

Canalway TRAIL TIMES



Winter 2010-2011

Issue #23

Canalway Trail Renewed in Madison, Oneida and Schenectady Counties

Ribbon cutting ceremonies attended by numerous State and local officials, community members and trail volunteers recently marked the completion of two major refurbishments of the Canalway Trail, including a 20-mile segment between Canastota and Rome and a four-mile section in Schenectady County.

“These projects are another step forward in our efforts to connect canal communities and encourage increased recreation, tourism, and economic development along the entire Canal System” said Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello. “The partnerships forged between the Canal Corporation and numerous organizations, including state and local governments, are vital to the Trail’s success. Completion of the Canalway Trail will provide a tremendous statewide link, creating new and exciting recreational opportunities in Madison, Oneida, and Schenectady counties and all along the scenic and historic Canal Corridor.”

Trail Widened Between Canastota and Rome

A 20-mile Canalway Trail segment extending from State Route 13/Peterboro Street in Canastota to Fort Bull Road/Erie Canal Village in Rome received a new 10-foot wide crushed limestone and asphalt surface. Informational sign kiosks were installed at the trailheads in Canastota and at Lock 21 in New London where the trail



Canal Corporation Director Carmella R. Mantello hosted the ribbon cutting ceremony at Lock 21 in New London in Oneida County to mark the opening of 20 miles of refurbished Canalway Trail between Canastota and Rome. Pictured left to right: Communication Assistant to Senator Valesky Gary Herbert; Canastota Mayor Todd Rouse; Assemblywoman Roanne Destito, Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello; Canal Corporation Trails Director John Dimura; NYS DOT Region 2 Sharon Haeybor; Verona Supervisor Owen Waller.

crossing was also improved and a hiker-biker-boater campsite was created.

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand said, “With the rehabilitation of the Canastota-to-Rome Erie Canalway Trail section, we are one step closer to maintaining the history of the Erie Canal and the rich character of Upstate New York. Preserving the Erie Canal Corridor promotes our natural heritage and maintains access for our communities and tourists alike. Revitalizing our local walkways, bicycle paths, and transportation corridors will promote economic development, create new jobs, and promote vibrant communities for the future.”

The \$2.12 million project was sponsored by the New York State Canal Corporation with funds from the Federal Transportation Enhancement funds administered by the

New York State Department of Transportation and developed in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which operates and maintains the Old Erie Canal State Park. Additional partners included Madison and Oneida counties, the City of Rome, the Village of Canastota, and the Towns of Lenox and Verona. The project, started in 2009, was constructed by Ulster Paving Company from Canastota, N.Y.

Schenectady Area Trail Re-built With Federal Stimulus Funds

The New York State Canal Corporation officially opened a newly rehabilitated four-mile segment of the Erie Canalway Trail/Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail in Schenectady County between Washington Avenue in Schenectady and Route 146 in Niskayuna. The project included drainage improvements, milling of the existing asphalt surface, and construction of a new 10-foot wide asphalt trail between Jay Street and Route 146. New directional and informational signs also were installed to help trail users navigate the on-street portion of the trail route in the City of Schenectady, between Jay Street and Washington Avenue.


Congressman Paul Tonko said, “I commend the New York State Canal

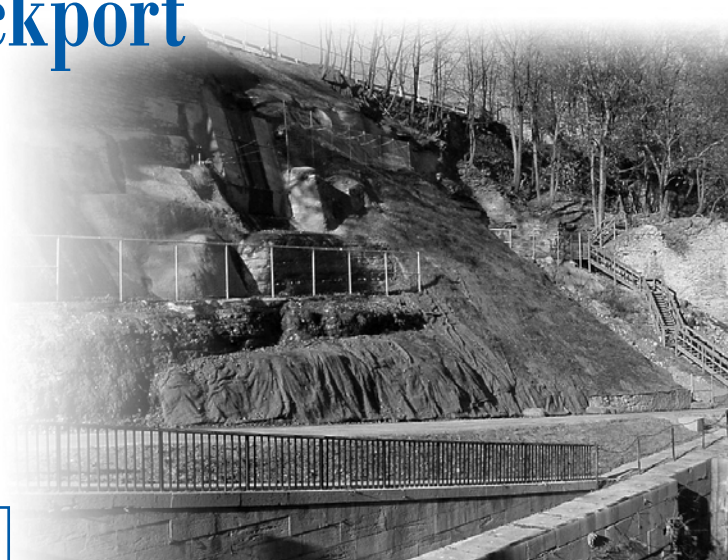
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Canal Corporation Re-opens Canalway Trail and Canal Lands in Lockport

