



# Erie Canalway Map & Guide



Fairport

## Launch Your Canal Experience

Come by boat, bike, car, or on foot—you'll discover a winning combination of recreational opportunities, unique regional food and beverages, small town charm, big city culture, and lots to see and do along the canals that built New York State and opened the Nation.

When you explore the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, or Oswego Canals, you're following in the footsteps of generations of families, canal boat workers, and world travelers who have plied these waters and walked its towpath since the Erie Canal opened in 1825. Some of our more famed visitors include Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mark Twain.

If you travel the entire length of the Erie Canal, you'll join a growing number of today's "End-to-Enders" who are enjoying a

big adventure and sense of accomplishment as they walk, cycle, row, kayak, or cruise nearly 400 miles from Buffalo to Albany.

But you don't have to travel the entire distance to have something to write home about. You can ride the Canalway Trail for an hour or two, visit one of the Canalway Corridor's premier canal museums and historic sites, discover the charm of canal villages, or step onboard a tour boat to get a sense of how much the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor has to offer.



### Wish You Were Here...

Before Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, people sent short messages to friends and relatives using postcards. As the social media of its day, postcards were cheap, fast, and fun to receive. Share your visit with friends and relatives and tag us at @ErieCanalway.



2023

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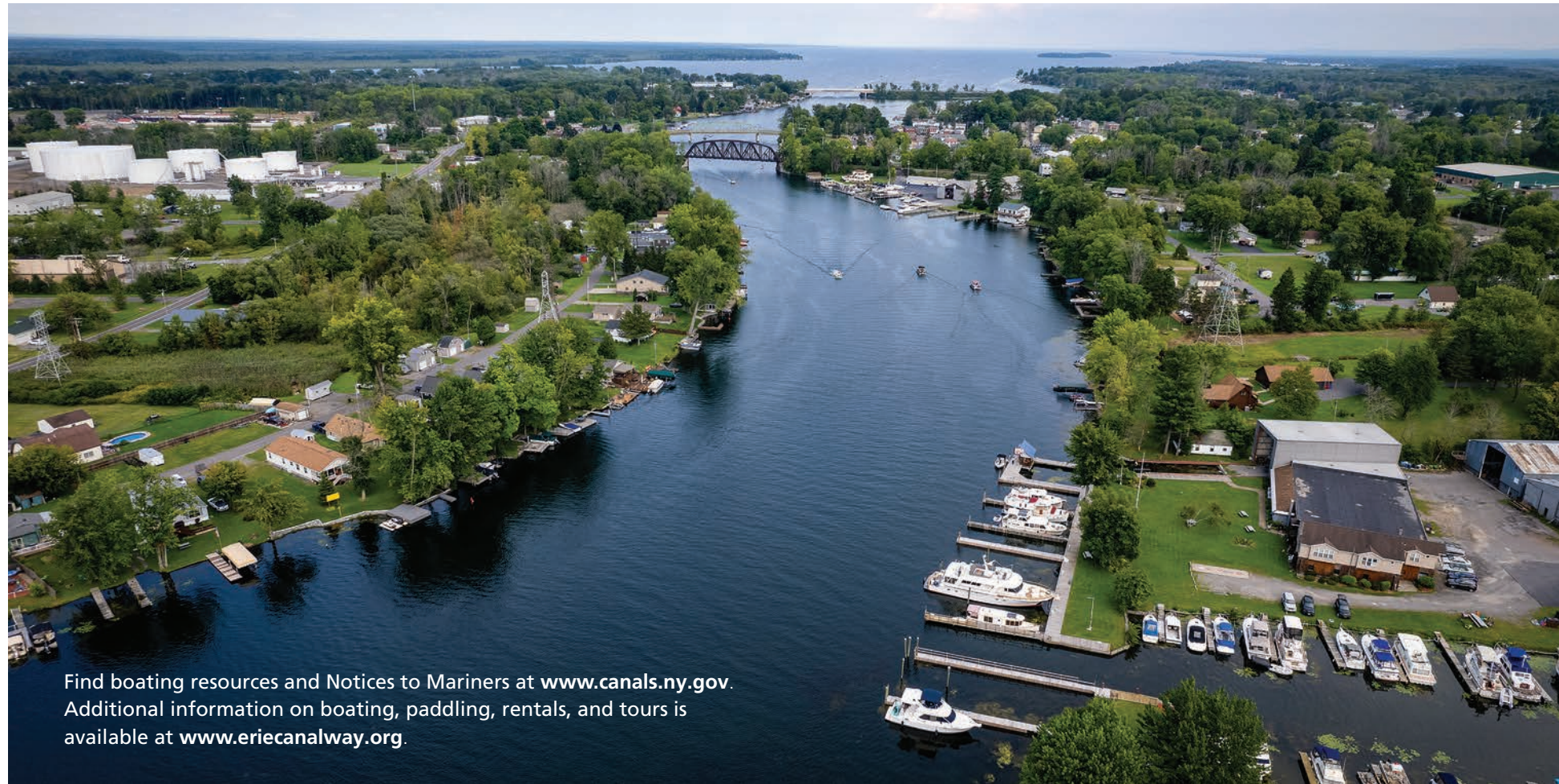
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# Get on the Water

