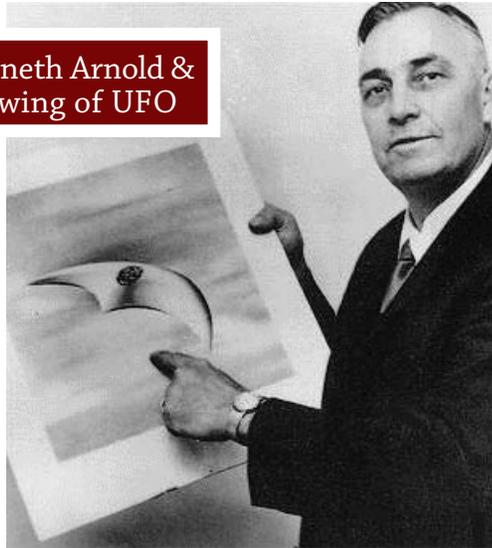
Just before 3 p.m., Arnold reported flying at an altitude around 9200' near Mineral. He had decided to abandon his search for the

crashed plane and was heading east toward Yakima. A bright, flashing light appeared, and he feared he might be too near another aircraft. He noticed only a DC-4 that was to his left and behind him about 15 miles away. About 30 seconds after this first flash, Arnold saw a series of flashes north of Mount Rainier about 20–25 miles away. He thought they might be reflections, so he did a series of quick tests, steering the plane side to side, rolling down his side window. Their formation made him think for a moment they might be geese, but the altitude and rapid speed disproved that. He felt then they must be experimental US military aircraft.

The objects moved toward and in front of Rainier, flashing at times, moving erratically, sometimes on edge and so thin he barely could see them. Arnold later described their shape as like a disc or saucer in the shape of a crescent and longer than they were wide. He said they were grouped together and wove side to side “like the tail of a Chinese kite,” moving among small mountains, at times flipping or banking on their edges in unison, a motion that caused very bright mirrored flashes in the sunlight. As they continued to move rapidly southwest, he watched from his

open side window. He clocked them taking one minute and 42 seconds to reach Mount Adams, 50 miles from Mount Rainier. Later, not knowing exactly where they were when he no longer could see them, he conservatively estimated their speed at 1200 mph. He calculated their size as larger than 100 feet; Army Air Force analysts doing more detailed calculations arrived at 140–280 feet.

Kenneth Arnold & Drawing of UFO



Later in this trip, when Kenneth Arnold departed Yakima and flew on to a Pendleton, OR air show, he told several pilot friends what he'd seen and was interviewed the next day by the local *East Oregonian* newspaper. The coverage took wing from

there, getting a great deal of attention in print and on radio. As early as June 27, three days after the sighting, Arnold said: *I haven't had a moment of peace since I first told the story.... This whole thing has gotten out of hand. I want to talk to the FBI or someone. Half the people look at me as a combination of Einstein, Flash Gordon, and screwball.*

The military denied having any aircraft in the area. On July 4, a United Airlines crew reported seeing nine disc-like objects over Idaho.

Lt. Frank Brown and Capt. William Davidson interviewed Arnold on July 12 and studied his written report to them in the first of several military investigations into the incident. They concluded he was telling the truth and was “a man of character and apparent integrity.” The Army Air Force's formal public conclusion: He'd seen a mirage.

Although the shape Arnold described was akin to a crescent, he also said the objects were shaped like discs or saucers. News accounts made the term “saucer” stick, and “flying saucer” entered our lexicon.

Planned Historic Projects

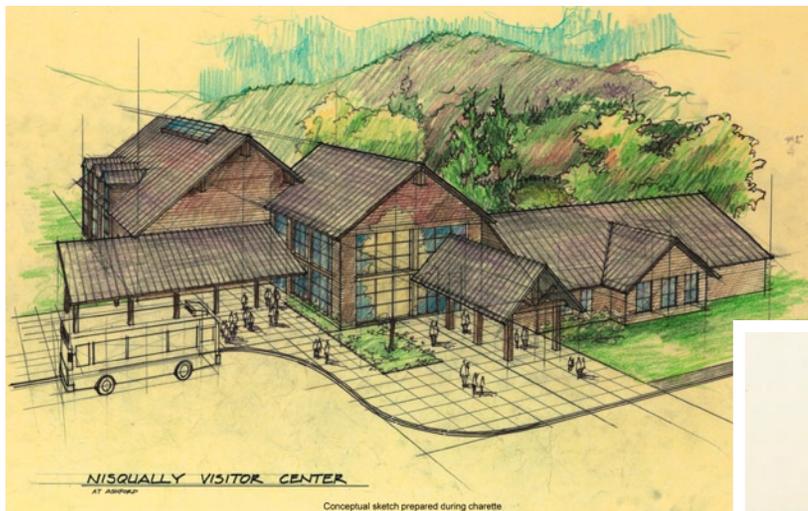
The **Mountaineering Museum** planned for Ashford will showcase Ashford's unique prominence in the US mountaineering world as well as its international significance. For those hoping to summit Mount Rainier as well as the many who will only daydream about doing so, the museum will capture that experience as best as can be done far below. Ashford is the home of two well-respected international climbing companies (Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. and International Mountain Guides) and world-renowned climbers including Lou Whittaker and Eric Simonson. Whittaker is a strong proponent of the museum.

The museum is in Phase III of Pierce County's Ashford County Park. Phase I with its extensive trails, picnic and playground areas, restroom facilities, and parking, saw completion a few years ago. During late summer, 2015 an exuberant crowd inaugurated the first concert at the park's beautiful outdoor amphitheater. The event signaled the success of Phase II. Friends of the Upper Nisqually (FUN) is the locally-based citizen group that has successfully advocated Ashford County Park development and serves as park overseer with Pierce County.

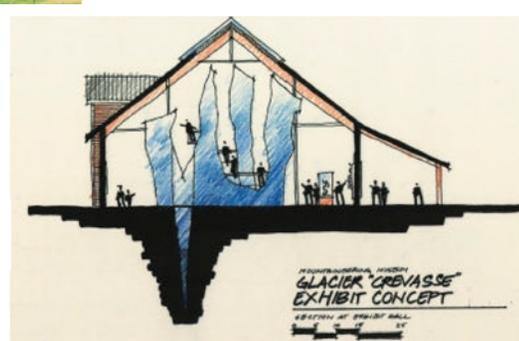
The Mountaineering Museum is a concept that sprang in great part from the creative brainstorming of community members. Their intensive sessions or charette resulted in the 2001 production of the printed Nisqually Road



Ashford County Park



Sketches of Mountaineering Museum



Corridor Charette. That plan, which was far-reaching in scope, has been used as a resource for this Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan.

The Nisqually Road Corridor Charette Team



Assessment Of Intrinsic Qualities

	Scenic	Recreational	Cultural	Historic & Archeological		Scenic	Recreational	Cultural	Historic & Archeological
Alder Community Club			X	X	Mineral Lake Lodge				X
Alder Ghost Town				X	Mineral School			X	X
Alder Lake	X	X		X	Mt. Rainier Lions Club Hall			X	X
Alder Lake Park	X	X			Mount Rainier National Park	X	X	X	X
Alder Presbyterian Church			X	X	Mount Rainier Railroad & Logging Museum	X	X	X	X
Ashford County Park	X	X	X		Mount Tahoma Trails Association	X	X		
Ashford Creek Pottery, Gallery, & Museum			X	X	Nisqually State Park (in development)	X	X	X	X
Ashford Mansion				X	Northwest Trek Wildlife Park	X	X	X	
Bud Blancher Trail	X	X	X		Ohop Grange			X	X
Dogwood Park	X			X	Pack Forest	X	X	X	X
Eatonville Arts Festival			X		Pioneer Farm Museum & Ohop Indian Village	X	X	X	X
Eatonville Community Center			X		Rainier Independent Film Festival		X	X	
Eatonville Public Library			X	X	Rainier Mountain Festival		X	X	
Elbe Hills Horse Trails & Camp	X	X			RAMROD (Bicycle Event)	X	X		
Elbe Hills ORV Camp & Trails	X	X			Recycled Spirits of Iron—Ex Nihilo Sculpture Park	X		X	
Elbe's Little White Church			X	X	Smallwood Park	X	X	X	
EZ Times Guided Horse Trails	X	X			Stage Stop Museum			X	X
Henley's Silver Lake Resort	X	X			Stringtown Cellars Winery & Lavender Farm	X		X	
Kenneth Arnold 1947 UFO Sighting				X					
La Grande US Post Office			X	X					
Mill Pond Park	X	X							
Mineral Lake	X	X							

NAT'L HISTORIC SITE
Elbe Church



BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

A tribute to the Armed Forces that have defended the United States of America

SPONSORED BY
 Hill and Dale District of Garden Clubs
 IN COOPERATION WITH
 Washington State Department of Transportation

SMALLWOOD
Park

NAMED IN HONOR OF: GEORGE H. SMALLWOOD

George Howard Smallwood
 November 3, 1919 - August 3, 1979
 Serving Community & Country

A Washingtonian served in the South Pacific winning several medals. Many Corps & Army awards. Heights in the battle of Iwo Jima & had the privilege to be named Kennedy #71 120.