Repairs Follow Rock Slide in 2008

New York State Canal Corporation Director Carmella R. Mantello recently joined with Lockport Mayor Michael W. Tucker and other state and local officials to reopen a portion of the Erie Canalway Trail at Lock E-34/35 that had been closed due to a significant rock slide in June 2008.

The repairs to the rock slope became necessary after a piano-sized boulder was dislodged from the slope and landed on the Canalway Trail in June 2008. The trail and Canal lands immediately surrounding the area were closed due to safety concerns and to allow for the repair project to proceed. The wall has since been stabilized and a rock catchment fence installed. 



The Canal Corporation recently completed a rock slope stabilization project in Lockport, making the Canalway Trail and area surrounding Lock E-34/35, including the historic Flight of Five, safe for visitors, tourists and Canal employees.

SAVE THE DATE



CANALCLEANSWEEP

April 15, 16 and 17, 2011

Note: There will be no Canalway Trail Celebration for 2011. Instead plan on participating in the Canal Clean Sweep and Canal Splash.

Canalway Trail Renewed in Madison, Oneida and Schenectady Counties

(Continued from page 1)




Congressman Paul Tonko (left) and Assemblyman James Tedisco (right) joined Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello to open the four-mile refurbished section of Canalway Trail in Schenectady County.

Corporation for completing this project which will greatly enhance recreation along the Canalway Trail. I look forward to continuing our partnership with the state and our local communities to develop opportunities along our waterways that will help promote increased use, tourism, and economic development.”

“The bike-hike trail is one of the County’s best recreation assets, and we’ve worked hard for the past six years to improve the trail for the enjoyment of all of our residents,” said Susan Savage, Chairwoman of the Schenectady County Legislature.

The \$1.2-million project was funded through the Federal economic stimulus funds under American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The grant was administered by the New York State Department of Transportation. Partners in the project included the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Schenectady County, the City of Schenectady and the Town of Niskayuna. The project was constructed by Carver Construction Company of Altamont, N.Y.

Schenectady Mayor Brian U. Stratton said, “The Canalway Trail was just a dream in Schenectady back in the 1960s, but that didn’t stop local citizens from striving for its creation. Today, the New York State Canal Corporation’s investment to upgrade our local section ensures that this cross-state trail system continues to provide recreation, tourism, and economic development opportunities for residents of Schenectady and our visitors.” 

Canal Corporation Announces Camillus Volunteer as Trail Tender Award Winner

Fenton Hanchett Early Supporter of Canalway Bicycle Trek

The New York State Canal Corporation has selected Fenton Hanchett of the Town of Camillus, Onondaga County, as the 2010 Canalway Trail Tender Award winner. The award was presented to Mr. Hanchett by Canal Corporation Director Carmella R. Mantello during a reception at the 2010 World Canals Conference in Rochester in September.



New York State Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello congratulates 2010 Canalway Trail Tender Award winner Fenton Hanchett of Camillus.

Hanchett was recognized for his outstanding efforts and commitment to promoting, developing and enhancing the Canalway Trail. Director Mantello said, "Volunteers are extremely important to the success of the Canalway Trail program. Fenton Hanchett's dedication and participation, in particular, have been an inspiration for us all. The Corporation is pleased to recognize Mr. Hanchett's diligent efforts with the Canalway Trail Tender Award."

Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin said, "The Canalway Trail we enjoy today is a result of visionaries like Fenton who long-ago recognized the trail's potential and dedicated their time and considerable talents to bring those dreams to reality. We congratulate Fenton on this well-deserved award."

