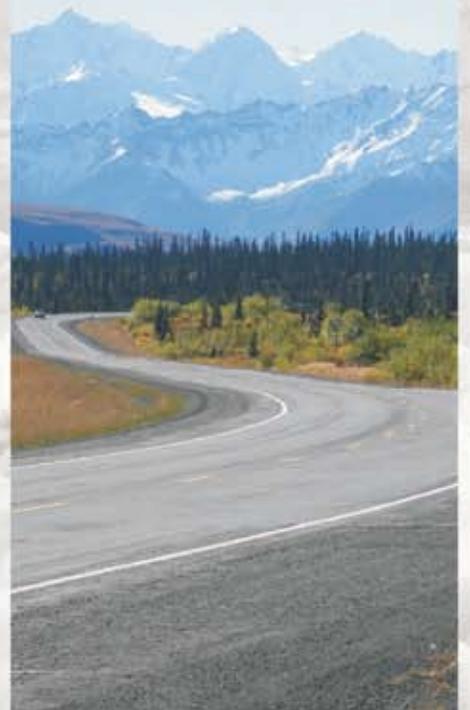
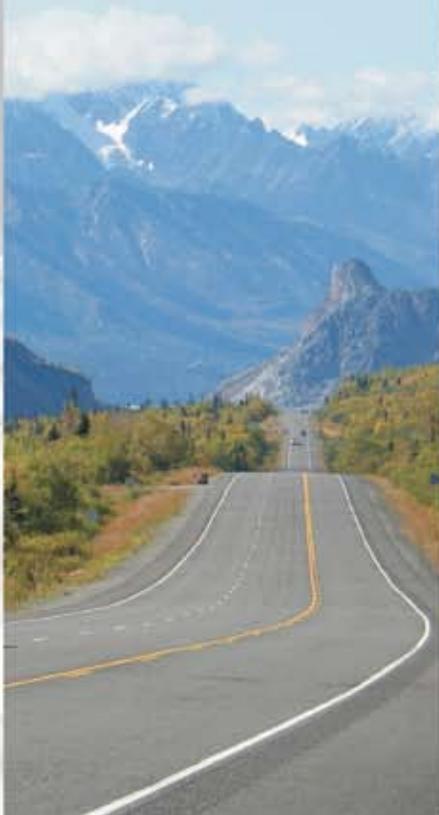


Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway

Interpretive Plan





This document was funded in part with a National Scenic Byway Grant provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan



Prepared by
Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Interpretation and Education.

Prepared for
Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Organization.

Summer 2006

GHNSB OVERVIEW MAP

Table of Contents

GHNSB OVERVIEW MAP	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
• Purpose of the Plan	1
• Background	2
• Planning Process	4
• Goals and Objectives	5
- Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Partnership Board Goals	5
- Interpretive Plan Goals and Objectives	5
• Mission and Vision Statements	8
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES	9
INTERPRETIVE THEMES	16
VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS	20
EXISTING VISITOR EXPERIENCE	22
• Information and Orientation	22
• Interpretation and Education	23
AUDIENCE ANALYSIS	27
PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE SITES AND SERVICES	34
• Informational/Interpretive Materials and Services	34
• Implementation Priorities for Site-Specific Interpretive Projects	38
• Site-Specific Interpretive Projects Map	insert
• Site-Specific Interpretive Projects	41
DESIGN GUIDELINES	88
PARAMETERS AND CONSIDERATIONS	94
EVALUATION	96
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	98
APPENDICES	99
• Appendix A: Summary of Public Comments	99
• Appendix B: Mile by Mile Resource Inventory	101
• Appendix C: Sample Design Standards	115
• Appendix D: Evaluative Techniques for Interpretive Services	122
• Appendix E: References	125

Executive Summary

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway winds 137.5 miles from Anchorage, Alaska’s largest city, through the glacially sculpted Matanuska River Valley, and empties into the expansive Copper River Basin. Stories about the Byway’s cultural and natural history are hidden in the towns and landscapes along the way. Several existing sites including businesses, nature centers, and waysides do a wonderful job sharing Byway stories with travelers. However, existing interpretation reveals only a fraction of the Byway’s significance. The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan will open doors to endless interpretive opportunities.

The Glenn Highway was designated a State Scenic Byway on June 30, 2000 and a National Scenic Byway on June 13, 2003. Since then the Byway committee has been working to increase membership and improve the Byway experience for residents and visitors.

The purpose of the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan is to establish planning guidelines and a long-range vision for maintaining and developing interpretive sites and services along this historic pathway. The Plan recommends implementing interpretive projects that:

- Enhance existing facilities along the Byway
- Enhance travelers’ experiences by offering more interpretive opportunities and adequate rest areas
- Provide travelers with information about Byway resources
- Provide travelers with opportunities to learn about the Byway’s natural, scenic, cultural, historical, recreational, and archaeological qualities
- Encourage local communities, businesses, and residents to take ownership in the Byway and its resources
- Benefit Byway businesses

The planning process involved time in the field and office inventorying resources, compiling research, talking with community members, and formulating the different sections of the plan. The result is a thorough examination of the Byway’s characteristics and needs, and a subsequent plan of action to meet those needs.

The Interpretive Plan will help the Byway committee obtain funds from the Federal Highway Administration to implement the recommended projects in the plan. The Plan will also help those implementing the projects choose relevant interpretive topics and use appropriate design standards.

The recommendations in this plan are just that – recommendations. It is the Byway committee’s prerogative to make final planning decisions with the Byway’s best interest in mind.



Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

“A good plan is a public declaration of your intentions. It will help you find out where you are, where you want to be and how you are going to get there.”¹



Alaska’s scenic beauty and natural wonders attract people from all over the world. For those looking to experience Alaska on the open road, the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway is a wonderful place to start. The purpose of the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan is to establish planning guidelines and a long-range vision for maintaining and developing interpretive sites and services along this historic pathway.

Interpretation along the Byway is meant to enhance a visitor’s experience by provoking thought and helping them understand more about what makes the Glenn Highway special. Interpretation will not only tell visitors what is interesting about the Byway, but also aim to convince them of its value and encourage conservation. The intention is not to litter the Byway with signage, but rather to choose the most appropriate locations to tell the Glenn Highway’s stories. In some locations, it may be appropriate to let nature itself be the interpreter and simply develop pullouts to enhance viewing opportunities.

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan is the first interpretive plan for Alaska byways and should be a standard reference for future planning.

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan:

- Provides relevant background information
- Outlines the themes, goals, and objectives of the plan itself and of the proposed interpretive sites
- Provides an overview of the Byway’s intrinsic qualities and includes a detailed mile by mile resource inventory
- Incorporates the needs and demographics of potential visitors to ensure that essential Byway values and activities are accessible, and to ensure that facilities and media are designed to meet visitor experience goals
- Takes into consideration the existing facilities along the Byway and makes recommendations to improve and maintain those sites
- Recommends developing new programs and facilities best suited to help Byway travelers have an enjoyable and memorable experience
- Makes suggestions for developing community partnerships to ensure that interpretive facilities along the Byway are maintained
- Establishes design guidelines for interpretive sites and services
- Suggests ways to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of the interpretive sites and services

¹ James Carter (editor), “A Sense of Place: An Interpretive Planning Handbook,” Scottish Interpretive Network, 2001, <<http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk>> (05 January 2006), 10.

Background

*“One morning you
awake to green leaves
and new life sprouting.
The sunlight increases
and there is much to
do and little time for
sleep...Mother moose
and babies graze in
the marsh and fields.
Summer residents
return with new stories.
Tourists roll in and
histories are exchanged
about our area and
lifestyle. It is then that I
realize how special we
are and how precious
our lifestyle is.”* - Judith K. Nix,
owner of King Mountain Lodge²

From Anchorage, the Glenn Highway follows Knik Arm and then the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains 189 miles into the Copper River Basin. It winds past lakes, rivers, and glaciers and into a landscape much different than the coastal environment of the Anchorage area. Although the scenic beauty of the landscape attracts many Glenn Highway travelers, there is much more to experience along this historic pathway than the views.

History of the Glenn Highway Corridor

The Matanuska River Valley is a natural pathway into interior Alaska. Alaska Natives used the corridor as a hunting and trade route well before Russian and European explorers arrived. Dena’ina Athabascans from the Cook Inlet and Matanuska River Valley regularly traded goods with Ahtna Athabascans from the Copper River Basin using a network of trails the Glenn Highway in part follows today.³

Dena’ina and Ahtna Athabascans were the primary users of the corridor until European Americans discovered gold in the Yukon. Suddenly, finding new routes to the Interior became a priority for both miners and the U.S. government. In 1898 U.S. Army Captain Edwin Forbes Glenn commanded an expedition, led by Joseph C. Castner, to find a route from Cook Inlet to the Tanana River. The information gained from this and other expeditions prompted miners and trappers to explore the Matanuska River Valley.⁴

Coal mining camps in the Matanuska Valley near Sutton and Chickaloon brought eager workers to the area in the early 1900s. In 1914 Congress authorized U.S. President Woodrow Wilson to locate, construct, and operate a railroad in Alaska.⁵ Promoting settlement in Alaska, developing Alaska’s resources, and providing access to the Matanuska Valley coal fields were major factors in rail development.⁶ President Wilson selected the Susitna route (Seward to Fairbanks) on April 10, 1915, which included a line to the Matanuska Valley coalfields.⁷ The Matanuska Valley spur reached Chickaloon in 1917, and the Susitna route was finished in 1923.⁸ The spur from Palmer to Sutton operated until 1969; however, the line from Sutton to Chickaloon only operated until 1923 and the tracks were removed in 1933.⁹

The Glenn Highway corridor proved once again to be a natural choice when need arose during WWII for a road connecting Anchorage to the Richardson

2 Glenn Highway Corridor Management Plan (Anchorage, AK: HDR Alaska, Inc. with support from Land Design North, 2001), 33.

3 Mary Craft Bauer, *The Glenn Highway: the story of its past, a guide to its present* (Sutton, AK: Brentwood Press, 1987), 3.

4 Bauer, 4-6.

5 Fran Seager-Boss and Lawrence E. Roberts, *Major Coal Towns of the Matanuska Valley: A Pictorial History* (Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Palmer AK: 1991), 23.

6 Ernest Gruening, *State of Alaska* (New York: Random House, 1954), 180-81.

7 Gruening, 222-223.

8 Seager-Boss, 26.

9 Seager-Boss, 49, 73.

Highway. In 1941 the Alaska Road Commission received a one million dollar appropriation endorsed by the War Department to start construction on the Glenn Highway.¹⁰

Upon completion in 1945, the twenty foot wide, rough and bumpy Glenn Highway stretched from Anchorage to Glennallen. Its connection to the Richardson Highway and the newly constructed Alaska Highway linked Alaska's roads to Canada and the lower 48 states for the first time. The Glenn Highway remained the only road between Anchorage and Fairbanks, and the main access route into Alaska, until the completion of the Parks Highway in 1971.¹¹

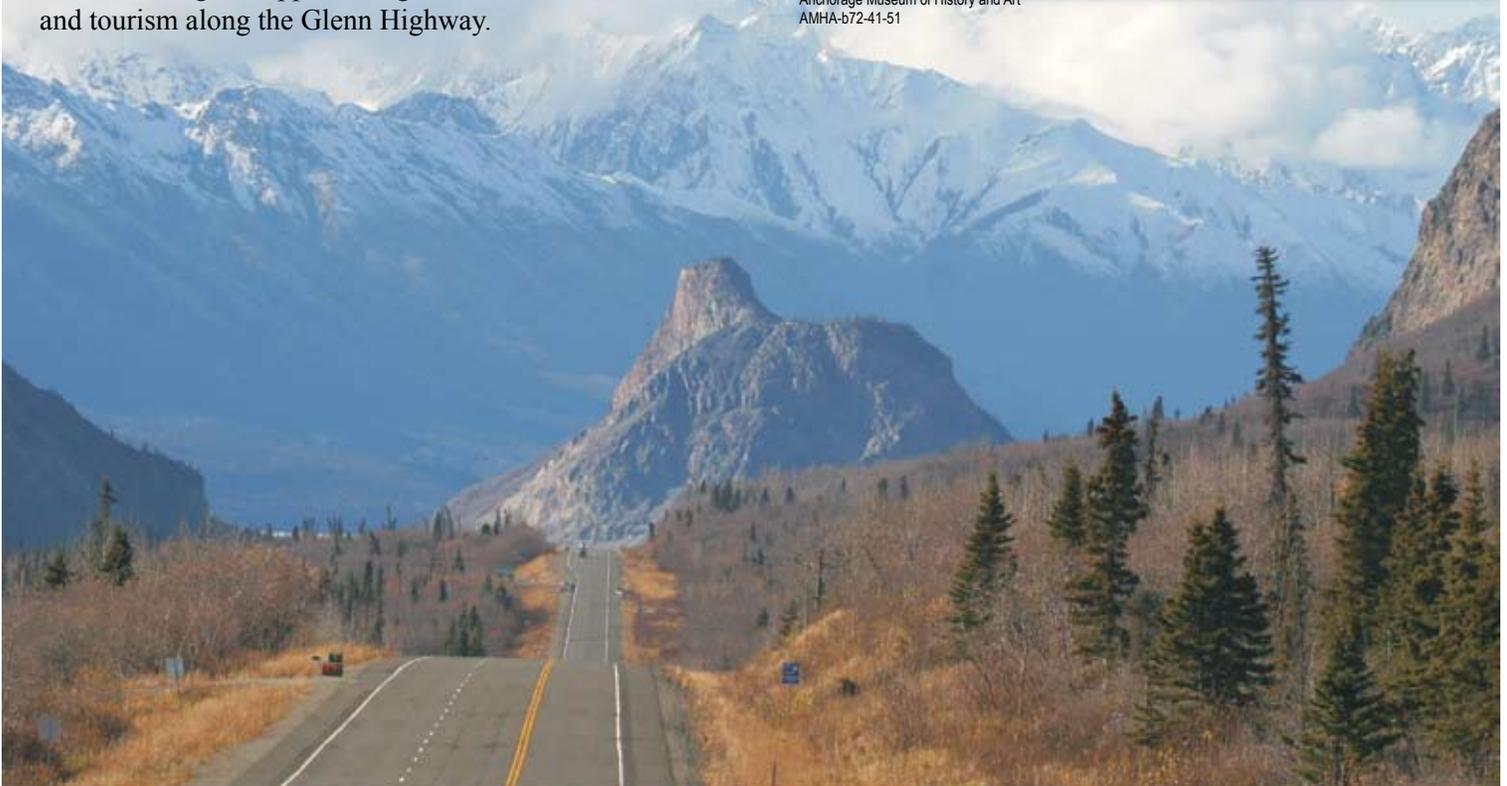
Dirt Road to Scenic Byway

On June 30, 2000, the Glenn Highway was designated a State Scenic Byway and received a grant to prepare the Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Shortly thereafter, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) facilitated the development of the Glenn Highway Scenic Byway Partnership Board. The board helped craft the CMP and draft the Byway's vision and mission statements, goals, and objectives.

Due to the grassroots efforts of the Byway Partnership Board and the Byway community, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration granted the Glenn Highway status as a National Scenic Byway on June 13, 2003. The Byway committee has been working hard ever since to gain support and generate excitement for travel and tourism along the Glenn Highway.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-672-41-51



¹⁰ Claus M. Naske, *Paving Alaska's Trails: The Work of the Alaska Road Commission* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 208-211.

¹¹ Bauer, 10-11.

Planning Process

“Interpretation is a part of how we manage and understand our heritage...And if they appreciate it, people may support efforts to conserve or protect the place concerned... Interpretation not only tells people what is interesting about a place, it aims to convince people of its value, and encourage them to want to conserve it.”¹²

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretive planning process began in summer 2004.

The planning team held public open houses in Eagle River, Palmer, Sutton, and Sheep Mountain September 14-23, 2004, to collect comments concerning Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretive planning efforts. Both written and oral comments were collected (please refer to Appendix A for a summary of public comments).

The Corridor Management Plan, library resources, Internet sites, personal interviews, and additional materials were valuable resources for research on the Glenn Highway’s intrinsic qualities and were essential for writing multiple sections of the Interpretive Plan.

The planning team drove the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway several times with the following objectives:

- Distribute flyers for public open houses at various businesses and attractions
- Compile a mile-by-mile inventory of interpretive sites and services, businesses, scenic areas, and cultural attractions along the Byway
- Mark existing waysides, scenic areas, trails, and interpretive facilities with GPS coordinates
- Inventory sites for possible interpretive development or enhancement including waysides, trailheads, campgrounds, recreation areas, and local businesses

The planning team began drafting the Interpretive Plan in April 2005. Three drafts of the interpretive plan were distributed to Byway members and board members between July 2005 and February 2006. Recipients were encouraged to submit their comments and suggestions to the planning team throughout the planning process.

¹² James Carter (editor), “A Sense of Place: An Interpretive Planning Handbook,” Scottish Interpretive Network, 2001, <<http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk>> (05 January 2006), 4.

Goals and Objectives

“Interpretation reveals the story of the people, places and events that have occurred or are occurring along the byway, and help guide visitors through a living museum of regional natural and cultural heritage... Without interpretation, it’s just a road!”¹³

The Interpretive Plan helps establish where we are, where we want to be, and how we are going to get there. Achievable goals and objectives for Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretation will keep the Byway committee focused on their overall vision for the Byway. The Interpretive Plan goals and objectives represent a general description for the desired outcome of interpretive sites and services along the Byway. These goals also compliment the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway partnership board goals listed below. Site-specific goals are listed in the Proposed Sites and Services section of the Interpretive Plan.

Goals and objectives are inherently different. Goals are general, immeasurable statements about what planners would like to accomplish; objectives are more specific and measurable. In this section of the plan, each Interpretive Plan goal is followed by a series of related objectives.

Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Partnership Board Goals

- Provide opportunities to learn about the history and culture of the Byway
- Enhance scenic views along the corridor
- Provide opportunities to learn about the significant geologic events and processes that shaped the land around the corridor
- Enhance the year-round Alaskan experience on the Byway
- Enhance safety along the corridor
- Respect private property boundaries and limit public access to those properties

Interpretive Plan Goals and Objectives

- **Present interpretive themes in a way that visitors understand their meaning and how they fit together to tell the stories of the Byway**
 - ▶ Develop multiple, primary themes that tell the stories of the Byway
 - ▶ After reading a related series of interpretive displays or other interpretive media, visitors should be able to state the theme in one sentence
- **Maintain interpretive sites and services so travelers may enjoy them year-round**
 - ▶ Set realistic evaluation standards for the maintenance and updating of interpretive sites

¹³ John A. Veverka, *Why Your Byway Can't Succeed without "Real" Interpretation*, from a presentation at the National Scenic Byways Program National Conference, August 1999, <<http://www.heritageinterp.com/newpage1.htm>> (05 January 2006), Introduction.

- ▶ Develop partnerships with local businesses and community groups to help with year-round trash pickup and inventory of site conditions
- ▶ Supply partners with material needed to maintain sites
- ▶ Coordinate planning with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and other partners for year-round maintenance of waysides and other Byway facilities
- **Provide high-quality interpretive displays relevant to Byway themes**
 - ▶ Enhance interpretive sites by adding new displays relevant to the primary themes of the Byway
 - ▶ Update interpretive displays as needed to better reflect the themes of the Byway and/or to improve quality
- **Enhance scenic views and maintain scenic character along the corridor**
 - ▶ Improve existing scenic pullouts to enhance visitors' experience (manage regular trash pickup, landscaping, etc.)
 - ▶ Clear brush, trim trees where appropriate, and maintain cleanliness along the Byway
 - ▶ Place and orient interpretive panels in locations where they preserve and enhance viewing opportunities and do not destroy the scenic character of the Byway
 - ▶ Limit the number of interpretive waysides so as not to litter the Byway with new development
 - ▶ Work cooperatively with community councils to maintain a quality viewing experience
 - ▶ Support the Adopt-a-Highway program along the Glenn Highway to promote community involvement and ownership of the Byway and its resources
 - ▶ Coordinate with DOT&PF to develop desired pullouts with the best viewing and interpretive opportunities in conjunction with future road realignments/improvements
- **Promote safe and responsible use of the Byway and its resources**
 - ▶ Develop interpretive materials that discuss the importance of conserving and protecting our resources. Encourage travelers to practice Leave-No-Trace principles
 - ▶ Encourage visitors to act appropriately when traveling/recreating along the Byway
 - ▶ Incorporate safe traveling tips and locations of visitor services in Byway brochures, newsletters, etc.
 - ▶ Promote use of appropriate trail etiquette
 - ▶ Adopt State of Alaska safe boating standards at appropriate locations along the Byway
 - ▶ Work with local recreation businesses and recreation groups to promote safe and responsible travel in the Byway corridor
- **Promote community involvement and ownership of the Byway and its resources**
 - ▶ Encourage local businesses to distribute interpretive materials and host interpretive displays. Benefits to businesses include increased visitation, personal and economic gain, and enhanced visitor experiences
 - ▶ Foster cooperative relationships with community businesses to ensure Byway resources are inventoried and taken into account when implementing the interpretive plan
 - ▶ Develop partnerships with area businesses to help maintain Byway facilities

- **Develop and coordinate a spectrum of programs, facilities, and media that:**
 - ▶ Represent all Byway themes
 - ▶ Meet the interests and educational levels of all segments of the visiting public
 - ▶ Are available and accessible to all persons
 - Interpretive materials should be relevant to the Byway and include a variety of media
 - Oral interpretive presentations should be catered toward multiple age groups
 - Themes of individual panels and presentations will relate to the primary interpretive themes of the Byway. Themes should be presented using professional interpretive techniques and a variety of interpretive media
 - Scientific or otherwise “uncommon” words used in interpretive materials should be defined so most audiences are able to understand their meaning
 - Planners will take into consideration the main interests of travelers to ensure that interpretation meets their expectations and interests
 - Byway facilities and materials should be ADA compliant



Mission and Vision Statements

A mission statement provides a framework for reaching your desired destination – how you will get where you want to go. It is a broad, general statement of purpose.

A vision statement describes your destination – where you are headed. It is a compelling mental image of your desired future.¹⁴

Byway Organization Mission Statement

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Partnership Board seeks to tell the Byway's story and broaden the traveler's experience through Byway improvements that make the highway safer, more comfortable, and accessible to all who wish to experience the grandeur it holds.

Byway Organization Vision Statement

By 2024 the Glenn Highway will be a safe, more efficient transportation corridor. It will preserve scenic viewing opportunities, identify and explain historical events, provide geological highlights and cultural background, and possess adequate visitor facilities.

Interpretive Plan Mission Statement

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan establishes a long-range vision for enhancing the traveler's experience through the improvement, development, and maintenance of interpretive sites, materials, and services along this historic pathway.

¹⁴ Anne Tellet, Kevin Skwira-Brown, and Cheryl Newman, "Making Grassroots Grow: Building and Maintaining Effective Byway Organizations," Americas Byways Resource Center, 2003, <http://www.bywaysonline.org/center/publications/order_grassroots.html> (05 January 2006), 18.

Overview of Resources

The National Scenic Byways Program designates roads as National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads based on their natural, scenic, cultural, historical, recreational, and archaeological qualities. The following is a general description of how the Glenn Highway embodies all six intrinsic qualities.

Visitors to Alaska expect to see something spectacular, like glaciers, mountains, and wildlife. Residents pride themselves on the state's scenic beauty, diversity of landscape, recreational opportunities, and culture. The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway will not leave travelers disappointed; rather it offers visitors and residents an experience to remember.

Driving sections of the Glenn Highway feels more like exploring a country road. It keeps you on your toes, anticipating views of the braided Matanuska River, mountain vistas, and even rock glaciers. Your eyes are peeled, looking for Dall's sheep high on the mountain slopes, black and brown bears foraging by the river, wildflowers painting the roadside, and the Nelchina caribou herd traveling across the corridor. From beginning to end, you are invited to embark on a journey through geologic and cultural history, following a path that has been used for thousands of years. For some, the Glenn Highway is the road home. For others, it is an open door to a new adventure. Regardless of your reason for traveling, the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway has something to share with you.

4017 © Alaska Division of Tourism

Painted Landscapes (Natural and Scenic)

When you travel the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway you will see a diversity of landscapes in 137.5 miles that others must travel thousands of miles to experience. Your journey begins at MP 0 (6th and Gambell) in Anchorage. The natural setting is spectacular, with the Chugach Mountains to the east and Cook Inlet to the west. On a clear day, Denali (Mt. McKinley) and the Alaska Range can be seen to the north. Cook Inlet and the Chugach Mountains are your guardrails out of Anchorage and remind you that "real" Alaska is never far away. The Chugach Mountains are home to diverse wildlife, including black and brown bears, moose, sheep, eagles, and salmon.

Glaciers are responsible for creating many natural features and for sculpting much of the landscape along the Byway. One such feature is the Elmendorf moraine, the long hill north of Elmendorf Air Force Base. The Elmendorf moraine is the terminal moraine of the Matanuska and Knik Glaciers and marks the end point of their advance about 14,000 years ago. The glaciers began retreating about 11,000 years ago, leaving this feature behind.¹ Mt. Susitna (locally known as "Sleeping Lady"), a prominent peak to the north, owes its shape to this glacial advance and retreat.



