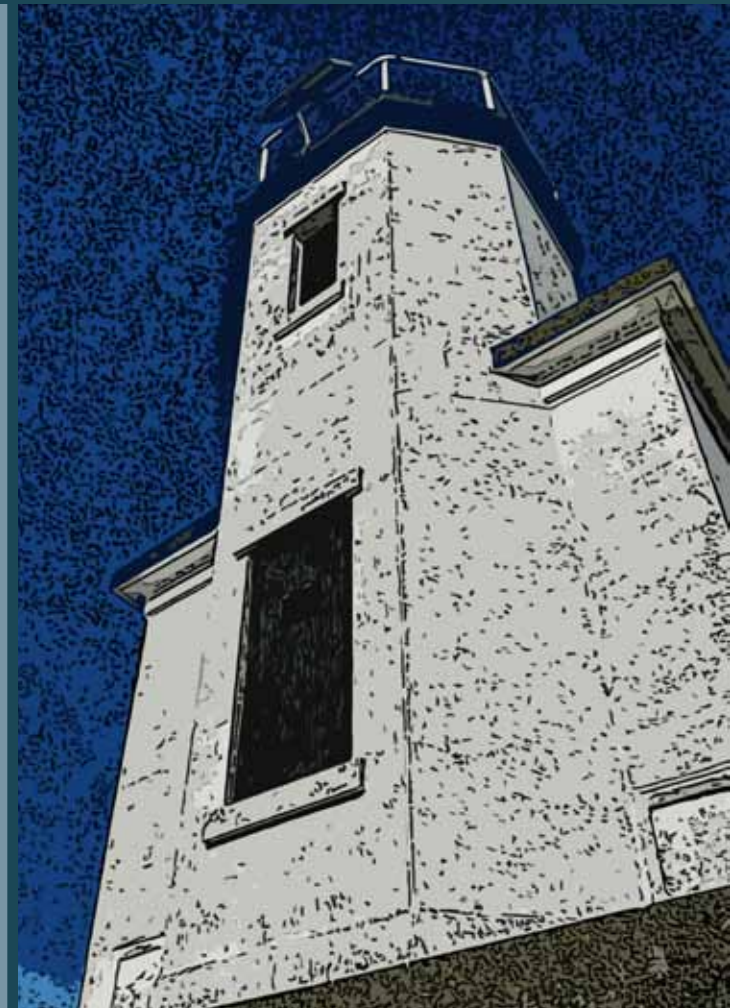


**ATTRACTING STEWARDSHIP-
MINDED VISITORS: MARKETING
AND PROMOTIONS PROGRAM**

10





A partial view of the Roche Harbor Marina

Stewardship-minded people, who bring a strong commitment to preserving the unique environment of the San Juan Islands,...

are ideal byway visitors. Marketing and promotional strategies and programs can help attract more visitors to the byway, but also can be valuable tools in influencing and managing visitation patterns and instilling important stewardship messages. The byway marketing and promotions program includes strategies for educating visitors about sensitive resources and ecosystems, as well as about local culture and rural lifestyles in the islands. Protecting and preserving these aspects so that the San Juan Islands will always be a special place will be critical as time goes on. As such, encouraging

stewardship and conservation of the sensitive resources and intrinsic qualities of the islands is an integral aspect of the marketing and promotions program for the byway.

Marketing and promotion of the byway can result in direct economic benefits to the San Juan Islands. More travel translates to more overnight stays, more jobs, and more revenue generated by sales and lodging taxes. Existing businesses (restaurants, shops, galleries, motels, hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, and others) benefit from tourism. The prevalence of

locally-owned establishments is unique in the San Juan Islands and should be promoted as such. Additional discussion related to the economic benefits associated with San Juan Islands visitors can be found in Section 5 of this corridor management plan.

Promoting Geotourism in the Islands

Geotourism, green tourism, sustainable tourism, ecotourism, ecological tourism – regardless of the terms used – reflects the principles of sustainability and environmental consciousness that are becoming increasingly important to travelers. Tourism that sustains and enhances the geographic character and ecological balance of a place – including its environment, character, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of local residents – is highly desirable to today’s travelers. The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau is already applying geotourism principles and has the potential to be viewed as a national leader. Effective visitor management for the scenic byway will be an important tool in this endeavor. A common message on tourism promotional materials is: “Take only memories and leave only footprints so these special places will remain pristine and beautiful for future generations.” (See pages 10-4 and 10-5 for more about the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau’s geotourism marketing and educational message.)

Ecotourism

Ecotourism, one dimension of geotourism, is focused on responsible and low-impact travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas. Ecotourism appeals to ecologically- and socially-conscious travelers through opportunities to be involved in conservation and environmentally-friendly activities. Ecotourists are often encouraged to volunteer and/or provide funds to benefit local ecological and preservation initiatives. One of the common goals of ecotourism is to offer insight into the impact

of human beings on the environment and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats. Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment through promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, and creation of economic opportunities for local communities. Local best practices being implemented in the San Juan Islands include shore-based whale watching, low impact camping and hiking (pack-it-in/pack-it-out), and onsite information about resource protection.

Agri-tourism

Agri-tourism, another dimension of geotourism, involves agriculturally-based operations or activities that bring visitors to a farm or ranch. Agri-tourism has different definitions in different parts of the world, and sometimes refers specifically to farm stays (as in Italy). Elsewhere, agri-tourism includes a wide variety of activities, including buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a B&B on a farm.

