

Canalway

TRAIL TIMES



Summer 2009

Issue #20

Construction begins on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail Years of persistence and perseverance pay off at last

On June 6, National Trails Day, trail enthusiasts in the Finger Lakes will gather in Waterloo to cut a ribbon marking the beginning of construction of the Cay-Sen Trail along the Cayuga-Seneca Canal, an event more than 10 years in the making. When completed, the trail will connect the 2.5-mile Lakefront Park trail at the top of Seneca Lake in the City of Geneva with the Erie Canal, passing through the towns of Fayette, Waterloo, Seneca Falls and Tyre, and the villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls.

"I am extremely pleased by the hard

work and determination of members of the Cay-Sen Trail Association over these many years," said committee chairman Vince Scalise, in recalling the years of struggle that have now begun to bring the trail to fruition. "They stuck with the project in spite of many obstacles, knowing it would benefit so many people in our area."

Scalise said work now moves from planning to physical labor. "As we enter this exciting new phase, we are looking for contributions of the use of equipment and materials to reduce the cost of construction. And, of course, many more people are needed to complete the trail. Here's an

opportunity for all of us to build for the future, to enhance our area as a tourism destination, to provide a safe place for young and old to exercise, and to enable future generations to experience the beauty of our area."

Trail development a study in perseverance

The history of the Cay-Sen trail is a study in patience and perseverance. Back in the early 1990s, there was much talk about a revitalized Erie Canal and development of a cross-state Canalway Trail. Doris Wolf was a reporter at the time writing about these efforts. She attended many canal-related events where she learned of a gap assessment report on the Seneca-Cayuga corridor. Wolf joined the all-volunteer Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) that included representatives from the Erie, Champlain and Oswego canals who were working to complete a trail along the entire Canal System.

Using information and contacts she gained at the CTANY meeting, Wolf convened a committee of about 20 members: representatives of the City of Geneva, the four towns and two villages in Seneca County, two state parks, and two national parks, tourism departments, and others. The committee, known as the Cayuga-Seneca Regional Canalway Trail Group (Cay-Sen RCTG), was sponsored by the Chambers of Commerce from Geneva and Seneca County.

Vince Scalise, then president of the

To Join the Friends of the Cay-Sen Trail, go to www.cay-sentrail.org. Everyone is welcome. All are needed! For more information, contact vincentjscalise@gmail.com



Waterloo entrance to Vern's Way, a spur of the Cay-Sen Trail which links the Waterloo business district to Oak Island and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. The path was built by the community in memory of businessman and former Waterloo Supervisor, LaVerne Sessler.

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Progress made in Closing the Gaps

Several Canalway Trail projects now funded

Due to budget revenue shortfalls, the New York State Thruway Authority/New York State Canal Corporation had deferred or delayed several Canalway Trail projects, bringing a halt to the construction of 37 new miles of Canalway Trail and much-needed refurbishment of 22 miles of existing trail, including two projects with more than 90 percent of the funding already in place. Knowing that the Canalway Trail must be fully finished from Buffalo to Albany for the State and the communities along the corridor to reap maximum tourism, health and other quality of life benefits, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) launched a campaign to Close the Gaps.

PTNY staff and CTANY officers have met with state and federal lawmakers and

agency officials to make the case that the Canalway Trail is becoming a world-class recreationway that can serve as a major economic engine for upstate New York. PTNY has also urged the Governor, the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT), and local Metropolitan Planning Organizations to include Canalway Trail projects on their federal economic stimulus lists.

The match has been found for the two projects with 90 percent funding already in place: 8 miles of new trail from Ilion to Little Falls and the refurbishment of 20 miles of existing trail between Canastota and Rome. Seven miles of trail between Newark and Clyde was recently awarded transportation enhancements program funding.

“We are pleased with what has happened in a few short months. Now

we’re focused on getting three 2005 Transportation Bond Act projects back on track: four miles of new trail in the City of Rome, five miles of new trail between Fort Edward and Fort Ann, and refurbishment of eight miles of trail between Pittsford and Fairport,” said Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “We know firsthand that Canalway Trail projects create jobs while making a valuable investment in the infrastructure of Upstate communities, so we’re committed to continue working with the Thruway Authority, the New York State Canal Corporation, New York State Department of Transportation and stakeholders throughout the corridor to “close the gaps.”



Who’s on the Canalway Trail?