¹ Cathy Connor and Daniel O'Haire, *Roadside Geology of Alaska* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1988), 169.

Overview of Resources

Twenty-eight miles outside of Anchorage the Byway approaches the Matanuska Valley. To the east, Knik Glacier is continually carving the underlying terrain and depositing sediment on the valley floor. The Byway crosses the Knik and Matanuska rivers and enters the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. The refuge encompasses 28,000 acres of wetlands, forest, tidal sloughs, lakes, and tidal flats. This area harbors an abundance of wildlife, including moose, raptors, and waterfowl, and is a popular hunting, fishing, and bird watching area. The ghostly trees here are remnants of the 1964 earthquake which caused this area to subside, drowning trees and changing the landscape forever.

Travelers can admire the rural town of Palmer before they are surrounded by the Chugach and Talkeetna mountains. These mountain ranges are geologically diverse and separated by the Matanuska River. Hanging glaciers in the Chugach remind us of a much cooler period as the road winds upriver through birch and spruce stands, past numerous freshwater lakes. The river plays hide-and-seek as the Byway dips up and down through the corridor.

Your first view of Matanuska Glacier is at about MP 91. Matanuska Glacier is the most accessible glacier along the Byway and is responsible for shaping much of the corridor. Keep your eyes on this river of ice as you drive up-valley; you will be rewarded with views of the glacier winding down from an ice and snow capped environment that resembles what this area looked like thousands of years ago. Views of Lion's Head (**Nutsada'yiy** – *Dena'iana*; **Natsede'aayi** – *Ahtna*; means "Rock That is Standing") and Sheep Mountain greet you as the road climbs away from Matanuska Glacier and Caribou Creek. If you are traveling north, don't forget to look in your rear view mirror for a great view of Lion's Head.

Devout bird watchers travel to MP 118.6 each spring to watch migrating raptors and other birds fly through en route to their summer breeding grounds. The Alaska Audubon Society hosts a "Raptor Tailgate Party" here every spring.

As the Byway exits the narrow Matanuska River canyon and enters the Copper River Basin, there is a noticeable change in scenery. Tahnetta Pass, MP 122, is the transition area between the Cook Inlet and Copper River basins. Vegetation along the final section of the Byway is characteristic of the Interior; birch and spruce stands and steep rock walls are replaced with low lying vegetation, rolling hills, wetlands, and spindly black spruce. The distant Chugach Mountains still serve as a backdrop to the south, where Nelchina Glacier can be seen creeping down from snow covered peaks. On clear days, you can see four mountain ranges from Eureka Summit: the Chugach Mountains, Talkeetna Mountains, Alaska Range, and Wrangell Mountains. After the Byway crosses Eureka Summit it descends to the Little Nelchina River, the end of the National Scenic Byway designation. This final section of the Byway is frequented by the migrating Nelchina caribou herd.



Third photo from top
6637 © Ernst Schneider, Alaska Division of Tourism

Overview of Resources

From the coastal waters of Cook Inlet to the Copper River Basin, the flora and fauna and diversity of landscape along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway are rare luxuries for travelers.

Following Footsteps (Cultural and Historical)

Culture and history interweave to create a story of life, change, and development along the Glenn Highway corridor. Native Alaskans, Russians, and European Americans shaped the cultural and historical qualities of the Byway.

Ahtna and Dena'ina Athabascans

Dena' (meaning “the people”) Native elders suggest that Athabascans have occupied lands in Alaska for 40,000 years, moving north and south across North America as the glaciers receded and advanced. Dena'ina lived a subsistence lifestyle attuned to the natural cycle of the seasons, with summer fish camps by the rivers and inland winter homes. Dena'ina of the Cook Inlet region traded goods with Ahtna Athabascans from the Copper River Basin using a network of trails the Glenn Highway in part follows today.²

There is a close association between Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans in the Matanuska River corridor. Historically, many Dena'ina and Ahtna spoke both languages and shared overlapping territory. Although Ahtna are typically associated with the Copper River Basin, both Ahtna and Dena'ina suggest that Ahtna have moved farther west and northwest in the past 150 years. For example, Chickaloon Native Village was originally used by Dena'ina, but has mainly been occupied by Ahtna since the mid-nineteenth century.³

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans along the Glenn Highway continue to use their Native place names and tell their stories about the corridor's landmarks. Travelers can learn about Dena'ina and Ahtna culture and history at a variety of places along the Byway, including the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Alaska Native Heritage Center, the Native Village of Eklutna, Chickaloon Native Village, and Alpine Historical Park.

Russian Influence

Athabaskan subsistence culture began to change when Russians and Europeans came to Upper Cook Inlet. In the 1780s Russian traders and trappers established trade relationships with Natives.⁴ Although they had no direct control over Dena'ina lands or the people, Russians did influence their traditional way of life by introducing western trade goods and the Russian Orthodox religion.⁵ Travelers can still see the church's influence in the Native Village of Eklutna. St.



Mary and Paul in Chickaloon, 1927
Photo courtesy of Patricia Wade



Photo courtesy of Alaska Native Heritage Center



Photo courtesy of Anchorage
Museum of History and Art

² Mary Craft Bauer, *The Glenn Highway: the story of its past, a guide to its present* (Sutton, AK: Brentwood Press, 1987), 3.

³ James Kari and James A. Fall, *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003), 289.

⁴ *Glenn Highway Corridor Management Plan* (Anchorage, AK: HDR Alaska, Inc. with support from Land Design North, 2001), 20.

⁵ James Kari and James A. Fall, “The Russian Presence in Upper Cook Inlet” in *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina* by James Kari and James A. Fall, 17 (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003).

Nicholas Church, built in the mid to late 1800s, is the oldest standing building in the Anchorage area.⁶ The church is also home to a museum and is open for public tours.

U.S. Military Expeditions

The United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.⁷ When gold was discovered in the late 1880s an influx of European Americans came to the new territory. About the same time, the U.S. Army sent mapping expeditions to Alaska to gather more information on the area's topography and natural resources. The maps produced by the U.S. Geological Survey prompted miners and trappers to explore the Matanuska River Valley.⁸

Mining in the Matanuska Valley

Coal mining camps in the Matanuska Valley near Sutton and Chickaloon brought eager workers to the area. When the Alaska Engineering Commission began construction on a railway from Seward to the Interior, with an extension to the Matanuska coalfields, the door to the corridor was open for good. Travelers can visit the Alpine Historical Museum in Sutton to learn more about mining history in the Matanuska Valley. They can also take a short side-trip to Hatcher Pass and go on a guided tour of Independence Mine, which operated as a gold mine in the 1930s and 1940s.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-aec-g1023



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-b76-82-268

Glenn Highway Construction

In 1940, Congress appropriated nearly forty million dollars for defensive installations in Alaska. The following year the Alaska Road Commission received a one million dollar appropriation endorsed by the War Department to start construction on the Glenn Highway.⁹ Completed in 1945, the Glenn Highway's connection to the Richardson Highway and the newly constructed Alaska Highway linked Alaska's roads to Canada and the lower 48 states for the first time. Historic roadhouses along the Byway, such as Sheep Mountain Lodge and Eureka Lodge, were built during and after highway construction and provided meals and lodging for workers and weary travelers.¹⁰

Matanuska Valley Colonists

Homesteading in the Matanuska Valley began in the early 1900s. Adjusting to the harsh Alaska climate was difficult but a handful of these early homesteaders succeeded in running productive farms. In 1935 President Roosevelt sent 203 depression era families from Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to the Matanuska Valley. Only these three states were chosen because planners thought their climates would best predispose the settlers to life in Alaska.¹¹

6 James Kari and James A. Fall, *Shem Pete's Alaska*, 19, 321.

7 Alaskans have varying cultural viewpoints of land ownership. Some believe the land transaction between the U.S. and Russia did not take Alaska Native's views toward land ownership into consideration.

8 Bauer, 4-6.

9 Claus M Naske, *Paving Alaska's Trails: the Work of the Alaska Road Commission* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 208-211.

10 Bauer, 10-11.

11 Ernest Gruening, *State of Alaska* (New York: Random House, 1954), 299.

Overview of Resources

There were multiple reasons for this relocation program. The government wanted to: give these families a second chance for a new life; stimulate population growth in Alaska; and demonstrate the agricultural potentialities in Alaska.¹² The Colonists succeeded in developing a productive farming community and proved that agriculture in Alaska was possible. The Colony also gave Alaska some positive publicity. Seven Colony farms are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Military Presence

Alaska is a strategic location for U.S. military defense. WWII saw a large military buildup in Alaska, specifically in Anchorage with the construction of two military bases. Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Base, originally one and the same, were built during and after WWII. Byway travelers will pass both bases and the Alaska National Guard headquarters on their way out of Anchorage. Their presence has influenced the development and demographics of the Anchorage area.

At about MP 6-10 travelers can see the remains of Site Summit Nike Missile Site perched atop a neighboring mountain. This Cold War relic was one of three Nike missile installations in Anchorage. Site Summit served to defend the neighboring bases and community against enemy attack from 1959-1979.

Recreation

Chugach State Park

Encompassing a half-million acres of Alaska wilderness, Chugach State Park is the third largest state park in the United States and is easily accessible from the Glenn Highway. Visitors to the park can hike, bike, view wildlife, cross-country ski, backcountry ski, snowboard, rock climb, canoe, lake and river kayak, and more.

The first spot along the Byway to access Chugach State Park is Arctic Valley Road. Arctic Valley is a wonderful place to hike and berry pick during the summer and fall, and is a popular spot for skiing in the winter. The Byway also lends access to the Eagle River Nature Center and Eagle River Campground, both situated in Chugach State Park. By 2010 travelers can enjoy segments of the Eagle River Greenbelt Trail. The trail will follow the river from the Glenn Highway to the North Fork of Eagle River access, and then follow the road right-of-way from the North Fork access to the Eagle River Nature Center. The trail will be suitable for a variety of recreational activities.

Eklutna Lake is another beautiful spot to hike, bike, canoe, kayak, and camp in Chugach State Park. The lake is nine miles off the Glenn Highway. Numerous other trailheads, from Eagle River to Pioneer Peak (on the Old Glenn Highway), provide access to the park.



Alaska State Library, Historical Collections
Official Photographic Album in Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corp.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Wien Collection
AMHA-b85-27-814



¹² Gruening, 299-300.

Endless Possibilities

Those interested in biking, walking, or roller skating on a paved trail should take advantage of the paved pathway paralleling the highway from Anchorage to North Birchwood. For more “off-road” travel, there are numerous places to hike and bike in the Chugach and Talkeetna mountains.

Another way to experience Alaska’s amazing scenery is by air; there are several businesses along the Byway that offer flight seeing trips. Many people book charter flights for backcountry hiking trips, and hunting and fishing excursions.

Visit the Musk Ox Farm, located just outside Palmer, to learn about musk oxen and the musk ox domestication project. Visitors also have the opportunity to tour the farm and observe these animals at close range. The farm harvests qiviut, the soft under-wool of musk oxen, for its use as a subsistence resource in Alaska Native communities.

For the more adventurous traveler, the Byway has places to rock and ice climb, white water raft or kayak, dog mush, fly-fish, and mountain bike. Travelers can drive to the toe of Matanuska Glacier and take a guided glacier trek and/or ice climbing classes.¹³

Eureka Summit, the highest point along the Glenn Highway, is a popular spot in winter for snowmobiling and for viewing northern lights. This is also a great spot during the summer and fall to kick-off backpacking and hunting trips.

From start to finish, there are numerous recreational opportunities along the Byway for beginner to advanced outdoor enthusiasts and for those just looking to relax and enjoy the beautiful environment.

Archaeological

The Corridor’s First Human Inhabitants

Archaeologists believe the territory around Upper Cook Inlet was not available to people and large numbers of land animals prior to 12,000 years ago; at that time, glaciers covered mountain passes to the north, and glacial ice and/or water covered most of the Upper Cook Inlet area.¹⁴ At least 285m (935 ft) of ice covered the Anchorage area at the height of the Elmendorf advance 14,000 years ago.¹⁵ Thousands of years passed before this area was habitable to humans.

Researchers estimate the earliest cultures inhabiting the Cook Inlet area occurred 7,500 to 10,000 years ago, the oldest sites concentrated along Turnagain Arm, the Kenai Mountains, Matanuska River, and Susitna Valley. The history of human migration to the Upper Cook Inlet region is complex but probably followed multiple routes through the Alaska Range or by sea from the southwest.¹⁶ Dena’ina peoples most likely migrated to Upper Cook Inlet from interior Alaska over the Alaska Range and down the Matanuska, Susitna, and Mulchatna Rivers.¹⁷

Archaeological sites near the Susitna River and at Long Lake, MP 85.4 of the Glenn Highway, are evidence that people occupied these corridors at least 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.¹⁸ Historic and ethnographic data indicates that both



Photo by Tom Bol/Mat-Su CVB



Photo courtesy of Musk Ox Farm

¹³ Access to the toe of Matanuska Glacier crosses private property. The owners do charge a fee.

¹⁴ Douglas Reger, “Upper Cook Inlet Prehistory: the Archaeological Evidence” in *Shem Pete’s Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena’ina* by James Kari and James A. Fall, 15 (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Richard D. Reger and DeAnne S. Pinney, “Late Wisconsin glaciation of the Cook Inlet region with emphasis on Kenai Lowland and implications for early peopling” in *Adventures Through Time: Readings in the Anthropology of Cook Inlet, Alaska*, proceedings of a symposium compiled and edited by Nancy Yaw Davis and William E. Davis, 27 (Anchorage, AK: Cook Inlet Historical Society, 1996).

¹⁶ Daniel R. Thompson, “Cultural Resource Reconnaissance and Testing at Long Lake, Glenn Highway MP 68 to 84: ADOT&PF, Project Number (IM-01A-5 (18)/54984)” (Anchorage, AK: Office of History and Archaeology Report Number 98, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 2004), 6.

¹⁷ Thompson, 10.

¹⁸ Reger and DeAnne S. Pinney, 31.

Overview of Resources

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans used the Upper Matanuska Valley before the contact period. Dena'ina sites with semi-subterranean, multi-roomed houses and copper, wood, and bone tools occur in Cook Inlet by 1,500 years ago. Copper tools from the Copper River Basin have been found at many sites in Cook Inlet, suggesting strong relationships between Dena'ina and Ahtna. Their linguistic systems were closely integrated and intermarriages were common.¹⁹

Further study of these sites will hopefully help researchers piece together more information about Alaska's first human inhabitants.

Paleontology

Both plant and animal fossils exist in the Glenn Highway corridor. Although the exact locations of fossils are sensitive, interpretive panels on paleontological topics would be interesting and revealing.

An entire fossil forest has been uncovered near Palmer. It is one of the only deposits of its kind in the world as upright petrified tree trunks are found in their growing position. Over 41 types of leaves have been found there including dawn redwood, palm, oak, maple, and hickory. These plants reveal that the climate was subtropical 55 million years ago.

It is a world-class fossil site because it is unusual to find fossils of leaves associated with wood. Sections of fossil tree trunks from this site may be seen at the UAA rock garden in Anchorage. High school students found a rare turtle fossil near this same location.

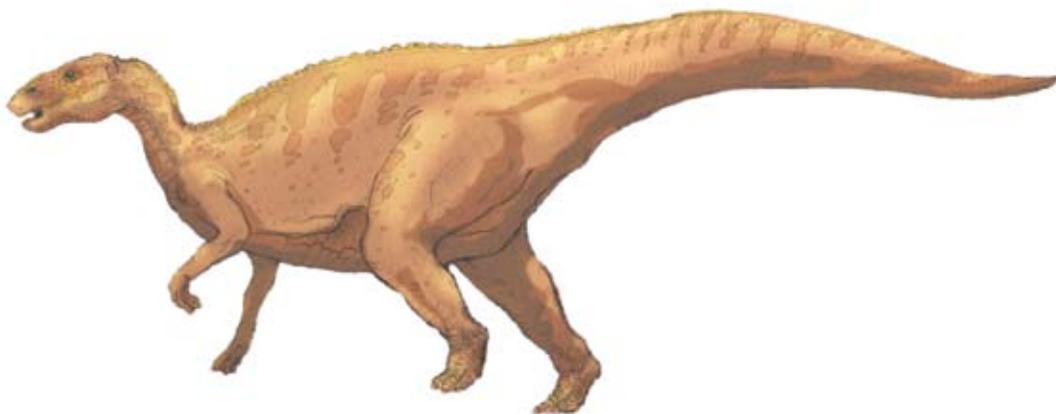
A variety of fossil mollusks represent some of the corridor's earliest animal life, including ammonites, inoceramids (large clams), and freshwater gastropods and clams.²⁰

Two rare dinosaur fossils have been discovered near the Glenn Highway corridor – an ankylosaur and a hadrosaur. The ankylosaur had

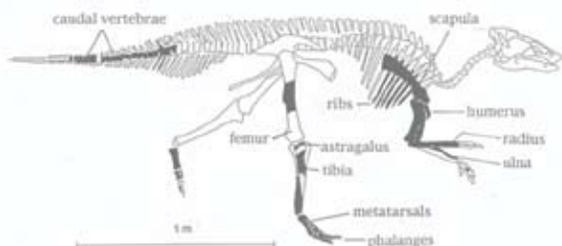
a heavily armored body with numerous spikes like most ankylosaurs, but did not have a club-like tail. The ankylosaur is the only representative of its kind known from Alaska and was discovered by the John Luster family. A very rare hadrosaur, or duck-billed dinosaur, was discovered by Kevin May near Gunsight Mountain. It is one of the oldest hadrosaurs known in the world and does not resemble any known genus so it is known simply as "Lizzie," named after Kevin May's daughter who helped excavate her.

In reference to interpretive planning for the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway, it is important to be discrete about the specific locations of archaeological and paleontological sites along the corridor to protect them from damage and looting.

Hadrosaur reconstruction by David Board



AK Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation,
Office of History and Archaeology



Skeletal drawing of hadrosaur
Courtesy of Anne Pasch

¹⁹ Thompson, 9-10.

²⁰ Connor and O'Haire, 171-173; Bruce I. Clardy et al., *Guide to Bedrock and Glacial Geology of the Glenn Highway, Anchorage to the Matanuska Glacier and the Matanuska Coal Mining District* (Anchorage, AK: Alaska Geological Society, 1984), 1-12.

Interpretive Themes

“Successful byway interpretation is evidenced in common themes that thread along and throughout the byway...It reflects the values of those communities that the byway transects, and tells their story in a sensitive, but honest and objective way.”¹

Themes are the primary messages visitors should understand about a particular interpretive site, or in this case, a scenic byway. Themes bring a sense of continuity to an interpretive site. They will also help the Byway committee stay on track with their goals and objectives, and help them organize the content and structure of interpretive topics.

Overriding Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Theme:

The Glenn Highway corridor is a natural pathway between the sea and Interior.

The primary interpretive themes listed below reflect the major stories of the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway and support the overriding interpretive theme. The sub-themes give more detailed information to support the primary themes and will help the Byway committee choose interpretive topics. Individual panels may have themes not directly stated here, but the themes should fall under a primary theme. After reading an interpretive panel, interpretive materials, or visiting an interpretive site, visitors should be able to summarize the theme in one complete sentence.

Primary Interpretive Theme #1

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Sub-themes:

- Water and wind constantly shape the landscape along the Byway.
- Glaciers along the Glenn Highway corridor are remnants of an ice sheet over a half-mile thick that covered this area thousands of years ago. As they advance and recede, glaciers grind down mountains, deposit sediment, and create telltale landscapes.
- As earth’s tectonic plates collide, slip past, and break apart from one another the landscape changes. Most of these changes, like mountain building, don’t happen overnight, but others, like earthquakes, can dramatically alter the landscape in a matter of seconds.

¹ Susan Hayman, “Key Points: Challenges to Successful Byway Interpretation,” from Interpretive Think Tank Luncheon and Interpretive Table Topic Luncheon, 2001, <<http://library.byways.org/display.php/KeyPoints.pdf?ID=8753>> also accessed through <http://www.bywaysonline.org/search?q=interpretation&cat%5B%5D=document> (05 January 2006), 1.

Primary Interpretive Theme #2

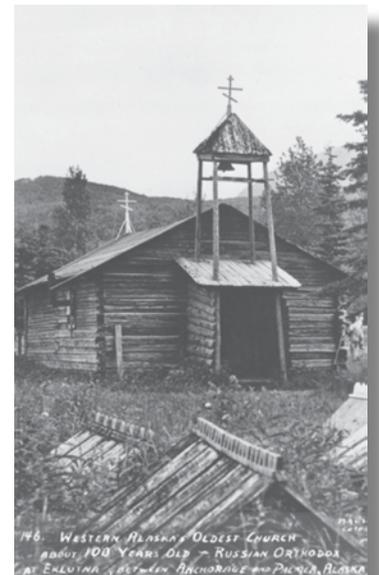
Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Sub-themes:

- According to Native elders, Athabascans have occupied lands in Alaska for 40,000 years. Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans subsisted on these lands long before Russian and European explorers came to the area.
- Coastal Dena'ina Athabascans traded goods and supplies with Ahtna Athabascans from the Copper River Basin using a network of trails the Glenn Highway in part follows today.
- Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have endured many changes brought by Russian and Euro-American explorers and settlers.
 - ▶ Russian explorers and traders introduced western goods and established trade relationships with Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans. Russians did not permanently settle in this area, but did encourage Natives to adopt the Russian Orthodox religion.
 - ▶ The influx of Russians and Euro-Americans changed the Dena'ina and Ahtna subsistence lifestyle to a cash economy. Native groups began to rely more heavily on western goods and took jobs such as guides, hunters, and laborers to earn money.
 - ▶ Native culture was almost lost when disease, alcohol, and other influences devastated communities.
- Today the Native Village of Eklutna and Chickaloon Native Village carry on the traditions of their ancestors and share their knowledge with family, the community, and visitors alike.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
B98.17.243



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-694-26-11

Primary Interpretive Theme #3

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Sub-themes:

- The Alaska Gold Rush and United States military mapping expeditions brought European Americans to the area in the late 1880s. Maps produced by these expeditions were invaluable for incoming miners and explorers. The Matanuska Valley corridor proved to be successful for an all-Alaska route to Interior gold fields.

Interpretive Themes

- Eager workers and settlers flooded the area in the early 1900s when the U.S. constructed a government owned railroad from Seward to Fairbanks.
- The Matanuska Valley railroad extension supported productive coal mining operations in the early 1900s. Production at the mines fluctuated with the U.S. dependence on coal. By the 1950s, only one major coal mine operated in the Matanuska Valley.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-aec-g388

- Matanuska Valley homesteaders and colonists succeeded in developing a productive farming community in Palmer, and proved that agriculture in Alaska was possible.



Alaska State Library, Historical Collections
Official Photographic Album - Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corp.

- Alaska is a strategic location for U.S. military defense. Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Base, originally one and the same, were built during and after WWII.
- Construction of the Glenn Highway began during WWII. Several roadhouses and lodges fed and housed workers during this time. Three are still in business today.² Upon completion, the highway connected Anchorage to the Richardson and Alaska highways and ultimately the lower 48 states.
- Today, the Glenn Highway links communities together, provides income for roadside businesses, and is one of Alaska's most important transportation routes.

Primary Interpretive Theme #4

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Sub-themes:

- Tahneta Pass is the transition area between the Cook Inlet Basin (coastal Alaska) and Copper River Basin (interior Alaska). Heading north, travelers feel the landscape open up as they leave the constricted Matanuska River Valley and enter the expansive Copper River Basin.
- Both maritime and continental climates influence the Cook Inlet Basin, creating moderate fluctuations in seasonal temperature and abundant precipitation. This climate supports black spruce forests, mixed spruce forests, aspen and



Photo by Bill Evans

² An Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities proposed road realignment bypasses the Hicks Creek Roadhouse. As of February 2006, Hicks Creek Roadhouse is closed and it is unsure whether the owners plan to reopen in a new location.

birch trees, tall shrub communities, and beautiful wildflower displays. Numerous lakes, ponds, and wetlands attract shorebirds, waterfowl, moose, black and brown bears, beavers, muskrats, and more. Travelers can also view Dall's sheep in the Sheep Mountain area.

- The Copper River Basin lies within the bed of ancient Lake Ahtna. The basin experiences a continental climate with more extreme fluctuations in temperature compared to maritime climates. The basin is underlain with scattered patches of permafrost (to depths of 100 feet in some places), causing poor drainage and making it difficult for certain types of plants to grow. Low shrubs and stunted black spruce forests characterize the area. Caribou, moose, fox, gray wolf, and numerous bird species, including migrating raptors and trumpeter swans, are among the animals inhabiting the basin.

Primary Interpretive Theme #5

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Sub-themes:

- Whether by foot, bike, boat, plane, or car, recreational opportunities along the Byway are abundant.
- Plan ahead and prepare! Just because the recreational opportunities are readily accessible, doesn't mean the activity will be a walk in the park.