Agri-tourism is widespread in America, and the San Juan Islands provide an attractive setting for agri-tourism interests. In the islands, agri-tourists can choose from a wide range of activities that include picking fruits and vegetables, visiting different types of farms and ranches, riding horses, learning about wine and cheesemaking, and oyster growing, or shopping in farm gift shops and farm stands for local and regional produce or hand-crafted gifts.

Volun-tourism

Volunteer travel, volunteer vacations or volun-tourism involves volunteering for a charitable cause as part of a travel or vacation

experience. Types of volunteer vacations are diverse, from low-skill work cleaning up local wildlife areas to high-skill medical aid in a foreign country. Volun-tourism participants are diverse, but they typically share a desire to “do something good” while also experiencing new places and challenges. Visitors are becoming more interested in volunteer activities as part of the experience of their vacation. In the San Juan Islands, visitors and residents can get involved in:

- Clean up and litter removal
- Revegetation and native planting projects
- Trail building and maintenance
- Rehabilitation of cultural landscapes and historic structures
- Other ecological and stewardship activities

GEOTOURISM DEFINED

In 1997, the National Geographic Society defined geotourism as “best practice” tourism that sustains, or even enhances, the geographical character of a place - its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.



The Geotourism Charter

The National Geographic Society has drawn up a "Geotourism Charter" based on 13 principles:

1. **Integrity of place:** Enhance geographical character by developing and improving it in ways distinctive to the locale, reflective of its natural and cultural heritage, so as to encourage market differentiation and cultural pride.
2. **International codes:** Adhere to the principles embodied in the World Tourism Organization's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Principles of the Cultural Tourism Charter established by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).
3. **Market selectivity:** Encourage growth in tourism market segments most likely to appreciate, respect, and disseminate information about the distinctive assets of the locale.
4. **Market diversity:** Encourage a full range of appropriate food and lodging facilities, so as to appeal to the entire demographic spectrum of the geotourism market and so maximize economic resiliency over both the short and long term.
5. **Visitor satisfaction:** Ensure that satisfied, excited geotourists bring new vacation stories home and encourage friends to experience the same thing, thus providing continuing demand for the destination.
6. **Community involvement:** Base tourism on community resources to the extent possible, encouraging local small businesses and civic groups to build partnerships to promote and provide a distinctive, honest (authentic) visitor experience and market their locales effectively. Help businesses develop approaches to tourism that build on the area's nature, history and culture, including food and drink, artisanry, performance arts, etc.



Leave Only Footprints in

(Marketing Message of the San

“Geotourism” is thought to be more encompassing than ecotourism and sustainable tourism – it is a concept that bridges all forms of sustainability in tourism. Like ecotourism, geotourism promotes a virtuous circle with tourism revenues providing a local incentive to protect what visitors are coming to see, but extending the principle beyond nature and ecology to incorporate all characteristics that contribute to sense of place, such as historic structures, living and traditional culture, landscapes, cuisine, arts and artisanry, as well as local flora and fauna. Geotourism incorporates sustainability principles, but in addition to the do-no-harm ethic, geotourism focuses on the place as a whole.

We look forward to your visit to the beautiful San Juan Islands, and we hope your visit exceeds your expectations for recreation, relaxation and rejuvenation. Please keep the following in mind, leaving little impact on our precious Islands and surrounding waters.

SAN JUAN COUNTY IS A MARINE STEWARDSHIP AREA

There are numerous protections, both voluntary and regulatory, that exist to protect and restore the waters and wildlife of San Juan County. Remember, our

responsible use of these waters today will allow for our enjoyment tomorrow. Puget Sound starts here in the Salish Sea.

WATER AND ENERGY

We are surrounded by salt water, but our fresh water resources are limited. Take short showers and reuse towels. Report water leaks to your innkeeper. Turn off lights when not in use. Although the Puget Sound area appears pristine, on an average day more than 143,000 pounds of toxic chemicals enter its waters. Please do your part to keep this in mind when visiting.

RECYCLE AND DON'T LITTER

Recycle newspapers, magazines, plastics, glass, cans, etc. All of San Juan County is a “no litter zone.”

HIKING AND BEACHCOMBING

Stay on designated trails and watch where you step. Leave starfish and other tidepool creatures in their natural environments. Coast Salish tribes have frequented the Islands for thousands of years. Please do not disturb midden sites, artifacts or areas of cultural significance. Build fires in established fire pits only, and only if our

the San Juan Islands

(Juan Islands Visitors Bureau)

burning ban (mid June–mid Oct.) is not in effect. Be respectful of private property. Pack out all garbage.

PETS

Keep pets leashed, and pick up after your companion.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

The Islands are full of “watchable wildlife.” Ask your innkeeper or the Chamber of Commerce visitor centers about wildlife viewing locations and commercial wildlife tours. Keep your distance and respect wildlife and their habitats.

WHALE WATCHING

The San Juan Islands are home to nearly 90 endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales which were listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2005. Conservation of these magnificent mammals depends on increasing salmon prey, decreasing toxins that enter Puget Sound and minimizing vessel impacts.

Follow the “Be Whale Wise” guidelines and Washington State laws. New federal regulations are expected for summer 2011. You can watch whales from the shore or from a boat. Lime Kiln Point State Park, a.k.a. Whale Watch Park, on San Juan Island is a great shoreline location. If you choose to go on a boat with a commercial operator, select a Pacific Whale Watch Association member dedicated to following best whale watching practices. If you are whale watching from a private boat, you must stay at least 100 yards away from the whales and respect the voluntary “No Boat Zones” along the west side of San Juan Island. Get whale watch guidelines and the new regulations at The Whale Museum, www.whalemuseum.org, or at Chamber of Commerce visitor centers.