A Washingtonian served in the South Pacific winning several medals. Many Corps & Army awards. Heights in the battle of Iwo Jima & had the privilege to be named Kennedy #71 120.

George was an avid environmentalist. He, with community members were the first to stock the "Kiss Your" habitat to promote education & respect of our environment.

A local leader serving on the Town Council for 14 years & Mayor for 8 years.

Mr. Smallwood will always be remembered.

TACOMA POWER'S
Nisqually River Project
 EST. 1912



Something's fishy
 Ready for adventure? Grab your fishing pole and try your luck fishing for kokanee, also called cut-throat salmon, within the next 60 to 100 miles between the lake each year to provide you with fishing opportunities.



Play all day. Stay all night.
 If you love outdoor fun, you'll love Alder Lake Park. It's one of Tacoma Power's four campgrounds featuring individual and group sites for RV and tent camping. You'll also enjoy boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking and more. Nearby Sunny Beach Point day-use area and Rocky Point campground are east of Alder Lake Park on Highway 7. Reserve your site at www.tacomapower.com/parks.

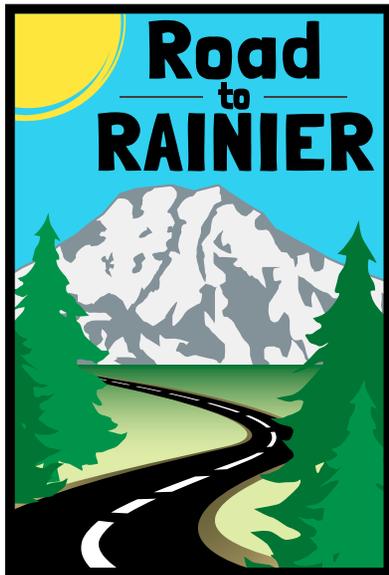
Wildlife on the edge
 Tacoma Power's wildlife lands surround Alder Lake and along the Nisqually River both upstream and downstream of the dams. Our wildlife lands total 3,500 acres and support elk, deer, wood ducks, herons and thousands of other critters that depend on high-quality habitat.

- 1912** Tacoma Power, then called Tacoma City Light, built the original diversion dam and a powerhouse. It was one of the first hydroelectric projects in the West.
- 1938** Tacoma Power's engineers planned to replace the diversion dam with two new dams and expand the existing powerhouse.
- 1945** Alder Dam stands completed near the site of the diversion dam, Alder Lake West.
- 1945** Construction of LaGrande Dam was completed. It sits 1.5 miles downstream of Alder Dam and forms a small reservoir.
- 1997** Tacoma Power received a new 60-year Federal license for the Nisqually River Hydroelectric Project and launched new fisheries, wildlife and recreation programs.



Interpretation & the Visitor Experience

The Byway Story



The story of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway is a tale intricately shaped by Washington's dominant icon: Mount Rainier. The Byway's tale is a chronicle of geologic drama, of Nisqually inhabitation for millennia, of pioneers and homesteading, of lumber mills and steam trains, of

mountaineering, and of a wealth of unique recreation opportunities. This narrative grows from a landscape both beautiful and thrilling. It encompasses distinctive communities that depend on the Mountain, its waterways, and its river valleys. Through interpretation, that story is told, allowing the traveler to make a deepened connection to place.



The Importance of Interpretation

A common complaint from travelers worldwide is this: We leave someplace we might never revisit and later learn we missed something there we didn't know about, something we wished we could have experienced. Equally disappointing is to arrive at a place we've never been before and wish we had at hand some information to help us fully appreciate it. Both situations exemplify what interpretation is not.

Definitions of Interpretation

- The National Park Service defines interpretation as: *a catalyst in creating an opportunity for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings and significance inherent in the resource.*
- The National Association for Interpretation considers interpretation to be: *a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.*
- The Association for Heritage Interpretation puts it this way: *Interpretation enriches lives through engaging emotions, enhancing experiences, and deepening understanding of people, places, events and objects from past and present.*

Interpretation within the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway corridor will be used to connect visitors to the area's history, distinct features and attractions, and its significance. The goal is to expand and intensify the travel experience. Doing so increases its meaning and weaves the Byway story into travelers' own.

Travelers ideally will:

- feel welcomed;
- gain a sense of place unique to the byway's character;
- develop their own connection to the area and its story;
- have readily available information — and enough of it — about where they are.

Existing & Planned Interpretation

Existing Interpretation

Many of the attractions listed in the previous inventory of intrinsic qualities have well-developed ways of telling their facet of the Byway story. A few deserve particular mention:

Mount Rainier National Park, adjacent to the Scenic Byway's eastern terminus, provides exhibits and films on the geologic history of the Mountain as well as its value to the Nisqually and other tribes and its inspiration for mountaineers. Both the Visitor Center at Paradise and historic collections at Longmire host such displays. Each year the park's history is brought to life along Longmire's Trail of the Shadows with the Shadows of the Past presentation in which colorful historic characters share their stories by lantern light. Each summer rangers give talks to park visitors about Mount Rainier's volcanic activity, its wildlife, and the Nisqually people's dependence on it.

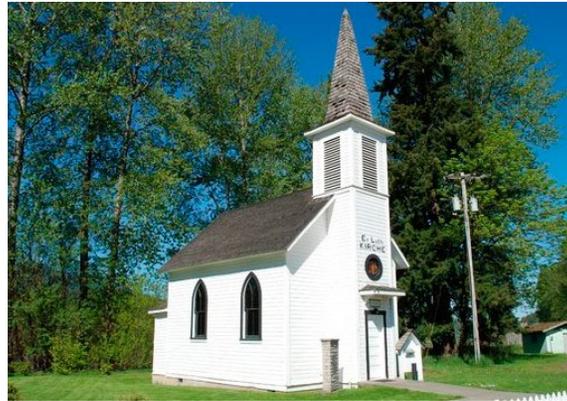


Mount Rainier from Ohop Valley

The Byway corridor's pioneer story and the story of its native tribal life are told in an engaging hands-on fashion at **Pioneer Farm Museum and Ohop Indian Village**. This nonprofit educational center gives children and adults who visit a chance

to experience day-to-day life, from food gathering to games to arrowhead carving, as those earlier people did. The setting is in one of the most beautiful locations in the Byway corridor: protected land in the Ohop Valley that stretches toward a majestic view of Mount Rainier.

Another place to learn about the Byway's pioneers is inside the original Van Eaton Cabin in Eatonville. It is now the **Stage Stop Museum**, and its display of artifacts is hosted by South Pierce County Historical Society.



The **Little White Church** in Elbe is one of the most charming sites along the Byway. The church, built in 1909, still opens its doors for services and weddings that are accompanied by music from its old bellows organ.

The rich railroad history that began with the Byway's logging days can be explored at **Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum** in Mineral and on the vintage steam train that takes visitors there from the Elbe Depot. The museum has an extensive collection of steam logging locomotives. Museum grounds are spread over a large area that includes six logging camp buildings from the early 1920s to show what life was like in those camps.

At the three-day **Rainier Mountain Festival** presented by Whittaker Mountaineering in Ashford, crowds gather to hear about climbing techniques and summit treks on Mount Rainier and peaks all over the globe. Celebrity mountaineers tell about their adventures and chat with festival-goers at this popular event. Ashford's story is intricately tied to Mount Rainier due to its location by the national park entrance, and two top international guide services are based in this hamlet.