Photo Courtesy of NOVA



Photo Courtesy of NOVA

Primary Interpretive Theme #6

Archaeological and paleontological discoveries enlighten researchers and laymen about the Byway's first inhabitants.

- Archaeologists believe the territory around Upper Cook Inlet was not available to people and large numbers of land animals prior to 12,000 years ago.
- Archaeological sites at Long Lake (MP 84.5) are evidence that people occupied these corridors at least 6,000-7,000 years ago.
- Both plant and animal fossils reveal what life may have been like millions of years ago.



AK Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation,
Office of History and Archaeology

Visitor Experience Goals

Visitor experience goals outline the experiences that should be available to Glenn Highway travelers. They describe opportunities for travelers to derive meanings and values from Byway resources and experiences. ¹

After traveling the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway visitors should appreciate and understand the significance of its intrinsic qualities. Travelers should be eager to share their experiences and hopefully encourage others to discover what the Byway has to offer. Travelers should feel a sense of stewardship toward the natural environment and think of ways to continue that stewardship at home. At the very least, travelers should feel their trip was worthwhile and fulfilling, and that their personal goals for their Byway experience were met.

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway will provide opportunities for travelers to:

- **Enjoy the corridor's scenic and natural landscape**

- ▶ Take photographs at scenic waysides
- ▶ Learn about the geological and glacial processes involved in shaping the corridor
- ▶ Discover the corridor's flora and fauna; view and learn about local wildlife, including salmon, eagles, raptors, Dall's sheep, moose, and caribou



- **Enjoy services offered by area businesses, communities, and waysides**

- ▶ Obtain information about area resources and attractions, and how to safely travel in the corridor
- ▶ Listen to a radio broadcast, podcast, or other media source with interpretive messages about the Byway and its resources
- ▶ Enjoy the natural, cultural, and scenic qualities of the Glenn Highway corridor by participating in recreational activities, and feel inspired to try new activities
- ▶ Have sufficient and evenly spaced rest areas available along the Byway, complete with garbage disposal and restrooms

- **Learn about the people and events that shaped today's Byway communities**

- ▶ Learn about Ahtna and Dena'ina Athabascan culture and history, and understand the significance of their presence in the corridor



¹ *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, prepared by the Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, 1998, <<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/ip.htm#>> (05 January 2006), 16.

Experience Goals

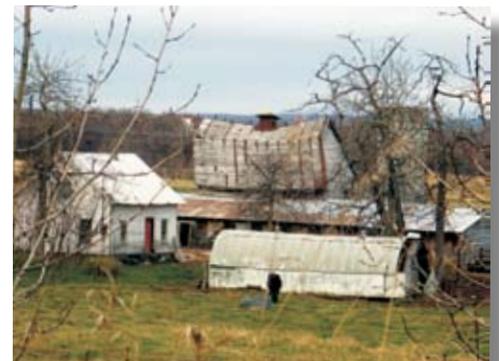
- Tour traditional Athabascan homes and learn about Athabascan subsistence culture
 - Listen to Athabascan stories and songs, and pass them on to others
 - Watch traditional Native dancing
 - See Athabascan arts and crafts and understand the significance of these items to Alaska Natives
 - Develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for Alaska Native culture
- ▶ Learn the history of mining in the Matanuska Valley
 - Understand how mining helped shape the economy and communities in the corridor
 - Tour historical buildings and see photographs of Matanuska Valley mines and mining towns
 - ▶ Learn the history of Glenn Highway construction
 - Understand the Glenn Highway's importance in connecting Anchorage and other communities with Canada and the lower 48 states
 - Visit historic roadhouses that served workers and travelers during Glenn Highway construction, and still serve travelers today
 - ▶ Understand the history and significance of farming in the Matanuska Valley
 - See historic buildings and photographs from the Matanuska Valley Colony era
 - Tour an original Matanuska Colony home and farm
 - ▶ Understand the historic and present significance of the U.S. military in the corridor



Ya Ne Dah Ah Dance Group, 2005. Photo courtesy of Patricia Wade
Dancers: Elder Albert Harrison, Kaylan Wade, Dillon Stuart, Leo and Leonard Ewan, Jarret Johns, Corey Stuart and Daniel Harrison.



Anchorage Museum of History and Art
AMHA-b74-4-19



Existing Visitor Experience

“Good interpretation helps visitors to explore and understand a little more about the places they visit. In doing so, it adds depth to tourists’ experiences, making a visit something more than just a trip to see the sights...If visitors feel that a place is interesting or exciting, they are more likely to recommend it to others... [Interpretation] contributes to an overall sense of place.”¹

It is important to evaluate the experiences Glenn Highway travelers currently have before we recommend changes or additions. This section focuses on existing facilities where travelers can get information about the Byway and where they can stop for interpretive experiences.

People travel the Glenn Highway for many reasons. Residents use the highway regularly – it is the only road between Matanuska-Susitna Borough communities and Anchorage, Alaska’s largest city. It is also the only road directly connecting Palmer to Glennallen, and must accommodate all the communities in between. In the summer, visitors might take a drive up the Glenn Highway from Anchorage to see one of its biggest attractions, the Matanuska Glacier, or drive to Hatcher Pass and Independence Mine. Others most likely drive through on their way south to Anchorage or north to Tok. Those wanting to drive from Anchorage to Valdez must take the Glenn Highway to get on the Richardson Highway. It is easy to see why the Glenn Highway is often referred to as a transportation corridor.

During winter, the Glenn Highway does not see many out-of-state travelers; residents, commuters, and truck drivers are the primary users. Several businesses along the highway cater to winter enthusiasts, like cross-country skiers and snowmobilers.

Information and Orientation

There are a number of different places to collect information on the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway. Byway brochures and placemats are located at the Palmer Chamber of Commerce, Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitors Bureau, North Slope Restaurant in Eagle River, Valley Hotel in Palmer, roadhouses along the Byway, Alpine Historical Park, Grand View Café and RV Park, and Castle Mountain Bed and Breakfast.

The Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Palmer Visitor Information Center are staffed year-round and offer information on local lodgings, eateries, and attractions. Local lodgings and restaurants in Anchorage, Eagle River, Palmer, Sutton, and on up the Byway may also offer tips on places to visit. An informational sign in Sutton directs visitors toward local services and attractions.

The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway committee sponsors local radio advertisements that encourage listeners to take advantage of the Byway’s resources. Radio advertisements are a great way to let listeners know about upcoming Byway events and interpretive presentations, where to purchase Byway materials, and where to go for more information.

¹ James Carter (editor), “A Sense of Place: An Interpretive Planning Handbook,” Scottish Interpretive Network, 2001, <<http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk>> (05 January 2006), 4-5.

Existing Visitor Experience

Merrill Field is home to around 900 general aviation aircraft. During the summer, spectators can see around 800 takeoffs and landings per day. Merrill Field is the place to go in Anchorage if you are interested in taking a flight seeing tour, going on a fly-in-fishing or hunting expedition, or want to visit one of Alaska's remote communities. Merrill Field is also home to the University of Alaska Anchorage's Aviation Technology Complex, a state of the art facility designed for education and research in the field of aviation. The Airport Heights entrance to Merrill Field has a pull-off with an entrance sign, map, and picnic tables. There is also one more pullout and a memorial at the 15th Avenue entrance.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center is a wonderful place to get information about Alaska Native cultures. Visitors can also look at various displays, watch Native dance performances, and tour replicas of indigenous homes. The Native Village of Eklutna and Chickaloon Native Village are also good resources for obtaining information on Athabascan communities, culture, and history along the Byway.

The historic roadhouses along the Byway are also great places to stop for a bite to eat and/or get information about the area. However, some of the roadhouses are only open during the summer.

Travelers can also find Glenn Highway information on the National Scenic Byways website at <http://www.byways.org> and the Alaska State Scenic Byways website at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/scenic/byways-glenn.shtml>.

Interpretation and Education

Oral Interpretation

Oral interpretation, including guided nature walks and evening talks, is an important form of interpretation. Oral interpretation allows the guide to make personal connections with the audience by sharing stories and relating the resource being discussed to visitors' everyday lives. The Byway and its partners should continue to support oral interpretation along the Glenn Highway as a way to personally connect with travelers.

The following places along the Byway offer forms of oral interpretation:

- Anchorage Museum of History and Art
- Alaska Native Heritage Center
- Eagle River Nature Center
- Native Village of Eklutna
- Colony House Museum – Palmer Historical Society
- Independence Mine State Historical Park
- Musk Ox Farm
- Wolf Country USA
- NOVA River Runners
- MICA Guides – Matanuska Glacier



Photos courtesy of Eagle River Nature Center

Interpretive Sites

There are 15 interpretive sites along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway:

- *Anchorage Museum of History and Art*

Visitors to the Anchorage Museum of History and Art learn about Alaska's history through interpretation, art, and numerous programs and activities.

- *Alaska Native Heritage Center*

Visitors to the Alaska Native Heritage Center can see dance performances, talk with cultural representatives, watch videos, browse through the exhibits, and take tours of the outdoor village settings.

- *Alpenglow at Arctic Valley Ski Area*

Alpenglow at Arctic Valley is a volunteer run ski area nestled in the Chugach Mountains. The Anchorage Ski Club leases the ski area land from Alaska State Parks. There is a Chugach State Park trailhead along Arctic Valley Road and one at the Alpenglow parking lot.

Interpretive panels on the history of the ski area, Anchorage Ski Club, and military are displayed inside the lodge. The lodge is open on weekends during the winter but is only open during the summer for special events.

- *Eagle River Nature Center*

Eagle River Nature Center is tucked in the Chugach Mountains and is one of many Chugach State Park trailheads. The non-profit group, Friends of Eagle River Nature Center, operates and manages the Center. They offer oral interpretive presentations and guided interpretive walks throughout the year. Interpretive panels along the hiking trails discuss a variety of natural history topics.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail, which stretches from Seward to Nome, passes through this site. The Crow Pass Trail is a popular summer hiking trail that follows this historic route from Girdwood to the ERNC.



Photo courtesy of Eagle River Nature Center

- *Native Village of Eklutna*

The Native Village of Eklutna, located at MP 26.5 of the Glenn Highway (Eklutna exit), is the oldest continually inhabited Athabascan site in the area. The Village offers cultural tours in the spring through fall. Visitors have the choice between a tour highlighting Dena'ina uses of local plants and animals, or a tour on Eklutna history and subsistence fishing techniques.

- *Eklutna Lake*

Eklutna Lake, located in Chugach State Park, is a popular area for year-round recreation. Summer activities include biking, hiking, kayaking, picnicking, and riding ATVs; winter activities include cross-country skiing, dog mushing, and snowmobiling. Eklutna Lake has restrooms, potable water, picnic tables, and 50 campsites (plus 15 overflow campsites). There are several interpretive panels and a viewing scope for watching wildlife. The Municipality of Anchorage's drinking water comes from Eklutna Lake, which makes this resource especially important to the community.

Existing

Visitor Experience

- *Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area**

Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area is managed by Lifetime Adventures. Kepler-Bradley has six campsites (for tents only), canoe rentals, and a day use area. This is a popular spot for fishing, hiking, and biking.

- *South Palmer Station and Alaska State Fairgrounds*

The South Palmer Station is located along the Byway at the Alaska State Fairgrounds. Seven interpretive panels displayed at the South Palmer Station present travelers with an introduction to the Byway. They include an introductory panel, a panel focusing on the Matanuska Valley, and five panels outlining the intrinsic qualities of the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway. The only intrinsic quality not represented is archaeological.

- *Hatcher Pass and Independence Mine State Historical Park*

Independence Mine in Hatcher Pass was one of Alaska's greatest gold producers in the 1930s. Today it is a State Historical Park, and hundreds of visitors flock to the site each summer to tour the mine and buildings. Hatcher Pass is also a popular area in winter for backcountry skiing and snowmobiling. The Park is currently being renovated. Alaska State Parks strengthened the foundations of historic buildings, improved and paved pathways and parking lots, and installed new interpretive panels and kiosks. The renovation is ongoing.



- *Gold Rush Centennial Pull-off*

Located at MP 50 of the Glenn Highway, this site has beautiful views of the Matanuska River and, on a clear day, Knik Glacier. A Gold Rush Centennial interpretive panel titled, "Loads of Gold in Hatcher Pass," previews what visitors will learn at Independence Mine State Historical Park.



- *Alpine Historical Park*

The Alpine Historical Park is an open air historical collection that features Matanuska Valley coal mining, Athabascan culture, and Glenn Highway construction. Coal mining equipment, historic buildings, and an Athabascan winter lodge accent the park.

Visitors will find interpretive signage describing each exhibit, local geology, and flora and fauna. Several of the buildings house extensive photo displays of the Park's historical focus, including the "Old Timers Hall of Fame" collection. Visitors will enjoy the open spaces, playground equipment, picnic tables, and well maintained flower and vegetable gardens. The park is available for private rental, company picnics, weddings, and family gatherings.



- *Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site**

Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site is managed by Long Rifle Lodge. There is an interpretive shelter, interpretive panels, a self-guided trail, rest rooms, and views of Matanuska Glacier. There is also a campground with 12 campsites, a water pump, toilets, fire pits, and picnic tables.



- *Sheep Mountain Interpretive Pull-off*

Located at MP 113, this site is a great spot to take photographs of Sheep Mountain and Lion's Head (**Nutsada'iy** – *Dena'iana*; **Natsede'aayi** – *Ahtna*). It has a picnic table and a four-panel kiosk with interpretive panels on geology, hiking, and Dall's sheep.



Corel Professional Photos

Existing Visitor Experience

- *Chickaloon – Knik – Nelchina Trail System, MP 118.5*

This site is near the transition area between the Cook Inlet Basin and Copper River Basin. It is also a hot spot for watching the seasonal migration of raptors through the corridor. There are restrooms, spotting scopes, and numerous interpretive panels. Panel topics range from the history of the local trail system to bird migration.

- *Gold Rush Panel – MP 129.4*

“U.S. Army Explores the Wilderness” is located at MP 129.4, just after Eureka Lodge. The panel sits to the side of a large pull-out and parking area. Eureka Summit is a popular winter destination for snowmobiling. On a clear day visitors can see four different mountain ranges from this spot: Chugach Mountains, Talkeetna Mountains, Wrangell Mountains, and Alaska Range.

* Due to budget cuts in 2002, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Alaska State Parks) was forced to close or contract out 11 park facilities in Fairbanks and the Mat-Su Valley, including Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area (MP 36.4), King Mountain State Recreation Site (MP 76.1), Long Lake State Recreation Site (MP 85.3), Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site (MP 101), and Little Nelchina State Recreation Site (MP 137.5). Private businesses manage Kepler-Bradley SRA, King Mountain SRS, and Matanuska Glacier SRS. These sites are open to the public. Access to Long Lake SRS and Little Nelchina SRS is not restricted but no toilet or garbage facilities are available.



Photo by Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org



Audience Analysis

“Successful byway interpretation ...inspires travelers to learn and leaves them with an understanding of the cultural, scenic and historic qualities that distinguish this byway as more than just another piece of road.”¹



The audience analysis is an essential component of the interpretive planning process. In order to plan appropriately, we should know past and potential visitor demographics, what motivates them to travel the Byway, and what expectations they have for their Byway experience. Knowing these things can also help with overall marketing strategies, advertising, and for providing general services.

Knowing Byway visitors and understanding their expectations helps determine the most appropriate interpretive sites and services. For example, if visitors are traveling the Byway for the first time they will most likely want to stop at scenic pullouts, read interpretive panels on local natural and cultural history, and perhaps stay overnight in a designated campground. On the other hand, brochures, guides, and booklets might be more appropriate for repeat travelers (such as residents of the area). These publications can present more detailed information about particular sites, events, or people and can offer repeat travelers more variety.

By studying the following reports and surveys, we can learn:

- Why visitors come to Alaska
- Who visitors are (general visitor demographics)
- What things visitors are expecting to do and/or experience
- What activities and opportunities are important to Alaskans traveling in-state

Information specifically on Glenn Highway travelers is sparse and therefore many of our assumptions about Glenn Highway travelers come from the following reports. The reports are far more general and mainly focus on Alaska visitors as a whole. A couple reports offer information about in-state travelers, and about residents' attitudes toward outdoor recreation and driving for pleasure.

Alaska Community Tourism Handbook: How to develop tourism in your community

The State of Alaska, Department of Community and Economic Development created this handbook to help communities market their town, businesses, and/or resources for the tourism industry. The handbook gives some good insight into Alaska tourism in general:

- Alaska's perceived weather conditions stop some people from coming to the state. However, those not discouraged by the possibility of bad weather are most likely to visit in late spring and summer.

¹ Susan Hayman, "Key Points: Challenges to Successful Byway Interpretation," from Interpretive Think Tank Luncheon and Interpretive Table Topic Luncheon, 2001, <<http://library.byways.org/display.php/KeyPoints.pdf?ID=8753>> also accessed through <http://www.bywaysonline.org/search?q=interpretation&cat%5B%5D=document> (05 January 2006), 1.

- Many visitors to Alaska are fulfilling a life-long dream. They come to see Alaska's scenic beauty, glaciers, and wildlife.
- Since Alaska is so big, visitors must pick and choose where they visit or what tour they go on. There must be something special about a community, park, or in our case, a scenic drive, that convinces them to choose that trip as part of their vacation. On the other hand, Alaska's size encourages visitors to come again and experience what they didn't get to the first time.
- Communities should focus marketing efforts on the specific group or groups that offer the greatest return.
- Alaskans vacationing in the state is on the rise. They visit recreational areas, friends and relatives, explore other communities, and attend special events and celebrations statewide. In reference to the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway, special consideration should be given to residents traveling in-state. These individuals might drive the Glenn Highway frequently and might even be residents along the highway.²

Alaska Travel Industry Association – 2004 General Visitor Statistics

ATIA General Visitor Statistics present basic information about people who traveled to Alaska in 2004. Information on the types of activities visitors participated in is helpful for interpretive planning purposes.

The study found:

- The majority of 2004 visitors took a sightseeing tour (69%) and/or visited a Native cultural attraction (59%).
- At least 25-50% of visitors:
 - ▶ Stayed in a hotel/motel (47%)
 - ▶ Took a day cruise (43%)
 - ▶ Took a motor coach tour (42%)
 - ▶ Bird watched (35%)
 - ▶ Went on a soft adventure nature tour (32%)
 - ▶ Went fishing (32%)
 - ▶ Went flight seeing (31%)
 - ▶ Backpacked or hiked (27%)
 - ▶ Stayed in a wilderness lodge/resort (26%)
- Less than 25% of visitors:
 - ▶ Rented a car (22%)
 - ▶ Went river rafting or floating (18%)
 - ▶ Stayed in a private campground (14%)
 - ▶ Stayed in a State/Federal RV campground (13%)
 - ▶ Took an extended wilderness trip (12%)



Photo courtesy of NOVA River Runners

² "Alaska Community Tourism Handbook: How to Develop Tourism in Your Community," prepared by State of Alaska, Division of Community and Economic Development, Department of Community and Economic Development, <<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/ruraltourism.pdf>> (05 January 2006), 17-22.

- Less than 10% of visitors
 - ▶ Stayed in a bed and breakfast, kayaked or canoed, camped in a tent, rode a bike, rented an RV, went hunting, or participated in winter activities³

Alaska Visitor Arrivals - Summer 2004

This study was prepared for the State of Alaska, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and is based on data from the Alaska Visitors Statistics Program (AVSP). The AVSP is a State program that collects data on general visitor characteristics, number of visitors, and visitor expenditures, activities, and opinions. Researchers conducted the most recent AVSP survey between 2000 and 2001. Data for 2004 on the reasons why visitors come to Alaska are based on the results of the 2000-2001 study.

In the summer of 2004 (May through September), 1,447,400 visitors came to Alaska. This is approximately 85% of the total visitor arrivals for 2004.

The AVSP separates visitors into five different groups: vacation and pleasure, visiting friends and relatives, business only, business and pleasure, and other. Study results show that during the summer, 75% of visitors can be lumped in the “vacation and pleasure” group. Traveling for “business only” accounts for 15% of summer visitors, while traveling to visit friends and relatives and for “business and pleasure” account for 6% and 5% of visitors respectively.

The Alaska Visitor Arrivals study shows only a small percent of 2004 visitors entered the State by personal vehicle (5%). However, of the 42% of visitors who arrived by domestic air, some could have rented cars to drive around the state. This study does not have an estimate for the number of visitors who rented cars for independent travel.⁴

Alaska Highway Travel 2003

GMA Research Corporation prepared the Alaska Highway Travel 2003 study for the Alaska Travel Industry Association. The study provides marketers and planners with insight into why visitors are motivated to travel to Alaska via the Alaska Highway and why they are motivated to travel to Alaska in general. The study also notes visitor demographics, what they are most interested in seeing and doing, and how long they tend to stay. Overall, researchers found the potential for Alaska Highway travel to be low and suggested a more “targeted” approach to marketing.

The highest proportion of past visitors and high potentials (those who plan to drive to Alaska some day) came from the western United States. The southern U.S. came in second, the mid-west third, and the east coast last.

The top mentioned reason visitors decided to take a driving vacation to Alaska was the freedom to do whatever they wanted and to travel at their own pace. The study found that visitors driving to Alaska are typically “RV” people looking to sightsee and stay in campgrounds. However they also found those with a high potential to drive to Alaska (but haven’t visited yet) are looking for more activity on their trip. Both groups agreed that scenery and wildlife were key attractions to taking a driving vacation to Alaska.

Potential visitors were most interested in:

- Seeing wildlife (71%)
- Dining on fresh Alaska Seafood (70%)

³ Maria Benner (Research and Marketing Coordinator for Alaska Travel Industry Association), “RE: visitor stats,” 20 April 2005, personal email (20 April 2005).

⁴ “Alaska Visitor Arrivals: Summer 2004,” prepared by Northern Economics Inc., 2004, <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/Summer_arrivals2004.pdf> (20 April 2006).

Audience Analysis

- Visiting Denali National Park for wildlife and scenery (64%)
- Riding the Alaska Railroad (61%)
- Meeting Native Alaskans and Canadians to learn about traditional lifestyles (59%)



USFWS-Alaska Image Library

Demographics of Alaska Highway travelers

	Visitors	Very High Potentials
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	44%	41%
Female	56%	59%
<u>Age</u>		
45-49	4%	23%
50-54	7%	15%
55-59	17%	14%
60-64	25%	24%
65 or older	36%	21%
<u>Ethnic Background</u>		
Caucasian	94%	76%
African American	0%	8%
Hispanic	0%	6%
Native American	1%	5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%	3%



Other

- Visitors are three times more likely to own an RV than Very High Potentials.
- A higher proportion of Visitors than Very High Potentials are not working or are retired. They have more time to spend on a driving vacation than younger, employed Very High Potentials with limited vacation time.
- Very High Potentials are more likely than Visitors to still have children under the age of 18 in the household.
- Visitors have a slightly higher income and possibly more discretionary income than Very High Potentials: \$67,300 average household income for Visitors vs. \$57,400 for Very High Potentials. ⁵

⁵ "Alaska Highway Travel 2003," (Bellevue, WA: Prepared by GMA Research Corporation, 2004).

Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2004-2009

The purpose of “Alaska’s Outdoor Legacy: Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan” is to serve as a guide for recreation-related land acquisition, facility development, policy, and decision making for the State of Alaska. The plan has relevant information about Alaska residents’ outdoor recreation uses and attitudes towards outdoor recreation resources in the state.

Researchers conducted telephone interviews and distributed surveys via mail and on-line resources to collect data on recreation-related preferences, issues, use trends, needs assessment, and potential facility development. Respondents had to be at least 18 years old and legal Alaska residents.

Ninety-eight percent of all telephone interview, mailout survey, and on-line survey respondents said parks and outdoor recreation were important or very important to their lifestyle. The top ten participation activities were:

Driving for pleasure or sight-seeing	83.83%
Walking for fitness	82.86%
Day hiking	81.28%
Bird watching or wildlife viewing	76.97%
Picnicking	73.84%
Bicycling or mountain biking	72.70%
Sport fishing	69.83%
Berry picking	64.41%
Playgrounds or open space activities at local parks	55.74%
Backpacking or tent camping in backcountry	55.70%

When asked about facilities, management issues, and resource protection, 76% of respondents supported more trailhead development along roads and highways, 74% supported more non-motorized trails, and 56% supported more off-road vehicle trails.

The SCORP shows outdoor recreation and access to trailheads along roads and highways are important to Alaska residents.⁶

Summary

Although the above reports do not give specific information about the demographics and expectations of Glenn Highway travelers, we can still make general inferences about Alaska visitors and Alaska residents.

⁶ “Alaska’s Outdoor Legacy: Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,” prepared by State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 2004, <<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/plans/scorp/2004scorpweb.pdf>> (05 January 2006), 22-44.

Audience Analysis

Visitors are most likely to come to Alaska from late spring through late summer (85% of Alaska visitors in 2004 came from May through September). The largest percentage (49%) of Alaska visitors in 2004 traveled to the state by cruise ship. Forty-two percent of visitors entered the state by domestic air, while only 5% entered by personal vehicle.