STRANDED AND INJURED ANIMALS

Report all stranded or injured marine mammals to The Whale Museum’s Hotline, 800-562-8832, and all

other wildlife to Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, 360-378-5000. Don’t touch, pick up or feed an animal you think is injured or stranded; phone in its location immediately.

BOATING

While boating near any of our 83 National Wildlife Refuges, or seal haulout and sea bird nesting areas, maintain at least a 200-yard distance to avoid disturbance. Be sensitive to eelgrass and kelp bed habitats. When anchoring, select sites that do not disturb sediments and vegetation in less than 30’ of water. Overnight moorage is available at over a dozen marinas and Marine State Parks.

FISHING AND CRABBING

Be aware of State Fisheries regulations, biological preserves, special bottomfish recovery zones, and seasonal and area closures for crabbing, fishing, and collection of shellfish and seaweeds.

7. **Community benefit:** Encourage micro- to medium-size enterprises and tourism business strategies that emphasize economic and social benefits to involved communities, especially poverty alleviation, with clear communication of the destination stewardship policies required to maintain those benefits.
8. **Protection and enhancement of destination appeal:** Encourage businesses to sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, aesthetic appeal, and local culture. Prevent degradation by keeping volumes of visitors within maximum acceptable limits. Seek business models that can operate profitably within those limits. Use persuasion, incentives, and legal enforcement as needed.
9. **Land use:** Anticipate development pressures and apply techniques to prevent undesired overdevelopment and degradation. Contain resort and vacation-home sprawl, especially on coasts and islands, so as to retain a diversity of natural and scenic environments and ensure continued resident access to waterfronts. Encourage major self-contained tourism attractions, such as large-scale theme parks and convention centers unrelated to character of place, to be sited in needier locations with no significant ecological, scenic, or cultural assets.
10. **Conservation of resources:** Encourage businesses to minimize water pollution, solid waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals, and overly bright nighttime lighting. Advertise these measures in a way that attracts the large, environmentally sympathetic visitors.
11. **Planning:** Recognize and respect immediate economic needs without sacrificing long-term character and the geotourism potential of the destination. Where tourism



attracts in-migration of workers, develop new communities that themselves constitute a destination enhancement. Strive to diversify the economy and limit population influx to sustainable levels. Adopt public strategies for mitigating practices that are incompatible with geotourism and damaging to the image of the destination.

12. **Interactive interpretation:** Engage both visitors and hosts in learning about the place. Encourage residents to promote the natural and cultural heritage of their communities so visitors gain a richer experience and residents develop pride in their locales.
13. **Evaluation:** Establish an evaluation process to be conducted on a regular basis by an independent panel representing all stakeholder interests, and publicize evaluation results.

The Ideal San Juan Islands Scenic Byway Visitor

Given the considerations and influences described above, the ideal byway visitor, and the type of visitor targeted in general by the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, is an environmentally-conscious nature lover – a geotourist – who enjoys being surrounded by scenic beauty and learning about the natural and cultural history of a destination.

This ideal visitor believes and understands the responsibilities and rewards of geotourism, as well as stewardship principles. This visitor wants to experience “soft adventure” outdoor recreation, responsible wildlife watching, unique attractions, local foods and wines, local art, performing arts, festivals and events.

This ideal visitor would stay for one, two, or more nights in the islands, and once home would tell friends and family about his/her wonderful experience in the San Juans. Consistent with the vision and mission of the San Juan Islands Scenic

Byway, the ideal visitor would take the environmental and stewardship lessons learned on their trip to the islands back to benefit their own communities and other sensitive environments around the world.

The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau currently targets a visitor demographic that includes educated couples in the 26-64 age bracket (such as Gen-Xers and Baby Boomers) with household incomes of over \$100,000, and who are interested in scenic beauty, nature, outdoor recreation, local cuisine, and cultural festivals, events, and attractions. The destination weddings market is also a focus, marketing to

brides who can bring groups of 10 to 300 or more to the islands.

Consistent with the geotourism charter (and principle number 4), the byway may wish to diversify its target market and encourage a full range of appropriate food and lodging facilities to appeal to the entire demographic spectrum of the geotourism market and maximize economic resiliency over both the short and long term.

For more about the typical characteristics of San Juan Islands visitors and the types of activities they are interested in, refer to Section 5 of the corridor management plan.



Gen-Xers and Baby Boomers are part of the current target market of the San Juan Islands Visitor Bureau.

Key Travel Trends and Target Consumer Markets

Based on research and data from the US Travel Association about tourism in Washington state, several key travel trends are emerging in the United States (US), and marketing and promotion of the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway should consider these influences.

- Visitors are increasingly interested in geotourism that provides opportunities for ecotourism, sustainability, and volun-tourism.
- Agri-tourism and culinary tourism have gained momentum as a solid segment of the tourism market in the US.
- Travelers are taking shorter, more frequent trips closer to home. This is a trend that is influenced by the economy and time constraints of modern travelers.
- Travelers are doing less advance planning and making more last-minute bookings related to their travel, again due to the economy and busy schedules. People often are not sure



As visitors demand a more authentic travel experience, heritage tourism has become a growing interest.