Planned Interpretation

Interpretative projects are planned by Pierce County and Washington State Parks & Recreation. Both ventures will heighten significantly the Byway visitor experience and provide new chapters of the Byway story.

The **Mountaineering Museum** is Phase III of development of Pierce County's Ashford County Park, designed and managed in cooperation with a local citizens group, Friends of the Upper Nisqually (FUN). The first two phases of the park are complete. The Mountaineering Museum will be the major storyteller for Mount Rainier's rich history in hiking boots. Visitors will experience the vicarious thrill of summiting the Mountain without undergoing the rigors of a climb. Mount Rainier's prominence as a training ground

for attempting the world's highest peaks will be emphasized, as will narratives of its dramatic ascents. The museum has strong backing from Ashford's most famous resident, world-renowned mountaineer Lou Whittaker, who has been integral to designing and promoting the museum. More information about the Mountaineering Museum is in the **Planned Historic & Archeological Projects** section under **Intrinsic Qualities**.

The **Nisqually State Park**, now in its initial stages, will be a prominent interpretive center for the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway. It is a project of Washington State Parks & Recreation and its project partners including the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Along with the park's many recreational opportunities, there will be

extensive exhibitions, programs, and activities providing a narrative of long-ago life within the Byway corridor. In particular, the People's Center facility will interpret the millennia-long history, culture, and aesthetics of the Nisqually and other Coast Salish tribes. At the planned Observatory on a ridgetop viewpoint, tribal storytellers will explain the park location's significance to their people and talk about their history and customs. Interpretive display signs about the park's two rivers, the Nisqually and its tributary Mashel, will be installed at the approaches to eight bridges across the waterways. More information about the Nisqually State Park is in the **Planned Recreation** section under **Intrinsic Qualities**.

Interpretive Design Guidelines

Interpretive Signs

Although many interpretive signs already exist within the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway corridor, there is no cohesive design. As has been noted, the Byway is already a well-traveled tourist path in summer, but the corridor and its assets are underutilized in the long shoulder season. It is a Byway goal to increase visitation during those months. Even during the peak of summer, many attractions in the corridor remain unknown or unvisited. Interpretive signs will be a primary way of showcasing those locations.

Interpretive sign designs will be created with guidance from WA State Department of Transportation in full compliance with state regulations. WSDOT's Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines manual will be used as reference. Where appropriate, Pierce County and Lewis County road departments also will be consulted to comply with each county's requirements.

Structural materials will speak of the land—wood and stone—where their use is permitted. They will echo the rustic vernacular of the national park's structural design guidelines. The Scenic Byway logo will be used on all signs.

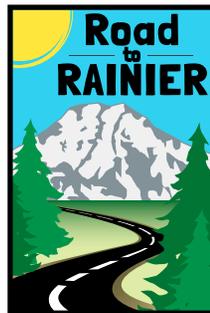
Display materials must be non-corrosive and resistant to rain, wind, and sun. Priority will be

given to recycled materials and those that don't harm the environment in their manufacture.

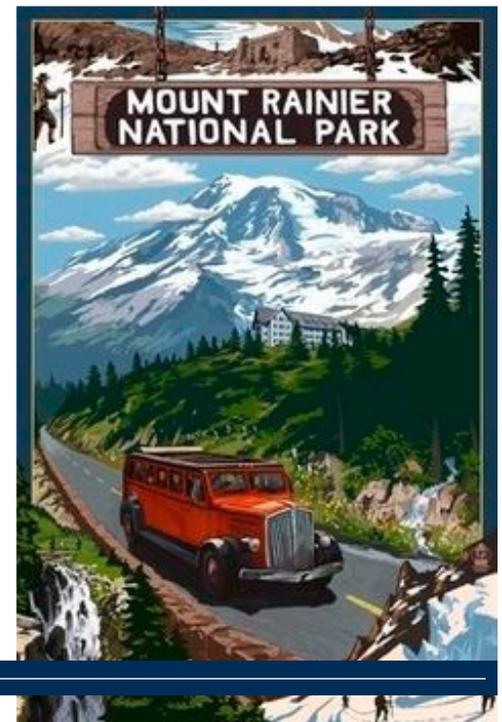
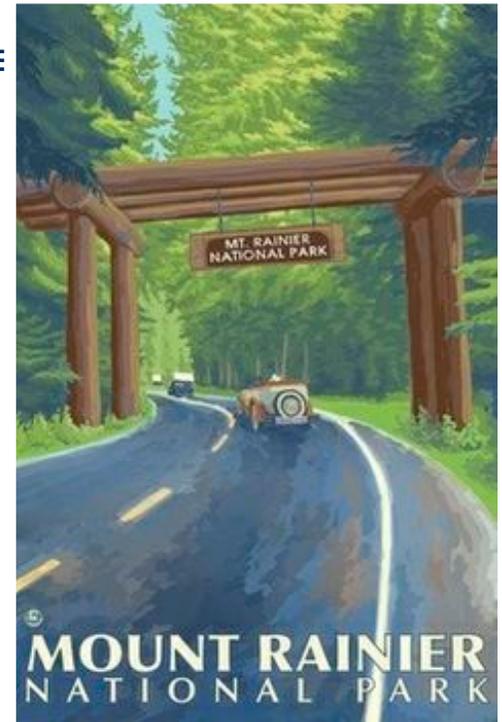
A consistent visual theme will be used for all planned interpretive signs. When feasible, existing interpretive signs will be replaced with new ones incorporating the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway design elements.

Electronic Interpretation

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway website (roadtorainier.com) already has extensive visual and descriptive information about the Byway's attractions and setting. The website will be updated regularly to provide visitors a reliable, easy-to-use source for planning their Byway travels. The website also functions as a handy mobile reference when visitors are already on their journey within the Byway corridor.



Graphic elements of interpretive signs will be in keeping with the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway's logo. The logo is a retro design that recalls early promotional posters used for Mount Rainier National Park.



Wayshowing Design Guidelines

The term wayshowing is not the same as wayfinding. Wayshowing specifically refers to providing information to help travelers find their way. Show them the way, then they can find it.

Wayshowing > wayfinding

Wayshowing also offers reassurance: You're not lost, here's what's ahead, and here's how to find it.

Directional signs are wayshowing markers that offer more specific information about a particular place: It's a mile ahead... it's the next left... turn here. Or in the case of Ashford, for those traveling east: This is your last chance for gas for 83 miles.



Wayshowing Signs, SR 7 & Eatonville Highway Intersection

All new wayshowing signs will incorporate the Scenic Byway's design theme as well as its logo when feasible. It is important travelers know they are within the Byway corridor. That identification can be made with colors, materials, and graphic design as well as wording.

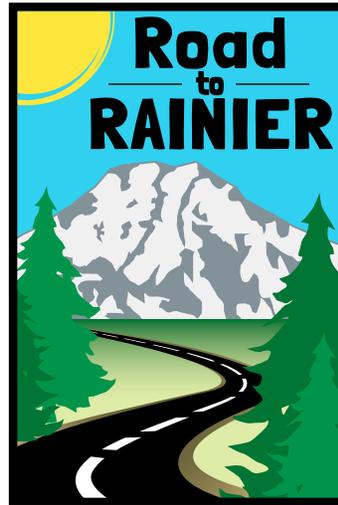
to comply with each county's requirements.

When feasible or advisable, content will be in Spanish as well as English.

Wayshowing sign designs will be created with guidance from WA State Department of Transportation in full compliance with state regulations. WSDOT's *Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines* manual will be used as reference. Where appropriate, Pierce County and Lewis County road departments also will be consulted

Byway Identity Design Guidelines

At the suggestion of WSDOT Olympia Region staff, this CMP does not include design illustrations for any Scenic Byway signs. Those will be created in consultation with state and county transportation staff at the appropriate time. Because federal and state funds are not available as they once were for Scenic Byway signs, funding would have to be secured by the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway management team through other sources. It is the determination of the team to do so as soon as feasible.



Identification signs always will use the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway logo. Both the west and east portals of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway will have distinct identification markers to let travelers know they are entering the byway's road system.



Example of Scenic Byway & state route sign

Along the route, markers will include metal signs posted immediately below state highway identification signs where permitted by WSDOT. Other markers will be placed as needed to identify each of the corridor's roads as being on the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway.

