

PAMLICO SCENIC BYWAY

Beginning at the Washington waterfront, the Pamlico Scenic Byway follows the Pamlico River to the Pamlico Sound at its junction with the Croatan Sound.

The Pamlico River begins west of Washington at the Beaufort County line where the Tar River and Tranters Creek meet.

Pamlico was the name of an American Indian tribe that once lived in the area. The river, first explored by Europeans in 1584, extends 33 miles from

Washington to the Pamlico Sound, which is 80 miles long and 15 to 30 miles wide. It covers more than 1,800 square miles and has a maximum depth of 21 feet. The Pamlico Sound drains water from the Albemarle Sound along with the Neuse and Pamlico rivers through the Ocracoke and Oregon inlets to the Atlantic Ocean.

The town of Washington, located at the head of the Pamlico River, was originally called Forks of the Tar River. In 1776, the town founder changed the name to honor his friend George Washington. Therefore, Washington, N.C., has the distinction of being the first town in the United States named after the legendary George Washington. As the Beaufort County seat, Washington has a

unique 18th century layout, though few of the original buildings remain due to fires during the Civil War.



NCDOT

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

From the intersection of U.S. 17 and Main Street in Washington, begin following the byway along the waterfront east on Main Street to Stewart Parkway. Turn right on Stewart Parkway as it curves around waterfront warehouses and becomes Water Street. Turn left

onto Harvey Street and then turn right back onto Main Street and pass the municipal park on the Pamlico River while continuing east to N.C. 32 on the eastern edge of Washington Park.

Follow N.C. 32 for 5.5 miles to the Broad Creek Bridge and the intersection with Harvey Road (S.R. 1331). Turn right, and continue by farmlands four miles to the intersection with N.C. 92 and U.S. 264 in Jessema. Follow N.C. 92 nearly six miles past the entrance to Goose Creek State Park and into the town of Bath.

Settled in 1690 and incorporated in 1705, Bath is the oldest incorporated town in North Carolina. Virginians and French Protestants settled the area around Bath

when it was called the town of Pamticoe (an early version of Pamlico). Located on what was called Town Creek and is now known as Bath Creek, Bath is home to the oldest church in North Carolina, St. Thomas Church, built in 1734. Royal Gov. Charles Eden had a provincial capital at Bath while Edward Teach, better known as the pirate Blackbeard, is said to have made his home on nearby Plum Point. Bath is now a state historic site with several restored buildings open to the public. Take a walking tour of the town to appreciate its 18th century flavor.

After touring Bath, cross Back Creek and continue along N.C. 92 about five miles to its intersection with N.C. 306 where the road becomes N.C. 99. From here, the road turns north to skirt Jackson Swamp to the northwest and the Pungo River to the east. **Follow N.C. 99 seven miles to the bridge at Pungo Creek.** The creek and the river both derive their names from *Machapunga*, an American Indian name given to them as early as 1733. **From here, travel 3.5 miles to the Pantego Creek and Belhaven town limits.**

At the stoplight in Belhaven, turn right to follow U.S. 264 Business through town. Located on the site of a American Indian village called Aquascogoc, Belhaven was settled in 1890 and incorporated in 1899. The town derives its name from the French words *belle* and *haven* — meaning “beautiful harbor”. It is a major stopping point for boats traveling the Intracoastal Waterway. **Join U.S. 264 East and continue 5.5 miles to the Pungo River Bridge at the community of Leechville. Continue another**

4.5 miles to the bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway, which offers an impressive view of the waterway for miles to the northeast.

After N.C. 45 joins the byway, continue four miles to Scranton, named for a lumber mill owner from Scranton, Pa. who settled here. Just past Scranton, enjoy a beautiful stretch of road where drainage canals and trees on both sides of the route form a unique and protective seven-mile tunnel with views of vast fields and tree farms on either side. While passing through the community of Rose Bay, travel parallel to the Swan Quarter National Wildlife Refuge, which covers the Pamlico Sound coast near the town of Swan Quarter.

Turn right 2.5 miles after Rose Bay onto N.C. 45 and follow it into the town of Swan Quarter. Settled before 1836, this fishing community is the Hyde County seat. Travel through the town on N.C. 45 to the Swan Quarter Ferry Terminal, which carries passengers to Ocracoke Island and the Outer Banks Scenic Byway (pg. 139).