- they will have the time or resources to take a trip until the last minute.
- Websites are crucial to travel planning, due in large part to the growing accessibility of the Internet, as well as travelers having less time to plan ahead. People continue to use the Internet to plan and book their trips. Online travel programs have largely replaced travel agent services, and many destinations are providing authentic, niche experiences in ways that make them attractive and easy to purchase online.
- Canada is becoming a key market for the San Juan Islands due to its geographic proximity and favorable exchange rates, although this tends to ebb and flow with the value of the dollar.
- International interest in the San Juan Islands is growing. Also, the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver BC generated increased travel throughout the region, and it is hoped that people from around the world who were in the area during the Olympics will be attracted to come back and spend more time.
- Visitors are demanding more authentic and enriching travel experiences – unique destinations and experiences with more exposure to local culture. Agri-tourism, culinary tourism, volun-tourism, education vacations, nature-based/watchable wildlife, history/heritage, arts, culture, heritage tourism, and other activities are all part of this growing interest. More and more, travelers want the “local experience” of the places they visit, not the “visitor experience,” and as such, they seek out the local fare and culture when they travel.



Dispersing visitors to areas on the islands that are equipped with facilities and services to address their needs, such as Friday Harbor, can help to minimize impacts to sensitive ecosystems.

Other Marketing Objectives and Strategies

Ongoing promotion of geotourism and focusing on marketing that follows the key trends described above as part of marketing the byway experience will be important. Additional marketing objectives and strategies for the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway are described below.

Overarching Objectives

- **Continue Current Efforts** – The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau and local chambers of commerce already implement a strong tourism promotion program for the islands with strategies and activities that include a focus on geotourism and the unique experience of the islands. The visitors bureau and local chambers of commerce also continuously market and promote the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway. The byway organization should continue to work closely with the visitors bureau and the local chambers of commerce to support and participate in events and activities consistent with the byway's vision and mission.

- **Strengthen Partnerships** – Continue to build strong partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation between byway communities across the islands, and encourage public and private partnerships in economic development and tourism planning. Continue to work with existing preservation and environmental organizations in the islands to promote educational and stewardship messages. Local and state elected officials and politicians should be engaged in byway activities and encouraged to provide support as feasible.
- **Seek Additional Funding** – Identify and generate funding opportunities for byway-specific marketing and promotional activities. Funding for byway-specific marketing and promotions programs may be available from the National Scenic Byways Program. Funding and support from existing businesses, organizations, and local governments could also help in implementation of short-term projects.

Other specific marketing and promotional principles and strategies for the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway are described below.

Target and Educate Existing Visitors

The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau estimates that approximately one to one-and-a-half million visitors come to the islands annually, in addition to second-home property owners who vacation in the islands. The visitors are already coming, and they are a captive audience for marketing the geotourism experience of the byway and education related to the benefits of stewardship and preservation. There is less need to bring more visitors to the islands if visitors already coming choose to stay longer, thereby spending more and experiencing more history, arts, and culture in the islands.

Manage Visitation Intensity at Sensitive Sites

Consistent with the Geotourism Charter Principle Number 8, Protection and Enhancement of Destination Appeal, byway partners should work with land stewards and regulatory agencies to preserve and conserve natural habitats, heritage sites, aesthetic appeal, and local culture. Preventing degradation of sensitive sites by keeping volumes of visitors within maximum acceptable limits will be an important ongoing objective.

While ongoing visitation and tourism is important to the local and regional economy, tourism must be managed in a way that preserves the unique and attractive characteristics that draw visitors to the islands and that sustains the natural environment and local quality of life.

Attract and Disperse Visitors to Places with Facilities and Services Available to Support Their Needs

The byway plan includes recommendations for dispersing visitors to sites in the islands that are equipped with facilities and services to address their needs and interests. Sensitive sites and ecosystems and/or locations where public facilities have not yet been developed should not be actively promoted or identified as places to visit along the byway. Another important strategy is to promote a mix of places and opportunities for visitors throughout the islands. This will help to disperse tourism activity and minimize heavy concentrations of visitors at specific locations during the peak summer season.

Extending the Visitor Season

In order to better balance economic activity and support businesses in the



Byway partners should work with public and private marinas to promote the water experience of the byway.

islands, the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau targets specific consumer markets seeking to extend travel and visitation activity to spring and fall leisure travelers. This includes travelers from around the Pacific Northwest, with a heavy concentration in the Seattle/Puget Sound area and Portland, Oregon as a secondary market. Victoria and Vancouver BC are also potential target markets depending on exchange rates.

The San Juan Islands are busy and bustling during the summer months, although in recent years, the economic downturn has slowed summer business. The byway should be promoted as a “year-around” destination. The rain shadow effect in the islands, which causes more sun and drier weather than other places in the region, helps to attract visitors to the islands. Spring and fall season activities that allow visitors to enjoy quiet, less congested experiences such as hiking, birding, bicycling, and visiting historic sites, should be promoted. A key message could be: “Experience our quiet seasons; come to the San Juan Islands in spring and fall.”

Promoting the Water Experience of the Byway

Much of the San Juan Islands’ history, culture, scenic qualities, and recreation opportunities revolve around water. The marine highway experience of the byway, and the unique focus on water transportation, including travel aboard Washington State Ferries vessels, boats, kayaks, and other water craft, is an attractive aspect of the byway, and one that sets it apart from other byways throughout the country. The byway partners should continue to work with Washington State Ferries, ports, private marinas, boating groups, and others to locate byway information on bulletin boards and kiosks, including important stewardship and geotourism messages. As part of encouraging car-free vacations and multi-modal connections, transit should be extended to ports and marinas, providing regular service during the boating season.

