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Outdoors



The Capital Region is one of the best places to live and work if you love the outdoors. We have world-class hiking, skiing, rock climbing, mountain biking, boating, hunting and fishing only a short drive away. This blog will talk about all things outdoors in upstate New York and beyond. Got a question about a hike or an adventure story to share? Send me an [email](#). Alan Wechsler, outdoors reporter.



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500 riders expected to bike across New York this July

May 5, 2009 at 3:16 pm by Alan Wechsler, staff writer



Cyclists finish the eight-day Erie Canal bike tour in 2006.

The best way to see New York state may be from the saddle of a bicycle.

The groups Parks & Trails New York has announced the date of this year's annual bike ride from Buffalo to Albany: July 12 to 19.

Last year, more than 500 riders from 38 states took part in Cycling the Erie Canal tour, which follows the Erie Canal Bike Path and also makes use of local roads. About 75 percent of the bike path is complete, with sections both paved and made from crushed limestone.

The tour, now in its 11th year, takes eight days to ride the 400 miles, with stops along the way to see tourist sites. Participants camp overnight, although local hotels are also available.

The tour costs \$525. For another \$80, participants can get a one-way shuttle from Albany to Buffalo the day before it begins.

A number of other states also offer bike tours. Iowa, for instance, lures 8,000 riders for its Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa. Oregon also has an annual tour.

But while the Iowa ride is a party unto itself, the purpose of the New York ride, says organizers, is to promote the Erie Canal as a cycling opportunity one can easily do on ones own. The Erie Canal corridor is designated a National Heritage Corridor, one of only 37 across the nation. The tour passes through historic canal villages and rural countryside.

Included in the \$525 fee is camping accommodations every evening with showers and toilet facilities, eight breakfasts and six dinners, plus two refreshment stops daily and guided tours of historic sites. Participants also get a T-shirt and water bottle. Bags will be carried by sag wagon, which will also offer mechanical help.

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Two weekend ride options are available, from Buffalo to Pittsford on July 11 to July 13 and from Canajoharie to Albany on July 17 to July 19. Non-cycling friends and family of riders can also follow along with their own transportation. Youths under 18 are half-price.

Parks & Trails New York, a statewide advocacy organization, seeks a network of parks, trails and open spaces across the state. Funds raised will help support trail programs, including the Canalway Trail. When complete, the 524-mile Canalway Trail will be the longest of its kind in the nation.

Looking for a shorter option? Parks and Trails is also organizing another multi-day bicycling tour through the picturesque Hudson Valley. The Great Hudson Valley Pedal, a six-day, 200-mile bicycle tour from Albany to New York City, is set for August 11-16.

The organizer's Web site is <http://www.ptny.org/canaltour>. You can also call 518-434-1583

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1. I have a question, and it is not intended as a criticism. I follow your blog pretty regularly, as an outdoor enthusiast myself, and it seems as though you put emphasis on biking activities locally. Based on your description of the blog, it seems to me there should be more posts regarding the plethora of outdoor activities in the state. I haven't seen much about rock climbing, which you reference in the description and even in your profile image.

No offense intended. Just one reader who would love to see more regarding hiking and rock climbing, both of which are ridiculously plentiful in the area.

Comment by hmm — May 6th, 2009 @ [10:32 am](#)

2. Yes, there has been an inordinate amount of biking stuff in the past week or so. That's probably due to the fact that this is National Bike Month, so there has been a lot of activities to announce or cover. But that doesn't mean we've forgotten about other pursuits. We'll be doing a hiking story tomorrow and are planning a rock-climbing story for the next week or two (haven't gotten out to climb yet this year). In the meantime, any suggestions for stories/places to write about are definitely welcome. Send them to awechsler@timesunion.com. Thanks!

Comment by Alan Wechsler, staff writer — May 6th, 2009 @ [3:18 pm](#)

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