The New York State Canal System—which includes the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego canals—is the centerpiece of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Often billed as the fastest way to slow down, boating here is like nowhere else. You’ll navigate century old locks; pass stunning stone aqueducts used to carry boats over rivers and streams in the 1800s; traverse the waterway with tugboats and cruisers; and experience narrow canal channels and wider rivers and lakes. Beautiful scenery, lively canal waterfronts, and distinctive New York flavor await around every bend.



Brewerton

Find boating resources and Notices to Mariners at [www.canals.ny.gov](http://www.canals.ny.gov). Additional information on boating, paddling, rentals, and tours is available at [www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org).



Pistisford



Seneca Falls



North Tonawanda

## Boat Tours

Step on board a canal tour boat for an hourly cruise, dinner cruise or themed tour. You’ll find boat tours within an hour’s drive of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and Saratoga. Most boat tours will give you the unique canal experience of going through a lock. Specialty cruises, sailing adventures, and wine tours are offered on lake and river sections of the waterway.

## Canal Cruising

Steer your way to fun on the canal for a day trip, weekend getaway, or full vacation. The Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca canals connect the Hudson River with Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, Cayuga Lake, Seneca Lake and Lake Erie. You’ll find amenities and overnight accommodations at numerous marinas and public docks, many within walking distance of shops, restaurants, and other attractions.

## Vacation Rentals

Vacation rentals provide an idyllic way to experience the canal at a relaxed pace. You’ll get lessons in steering, docking, and locking before heading out, so you can feel confident on the water even if you’re new to boating. Rental boats are well-equipped with sleeping quarters, a galley, and deck space for relaxing; many come with bikes so you can enjoy the Canalway Trail too.

## Paddling

Discover great day trips and multiday adventures along the **NYS Canalway Water Trail**. Well-marked with blue and gold signs and maintained by volunteer stewards, the 450-mile water trail includes more than 150 public access points that make it easy to launch a kayak, canoe, or stand-up paddleboard. You’ll find rental outfitters at numerous locations.



Fort Ann, Frank Forté

## Canal Boating Basics

- The NYS Canal System is open from mid-May to mid-October.
- Boating is free and no permit is needed to go through a lock.
- Lock tenders are on hand to assist you and make your experience going through locks easy and enjoyable.
- It typically takes 15 to 20 minutes to go through a lock.
- Power boats and paddlers share the canal, so be mindful of speed limits and wakes.
- There are more than 80 public boat ramps where you can launch a boat.
- The canal is open daily from 7am to 5pm, but many locks and lift bridges are open on demand until 10pm.
- Make boating safety a priority. Consult the New York State Boater’s Guide for registration, operation, and safety information: <https://parks.ny.gov/boating/>.



## Say Hello to a Looper

Take a short stroll at most canal harbors and you’ll see boats from around the U.S. and Canada. Some use the canals to transit to and from home ports, while others are completing epic journeys. The NYS Canal System is part of a 6,000-mile boating route known as the Great Loop. Boaters traverse 15 states, 100+ locks, and typically take a year to complete it. Shorter loop options are also available. Strike up a conversation with “Loopers,” as they are affectionately named. Find out more about the journey at [greatloop.org](http://greatloop.org)

# Hit the Trail

Explore New York State’s extraordinary experiences, people, and places along the 750-mile Empire State Trail. The trail includes the east-west Erie Canalway Trail from Albany to Buffalo and north-south trails from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to Lake Champlain. Whether you like to cycle, hike, run, or roll, the trail welcomes people of all abilities, from all walks of life, and all backgrounds.



Niskayuna

The trail is both accessible and varied, so you can head out with friends or family for a few miles, enjoy a full day’s journey to see the sites, or have an unforgettable multiday adventure. Lodging, dining, and visitor services are readily available short distances off the trail.