Encourage Car-free Vacations

As the general population grows, more and more visitors might be bringing cars to the islands. There is limited capacity on the ferries, some of the rural roads in the islands are narrow, and there are limited areas to park cars. Even under today’s

conditions, traffic congestion and ferry wait times occur during the peak summer season. More traffic and congestion also equate to more environmental impacts. Sensitive marine and land ecosystems can be impacted by motor vehicle pollution. Also, more motor vehicle use results in a larger carbon footprint associated with tourism in the islands. These problems not only affect the environment, they also can result in negative experiences for visitors. In keeping with the principles of geotourism and ecotourism, visitors to the San Juan Islands should be encouraged to leave their cars at home or at parking facilities at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal and take car-free vacations to the islands.

Promote Transit and a “Share the Road” Culture

In step with encouraging more car-free vacations, visitors need to have other transportation options, and they need to feel comfortable that they’ll be able to get around the islands without their cars. The existing privately-operated transit systems will need more economic support to be able to expand and serve visitors on a more frequent and continual basis. Bicycling and use of small personal transport vehicles, such as mopeds, and scoot cars, will only succeed as viable modes of transportation if residents and visitors are committed to sharing the road. The existing “Share the Road” campaign should continue and be expanded on the islands. Motorists and bicyclists can benefit from more education about sharing the road via displays on the ferries and at ferry terminals, and through brochures and website information. Promotion of walking routes and installation of more “Pedestrian Crossing” signs and other improvements at intersections and areas near bus stops should be provided to slow and “calm” traffic and



Motorists and bicyclists can benefit from more education about sharing the road. (This photo shows bicyclists on the road to the Anacortes Ferry Terminal.)

alert drivers of pedestrians. Shoulder widening throughout the islands and development of shared-use trails between popular visitor destinations will help to encourage bicycling and walking activity. Refer to Section 7 for additional recommendations.

Involve Future Generations

Partner with local schools and involve students in programs and projects that achieve byway goals, objectives, and strategies. This will help promote the byway on a local level and inspire stewardship for the byway in future generations of residents and visitors.

Involve Communities and the Public on an Ongoing Basis

Marketing plans should involve the communities on the islands public as much as possible. Involving interested citizens, local businesses, public agencies, and special interest groups will increase support for the program. Continual efforts should be made to notify the public of byway-related activities, inform them of progress on projects and invite their input at each step of the way.



Involving local students will help inspire stewardship of the byway in future visitors.

Coordinate with Other Existing Visitor Outreach and Tourism Promotion Programs

To ensure consistency in messages conveyed to visitors and a coordinated approach to outreach and promotion of the byway, it will be important to continue to coordinate with other existing organizations and agencies that provide public information. In addition to the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, the San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce, and the Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce, outreach to agencies and organizations may also include the:

- Washington State Ferries
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
- National Park Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Educational organizations
- Recreational/sports facilities/bicycling clubs
- Environmental organizations
- Historical societies, museums, and historic preservation groups
- Other relevant public agencies, non-profit and private organizations

Byway Subcommittees

Byway subcommittees can be formed to work with the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, the local chambers of commerce, and other partners on an ongoing marketing and promotions program, corridor stewardship activities, and other tasks (see Section 12).



It is important to continue coordination with WSF concerning promotion of the byway.

A byway marketing and promotions subcommittee (formed within the Byway Partnership) can help with several tasks, including overseeing development of byway-specific print and/or digital brochures, travel guides, displays, and other tools, as well as carrying out media relations, promotional campaigns and other programs. This subcommittee would work closely with the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, local chambers of commerce, and other partners in marketing and promoting the byway.

Marketing and Promotions Tools

There are a variety of specific tools and projects that aid marketing and promotional efforts for the San Juan Islands. Many tools, such as travel guides and brochures, are already being developed and distributed by others each year. Following are recommendations for byway-specific tools.

Byway Interpretive Guide(s) and Map(s) and Information Displays

As a primary promotional piece, the byway partners could develop a full-color brochure in the form of an interpretive guide and map. These could be created as hand-held guides, vertical displays at information centers and byway hubs, and as digital/electronic displays for websites. The byway map should depict the following features at a minimum:

- Intrinsic qualities as identified in Section 4 of this plan
- Scenic photos of the corridor including scenic vistas and views
- Historic features and related interpretive stories and themes
- Parks, forests, and other public lands that byway visitors are encouraged to see
- Trails, camping, hiking, biking, and other recreational opportunities
- Interpretive centers and visitor information sites
- Scenic viewpoints, pull-off areas, and public restroom facilities
- Cultural events and information

The brochure should also include:

- Calendar of events (this could include a listing of typical annual events with a website to information about special events)
- Websites and regional contact information
- And most importantly, stewardship messages

This information may be a lot for one guide, and as such, it may be desirable to develop multiple guides and maps. To maximize usefulness, flexibility, and easy updating, the guides and maps could

be made accessible on-line and available for visitors to print their own copies, rather than printing copies of all guides. Specific guides and maps could be created to highlight special tours related to:

- Arts and culture
- Farms and barns (farm stands, farmers markets)
- Bicycling
- Historic sites/heritage
- Wildlife watching/nature
- Recreation sites and opportunities
- Sight-seeing/scenic areas

Each guide and map should include interpretation related to the subject matter, stewardship messages, and other important information for visitors. Guides should be professionally designed and produced. Print versions should be distributed to brochure racks throughout the state and Pacific Northwest region, such as at visitor centers, key visitor destinations, hotels, parks, onboard the Washington State Ferries and at ferry terminals. The brand identity of the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway should be reinforced by using the byway's name, logo, and familiar themes and story lines on the guides/brochures.

