

## **Poore Family Foundation Scenic and Cultural Byways Visitor Welcoming Center**

The Federal Highway Administration, the NH Office of Energy and Planning, and the Poore Family Foundation for North Country Conservancy, have determined that phase-one and phase-two of a two-phase project designed to provide safe access from the National Byway, NH Route 145, in Stewartstown, to an important historical New Hampshire landmark, The Poore Family Homestead Historic Farm Museum and to a National Byways Welcoming Center constructed on the Foundation's property, is an eligible project for funding under the National Scenic Byway Program, created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and was authorized to enter into Agreement as approved by the NH Governor & Council on April 18, 2007. The "Notice to Proceed" for phase-one of this project was effective as of May 13, 2008.

Phase-Two, NSBP #SB-2009-NH-5548, also gained state and federal approval, passed NH Governor and Council and had received the "Preliminary Engineering Notice To Proceed" effective August 9, 2010.

TO READ THE FULL SUBMITTED AND APPROVED 2009 Scenic Byways Phase-Two Grant Application, [http://www.poorefarm.org/files/Submitted\\_&\\_APPROVED-SB-2009-NH-55448.pdf](http://www.poorefarm.org/files/Submitted_&_APPROVED-SB-2009-NH-55448.pdf)

Also HERE IS A LINK TO ARCHITECT'S WEB PAGE ON OUR PROJECT:

<http://www.trhdesign.net/projects-institutional-poore-welcome-center.html>

### **Project Purpose:**

The Poore Family Foundation Scenic and Cultural Byways Interpretive/Welcoming Center will enhance the Foundation's capacity to serve the public, plus add to the region's infrastructure, vitality and economic growth.

This project will benefit the National Scenic and Cultural Byway, NH Route 145, and its' traveler by providing a safe highway turn-off and improved access to an important historical landmark, the Poore Family Homestead Historic Farm Museum, and access to kiosks, hiking, the performing arts, parking, and an

Interpretive Center that captures the character, history and culture of the region through architecture and the preparation of interpretive information including maps and historic artifacts. This handicap accessible facility will be located mid-point on Route 145, as it meanders through the 100-acre Poore Family Farm Museum property, providing modern facilities for the touring public.

The construction of the center will mimic that of the 19th century and will be constructed from native timbers sawn on location. The post and beam framing and workmanship will replicate that of the Poore Homestead's main barn and it's exterior in general appearance.

The first phase involves the construction of a safe highway turn-off and parking area with a separate, new exit road that will accommodate recreational vehicles, buses and vehicles towing trailers. This phase also includes the construction and placement of two kiosks highlighting area information, maps and guidance to local points of interest in the region, to the Bishop Brook Gorge Nature Center, hiking trails, walking paths and to the Poore Family Homestead Historic Farm Museum.

Phase-one of this construction project includes: all excavation, grading and site preparation for the Interpretive Center, State approved septic system, construction and capping of the concrete foundation for a 2400+ sq. ft. Interpretive Center, heating system, plus all design and engineering necessary for both construction phases. Phase-Two is the rest of the building's construction.

### **Project Status:**

This Poore Foundation's Byways Visitor Welcoming Center project has endured many set backs and delays since the National Scenic Byway Program (NSBP) originally embraced our initiative, back in 2001. Our Grant application and proposal had a high approval ranking and quickly gained NSBP approval and funding for Phase-One in 2003. Unfortunately, and to everyone's dismay, the then NH Governor allocated our Byway award to another NSBP project elsewhere in NH. The NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP), the State agency managing the Federal Byways Grant Program at that time, advised us to re-apply to the Federal NSBP the following year. That Grant resubmission was quickly approved once more and awarded funding for the second time by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2005 and authorized to enter into an Agreement, as approved by the NH Governor & Council as of April 18, 2007.

All agreements and contracts were approved, signed and delivered, we were ready to break-ground, when we received a Federal Stop-Order from the FHWA, who decided to audit the entire State of NH's Scenic and Cultural Byways Program, that was being managed by the NHOEP. The audit stalled our project yet another year or so. The Poore Foundation's National Byways project survived the Federal audit, (and with flying colors) and retained its high approval ranking status. Our Grant award was one of the four National Byways projects that survived the Federal audit of NH's Byways program. Upon conclusion of the audit though, there was yet another delay, a change in management. The NHOEP would no longer be administering the Federal Byways program for NH. The State of NH assigned the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) as the new administrator in charge of the National Scenic Byways Grant Program and awards for the State of NH. All our information, documents, files and our award had to be transferred over to a new agency and over to new handlers. More time passed. Eventually the Poore Foundation's award became the first National Byways funded and approved project for the NHDOT to manage, and for a nonprofit organization as the sub-recipient.