The **360-mile Erie Canalway Trail** closely parallels both active and historic sections of the Erie Canal. You’ll see unique canal structures like locks and lift bridges, as well as all types of boats, and you’ll discover canal communities and historic sites that are intriguing and fun cycling destinations. More than 85% percent is off road. The remaining on-road sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways, intended for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding adjacent to vehicle traffic.

The **65-mile Champlain Canalway Trail** includes a mix of off and on-road segments from Waterford to Whitehall. The trail closely parallels the Hudson River/Champlain Canal through a region rich in Revolutionary War history. Forty percent of the route is off-road trail. At Fort Edward, the 9-mile off-road **Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail** connects to the Glens Falls Bikeway and Lake George. North of Whitehall, the Empire State Trail route is a 110-mile on-road bicycle route running north through the Champlain Valley to the Canadian Border at Rouses Point.

## Amenities & Resources

Parking areas, restrooms, and canal amenity centers are located all along the waterway. Camping is permitted at designated Hiker-Cyclist-Boater sites and at many locks with permission of the lock operator. Comprehensive

guidebooks, maps, and multi-day itineraries are available to help you plan a trip.

- [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org)
- [empiretrail.ny.gov](http://empiretrail.ny.gov)
- [nycanalmap.com](http://nycanalmap.com)
- [cycletheeriecanal.org](http://cycletheeriecanal.org)

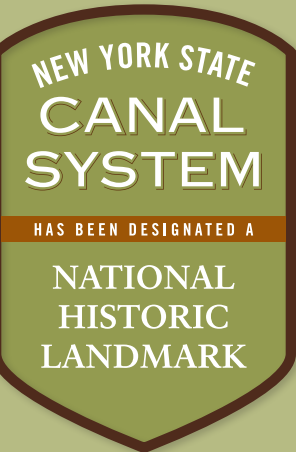
## Adaptive recreation



There are numerous places along the canals and Canalway Trail that are accessible and several that offer adaptive bikes and kayaks. Learn more at: [www.eriecanalway.org/1st-Mile](http://www.eriecanalway.org/1st-Mile)



# Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in New York State

The New York State Canal System's exceptional scenery, history, culture, and natural resources earned the 524-mile waterway and the communities along its shores Congressional designation as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000. The designation recognizes the significance of New York's canals to the state and nation.

Since its grand opening in 1825, the canals have been enlarged three times to accommodate larger boats and more traffic. Changes were made to the route and to canal structures like locks and bridges each time. Explore the many cities, towns, and villages along the waterway to touch history and experience for yourself the canals that transformed America.



## Locks

Locks are elevators for boats, lifting and lowering them as they travel along the waterway. Get an exceptional side-by-side comparison of locks used in the 1800s and locks used today in Lockport.

## Lift Bridges

Built between 1905 and 1918, 15 lift bridges still carry traffic over the Erie Canal in western New York. When boats need to pass, a bridge operator stops traffic on the roadway and raises the deck of the bridge 15 feet to give clearance.

## Heritage Sites and Visitor Centers

Visit local museums to learn about people, places, and innovations along the canals. Find information about attractions and amenities at canalfront visitor centers.

## 1800s Erie Canal

Find a rewatered stretch of the 1800s Erie Canal running through Central New York. See stone locks, aqueducts, and other structures formerly used to operate the canal at museums and parks from Montezuma to Amsterdam.

## Movable Dams

Eight movable dams between Schenectady and Fort Plain regulate water flow on the Mohawk River. Dam gates are lowered to form navigable pools during the summer but are pulled up in winter to clear the way for ice and debris-filled floodwaters.

## Canal Communities

Waterfront festivals, concerts, and events are the hallmark of summer along the canals. Be sure to sample local fare—microbreweries, wineries, farmers markets, and ethnic restaurants will give you a great taste of the region.



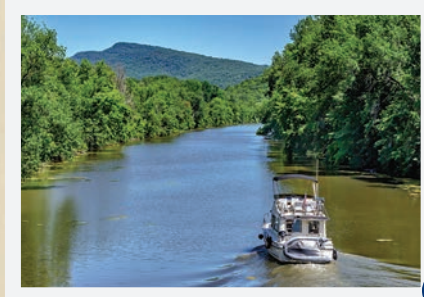


# Celebrate the Champlain Canal's 200th Anniversary

Two years prior to the auspicious opening of the Erie Canal, the Champlain Canal was fully operational from Troy to Lake Champlain in 1823. In its first year, one hundred boats made the 63-mile journey.

