

# Exploring Georgia's Scenic Byways

By Laurie Scott

**I**nterstate-185 and Warren County-Piedmont Scenic Byway Extension are the latest Scenic Byways approved by the State Transportation Board.

Interstate-185 qualified for the Scenic Byway designation due to its scenic qualities. Board member Sam Wellborn of Columbus, representing Congressional District 3, presented the resolution to the Board. "This took the efforts of many people such as the Keep Columbus Beautiful Commission to make this happen; I appreciate the hard work and support for getting this resolution passed," Wellborn said.



*Northern view of the I-185 Scenic Byway*

The I-185 Scenic Byway is a 39-mile route that begins at Interstate 85 in Troup County and passes through Harris County and northern Muscogee County. It ends at Ft. Benning, near Columbus, Georgia.

The purpose of the I-185 Scenic Byway designation is to protect the existing scenic qualities of the route and to provide information about the rich, cultural and natural attractions in the vicinity of I-185. The byway designation also ensures that billboards will not be allowed along the route.

The overpass highway bridges that are varied by architecture and the miles of mixed pine and hardwood forests are among the attractions of the I-185 Scenic Byway.

Beyond the designated route of the I-185 Scenic Byway is a rich network



*Callaway Gardens is located 6.5 miles from the I-185 Scenic Byway.*

of scenic roads, natural areas, cultural and historic sites. Callaway Gardens (6.5 miles from the byway) is a 14,000-acre woodland and display garden, resort, and preserve attracting thousands of visitors annually from around the world.

The 23-mile Pine Mountain Trail in Franklin Delano Roosevelt State Park (9 miles from the scenic byway) is a scenic hike which winds through a mix of hardwoods, pines and waterfalls.

**The Warren-County Piedmont Scenic Byway Extension** is a 15-mile route that begins at the Hancock County line at Jewell and continues east on State Route 16 to the City of Warrenton. The byway passes through a wildlife management area, farmland, rivers, and historic properties. It serves as a continuation of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway (located in Putnam and Hancock counties).

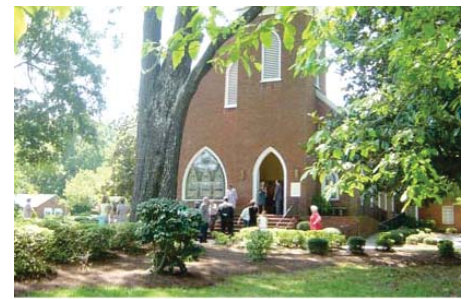


*Scenic view along SR 16 at the Warren-Hancock County line.*

Board member Raybon Anderson of Statesboro, representing Congressional District 12, presented the resolution to the Board. "I am pleased that my district is able to do its part in preserving the natural beauty of Georgia," he said.

The route was once part of the old Native American Okfuskee Trail, which connected what is now Augusta with the Mississippi River.

The Warren-County Piedmont Scenic Byway has been featured twice on the Tour de Georgia bicycle race route. Visitors have many choices for recreation such as cycling, golfing, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, and equine activities.



*Historic church along State Route 16 in downtown Warrenton*

A Georgia Scenic Byway is defined as any designated highway, street, road or route that possesses qualities that are natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historic or archaeological.

The benefits of the designation include increased tourism; placement of the byway on state maps and travel magazines; and access to state, federal and private funding sources for projects. To obtain the designation, a local sponsor must complete a multi-stage process that includes identifying the route; submitting an application that develops a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and receiving approval of the State Transportation Board. For more information on Scenic Byways, please visit [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).