All signs identifying the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway will be created with guidance from WA State Department of Transportation in full compliance with state regulations. For reference, WSDOT's *Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines* manual will be used. Where appropriate, Pierce County and Lewis County road departments will be consulted to comply with each county's requirements.

Visitor Accommodations



Ashford Visitor Center

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway already has well-established visitor centers. The primary one is in Ashford and is operated by Mount Rainier Visitor Association. Staff provide abundant information for travelers, help them find accommodations, provide wifi and an onsite computer, as well as a public restroom. Ashford County Park has restrooms, a large playground, picnic area, and trails to welcome visitors during warmer months.

Eatonville has a city-run, seasonal visitor center a block from the Scenic Byway's SR161/Washington Avenue. Its public restroom, housed in a separate, nearby building, is open all year.



Eatonville Visitor Center

On the western edge of Elbe, WSDOT has a rest area with interpretative information as well as restroom facilities. Also in Elbe, Mount Rainier Railroad operates a welcome center at the historic depot.



Elbe Rest Area

Within Mount Rainier National Park, expansive visitor centers are at Longmire and Paradise. Also at these locations are food services, restrooms, and interpretative displays about the park. The Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise also screens a well-produced film about Mount Rainier that is shown several times each day.

Recommendations For Visitor Enhancements

Staff at Mount Rainier National Park as well as local Byway leaders have stated their desire to have electric charging stations for vehicles. Travelers with electric cars are a growing segment of the visitor population, and those travelers often schedule their trips around the availability of charging stations. A succession of such stations placed strategically within the Byway corridor would be a valuable enhancement. This also would support the goal of drawing more visitors to the Scenic Byway area during the long, less-frequented shoulder season.

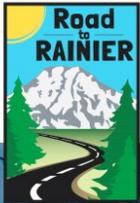
Various projects planned for development are mentioned in the Intrinsic Qualities section. Each of these merits bringing to fruition and would enhance the visitor experience. They also provide additional reasons to bring visitors to the Scenic Byway area in the shoulder season.

It is recommended that all public restrooms and visitor centers now operating only during summer months be open to the public during the shoulder season as well, at least on weekends. Another recommendation is to have more events that would attract travelers during the off-season.

In a broader context, maintaining a beautiful and healthy natural environment is a must in attracting visitors drawn to explore the Scenic Byway's unique attractions as well as those in nearby Mount Rainier National Park.

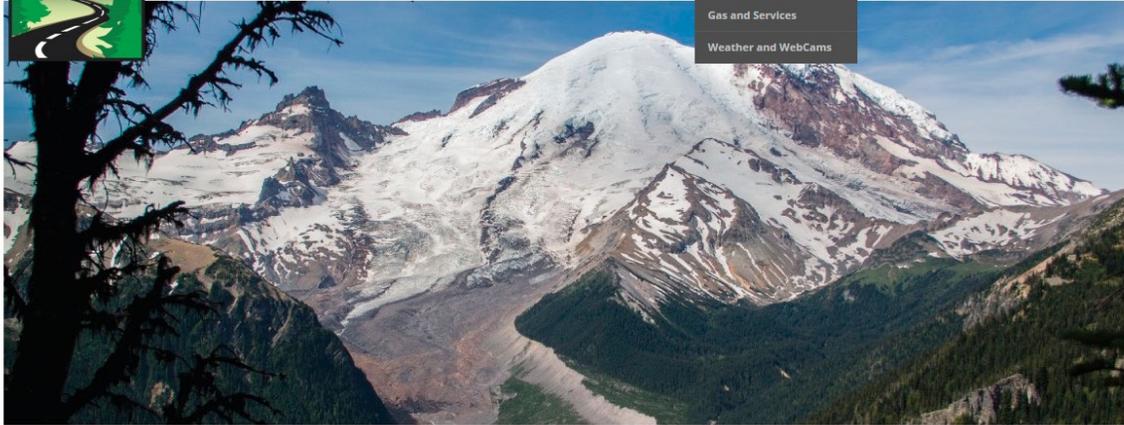
Outdoor Advertising Control Compliance

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway will remain in full compliance with federal and state regulations for outdoor advertising. The Byway route adheres to the *Federal Highway Beautification Act* of 1965. Federal law *23 USC 131* bans billboards along federal interstate and federal-aid primary routes designated as Scenic Byways. In addition, Washington State regulates outdoor advertising with the *1971 Scenic Vistas Act, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.42*.



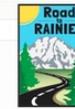
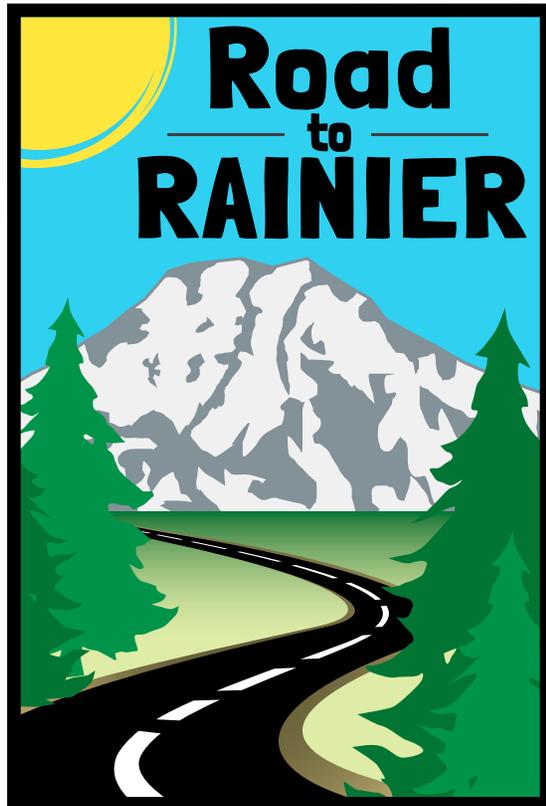
PLAN YOUR TRIP

- Scenic Byway Route
- Visitor Information
- Road Conditions
- Gas and Services
- Weather and WebCams



Scenic Byway

park's only year-round entrance
to Paradise and Longmire



Elbe

A tiny church in a tiny town
An antique steam locomotive to take you on a scenic ride
A hotel with rail cars for sleeping overnight and a dining car for meals



Getting Here

On the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, Elbe is 13 miles before the main entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. On your way to the park, you'll come to Elbe whether you take the Eatonville or highway 7 portions of the scenic byway loop. Those sections join shortly before Elbe. From Elbe, you can take a short spur of our byway to visit historic Mineral.



Elbe is the site of a state-run rest area as you enter town.



Activities

The Little White Church retains all its charms from 1906 when it was built. This Evangelical Lutheran Church is only 18' x 24' and still uses its original altar and elevated pulpit for services. The bellows organ from that time is played for worship and weddings. Above the front door is the inscription in Latin, *KIRCHT (evangelische) Luthertische Kirche* that tells of the German ancestry of its founders.



Mount Rainier Steam Railroad & Museum This rail line, since the early 1900s, Tacoma Eastern RR, is the largest continuously operating steam train on the Pacific Northwest. Hop aboard at the depot in Elbe and ride a vintage locomotive to Mineral and the railroad's expansive museum. There you'll see the fullest collection of steam logging locomotives in the world. History is housed inside six logging camp buildings from the early 1920s.



The railroad's regular runs are from late spring through fall. Special, event-themed runs include Santa Express, Pumpkin Express, Washington Wine Express, and others.

Mount Rainier Railroad Dining Car, and Hobbit Inn Eat in an antique dining car and stay overnight in your own vintage rail car.



Alder Lake Park is on Elbe's west side. Campsites, RV hookups, water sports, and **tubing** are all here.

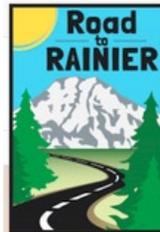
Horseback riding is available at [Elbe State Park](#). For those with their own horses, WA State's Dept. of Natural Resources manages [hunting trails](#) and [Sahara Horse Camp](#).

Also in Elbe is the seasonal Scalesberger, as well as a convenience store/gas station, historic general store, express stand, tavern, and post office.

Mount Rainier Visitor Association serves the areas of Elbe, Mineral, and Ashford with listings for lodging, dining, shopping, and events.