DOT's management approach to the Byways program was one that had a strong emphasis on the process and procedures, regulation and allowable costs or actions. They also reclassified the Poore Foundation's nonprofit status to a Government Municipality, concerning this award, and imposed a growing number of state requirements and regulations. DOT recently posted their latest version of the "**Local Public Agency Manual for the Development of Projects**" which they now require all municipalities to follow. You can view this 600 plus page document on-line at:

<http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/documents/LPAManual.pdf>

Over the five years DOT had managed our project, the additional engineering, studies, contingencies and State requirements, has escalated the cost estimate for our Welcoming Center, exceeding our actual Grant award. We need to raise an estimated \$322,000 to complete a project what we have invested in so dearly.

Because of these persistent changes in state regulations our project has stalled once again. For this reason we ask for your help in realizing the completion of this important and deserving project.

You can help. Please consider becoming a sponsor for our National Scenic and Cultural Visitor Welcoming Center. All contributions are fully Tax deductible. <http://www.poorefarm.org/contribute.html>

Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Poore Family Foundation

Board of Directors

### **Poore Byways Visitor Welcoming Center Progress Report**

**Phase-One, NSBP #SB-2005-NH-52187**, is a fully funded, eligible National Scenic Byways Project that the NHDOT had issued the “NOTICE TO PROCEED” for this phase on May 13, 2008.

**Phase-Two, NSBP #SB-2009-NH-55448**, was a fully funded, eligible National Scenic Byways Project that the NHDOT had issued the “PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING NOTICE TO PROCEED” for this phase on August 9, 2010.

**All engineering, review and planning requirements have been completed.**

- The septic design has been approved by NHDES and issued the “APPROVAL FOR CONSTRUCTION” permit, approval # CA2008094266.
- The “ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY” was successfully completed and no sensitive areas were detected.
- The “ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW” was performed by NHDES and passed this back in 2006 when the project was being administered by NH Office of Energy and Planning.
- \* The “ARCHITECTURAL SECTION 106 INVESTIGATION” was successfully completed and filed with the NH Division of Historical Resources.
- \* A new driveway right-of-way construction permit has been issued to the Poore Family Foundation by Division-One of NH DOT, permit # 01-305-4676P.

\* “CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS AND FOUNDATION PLANS”, needed for Phase-One have been drafted by a licensed architect and has passed the Poore Foundation’s review and revision stage of the planning process.

\* A NH licensed architectural firm, TRH Design, was hired (in accordance with all TE/CMAQ program manual procedures - the manual we were following at the time) to the project and has developed the engineering, drafting and detailed construction plans for both Phases of construction. Phase-One construction plans have been approved by NHDOT and NH Public Works to pour and cap the concrete foundation and other Phase-One site related work.

\* Most of the timbers and lumber required for Phase-One construction, (capping off of the foundation) have been produced on site from local grown and donated timbers. Additional saw logs are on site at the ready.

\* The project Architect and project Director had test pits excavated in the proposed foundation area to determine what equipment or process would be necessary to excavate the foundation hole down to grade. After which, it was determined that a 20 metric ton excavator or equivalent would be adequate to do the job but some jack hammering may be necessary to finalize the depth in one corner. This minor expense saved the project in excess of \$10,000. This knowledge, not needing to blast rock to excavate, enabling us to bid out the foundation excavation for much less.

\* The foundation hole (composed mostly of ledge and shale) was successfully excavated down to grade for under \$1,000. The foundation’s footing grade level sits on top of ledge and rock formations. Some jack hammering was necessary to finalize the work. The contractor also performed some site work, preparing the grade around the site and the access leading up to the foundation hole, to accommodate for cement trucks and other construction vehicles. We are ready to pour the foundation.