To continue along the Pamlico Scenic Byway, leave town by way of Main Street (S.R. 1129), which leads back to U.S. 264 East. The farms on both sides of the road are on lands reclaimed by draining the surrounding swamps. This practice, called “swamp busting,” is no longer allowed as these wetlands are now protected for the vital role they serve.

Continue east on U.S. 264, but be cautious of the elbow curves before and after Haw Branch Road (S.R. 1129) near Swindell Fork. At the second curve, the road begins to follow the southern

shoreline of Lake Mattamuskeet, a natural freshwater lake of about 50,000 acres discovered in 1585. Its name is derived from a American Indian word that means “moving swamp” or “shallow lake.” This is appropriate, since the deepest point in the lake measures only five feet. Near the community of Lake Comfort is the intersection of U.S. 264 and N.C. 94, the southern terminus of the Alligator River Route (pg. 134).

From this intersection, travel 8.5 miles to Lake Landing. This area marks the state’s largest rural historic district. Watch closely for older buildings along this stretch, including the octagonal house known as the Ink Bottle House. In addition to the historical aspects of this section, observe the vast farmlands that attract numerous hunting clubs. Between the communities of New Holland and Lake Landing, Lake Mattamuskeet is visible on the left.

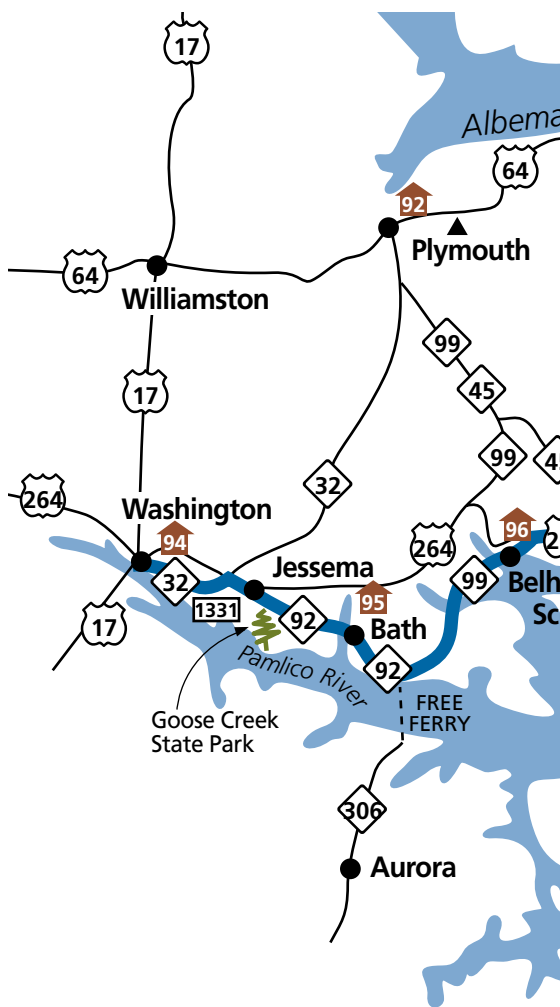
The community of New Holland, settled in 1910, was named for the development company that tried to drain Lake Mattamuskeet. Lake Landing was the site of the Hyde County courthouse from 1820 to 1836.

Watch for another sharp curve near the community of Amity, about four miles east of Lake Landing at the intersection of U.S. 264 and North Lake Road (S.R. 1311). From here, the byway turns away from the lake’s shore. **It is one mile to the village of Engelhard.** Located on Far Creek between Lake Mattamuskeet and the Pamlico Sound, Engelhard was first named Far Creek Landing. In 1874, Engelhard was given its current name in honor of the publisher

of the Wilmington newspaper. *NOTE: Engelhard is the last stop for restrooms or fuel until Manns Harbor, 40 miles away.*

Leaving Engelhard, look to the right to see the Pamlico Sound. **Continue on U.S. 264 through the wetlands and maritime forests of the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. From the Far Creek bridge, travel 11.5 miles to the Dare/Hyde County line.**

Stumpy Point Bay and the fishing village of Stumpy Point are 13 miles from the county line. Founded in 1733, the village is about two miles from U.S. 264.



