

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Walk in the Clouds, Wildflower Talks and Millions of Blossoms on America's Byways™

Explore blooming wildflowers and trees with a springtime drive on some of America's best roads

Washington, D.C. – This spring, explore America's Byways™ as nature awakens with a colorful palette of wildflowers and blossoming trees. Designated by the US Secretary of Transportation, the 39 state collection of America's Byways™ spans the entire country, where the spring season offers travelers a menagerie of color.

America's Byways™ is a community-based grassroots program, with each roadway nominated for distinction by local residents. In **Tennessee** and **North Carolina**, look for the white blossoms of Large Flowered Trillium on sunny hillsides along the **Cherochala Skyway**. Drivers will also see Columbine, Bloodroot and Violets. Don't forget to stop at Haw Knob. At 5472 feet, it is the highest point along the 40-mile Byway and offers a spectacular view of the lower Appalachians.

Flowering trees dot the landscape along **Crowley's Ridge** in **Arkansas** and **Missouri**. Wild plums are the first arbor blooms of spring, first appearing in March. Their brilliant white flowers have a wonderful fragrance from a distance, but don't put your nose directly on the flower – it smells like a wet chicken. In mid April and early May, the fiery Redbuds can be seen blooming next to the glowing white blossoms of Dogwoods.

The **West Cascades Scenic Byway** in **Oregon** spans 220 miles along the Cascade Mountains, where, in March, wildflowers begin to bloom in the lower elevations. Look for the blue flowers of Spring Queen, one of the first blossoms of the season. They can even be seen blooming in February if the weather is mild enough. Take one of the many trails along the Byway where Rock Penstemon grows in the clefts of rocks, and fields of Blue Phlox bloom as the weather warms.

"America's Byways™ tell America's story," says Laura Hodge, Executive Director of the Monroe County Tourism Council. "With blossoming mountain fields, guided wildflower walks and spectacular blooming forests, nature's beauty along the Byways is breathtaking in the springtime."

America's Byways™ are a collection of distinct and diverse roads, designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Travelers can plan trips that last for an hour, a day or longer by visiting www.byways.org. Maps, weather information, and unique stories are available for all 96 roads designated as America's Byways™. For more information about itineraries, visit www.byways.org or www.seeamerica.org. Featured drives include:

Tennessee and North Carolina: The Cherohala Skyway

40 miles (2 hours)

- Take a walk in the clouds. With elevations reaching over 5,000 feet, clouds often descend onto the mountaintops, where wildflowers bloom all summer
- Three national forests converge in the area around the Byway, where local botanists give interactive presentations to springtime visitors
- In Tennessee, visit Bald River Falls. With 80 feet of tumbling water, it is the tallest waterfall in the area

Missouri and Arkansas: Crowley's Ridge Parkway

212 miles (6 hours)

- Apple and peach orchards flank the byway, providing brilliant white blooms in the early spring and juicy fruit as the weather warms
- While traveling, look for the Turks Cap Lily. Growing up to three feet tall with bright orange-yellow blooms, this beautiful wildflower greets spring and summer visitors
- Stop at Village Creek State Park and see old mills along the streams

Oregon: The West Cascades Scenic Byway

220 miles (8 hours)

- Guided wildflower tours are available in the Mt. Hood and Willamette National Forests, which is a great way to learn more about springtime blooms
- Take a trip up to Big Summit Prairie, where spectacular yellow fields of wild sunflowers abound
- In Deschutes National Forest (also known as the "Land of the Giants"), towering Douglass Firs that measure six feet in diameter and stand over 180 feet tall dwarf the sweeping Trillium

About America's Byways™

Established in 1991 by the US Secretary of Transportation, the America's Byways™ designation is awarded to the country's finest roadways. To date, the Secretary of Transportation has selected 96 roadways across the country, each nominated by local communities. Roads must meet rigorous standards for specific intrinsic qualities: scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, recreational, and natural. America's Byways™ are divided into two designations: National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. There are 75 National Scenic Byways, considered "the roads less traveled." The 21 All-American Roads are the country's best drives and are destinations unto themselves.

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