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## Helpers on Canalway Trail

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COLONIE -- Bikers and in-line skaters wearing orange vests on the Canalway Trail between Colonie and Rotterdam will offer assistance and information to trail users throughout the season.

The Canalway Trail Ambassador project began last fall as a pilot program in Niskayuna and expanded this year after favorable reports from volunteers and trail users.

"It worked very well last year," said project director Wally Elton of Parks & Trails New York. "Volunteers helped with bike problems and monitored conditions, but we also had a case last year where a volunteer had to provide first aid."

Trail ambassadors will serve numerous roles on the trails, providing directions, fixing bikes, monitoring trail conditions and promoting safety. Volunteers will not work set schedules in specific areas but will be identifiable by their orange vests, which say "trail ambassador" on the back.

About 20 volunteers are expected to be on the trail this season.

The program is being funded by local trail groups and Assemblyman Bob Reilly and could expand to other sections of the trail in the future. It is expected to extend to the Corning Preserve in Albany next year.

The area being monitored this season is part of a trail system that, once complete, will run nearly 400 miles from Albany to Buffalo following the corridor of the old Erie Canal. The trail is 75 percent complete and the gaps can be negotiated using marked road routes.

For more information on visiting the Canalway Trail visit the Parks & Trails New York Web site at <http://www.ptny.org>.

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