Just as canal proponents had hoped, the connection of Lake Champlain with the Hudson River enhanced the value of northern New York and Vermont. Iron ore, lumber, pulpwood, and farm produce from New York's North Country, Vermont, and Canada flowed south. Profits from trade also diverted south from Canada, as New York City grew to become the nation's largest port.

The Champlain Canal continues to serve as a north-south connector, welcoming visitors to experience the history and scenic beauty of the region.



• **Glens Falls**—View masterpieces at **Hyde Collection**; cycle on the 9-mile trail along the **Glens Falls Feeder Canal**; and top off your trip with a visit to a brewery or restaurant in the heart of town.

• **Whitehall**—Boaters heading to or from Lake Champlain can tie up near **Lock C12** to visit **Skenesborough Museum**. Located in a 1917 canal terminal building, the museum displays artifacts related to Whitehall's history as a center for transportation and defense.

• **Schuylerville**—Take your family to see a lock in action at **Lock C5** and explore neighboring **Hudson Crossing Park**, which offers more than two miles of waterfront trails, picnic sites, children's play garden, boat access, and self-serve kayak rentals. You can also enjoy a scenic cruise with **Mohawk Maiden Cruises**, which boards near Lock C5.

Follow in history's wake to these sites along the Champlain Canal.

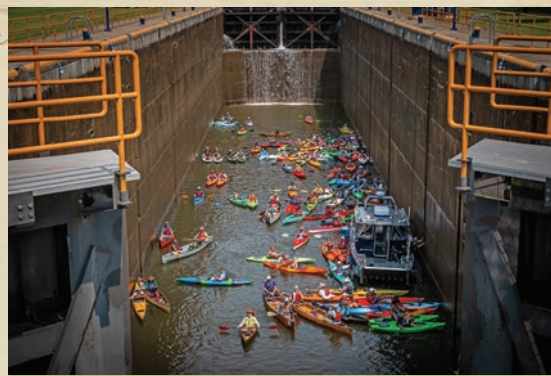
• **Fort Edward**—The **Fort Edward House Museum** complex shares the history of Fort Edward and the Champlain Canal. Exhibits at nearby **Rogers Island Visitors Center** tell stories of the area from the earliest Native Americans through the Revolutionary War. Fort Edward has several boat launches and is a good place to begin a paddling trip.



• **Stillwater**—Walk, cycle, or drive the 10-mile tour road to explore **Saratoga National Historical Park** where the most decisive battles of the American Revolution were fought in 1777. Nearby, visit other parts of the park at Victory Woods, Saratoga Monument, and the country home of Revolutionary War General Philip Schuyler.



• **Waterford**—Located at the confluence of the Erie and Champlain Canals, Waterford is a hub for canal commerce and recreation. Stop by the **Waterford Harbor Visitor Center** to get oriented, stroll the canal promenade, rent a kayak, connect to the Canalway Trail, or enjoy the Sunday morning Waterford Harbor Farmers Market.



## Bicentennial Events

- **Champlain Canal Stories: 200 Years from Waterford to Whitehall** (exhibit) through 12/23, Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls
- **Champlain Canalway Trail Family Bicycle Celebration**, 6/3, Fort Edward to Fort Ann
- **Champlain Canal History Tour & Paddle**, 7/14, Whitehall to Comstock and back
- **Paddle the Canals: Champlain 200!**, Saturday, 7/29, Fort Edward to Schuylerville
- **17th Annual Cardboard Boat Races: Magical History Tour**, 8/12, Fort Hardy Park, Schuylerville
- **Champlain Canal Bicentennial Concert with the Albany Symphony**, 10/8, Albany
- **Locktoberfest Fort Edward**, 10/14, Canal Street Marketplace, Fort Edward

Find details and more events at: [eriecanalway.org/explore/events](http://eriecanalway.org/explore/events)

# Take the Kids!

Spending special time with family or friends is a favorite pastime of any child. There are lots of ways to share a fine afternoon or an entire vacation along the canals. Here are our top five things to do with kids:

**1 Take a Boat Trip.** Kids especially love the experience of going through locks or under lift bridges. If you'd prefer to stay on land, visit one of the canal system's 57 locks to watch boats go by.



**2 Cycle on the Erie Canalway Trail.** The off-road trail is a great, safe place to ride. From budding two-wheelers to teens ready for a multiday trip, the trail offers options to suit every skill level.