Annual Count estimates more than 200,000 visitors in eastern Monroe County

It’s well known that the Erie Canalway Trail near Rochester is a popular place, but until recently no one knew exactly how many people really did use the trail in a year. Now, based on actual counts gathered in summer 2008, Parks & Trails New York has generated estimates of annual trail traffic of approximately 213,000 at Schoen

Place in the Village of Pittsford, a popular destination, with restaurants, shops, and outdoor summer programs.

At three other nearby locations along the trail, annual estimates of trail traffic volume ranged between 102,000 to 180,000. The results are similar to those of 2007 when counts conducted at the same locations projected annual use between 100,000 and 200,000 persons.

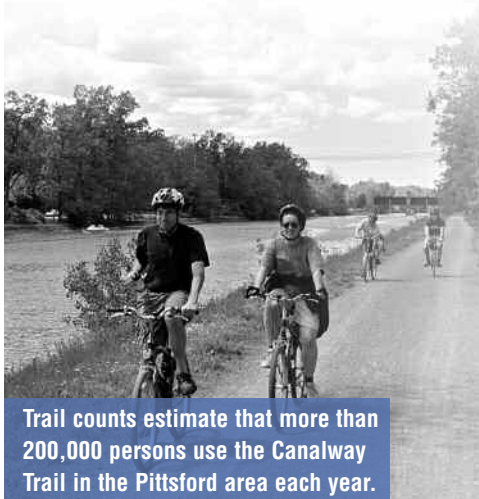
Twenty-five volunteers, many of them employees of a local engineering firm, played a pivotal role in getting the data needed to generate the trail traffic estimates. Multiple counts were conducted at four separate locations on weekday evenings in July and August.

“Due to its popularity, many of our employees were interested in helping get counts for the trail – particularly those who use it,” said Mark Johns, principal

landscape architect for Bergmann Associates and the organizer of his firm’s volunteer counters. “What we found is that the Canalway Trail is an important element in the daily lives of many Rochester-area residents.”

The survey found that the majority of trail users are bicyclists. Bicyclists represented 52% of those counted, followed by 35% walkers, 9% joggers, 2% persons with baby carriages, and 2% in-line skaters. Sixty-one percent of all bicyclists were wearing helmets.

The annual Canalway Trail User Count is organized by the Canalway Trails Association New York, the New York State Canal Corporation, and Parks & Trails New York. Trail count information is used to guide trail design, management, marketing, and funding decisions. Read the full report, *Who’s on the Trail? Erie Canalway Trail User Count 2008*, by visiting www.ptny.org, then click on Canalway Trail/publications.



Trail counts estimate that more than 200,000 persons use the Canalway Trail in the Pittsford area each year.

Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail

(continued from page 1)

Geneva Chamber, joined the group. Highly respected in political and business circles in Geneva, an avid biker and a trail enthusiast, he gradually assumed leadership.

Locally, the idea of a trail was not popular. An early meeting proposing a sculpture trail in the village of Seneca Falls was attended by angry neighbors. Despite opposition, a small group of trail advocates, including Seneca Falls village planner Fran Caraccilo and resident Wilhemina Pusmuskans, continued to work on the project, leading to the completion of the one-mile Ludovico Sculpture Trail adjacent to the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.

The group received an early boost with a \$1,000 planning grant from the State Health Department through the Seneca County Healthy Heart program, with which it hired landscape architect Rick Manning of Northeast Greenways of Ithaca. He drew up a master plan for the trail that was used to apply for grants and in presentations to the public. The committee also developed a logo and a static display that members took to trail meetings and conventions across the state, designed a brochure, adopted bylaws, applied for not for profit status, and created a website. The committee had all the pieces of a successful trail except an actual trail!

Meeting monthly under Scalise's leadership, the Cay-Sen RCTG enjoyed several successes, such as a federal transportation enhancements program grant of about \$400,000, a \$5,000 grant from Geneva Growth, Inc., \$7,000 from the Town of Geneva, and funds from the Town of Seneca Falls.

County's assistance a boon

The committee's efforts were rewarded by approval by the Seneca County Board of Supervisors, which agreed to act as lead agency and dedicate the help of the staff and resources of its planning and grant writing departments.