Many visitors are fulfilling a lifelong dream and come to see Alaska's scenic beauty, glaciers, and wildlife. In 2004 over half of Alaska visitors went on a sightseeing tour and/or visited a Native cultural attraction. Seventy-five percent of summer travelers visit Alaska for vacation and pleasure, while 15% visit for business only, 6% to visit family and friends, and 5% for mixed business and pleasure.

Since Alaska is so big, visitors must pick and choose where they want to go on their vacation. Visitors must see something worthwhile about traveling the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway to choose it over another destination, such as visiting Denali National Park. A positive thing about Alaska's size is if visitors enjoyed their trip the first time, they are more likely to visit again to explore a different area.

According to the 2003 Alaska Highway Travel study, the potential for visitors to travel to Alaska via the Alaska Highway is low. Most of those who traveled to the state via the Alaska Highway came from the west coast of the U.S. The top mentioned reason why these individuals decided to take a driving vacation to Alaska was the freedom to travel at their own pace and do whatever they want. Past Alaska Highway travelers ages 65 or older were the biggest age group (36%), while past travelers ages 60-64 were the second biggest group (25%). Ninety-four percent of past Alaska Highway travelers were Caucasian. In comparison, potential visitors ages 60-64 were the biggest group (24%), while potential visitors ages 45-49 were the second biggest group (23%). Only seventy-six percent of potential visitors were Caucasian. Eight percent of potential visitors were African American, 6% were Hispanic, 5% were Native American, and 3% were Asian or Pacific Islander.

"The Alaska Community Tourism Handbook" suggests that increasing numbers of Alaskans are traveling in-state. "Alaska's Outdoor Legacy: Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan" showed that 98% of respondents (all Alaska residents) said parks and outdoor recreation were important or very important to their lifestyle and that 76% of respondents would support development of more trailheads along roads and highways.

Conclusion

When planning for interpretive sites and services along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway it is important to consider what Byway travelers are like and what they will be most interested in learning and/or experiencing.

Using the above reports, we can infer that most visitors to Alaska who decide to travel the Glenn Highway:

- Will be interested in (and most likely expecting to see) beautiful landscapes and wildlife
- Will be over 60 years old



Audience Analysis

- Will be Caucasian
- Will arrive by cruise ship or domestic airlines, and will most likely rent a vehicle
- Are traveling for vacation and pleasure

The Glenn Highway is a major transportation corridor in Alaska and is one of only a few major highways that link popular in-state destinations. Commuters also use the Glenn Highway daily driving back and forth from work. Popular recreation and vacation spots along the Glenn Highway for Alaska residents include Lake Louise, Eureka, Matanuska Glacier, and Hatcher Pass. According to “Alaska’s Outdoor Legacy: Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,” outdoor recreation is important to Alaska residents, who ranked driving for pleasure or sightseeing as their top outdoor participation activity.

Alaska residents traveling in-state should not be overlooked when forming an impression of Glenn Highway travelers. Interpretive sites and interpretive media should be tailored to these repeat visitors.

Other reasons residents travel the Glenn Highway:

- Hunting and fishing expeditions
- Recreational opportunities
- To drive out of Alaska
- Visit friends and relatives



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

The following section presents a detailed description of informational and interpretive materials, services, and waysides proposed for the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway. This section helps create an overall vision for the Byway and will be a valuable tool when the committee is ready to develop interpretation along the Byway.

The proposed sites and services were chosen because they have potential for telling the Byway's stories, meeting the plan's interpretive goals and objectives, and incorporating community recommendations. The plan's recommendations are both non site-specific and site-specific.

Oral Interpretation - The plan does not recommend establishing a Byway-wide oral interpretive program, but does recognize the importance of talks, presentations, guided walks, and other forms of oral interpretation. These programs give visitors the opportunity to have a personal connection with someone knowledgeable about the area, who is excited to share stories about a place, feature, or event. This personal connection allows the visitor to ask questions about the resource being interpreted and engage the guide in discussion. Oftentimes these talks are impromptu; for example, a client on a Matanuska River rafting trip may ask his/her guide questions about surrounding rock formations, initiating a talk on Byway geology and glaciology.

Many businesses along the Byway offer forms of oral interpretation (see the "Existing Visitor Experience" section for a list). The Byway committee should encourage and support oral interpretative walks and talks by remaining up-to-date about the programs being offered along the Byway. By sharing the Byway's goals and objectives, interpretive themes, and visitor experience goals with those offering oral interpretive programs, the committee can help ensure their goals are being met and that travelers have a wonderful Byway experience.

Informational/Interpretive Materials and Services are designed to provide general, non site-specific information and interpretation about the Byway and its resources. In order to reach a large, diverse audience, the plan recommends using a variety of media types for non site-specific materials and services. A couple media types *will* direct travelers to specific sites. The difference between the materials and services listed in this section, opposed to those in the Site-Specific Interpretive Projects, is these do not recommend building any type of permanent structure at mentioned locations.

Site-Specific Interpretive Projects identify locations for developing and/or renovating interpretive sites along the Glenn Highway. These locations will give visitors the opportunity to have an interpretive experience, to enjoy the Byway's scenery, and to obtain Byway materials. The project descriptions range in size from simple trailhead improvements to large scale development of interpretive waysides. Site-specific interpretive projects have also been broken into suggested implementation phases. These phase recommendations are flexible and should be reevaluated when circumstances arise.

Informational/Interpretive Materials and Services

The following materials and services will provide general, non site-specific information and interpretation about the Byway and its resources.

1. Brochures

Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway brochures will provide general information and interpretation about the Byway's resources and can be used as a marketing tool to attract visitors from in and out of state. The brochure should include introductory information about the Byway, including its location within the state, where to start, a short paragraph describing what makes the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway unique, and appropriate contact information. The brochure should have enough foldouts to display needed text, a detailed map, and photographs of interpretive sites.

The Byway committee should also develop a family of brochures, each highlighting a different Byway attraction. Examples are: mining history, Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans, recreational activities in the corridor, geologic and glacial features, and Byway plants and animals. These brochures would have interpretive messages about the resource, i.e. geology, and highlight relevant locations along the Byway where travelers could either stop for more information or see examples first-hand.

A digital copy of Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway brochures should be available on the web.

2. Byway Newsletter

On the Road Again is the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway newsletter. Byway newsletters are an important tool to update members about current happenings and highlight Byway businesses. Newsletters encourage members to get more involved by letting them know what their committee has been up to and what they hope to accomplish in the coming months.

A digital copy of *On the Road Again* should be available on the web.

3. Placemats

Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway placemats are an effective marketing tool for the Byway. The placemats feature a hand-drawn map of the Byway by local artist Dimi Macheras. The map highlights local attractions, businesses, geological and geographical features, and historic roadhouses. The Byway committee distributes the placemats to local restaurants along the Byway.

Before each printing, the placemats should be checked for accuracy to ensure the most current information about the Byway is displayed.

4. Video/DVD

A Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway video/DVD would highlight the Byway's intrinsic qualities and the interpretive themes outlined in this plan. The Byway's stories will help differentiate this video/DVD from the many promotional videos about Alaska.

The video could be shown at Alaska Public Lands Information Centers, Eagle River Nature Center, Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitor Bureau, in local schools, on cable and public television, at libraries, and on ferries. In addition, it could be sold in stores located along the Byway and at Alaska Natural History Association outlets.

This video/DVD would have both open and closed captions for visitors with hearing impairments, and audio descriptions for visitors with visual impairments.

5. Radio Advertisements

The Byway committee should continue to sponsor radio advertisements to encourage listeners to take advantage of Byway resources year-round. Radio advertisements are a great way to let listeners know about upcoming Byway events and interpretive presentations, where to purchase Byway materials, and where to go for more information. The messages should be regularly updated to reflect the most accurate Byway information.

6. Geocache - Earthcache

Earthcaching is a form of geocaching – a game for GPS (global positioning system) users. In geocaching, players use GPS units to find hidden caches all over the world. GPS locations of caches are posted on the Internet and the caches themselves hold a variety of rewards.

The difference between geocaching and earthcaching is the reward; instead of looking for a cache or box, earthcache players find the latitude and longitude of geographic and geologic features. An earthcache is a *virtual* geocache. Players learn about unique aspects of the earth by reading cache notes on the website. Cache notes are tailored to a general audience and should not contain scientific jargon, unless the terms are defined.

Earthcaching is becoming increasingly popular with people of all ages and abilities. Earthcaching is not only an activity for individuals, but also for school groups, families, and others. Creating earthcaches along the Glenn Highway will help attract a more diverse audience.

For more information about earthcaches, visit <http://www.earthcache.org/>.

The National Scenic Byways website (<http://www.byways.org/>) and the Alaska Scenic Byways website (<http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/scenic/index.shtml>) should have links directing visitors to earthcaches along the Glenn Highway and other related earthcache links.

7. Podcasting

A podcast is a digital recording made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal computer, iPod, MP3 player, or other personal audio device.

Podcasts would introduce travelers to the Byway's intrinsic qualities. Listening to Byway stories would help instill a sense of place; it would slow down the pace of travel and allow visitors to more fully appreciate and enjoy their surroundings. Possible podcast topics include: conservation messages, Leave No Trace (LNT) principles, geology and glaciology, natural history, history, Athabascan stories, recreational opportunities, weather and road condition updates, safety messages, and descriptions of local businesses. One advantage to podcasting, in comparison with CDs, is that podcasts can be easily changed and uploaded to the Internet for broadcasting up-to-date information about the Byway. In addition, new iPods and MP3 players have still picture and video capabilities, which would



allow photographs and even video clips to accompany Glenn Highway podcasts.

The National Scenic Byways website (<http://www.byways.org/>) and the Alaska Scenic Byways website (<http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/scenic/index.shtml>) should have links directing visitors to Glenn Highway podcasts and other related podcast links.

To learn more about podcasting and listen to examples, visit the following websites:

<http://wildebeat.net/> - an audio journal about exploring the earth's wild places

<http://www.naturepodcasts.com/> - directory of nature podcasts

<http://www.ipodder.org> - podcasts by subject

8. Byway Website

A website dedicated solely to the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway would give interested visitors more detailed information than that given on the National Scenic Byway and Alaska Scenic Byway websites. Byway updates, newsletters, brochures, and contact information should be posted on the site, along with detailed information about the Byway's history and resources. The website should also serve as a host for podcast and earthcache links.

Visit the following scenic byway websites for examples:

<http://www.goldbeltbyway.com/index.html> - Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway, CO

<http://www.ctrivertravel.net/> - Connecticut River Scenic Byway, VT & NH

<http://www.nationalroadpa.org/> - The Historic National Road, PA

<http://www.spturnpike.org/> - Staunton Parkersburg Scenic Turnpike Byway, WV



Implementation Priorities for Site-Specific Interpretive Projects

Conclusions from the Audience Analysis, land ownership, political concerns, future DOT road improvements, and sites' potential to attract travelers were considered when placing recommended projects into phases.

This is not a fixed schedule, but should be used as a guideline for implementation. Funding and results from the evaluation of interpretive sites and materials may provoke the Byway committee to make changes to the implementation priorities.

Proposed projects are grouped into phases, with phase one being the highest priority. The projects within the phases may be implemented in any order and do not have to be implemented one at a time. The Byway committee may choose to tackle two or more projects at a time.

Phase 1

Phase one includes locations that receive or have the potential to attract a large number of travelers. These sites include heavily used parks and scenic waysides, and undeveloped sites being used as rest areas.

Phase one also includes locations where interpretation would benefit Byway travelers and the on-site business. Interpretative panels, visitor amenities, and the option to purchase business and Byway materials would enhance travelers' experiences. Interpretation and improvements at these sites will improve business and help instill a sense of ownership in the Byway experience. The property owner/manager at these locations would maintain the interpretation.

Site Name	Site Number
Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area	5
Gold Rush Centennial Pull-off	6
Chickaloon Native Village pullout	7
Alpine Historical Park – park entrance and rest area/ public restroom signs	8
King Mountain Lodge	12
Hicks Creek Roadhouse (dependent whether or not Hicks Creek Roadhouse will be relocating and opening for business – if they do, we should give them the same opportunity as the other lodges to display interpretive panels)	N/A
Caribou Creek pull-off	17
Grand View Café and RV Park	18
Sheep Mountain Lodge	19
Eureka Lodge	26
DOT material site/gravel pit	28

Phase 2

Phase two includes projects associated with trailhead improvements. These projects will appeal to both Alaska residents and visitors. Giving trailheads a uniform appearance, cleaning up garbage, and landscaping will improve the aesthetic qualities of the Byway. Trailhead maps outlining trail difficulty, length, and highlights will help travelers decide whether or not to take a short walk or embark on a three-day trip.

Site Name	Site Number
Arctic Valley Road Viewing Platform	1
Thunderbird Falls Trailhead	2
Eklutna Lake	3
Knik River Access Interpretive Project	4
Kings River Trailhead	10
Purinton Creek Trailhead	14
Camp Creek Trailhead	20
Trooper Bruce A. Heck Memorial	22
Squaw Creek/Belanger Pass Trailhead	23
Belanger Pass Trailhead	24
Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System, MP 126.4	25
Old Man Creek Trailhead	27

Phase 3

Projects in Phase three will require interdepartmental and interagency coordination, funding, and cooperation. For example, sites 15 and 16 are both dependent on the 92-97 DOT road realignment. DOT will construct the waysides with excess material from the road realignment. The Byway committee should stay informed of the project timeline to ensure the Byway’s interpretive needs are met. If construction begins soon, these projects would become a higher priority.

Site Name	Site Number
Alpine Historical Park – O’Neill House renovation and kiosk	8
Sutton Community Pullout	9
King Mountain State Recreation Site	11
Long Lake State Recreation Site	13
Matanuska River Scenic Overlook, MP 95 (92-97 realignment)	15
Pinochle Creek Spillway Overlook (92-97 realignment)	16
Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System, MP 118.5	21

Site-Specific Interpretive Projects

The plan recommends utilizing existing pull-offs, scenic waysides, parks, and trailheads for interpretive improvements. One major concern among Byway residents and those who commented during public open houses is that the Byway has too many sites the State does not maintain. Garbage along the roadside and at pull-offs is a major concern. Many business owners have taken the initiative to pick up trash and maintain waysides near their business and even allow travelers to use their dumpsters, trash cans, and restrooms.

The Byway committee recognizes the need for more public toilets and trash facilities along the Byway. The plan recommends adding toilets at several locations. The committee should continue to establish partnerships with local businesses to help maintain nearby interpretive sites.

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:****#1 – Arctic Valley Road Viewing Platform**

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Site Location and Description:

Exit MP 6.1 Arctic Valley Road.

Arctic Valley Road is about seven miles long and ends at Alpenglow at Arctic Valley Ski Area. The road is gravel, winding, and steep in places. The recommended interpretive site is located at mile 4.2 of Arctic Valley Road. The site is currently a popular place to take photographs and enjoy the scenic views. There is ample parking space but no safe pedestrian area at this time. Arctic Valley Road and the surrounding land (up to Alpenglow Ski Area) are military property.

Interpretive Significance:

This viewpoint overlooks Anchorage, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Fort Richardson Army Base, and the Glenn Highway. The views are beautiful, with the Alaska Range and Cook Inlet serving as the backdrop; Denali (Mt. McKinley) is visible on clear days.

Interpretive panels at this location could focus on military history and influence in the area. Numerous other natural history topics would be appropriate here as well, including glacial morphology. Mt. Susitna and the Elmendorf moraine are visible from this location. Mt. Susitna, aka “Sleeping Lady,” owes its shape to the Matanuska and Knik glacial advance and recession, while the Elmendorf moraine is the terminal moraine of their advance. A panoramic-shaped panel with a photograph of the view on a clear day could point out these different landmarks. That way if travelers came on a cloudy day, they would still be able to enjoy the view.

Site Goals:

- Offer travelers a safe place to take photographs and have an interpretive experience
- Offer travelers a glimpse into military history and influence in the Anchorage area

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Project Description:

Build an elevated viewing platform to display four interpretive panels and two viewing scopes (one standard scope and one ADA scope)

The elevated viewing platform will provide a safe area for travelers to take photographs and read interpretive panels. The viewing platform will also alleviate the potential problem with snow removal at the site. Managers will not have to worry about the interpretive panels being hit by the plow and plow operators will not have to take extra care to plow around the panels.

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Type C - standard interpretive panels mounted to the railing

Land Owner/Manager:

The road is owned and maintained by Fort Richardson Army Base

Potential Partnerships:

U.S. Army – Fort Richardson Army Base (necessary partnership)

Anchorage Ski Club/Alpenglow at Arctic Valley Ski Area

Chugach State Park

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#2 – Thunderbird Falls Trailhead

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

Eklutna Exit MP 26.5, south side of highway

Thunderbird Falls trailhead is one mile from the Eklutna exit. There is a bulletin board located at the trailhead and several viewing areas along the trail. The trail parallels Eklutna Canyon and is easy to moderate in difficulty. A view of Thunderbird Falls marks the terminus of the trail, only one mile (1.6 km) from the parking lot.

An information kiosk/bulletin board displays Chugach State Park rules and regulations, a Chugach State Park map, and miscellaneous information about the park and safety.

Eklutna, Inc. owns lands adjacent to Thunderbird Falls trailhead. Care should be taken to respect private lands.

Interpretive Significance:

The Thunderbird Falls trail is a relatively easy and accessible trail for a variety of user groups. A range of natural history topics on plants, birds, and land mammals would be appropriate for trailside interpretation. The main focus for this site is orientation to the trail and education about Chugach State Park and safety.

Site Goals:

- Display trail map listing trail's level of difficulty, viewpoints, and potential trail dangers
 - Display Chugach State Park rules and regulations and other relevant information
 - Educate visitors about bear safety, proper trail etiquette, private property boundaries, etc.
-

Project Description:

Replace existing bulletin board with new two-panel kiosk to display trail map and park information/interpretation

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two-panel kiosk

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska- owner

Alaska State Parks - manager

Eklutna Native Corporation - owns adjacent property

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks

Municipality of Anchorage

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#3 – Eklutna Lake

Interpretive Theme:

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Site Location and Description:

Exit MP 26.5, south side of highway

Eklutna Lake, located nine miles from the highway in Chugach State Park, is a popular area for year-round recreation. Summer activities include biking, hiking, kayaking, picnicking, and riding ATVs; winter activities include cross-country skiing, dog mushing, and snowmobiling. Eklutna Lake has restrooms, potable water, picnic tables and 50 campsites (plus 15 overflow camping sites). There are several interpretive panels and a viewing scope near the boat launch area.

Interpretive Significance:

The Municipality of Anchorage's drinking water comes from Eklutna Lake, which makes this resource especially important to the community. Eklutna Lake also supplies water to the Eklutna Hydroelectric Power Plant. The plant has operated since the 1950s, and supplies power to the Municipality of Anchorage and Mat-Su Borough.

Existing interpretive panels focus on Dall's sheep, bears, eagles, fishing, Dena'ina Athabascans, the Eklutna Water Project, and boating safety. Historically this area was a popular hunting area for Dena'ina Athabascans from Eklutna Village, and today is a popular recreation area for Alaska residents and visitors.

The existing panels are outdated and should be replaced (the boating safety panel is the one exception – it was installed in summer 2005).

Site Goals:

- Enhance viewing opportunities
 - Improve ADA accessibility
 - Update interpretive panels to enhance interpretive experience
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Project Description:

- Selectively thin vegetation
 - Update and replace existing interpretive panels
 - Refurbish kiosks
 - Improve ADA accessibility – parking areas, bathroom access, and boat launch
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

1/8” thick interpretive panels for kiosks

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska - owner

Alaska State Parks - manager

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

Interpretive Theme:

#4 – Knik River Access Interpretive Project

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 30.6, Knik River Access Exit, west side of highway

This exit provides access to Knik River, Reflections Lake, and the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. The proposed project area incorporates the existing parking area and trail leading to Reflections Lake.

Interpretive Significance:

Knik River Access is one of three main access points for the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. The Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge encompasses 45 square miles of wetlands, forest, lakes, and tidal sloughs. Ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, moose, muskrats, salmon, and many other birds, mammals, and fish depend on the refuge for habitat.

The refuge is also an important and active recreation area. Hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, photography, snowmobiling, and dog sledding are a few popular activities enjoyed on the refuge.

A short hike from the parking area leads visitors to Reflections Lake. The lake is a wonderful resource right off the Byway for picnics, boating, hiking, and enjoying the beautiful views.

Site Goals:

- Enhance Reflections Lake trailhead for benefit of visiting public
 - Increase awareness about the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and its many resources
 - Encourage community involvement and stewardship in Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge
 - Provide an established and comfortable venue for special events
-

Project Description:

- Improve parking to accommodate tour buses
 - Add four-panel kiosk to display map of Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and local trails, and other relevant interpretive topics determined by Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
 - Add restrooms
 - Build sheltered picnic area near Reflections Lake
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Potential Partnerships:

Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats

Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Photos courtesy of Kris Abshire - Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:	Interpretive Theme:
-----------------------	---------------------

#5 – Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area	<i>Travelers can safely enjoy the many recreational opportunities the Byway offers.</i> <i>The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.</i>
--	---

Site Location and Description:

MP 36.4, north side of highway

Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area is managed by Lifetime Adventures. Kepler-Bradley has six campsites (for tents only), canoe rentals, and a day use area. This is a popular spot for fishing, hiking, and biking.

Interpretive Significance:

Glaciers are responsible for shaping this landscape – the lakes are a series of filled crevasses bordered by moraine ridges. The lakes are stocked with grayling and rainbow trout and offer excellent sport fishing opportunities.

Existing interpretive panel topics include loons, aquatic insects, glacial silt, and grouse.

Site Goal:

Improve visitors’ interpretive experience and the aesthetic qualities of the Byway by reprinting and replacing vandalized interpretive panels

Project Description:

Reprint and replace interpretive panels to enhance visitors’ experience

Recommended Interpretive Media:

1/8” thick interpretive panels for four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska - owner

Lifetime Adventures - manager

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks

Lifetime Adventures

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

Interpretive Theme:

#6 – Gold Rush Centennial Pull-off

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Site Location and Description:

MP 50.0, south side of highway

This site sits on a bluff overlooking the Matanuska River, Knik Glacier, and Palmer. A Gold Rush interpretive panel is displayed here. Although the views from this site are spectacular, it is subject to wind blown silt deposition and vandalism.

Interpretive Significance:

The main attraction at this wayside is the view; the Matanuska River runs directly below, Knik Glacier can be seen to the southeast, and Matanuska Valley farms lie to the west. Travelers can also see the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains from here. This is a heavily visited site because of the view.

Possible interpretive topics include mining history in the Talkeetna Mountains, Matanuska Valley Farms (Matanuska Colony), loess deposition, and others.

Site Goals:

- Improve the design/layout of pull-off to reduce vandalism and silt deposition
- Enhance interpretive experience

Project Description:

- Develop two viewpoints on the east and west side of the existing site
- Build a walkway to connect viewpoints
- Add four additional interpretive panels
- Remove chain link fence

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Type C - standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks, Office of History and Archaeology

Palmer Historical Society

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**#7 – Chickaloon Native Village pullout**

(site development dependent on partnership with Chickaloon Native Village)

Interpretive Theme:

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Site Location and Description:

MP 55.5, south side of highway

The Ya Ne Dah Ah School, Chickaloon Native Village offices, Katie's Wall (rock garden), and a private home exist at this location. There is a double-entrance turnout with plenty of room to maneuver large vehicles.

Interpretive Significance:

This is an appropriate location to introduce Ahtna Athabaskan history and culture. Interpretive topics could include Ahtna history and culture, historic trade routes, village government, and the Ya Ne Dah Ah School. An interpretive panel could even display a Ya Ne Dah Ah story with original art from the village's published storybooks.

The Ya Ne Dah Ah School has received national recognition as Alaska's only tribally owned and operated full-time primary school. The school combines traditional Native teachings with modern subjects to give its students a well-rounded education. There is also the possibility of organizing oral interpretive presentations at this site. Travelers could watch performances by the school's dance group or hear stories about Ahtna people and history.

Site Goals:

- Inform travelers about Ahtna history, culture, stories, and influence in the area
 - Provide travelers with a place to rest and obtain interpretive and informational materials about the Chickaloon Native Village, Ya Ne Dah Ah School, and Byway
-

Project Description:

Build rest area with interpretive kiosk, picnic tables, and toilets

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

Chickaloon Village through Chickaloon Village Traditional Council

Potential Partnerships:

Chickaloon Native Village (necessary partnership)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#8 - Alpine Historical Park

Interpretive Theme:

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Site Location and Description:

MP 61.6, north side of the highway

The Alpine Historical Park is an open air historical collection that features Matanuska Valley coal mining, Athabaskan culture, and Glenn Highway construction. Coal mining equipment, historic buildings, and an Athabaskan winter lodge accent the park (the winter lodge has an authentic interior including fire pit and locally recorded stories and songs).

Visitors to the Park will enjoy the open spaces, playground equipment, picnic tables, and well maintained flower and vegetable gardens. The Park is available for private rental, company picnics, weddings, and family gatherings. There is also a public restroom here.

