

# Our Vision

- \* **America's Byways designation for western extension**
- \* **Enhanced visitor services and identity**
- \* **Sustainable Association**
- \* **Interpretive Murals Trail-wide**
- \* **Mid-Atlantic Travel Destination**
- \* **Eastward extension through Virginia**
- \* **Heritage preservation**
- \* **Preservation of environment**
- \* **Pioneer history celebrated**
- \* **Industrial history celebrated**

# The Midland Trail Purpose

1. As a nonprofit heritage development organization, the Midland Trail Scenic Highway Association is dedicated to heritage preservation and to promotion and enhancement of the Trail's qualities for those who work, live, and visit, now and in the future.
2. The Association will work to shape a continuous, meaningfully connected, 180-mile elucidation of pioneer movement westward, natural scenic beauty, industrial history heritage, and richness of culture along one of the country's oldest historic routes.
3. For guests to the Trail, the Association is committed to meaningful and memorable interpretation that enhances visitor experience and increases appreciation for history and heritage.
4. The Association will work to provide and preserve a meaningful aesthetic experience for the visitor through unspoiled views all along the Trail.
5. The Association is committed to enhancing visitors' experiences with programs that preserve recreational qualities and encourage environmentally friendly recreational activity.
6. In keeping with a broad and progressive outlook for the Trail, the Association is dedicated to developing links with other trails and byways like the Coal Heritage Trail and the Highland Scenic Highway as we foster a regional and statewide approach to heritage development, interpretation, preservation, and management.
7. The Midland Trail is committed to the encouragement, development, and preservation of viable business growth that has minimal or no impact upon the Trail's environment.

# The Midland Trail Vision

Created by both natural and manmade forces, the fascinating and beautiful Midland Trail will be designated an All-American Road providing travelers an accurate glimpse of the challenges westward-bound pioneers faced when settling a new frontier. The Midland Trail, beginning with George Washington's vision of a road connecting the East with the West, will help travelers to understand the American westward expansion.

The Midland Trail will link together scenic byways within West Virginia that are north to south routes as well as link the original Midland Trail in neighboring Virginia, Kentucky, and points west. This east to west Midland Trail will create a heritage corridor known internationally as the road immigrant pioneers used in their search for the American Dream.

The Midland Trail will interpret pioneer settlement and the industrial economic development of the salt, coal, oil, gas, timber, metals, and chemicals as a process and model that has become compatible with recreation, environment, historic preservation, and scenic byway development.

The Midland Trail will use its redevelopment and reinvention as a scenic byway and as a national, and ultimately international, model to advance the scholarship and study of this phenomenon of rural micro-economic development through scenic byways programs.

The Midland Trail will be an environmentally conscious advocate and leader for the small communities that embody Appalachian culture in West Virginia.

The Midland Trail will coordinate and partner in every way possible with other scenic highways, recreational, cultural, and historic organizations providing support and sharing economic and community development and market opportunities.

The Midland Trail will recognize the contributions of the diverse cultures which populated the Trail and which are inextricably linked to the development of the Midland Trail and the westward expansion of this country.

The Midland Trail will act as a catalyst helping to market, focus, preserve, and interpret the distinct history of the region.

# GOALS

## OF THE MIDLAND TRAIL

**In formulating goals and objectives for the future of the Midland Trail, we first looked to the past. Establishing our organization encouraged many community people along the Trail. Some goals and objectives remain the same. Others have expanded to take on a larger vision and to provide greater service to tourists.**

**I.** The Midland Trail will be clearly identifiable and will provide easily accessible and adequate availability of visitor services.

**II.** The Midland Trail will be free of visual intrusions that detract from the beauty and scenic qualities of the Trail.

**III.** The Midland Trail will provide the visitor with interpretive opportunities to increase appreciation and understanding of the historical and heritage context of the Trail.

**IV.** The Midland Trail will support an administrative structure for continuous and active oversight of Trail management, development, and interpretive activities.

**V.** The Midland Trail will encourage business development that is at least in part tourist-driven and any development or activity that provides minimal or no disruptions to the Trail's intrinsic qualities.

**VI.** The Midland Trail will work to increase regional, statewide, national, and international appreciation of the Trail through projects that are intended to attract scholarship.

**VII.** The Midland Trail will encourage development that is sensitive to the Trail's intrinsic qualities.

**VIII.** The Midland Trail will foster ongoing cooperation and collaboration with local communities, local groups, landowners, boards and commissions, and businesses to promote all of the above goals.

