



Chapter 1

Introduction

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway is comprised of 28 secondary roads within the Red Clay Creek Watershed, located in New Castle County, Delaware. When the Delaware Nature Society (DNS) and its sponsoring partners nominated the Byway in July of 2004, the concept of nominating multiple roads within a single watershed was quite remarkable. Certainly such an approach had never been taken in Delaware and the sponsors quickly realized that such an approach was unique, if not original, to the nation.

Why were the sponsors willing to nominate an unheard of 28 roads all at once? The reason was that the roads of the Red Clay Valley form an interconnected and interdependent network closely linked to the Red Clay Creek and its watershed area. This “watershed-based planning effort” was pursued because it was determined that the roads in the watershed mimic an interconnected stream system as defined by the stream order concept (see the Stream Order Concept Figure in Chapter 3, page 3-2). Under this thinking, Route 82 (Creek Road) serves as the “main stem” with first and

second order “streams” (road corridors) linking at points of confluence (intersections). As with a stream system, all ordered roads play an integral part in the linked network. While each road has unto itself a corridor boundary, the watershed boundary of the Red Clay Valley has intrinsic value that is an integral component of each road’s character. Thus, while each road has a separate identified corridor boundary, the overall study boundary is the Red Clay Creek Watershed. Just as healthy streams evolved and meandered to shape and define their watersheds, so too did the road network that evolved in the Red Clay Valley. Together, the intrinsic qualities of the Byway told a unique story of scenic beauty, diverse natural resources, and a historically significant development pattern that contributed to the Valley’s growth and preservation.

Although the approach outlined above was unique, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) clearly saw merit in the approach and the Secretary of the Department designated the Byway a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway on April 5, 2005.

The roads of the Red Clay Valley date from early European settlements in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Three hundred years of human influence on the land has created a network of roads, mill dams and bridges, homes and barns,

rolling meadows, and fence rows. Remarkably, however, such influences often “spared” the natural resources that contribute immensely to the character of the Valley. All provide a pastoral tranquility. Not urban, nor suburban, the Red Clay Valley provides a unique natural beauty that is unsurpassed in Delaware. Today, the roads of the Valley are exceptionally scenic and help tell the history of the Valley in the context of human interaction with nature. In this context the use of the land, both historically and in the present, speaks to the stewardship that has formed the thinking of those that live and work in the Valley.

Several chapters contained herein describe in detail the intrinsic qualities of the Byway and attempt to give the reader an “experience of the corridor.” While numbers tell only part of the story, the Byway contains 94 identified visual accents, 11 vista points, 117 historic resources, and innumerable natural resources and stream tributaries that together form “a place of uncommon beauty and very special significance (1).”

This Corridor Management Plan has been undertaken through the leadership of the Delaware Nature Society (DNS) and the Plan sponsors and partners who make up the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Steering Committee. The goal of this project is to complete the requirements of the state’s Scenic and Historic Highway planning process by preparing and adopting a Corridor Management Plan for the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway.

B. THE PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1. Previous Planning Initiatives

Prior to designation of the 28 road network as the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway, many planning initiatives highlighted the important resources of this unique area.

A report by Turtle Creek Design was prepared for the Environmental Management Center of the Brandywine Conservancy in 1986. The purpose of the study was to develop a blueprint to guide changes in land use that arise when properties change hands and identify areas in need of protection. The study noted that the Red Clay Valley is a “place of uncommon beauty and very special significance (1).”

In 1972, the Delaware Nature Education Society began its Natural Areas Study by invento-

rying statewide the remaining areas worthy of preservation, resulting in the publication of *Delaware’s Outstanding Natural Areas and Their Preservation* in 1978 (2). Five Natural Areas in the Red Clay Watershed were identified in the book and include the Coverdale Farm Woods, Burrows Run Valley, Chestnut Ridge, Red Clay Ravine, and Red Clay Reservation. These areas were later grouped together and are known as the Red Clay Creek Valley Natural Area.

A report on the *Natural History and Heritage of the Red Clay Creek* was prepared by the Delaware Nature Education Society in 1987 for the Division of Water Resources, within the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (3). The report was prepared as a lead into a major study of toxic compounds that was prepared by Weston Associates. The information was used as background material for discussions between Pennsylvania and Delaware regarding water pollution concerns in the Red Clay Creek watershed.

Completed as a component of the overall comprehensive planning process for New Castle County, the *Red Clay Creek Scenic River and Highway Study* highlights the characteristics of the Red Clay Valley, inventories its natural, scenic and historic resources, investigates management issues and priorities, and provides a means for achieving resource protection objectives (4). The New Castle County Department of Planning, in conjunction with the Environmental Management Center of the Brandywine Conservancy, prepared the study and the Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Council, among others, provided support.