Interpretive Significance:

The Alpine Historical Park offers a unique learning experience. Visitors can take a self-guided walking tour through the Park's buildings and exhibits to learn about the Matanuska Valley coal mining era, Athabaskan culture, Glenn Highway construction, local geological formations, and flora and fauna. Several of the buildings have extensive photo displays of the Park's historical focus, including the "Old Timers Hall of Fame" collection. Equipment and foundations from the Sutton Coal Washing Plant are also displayed at the Park.

Each building houses a significant Park exhibit; for example, visitors can learn the personal history and employment responsibilities of coal miners in the Mary Giest house or listen to Native recorded stories and songs via an audio presentation in the Athabaskan winter lodge. The Sutton Post Office building has an original set of post office boxes, a cash register, and photo display. The Bunk House will captivate visitors with its photo display of Glenn Highway construction.

Site Goals:

- Increase visitation and enhance park entrance signs
 - Assist with renovation of the O'Neill house
 - Enhance traveler's experience while visiting Alpine Historical Park
 - Increase awareness about the public restroom at the park
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Project Description:

- Improve existing park entrance signs
 - Two signs: one on the corner of Chickaloon Way and Glenn Highway, and the other in front of the O’Neill house or across the street
- Add signage for rest area/public restrooms
- Assist in renovating O’Neill house to accommodate Byway and Park visitors – essentially turn the O’Neill house into a visitor center
 - Improve ADA accessibility to O’Neill house
 - Add/improve parking area in the southeast corner of the park to accommodate increased parking needs for visitor center (existing parking lot would become overflow parking)
 - Provide a rack for brochures
- Display AHP map and Byway interpretive panel

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Two park entrance signs
- Two or four - panel kiosk to display AHP map and Byway interpretive panel(s)

Land Owner/Manager:

Mat-Su Borough - land owner

Alpine Historical Society - land and facilities manager

Potential Partnerships:

Alpine Historical Society (necessary partnership)

Mat-Su Borough (necessary partnership)

Chickaloon Native Village

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1 – Park entrance and rest area/public restroom signs

Phase 3 – O’Neill house renovation and kiosk



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#9 - Sutton Community Pullout

Interpretive Theme:

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Archaeological and paleontological discoveries enlighten researchers and laymen about the Byway's first inhabitants.

Site Location and Description:

MP 62.8, south side of highway

This large pullout near the Matanuska River has ample space for parking. A hand-painted sign shows local attractions and amenities, trails, fishing streams and lakes, and names of surrounding mountains.

Interpretive Significance:

The existing sign welcomes travelers to the Sutton Community. Sutton has many opportunities to explore the intrinsic qualities of the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway; the community map should highlight these opportunities.

Sutton began as a coal mining town along the Matanuska branch of the Alaska Railroad. Today Sutton has wonderful resources for learning more about mining history in the Matanuska Valley.

This pullout is an excellent spot for interpretation on the Matanuska River, the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains, and paleontology. There is a world-class fossil forest in the Sutton area. This site would be an excellent place for interpretation on the fossil forest.

Site Goals:

- Update/refurbish existing sign and graphics
- Enhance scenic viewing opportunities by selectively thinning trees
- Build an interpretive shelter to display panels and protect visitors from persistent winds
- Enhance interpretive experience



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Project Description:

This project is broken into three options. The Byway committee and land owner should agree on the preferred option. The project can also be implemented in phases if more than one option is chosen.

Option 1: Existing sign location

- Refurbish existing sign by repainting map, text, and other graphics
- Add Castle Mountain to the Talkeetna Mountain painting
- Selectively thin trees to enhance viewshed

Option 2: Existing sign location

- Build low profile interpretive display – 180 degree view of mountains
- Build sitting area and small covered facility for wind/rain protection
- Incorporate local artwork, text, and map from existing sign into a new panel
- Selectively thin trees to enhance viewshed

Option 3: Site by River (southeast corner of pullout)

- Build interpretive shelter with spotting scope
 - Build raised viewing area with granite retaining wall
 - Build low profile interpretive display – 180 degree view of mountains
 - Incorporate local artwork, text, and map from existing sign into a new panel
 - Add more standard interpretive panels
 - Selectively thin trees to enhance viewshed
-



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Option 1:

- Hand painted “Welcome to the Community” sign similar to existing sign

Option 2:

- Two, low profile panoramic panels for Chugach and Talkeetna Mountain identification
- One vertically oriented interpretive panel incorporating local artwork, text, and map

Option 3:

- Two, low profile panoramic panels for Chugach and Talkeetna Mountain identification
- One vertically oriented interpretive panel incorporating local artwork, text, and map
- Two or three standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

Private Property

Potential Partnerships:

Property Owners

Alpine Historical Society

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#10 – Kings River Trailhead

Interpretive Theme:

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 66.3, north side of highway

This informal trailhead is located east of Kings River Bridge. The Kings River trail is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System.

Interpretive Significance:

Kings River is the beginning of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System, historically a Native trail system. The Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset to the Glenn Highway corridor. This multi-use trailhead is popular with ATV users, hikers, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Kings River is a popular waterway for whitewater rafting and kayaking.

This project will improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead and teach users how to be prepared for the terrain and use proper trail etiquette.

Site Goals:

- Develop trailhead marker to depict appropriate camping/day-use area
 - Add trail map to discourage users from trespassing on private lands
-

Project Description:

- Work with Matanuska-Susitna Borough on site enhancements
 - Add trailhead marker and information kiosk with trail and land status map, and safety panel for multiple use trail
 - Develop site/trail map that highlights public and private lands to show visitors where it is and is not appropriate to camp and recreate
 - Add restrooms
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two or four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Private Lands

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

Matanuska/Susitna Borough

Neighboring landowners

Local clubs (ATV, Snowmobiling, hiking, etc.)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#11 – King Mountain State Recreation Site

Interpretive Theme:

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Site Location and Description:

MP 76.1, south side of highway

King Mountain State Recreation Site is a camping and day use area on the banks of the Matanuska River. A plan to renovate this site is included in the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Enhancement Project.

Interpretive Significance:

The Matanuska River and geology of King Mountain are appropriate interpretive topics for this site. Other topics could include Leave No Trace principles, Native history/influence in the area, and the Alaska Railroad.

A map of the site, showing campsites, day use areas, restrooms, etc. would be appropriate in an introductory kiosk.

Site Goals:

Update existing site to attract more visitors and improve facilities along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway

Project Description:

- Refurbish existing facilities, including toilets, wells, host site, and camping and day use area
 - Develop interpretive panels relevant to the area
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Type C - standard interpretive panels
 - Two or four-panel kiosk
-

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska - owner

Lifetime Adventures - manager

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

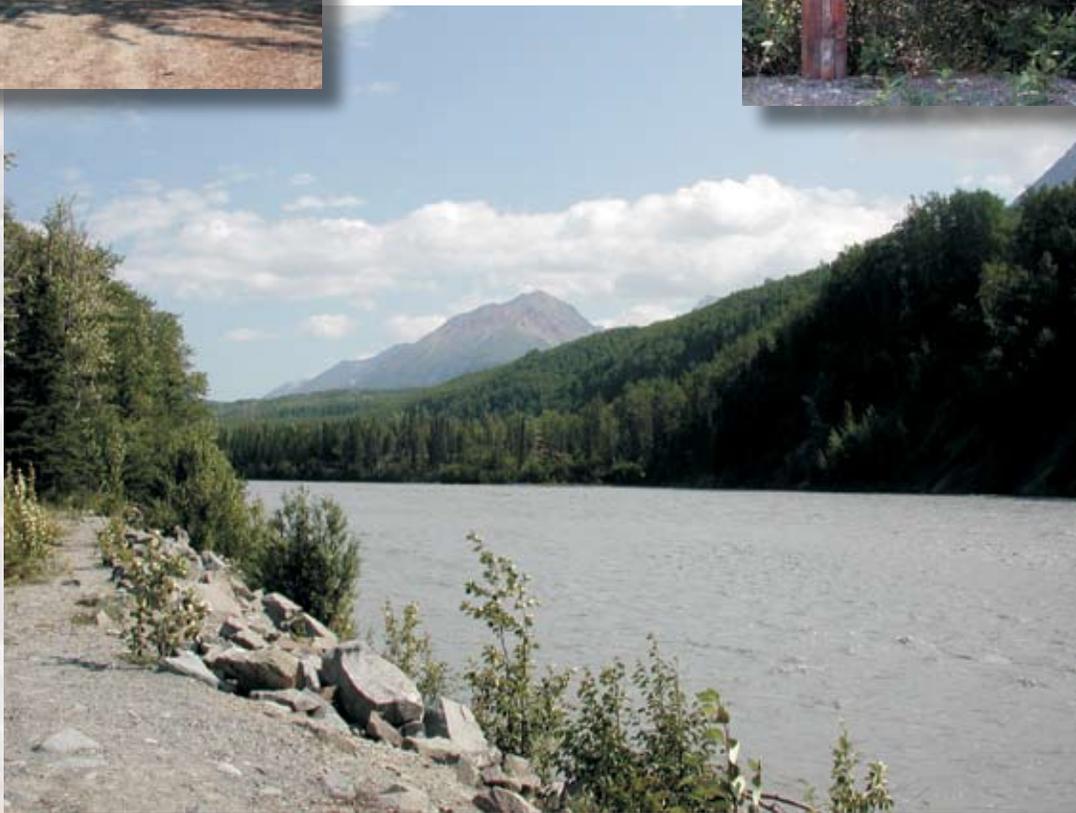
Alaska State Parks

Lifetime Adventures

King Mountain Lodge

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#12 - King Mountain Lodge

(site development dependent on partnership with King Mountain Lodge)

Interpretive Theme:

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Site Location and Description:

MP 76.2, south side of highway

King Mountain Lodge is one of four historic roadhouses along the Byway.

Interpretive Significance:

King Mountain Lodge has served Glenn Highway travelers for over fifty years. An interpretive panel on the history of the lodge and its relationship with the Glenn Highway would be appropriate at this location.

King Mountain is to the south of the lodge; its conical shape makes it a definable feature along the Byway. An interpretive panel on King Mountain geology would be appropriate at this location.

Site Goals:

- Enhance business for King Mountain Lodge
- Enhance visitors' experience while visiting the lodge
- Inform travelers about the area's historic significance and local geology

Project Description:

Develop two standard interpretive panels; work with lodge owners to determine the most appropriate location for panels

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two Type C - standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

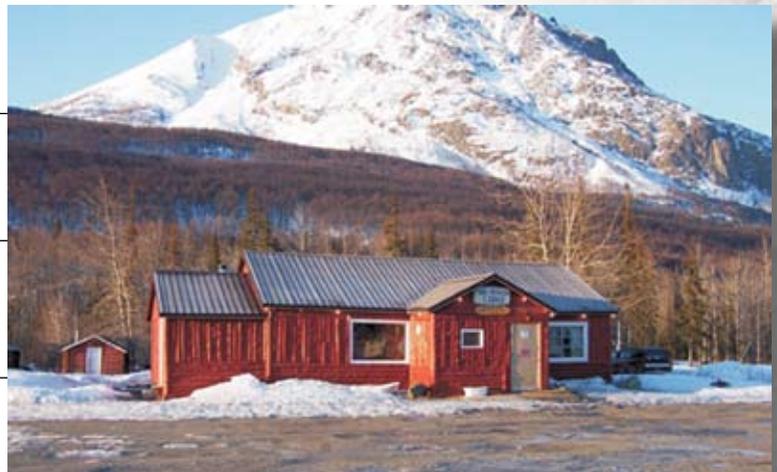
Judith Nix

Potential Partnerships:

King Mountain Lodge (necessary partnership)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#13 – Long Lake State Recreation Site

Interpretive Theme:

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Archaeological and paleontological discoveries enlighten researchers and laymen about the Byway's first inhabitants.

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 85.4, north side of highway

Long Lake is a State Recreation Site. Due to recent budget cuts, however, Alaska State Parks does not currently manage the site. Access to Long Lake is not restricted, but no garbage or toilet facilities are available.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities plans to realign the Glenn Highway to the south side of Long Lake. This proposed interpretive project will be in conjunction with the DOT&PF road realignment.

Interpretive Significance:

Long Lake is a valuable site along the Glenn Highway and has the potential to offer numerous interpretive opportunities. An interpretive loop trail could feature panels on a variety of topics, including grouse, moose, raptors, Ahtna and Dena'ina trade routes, and Athabascan culture.

Archaeological excavations have discovered evidence of a prehistoric presence at Long Lake. Care should be taken to not disclose exact locations of archaeological sites.

Anthracite Ridge rises above Long Lake to the north; an interpretive panel on Anthracite Ridge geology and mining history would be appropriate here.

Long Lake is a popular location for summer and winter recreation. Fishing, boating, hiking, berry picking, rock and ice climbing, and snowmobiling are a few activities popular in and around Long Lake.

Site Goals:

- Renovate/clean up existing site
 - Establish management presence at Long Lake
 - Create a site that encourages extended visits, offers recreational and interpretive opportunities, and tells Byway stories
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Project Description:

- Build an extended interpretive loop trail around the lake
- Build and manage public use cabins
- Build day use/picnic area with restrooms, orientation kiosk, and boat access
- Build camping facility
- Add interpretive kiosk and standard interpretive panels

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Reduced size panels for interpretive loop
- Four-panel orientation kiosk
- Type C - standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Local property owners

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#14 - Purinton Creek Trailhead

Interpretive Theme:

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 90.8, north side of highway

This marked trailhead is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. The Purinton Creek trail is a multi-use trail and connects with the Boulder Creek trail, another trail in the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System.

Interpretive Significance:

The Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset of the Glenn Highway corridor. Trails within the system offer recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. This project will improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead, and teach users how to be prepared for the terrain and use proper trail etiquette.

Site Goal:

Define difficulties and rewards of the Purinton Creek Trail

Project Description:

- Improve trailhead marker – include trails' difficulty, map, and features
 - Build kiosk to display map and interpretive panel on safety and/or trail etiquette
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Potential Partnerships:

Local snowmobile/ATV groups

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#15 – Matanuska River Scenic Overlook

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans have lived and traveled in this corridor for thousands of years and continue to have a strong presence today.

Site Location:

MP 95, south side of highway

DOT&PF will develop this pullout as part of the 92-97 road realignment.

Interpretive Significance:

The Matanuska River meanders below this location and is just one of the eye-catching physical features here. The Chugach Mountains and the river bank's unique geologic structure present an opportunity to interpret hanging glaciers, glacial morphology, and geology.

Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascans used the frozen river as a transportation route in winter. During summer months overland trails were the principal transportation routes because the river was too strong to travel on safely.

Site Goals:

- Provide a safe place for travelers to enjoy the scenic landscape
 - Provide an opportunity for travelers to have an interpretive experience
-

Project Description:

- DOT&PF will build the pullout with excess fill material from the 92-97 realignment
 - Pullout will have a separated pedestrian area
 - Add standard interpretive panels
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Type C - standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3 – The Byway committee should stay informed about the 92-97 road realignment. This interpretive project should become a top priority when the realignment begins.



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#16 –Pinochle Creek Spillway Overlook

Interpretive Theme:

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Site Location and Description:

MP 97, north side of highway

DOT&PF will develop this pullout as part of the 92-97 road realignment.

Interpretive Significance:

The pull-off will be located above the Pinochle Creek spillway, a glacial meltwater channel formed when the Matanuska Glacier advanced and blocked the Matanuska Valley prior to 8,000 B.P. The glacier advanced three to four miles up Caribou Creek, diverting meltwater and the water from Caribou Creek westward across the present valleys of Dan and Pinochle creeks to Hicks Creek. Diverted water cut the canyon at Pinochle Creek sometime during this glacial advance.

Site Goal:

Provide travelers with a safe overlook and rest area, and an interpretive opportunity

Project Description:

- DOT&PF will build the pullout with excess fill material during the 92-97 realignment
 - Pullout will be a wide spot in the road with a separated pedestrian area
 - Add standard interpretive panels
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two Type C - standard interpretive panels

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3 - The Byway committee should stay informed about the 92-97 road realignment. This interpretive project should become a top priority when the realignment begins.



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#17 – Caribou Creek pull-off

Interpretive Theme:

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Site Location and Description:

MP 107.5, south side of highway

This site is located above Caribou Creek and is an Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) pull-off. The pull-off is paved and has a jersey-barrier wall on the west side.

Interpretive Significance:

This site has a unique view of Matanuska Glacier creeping down from the Chugach Mountains. Interpretive topics relevant to Matanuska Glacier would be appropriate here.

Other possible topics:

- Geology/Lion's Head
- Mining history at Caribou Creek
- Glenn/Castner Expeditions

Caribou Creek trailhead is located at the parking area to the east side of the bridge. The Caribou Creek trail is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System.

A recreational gold panning area across the creek offers travelers an opportunity to try their hand at mining.

Site Goals:

- Improve viewing opportunities at Caribou Creek
 - Meet travelers basic needs by building a public restroom
 - Create opportunities for travelers to have an interpretive experience
-

Project Description:

- Build viewing platform and access trail on southwest corner of site overlooking Matanuska Glacier and Caribou Creek
 - Add standard interpretive panels at viewing platform
 - Add restrooms
 - Affix steel sculptures to retaining wall on opposite side of Caribou Creek
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Type C - standard interpretive panels
 - Steel sculptures
-

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

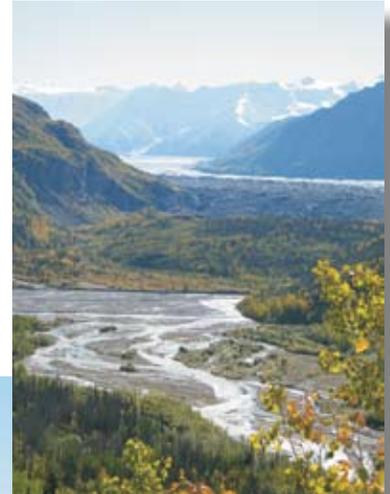
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Grand View Café and RV Park

Glacier View Elementary

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#18 - Grand View Café and RV Park

(site development dependent on partnership with Grand View Café and RV Park)

Interpretive Theme:

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Site Location and Description:

MP 109.7, south side of highway

Grand View Café and RV Park has tent sites, laundry, showers, scenic views, and nineteen RV sites.

Interpretive Significance:

Lion's Head serves as a dramatic backdrop for Grand View Café and RV Park. The Lion's Head interpretive panel located at MP 113 would be more appropriately located at this site.

An interpretive loop trail would facilitate views of Matanuska Glacier and would enhance visitors' experience at the park. Topics for the interpretive loop trail could include glacial morphology, local plants and wildlife, and geology.

Site Goals:

- Consolidate new and existing interpretive panels
- Enhance business for Grand View Café and RV Park
- Enhance visitors' experience while visiting the café and RV park

Project Description:

- Add interpretive kiosk at trailhead
- Add loop trail with trailside interpretation
- Move Lion's Head panel from MP 113 to here – incorporate Native place name into reprinted panel

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Interpretive loop trail with small, low profile interpretive panels
- Two or four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

Dwight Dietrich – owner of Grand View Lodge and Café

Glenn Highway Hospitality, LLC. – owner and operator of campground

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

Grand View Café and RV Park (necessary partnership)

- Dwight Dietrich – owner of Grand View Lodge and Café
- Glenn Highway Hospitality, LLC. – owner and operator of campground

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

Interpretive Theme:

#19 - Sheep Mountain Lodge

(site development dependent on partnership with Sheep Mountain Lodge)

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Site Location and Description:

MP 113.5, north side of highway

Sheep Mountain Lodge is one of four historic roadhouses along the Byway. Sheep Mountain Lodge has 10 private cabins for rent year-round, endless recreation and leisure opportunities, and spectacular views.

Interpretive Significance:

Sheep Mountain Lodge has been serving Glenn Highway travelers for over fifty years. Interpretation on the history of the lodge and construction of the Glenn Highway would give visitors a sense of place.

Numerous other qualities about this site make it a great place for visitors to have an interpretive experience. Possible topics include the geology of Sheep Mountain and Lion's Head, and Dall's sheep.

Site Goals:

- Consolidate new and existing interpretive panels
- Enhance business for Sheep Mountain Lodge
- Enhance visitors' experience while staying at the lodge or eating at the restaurant
- Meet ADA requirements by moving the kiosk at MP 113 to here

Project Description:

- Enhance driveways
- Move interpretation and kiosk from MP 113 to here (exception: recommended that Lion's Head panel be moved to MP 109.7, Grand View Café and RV Park)
- Add two additional interpretive panels
- Add ADA telescope
- Improve driveway ingress and egress

Note: The existing telescope at Sheep Mountain Lodge is a revenue generating source for the lodge and should remain this way.

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Four-panel kiosk
 - One Type C - standard interpretive panel
-

Land Owner/Manager:

Zak and Anjanette Steer - owners

Potential Partnerships:

Zak and Anjanette Steer (necessary partnership)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#20 – Camp Creek Trailhead

Interpretive Theme:

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 117.2, south side of highway

A highway sign directs travelers to the Camp Creek Trailhead, but the trail itself is not marked. This is a multi-use trail for summer and winter use.

Interpretive Significance:

Local trails are an asset to the Glenn Highway corridor and offer recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. This project will not only improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead, but will also help users be prepared for the terrain.

Site Goal:

Improve recreational and interpretive experience by adding a trailhead marker

Project Description:

- Add trailhead marker – include trail's level of difficulty, route, profile, etc.
- Cleanup trash

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Sheep Mountain Lodge – Zak and Anjanette Steer

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#21 - Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System

Interpretive Theme:

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 118.5, north side of highway

This marked trailhead is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. The trailhead at MP 118.5 includes a large parking area, restrooms, interpretive panels, and spotting scopes. The parking and interpretive areas offer scenic views.

Interpretive Significance:

Byway travelers notice a significant change in landscape as they travel between the Cook Inlet and Copper River basins. Visitors to this site are able to view this change simply by studying the landscape to the east and west. Interpretive panels focusing on this transition area would highlight the differences between the two zones.

This area is a popular location to watch the seasonal migration of raptors. The Alaska Audubon society hosts a "Raptor Tailgate Party" near here every spring.

Trails within the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System offer recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups and have historic significance. Recreationists can access over five different trails from this trailhead.

A very rare hadrosaur, or duck-billed dinosaur, was discovered by Kevin May near this site. It is one of the oldest hadrosaurs known in the world and does not resemble any known genus so it is known simply as "Lizzie," named after Kevin May's daughter who helped excavate her. This would be an excellent location for an interpretive panel on Lizzie.



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Goal:

Improve the layout and appearance of the facility by reconfiguring interpretive panels, updating restrooms, and adding a small loop trail

Project Description:

- Add restroom symbol to current highway signs
 - Reconfigure existing facility
 - Cluster panels by topic – three clusters total
 - Add two interpretive panels
 - Reprint four panels to fit appropriately in frames
 - Move *What Caribou Go Through To Survive* interpretive panel to Site #28, MP 133
 - Add short loop trail to viewing area
 - Provide ADA telescope
 - Replace restrooms with new concrete vaulted toilets (see Appendix C for description)
 - Replace damaged interpretive panels in kiosk
 - Improve landscaping
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Add two Type C - standard interpretive panels (possible topics include: Lizzie the hadrosaur, transition zone and black spruce)
 - Use existing standards and kiosks to mount reprinted panels
-

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska State Parks

Audubon Society

Mat-Su Birders

Implementation Priority:

Phase 3



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#22 – Trooper Bruce A. Heck Memorial

N/A

Site Location and Description:

MP 120.2, south side of highway

A monument at this site honors Alaska State Trooper Bruce A. Heck, who was killed in the line of duty near MP 120 in 1997. The Alaska State legislature designated MP 128 to MP 189 the Trooper Bruce A. Heck Memorial Corridor in 1999.

Interpretive Significance:

The purpose of this site is to memorialize and honor Alaska State Trooper Bruce A. Heck. The plan does not recommend any interpretive improvements.

Site Goal:

Make the Trooper Bruce A. Heck memorial more aesthetically pleasing and reduce vandalism at the site by adding appropriate landscaping

Project Description:

Improve landscaping around memorial – this location is less likely to be vandalized if it looks like it is being cared for

Recommended Interpretive Media:

N/A

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Sheep Mountain Lodge - Zak and Anjanette Steer

Alaska State Troopers

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#23 – Squaw Creek/Belanger Pass Trailhead

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 121.4, north side of highway, across from Lake Leila

This marked trailhead provides access to trails in the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. A trailhead marker does not exist at this time, but there are highway signs. This trailhead has a small parking area, appropriate for only a few vehicles.

Interpretive Significance:

Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset of the Glenn Highway corridor. The Belanger Pass Trailhead connects with other trails in the system and offers recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. An interpretive panel at this site should show the connections between trails.

Trails within the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System have historic significance; many trails follow Native trade and hunting routes.

This project will not only improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead, but will also teach users how to be prepared for the terrain.