Washington State Ferries is working with the byway partners to provide display space on existing walls and kiosks at ferry terminals for permanent displays of byway information. Funding for a first phase of this project has already been provided by the National Scenic Byways Program. WSF will also provide display space onboard the ferries for a byway map poster. This includes onboard vessels on the Salish Sea/San Juan Islands routes, as well as onboard other routes in the region.

Media Outreach

Involving the media is a very cost-effective way to get the word out to the public, and also a means for conveying a strong message about the commitment to geotourism in the islands. The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau already maintains strong ties with media representatives and promotes the byway to media contacts such as magazines, newspapers, television and radio venues. Byway-specific opportunities include the following.

- Prepare notices of special events, such as festivals, project ribbon-cuttings, ground-breaking ceremonies, and special byway tours (invite media, the public, and all involved groups).

- Provide local and regional newspaper stories on the byway; perhaps a byway group member could write a regular column on the byway and related issues.
- Develop a press kit that contains the byway name, logo, themes, story lines, and color photos of spectacular features – make the reporter's or columnist's job easier by giving them everything they need (the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau already provides this type of package for interested media representatives).
- Provide notices of byway meetings and activities to local radio and online community bulletin boards.
- Continue to promote the byway's significance to the region and stewardship activities through locally-produced videos or as guests on local television talk shows or programs (update the current three videos as funding allows).

Social Marketing

Social marketing programs and services such as Twitter, Facebook, FourSquare, Groupon, travel websites, popular blogging sites, and others have become

part of mainstream in how people communicate, learn about places and events, and plan leisure activities and vacations. The byway partners should work with the San Juan Islands Visitor Bureau and other local organizations and agencies to build links and relationships to these programs. For example, the byway should consider establishing its own Facebook page and assigning twittering responsibilities to byway partners to market and promote byway places and events.

Portable Displays

Free-standing portable displays provide information to a wide variety of people at a relatively low cost. Displays should include a byway map, photographs of the byway, and information about key features. Displays could be placed at community venues, schools, special events (e.g., the County Fair), conferences, trade shows, libraries, community centers, chamber offices, transportation/transit hubs, and other public buildings throughout the islands. As mentioned above, Washington State Ferries has agreed to provide display space on existing walls and kiosks at ferry terminals for permanent byway information displays.

Copies of the displays can be developed for installation at multiple sites. Being able to set up the display at multiple locations, moving from place to place, is a strong advantage of a portable display. The design of the display should be tailored to fit the target audience and customized to fit the byway's needs. For example, if the byway partners/volunteer base needs to be expanded, the display could encourage participation, feature contact information, and include ideas about how to get involved and support the program. Different versions could be created to highlight different aspects of the scenic byway. For example, one

version could highlight San Juan Island sites and activities, while another highlights Orcas Island sites and activities.

A marketing and promotional display for a tourism audience would need to be designed to highlight the main attractions of the region. This type of display should invite and entice visitors to experience the byway. Electronic video and/or audio features could be integrated into the display to enhance the experience, but keep in mind that this adds costs and maintenance requirements. A low-tech, self-guided display may be just as effective and easier to manage. The display should be designed for indoor as well as outdoor environments to maximize its use and flexibility.

Electronic Tours/Podcasts/Applications

Electronic media (CDs, DVDs, podcasts, apps, etc.) can provide virtual tours of the byway and aid visitors in the travel with "on-the-go" interpretation and education. Travelers can pick up a CD/DVD as they start their byway experience or download podcasts or apps of narrated tours and use these during their trip to learn more about features and stories along the byway. If CDs/DVDs and other devices are borrowed or rented, return drop boxes can be provided at convenient locations.

CDs, DVDs, and podcasts or downloadable programs (apps) can provide meaningful interpretation and information to visitors on a continual basis during their journey. They can be easy to update and can be fairly cost effective, depending on the level of detail of video display. The main themes of the byway can be told. "Voices" from the byway's past and present can be reflected in the audio, along with interesting facts about byway features. Imagine an artist describing their craft, a farmer discussing their products, or a tribal

elder telling of an important tradition. Myriad stories and aspects of the byway can be interpreted and promoted this way. These methods are highly resourceful, bringing the advantage of not having to update and reprint paper brochures or static signs and displays. They also minimize intrusion on the scenic landscape.

Speakers' Kits

Community members and supporters of the byway can get involved in promoting the byway through the use of a digital media slide shows and presentations prepared for this purpose. This presentation can be given at civic groups and community meetings to promote the byway. The kit could be made available to the public to take to other places they may travel to promote the islands. The speakers' kit should emphasize the byway's commitment to stewardship, special places along the byway, recreational opportunities available, and suggested ways to support the program. It should also include byway contact information, and the byway guide/map and where it is available. This approach can be particularly useful in the early stages of byway promotion and when there might be specific questions from the audience that need to be answered by a "warm body" and/or through digital presentation slides that are easy to update.

Byway Specific Website/Links to Other Existing Websites

Byway information, stewardship messages, and scenic photographs can be combined to create a specific website for the byway. Currently, the byway shares a site with the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, and it may be desirable to continue this practice. However, over the long term, as more information is developed, it may be more effective for the byway to have its



own website. The website could highlight recreational, tourism, and interpretive opportunities, as well as educate visitors about sensitive resources and the need for stewardship. This website should link to state and national scenic byway sites (such as "National Scenic Byways Online" www.byways.org), as well as to other websites such as local visitor centers, chambers of commerce, and tourism organizations.

Pursuing National Scenic Byway Designation

The National Scenic Byways Program provides excellent tools for marketing and promoting byways. With national designation, the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway would be listed in brochures and

maps. Information on the national website can include not only places visitors are encouraged to see, but also stewardship and travel information messages that are critical to the byway experience.