History

Elbe first had the name *Shower's Junction* as a settlement in the 1890s. In 1904, the Tacoma Eastern Railroad laid tracks through here and created a logging boomtown. The town's name later became Elbe to honor an early settler, Henry C. Lutken, who came from the Elbe River valley in Germany. When the Tacoma Eastern Railroad ended passenger service from Tacoma to Ashford in 1924, Elbe started losing residents and shrank to the approximate size it is today.



WHO WE ARE



[Nisqually Land Trust](#) and its partners are spearheading protection of the Road to Rainier

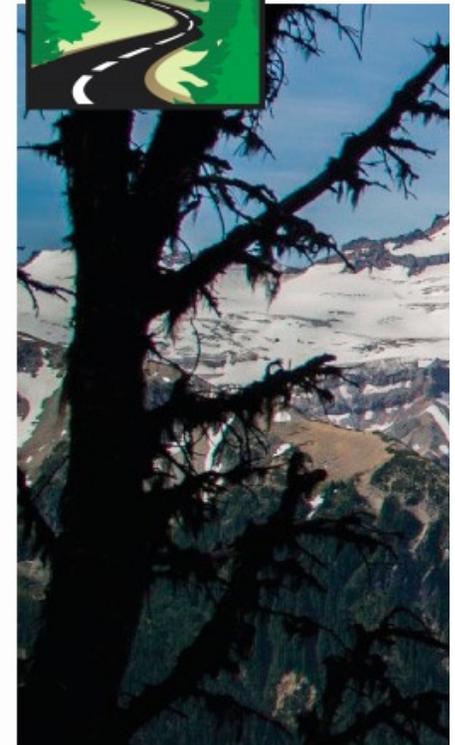
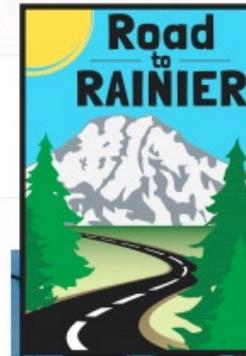
Our Mission

Marketing & Promotion

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway lends itself easily to marketing and promotion due to its access to Mount Rainier National Park, its abundance of visitor attractions throughout the corridor, and its superb natural beauty. This Byway also has the advantage of several successful marketing/promotion efforts already underway.

As noted elsewhere in this Corridor Management Plan, the focus for Scenic Byway marketing/promotion needs to be on the shoulder season, the long months when the summer crowds are gone. Marketing campaigns underway by Mount Rainier Visitor Association, Visit Rainier, Mount Rainier National Park, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum, the Town of Eatonville, and private entities already target for the off-season.

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway team will sharpen this shoulder season focus, both in solo efforts and in partnership marketing and promotion. MRVA, Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum, and Visit Rainier often engage in such partnerships and have a history of working cooperatively.



Marketing & Promotion Plan

The difference between marketing and promotion is not always a distinct one, but in general:

Marketing is a strategy to target potential customers and generate awareness and interest. Marketing includes promotion as part of its mix. That mix traditionally is referred to as the four P's: Price, Product, Promotion, and Place. In practical terms, however, the words often are used interchangeably.