# FIVE -YEAR GOALS FOR THE MIDLAND TRAIL

1. To achieve All-American Scenic Byway Status for the 180-mile Midland Trail.
2. To coordinate with and support all local and region-wide efforts at beautification and cleanup, as well as environmental protection.
3. To promote and encourage high-quality arts and crafts design, development, and marketing in the Midland Trail region.
4. To develop a Midland Trail heritage curriculum for use in West Virginia's tourism and hospitality classes.
5. To complete travel assistance programs like hospitality training, informational pull-offs with radio-transmitted information, interactive exhibits, and audio travel tools to assist travelers and increase appreciation and understanding of the Trail among local communities.
6. To upgrade the Midland Trail Web site with revenue-producing activities.
7. To develop volunteer opportunities for senior citizens and high school students.
8. To secure National Scenic Byway status for the western extension of the Trail (or incorporate it into All-American Road) and continue to build partnerships with businesses, local governments and community groups necessary for successful marketing and hospitality.
9. To build national name recognition for the Midland Trail.
10. To inventory historical properties and historical organizations and establish goals for preservation and marketing of properties, where appropriate.
11. To complete the Midland Trail signage and wayfinding plan and work with WVDOT to upgrade signage along the Byway and at attractions.
12. To complete the Midland Trail marketing and interpretation plan and work with WVDOT, WV Culture and History, WV Tourism, local governments and attractions, and others to implement the marketing program and provide consistent, high-quality interpretation of all six intrinsic qualities.
13. To monitor and/or reduce the amount of outdoor signage, and simultaneously creating a coordinated visual signage message along the Trail.
14. To develop a full-service, state-of-the-art visitor center that promotes byways, rivers, and trails in the Midland Trail region.
15. To create a Trailwide video, with at least three distinct versions for regional visitor centers.

# TWENTY -YEAR GOALS FOR THE MIDLAND TRAIL

1. To develop community strategies that collectively enhance the Midland Trail region and its qualities, creating national and international awareness of the area as a destination region.
2. To establish an academic base for multi-level scholarly study of industry, heritage, and tourism individually, and as an interconnected concept.
3. To develop and communicate a plan that establishes the Midland Trail region as the place near the Eastern Megalopolis where one can find and experience history, recreation, and relaxation.
4. To implement environmentally sustainable strategies that preserve and protect the Trail's scenic and natural qualities.
5. To actively encourage the public and private sectors, including non-profits, for development of independent and interdependent vehicles that build the tourism and arts and crafts culture along the Trail.
6. To develop working linkages between colleges and universities along the Trail for advancement of design and development of traditional as well as contemporary arts and crafts along the Trail.
7. To develop long-term revenue-producing strategies that will assist in the support of Midland Trail management and marketing functions and create a self-sustaining organization.
8. To establish heritage centers along the Midland Trail that will serve as regional/community information, service, and support centers.
9. To foster and expand working partnerships between the heritage centers along the Trail that in part will be sustained by joint marketing, maintenance, and planning efforts that create efficiency for both communities and visitors.
10. To advance economic opportunities for the Midland Trail region through activities that encourage and promote economic development.
11. To develop and maintain a traveler- and user-friendly, environmentally appealing green Trail.
12. To garner an active citizenry, with support from local and regional groups, that will provide ongoing protection of the Trail and its intrinsic qualities.

# Goal 1

## Enhance MT Identity and Accessibility to Travel Assistance

**To make the Midland Trail clearly identifiable and to provide easy accessibility to and availability of visitor services.**

1. Create a clear identity for the Midland Trail with consistent signage, reinforced with consistent usage of the Midland Trail logo in all presentations, whether on the road or in publication.
2. Encourage partners to reinforce the name recognition of Midland Trail by distributing Midland Trail guides, displaying the Midland Trail logo in their windows, offering member discounts, and including Midland Trail in their advertising.
3. Identify all visitor information centers with easily identifiable markers and provide informational signage as necessary and convenient, both from the roadside and at center locations.
4. Furnish interpretive signs in English, French, Spanish, Japanese, and German where feasible, and where such will not prove disruptive to the scenic qualities of the Trail.
5. Educate and train all visitor center personnel, paid or volunteer, and including secondary and collegiate-level students, in the best and latest methods of hospitality service.
6. Provide informational kiosks that identify visitor centers, convenient lodging, convenient places of dining, convenient service stations, places of recreation, and the Trail's intrinsic qualities.
7. Provide an ongoing visitor's informational guidance program that will use all available audio, visual, and Web media. The Association will publish a biennial destination guide and specialty brochures and maintain a Web site for visitor use.

