



Byway Enhancement Awards 2023

Official Press Release

December 4, 2023



Relocation of Log Drive Historical Marker



Lisbon Area Historical Society Museum



Stratford Grange

The relocation of the Log Drives Historical Marker in Stratford, the new home for the Lisbon Area Historical Society, and the renovation of the Stratford Grange earned the 2023 Byway Enhancement Awards sponsored by the North Country Scenic Byways Council. These awards recognize outstanding community efforts that result in new or improved attractions along the North Country's 600-mile network of scenic & cultural byways. Each award comes with a donation of \$1,000 to a charitable entity associated with the project.

North Country Scenic Byways Council sponsors three types of awards. The "Read the Marker Award" recognizes improvements that encourage people to pull off the byway to learn about the people, structures or events described on one or more of New Hampshire's historical markers. The "By the Byway Award" recognizes improvements that encourage people to stop to photograph the scenery, take a walk, have a snack, or otherwise enjoy a few minutes at a local rest area, pull-off, or trailhead. The "New Attraction Award" recognizes major projects that provide a new reason for people to "Spend a Day on the Byway." Nominated projects are evaluated on criteria related to the attractiveness of the site, the activities available at the site, the nature and extent of improvements, the extent of community involvement, and demonstrated success in attracting people to the site.

The nominations for these awards included descriptions of the work that was done, the groups involved, and the way that the enhancements have attracted visitors. In each case, multiple groups of people were involved in making improvements that have led to greater use of the sites by both residents and visitors.

The relocation of the Log Drives Historical Marker earned the “Read the Marker Award.” This marker was erected in 1964 on a site in Stratford next to US 3 that then offered views of the river where, as stated on the marker, “Hardy crews of ‘white-water men’ risked life and limb in the hazardous work of the annual spring drives.” By 2022, when the marker was temporarily removed for restoration, it was clear that a better site was needed for this marker. Not only had the site had become so overgrown that the river was no longer visible, there was no safe pull-off from the busy, high-speed highway. A coordinated effort initiated by NH DOT and approved by NH Division of Historical Resources led to the installation of the restored marker on the banks of the Connecticut River at the River Launch & Picnic Area in North Stratford. Now that the marker is located at a site with safe parking, a clear view of the river, and multiple other reasons to stop, it has become one of the most accessible rather than one of the least accessible markers in the North Country. The cash award will go to the Cohos Historical Society.



The Log Drives Historical Marker is now located on the banks of the Connecticut River in the Stratford River Launch & Picnic Area

The renovation of the Stratford Grange earned the “By the Byway Award.” The Grange, which was added to the State Register of Historic Places in 2017, celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2020, and the Town of Stratford has worked with LCHIP, Moose Plate, TCEnergy, the NH Charitable Foundation and others to refurbish the building and the grounds. The front vestibule provides a small kiosk/walk in center where the public can learn about and view this historic spot. The grounds now have parking and a picnic area, which will attract more byway travelers to this spot.



The Stratford Grange before it was moved back from US 3 and refurbished.

The Stratford Grange after it was moved back from the highway and refurbished (October 2023)



The “New Attraction Award” was earned by the transformation of the former Lisbon Congregational Church Parish House into a new Lisbon Area Historical Society Museum and research/event center. The building, which was built in 1915, is visible from US 302/NH 10 in the center of Lisbon. The building had served for 40 years as the headquarters for White Mountain Footwear when it was acquired by LAHS in 2021. Following extensive renovations, the building was opened to the public in 2023. In addition to its exhibits and resources related to local history, the Parish House provides a new space for public programs and other events. The Parish House Museum is located right next to the Historic Lisbon Railroad Station and Museum and the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail, which makes gives byway travelers multiple reasons to spend some time by this new byway attraction in Lisbon.



The Lisbon Area Historical Society Museum opened in 2023 after the former Lisbon Congregational Church was renovated for museum exhibits, offices, and meeting spaces.

Prior “Read the Marker” awards recognized improvements to the site of the Stone Iron Furnace Historical Marker on NH 18 in Franconia, the installation of new historical markers along Main Street in Bethlehem, and the reopening of the Nansen Ski Jumps. Prior “By the Byway” awards recognized improvements to the Coffin Pond pull-offs on NH 18 in Sugar Hill, the Mountain Road in Weeks State Park, and the Bill Hastings Trail off US 2 in Shelburn. The first “New Attraction Award” went in 2022 to the Forest Society’s Ammonoosuc River Trail in Bethlehem.

.North Country Scenic Byways Council will continue its Byway Enhancement Awards in 2024. Once again, towns, historical museums, conservation commissions, and other organizations or groups of volunteers will be able to nominate their projects for the “Read the Marker Award,” the “By the Byway Award,” or the “New Attraction Award.” Nominees can indicate one or more non-profit organizations that would receive or share the cash award of \$1,000 if they

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