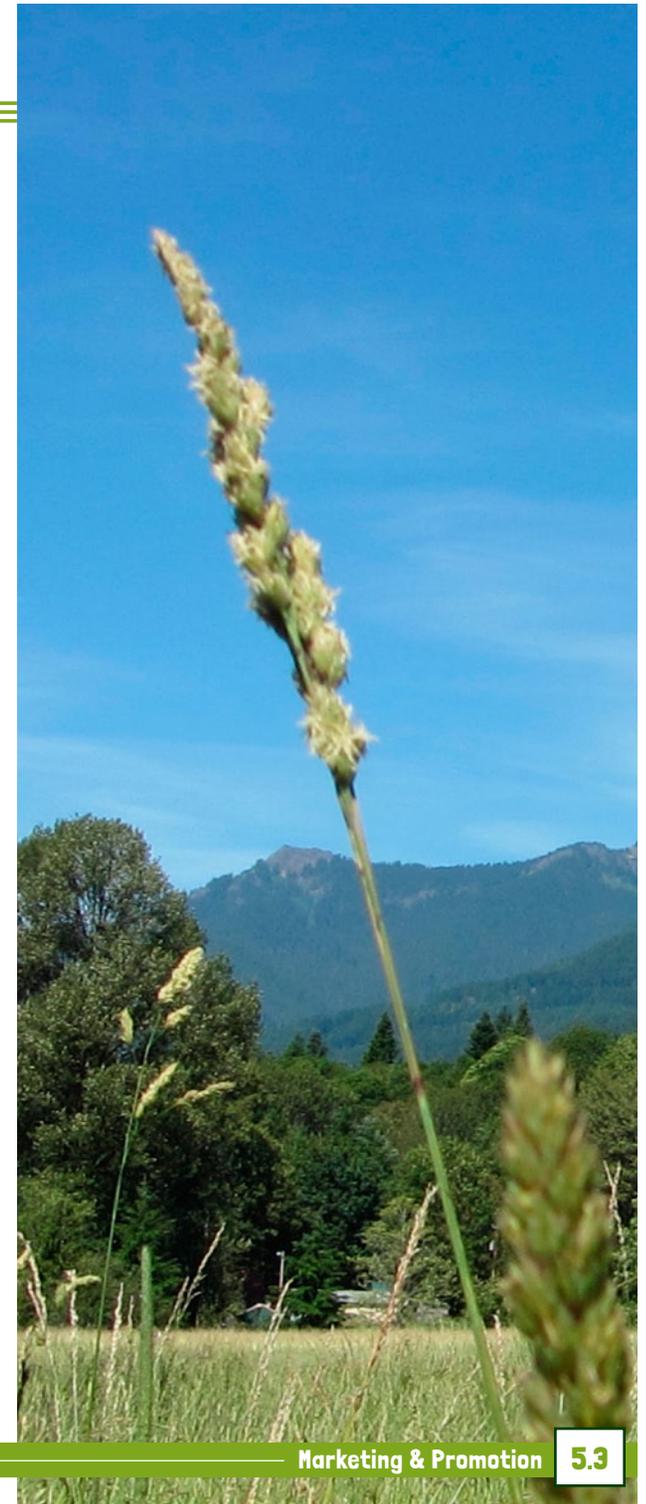
Priorities for Marketing & Promotion

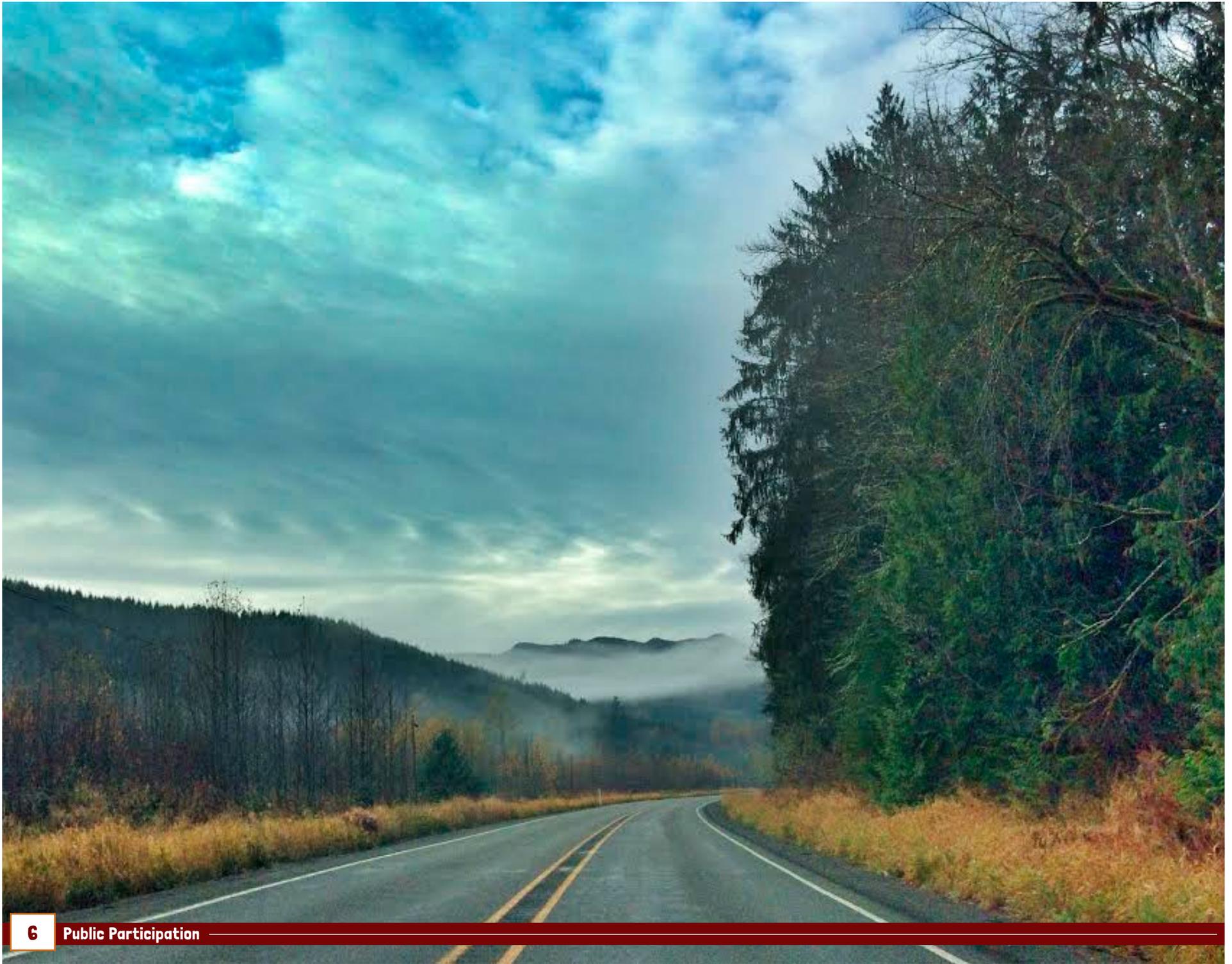
- Offer a rich travel experience unique to the intrinsic qualities of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway;
- Increase tourism during the non-summer months of shoulder season when already-developed accommodations and attractions for travelers are underutilized;
- Support economies of the tourism-dependent Byway communities and their businesses;
- Focus on ecotourism;
- Align with local and regional interests to preserve, enhance, and promote the natural habitats and unique scenic attributes of the Byway corridor;
- Target specific audiences and locales for promotional efforts, e.g., Portland OR travelers constitute a large population base that must stay overnight when visiting Mount Rainier;
- Work cooperatively to promote tourism with other groups including Mount Rainier Visitor Association, Town of Eatonville, Mount Rainier National Park, Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum, Tourism Tacoma + Pierce County, Discover Lewis County, Visit Rainier, and local festivals and events;
- Tap the resources of the National Scenic Byway Foundation and maintain communications with that nonprofit group to be aware of successful marketing elsewhere in the country and national legislation affecting Scenic Byways;
- Consider seeking national Scenic Byway status if that option becomes available again through USDOT;
- Assess effectiveness of promotional campaigns, ours and those of other Scenic Byway teams;
- Use branding that, as the Byway's name suggests, links to the strong draw of Mount Rainier National Park but that positions the Byway as a travel experience on its own, whether or not one is visiting the park.

Techniques for Marketing & Promotion

Marketing the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway will use a variety of proven approaches to heighten brand awareness and appeal. That includes a strong web presence and print promotion:

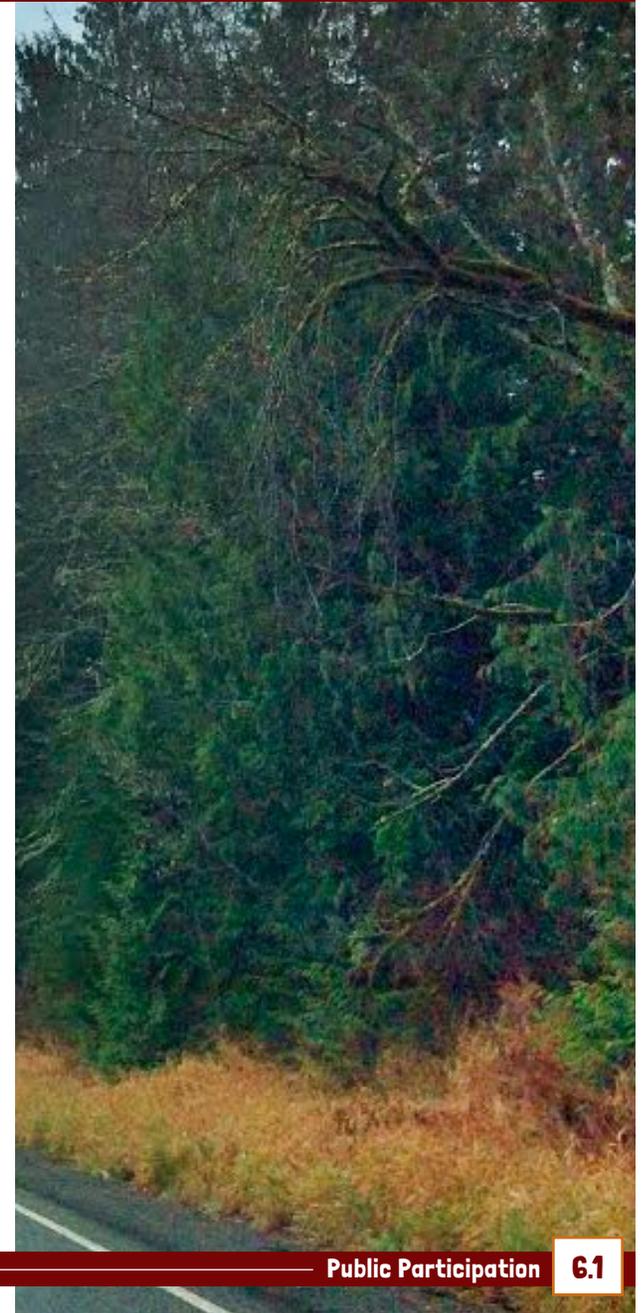
- A full-color brochure with a map and points of interest;
- A tear-off map of the Scenic Byway noting its attractions;
- Strategic distribution of the brochure and map using an outside firm specializing in such placement;
- Media ads and sponsorship as budgeting allows. As an example, Mount Rainier Visitor Association effectively airs short promos on radio, TV, and the web targeted to specific markets and demographics;
- Joint promotions with other tourism agencies and nearby Scenic Byway groups. For example, Visit Rainier currently has a geocaching promotion that includes locations within the Byway corridor;
- Strong web presence:
 - An up-to-date, content-rich, mobile-friendly website (already active at roadtorainier.com)
 - A mobile app
 - Social networking
 - Constant Contact for promotional efforts
 - Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to boost web placement in search engine results using keywords, backlinks, and other SEO tools
 - A blog linked to the website (another valuable SEO tool)
 - Incorporation of new e-technologies as they become available





Public Participation

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway incorporated public outreach early and will continue that priority. One benefit of such outreach is that it helps the local communities in the corridor think of it as their Byway. Given the economic dependence on tourism in these communities, there is a vested interest in the Byway's success.

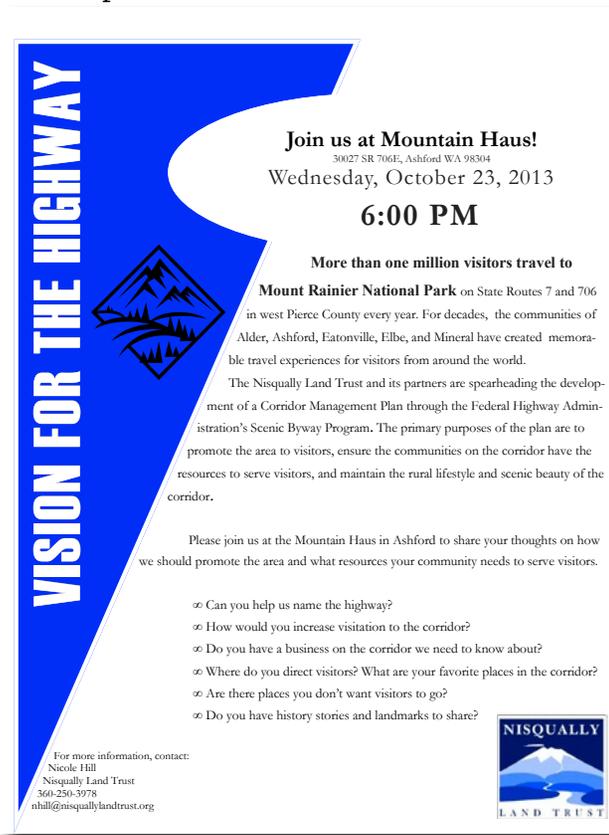


Recent & Current Public Participation

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Committee began meeting in 2013 to brainstorm ideas about what it would mean to establish the Byway, how to best do that, and what its identity and branding would be. This was spearheaded by Nicole Hill who at that time was on the staff of Nisqually Land Trust, and grant funding was procured for this initial phase. The committee members recruited for the Byway team represent private and public interests from a diverse group, and each member brings his or her particular, valuable expertise. A graphic designer was hired to begin creating a visual identity and logo with input from the public. The committee met several times to develop plans.