Site Goal:

- Enhance recreational and interpretive experience by adding a trailhead kiosk
 - Enhance parking area
 - Familiarize users with the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System by showing connections between trails
-

Project Description:

- Build kiosk to display trail map (include trail's level of difficulty, features, and connections to other trails) and interpretive panels
 - Enhance parking
 - Clean up garbage
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

Eureka Lodge – Jim and Darla Fimpel (owners)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#24 - Belanger Pass Trailhead

Interpretive Theme:

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 123.4, one mile east of Tahnetta Pass, directly across from Tahnetta Lake, north side of highway

The Belanger Pass Trail is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. You can also access Squaw Creek and Crooked Creek trails from here. A trailhead marker does not exist at this time, but there are highway signs. The trail starts from an existing gravel road. There is a primitive parking area about 0.5 miles up this road.

Interpretive Significance:

Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset of the Glenn Highway corridor. The Belanger Pass Trailhead connects with other trails in the system and offers recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. An interpretive panel at this site should show the connections between trails.

Trails within the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System have historic significance; many trails follow Native trade and hunting routes.

This project will not only improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead, but will also teach users how to be prepared for the terrain.

Site Goals:

- Enhance recreational and interpretive experience by adding a trailhead kiosk
 - Enhance parking area
 - Familiarize users with the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System by showing connections between trails
-

Project Description:

- Add highway sign with trailhead name
 - Build kiosk to display trail map (include trail's level of difficulty, features, and connections to other trails) and interpretive panels
 - Enhance parking
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two or four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Potential Partnerships:

Eureka Lodge – Jim and Darla Fimpel (owners)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#25 - Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 126.4, south side of highway

This marked trailhead is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. The trail leads to Eureka Creek, Goober Lake, and Nelchina River.

Interpretive Significance:

The Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset of the Glenn Highway corridor. Trails within the system offer recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. This project will not only improve the aesthetic qualities of the trailhead, but will also teach users how to be prepared for the terrain.

Site Goals:

- Enhance recreational and interpretive experience by improving trailhead marker
 - Improve access to the trailhead by lessening the grade at the entrance
-

Project Description:

- Improve trailhead marker – include trails' difficulty, map, and features
 - Build kiosk to display map and interpretive panel on safety
 - Replace highway signs
 - Fill entrance with gravel to lessen grade
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two or four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Eureka Lodge – Jim and Darla Fimpel

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

Interpretive Theme:

#26 – Eureka Lodge

Several significant events increased Euro-American presence in the corridor.

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 128.3, north side of highway

Eureka Lodge is one of four historic roadhouses along the Byway. The Lodge has a restaurant, lounge, and comfortable lodging. They also have fuel service and offer winter RV parking. This is a popular rest area and destination point for many Byway travelers.

Interpretive Significance:

The original Eureka Roadhouse was the first to open along the Glenn Highway corridor. The roadhouse sits east of the present Eureka Lodge, an important business for highway travelers.

Eureka is a popular summer and winter recreation area for hikers, hunters, skiers, ATV users, and snowmobilers. Interpretive panels displayed at or near the lodge could focus on snowmobile safety, Leave No Trace principles, Glenn Highway construction, and history of the lodge.

Site Goals:

- Enhance business for Eureka Lodge
 - Enhance visitors' experience while staying at the lodge or eating at the restaurant
 - Increase awareness about Leave No Trace principles
 - Increase awareness about snowmobile and ATV safety
-

Project Description:

- Build two-panel kiosk to display local trail information and snowmobile and ATV safety panel
 - Add one, Type C - standard interpretive panel on lodge history and highway construction
 - Work with lodge owners to determine the most appropriate location for interpretive panels
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Two-panel kiosk
 - One Type C - standard interpretive panel
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Land Owner/Manager:

Jim and Darla Fimpel

Potential Partnerships:

Eureka Lodge – Jim and Darla Fimpel (necessary partnership)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:**Interpretive Theme:**

#27 – Old Man Creek Trailhead

Travelers can safely enjoy the Byway's many recreational opportunities.

Site Location and Description:

MP 130.5, about two miles east of Eureka Lodge

The Old Man Creek Trailhead is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System and a popular winter snowmobile trailhead. Old Man Creek Trail intersects with the Crooked Creek trail and leads to the old Nelchina townsite.

Interpretive Significance:

Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System is a recreational asset of the Glenn Highway corridor. The Old Man Creek Trailhead connects with other trails in the system and offers recreational opportunities to a variety of user groups. An interpretive panel at this site should show the connections between trails.

Trails within the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System have historic significance; many trails follow Native trade and hunting routes.

Site Goals:

- Enhance recreational and interpretive experience by adding a trailhead kiosk
 - Familiarize users with the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System by showing connections between trails and provide tips on how to prepare for the terrain
-

Project Description:

- Add highway sign with trailhead name
 - Build kiosk to display trail map (include trail's level of difficulty, features, and connections to other trails) and interpretive panels
-

Recommended Interpretive Media:

Two or four-panel kiosk

Land Owner/Manager:

State of Alaska

Potential Partnerships:

Eureka Lodge – Jim and Darla Fimpel (owners)

Implementation Priority:

Phase 2

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Site Number and Name:

#28 - DOT material site/gravel pit

Interpretive Theme:

The Glenn Highway corridor supports a wide range of plants and animals.

Dynamic, natural forces continue to shape the Byway just as they have for thousands of years.

Site Location and Description:

Near MP 133, south side of highway

This is an Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) material site/gravel pit. Byway travelers and year-round recreationists currently use this site as a parking and camping area. This is a great location to develop an extended stay facility because of its distance from the road and the viewing and interpretive opportunities. However, this is a heavy use area, possibly subject to vandalism.

Interpretive Significance:

This site offers 360 degree views of four different mountain ranges: Chugach Mountains, Talkeetna Mountains, Alaska Range, and Wrangell Mountains. Natural features such as the Nelchina Glacier, wildflowers, and stunted spruce dominate the viewshed. This is a great spot to simply enjoy the beauty and diversity of the Byway's natural landscape.

This area intersects with the summer range of the Nelchina caribou herd. An interpretive panel on the herd at MP 118.5 should be moved to this location.

Other possible interpretive topics include recreation, and Athabascan culture and trade.

Site Goals:

- Develop a safe pull-off and rest area that facilitates an interpretive experience
 - Tell stories relevant to the Byway's intrinsic qualities
-

Project Description:

- Develop a double-entrance turnout that facilitates both small and large vehicle parking
 - Develop a separated pedestrian area with an interpretive loop trail
 - Build an interpretive shelter similar to that at MP 101 (Matanuska Glacier SRS)
 - Build restrooms
 - Use concrete construction for buildings
 - Move *What Caribou Go Through To Survive* from MP 118.5 to here
-

Proposed Interpretive Sites and Services

Recommended Interpretive Media:

- Type C - standard interpretive panels
 - A panorama shaped panel detailing mountain ranges
-

Land Owner/Manager:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Potential Partnerships:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

Eureka Lodge - Jim and Darla Fimpel (owners)

Slide Mountain Cabins and RV Park

Snowmobile and ATV groups

Implementation Priority:

Phase 1



Design Guidelines

The following section suggests several design guidelines for interpretive projects. These guidelines suggest the Byway use unifying design elements to connect interpretive sites and materials, and give the Byway a distinctive appearance. Unifying design elements will also help travelers recognize Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretive sites and materials. The Byway committee should work with professional interpreters to ensure Byway facilities and products meet these design recommendations.

User Safety and Quality of Facilities

The following items should be considered when implementing proposed projects:

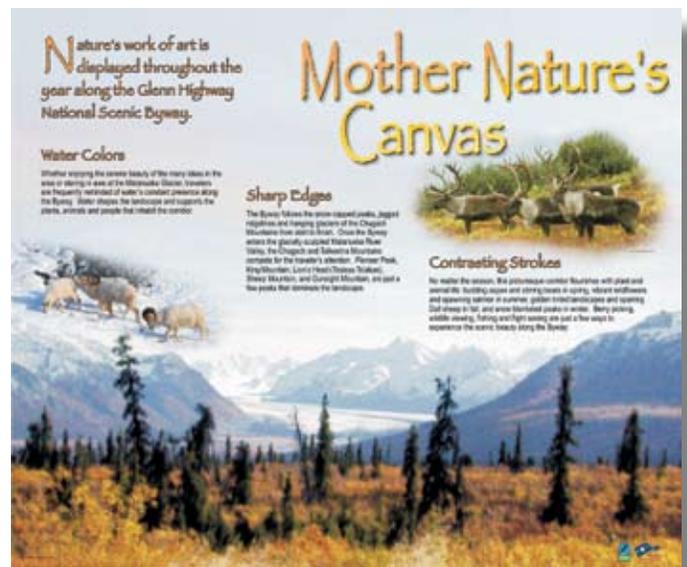
- Separated pedestrian pathways at waysides
- Site distance for entering and exiting waysides, pull-offs, and trailheads
- Advance Warning Signs that alert travelers to an upcoming “point of interest,” i.e. an interpretive wayside
- High quality, professional standard for interpretive panels, parking facilities, structures, kiosks, and restrooms
- Low maintenance and vandal resistant interpretive panels and structures

Design Elements - Interpretive Panels

Interpretive sites along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway should have a unifying design element. A similar design element will help travelers distinguish Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretive panels from others around the state. The panels should instill a sense of familiarity to visitors and should have a similar visual characteristic.

The Byway committee should take into consideration the existing interpretive panels and waysides along the Byway when choosing designs for new interpretive sites. Design elements that cannot be changed easily, like the Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site interpretive shelter, should be incorporated into plans for developing new facilities along the Byway. Others, like out-of-date panel design, can be updated to match new design elements when funding becomes available.¹

Alaska State Parks designed and installed the majority of interpretive panels along the Glenn Highway. New interpretive panels and facilities should have a similar design to those existing Alaska State Park panels and facilities.



¹ Existing Gold Rush interpretive panels are an exception to this recommendation. These panels, located at MP 50, 118.5, and 129.4, are part of a federal program with overriding funding, and should not be altered to look like other Glenn Highway panels. Interpretation and site design at Independence Mine State Historical Park is also an exception.

Panel Design

Graphics, Font, and Text

The content of an interpretive panel, including theme and topic, should determine the types of graphics used. Graphics or a font style that works beautifully in one panel may not be appropriate for another.

The plan recommends the Byway use Papyrus font for titles, walking away statements, and subtitles where appropriate. This font works beautifully for the panels at the South Palmer Station, Alaska State Fairgrounds. Papyrus is a preferred font but not a mandate; it will be up to the contracted interpretive specialist and Byway committee to decide whether it is appropriate for a particular panel.

Byway interpretation should exhibit a consistency in writing style. This can be accomplished by utilizing one contractor for Byway interpretation so the interpretation has a consistent look and voice.

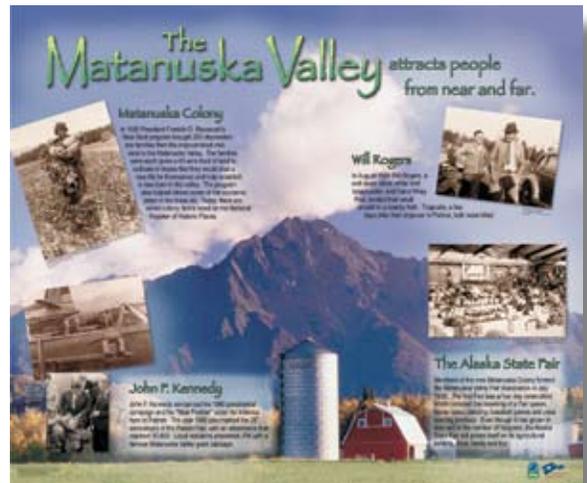
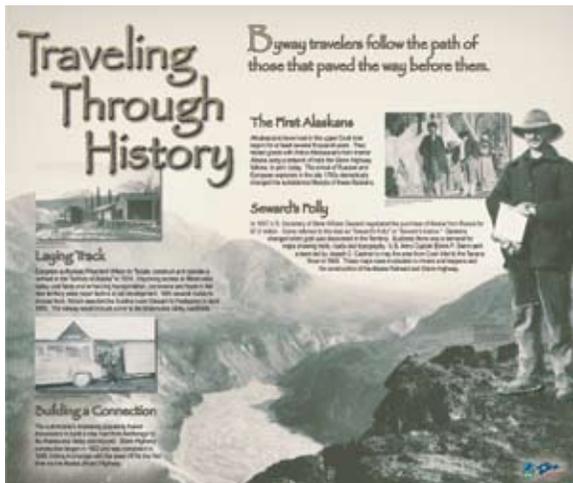
Interpretive panels should be designed and stored in a digital format for easy printing, fabrication, and retrieval.

Logo

The America's Byways logo must be on all Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway interpretive panels.

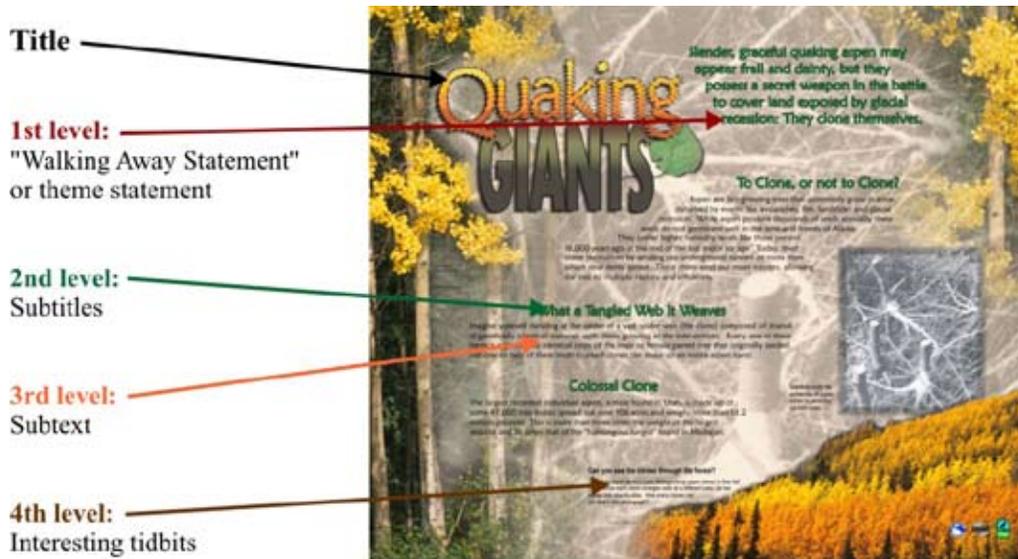
The Byway committee should develop one Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway logo for marketing and recognition purposes. Having too many logos will “water down” the logo’s significance and potentially confuse people. Once determined, the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway logo should also be on interpretive panels.

The Byway committee should continue their efforts to have the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway logo displayed on road signs along the Byway. The logo, spaced out a determined number of miles, would increase awareness about the Glenn Highway’s designation and provoke travelers to learn more about it.



Layout

The following image shows a typical Alaska State Parks interpretive panel layout. Panels along the Byway should have a similar layout design and incorporate these major textual elements. This format may be slightly altered to better represent the panel theme.



The different textual components of the panel are as follows:

- **Title:** the **title** tells the audience what the panel is about and should intrigue them to investigate further. Bold colors and unique fonts can attract the audience.
- **1st level:** the **Walking Away Statement or theme statement** presents the overall theme of the panel and provokes the audience to read further. However, if this statement is the only thing they read, they should still “walk away” with the main message of the panel. The font size is typically between 50-65 points. The font type can be somewhat creative and differ from the body text as long as it is legible.
- **2nd level:** **subtitles** introduce readers to the subtext below. The subtitle should be representative of its subtext and vice versa. Typically the walking away statement and subtitles have the same font type and are the same size.
- **3rd level:** the **subtext** is the main body of text which supports the walking away statement. Both the subtext and walking away statement should relate the resource being interpreted to the audience and reveal something meaningful about the resource. Subtext font is typically around 32 points.
- **4th level:** **4th level text** reveals interesting information not included in the subtext; it can be used to further describe a process, person, or an event. It can also describe a detailed photograph. Font size is typically between 18-22 points.

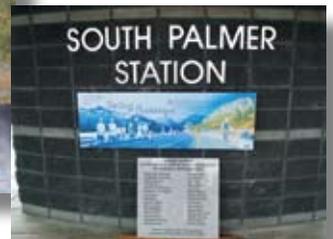
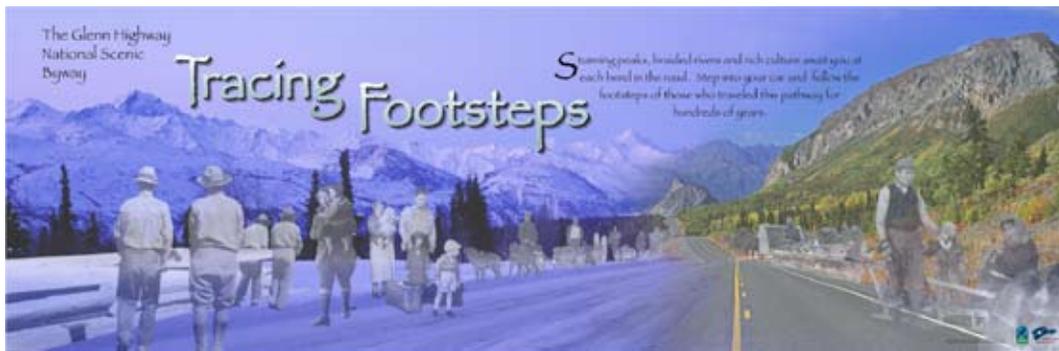
Photo Captions and Credits describe the photograph portrayed and give credit to photographers and holding agencies. Photo captions and credits are 12 and 9 points respectively.

Design Guidelines

Size

The plan recommends the Byway adopt the Alaska State Park standards for panel size to keep a consistent look along the Byway. These sizes are not set in stone; some sites may require a panoramic-shaped panel or other alternate design.

- Horizontal interpretive panel: 36.5” w x 30.5” h
- Vertical interpretive panel (for kiosks): 30.5” w x 36.5” h



Color palette

It would be difficult to restrict panels to a particular color palette. The panels should display a sense of continuity, but need leeway to ensure the color palette of individual panels matches the topic and theme. The contracted interpreter and graphic artist designing Byway interpretation will make color palette choices.

Panel Mount

Interpretive Sign, Type C

Alaska State Parks uses Interpretive Sign, Type C mounts for most horizontal interpretive panels. This standard is a recognizable and thematic element that will help link individual sites together. See Appendix C for the Interpretive Sign, Type C standard drawing.

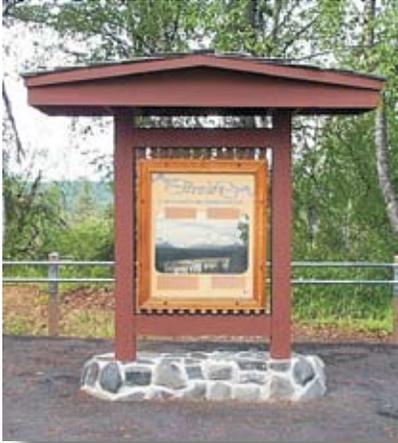
Description:

- Horizontally oriented interpretive panel bolted to aluminum plate and supported by two, 4x4s bolted to sonotubes buried in the ground
- Interpretive panels are made of 0.5” thick phenolic resin
- Interpretive panels are durable and resistant to vandalism
- Easy panel installation
- Appropriate for trails, overlooks, and waysides



Two and four-panel kiosks

Alaska State Parks uses kiosks to display vertical interpretive panels. This standard is a recognizable and thematic element that will help link individual sites together. See Appendix C for Interpretive Kiosk, Types A and B standard drawings.



Description:

- Roofed structure
- Display vertically oriented interpretive panels
- Interpretive panels are made of 1/8" thick phenolic resin
- Interpretive panels are durable and resistant to vandalism
- Easy panel installation
- Appropriate for trails, trailheads, and viewing areas
- One frame can hold a bulletin board
- Four-panel kiosks can be easily converted to hold more panels by adding an additional beam.

Design Elements - Facility Design

Contractors designing the site-specific interpretive projects should follow these facility design standards:

- Develop separated pedestrian pathways at waysides so travelers can safely enjoy these facilities out of their car
- Develop adequate site distance for ingress and egress at waysides, pull-offs, and trailheads to ensure travelers can safely enter and exit these facilities
- Maintain a high quality, professional standard for parking facilities, structures, kiosks, and restrooms
- Use concrete, vaulted toilets for new toilet construction
- Plant native vegetation when landscaping at waysides, pull-offs, trailheads, etc. so as not to introduce potentially harmful non-native species
- Design facilities with a consistent look and materials so they are familiar to travelers
- Design facilities so they are ADA accessible

Other Considerations for Interpretive Media

Speaking voice

Similarly to interpretive text, the plan recommends the Byway committee hire the same person, if possible, to be the Byway's "voice." This recommendation relates to narration for radio advertisements, the Byway video/DVD, and podcast messages. A common narrator will tie these different interpretive programs together, help listeners recognize Byway messages, and add another thematic element to Byway interpretation.

The narrator should be able to invoke feeling and importance in the Byway message and/or story. For some Byway stories, it may be appropriate to use storytellers who have a direct relationship to the resource being interpreted. The Byway narrator could give the introduction and background information and then introduce the special storyteller. For example, if the Byway committee wants to have an Athabascan culture section on the video/DVD or podcast, the most appropriate storyteller would be someone from the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Native Village of Eklutna, or Chickaloon Native Village.

Parameters and Considerations

The Byway committee should keep the following parameters and considerations in mind when implementing, evaluating, and maintaining interpretive sites and services along the Byway.

Partnerships

Congressional support for a growing Scenic Byways Program ensures a continual stream of funding for prioritized projects on byways. The cooperative working relationship the Byway has established with DOT&PF puts the Byway ahead of the curve on development of interpretive sites in conjunction with highway safety improvement projects.

Establishing partnerships with other agencies, private businesses, non-profit groups, clubs and organizations, and individual Byway members will help produce well-rounded interpretive materials and programs. Partners can also help oversee specific management and maintenance duties, assist the Byway committee with text and graphics for interpretive materials, and increase support for Byway programs and funding.

Business and the Byway

Businesses along the Byway present ready, secure locations for dispensing interpretive materials and information. The Byway organization should keep local businesses informed of meetings, new developments, and other happenings so they stay connected. Both businesses and residents should feel a sense of ownership in the Byway.

Package Tourism

Package tourism is becoming increasingly popular and can create funding opportunities to assist in implementing this plan. The GHNSB Interpretive Plan complements the needs and desires of package tourism users. The committee should consider establishing relationships/partnerships with package tourism companies to increase the Glenn Highway's marketability and visitation.

Electronic Media

Our growing reliance on electronic information sources creates the opportunity to deliver interpretive messages via electronic media. State Scenic Byway and National Scenic Byway web sites are available to provide access to digital formats of interpretive materials, such as podcasts and geocaching sites. New technologies should be reevaluated on a regular basis to ensure interpretive media is current with the times.

Sustainable Interpretation

Before interpretive panels are written, brochures hit the shelves, and tens of thousands of dollars are spent on new facilities, the Byway group needs to make sure the interpretation will be sustainable. Will the interpretation and information be relevant two, three, or ten years down the road? Will interpretative sites and materials still be interesting and useful for Byway residents year after year? Does the Byway group have plans for updating information and refreshing interpretive sites and materials? What steps will the group take to evaluate the effectiveness of Byway interpretation?

For more questions to ask and answer, and for ideas on how to keep interpretation sustainable, refer to "Is Your Scenic Byway Interpretation Sustainable" by John Veverka, <http://www.heritageinterp.com/newpage14.htm>.

Road Realignments

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) plans significant Glenn Highway road realignments, including the mile 92-97 and Long Lake realignments. The Byway committee should remain up-to-date on the status of these realignments and plan their projects accordingly. Road realignments will also change mile markers and possibly elements of the Glenn Highway mile-by-mile resource inventory.

Impacts to Travelers

Resource development strategies pursued by the State have the potential to affect the use of interpretive waysides and Byway resources. DOT&PF road re-alignment projects can cause significant irritation and delays for travelers. Podcasts, radio spots, affiliated web sites, and other mass media outlets are ways the Byway committee can keep potential travelers informed of construction projects, possible delays, and closed amenities. These advanced warnings will help ease travelers' frustrations.

Gas pipeline

If an all-Alaska natural gas pipeline is built and the Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority (ANGDA) constructs a spurline from Glennallen to Palmer, it could affect trails in the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail System. The Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway organization should stay up-to-date with possible natural gas pipeline development and plan accordingly.

Maintenance

Trash and vandalism are significant problems at numerous locations along the Byway. Snow removal, trash removal, cleaning restrooms, and replacing/alternating interpretive panels are all issues affecting management of interpretive waysides. Establishing partnerships with DOT&PF, Alaska State Parks, local businesses, and private property owners to help maintain interpretive sites and services and roadsides is a necessary task for the Byway committee.

Burnout

The GHNSB committee is a true grass roots organization and represents the voice of Byway residents and business owners. A strong membership base and board will ensure the continued activity, vitality, and functionality of the Byway organization.