The National Scenic Byways Program is also a comprehensive clearinghouse of guidance for local scenic byway organizations, including marketing and promotions ideas and strategies. A current feature of the National Scenic Byways Program website, www.byways.org, is a section on Branding America's Byways, which contains useful information about brand building, and most importantly, an extensive Marketing Toolkit. The toolkit contains over 300 pages of helpful advice covering such topics as:

- Moving from Product Development to Marketing
- Planning Your Party – A Checklist for Marketing Your Byway, which includes fun and helpful advice on “Who should be invited?” (identifying your target markets) and “What kind of party should we have? Toga? Luau?” (What is the Byway’s story or theme?)
- Key to Marketing Terminology
- Positioning Your Byway through Interpretation
- Profiling Your Byway
- Your Guest List (Identifying Your Target Market through Research)
- Byway Market Planning: Developing Strategies for Marketing Your Byway (includes advertising suggestions)
- Implementing Marketing Plans
- Media Relations
- Community Awareness
- Case Studies



A scenic byway brand identity should set itself apart from others, such as this example from the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way.

Building a Consistent "Brand Identity" for the Scenic Byway

Building an identity for the byway and the Byway Partnership is important. The National Scenic Byway Program refers to the “branding” process as an opportunity to set the scenic byway apart from others. Branding is the act of creating a specific impression in the minds of your target market. Successful branding usually requires a combination of elements, including:

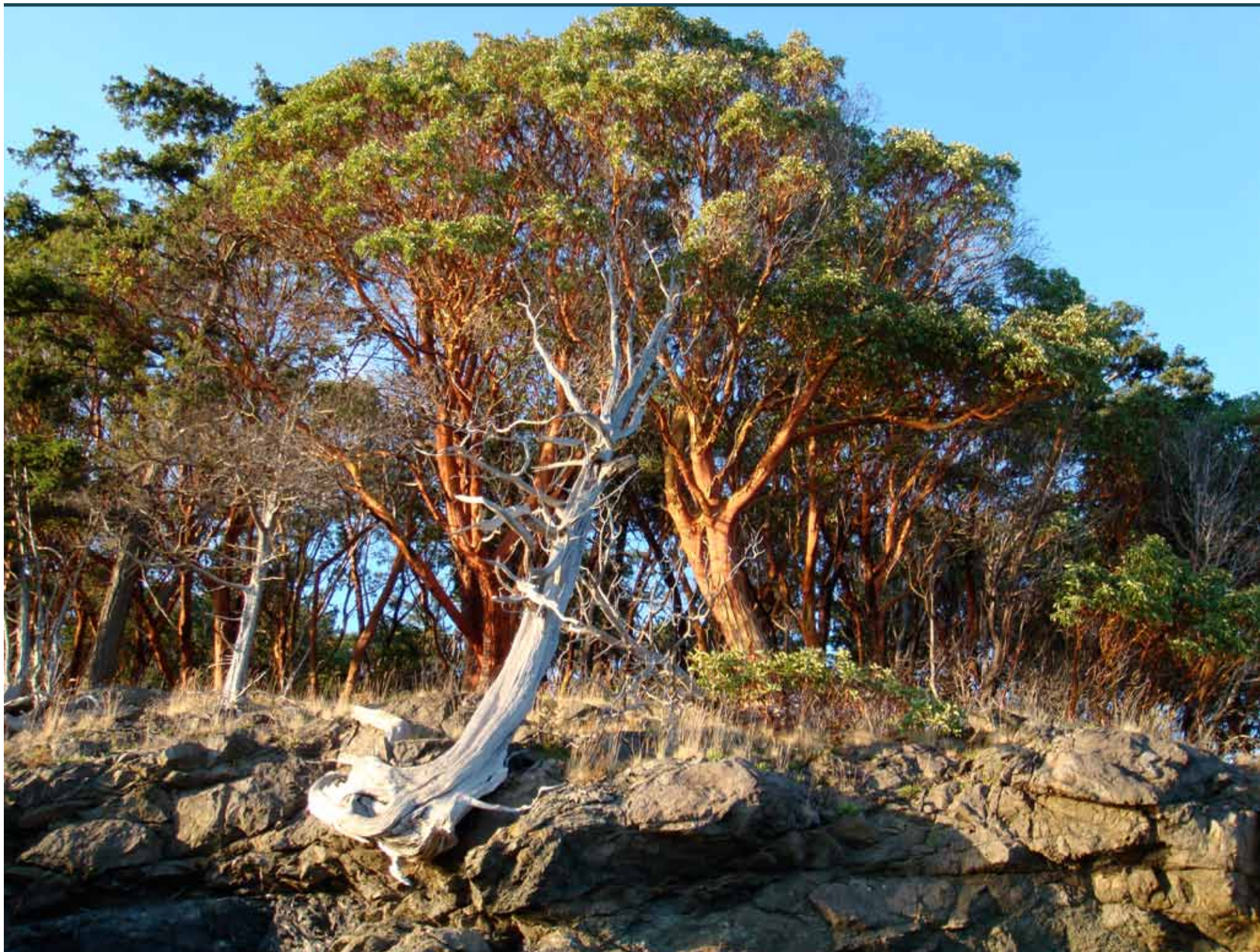
- Byway name
- Byway story
- Byway logo
- Byway organization
- Other elements such as the Byway’s vision and mission, Byway partnerships, visitors’ expectations and perceptions, and services and facilities offered to visitors
- Using the logo for all outreach and communications materials (letterhead, postcards, bookmarks, information displays, brochures/guides, business cards, etc.). Creating letterhead that includes the logo and corridor name on stationary would be good for official purposes, such as letters of support, funding applications, and endorsement of special programs.
- Logo wayshowing signs along the byway route and approaching routes, as well as at key gateways to the byway and at byway hubs/visitor information sites
- Distributing special event posters or flyers with the byway name and logo
- Developing and distributing maps with the byway name and logo
- Sending out a quarterly or monthly newsletter with the new logo
- Placing articles or notices in newspapers showing the new logo
- Using the formal name for the byway and Byway Partnership, the “San Juan Islands Scenic Byway” in all communications and collateral materials associated with the byway