A public visioning open house was held October 23, 2013 at Mountain Haus in Ashford. An informational flyer created to increase public input asked local residents “to share your thoughts on how we should promote the area and what resources your community needs to serve visitors.” It listed questions that were the meeting’s focus:

At the open house, local participants chose the name and logo and discussed branding. Several useful ideas and approaches generated at the meeting are incorporated into this document. Another important outcome was that the Scenic Byway became a topic of local discussion. Local “buy-in” to the concept increased.



Can you help us name the highway?

How would you increase visitation to the corridor?

Do you have a business on the corridor we need to know about?

Where do you direct visitors? What are your favorite places in the corridor?

Are there places you don't want visitors to go?

Do you have history stories and landmarks to share?

Outreach for Corridor Management Plan

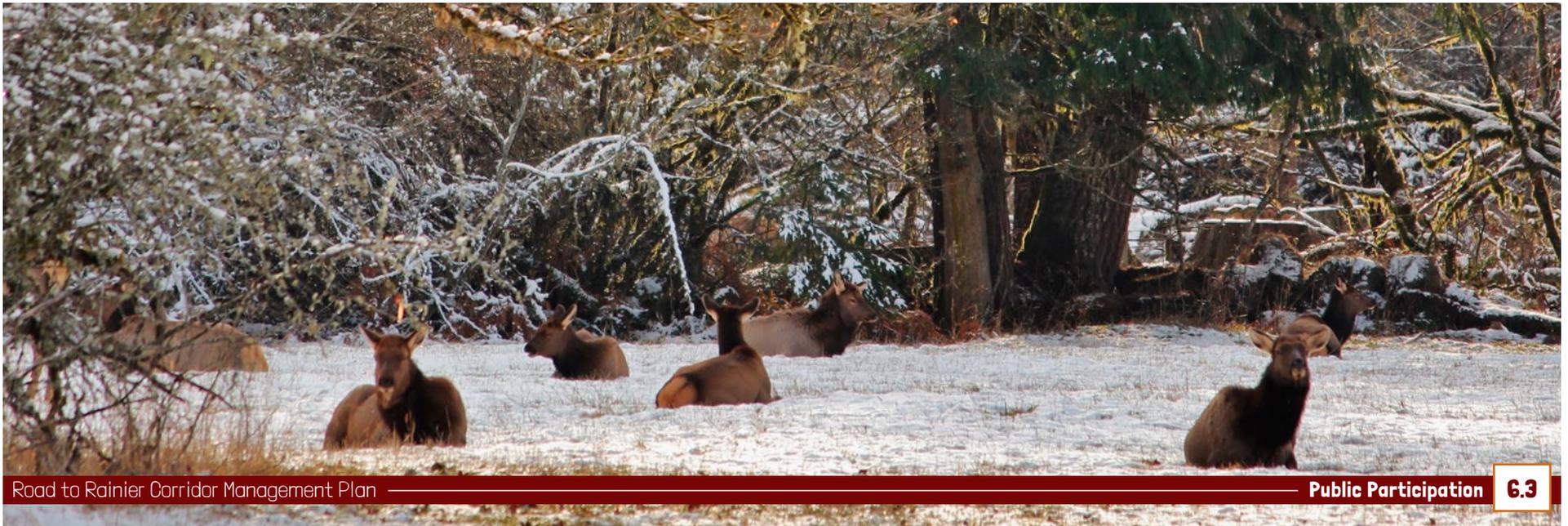
Consultations with local groups and individuals have helped ensure community needs, values, and viewpoints are incorporated in this Corridor Management Plan. Community-focused publications provided insight into long-range goals. These include *Eatonville Regional Trail Plan* (2009), *The Nisqually Road Corridor Charette* (2001), *The Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* (1999-2000), *Trail with Rail Feasibility Study* (2007), and *The Upper Nisqually Heritage Trail* (2005). Local and regional online resources also provided guiding information as did the Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum.

Planned Public Participation

The most immediate goal for involving the public regards final development of this Corridor Management Plan. First, a draft CMP will be submitted for review by key individuals and agencies as well as Scenic Byway committee members. After that process, public input will be sought via publicized meetings and an online posting of the CMP with a 30-day comment period. The final CMP will be delivered to WSDOT and other pertinent groups and individuals. It also will be posted on the roadtorainier.com website.

Engaging the local citizenry is an ongoing process that will use both in-person meetings and electronic means. This includes presentations to local groups as well as agency partners, a process that already is underway. The intent is for the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway to become part of the local identification with place. Those who live and work in the Byway corridor will be provided information about how the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway offers a unique opportunity to preserve and protect the beauty of this area while supporting local economies, especially during the lengthy tourism off-season.

It is important also to solicit feedback from travelers and would-be travelers. Social media, surveys, and other tools will be used to heighten awareness of the Scenic Byway and gain insight for possible improvements and further development.





Ongoing Corridor Management

Long-term success of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway depends on management by a committed, well-organized, stable group. Volunteers, including Scenic Byway committee members, are important at every step, but paid staff are required to devote the time and effort needed to develop and market the Scenic Byway and its assets.

Enduring, effective Scenic Byway management teams generally share a few key characteristics:

- Paid staff carry out the primary responsibilities. Volunteers can provide everything from ideas to hands-on work, but they cannot be counted on for the ongoing, long-range planning and oversight that are essential for Scenic Byway management. Hired staff are needed also for the research and development of grant proposals that are critical to Byways during this era when USDOT funding is no longer readily available to support Scenic Byways.
- The Byway team builds and maintains active partnerships. Working cooperatively with agencies, groups, and individuals aligned with the Byway's goals and willing to offer their expertise greatly increases the resources available to the team. These partners create a broader foundation than the team would otherwise have and allow the Byway's activities to have a much greater reach.
- The management team completes achievable goals and projects. It works with committee members and the public to set those goals and update them as needed. The team handles the work and coordination required for new projects, whether that's a website change, creation of a printed brochure or map, or enhancing signage on the Byway. The team has the wide view for seeing what needs to be done and the close-up concentration to make it happen.
- Successful Byway teams are flexible and dynamic. They evaluate successes and misses, make adjustments as needed, and are active in researching and adapting new technologies and approaches. An experienced, permanent team can quickly pursue unexpected funding opportunities and can develop long-term strategic planning.

Management Structure, Strategy, & Implementation ≡

Primary planning and implementation for the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway will be under the guidance of Nisqually Land Trust and Mount Rainier Visitor Association. Both are nonprofit entities with a strong and respected presence in the Byway corridor and solid records of successful growth. Both the Land Trust and MRVA have full-time staff as well as part-time and contract employees. Both have a demonstrated commitment to the Scenic Byway.

