

Skill Builders: Assessing The Data

After you identify and describe the intrinsic qualities and key resources along the byway, the next step is for all of the inventory teams to meet together to discuss and evaluate their findings. This important step of assessment sets the stage for your further byway development efforts.

Important: During assessment, refer to Learning Objective #1 of this section, which discusses inventory and designation considerations for each of the six intrinsic qualities.

Questions For Assessing The Intrinsic Quality

The following questions can help structure this discussion and lead toward a summary of the intrinsic qualities.

- Can the intrinsic quality be conveyed by a coherent theme or story, or is it represented by a collection of diverse and loosely related resources?
- Are the resources that contribute to the intrinsic quality distributed along the byway, or are they concentrated in only a few locations? For a traveler along the byway, do these resources occur often enough that they truly offer a distinct experience?
- How does the road itself relate to the intrinsic quality? For example, for a historic quality, does the road play a role in the historic story you are describing? For a scenic quality, is the road's planning, design or construction part of the scenic experience?

Questions For Assessing Each Resource

You may also want to provide the teams with questions to address each resource, such as these examples of helpful assessment questions:

- How does the resource contribute to the intrinsic qualities that you are trying to demonstrate? Does it stand on its own as a significant feature, or is it important as part of a group of resources along the road or in the region?
- What is the condition of the resource? Does this condition affect the resource's value as part of the byway's story? Is the resource intact? If not, can it be restored? What factors have led to its current condition: neglect, overuse or change of use?
- If the resource is included for its contribution to scenic quality, how does it relate to scenic evaluation concepts such as intactness, variety, order, contrast, scale and harmony?
- Are there factors that undermine the intrinsic qualities? Is there anything that your group would consider as an eyesore, or being out of place?
- Is the resource threatened? What would happen to the resource or its surroundings that could affect its existence, its integrity or the experience that it provides to visitors?



- Who owns and manages the resource? Does the current ownership affect how the resource is used or maintained? Are the owners and managers involved in the byway planning process? What are their concerns relative to scenic byways?
- Is the resource visible from the byway? Does it currently handle visitors? Could it handle more visitors if it were promoted as part of the byway?
- How ADA-accessible is the resource to someone with a disability? Are there facilities and services accessible to those with physical, visual, auditory or other impairments?
- Do the resources you may promote have any safety considerations? Are any areas particularly dangerous?

At the end of this session, you should have the information you need to complete the documentation for your byway nomination.

For each intrinsic quality, confirm that you have the following:

- A series of photographs of resources and features along the byway that contribute to the intrinsic quality.
- Descriptions of these resources based on the answers to the questions listed for the fieldwork task.
- A map of the byway showing the locations of the resources. Electronic formats and geospatial information to accommodate geographic information systems (systems that use computers to collect, store, manipulate, analyze, and display data) are highly desirable.
- A statement explaining how the byway demonstrates the intrinsic quality.

A Reminder On Professional & Funding Assistance

Byway organizations should not forget the judicious use of paid experts in this stage of planning. Certain information gathering and assessment requires specific expertise, education and experience.

Discuss your inventory work with your State or Indian tribe byway coordinator and consider the cost to fund experts when calculating realistic costs for the planning process. Under the National Scenic Byways Program, Corridor Management Planning is an eligible grant category that byways can refer to as a funding consideration to assist with this phase of byway development and planning.