Scalise acknowledges that the trail could not have been possible without the county's assistance. "Our Association appreciates all the effort invested by Seneca County officials – both

"Here's an opportunity for all of us to build for the future"

Vince Scalise,

Cay-Sen Regional Canalway Trail Group

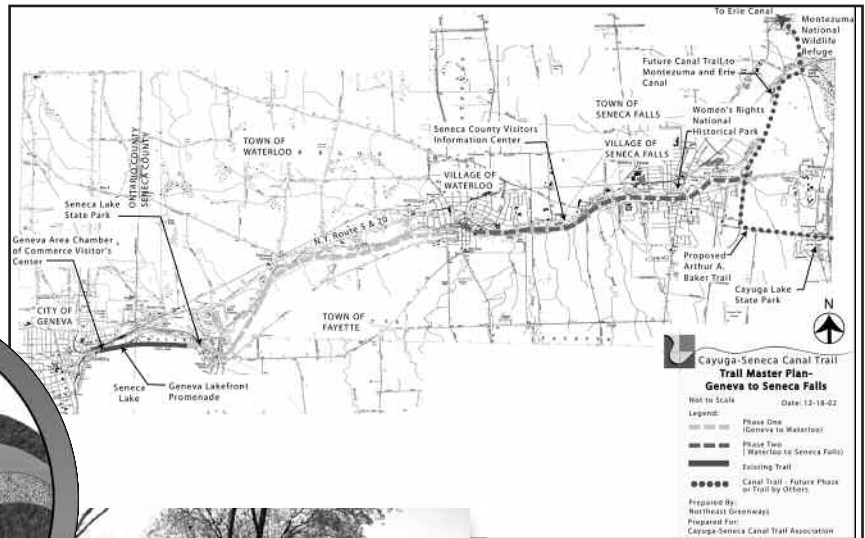
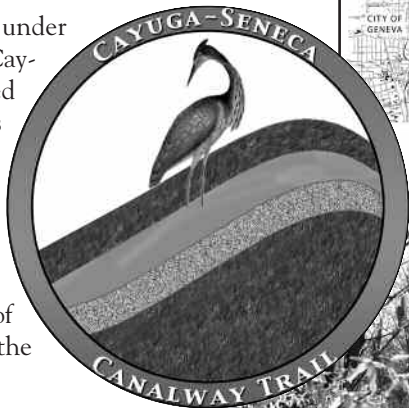
Supervisors and management for their encouragement and support of the project," he said. Scalise is especially appreciative of the efforts of Mitch Rowe, the county's director of planning and development, who has been "a tremendous help in moving the project forward."

For many years, the group and the county attempted to negotiate with New

York State Electric and Gas for use of its right of way as the route for the trail. Recent events have ignited a light of hope at the end of the tunnel. The utility has now allowed the committee to gain access to the right of way to begin construction. "We are grateful to have the support of NYSEG, which is vital to the success of our project," Scalise said.

The story of the Cay-Sen Trail is a tale of the importance of private citizens, who come together to share a common goal. Scalise said the number of people involved in developing the trail has made it both challenging and interesting.

"So many people have worked so hard in so many ways to make this day possible," Scalise said. "We have come so far, but we have, literally, miles still to go. Please join us as we go forward. We need everyone's help to construct, maintain and enjoy this trail. When the trail is completed, it will provide a wonderful opportunity for so many people to enjoy the outdoors."



The Ludovico Sculpture Trail in Seneca Falls is the only section of the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail now open to the public. Developed by volunteers on land donated by Frank Ludovico, the trail is managed by a nonprofit friends of the trail group. The trail is unique for the numerous sculptures, many created by women, which honor aspects of Seneca Falls social and cultural history including the women's rights movement and Italian and Irish immigration.

4th Annual Clean Sweep *Biggest Yet*

The 2009 Canal Clean Sweep, held over the weekend of April 18 and 19 to recognize Earth Day, consisted of more than 80 events, making this the largest edition of the annual "spring cleaning" of the NYS Canal System corridor so far. With favorable weather prevailing, hundreds of volunteers turned out from Tonawanda to Waterford and from Whitehall and Oswego to



CANALCLEANSWEEP

Weedsport. In the Onondaga County Town of Clay, the Pirates of CHAOS street theatre crew lent a festive air to the day by dressing in costume to work with town officials and residents to make "garr-bage walk the plank."