**3 Please touch! Experience Hands on History.** Most canal-related history museums offer special programs, hands-on displays, and family-friendly events. Check museum websites for events and kid-friendly activities.



**4 Go Fish!** Cast your line in the canal itself, or in streams and lakes throughout the Corridor. Common catches include walleye, northern pike, small and large mouth bass, and panfish. In the fall, the NYS Canal Corporation releases water from the Erie Canal into Lake Ontario tributaries in Western New York to create outstanding angling conditions.



**5 Cultivate a Sense of Wonder.** Enjoy swimming, hiking, and nature study at state parks, nature preserves, and National Natural Landmarks. You'll find dramatic waterfalls, beautiful lakes, extensive trails, and vast wetlands full of bird life. Some great picks include: Moss Island National Natural Landmark, Little Falls; Green Lakes State Park, Fayetteville; Buttermilk Falls State Park and Robert H. Treman State Park in Ithaca, and the Montezuma Audubon Center in Savannah.

# It's a Hard Knock Life



## Kids on the Canal in the 1800s

Picture walking along a dirt path, the smell of animals mixed with that of laboring men—day after day, mile after mile, through hot sun and driving rain—and the life of a mule driver on the canal begins to come into view. What's harder to imagine today is that many mule drivers were children.

The demanding job of the mule driver was often held by boys (and occasionally girls) as young as eight-years old. They walked 15 to 20 miles each day, typically completing two six-hour shifts as the canal boat traveled to its destination. At the end of the day, no hot shower or soft pillow awaited. Boys often slept with the animals and tended to their needs in stalls onboard the canal boat.

Some mule drivers worked alongside their families, pitching in as expected to run a family-run canal boat business. Others were orphaned immigrants. Children whose parents did not survive the transatlantic journey were sometimes sent north from New York City to work on canal boats. Low wages and rough conditions marked the life of the mule driver.

## NEW YORK STATE CANAL STORE

[shop.eriecanalway.org](http://shop.eriecanalway.org)

## Gear Up for Your Canal Adventure!

Find shirts, hats, fleece vests, and more in a variety of styles and designs. All net proceeds support Erie Canalway programs.





# GET UP, GET OUT, AND GET ACTIVE!



Discover fun and fitness along the canals with the Canalway Challenge.

This free program lets you choose your own personal mileage goal and then walk, run, cycle, or paddle on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System to achieve it. You'll earn mileage status and a recognition sticker, magnet, and set of postcards when you finish to show off your accomplishment.

Select 15, 90, 180, or 360 miles; people with disabilities are welcome to begin with the 1st Mile Challenge. You can complete the Canalway Challenge in one big trip or many small ones. Participation is free and registration is open to individuals, teams, and organizations. Sign up today!

[www.canalwaychallenge.org](http://www.canalwaychallenge.org)



## FREE ACTIVITIES, ALL YEAR LONG

On THE CANALS



On the Canals is a year-round program of free activities along the waterways and trails of the NYS Canal System, brought to you by the NYS Canal Corporation. From kayaking, biking and hiking, to painting en plein air and snowshoeing, there is so much to do every season. More fun is added throughout the year so get weekly emails at the QR Code below.

Through partnerships with selected providers, this year's lineup of On the Canals recreation and arts experiences across New York State can be found online where free reservations are a breeze. Several activities have accessible equipment available. Come autumn, the program offers world-class fishing on several Western NY tributaries that flow to Lake Ontario, enhanced with water from the Erie Canal.

Enjoy all the New York State's canals and trails have to offer...Free...On the Canals.



[Canals.ny.gov/onthecanals/](http://Canals.ny.gov/onthecanals/)

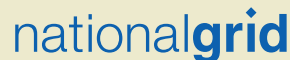
### Many thanks to our generous tourism supporters:



The New York State Canal System is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.  
1-800-4CANAL4  
public.info@canals.ny.gov  
canals.ny.gov



CENTRAL NEW YORK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Dolgeville, NY  
sprucecreekcampground.com



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Macedon, Neil Spohr

### Enter the Erie Canalway Photo Contest

Submit up to three photos of your favorite places, views, and people enjoying the canals for a chance to win a spot in the 2024 Erie Canalway calendar. Find an entry form and tips on our website:

[eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest](http://eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest)

Deadline: **August 25, 2023**

**NOTE: Images must be horizontal format.**



In partnership with the National Park Service

The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of historic waterway.

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