# Goal 2

## Enhance the Visual Experience

**To remove or minimize the impact of all visual intrusions that detract from the beauty and scenic qualities of the Trail.**

1. Limit the use of billboard advertising in segments of the Trail where it might block or detract from views of natural beauty.
2. Monitor and reduce the amount of outdoor signage while simultaneously creating a coordinated visual signage message along the Trail.
3. Clear and control growth of vegetation that would block views, particularly but not exclusively at pull-off areas.
4. Discourage any business or industry activity that might prove disruptive to scenic qualities or the tourist's enjoyment of them, i.e. "business-free" zones that restrict any use of disruptive, non-tourist-based business. Develop programs that publicize, recognize, and honor business and industrial activity that protects and preserves the Trail's qualities.
5. Work with local governments to aggressively pursue a program to condemn all non-historic dilapidated buildings within the viewshed.
6. Promote and coordinate with all community-based and region-wide efforts at beautification and clean-up, as well as proactive efforts at environmental protection.
7. Minimize the distraction of satellite dishes, cell phone towers, radio towers, and power lines. Minimize the spraying of herbicides, which constitutes harm to the scenic qualities of the Trail.
8. Use vegetative "green-screening" to decrease the impact of unsightly buildings or business and industrial operations.

# Goal 3

## Enhancing the Interpretive Experience

**To provide the visitor with interpretive opportunities to appreciate and understand the historical and heritage context of the Trail.**

1. Provide interpretive roadside signs and interpretive panels at pull-offs.
2. Establish Share Our Heritage Interpretive Murals program that utilizes top quality fine art to depict historical events along the Byway, which will draw visitors across the entire Byway, raise historical awareness, and create a national attraction.
3. Establish new and support existing museums and interpretive centers all along the Trail.
4. Develop cultural events and programs such as festivals, arts and crafts shows, and artistic productions that highlight the Trail's qualities.
5. Commission dramatic and musical productions that will showcase Trail heritage and qualities.
6. Produce traveler's audio tapes in English, French, and German that will explain and interpret Trail history and heritage, and serve not only the automobile traveler, but also school curriculum development and libraries.
7. Operate and maintain a viable Midland Trail Web site; expand services for advertisers, consumers, and researchers who visit the site; develop historical research for the site; and include scenic byways information for public use on the site.
8. Place and operate informational kiosks at strategic points along the Trail.
9. Promote and encourage high-quality arts and crafts programs with design, development, and marketing in the Midland Trail region.
10. Develop a "Special Themes Tour" program that would highlight and showcase specific qualities of the Trail.
11. Inventory historic properties and historical organizations and establish goals for preservation and marketing of properties, where appropriate.

# Goal 4

## Build a Self-Sustaining Organization

**To create and support an administrative structure for continuous and active oversight of Trail management, development, and interpretive activities**

1. Employ an executive director who will act as spokesperson for the Trail; direct fund-raising and grant-writing; promote business potential and growth that enhances and does not disrupt the Trail's intrinsic qualities; oversee resource management of the Trail; act as a liaison for the Board with governmental agencies; direct and oversee interpretive and development projects; oversee and assist local efforts at heritage preservation; oversee and direct activities of the Scenic Byways Center; direct publication of a Trail newsletter; and supervise the Trail staff. Perhaps most important, the Executive Director will work actively and continuously to maintain collaboration between governmental agencies, local communities, Trail associations, and citizens' groups, businesses, schools, and individual citizens.
2. Engage an outreach manager to build a broad base of community involvement through coordinating MTSHA Task Force Committees (see list in chapter 10), community coordinators who will assure participation from all parts of the 180-mile Byway, and any volunteers MTSHA engages.
3. Engage sufficient support staff to handle the Association's fiscal responsibilities, and office operations.
4. Engage a distribution manager who will oversee direct mailing of Guides to all individuals who request them, ensure Guides remain well-stocked at all of our partner businesses, and track ad leads.
5. Engage a development director who will secure funding to implement desired projects by writing grants, establishing and implementing fundraising programs, and seeking private and public contributions.
6. Engage an interpretive specialist who will generate plans for interpretations through museums, roadside panels and kiosks, special Trail events at selected venues, and multi-media projects.
7. Engage a historian who will research Trail history, document research, and maintain a public library of multi-media materials for historians.
8. Engage a Webmaster who will maintain currency of Trail historical, business, recreational, and cultural information on the Trail's Web site. The Webmaster will also be responsible for developing revenue-producing activities on the site.
9. Engage a business development specialist who will develop programs intended to build and enhance the Trail's tourism potential and to promote tourism-based Trail businesses.