Raking leaves, cutting brush, and picking up litter and other metal and plastic trash was the order of the day for most

groups. But along with the trash, the 30 persons, aged nine to 70 who joined Assemblyman David Townsend, Jr. in clean up along the canal and Oneida Lake shoreline at Sylvan Beach, also discovered a piece of treasure.

"An old green soda bottle sitting on a pile of leaves where the canal meets

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Employees of the engineering firm Bergmann Associates picked up trash along the Canalway Trail in the Monroe County Town and Village of Pittsford.



CTANY board member Keith Kroon, Canalway Trails Association New York director, thanks Marshall Shear, Commander of the Iroquois Sail and Power Squadron for the group's work as Canalway Trail adopters for a 1.8-mile section of trail in Perinton. Members of the Squadron received Canalway Trails Association New York caps in appreciation of their ongoing efforts.

Enjoy *Your* Canalway Trail! 6th Annual Canalway Trail Celebration

The sixth annual Canalway Trail Celebration is just around the corner and is set to be bigger than ever. Coinciding with National Trails Day on June 6 and designed to increase awareness and enjoyment of the Canalway Trail system as a world-class recreation resource and tourist destination for New Yorkers and visitors alike, the Celebration is a coordinated series of events in communities all along the trail.

This year more than 40 events, ranging from family bike tours, interpretive history walks and trail clean-up activities to costumed interpretive programs, arts and crafts fairs and a rhubarb festival, will draw thousands of trail and canal enthusiasts. Events are planned across the state from Tonawanda and Lockport to Schenectady and Cohoes, and from Schuylerville to Seneca Falls. Just a few of the events scheduled include "A Tribute to Canallers - Yesterday and Today" in Chittenango, the first annual Murray-Holley June Fest, a "Learn to Row" workshop in Albany, and the Fairport Canal Days Festival, which takes place throughout the weekend.

The Canalway Trail Celebration is organized by Parks & Trails New York, the New York State Canal Corporation, and the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY), with additional support from the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.



**Sixth Annual Canalway Trail Celebration
June 6, 2009**

Join the fun!
Check out the full list of planned events at www.ptny.org.

Erie Canalway Passport Stamp Program Set to Make its Mark

Stamps now available at 21 sites throughout the National Heritage Corridor

Visitors to selected cultural heritage sites in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor can now record their experiences with stamps collected in a special spiral-bound National Park Service Passport, thanks to the Passport to Your National Parks © program. The program, coordinated by Eastern National, a National Park Service partner, in cooperation with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, enables visitors to collect free cancellation stamps at 21 sites in the Erie Canalway, as well as hundreds of national parks and NPS-affiliated areas nationwide.

"How great is it to now be able to collect a special set of stamps that commemorate the Erie Canal, while visiting some of the best sites in the Corridor," said Erie Canalway Director of Heritage Tourism Lori Duell. More than a million Passport books have



been sold to date, which attests to how popular this program is.

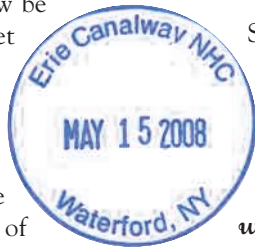
Stamp pads and stamps are usually located in a site or park's

visitor center, gift shop, or headquarters. The cancellation lists the site and the date of visit for the holder. A special Kids' Passport® To Your National Parks Companion is also available.

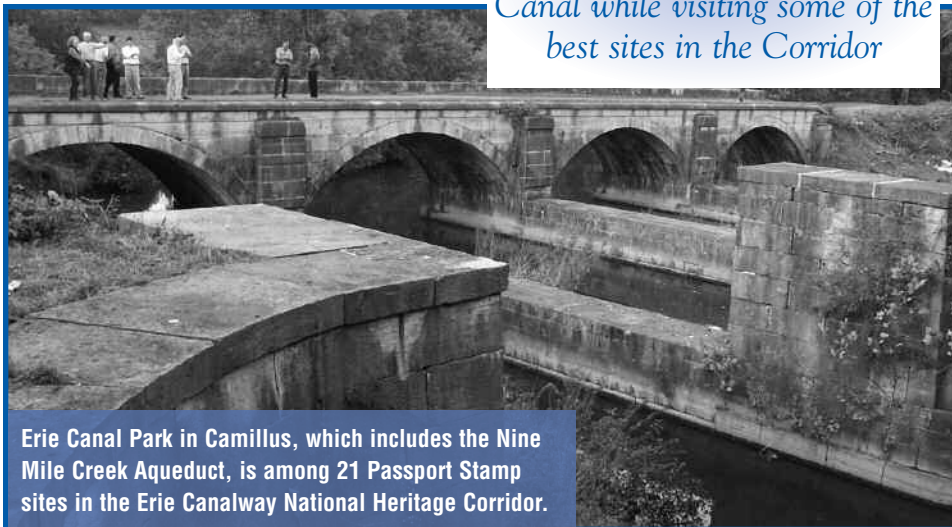
"Collecting passport stamps encourages people to visit multiple sites, each one telling a different part of the canal story," explained Duell. "By linking sites along the Erie Canalway, the passport program offers visitors a more complete experience and memories to last a lifetime."

