



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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

SCENIC BYWAY PLANNING ADVANCES

Regional Coalition Embraces Heritage Tourism Initiative

For Immediate Release (Salem, MA) ... Support for branding and marketing the 64-mile Essex Heritage Scenic Byway gained momentum during a recent series of local meetings involving 13 Essex County communities. During planning meetings held throughout the early fall, stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests, such as representatives of local government, chambers of commerce, heritage and natural resource sites and civic organizations, identified and discussed the key historic, natural, and scenic qualities that characterize the state designated North Shore coastal route. The information gathered during the meetings is being used to help prepare a corridor management plan for the byway.

Anchored at each end by the gateway communities of Lynn and Newburyport, the byway passes through the city and towns of Swampscott, Marblehead, Salem, Beverly, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, Ipswich, Rowley, and Newbury.



“We are thrilled by the enthusiastic support being offered for the byway,” said Annie Harris, executive director of the nonprofit Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage), which is spearheading the regional initiative. “People are beginning to see the byway as a tool that a community can use to both preserve and promote the physical assets that define its very character. By working as a regional coalition, we can create and market a distinctive and powerful brand that we believe will boost local economies by drawing heritage tourists from both near and far.”

Launched in early June by Essex Heritage with support from a consulting team led by the Newburyport-based planning firm of Taintor & Associates, the 21-month planning process is funded with grants from the National Scenic Byway Program and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. A series of open meetings are being held to solicit community input throughout the planning phases.

Developed with substantial community involvement, the corridor management plan will identify strategies for preserving, enhancing, and promoting the byway’s scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and natural qualities. In addition, a corridor management plan is a prerequisite for attaining designation as a National Scenic Byway, a distinction that will bring added recognition and possibly additional federal funding to the route and the region.

Together, the 13 byway communities contain over 8,700 properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as several National Historic Landmark properties. The region's unique story is chronicled by the numerous historical societies and house museums found along the byway. Easily accessed from the route are numerous beaches, trails, and parcels of conservation land open to the public. Five Essex Heritage visitor centers along the route help byway travelers discover the region's rich heritage

For additional information, please visit: www.Essexheritage.org/scenicbyways

 <p>ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA</p>	<p>About the Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage</p> <p>Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a non profit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area’s unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.</p>
	<p>About Salem Maritime National Historic Site</p> <p>Salem Maritime National Historic Site was designated in 1937, the first National Historic Site in the National Park Service system. The nine acre site includes the homes of merchants and mariners, the Salem Custom House in which the famous author Nathaniel Hawthorne worked, and a replica of the three-masted cargo vessel <i>Friendship</i>. Today, the rangers and volunteers of Salem Maritime NHS continue to inform and inspire visitors with the maritime history of New England and the United States. For more information, visit us on the web at www.nps.gov/sama or call 978-740-1650.</p>