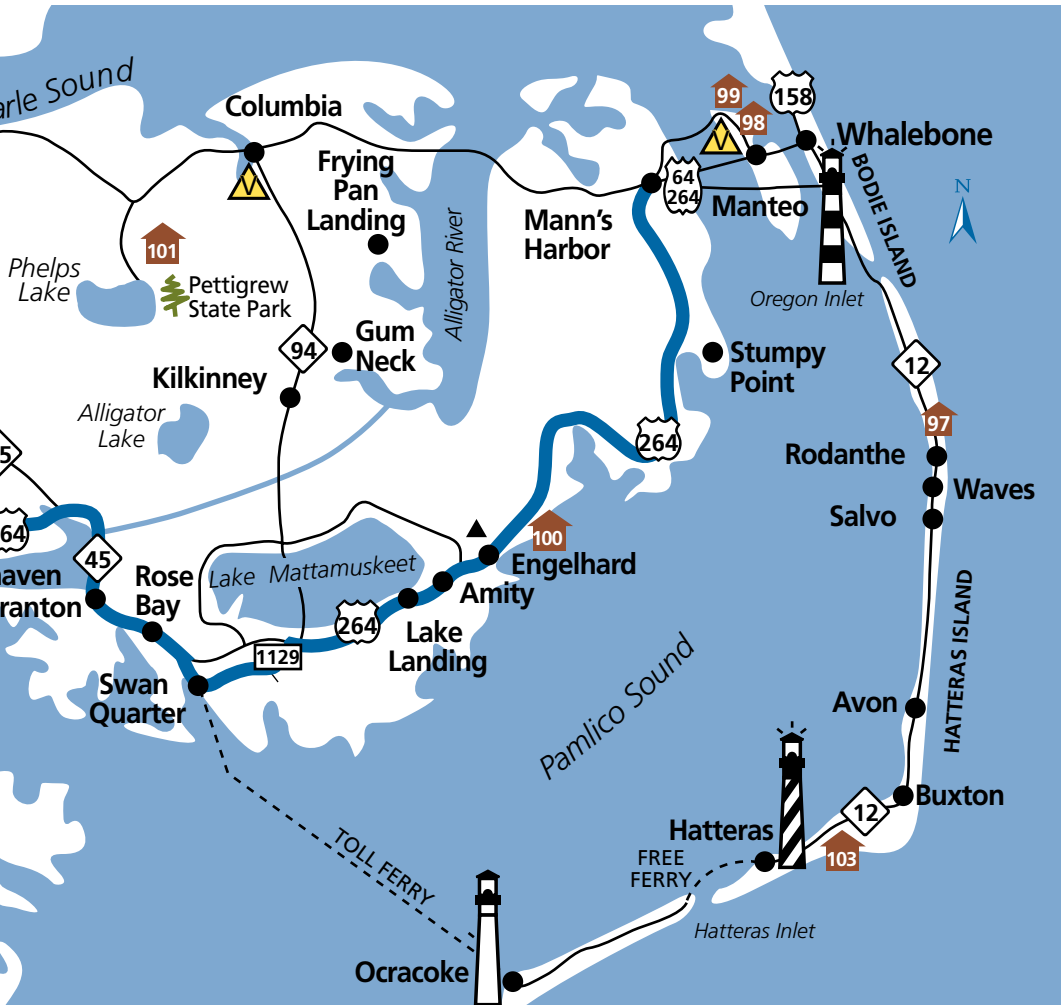
The bay was once a lake, but now opens into the Pamlico Sound. A major portion of the commercial fishing fleet that comes through Oregon Inlet is based here (the rest are based in Wanchese on Roanoke Island). The U.S. 64 intersection with U.S. 264 is another 13 miles from Stumpy Point. **This intersection of U.S. 64/264 marks the end of this scenic byway.**

Note the old U.S. Army and Navy bombing ranges nearby along U.S. 264. Also, be sure to watch for red wolves (an endangered species) along the last portion of the route while traveling through the

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. For more historical and recreational attractions, visit Roanoke Island and the Outer Banks.



Length: 127 miles
Drive Time: 3 hours
Counties: Beaufort, Hyde and Dare



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