The spiral-bound National Park Service Passport is available online at www.estn.org and at National Park Service visitor centers.

Detailed information about each of the 21 Erie Canalway passport stamp sites is available at www.eriecanalway.org.



Collect a special set of stamps that commemorate the Erie Canal while visiting some of the best sites in the Corridor



Erie Canal Park in Camillus, which includes the Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct, is among 21 Passport Stamp sites in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial establishes Legacy Trail System

Throughout 2009, New York State will be celebrating the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial; the 400th anniversary of Hudson and Champlain's voyages of exploration, and the 200th anniversary of Fulton's successful steamboat voyage and establishment of steam commerce on the Hudson River. To mark these historic events, New York State and its many communities have planned a year-long series of events. Starting from the New York City Harbor to the state capitol in Albany up to Quebec our Native American, Dutch, French and English roots and heritage will be commemorated.



As part of the Quadracentennial activities, New York State will promote legacy projects that will last beyond the celebration,

including a Quadracentennial Legacy Trail System. The system will be comprised of multiple trail types, including but not limited to walking, biking and water trails. Existing and proposed portions of the Champlain Canalway Trail will be eligible for Quadracentennial Legacy Trail System designation. Designated Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Legacy Trail segments will be provided identifying signage and will be included on a Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial Legacy Trail map. For more information on the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial Legacy Trail, please contact Scott Keller or Beth Campochiaro, Hudson River Valley Greenway, (518) 473-3835, hryg@hudsongreenway.state.ny.us

To learn more about Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial events taking place throughout the year, please visit.

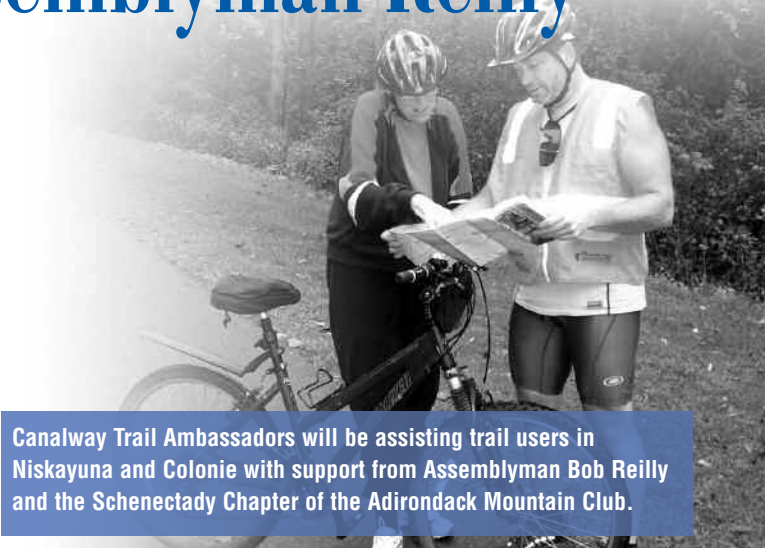
www.exploreny400.com



Reach of Trail Ambassadors Grows with Grant from Assemblyman Reilly

Thanks to a \$3,000 grant from Assemblyman Bob Reilly, Canalway Trail Ambassadors will extend their patrols eastward from Niskayuna into the Town of Colonie (Albany County) this summer. Building on last year's successful pilot project, Parks & Trails New York again will collaborate with the Friends of the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail to recruit, train and support volunteer Trail Ambassadors to be the "face" of the Canalway Trail in these two towns and the City of Schenectady throughout the summer. These funds also will allow greater promotion of the trail in the Towns of Clifton Park and Halfmoon.