2. Designation of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway

During the Delaware Nature Society’s annual meeting in April 2005, DelDOT Secretary Nathan Hayward announced the designation of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway. This was the culmination of a nearly five year effort by the Delaware Nature Society and other partners that began with support of Senate Bill 320 during the 140th General Assembly which enabled DelDOT to apply for federal funding to initiate a scenic and historic byways program.

Shortly after the bill became law, the Delaware Nature Society initiated meetings with

members of the public and organizations located in the Valley to discuss a proposal to incorporate 28 roads in the Red Clay Valley in the State's new Scenic Highways program. Over the period from July 2001 through December 2002, eight meetings were held resulting in the decision to move forward with the nomination application.

The nomination application was prepared through a collaborative process between Gaadt Perspectives, LLC, staff from the Delaware Nature Society, and staff from the New Castle County Department of Land Use and was sponsored by New Castle County, the Red Clay Valley Association, Center for Creative Arts, the Yorklyn Planning Group, the Chesapeake Bay Girl Scouts Council, and Historic Red Clay, Inc. More than twenty letters of support accompanied the nomination application.

3. Creation of the Corridor Management Plan

The Corridor Management planning process began with the first meeting of Steering Committee members on May 12, 2005 to outline the schedule for plan creation and identify the roles and responsibilities of committee members. A complete list of Steering Committee members can be found in Appendix 6.

Since that initial meeting, the Steering Committee has convened 13 times under the leadership of Delaware Nature Society staff and Gaadt Perspectives, LLC to develop the elements of the plan contained herein and review transportation projects and other timely issues affecting the Byway. Meetings were held on August 9, 2005; October 4, 2005; December 6, 2005; February 7, 2006; April 4, 2006; June 6, 2006; August 8, 2006; October 3, 2006; December 5, 2006; February 12, 2007; April 16, 2007; August 6, 2007; and October 1, 2007.

The importance of context sensitive design approaches became readily apparent during discussions within the Steering Committee which led to the formation of a Context Sensitive Design Subcommittee in May 2006. A complete list of Subcommittee members can be found in Appendix 6. The objective of the subcommittee was to create an appendix for this Corridor Management Plan, including a palette of design materials, description of demonstration projects, landscape management tools, and resources. The Subcommittee first met on May 15, 2006 and then

reconvened seven times under the leadership of Delaware Nature Society staff and Gaadt Perspectives, LLC. Meetings were held on July 10, 2006; September 11, 2006; November 6, 2006; January 8, 2007; March 20, 2007; May 14, 2007; and July 9, 2007.

Through attendance at meetings, Steering Committee and Subcommittee members donated over 300 hours of volunteer service through the corridor planning process. In addition, volunteers from the committees took hundreds of photographs throughout the Byway to compile a photolog for this plan and create a library of images for future projects such as brochures, websites, and publications.

The draft Corridor Management Plan was presented to the public during a workshop held at the Delaware Nature Society's Ashland Nature Center on Thursday, September 27, 2007 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. The workshop was promoted through the Delaware Nature Society's newsletter *Nature's Voice* and local newspapers such as The News Journal. In addition, DelDOT helped promote the workshop. The public workshop was intended as a poster session and informal discussion regarding the plan (no formal agenda was provided). The 30 individuals who attended the workshop responded positively to the Corridor Management Plan recommendations. Copies of responses to the workshop questionnaire can be found in Appendix 6.

A number of letters of support have been submitted on behalf of the plan indicating strong support for the recommendations regarding future management of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway.

Appendices to this Corridor Management Plan include information related to public involvement and support. Appendix 6 includes newsletter and press articles; letters of support; contact information for members of the Steering Committee and Context Sensitive Design Subcommittee, as well as sample minutes from meetings of both groups; and information related to the public workshop, such as the workshop announcement, sign-in sheet, and presentation materials.

C. DELAWARE BYWAY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In order for a Byway to be eligible for Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway designation, it must possess at least one of the National Scenic Byway program's six intrinsic qualities (scenic, historic, natural, recreational, cultural, or archeological)(5). The Nomination Application for the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway compared the merits of the Byway to the standards for each intrinsic quality set forth in the national program's policies [Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)](6). In fact, the Intrinsic Quality Resource Inventory contained in the Nomination Application quotes the FHWA policy at the beginning of each intrinsic quality resource description. Chapter 4 of this Plan replicates much of this description by providing an in-depth account of the unique and irreplaceable qualities that contribute to the Byway's overall character. The Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway is primarily associated with the state and nationally significant scenic and natural qualities (primary and secondary intrinsic qualities), and supported by its state and regional significant historic qualities.

The Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Program Guide used for this Plan and the Nomination Application states that "A Corridor Plan lays out the vision, goals, and responsibilities for conserving and enhancing the corridor's most valuable qualities..." Furthermore, "(t)he Corridor Plan presents a strategy for balancing concern for the intrinsic resources with the visitor's opportunity to experience the Scenic and Historic Highway. It explains how the participants are involved in and responsible for implementing the Plan." (5)

REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR THE PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Vision and goals statement with objectives and strategies for achieving the goals.
2. Documentation of public involvement efforts to illustrate the support the corridor designation has received from the public.
3. Stewardship of intrinsic qualities through resource preservation, enhancement of existing development, and accommodation of new development in a complementary manner.
4. Tourism development, including an explanation of the tourism potential of the corridor and

a description of how the visitor's experience will be maximized and enhanced.

5. Marketing and promotion, including a signage plan supportive of the visitor experience.
6. Resource interpretation, including recommended locations for distributing information.
7. Support and implementation responsibilities, including relationship to local government comprehensive plans.
8. Funding plan for implementing the Corridor Plan.
9. Transportation and safety, including consideration of appropriate design guidelines for Context Sensitive Design in the corridor, accommodating commercial traffic, accommodating multi-modal uses of the corridor to the extent feasible, and complying with outdoor advertising controls.
10. Short-term plan for implementation

AN APPENDIX TO THE PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

11. Physical description of the route.
12. Representative photographs.
13. Map of the byway boundaries, intrinsic qualities, and land uses.
14. Intrinsic quality resource inventory.
15. Summary of primary and secondary intrinsic qualities.
16. Summary of visitor experience.
17. Description of public involvement, comments, and input.

It should be noted that this Plan's format varies slightly from the *organizational* approach listed above but does not alter the *content* required under the state's program.

D. PLAN FORMAT

This Corridor Management Plan is organized to optimize readability and permit easy referencing as implementation activities come on line. Thus, while the Plan's organization is different from that referenced in the state's program guide, all of the state's submission requirements have conceivably been met.

The Plan contains seven chapters and accompanying maps and appendices. Beginning with a description of the mission, vision, goals and objectives, the Plan goes on to describe the

Byway, its intrinsic qualities, and the transportation, tourism and marketing issues relevant thereto. Later chapters address resource preservation and management, followed by implementation and funding strategies.

Chapter 1, Introduction, gives a brief project overview, including the purpose of the Plan and the process undertaken to prepare the Plan. Also included is a description of past preservation efforts in the Red Clay Valley, and a detailed explanation of the extensive public participation that has been a part of both the Nomination Application and the Corridor Management Plan. Supporting information, including letters of support, Steering Committee meetings and public workshops, is contained in Appendix 6.

Chapter 2, Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives, presents the Byway's mission and vision statements, goals and objectives developed through public meetings and workshops held by the project Steering Committee. The goals and objectives listed in Chapter 2 provide the basis for the resource preservation and management strategies presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3, Description of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway, describes the Byway's physical boundaries and roads, as well as the experience of the corridor from the perspective of one driving the Byway. Supporting material includes the resource inventory mapping included in Appendix 1 and the Photolog contained in Appendix 7.

Chapter 4, Intrinsic Qualities and Resources, provides an in-depth discussion of the unique and irreplaceable scenic, natural and historic qualities that contribute immeasurably to the overall character of the Byway. Supporting materials include inventory data, visual accents/ vistas, and a historic resource inventory contained in Appendices 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Chapter 5, Transportation, Tourism and Marketing Issues, reviews planned and recently implemented or completed transportation projects; discusses transportation management issues, coordination, and context sensitive design; and describes tourism and signage in the context of the Plan's conservation and preservation focus.

Supporting materials include Appendix 5 (Context Sensitive Design for the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway), Appendix 8 (WILMAPCO traffic count data and DelDOT road width data), and Appendix 9 (MOU with DelDOT).

Chapter 6, Stewardship of Intrinsic Qualities: Resource Preservation and Management Strategies, presents the various preservation and management strategies aimed at conservation, restoration, safety, education and coordination. Included here are Byway-wide strategies, as well as those management strategies compiled for individual road segments.

Chapter 7, Plan Implementation, addresses the full range of activities involved in implementing the plan. Also included here is a description of responsible parties, funding sources, and implementation phasing. Two implementation matrices list management strategies, identify the parties responsible for implementation, provide a schedule for task completion, and identify possible funding options to accomplish tasks. One matrix lists management strategies according to the goals and objectives developed for the Plan; the other matrix lists management strategies according to scheduling milestones.

In all, the plan offers an in-depth description of the Byway's resources, provides the guiding mission and vision for the conservation and preservation of such resources, and offers a detailed plan by which the Byway can be managed and preservation can be achieved.