

LAPEER COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION  
PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONS POLICY MANUAL

Policy Subject: <b>DESIGNATION OF NATURAL BEAUTY ROADS</b>	
Authorized by Board of Road Commissioners	Date: 10/22/08
Amended	Date:

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The goal of the Natural Beauty Road program is to identify and preserve in a natural, essentially undisturbed condition, certain county-local roads having unusual or outstanding natural beauty by virtue of native vegetation or other natural features within or associated with the right of way, for the use and enjoyment of local residents and the public in general.

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

1. **Character of Road** – A natural beauty road shall have outstanding natural features along its borders. This can include native trees and other native vegetation - such as shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and ferns – as well as open areas with scenic or natural vistas which, singly or in combination, set the road apart from other roads as being something unique and distinct.
2. **Length** – A minimum of one-half mile will be considered for designation as a natural beauty road. Stretches shall be continuous except where broken by a non-qualifying portion. Non-qualifying portions should normally not exceed one-half mile in length.
3. **Roadside Development** – Qualifying roads should preferably have no development along them, but such development as exists at the time the road is designated should be compatible with the surroundings, and should not detract from the natural unspoiled character and visual impact of the road area.
4. **Road Bed** – Natural beauty roads may be dirt, gravel, or hard surface.
5. **Function of the Road** – Roads shall be county-local roads before they are considered for designation. They shall not be collectors or primary roadways.

**PROCEDURE**

1. A petition for designation shall be submitted to the Road Commission.
  - a. The petition shall state clearly the name of road, location, length, exact beginning and end points for the designation request, and a statement of justification outlining how the requested area meets the above criteria.
  - b. The petition shall be signed by twenty-five (25) or more landowners in the Township. Signers need not live on the road being petitioned for.
  - c. The petition shall be accompanied by a statement from the respective Township regarding their position on the status of the road.
2. Within six (6) months after the petition is received, the Road Commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the described road as a natural beauty road. The Road Commission shall post notice at least once each week for two successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. The Road Commission shall also post

five (5) notices within the limits of the portion of road to be designated. The posting and at least one publication in the newspaper shall be made not less than ten (10) days before the hearing.

3. The vote of the Board of County Road Commissioners in respect to such a determination shall be taken by a roll call vote. The vote shall be entered at large on the Road Commission's records.
4. Notice of the Road Commission's determination shall be given to the Township in which the road is situated.
5. If approved, the Road Commission shall sign the natural beauty road at entrance points.

#### ACCEPTED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

In general, natural beauty roads should receive the same level of maintenance that was performed on the road prior to designation, as long as the character of use and development of the road does not change to the extent that a higher degree of maintenance is necessary.

Mowing should be continued where done previously, but should be limited to one swath on either side of the road.

Under no circumstances will herbicides be used to control or eliminate roadside vegetation.

Where dust control has been the practice or becomes a necessity, a minimum level of dust treatment may be used.

Cross drainage must be handled where necessary to prevent damage to the road, possible washouts and other problems that may be detrimental to proper safety.

Tree branches and shrubs may be trimmed or removed as necessary for safety and protection of the traveling public and vehicles. This should be done in a manner so as not to leave unsightly scars.

The existing road surface at the time of designation should normally be continued. Necessary changes in surface to improve safety, drainage, reduce maintenance problems, etc., may be cause for un-designating such roads if such changes disturb the natural beauty characteristics for which the road was designated.