

## New/Greenbrier Valley Byways & Backways



**Amongst the rugged mountains and fertile valleys of southern West Virginia, these five roadways traverse through rolling pastures and historic farmlands. Flanked by the ever-present Appalachian Mountains, farmers have been forced to cut their small subsistence farms out of the mountainside itself, while others built larger farms on top of the rich soil by the riverbanks.**

### **Farm Heritage Road**

One of the best ways to see this idyllic countryside is the Farm Heritage Road, located just off both the Midland Trail and Coal Heritage Road. This drive through the verdant fields where so many farmers worked to feed their families consists of gently flowing creeks, rolling hills, and a ridge called Peters Mountain. Bird watchers enjoy the view from Hanging Rock Tower as thousands of hawks, and even a few bald eagles, make their way through the area. What attracts most people to the Farm Heritage Road is the chance to see an area that has been left relatively unscathed by industrialization, resulting in farms and barns that have been around for close to 200 years.

## **Mountain's Shadow Trail**

For a more rugged version of the Farm Heritage Road, drive Mountain's Shadow Trail. Located, only a few miles from the Appalachian Trail, this road is perfect for hikers looking for a place to enjoy this gigantic trail. Staying true to its rustic roots, the road is mostly one-lane, with some gravel road portions. While this road is not suitable for the hurried, those wanting to see what life was like in the early Appalachian settlements will certainly enjoy driving it.

## **Lower Greenbrier River Byway**

Along the banks of its namesake river, the Lower Greenbrier River Byway makes its way through a beautiful countryside marked by historic settlements and advances in transportation. The byway passes through historic Alderson and its restored Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad depot and unique arched bridge. In Lowell, the Graham House is one of the oldest dwellings in the state, built between 1770 and 1772. Used as both a frontier home and a fort against Indian attack, this classy log cabin is a far cry from the normal crude cabins of the time. Further west, Talcott's John Henry Monument stands right outside the Big Bend Tunnel. This gigantic rail tunnel was the site of Henry's legendary victory over a steam-powered drill.

## **Wolf Creek Backway**

Just south of the Lower Greenbrier River Byway, the Wolf Creek Backway makes its way through the rolling farmland below Alderson. Comprised of both state and county roads, this backway is a leisurely paved alternative to other, more rustic backways. Spelunkers should know that the surrounding countryside is situated on top of a vast slab of limestone, which over time has become pockmarked with sinkholes and caverns. This gentle road also passes by the Wolf Creek Winery, home to four different kinds of grapes, as well as a tasting room. While this backway is largely off the beaten path, there is still ready access to gasoline and food.

## **Lowell Backway**

West of the Wolf Creek Backway, the Lowell Backway travels along a one-lane road through the farmlands of Summers County. While only nine miles long, this backway passes by two historic springs, an old Civilian Conservation Corps camp, and many quaint farms.

Largely bypassed by industrialization, much of the countryside surrounding these pastoral roadways has remained almost entirely unchanged from its early pioneer beginnings helping to preserve an authentic, rustic feeling.