Assemblyman Reilly donates his salary to nonprofit organizations benefitting residents of his district each year. The Friends have also received a grant from the Adirondack Mountain Club, Schenectady Chapter to support continuation of the Canalway Trail Ambassadors project.



Canalway Trail Ambassadors will be assisting trail users in Niskayuna and Colonie with support from Assemblyman Bob Reilly and the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Cycling the Erie Canal website wins national contest

Visit www.ptny.org/bikecanal

Parks & Trails New York's Cycling the Erie Canal website was named "best travel and tourism site for trails" in 2008 by American Trails, the national nonprofit working to create and protect America's network of interconnected trails on behalf of all trail interests. American Trails sought websites that really make trails come alive and provide effective information delivery, support volunteers, and engage the public.

"We're thrilled to receive this national recognition and look forward to the increase in visitors to the trail that it will bring. We want everyone to discover that the Erie Canalway Trail provides similar history, culture, and services that one can find cycling along European canals. With the emphasis today on finding reasonably priced, close-to-home opportunities for

recreation, our Cycling the Erie Canal website makes it easy to plan a trip to the Erie Canalway Trail," said Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin.

At the heart of the website is an interactive map that features the Canalway Trail route and outstanding sightseeing stops. Users can pan or scroll through the entire route, choose a specific region to explore, or find the location of a particular attraction, lodging establishment or bike shop by selecting it from the database. Each point of interest features a link for more information. A special feature allows users to create personalized itineraries. The website was developed with support from the New York State Department of Economic Development, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and the New York State Canal Corporation.



Clean Sweep

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Oneida Lake was the highlight of our event. There were 10 written messages in this bottle along with 10 cents. Some of the messages had biblical scripts and others gave their name, number and a brief message. A 12-year old boy from Taberg, NY wrote the date 2005 and gave his

phone number along with a message for any hot models to call him! Another message was DUDE...Mountain Dew!!" said Ashley Baker, aide to Assemblyman Townsend.

This year the NYS Consumer Protection Board joined the NYS Canal Corporation, the NYS Environmental

Facilities Corporation, and Parks & Trails New York as a sponsor of the Sweep. The CPB organized a "Shredding Day" in Utica on Friday, April 17, to kick off the weekend's activities. Special thanks go to all of the local groups and volunteers who made the Canal Clean Sweep possible.



Snowmobiling to be allowed on Canal Lands

Snowmobiling will Increase Recreational Use of the Canal System Year Round

The New York State Canal Corporation announced in April that it will begin the Rule Making process for revising the Canal Corporation Rules and Regulations to allow snowmobiling on Canal Corporation owned lands. Snowmobiling will be allowed by permit on a case by case basis to clubs that are members of the New York State Snowmobile Association. In order to obtain a permit, the clubs must demonstrate local municipal support in the form of a resolution. The Thruway Authority/Canal Corporation Board approved the amendment at a recent meeting.

Carmella R. Mantello, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation, said, "By working with local municipalities to allow snowmobiling on Canal lands, the Canal System will truly become a year

round destination. In addition to the activities already taking place throughout the winter months, communities will now be able to reap the recreational and economic benefits of snowmobiling. The Corporation is pleased to partner with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Snowmobile Association to make this a reality."

Dave Perkins, Trails Coordinator for the New York State Snowmobile Association, said, "This action by the Thruway Authority/Canal Corporation Board represents an opportunity for snowmobile clubs to utilize canal lands to complete significant trail linkages in the statewide snowmobile trail system. As shown in Washington County, Montgomery County, Onondaga County and Orleans County, snowmobile clubs

will accept the responsibility to work with state and local government to provide safe and well-maintained snowmobile trails. Canalside businesses and those on adjoining trails will benefit economically with these trail linkages in place."

Snowmobiling pilot program begun in 1998

In 1998, the Canal Corporation initiated a pilot program that allowed snowmobile use on Canal lands on a case-by-case basis where local municipal support was demonstrated. As part of the pilot program, approximately five snowmobile programs have operated in different parts of New York State on Canal lands since 1998. All clubs have acted responsibly during this time and have helped to maintain the trails.