The name “San Juan Islands” has already become a brand name, as a place known throughout the world as a unique and beautiful setting. The byway, as a key experience in the San Juan Islands, brings an opportunity not only to reinforce this brand identity, but also to reinforce key stewardship messages to visitors and residents of the islands.

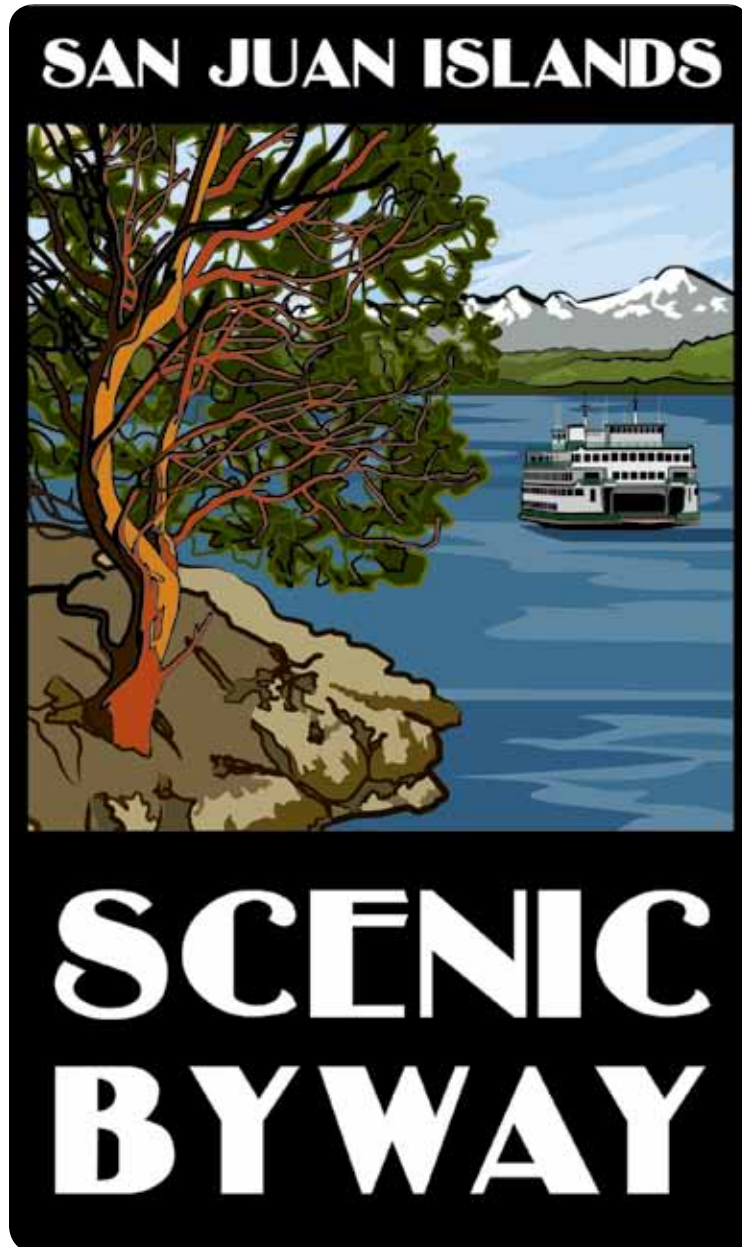
The byway’s identity should continue to be promoted and reinforced at the local, regional, state, national and international levels. Activities that will reinforce the byway identity include:



Examples of other scenic byway branding identities in Washington State



Madronas found on rocky shores throughout the islands inspired the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway logo.



San Juan Islands Scenic Byway Logo Development

The San Juan Islands Scenic Byway logo was developed based on a public process that started with a “Call for Inspiration” that requested submissions of artwork, graphics, poetry, photographs, words, and other elements expressing the essence of the San Juan Islands and its scenic/visual experience. Submissions highlighted elements such as:

- Islands surrounded by water
- The Salish Sea
- A Washington State Ferry boat
- Snow-capped peaks in view
- Agricultural scenes/fields and barns
- Mount Constitution and the view from the top
- Wildlife watching -- including orcas, birds, butterflies, fox, deer, etc.
- Prairies, wetlands, forests, and sensitive ecosystems
- Historic sites and buildings
- Galleries, studios, and artworks

Conceptual design options for the logo were developed and published in the local paper and online. They were also displayed at public meetings for comments and input. The Scenic Byway Steering Committee selected the preferred logo design based on this input. The design was then refined and is now ready to be produced for logo wayshowing signs and other uses. The selected, refined design is shown at left.

The byway partners have discussed the potential to create a “family” of logos in a complementary design style to the byway logo to represent special places along the byway, as well as special

events and programs. The logos shown below begin to reflect the concept of a family of logos, and illustrate how various logos could be developed to honor unique aspects of the San Juan Islands.

