



### *What's Your Sign?*

Each of the state's Scenic Byways are marked by a recognizable sign.

When I was a kid it was common for people to take a Sunday drive. And when people drove in a leisurely

fashion, regardless of the day, we would proclaim them "Sunday drivers." Our state has created eight inviting road trips perfect for the Sunday driver in all of us. These are part of the State Scenic Byway Program, which includes the Delaware River, Millstone Valley, Upper Freehold Historic Farmland, Warren Heritage, Western Highlands, Pine Barrens, and Bayshore Heritage Byways, the latter two being the ones in our region. As a member of the committee at the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition that sponsors this vehicular corridor, I'm most familiar with the Bayshore Heritage.

The NJ Department of Transportation (DOT) is part of a larger National Byways program. Running through some of the most picturesque areas, each designated route must have outstanding scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, historic, or archaeological significance. The program is a voluntary, community-based initiative that encourages people to enjoy some of America's most memorable road trips. The Bayshore Heritage and Pine Barrens Byways are the most ambitious of the drives, each one encompassing about four times the

length of the others. Bayshore Heritage begins at Cape May Point and ends near the Delaware Memorial Bridge, running parallel to our Delaware Bayshore—with inlets, marinas, and water vistas— for 122 miles. The Pine Barrens has three routes but basically covers Tuckerton to Estell Manor, encompassing the pine forests and small tea-colored streams typical of that area. It joins up with the Bayshore Heritage section in its southern portion.

A recent survey showed that it is primarily locals traveling these roads for recreational pleasure. The Bayshore Heritage Byway has the greatest number of out-of-state visitors at its southern terminus in Cape May, but mostly it is you, the people who live near a byway, who are enjoying its intrinsic qualities.

Signage is essential to enable people to follow the trails; by way of example, the Bayshore Heritage Byway includes at least 27 county roads and three state roads. All of the corridors have a specific color scheme, as well as icons associated with the region. The Bayshore Heritage sign has an osprey flying toward the East Point Lighthouse along the Bay. The Pine Barrens sign

has a beached canoe, signifying the abundance of waterways that can be paddled in small boats.

The Bayshore Heritage Byway, for me, offers a sense of past and present mixing together along the roadway. The big skies of the Bayshore marshes and abundant wildlife typify our area along its length. The architecture, natural history, maritime past and present, and agriculture are significant aspects of our byway, leading to its inclusion in the program.

Here are a few highlights found along our Byway. The Cape May Meadows and Cape May Point State Park, with its 1859 lighthouse, walks, and avian viewing platforms, mark the southernmost spot. Travel north, and Historic Cold Spring Village, a living history museum, is a step back in time. The beaches that parallel Route 47 are the famed migratory stopover areas of shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors that span the seasons.

On to Cumberland County where nature and birding opportunities abound. Check out NJ Audubon and DOT's Delaware Bayshore Birding and Wildlife Trails guide, either online or in print, or

go to places like the Natural Lands' Eagle Trail and Maple Avenue Trail. Choose from an abundance of State Wildlife Management Areas like Heislerville and Egg Island/Turkey Point. Tour the 1849 East Point Lighthouse and see the newly furnished period rooms. Stop at the Bayshore Center in Bivalve for a lesson in our maritime history; enjoy some of the bay's bounty at the café.

Some of Salem County's highlights are Fort Mott and Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuges. Salem boasts a rich architectural heritage, including the Quaker-built "pattern brick homes" whose bricks often give insight into the dates they were constructed. The 1734 Hancock House with its Flemish-bond brickwork and Revolutionary War stories is worth a tour. Get your binoculars polished up for a scan of the Mannington Meadows.

Check out the public access points of the PSEG Wetland Restoration sites along the length of the corridor—at Dennisville, Thompson's Beach, Commercial Township, Cohansey, and Alloway. Make some stops at the farm stands.

The world's largest land trust, The Nature Conservancy, considers the NJ Delaware Bayshore one of the "Last Great Places" on Earth. Our area has numerous conservation designations due to its rich wetlands and abundant wildlife, from state, national, and international organizations. So be a Sunday driver and meander along our regional byways. You'll be surprised by the many treasures you'll find.

Read more about NJ Scenic Byways at [state.nj.us/transportation/community/scenic/byways.shtm](http://state.nj.us/transportation/community/scenic/byways.shtm).