As a result of the success of the pilot programs and the popularity of snowmobiling in rural portions of the Canal System, the Board approved the Canal Corporation staff to proceed with the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA) process to amend the Canal Rules and Regulations to provide flexibility to allow snowmobiling by permit on a case-by-case basis. The SAPA process takes approximately nine months to one year. Final issuance of a permit would remain at the discretion of the Canal Corporation. Proposed permits would require liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million aggregate through a blanket insurance policy administered by the New York State Snowmobile Association and funded by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Additional safety controls will be required, including proper signage, speed restrictions and opening and closing dates and times.



If you are interested in participating in the Canalway Trails Association New York in any way, please fill out the coupon below and send it to the address indicated. You can also email your information to canaltrail@ptny.org.

Yes, I would like to learn more! Fill in and return this portion to the Canalway Trails Association at the address below:

_____ Please put me on your mailing list to receive newsletters and other information.

_____ Please put me in touch with others working to support the Canalway Trail in my area.

Name (legibly, please!) _____

Address _____

Town/state/zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____



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C/O PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK
29 ELK STREET
ALBANY, NY 12207 (518) 434-1583

Registration Open for 11th Annual Cross-State Bicycle Tour Along Erie Canal

**400-mile bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany
scheduled for July 12-19, 2009**

The 11th annual cross-state bicycle tour along the Erie Canal – *Cycling the Erie Canal* – is scheduled for July 12-19, 2009. *Cycling the Erie Canal* is an eight-day, 400-mile recreational bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany along the historic, scenic, and still-active Erie Canal.

Cycling the Erie Canal is a great ride for cyclists of all abilities and ages. More than two-thirds of the journey is on the off-road Erie Canalway Trail, the rest is on rural roads with good shoulders. Along the way, canal historians and local experts will introduce participants to the people, places and things that make the Erie Canal so unique and so important to the history of New York State and the country.

“The *Cycling the Erie Canal* tour is an inexpensive and healthy way to explore the Erie Canal and upstate New York, plus it’s fun. I call it a rolling summer camp for all ages,” says Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “Last year we had cyclists from 35 states plus several hundred volunteers in communities along the route ready to welcome riders and help them discover what makes the Erie Canal and upstate

New York unique.”

Two weekend ride options are also available, from Buffalo to Pittsford on July 11 to July 13 and from Canajoharie to Albany on July 17 to July 19. A shuttle will be available at the beginning of the ride to transport riders and their bicycles to Buffalo. Non-cycling friends and family of riders with their own transportation are welcome. Youths under 18 enjoy a special half-price rate.

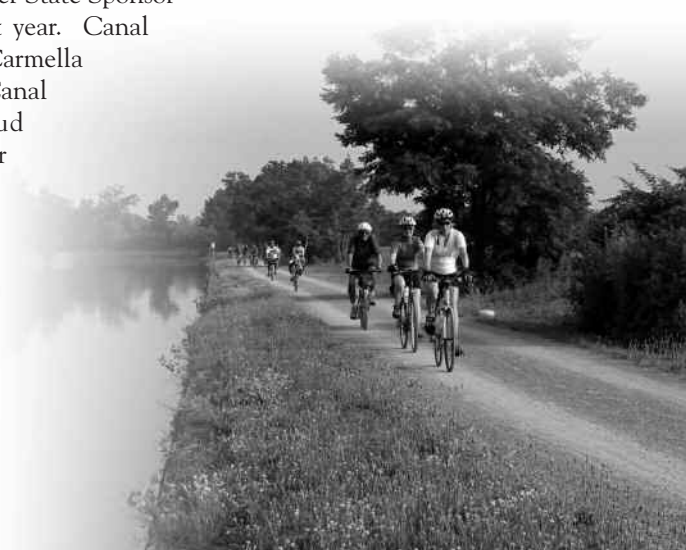
The New York State Canal Corporation is the Premier State Sponsor for the eleventh straight year. Canal Corporation Director Carmella R. Mantello said, “The Canal Corporation is proud to once again partner with Parks and Trails New York, canalside communities, and businesses to promote this historic national treasure that runs through our backyard.”

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is the event’s Heritage Sponsor. Supporting sponsors

include: Brookfield Power, CSEA, Terry Cycles, Panera, and Wegmans.

Ten tourism promotion agencies sponsor the event from Rochester and Syracuse and Orleans, Wayne, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Montgomery, Schenectady, and Albany Counties.

For more information on *Cycling the Erie Canal*, e-mail eriecanaltour@ptny.org call Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-1583, or visit www.ptny.org/canaltour.



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