Longevity of service and waning enthusiasm of board members may negatively affect the Byway organization. Burnout among members and board members can occur when there are too few people managing too many projects. Recruitment of new members is fundamental for maintaining an effective organization. New members bring vitality and energy to the group. Long-term, committed members bring leadership and stability, and are essential to the organization. There must be a balance of both in order to accomplish the groups' organizational and interpretive goals.

Evaluation

Creating guidelines for evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive sites and services is an essential part of the planning process. Evaluating interpretive sites and services will help the Byway committee measure whether their goals and objectives are being met. The results will let the committee know what's working, what's not working, and enable them to make appropriate changes.

If budget allows, interpretive exhibits should be pre and post-tested. Pre-testing may not be feasible with smaller budgets, but it is still important to test the effectiveness of the interpretation during and after implementation. Evaluation should be an ongoing process.

John Veverka, author of *Interpretive Master Planning*, outlines six main parts of the evaluation process:

1. Identify the objectives you want to evaluate
2. Select the most appropriate evaluation technique or tool
3. Apply evaluation techniques and obtain results
 - creating a timetable on when and how you will evaluate could be helpful
4. Compare the actual results to those outlined in your objectives
5. Analyze the results. Did you accomplish your objectives? Why or why not?
6. Make appropriate recommendations for improvement¹

There are several different evaluative techniques appropriate for Glenn Highway interpretation. Questionnaires, personal or phone interviews, and comment boxes would be the most effective tools for evaluating the Byway's interpretive sites and materials. Writing questions for questionnaires and interviews can be tricky – you do not want the questions to lead respondents into answering one way over another. The Byway committee should engage a professional

¹ John A. Veverka, *Interpretive Master Planning: the essential guide for interpretive centers, parks, self-guided trails, historic sites, zoos, exhibits and programs* (Tustin, CA: Acorn Naturalists, 1994), 82.



researcher to help ensure their questionnaire and interview questions are not biased and give them accurate results. Comment boxes should be placed in locations travelers visit frequently and locked to protect against tampering.

Evaluating interpretive sites and materials takes time and money. Here are a few cost and energy saving suggestions:

- Engage local high school or college students to write and administer questionnaires as part of a class project
- Ask local businesses to display a comment box and/or collect and administer questionnaires
- Hire a part-time summer employee to administer questionnaires, conduct interviews, and evaluate data
- Engage Byway members to participate in a one-to-two day activity where they distribute questionnaires, ask for feedback, etc.

See Appendix D for a comprehensive list of evaluative techniques for interpretive services. Each technique has a description, list of pros and cons, and additional comments.

Many of the techniques listed in Appendix D are directed toward evaluating oral interpretive presentations. The majority of interpretive sites and services recommended in this plan are static interpretive displays or publications. However, oral interpretation and related evaluation techniques should not be discounted as viable options for Byway interpretation.

Oral interpretive presentations, such as guided nature walks and evening talks, are valuable forms of interpretation, but require different types of management and resources than a static interpretive panel. Locations such as the Eagle River Nature Center do an excellent job providing visitors with opportunities to participate in oral interpretive presentations. The Byway committee should continue to support this type of service and work cooperatively with businesses and groups providing oral interpretive presentations to ensure the programs are effective in meeting the Byway's goals and objectives.

Acknowledgements

Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway board members and general membership

Participants and hosts of GHNSB public open houses

Aneta Synan – Alaska’s Scenic Byways Program Coordinator

Jo Frisby and Nancy Dryden – Alpine Historical Park

Patricia Wade – Chickaloon Native Village

Maria Benner – Alaska Travel Industry Association

Michelle Ethun – America’s Byways Resource Center

Kris Abshire – Friends of Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge

All those who assisted with research and photograph needs

Special thanks to:

Dick Ostergaard – NAI Certified Interpretive Planner

Joe Lawton and the Alaska State Fair

Bill Evans – Landscape Architect, Alaska State Parks

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Public Comments

The following list is a summary of comments from public open houses (September 14-23, 2004) and meetings with Byway residents/business owners (November 3, 2005).

Interpretive Topics

- Lake George flooding
- George Palmer – history
- Moose Creek Restoration Project (including history of Moose Creek)
- Slipper Lake, Sutton (topics include Alaskan Wood Frog, Rainbow trout and others)
- Water bugs
- Old railroad bed at Eska Creek
- How Sutton community adopts their watershed
- Mining history of Matanuska Valley coalfields
- Cultural ties in Sutton community
- Native stories – example: Seven giant brothers
- Caribou Creek – Dall’s sheep, geology
- Coal Creek history (mining town)
- Lizzie the hadrosaur
- Four mountain ranges seen near Eureka Summit
- Rivers, glaciers
- Animals
- Medicinal plants
- Climate change

- Spruce bark beetle
- Fire safety
- Nelchina caribou herd
- Historic roadhouses
- Hitchcock’s homestead in Caribou Creek before highway was built
- Construction of the Glenn Highway
- Ed Ueek
- Snowmobile safety
- Being responsible for trash

Byway Significance

- Alaska State Fair
- Hatcher Pass
- Matanuska Glacier
- Four mountain ranges seen near Eureka Summit
- Alpine Historical Park
- Historic value of the lodges/roadhouses
- Byway’s “frontier” spirit, remoteness
- Geology
- Sense of place, “Home”
- Embodies everything travelers/visitors hope to find in Alaska

Concerns

- Need more safe places to pull off
- Use existing pullouts – do not build more
- Need more public rest areas – should be a restroom every 10 miles
- The State is not taking care of the facilities it has now- how will they take care of additional facilities?
- Garbage is a big problem – junk cars, tires, you name it. Businesses should be compensated for letting general public use their dumpsters, trash cans and restrooms
- Roads are terrible and falling apart – no effort being made to make roads sustainable – roads should be fixed to promote tourism
- Most people don't know what a Byway is? How will we spread the word?
- Byway is being undersold and should be better advertised
- Landscaping along Byway is poor
- “Lion's Head” is not the accepted name among the Native community. Replace and/or edit interpretive panel on this particular geologic formation
- Slipper Lake, Sutton – residents would like to see some more control up there
- No more campgrounds
- MP 106 – top of Caribou Creek (west side) – road to gold panning area – people go down there to sleep. It is safer to stop at the top and the view is better
- Do not litter the Byway with interpretation
- Do not want large panels that obstruct view
- Need kiosk and wayside restrictions because of water
- There is no public access to the toe of the Matanuska Glacier and no advanced warning that you have to pay \$12.50 per person when you reach the bottom of the hill

Other Suggestions

- Make improvements to existing facilities and have regular maintenance
- Road sign “Chugach State Park – Next Exit” before Arctic Valley Road
- Chickaloon Native Village wants a cultural center with museum, etc.
- Add Native place names to road signs and interpretive materials
- Enhance raptor viewing areas
- Need slogan and logo to enhance marketing
- Talk to resident geologists Garr Pissel and Mitch Henning (Sheep Mountain)
- Interpretation at Mile 107 (Caribou Creek DOT pulloff)
- Use local artists for artwork, sculptures, etc.
- Brochures, etc, should have a way-finding guide for sites and services
- Need to add Scenic Byway signs
- Businesses should be reimbursed for money spent on maintaining State owned byway facilities
- Byway committee needs to maintain a partnership with DOT
- Partner with communities to maintain Byway's scenic character
- Keep Sheep Mountain area “green and unchanged”

Appendix B: Mile by Mile Resource Inventory

The mile by mile resource inventory presents a detailed and representative picture of what travelers can find and experience along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway. The resources are listed according to their location along the Byway, beginning at MP 0 in downtown Anchorage and ending at MP 137.5, the Little Nelchina River.

Key terms:

Mile-by-odometer: The reading on the car odometer.

Mile-marker on highway: The mile-marker seen on the roadside. The mile-markers are somewhat sporadic and are not consistently placed. The mile-markers have not been changed in response to road improvements and road realignments; therefore, the mile-markers do not accurately reflect the mileage of the Glenn Highway.

As in Milepost: The Milepost is a yearly publication that travelers use as a trip planner and travel guide for driving highways throughout Alaska and Canada. The mileages given in the milepost most oftentimes reflect the mile-markers on the highway.

Type of resource: There are six different types of resources: natural, scenic, historical, cultural, recreational, and archaeological. These resources are the six intrinsic qualities outlined by the National Scenic Byways program. The Glenn Highway embodies all six intrinsic qualities.

Description: This section describes the resource mentioned. Also noted in this section are existing interpretation and marked trailheads.

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
0.0			Scenic	<p>Start of Byway – 6th and Gamble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You can see the Chugach Mountains straight ahead on your way out of town. ▪ The first nine miles of the Glenn Highway is designated the Veterans' Memorial Parkway and is a Blue Star Memorial Highway.
0.75			Historical Recreational	<p>Merrill Field (Concrete Street – Merrill Drive intersection) Can see the Arctic Valley Star to the east in winter</p>
1.5		1.2	Historical	<p>“Welcome to Anchorage” Sign Airport Heights Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Airport Heights entrance to Merrill Field has a pull-off with picnic tables. There is also one more pullout and a memorial at the entrance on 15th Avenue.
2.2		1.9		Bragaw Street
3.0		3.0	Cultural Historical	<p>Boniface Parkway Exit Elmendorf Air Force Base (entrance)</p>
4.6 South 4.8 North		4.4	Cultural Historical Scenic	<p>Muldoon Exit Fort Richardson Army Base (entrance) Alaska Native Heritage Center</p>
5.3				Municipal Light and Power Station
6.4				Ship Creek
6.45		6.1	Historical Scenic Recreational Cultural	<p>Arctic Valley Road Exit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moose Run Golf Course ▪ Chugach State Park ▪ Alpenglow at Arctic Valley Ski Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interpretive panels on the Anchorage Ski Club, Site Summit, and history of Alpenglow at Arctic Valley Ski area are displayed inside the lodge. ▪ Site Summit Nike Missile Site
7.7		7.5	Cultural	<p>Fort Richardson Exit Access to Arctic Valley Road National Cemetery at Fort Richardson</p>

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
9.4				Passing Alaska National Guard Headquarters – access via Fort Richardson Exit
10.8		10.6		Weigh Station Exit
10.95				Look east to see military rifle range
11.3				Look east to see Site Summit Nike Missile Site
11.8		11.6	Recreational Scenic	Eagle River Loop Road / Highland Road Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eagle River Road (access) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eagle River Nature Center – Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Variety of natural history topics ▶ Oral interpretive presentations ▪ Eagle River Campground (access)
13.15		12.8	Scenic Archaeological (Paleontological)	Eagle River Bridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nice views of Eagle River Valley ▪ Fossil mollusks exposed in rocks downstream
13.6		13.4	Recreational Scenic	Eagle River (town of) – south exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreational opportunities in Eagle River, including hiking, berry picking, and wildlife viewing ▪ Amenities
15.4		15.3	Natural Historical Recreational	Eagle River (town of) – north exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old Glenn Highway and Fire Lake (access) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hiking opportunities off the Old Glenn Highway – Chugach State Park trailheads
3.0 - 20.9			Recreational	Bike/Pedestrian path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Runs from Anchorage to North Birchwood along the Glenn Highway (continues along the Old Glenn Highway from North Birchwood to south Peters Creek exit)
16.3				Fire Lake to southeast
17.1			Scenic	Good views of the Talkeetna Mountains
17.4		17.2	Scenic	South Birchwood Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chugiak High School ▪ Old Glenn Highway (access)
17.7				Look north for views of the Alaska Range, including Denali (Mt. McKinley), Mt. Foraker, and Mt. Hunter

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
20.9		20.9	Recreational	North Birchwood Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chugiak Post Office ▪ Old Glenn Highway (access) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiking trails - Peters Creek Park (city park and disk golf course)
21.6			Natural	Peters Creek
22.0		21.5	Recreational	South Peters Creek Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hiking on Mt. Eklutna and access to Peters Creek trailhead ▪ Amenities
23.0		23.0		North Peters Creek Exit
23.9		23.6	Natural Recreational	Mirror Lake (northbound exit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nice spot for picnicking, etc.
	25			
25.6		25.2	Natural Recreational Scenic	Thunderbird Falls Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residential Neighborhood ▪ Trailhead - hiking, wildlife viewing
26.0			Natural	Eklutna River
26.4		26.5	Cultural Historical Recreational Scenic	Eklutna Exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Native Village of Eklutna <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church - Athabaskan Cultural Tours ▪ Eklutna Lake (9 miles from highway) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boating, camping, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, ATV use - Existing interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Topics include boating safety, Eklutna water project, Dena'ina Athabascans, eagles, bears, and Dall's sheep ▪ Thunderbird Falls (access)
27.15		27.3	Scenic	Highway crosses the railroad tracks Enter Eklutna Flats Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains are beautiful Can see Pioneer and Twin Peaks Can see the Bodenbug Butte Wildflowers on flats

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
28.0				Large gravel pull-off to right
29.8		29.6	Recreational Natural	<p>Old Glenn Highway Exit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attractions off the Old Glenn Highway (from here to Palmer) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eklutna Power Plant – Hunter Creek Outfitters – Knik Glacier Adventures – Bodenbug Butte – glacially sculpted feature called a roche moutonee (similar to Mt. Susitna) – Alaska Raceway Park – Reindeer Farm (farm offers reindeer tours, a gift shop, horse rides, and nearby hiking trails) – Kim’s Scenic Tours (horseback trail rides) – There is a clear water channel running next to the road and mass numbers of salmon spawn there. People park across the road and run to the other side to watch – Mt. View RV Park – Lazy Mountain Recreation Area – George W. Palmer Memorial Bridge – Matanuska River Park – Palmer airport
30.7		30.3	Scenic Natural	<p>Knik River Bridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Giant’s foot” (rock outcropping) ▪ Nice views
31.1		30.6	Recreational	<p>Knik River Access Reflections Lake</p>
31.8		30.8		Bridge crossing Knik River and railroad trestle
32.5		31.5		Bridge crossing Matanuska River and railroad trestle
32.9 (at sign)			Natural Scenic Historical	Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge
34.9			Recreational	<p>Rabbit Slough Trailhead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only accessible from southbound lane ▪ Access to lakes, fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing
35.1		34.0		<p>Parks/Glenn Interchange - Glenn Highway Exit Parks Highway traffic continues straight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parks Highway – access to Wasilla, Denali State Park, Denali National Park, and Fairbanks ▪ Matanuska-Susitna Convention & Visitors Bureau

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
36.6		36.2	Recreational	Homestead RV Park
36.7		36.3	Recreational	Fox Run RV Campground
36.8		36.4	Recreational Natural	Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fed from melt-water streams and formed by glaciers ▪ Crevasse filled ridges formed when glaciers receded ▪ Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Topics include loons, glacial silt, grouse, and aquatic insects
36.9			Historical Cultural	Matanuska Town Site Exit
37.6				RV Hookups
37.7		37.2		Echo Lake Parking
37.85		37.4	Recreational	Kepler Park (on Kepler Drive) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Camping, boating
38.9 (Central Paving Entrance)			Historical Cultural Natural	Anchorage Sand and Gravel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gravel comes from glacial till deposited by the Matanuska Glacier ▪ Matanuska gravel is important for road building and construction in Anchorage and the Valley
39.1				Matanuska Valley Sportsman Shooting Range
39.45				Train loading facility for Anchorage Sand and Gravel
39.6		39.2		Outer Springer Loop
40.1		39.5 39.6	Recreational	Town and Country RV Park (left) Inner Springer Loop (right)
	40			
40.7		40.2	Cultural	Commuter Center and Alaska State Fairgrounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction to Glenn Highway NSB – Panels cover the Byway's intrinsic qualities and history of the Matanuska Valley
41.3				Inner Springer Loop
41.75		41.2		Business District Exit
42.4		41.8	Natural Historical	Palmer - Junction with Palmer-Wasilla Highway and West Evergreen Avenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matanuska Colony Farms ▪ Colony House Museum ▪ Amenities

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
42.95		42.1		West Arctic Avenue - road to Old Glenn Highway
	49			
44.4		49.5	Recreational Scenic Historical	Fishhook Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hatcher Pass and Independence Mine State Historical Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Topics include the history of Independence Mine (buildings, operations, people, and more), avalanche awareness and snowmobile safety, and a variety of geology and natural history topics
44.8		50.0	Historical Scenic Natural	Gold Rush Centennial Pull-off <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic: gold mining in Hatcher Pass ▪ Views of Matanuska River, Knik River, and Knik Glacier
45.0		50.1	Recreational Historical	Archie Road - Musk Ox Farm
45.7		50.7		Farm Loop Road
46.0		50.9		Fire Station
46.75			Cultural	Gray Owl Farm
46.8		52.0	Cultural	Wolf Country USA
47.35				Soapstone Road
47.95	53	53.0		Buffalo Mine Road
	54			
49.1			Scenic Natural	Nice views up valley and of the river Gravel outwash deposits on the left as you descend to Moose Creek
49.7		54.6	Natural Historical Recreational Archaeological (Paleontological)	Moose Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remains of old railroad trestle can be found in area ▪ Moose Creek Restoration Project – restoring creek to its original channel (pre-mining) ▪ Defunct campground ▪ Fossils
47.75			Natural	Rock outcropping on left side of highway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tertiary Chickaloon formation exposed in road cut ▪ Consists of tan to gray sandstone

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
49.9	55			Moose Creek Ranch
50.6			Cultural Historical	Ya Ne Dah Ah School Katie's Wall
50.9	56			
51.7		56.8		Entering Matanuska-Susitna Valley Moose Range
52.5	57			
52.9		58.0		58 Mile Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Palmer Correctional Center ▪ Seventeenmile Lake Good views upriver
53.5		58.6	Scenic	Small pullout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paved, no pedestrian area ▪ Good area for pictures
54.05	59			
54.6		59.6		Gas station
54.95	60			
55.0		60.1		Double-ended pullout to right
55.4		60.4		Double-ended pullout to right
55.8				Entering Sutton
55.85		60.8	Natural	Eska Creek
56.0		61.0	Recreational Archaeological Historical	Jonesville Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interesting geology about one mile up Jonesville road ▪ Slipper Lake– needs restoration and improvement ▪ Coyote Lake ▪ Fossils
56.5			Cultural	Chickaloon Village Government Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spirit houses in front of building
56.6		61.6	Historical Recreational	Chickaloon Way Alpine Historical Park
57.1	62			
57.5		62.4	Natural Archaeological (Paleontological)	Granite Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geology ▪ Fossil mollusks exposed in Matanuska Formation upstream
57.6		62.5	Recreational	River's Edge Recreation Park

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
57.8		62.8	Scenic	Sutton Community pullout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map of area - shows local roads and attractions ▪ Nice views of the river just after the pullout
58.1	63			
59.1	64			
60.15	65			
61.1	66			
61.5		66.3	Recreational	Kings River Trail – entrance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation area
61.6		66.4	Natural	Kings River
62.0			Natural Archaeological (Paleontological)	Interesting geology on both sides of the river Fossils exposed in roadcut to left
62.2	67			
63.2	68			
63.3			Scenic	Nice views of river below
64.0			Natural Scenic	Interesting geology Road follows the river – low elevation at this point Nice views of the river and King Mountain
65.4		69.7	Recreational	Pinnacle Mountain RV Park
66.3			Natural Scenic	Rock face to the left of road Beautiful view of river Nice views of King Mountain
66.8			Natural	Wetlands/lagoon to left of road
67.6	72			
68.5		72.9		Fish Lake Road
68.6	73			
69.6	74		Scenic	View of King Mountain
70.6	75			
71.6		76.1	Recreational Natural	King Mountain State Recreation Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation ▪ Geology
71.75		76.2	Recreational Historical	Chickaloon NOVA River Runners Chickaloon General Store King Mountain Lodge
72.0				Small pullout

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
72.3				Small pullout
73.2		77.7	Historical Cultural	Old Chickaloon Road Castle Mountain B&B Chickaloon River Bridge – Howe Truss Bridge
			Archaeological (Paleontological)	Chickaloon River enters the Matanuska River - Carbonaceous beds with fossil plants typical of the coal-bearing part of the Chickaloon Formation are well exposed in the large cut at the road junction
73.9				Marked scenic pullout
				Old Chickaloon Lodge or Roadhouse – MP 78
				Churchill/Cotter Homestead – MP 79.75
75.5	80			
76.3		80.8		Leaving the Matanuska-Susitna Valley Moose Range
	81			
76.7			Recreational	Last Frontier Air Adventures
78.5	83		Scenic	Good views of river and valley Scenic view, alluvial fan U-shaped valley in the middle of a U-shaped valley
78.8		83.2	Natural Recreational	Access to Ravine Lake and Bonnie Lake
79.7		84.1		Turnout with good views
80.2			Scenic	Heading away from river Anthracite Ridge ahead
80.6	85			
80.9		85.4	Natural Recreational Archaeological	Long Lake State Recreation Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs care; beautiful spot but facilities are in awful condition ▪ DOT road re-alignment will go to the south side of the lake and change mile marker ▪ Archaeological site Anthracite Ridge to north
	86		Scenic	Nice view
83.2		87.4	Scenic Natural	Small pullout with views of the Chugach Weiner Lake
83.7			Natural	Small pullout Spruce and aspen
84.5		89.0	Natural Recreational	Purinton (“Puritan”) Creek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Footpath along stream
85.4	90			
86.1		90.8	Recreational	Purinton Creek Trailhead
86.4	91			First views of Matanuska Glacier

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
87.4	92			
88.7		93.2		Cascade Station Drive / DOT maintenance yard
89.4			Scenic Natural	Rock glacier above left
89.5	94			
90.1		94.6	Natural	Victory Road - Victory Bible Camp Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good views of rock glacier from the camp
90.6	95	95	Scenic Natural	Nice views of the river Interesting geology on the river banks and cliffs
91.4	96			
91.8		96.5 / 96.6	Historical Natural	Hicks Creek / Hicks Creek Roadhouse Closed due to proposed DOT&PF road realignment
93.6			Scenic	Marked scenic pullout
94.4				Hicks Creek coffee stand – possible site of relocation
94.8		99.7	Scenic	DOT pullout with a view of the glacier
94.9		99.8		Pinochle Lane - access to old highway
95.2	100			
96.0	101			
96.2		101.0	Recreational Scenic Natural	Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Topics include glaciology, ice worms, aspen, and silt deposition in Matanuska Valley
96.8				Small pull-off - Paved, good views
97.0	102			
97.1		102.0	Recreational Scenic Natural	Matanuska Glacier Access at Glacier Park Wickersham Trading Post MICA guides Camping
97.3		102.2		Long Rifle Lodge
98.2	103			
98.4		102.8	Scenic Natural	Wickersham Road Pullout with views of glacier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can see the lobe of ice covered by vegetation
99.2		104.0		Glacier View Elementary
99.5				Small Pull-off - Paved, no views
100.1	105			
100.8				Small Pull-off - Paved, no views

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
101.1		106.0	Recreational Natural	Recreational gold panning turnoff Heading down to Caribou Creek Geology
102.0		106.8	Natural	Caribou Creek
102.1	107		Recreational	Caribou Creek Access
102.9				Large DOT paved parking area, good view
103.3	108			
104.5		109.5	Recreational	Tundra Rose Guest Cottages
104.6		109.7	Recreational Scenic	Grand View Café and RV Park View of Matanuska Glacier Lion's Head in rear view mirror, heading north (Athabaskan name: Nutsada'iy – Dena'iana; Natsede'aayi – Ahtna)
105.0	110			
106.0	111			
106.9	112			
107.1		112.2	Natural	Gypsum Creek
107.7		112.8	Recreational Scenic	Turnout Existing Interpretation ▪ Topics include geology, Dall's Sheep, and hiking
107.9		113.0		Sheep Mountain Airport Road
108.0	113			
108.5		113.5	Recreational Historical Natural	Sheep Mountain Lodge Polychrome Pass Geology Sheep
109.0	114			
109.8		114.9	Recreational Scenic	Majestic Valley Lodge Views of Majestic Valley
110.0	115	115.0		Turnout - Access to abandoned section of highway Meekin's Air Service
110.6			Scenic	Turnout - Good views of Majestic Valley and Lion's Head (Athabaskan name: Nutsada'iy – Dena'iana; Natsede'aayi – Ahtna)
111.1	116			
112.1	117			Weather Station Web cam
112.3		117.2	Recreational	Marked Trailhead – Camp Creek Trail

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
113.2	118		Archaeological (Paleontological)	"Lizzie" the hadrosaur found near here
113.6		118.4		Alascom Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication towers ▪ Access to Knob Lakes
113.7		118.5	Recreational Natural	Chickaloon – Knik – Nelchina Trail System (Trailhead Road) Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Topics include bird migration, raptors, caribou, historic trails, hiking, and the Gold Rush
113.9	119	119.0	Recreational Cultural	Large double-ended turnout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paved ▪ Hot spot for watching spring bird migration ▪ Site of Audubon Society "Raptor Tailgate Party" held in mid-April
115.0	120			
115.1		120.2		Trooper Bruce A. Heck Memorial
115.3			Scenic	Large gravel pit Possibly Blueberry Hill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wrangell Mountains visible on a clear day ▪ Lakes are the beginning of the Matanuska River
116.1	121			
116.4		121.4	Recreational	Marked Trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small parking area • Access to Squaw Creek Trail and Belanger Pass Trail
117.1	122	122.0	Natural Scenic	Tahnetta Pass - elevation 3,000 feet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transition area between the Cook Inlet and Copper River basins
117.2		122.1		Double-ended turnout
118.1	123			
118.4		123.4	Recreational	Marked Trailhead - Belanger Pass Trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail goes off of an existing road ▪ Connects to Crooked Creek and Squaw Creek trails ▪ No sign saying where you are or where the trail goes
119.1	124			
120.1	125			
121.1	126			
121.6		126.4	Recreational	Marked Trailhead - Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs a better trail marker, trail map, and access improvements ▪ Current sign says: 1.5 m – Eureka Creek; 8 m – Goober Lake; 9 m – Nelchina River

