



## Project Number

BDV25-977-61

## Project Manager

Jeff Caster

*FDOT Road Design Office*

## Principal Investigator

Sisinnio Concas

*University of South Florida*

## Florida Department of Transportation Research

# Measuring the Impact of Florida Scenic Highway Designation

July 2020

### Current Situation

Florida's roads provide magnificent views of its lush forests, beautiful coastlines, quiet lakes, and sweeping grasslands. Along these roads are many points of interest, local businesses, and historic sites. Twenty-six roads across the state have been selected by the Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) as showcases of Florida's outstanding cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, natural and scenic resources. FSHP focuses on community-based support and resource protection while seeking to promote regional economic benefits that may result from corridor designation.

### Research Objectives

University of South Florida researchers developed data collection tools to assist the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in evaluating and quantifying the contribution of FSHP roads and activities to Florida's economy and quality of life of Floridians.

### Project Activities

The researchers conducted a thorough assessment of the 26 scenic highways in Florida to collect relevant information relating to site-specific characteristics, such as start and endpoints of the byway, the number of visitor centers, access and egress to and from the scenic highway, and information about surrounding counties, cities, and towns.

Based on the assessment, the researchers extended the current FSHP visitor survey so that it requests information about the specific highway the visitor traveled. More specific information will aid FSHP and local stakeholders in gaining additional support for preserving and enhancing scenic highways and further enhance their contribution to local economies. As a companion to the new visitor survey, the researchers also designed a data analysis tool that can be used by FSHP staff to easily maintain, sort, and analyze information obtained from the visitor surveys.

The visitor survey provides an important view of the impact of scenic highways, but an equally important view is available from the people who live along and near these roads. Therefore, the researchers also developed a local quality of life survey aimed at these residents and a corresponding data analysis tool.

In addition to the qualitative information gained through analysis of the visitor and resident surveys, the researchers developed a quantitative tool that estimates the local economic impact of scenic highways. The researchers defined a methodology that links visitor survey responses about spending to vehicle counts on scenic highways. This tool can provide ongoing economic impact information that can be analyzed by time period or highway, or it can provide an economic overview of the entire system.

### Project Benefits

Better information and a better understanding of the impacts and needs of scenic highways can help in managing the highways and gaining support for their maintenance and improvement.

*For more information, please see [www.fdot.gov/research/](http://www.fdot.gov/research/).*



*There are no mountains on the Green Mountain Scenic Highway in central Florida, but there is plenty of beautiful scenery.*