



What is the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor?

The Erie Canal, along with the Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga- Seneca Canals, is known throughout the world as the most historically significant and influential canal system in North America. These canals are widely seen as a scenic and cultural treasure that evokes powerful memories of a proud past and provides great promise for a bright future.

In recognition of this historic significance, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Act (PL 106- 554, Title VIII) was signed into law on December 21, 2000.

Vision & Mission

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, working through a wide range of partnerships, is preserving and interpreting our nation's past, providing world class recreational and educational opportunities, fostering economic revitalization, improving the quality of life in corridor communities, and guiding the reemergence of the Erie Canalway as a 21st- century "River of Commerce and Culture."

The mission of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission is to plan for, encourage, and assist historic preservation, conservation, recreation, interpretation, tourism, and community development in ways that promote partnerships among the Corridor's many stakeholders, and enhances the Corridor's national significance for all to use and enjoy.

Geographic Area

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor includes the 524 miles of navigable canal that comprise the New York State Canal System, including the Erie, Cayuga- Seneca, Oswego, and Champlain Canals, plus the historic alignments of these canals and the 234 cities, towns, and villages that lie immediately adjacent to the navigable waterway and the historic alignments.

The Heritage Corridor encompasses 4,834 square miles in 23 counties. The population of the corridor is 2.7 million people and includes the largest population centers in Upstate New York- Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and the state capital, Albany.

Management

The enabling legislation created a 27 member, community- based federal commission to serve as the management entity for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The Commission is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, based primarily upon recommendations of the Governor of New York and the Corridor's Congressional delegation. The Commission includes: the U.S. Secretary of the Interior; seven New York State agency representatives including the New York State Canal Corporation; 13 members recommended by the members of Congress whose districts encompass the Corridor; and 6 at- large community representatives who live in any county constituting the corridor. Commission meetings are held at least quarterly and are open to the public.

Management Plan The Commission completed a Preservation and Management Plan, which was approved by the Governor in March 2006 and the Secretary of the Interior in June 2006. The Commission is undertaking actions to implement the plan and support public and private efforts to preserve the Canalway's cultural and natural resources and stimulate economic growth and heritage development that is balanced and self- sustaining.

Funding The Commission receives federal funding for its operations, planning, and projects with local communities and partners. It has also established a fundraising organization, the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, to help ensure the long term financial viability of its activities. The Commission has partnered with state, local, and non- profit organizations to leverage \$12.3 million in additional funds for Erie Canalway projects since 2002. In addition, the National Park Service is authorized to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

Partnerships The Commission has developed relationships with key organizations to partner on ongoing projects. These partnerships include:

- New York State Canal Corporation- A partnership has been formalized through a Cooperative Agreement with the New York State Canal Corporation, which owns, operates and maintains the 524- mile modern canal system. Joint projects include interpretive wayside exhibits and co- sponsorship of statewide canal events.
- Parks and Trails New York- A Cooperative Agreement with this statewide non- profit advocacy organization has resulted in joint projects, include co- sponsorship of a weeklong, 400- mile bike trek along the canal trail, and assistance in publishing *Cycling the Erie Canal - A guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail*.
- National Park Service- The National Park Service has provided technical assistance by expert staff on various projects, including brochures and wayside exhibits, and training.
- Cooperative Agreements have been signed with the Canal Society of New York State, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation- The Commission worked in partnership with OPRHP to rehabilitate a historic building into a new visitor center at Peebles Island State Park at the junction of the Erie and Champlain Canals in 2005.
- Thirteen non- profit organizations and municipalities were awarded grants totaling \$200,000 from the Commission in 2007.
- NYS Department of Transportation and NYS Thruway Authority- Transportation dollars secured by Congressman James Walsh funded more than 160 gateway signs to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

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