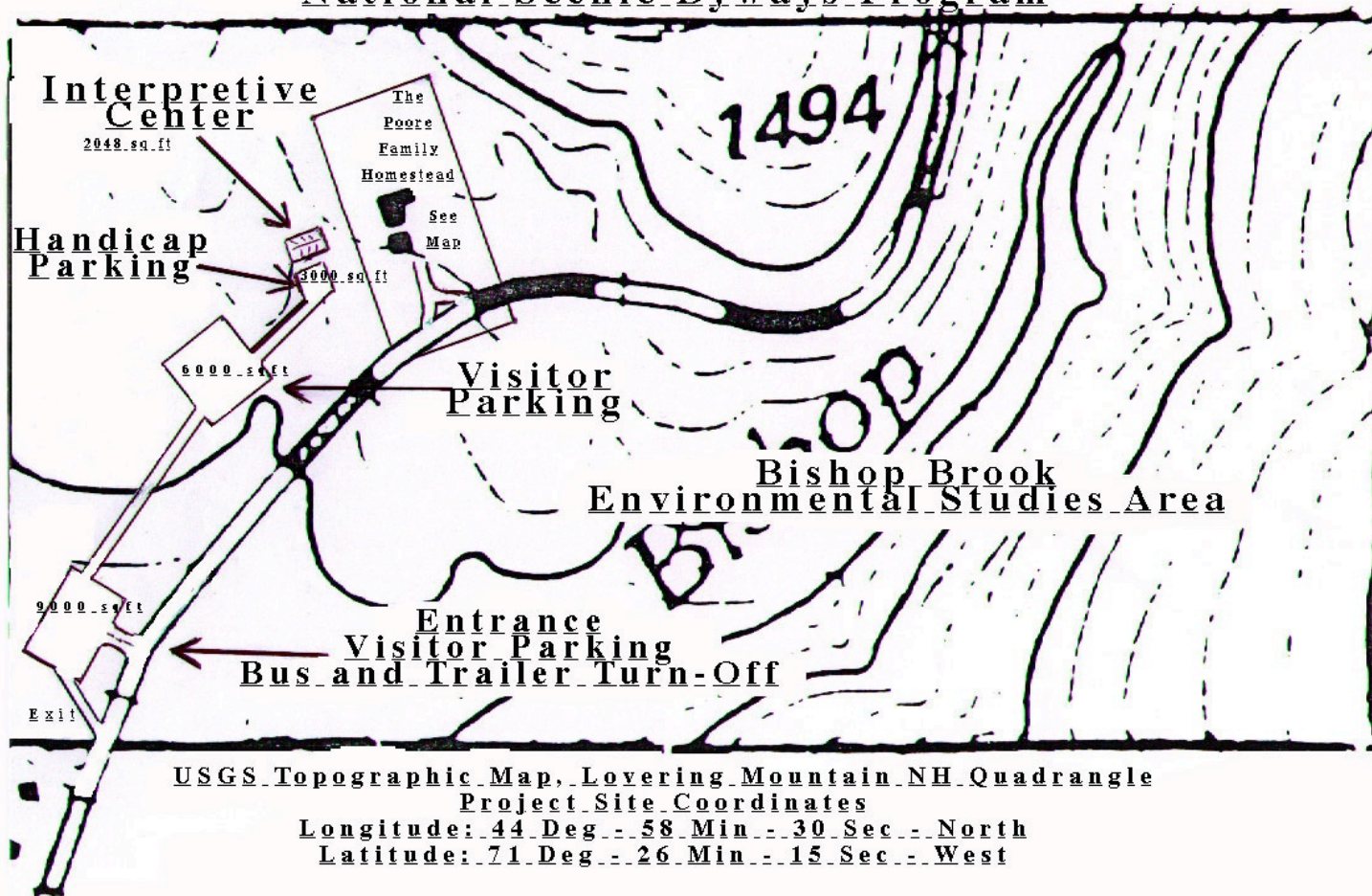
\* A 4-inch x 60-foot long foundation drainage pipe was placed in the foundation’s drainage ditch and covered. Ledge and rock did need to be jack hammered and excavated out of the ditch and pitched the drainage pipe away and below foundation grade. It drains to daylight and a sediment trap.

\* NH Electric Co-op Company has installed a new 200 amp electric service: transformer and one pole, approximately 250 feet into the Poore property from NH Route 145.

\* The bid to pour the foundation went out in the fall, late in the construction season, and we did not receive any responsive bid proposals. By then it was too late in the season to put it out for bid again that year due to the impending severe weather. This project must endure yet another delay.

**Project continuance is contingent on your support.** <http://www.poorefarm.org/contribute.html>

## Poore Family Foundation's Interpretive Center and Parking Proposal to the National Scenic Byways Program



Investors in the Poore Family Foundation's National Byways Welcoming Centers, thus far:

Poore Family Foundation for North Country Conservancy  
Federal Highway Administration, National Scenic Byways Program  
Neil & Louise Tillotson Donor Advised Fund, of the NHCF  
NH Charitable Foundation  
Doris L. Benz Trust  
Emma M. Kelly Charitable Trust  
Saul O. Sidore Memorial Foundation  
Jack and Dorothy (remain anonymous) Foundation  
Lyme Timber Corporation  
First Colebrook Bank  
Canaan, Vermont, High School Building Trades Program  
And many contributions from local businesses, individuals, students and volunteers.

To see our full, submitted and *approved*, National Byways Grant Application  
[http://www.poorefarm.org/files/Submitted\\_&\\_APPROVED-SB-2009-NH-55448.pdf](http://www.poorefarm.org/files/Submitted_&_APPROVED-SB-2009-NH-55448.pdf)