Mile by Odometer	Mile-marker on Highway	As in Milepost	Type of Resource	Description
122.2	127			
123.4		128.3	Historical Recreational Scenic Natural	Eureka Lodge and historic Eureka Roadhouse McCarty Air Service Gunsight Mountain in rearview mirror
124.2	129			
124.6		129.4		Large turnout to south with three driveways Existing Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Topic: military mapping expeditions during Gold Rush
125.2	130	129.5	Natural Recreational Scenic	Eureka Summit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elevation 3,322 feet – highest point on Glenn Highway ▪ This is a popular area for snowmobilers and ATV users ▪ Keep eyes open for Nelchina caribou herd ▪ Views of Gunsight Mountain ▪ Views of four mountain ranges: Chugach, Talkeetna, Wrangell, and Alaska ▪ Good views of the Nelchina Glacier
		130.5		Large gravel parking area Old Man Creek Trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leads to Crooked Creek Trail
126.2	131		Natural Recreational	Talkeetnas “trailing off” (ending) Popular snowmobiling area Wind
127.2	132		Scenic	Nelchina Glacier to the south
128.1			Scenic	Large DOT gravel pit - south side of road
128.2	133			
128.4			Scenic	Old road to right
129.3	134			
130.3	135			
130.5		135.1	Recreational	Slide Mountain Cabins and RV Park
131.0				Pullout to left
131.2	136			
131.9	137			
132.3		137.4		Leaving Matanuska-Susitna Borough
132.6		137.5		Little Nelchina River – End of the National Scenic Byway designation
132.8		137.6	Recreational Natural	Little Nelchina State Recreation Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defunct State campground ▪ Good raft put-in and possible area for improvement; also good for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and snowmobiling

Appendix C: Sample Design Standards

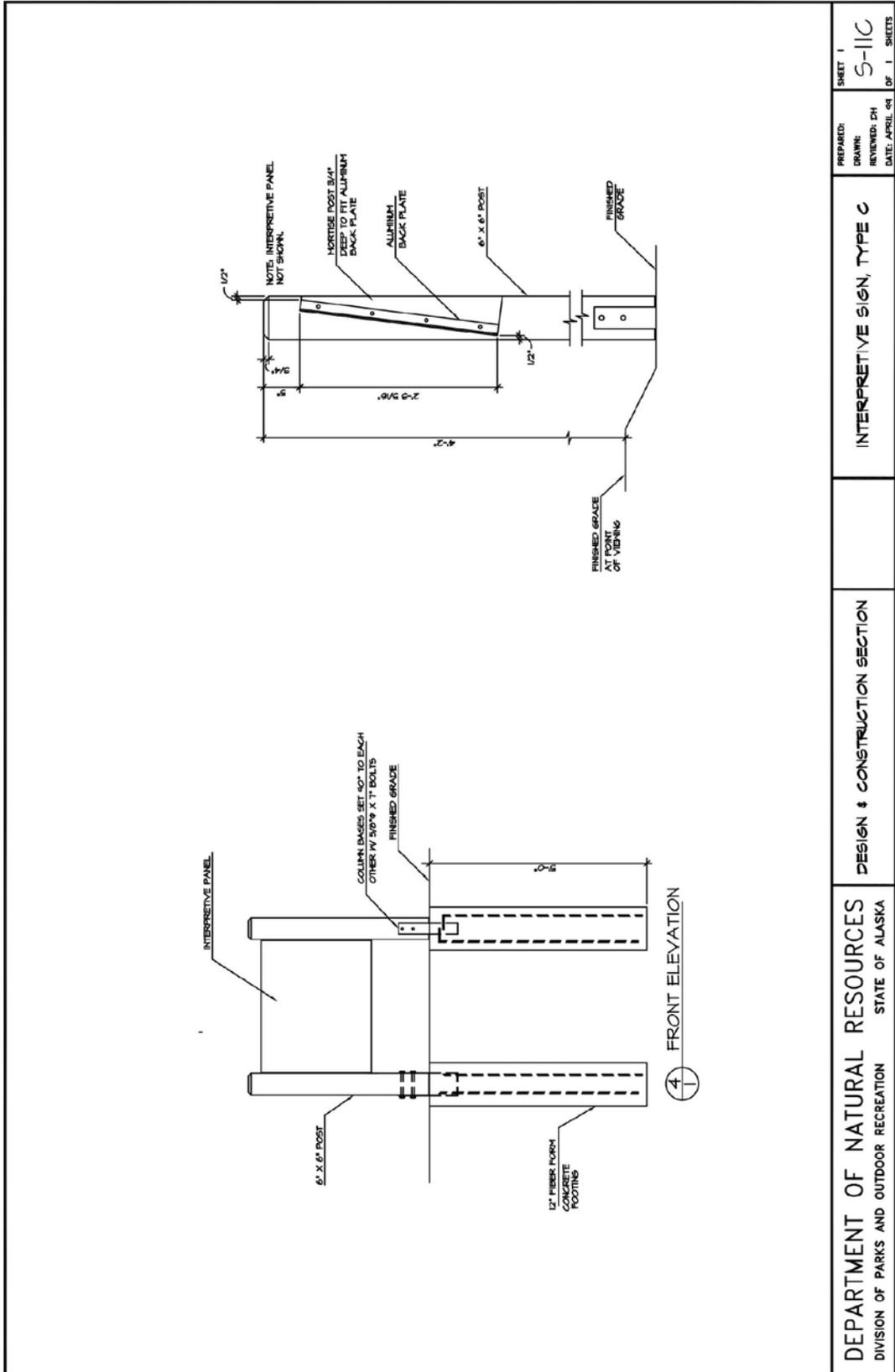
A. Standard Drawings

- Interpretive Sign, Type C 116
- Interpretive Kiosk, Type A (two-panel kiosk) 117
- Interpretive Kiosk, Type B (four-panel kiosk) 118

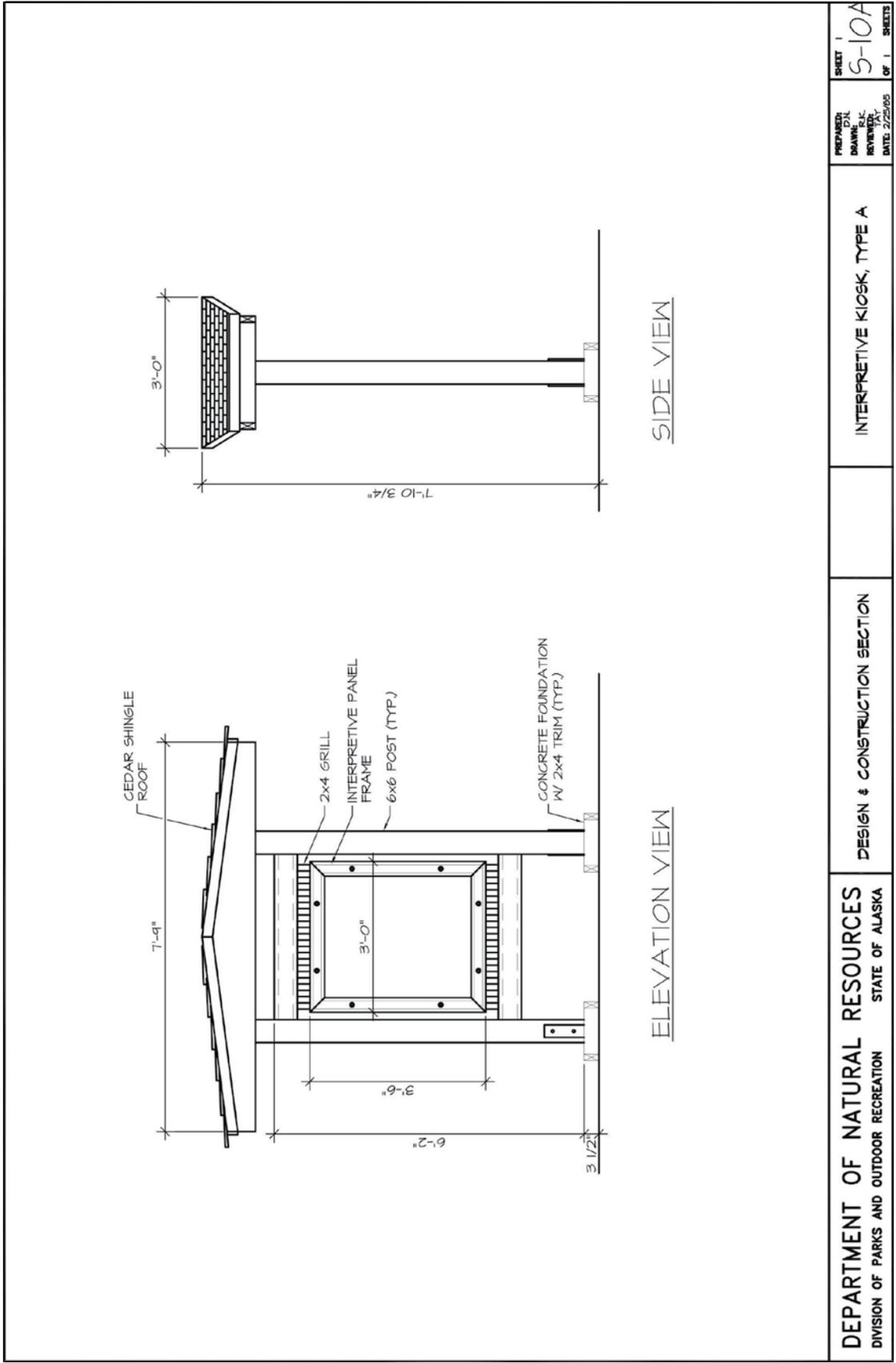
B. Examples of other structures and facilities

- Picnic Shelter 119
- Interpretive Shelter 120
- Concrete Toilets 121

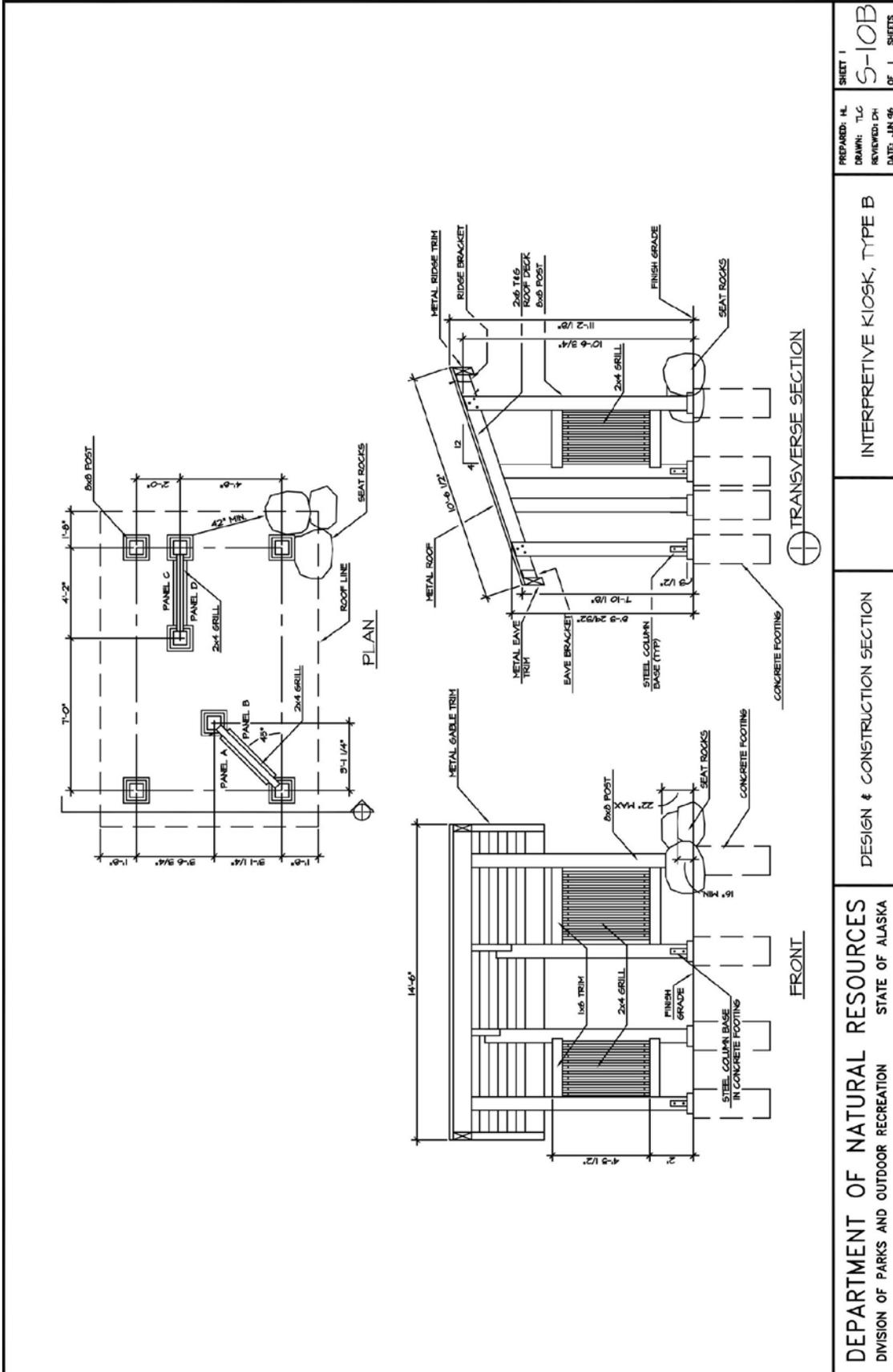
A. Standard Drawings



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION STATE OF ALASKA	DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SECTION	INTERPRETIVE SIGN, TYPE C	PREPARED: DRAWN: REVIEWED: CH DATE: APRIL 04	SHEET 1 5-11C OF 1 SHEETS
--	-------------------------------	---------------------------	---	---------------------------------



<p>DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION STATE OF ALASKA</p>	<p>DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SECTION</p>	<p>INTERPRETIVE KIOSK, TYPE A</p>	<p>PREPARED BY: [blank] DRAWN BY: [blank] REVIEWED BY: [blank] DATE: 2/22/05</p> <p>SHEET 5-10A OF 1 SHEETS</p>
---	--	-----------------------------------	--



PREPARED BY: HL
 DRAWN BY: TJC
 REVIEWED BY: DH
 DATE: JAN 96

SHEET 1
5-10B
 OF 1 SHEETS

INTERPRETIVE KIOSK, TYPE B

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SECTION

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
 STATE OF ALASKA

B. Examples of Other Structures and Facilities

Picnic Shelter



Description:

- Placed over concrete slab
- Four to six heavy timber posts
- Metal roof with open rafters
- Picnic table(s)
- Fire pit
- Variable size: photo at right shows shelter with six – 10”x10” posts and about 18’x18’ concrete slab

Interpretive Shelter



Description:

- Top middle and at right – Matanuska Glacier State Recreation Site Interpretive Shelter
- At left – inside of Bird Point Interpretive Shelter (similar to inside of Matanuska Glacier SRS Interpretive Shelter)
- Design elements include an open steel-truss metal roof, six masonry encased steel posts, 20' x 24' concrete slab, and bench
- House both vertically oriented interpretive panels and Type C standard panels
- Provide shelter from weather and can provide a place to rest
- Appropriate at large facilities
- New interpretive shelters proposed along the Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway should follow a similar design to those pictured above

Concrete Toilets



FRONT

BACK

Alaska State Parks is taking steps to replace existing restrooms in need of repair with concrete, vaulted toilets.

Description:

- low maintenance
- pre-fabricated and quick to install
- designed to withstand snow, wind, water, and zone 4 earthquakes (areas in immediate proximity to major fault systems)
- durable
- multiple design, textures, and colors available
- meet ADA standards
- similar in cost to wood structures

Appendix D: Evaluative Techniques for Interpretive Services

Evaluative Technique	Description	Pros	Cons	Comments
Direct Audience Feedback (oral interpretation evaluative technique)	Interpreter analyzes visitors' responses in face-to-face settings.	Allows for immediate analysis of visitors' reactions to the interpreter and service. The interpreter can change his/her approach on the spot to elicit a better response from the visitors.	Technique is subjective since the interpreter must "interpret" the visitors' reactions to him/herself and the service.	The number of questions visitors ask, facial expressions, restlessness, etc. are often good indicators of enjoyment, boredom, etc.
Auditing by an Expert (oral interpretation evaluative technique)	Have an experienced interpreter watch and critique an interpretive presentation.	Allows for the input of more experienced professionals into interpretive programming.	The expert judges how she/he thinks a presentation will affect a visitor. Thus, subjective.	In the case where live presentations cannot be evaluated on site, video tapes can be used.
Direct Measures of Behavior	Determine what interpretive service options visitors take when given a choice (i.e. hike vs. movie).	Allows for the determination of which services are most preferred.	Can determine <u>what</u> services visitors prefer but not <u>why</u> .	This type of information usually determined by head counts, ticket stub, etc. The technique could be used in conjunction with a questionnaire or interview to determine why visitors made certain choices.
Observation of Audience Attention (oral interpretation evaluative technique)	Plant scanners in audience to watch and document how many people are focusing their eyes on the interpreter.	Allows for the determination of visitor responses during a presentation.	Assumes that watching the interpreter is synonymous with interest, understanding, enjoyment, etc.	

Evaluative Technique	Description	Pros	Cons	Comments
Length of Viewing or Listening Time	Compare the amount of time people look at or listen to a presentation with the amount of time it would take to completely read or hear it.	Allows for the determination of whether or not people are spending enough time with an exhibit, sign, etc. to absorb the entire message.	Cannot determine visitor enjoyment, understanding, or interest. Thus, no judgment can be made as to whether or not the message is too long.	Shiner and Shafer found that “visitors looked at displays only 15 to 64 percent of the total time required to read or listen to the total message presented.” “... the longer the printed or recorded message...the shorter the viewing time.”
Questionnaire*	A written set of questions given to visitors to determine demographic and experiential data.	A great deal of visitor information can be obtained with a well-designed questionnaire. Questions concerning specific services can be incorporated into the questionnaire.	Subject to written response bias. Time consuming to design, administer, and evaluate.	A major problem with many questionnaires is that they are designed and written to elicit the responses the researcher wants. Great care must be taken to design a questionnaire as objectively as possible.
Interviews*	Similar to questionnaires except that questions are administered orally.	Same advantages as questionnaires. Often a preferred method of data collection since many people are more willing to communicate orally than in writing.	Similar problems as with questionnaires in terms of designing objective questions.	

Evaluative Techniques	Description	Pros	Cons	Comments
Self-Testing Devices	Mechanical devices operated by the visitor to answer questions or uncover more interpretive information.	Allows for active participation of visitors. A “fun” technique of evaluation from the visitor’s point of view.	Subject to mechanical breakdowns and vandalism. Often monopolized by children.	
Panel of Outsiders	A panel of people not associated with interpretation nor the subject matter being presented are asked to evaluate a service.	The panel can point out the strengths and weaknesses of a service before it is ever presented to the public.	The evaluation will only be as objective as the panel members chosen.	
Other Unobtrusive Measures	Look at fingerprints and nose prints on glass, footwear, litter (such as leaflets, cigarette butts, etc.). Look at products of depreciative behavior (graffiti, vandalism, etc.)	May indicate heavy use or a basic design problem.	Do not know <u>why</u> areas are being used so extensively nor the specific design flow.	This information oftentimes can be gleaned by talking to maintenance personnel.
Suggestion Box*	A locked box where visitors can drop any comments or suggestions.	Anonymity	Usually get comments biased towards a positive or negative extreme.	In relation to Malabar, the box should be located in VIC as a general catch-all for comments concerning all services.

* Recommended techniques for evaluating Byway interpretive sites and services
 Table from *Interpretive Master Planning* by John Veverka, 84-86

Appendix E: References

- “Alaska Community Tourism Handbook: How to Develop Tourism in Your Community.” Prepared by State of Alaska, Division of Community and Economic Development, Department of Community and Economic Development. <<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/ruraltourism.pdf>> (05 January 2006).
- “Alaska Highway Travel 2003.” Bellevue, WA: Prepared by GMA Research Corporation, 2004.
- “Alaska’s Outdoor Legacy: Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.” Prepared by State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, in cooperation with other local, state, and federal outdoor recreation professionals, interests groups, and the public, 2004. <<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/plans/scorp/2004scorpweb.pdf>> (05 January 2006).
- “Alaska Visitor Arrivals: Summer 2004.” Anchorage, AK: Prepared by Northern Economics Inc., 2004. <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/Summer_arrivals2004.pdf> (20 April 2006).
- Atwood, Evangeline. *We Shall Be Remembered*. Anchorage, AK: The Alaska Methodist University Press, 1966.
- Bauer, Mary Cracraft. *The Glenn Highway: the story of its past, a guide to its present*. Sutton, AK: Brentwood Press, 1987.
- Benner, Maria (Research and Marketing Coordinator for Alaska Travel Industry Association). “RE: visitor stats,” 20 April 2005. personal email (20 April 2005).
- Carter, James (editor). “A Sense of Place: An Interpretive Planning Handbook.” Scottish Interpretive Network, 2001. <<http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk>> (05 January 2006).
- Clardy, Bruce I, Peter T. Hanley, Charles C. Hawley, and Joseph C. LaBelle. *Guide to the Bedrock and Glacial Geology of the Glenn Highway, Anchorage to the Matanuska Glacier and the Matanuska Coal Mining District*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Geological Society, 1984.
- Connor, Cathy and Daniel O’Haire. *Roadside Geology of Alaska*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1988.
- Glenn Highway Corridor Management Plan*. Anchorage, AK: Prepared for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities by HDR Alaska, Inc. with support from Land Design North, 2001.
- Gruening, Ernest. *The State of Alaska*. New York: Random House, 1954.
- Hayman, Susan. “Key Points: Challenges to Successful Byway Interpretation.” From Interpretive Think Tank Luncheon and Interpretive Table Topic Luncheon, 2001. <<http://library.byways.org/display.php/KeyPoints.pdf?ID=8753>> also through <http://www.bywaysonline.org/search?q=interpretation&cat%5B%5D=document> (05 January 2006).
- Kari, James and James A. Fall. *Shem Pete’s Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena’ina*. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003.

- Kari, James and James A. Fall. "The Russian Presence in Upper Cook Inlet." In *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina* by James Kari and James A. Fall, 17-21. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003.
- Naske, Claus M. *Paving Alaska's Trails: The Work of the Alaska Road Commission*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986.
- "Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience." Prepared by the Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, 1998. <<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/ip.htm#>> (05 January 2006).
- Reger, Richard D. and DeAnne S. Pinney. "Late Wisconsin glaciation of the Cook Inlet region with emphasis on Kenai Lowland and implications for early peopling." In *Adventures Through Time: Readings in the Anthropology of Cook Inlet, Alaska*, proceedings of a symposium compiled and edited by Nancy Yaw Davis and William E. Davis, 13-35. Anchorage, AK: Cook Inlet Historical Society, 1996.
- Reger, Douglas. "Upper Cook Inlet Prehistory: the Archaeological Evidence." In *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina* by James Kari and James A. Fall, 15-16. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2003.
- Seager-Boss, Fran and Lawrence E. Roberts. *Major Coal Towns of the Matanuska Valley: A Pictorial History*. Palmer, AK: Unpublished document, 1991.
- Tellet, Anne, Kevin Skwira-Brown, and Cheryl Newman. "Making Grassroots Grow: Building and Maintaining Effective Byway Organizations." Americas Byways Resource Center, 2003. <http://www.bywaysonline.org/center/publications/order_grassroots.html> (05 January 2006).
- Thompson, Daniel R. *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance and Testing at Long Lake, Glenn Highway MP 68 to 84: AKDOT&PF, Project Number (IM-01A-5(18)/54984)*. Anchorage, AK: Office of History and Archaeology Report Number 98, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 2004.
- Veverka, John A. *Interpretive Master Planning: the essential guide for interpretive centers, parks, self-guided trails, historic sites, zoos, exhibits and programs*. Tustin, CA: Acorn Naturalists, 1994.
- Veverka, John A. "Why Your Byway Can't Succeed without "Real" Interpretation." From a presentation at the National Scenic Byways Program National Conference, August, 1999. <<http://www.heritageinterp.com/newpage1.htm>> (05 January 2006).