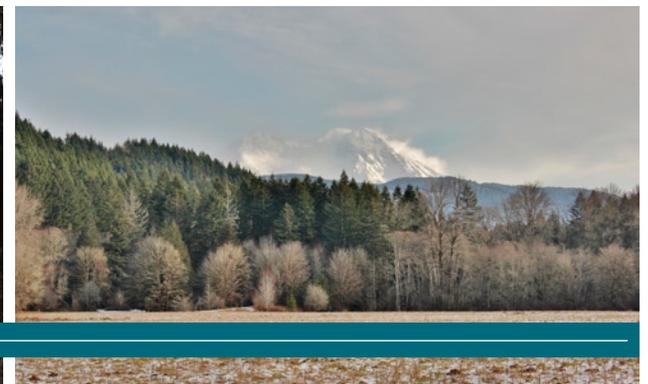
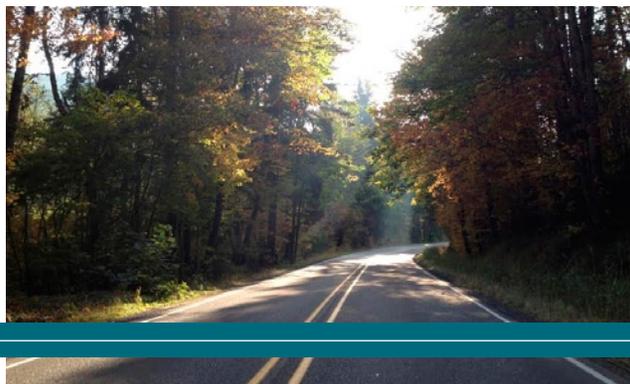
Specifically for the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway, a Byway Coordinator would be hired as a part-time employee. This staff person would be an independent contractor supervised by the Managing Director of MRVA with additional oversight by Nisqually Land Trust.

The Byway Coordinator would be responsible for day-to-day and long-range duties including but not limited to overall Byway development, marketing/promotions, website updates and upgrades, budgeting and grant procurement, public outreach, building and maintaining public and private partnerships, and working with all pertinent government agencies including WSDOT and Pierce and Lewis County road departments.

As needs and funding dictate, additional part-time, short-term staff might be hired to carry out a particular project. Such workers would be independent contractors supervised by the Byway Coordinator.

Scenic Byway committee members represent the diversity and strengths of the Byway region, and their insights and expertise offer a potent resource. It would be the responsibility of the Byway Coordinator to coordinate activities with committee members and inform them about Byway developments. It is notable that the Managing Director of Mount Rainier Visitor Association has been on the Scenic Byway committee since its inception and has continued to be active in the Byway's design and development.

Standing committees will focus on marketing and funding. Ad hoc committees will be created as needed for specific projects. Both standing and ad hoc committees will draw from community volunteers as well as Byway team members. The Byway Coordinator will work closely with all committees and provide oversight.



Agency Participation

The Road to Rainier Scenic Byway already has in place an influential network of private, nonprofit, and government partners with their own commitments to the region.

It will be the responsibility of the Byway Coordinator to maintain strong partnerships and identify potential new partners. The Byway Coordinator will work with these groups to widen the Byway's resource pool and marketing reach.

In addition to Nisqually Land Trust and Mount Rainier Visitor Association, partners include or will include:

Chinook Scenic Byway	Puget Sound Regional Council
Discover Lewis County, WA	Scenic Washington State
Experience Washington	Travel Tacoma + Pierce County
Greater Eatonville Heritage Area Forum	Town of Eatonville, WA
Mount Rainier National Park	University of Washington's Pack Forest & Center for Sustainable Forestry
Mount Rainier Railroad and Logging Museum	US Forest Service
Mount Tahoma Trails Association	Visit Rainier
National Scenic Byway Foundation	WA State Dept. of Natural Resources
Nisqually Community Forest	WA State Dept. of Transportation
Nisqually River Council	WA State Parks
Nisqually Indian Tribe	Washington Trails Association
Northwest Trek Wildlife Park	Washington Tourism Alliance
Pierce County, WA	White Pass Scenic Byway

Funding

Mount Rainier Visitor Association will be the umbrella organization for funding procurement and will work with the Byway Coordinator in this endeavor.

Many businesses in the Byway corridor are in the hospitality industry and charge their patrons Pierce or Lewis county lodging tax. These taxes are paid to the respective counties at the time state business taxes are paid to WA Dept. of Revenue and are sent to that state agency. The state returns those funds to the counties to be overseen by each county's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC). Eatonville has its own lodging excise tax for commercial lodging businesses within the city limits.

Each year, various tourism groups in Pierce and Lewis counties prepare grant proposals to direct revenue back home. The only allowable use of this lodging revenue is to fund spending to market tourism. LTACs evaluate those grant requests and decide whether to award the full grant sought, a portion, or none of it. MRVA has an excellent record of achieving full funding for its LTAC requests to Pierce County, its chief but not sole funder.

Because the Scenic Byway corridor is mainly in Pierce County but also extends to Lewis County, both LTAC sources would be potential revenue streams. The Town of Eatonville and Port of Tacoma also are possible grant funding sources.

The National Scenic Byway Discretionary Grant program once was a reliable source of funds for Byways, but that program currently is nonexistent. The nonprofit National Scenic Byway Foundation keeps Byway teams up to date on federal changes, and there is pressure from states nationwide to get the federal government to once again provide program support and a funding channel for grants from the Federal Highway Administration under USDOT, but such support would be years away if that. During the first week of December, 2015 Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the \$305 billion, five-year transportation plan. The new law establishes a National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure, but no changes or new provisions were made in this long-term plan for Scenic Byways. Given that tourism promotion historically generates several times its expenditure, this is unfortunate for communities across the country.

The US Department of Agriculture’s Rural Business Development Grants offer “targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities” for projects that benefit rural areas. Information on these and other potential federal grants can be found in the online *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs*. This list will be used to help procure Byway project funding.

At the state level, WA State Department of Commerce Direct Grants are a potential funding source. The department’s Community Capital Facilities program provides money for various capital projects, either through competitive grants or direct legislative appropriation. These capital funds could support such projects as interpretative markers and Byway signs.

Another possible state revenue source is the WA Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) which manages several grant programs that fund recreation-related projects.

The Washington State Scenic & Recreational Highways office gives assistance to Scenic Byway teams looking for funding opportunities and is a valuable resource for what might be available federally and at the state level. It will be important for this and other reasons for the Byway Coordinator to establish a solid relationship with staff in that office. Currently the program is under WSDOT’s Local Programs department. The office works as an “active partner” with Washington’s Scenic Byway teams. The WA State Scenic & Recreational Highways Strategic Plan 2010–2030 is a useful resource available online to help the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway team align with state goals and create a wider vision for the Byway.

Neither federal or state grants provide funds for marketing, so lodging tax (LTAC) funds, especially from Pierce County, would be a possible source for tourism promotion.

Oversight & Review

Attentive oversight and review, along with continuous self-assessment, can guarantee the Scenic Byway and its team are adhering to the mission and goals while nimbly making adjustments to best meet changing circumstances.

Mount Rainier Visitor Association, as the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway's umbrella organization, will have the closest oversight and review responsibility. Nisqually Land Trust will provide a second layer of monitoring. The Byway Coordinator, as an independent contractor, will report to both. The Byway Coordinator and committee members are charged with regular self-evaluation and with carrying out the specific duties of Byway management. Short and long-term goals are to have benchmarks to mark their progress, and as soon as feasible, a strategic plan is to be developed.

Built into grant fulfillment, particularly with LTAC funds, is a procedure for reporting and reimbursement. MRVA has followed this process for many years and is well versed in making certain all

LTAC requirements are met. MRVA also has established relationships with Pierce County staff who handle these reports and reimbursements. The Byway Coordinator will have responsibility for preparing and delivering such information under the supervision of MRVA's Managing Director.

It will be the responsibility of the Byway Coordinator to:

1. Monitor and research information from the National Scenic Byway Foundation;
2. Maintain open communication and a strong partnership with WA State's Scenic & Recreational Highways office, WSDOT staff, and Pierce and Lewis county road departments;
3. Monitor and work with other Scenic Byways in Washington state.

The intent is to build and nurture relationships with these groups, glean ideas from them, and benefit from their experience. The work becomes part of the Byway team's internal oversight and review, assessing what can be learned and applied locally.

Public Outreach

The public participation element of Scenic Byway management is addressed more fully in the previous section dedicated to that topic.

Outreach must be a perpetual function of the Scenic Byway team and the Byway Coordinator. The Scenic Byway exists to serve the public:

- to attract visitors and provide those visitors with the rich experience unique to the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway and its attractions;
- to strengthen the economic foundation of local communities with their dependence on tourism and help them sharpen their tourism focus;
- to protect and preserve the natural habitat and stunning scenic beauty of the Byway corridor.

In conclusion, as at the beginning of this Corridor Management Plan, it is fitting to state the mission:

The mission of the Road to Rainier Scenic Byway Committee is to enhance the region's cultural, historical, and recreational amenities while creating a memorable experience for visitors from around the world.