# Goal 5

## Encourage Business Development

**To encourage business development and activities that are at least in part tourist-driven and any development or activity that provides no disruptions to the Trail's intrinsic qualities.**

1. Continue and expand our marketing program that is bringing customers to the "front doors" of our business partners along the Byway. Look for new venues to promote the Byway and its businesses.
2. Encourage the "all ships are lifted in a rising tide" approach: assist Byway partners in learning about their counterparts along the 180-mile Byway and become ambassadors to promote businesses along the Trail.
3. Develop and administer an active stewardship awards program that honors businesses that contribute to a good quality of life and tourist experience on the Trail.
4. Develop a state, regional, and national magnet program that seeks to attract tourist and environmentally friendly business to the Trail.
5. Work with the four universities, WV Governor's Office of Economic Development, and its counterparts in county and local governments to pinpoint needed businesses and services and encourage business development.

# Goal 6

## Encourage Scholarly Research Partnerships

**To increase regional, statewide, national, and international appreciation of the Trail through projects intended to attract scholarship and interest.**

1. Coordinate with the four universities along the Trail to conduct research on those who live along and travel the Byway to ascertain how to best enhance the visitor experience.
2. Develop a Midland Trail Conferences and Seminars Program with special themes.
3. Involve all ages of students to participate in practical supportive programs that benefit the Trail region, i.e. tourism and hospitality education, a Trail junior associates program, and a Midland Trail heritage curriculum for high schools.
4. Develop volunteer opportunities for senior citizens.
5. Reactivate the Midland Trail Writers' Project for positive coverage in the media and among scholarly journals.
6. Contemplate a Center for Rural Byway Studies that will conduct ongoing research into development, preservation efforts, management, and interpretive opportunities on and along America's scenic byways and highways. Additionally, the Center will act as a research repository for studies of the Midland Trail. Contemplate the creation of an international component of the Rural Byway Studies Center where foreign visitors may study best practices and American-style rural tourism development.

# Goal 7

## Encourage Sensitive Development

To encourage development that is sensitive to the Trail's intrinsic qualities.

1. Oversee construction of pull-off upgrades in the six counties through which the Trail passes: Wayne, Cabell, Putnam, Kanawha, Fayette, and Greenbrier.
2. Promote a Midland Trail Heritage Parks program that will enhance the heritage and history of various historically significant sites on the Trail.
3. Promote a Main Street program for towns whose main street is the Trail.
4. Preserve and enhance "heritage core areas" that contain more than one historical attraction within short, easy walking distance from each other.
5. Promote Share the Road bike programs; develop green spaces and parks in towns and along the Byway; create paths and trails for biking and hiking; develop public river access projects, so those who live, work, and visit along the Byway can enjoy the natural and scenic intrinsic qualities.
6. Recognize companies who are good stewards of the natural qualities of the Byway and encourage others to follow their example.
7. Encourage the extraction industry to be sensitive to the intrinsic qualities of the Byway. Work with companies to minimize anomalous intrusions on the landscape and viewshed.

# Goal 8

## Encourage Collaboration

**To foster ongoing cooperation and collaboration with local communities, local groups, landowners, boards and commissions, and businesses to promote all of the above goals.**

1. Support and encourage collaborative tourism and visitation among attractions of the Trail and the broader region, including the metropolitan areas of Charleston Huntington, and gateway towns like Fayetteville, Oak Hill, Summersville, and Beckley.
2. Encourage and develop cooperation among existing organizations in interpreting and promoting the Trail.
3. Create a linkage for various agencies and programs along the Trail through the following media: a newsletter; personal communications; and Web site, e-mail, or other alternative electronic communications methods.
4. Serve as a liaison between member organizations and the U.S. Congressional Delegation, State Legislature, and regional and local governmental bodies.
5. Develop working linkages between colleges and universities along the Trail in order to advance design and development of traditional, as well as contemporary, arts and crafts and other disciplines.
6. Promote self-help economic incentives among its board members and membership at large; provide guidance and information in the form of informational training sessions that offer technical expertise in fund-raising, development, promotional, and grant proposal activities.