Mr. Hanchett has made a number of significant contributions to the Canalway Trail. In 1997, Fenton was one of eight people who participated in the first 400-mile Canalway Trail Trek bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany. This pioneering event generated extensive media coverage and local support.

As a result of that first Canalway Trail Trek, the "Cycling the Erie Canal" tour was started by Parks & Trails New York. The event now attracts more than 500 people

from all over the world who cycle across New York each July. Mr. Hanchett has supported the "Cycling the Erie Canal" tour each year by helping to organize a rest stop for the cyclists at the Camillus Erie Canal Park.

Mr. Hanchett also helped to found the Camillus Canal Society and served as a vice-president and assistant director of the Camillus Erie Canal Park. In the mid-2000s Fenton provided valuable information to Canal Corporation planners and engineers in the design of the Canalway

Trail reconstruction in the Camillus area.

While he has worked tirelessly on the local level in Camillus, Mr. Hanchett also has maintained an eye on the larger, statewide goal of completing the Canalway Trail. He has been a member of the statewide volunteer Canalway Trails Association New York board since the group began in 1999. Mr. Hanchett has always helped provide logistics for the Canalway Trails Association meetings, which take place at the Camillus Erie Canal Park and he cycles along the Erie Canal towpath to the meetings whenever possible.

Mr. Hanchett also serves on the Board of Directors of the Canal Society of New York State and was actively involved with the Nine-Mile Creek Aqueduct Restoration Committee in Camillus.

The Canalway Trail Tender Award was established in 1998 to honor the efforts of volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary and significant contributions to the development, promotion, and enhancement of New York's historic Canalway Trail.



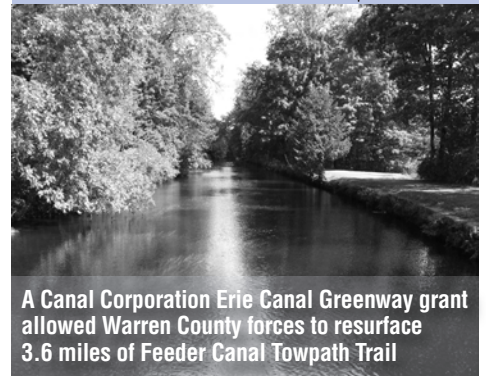
Improvements Completed Along Glens Falls Feeder Canal and Towpath Trail

Two Canal Corporation grants totaling \$149,595 have made possible improvements to the Glens Falls Feeder Canal and Towpath Trail.

A \$140,585 grant from the New York State Canal Corporation's Canal Greenway Grant Program expanded community connections along the Glens Falls Feeder Canal and the Towpath Trail. Warren County partnered with the Canal Corporation, the City of Glens Falls, the Town of Queensbury and the nonprofit Feeder Canal Alliance to complete work in both Overlook Park in the Town of Queensbury and Haviland Cove in the City of Glens Falls. Site improvements to both parks included enhancement of picnic facilities and resurfacing of the roadways, trailways and parking areas.

In addition, the Canal Corporation provided \$9,000 to complete signage along the seven-mile Feeder Canal Trail in both Warren and Washington Counties. Weathered signs were refurbished and replaced, and obsolete signs were replaced with new interpretive signs.

Canal Corporation Director Mantello said, "The Canal Corporation is pleased to have worked with both the Warren County Planning Department and the Feeder Canal Alliance on these projects. Communities all along the Canal continue to embrace this incredible historic and natural resource and make it the centerpiece of their revitalization and tourism efforts. These grants help to build on those investments by promoting additional public access, amenities, and development along the canal to help revitalize Upstate New York."



A Canal Corporation Erie Canal Greenway grant allowed Warren County forces to resurface 3.6 miles of Feeder Canal Towpath Trail

New Report cites need to “Close the Gaps” in Canalway Trail

The Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) used the occasion of its annual meeting at the Erie Canal Park in Camillus to release *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail*. The report, which was prepared in conjunction with Parks & Trails New York, summarizes the status of efforts to complete the trail, including recent progress and current obstacles to closing the remaining gaps. It is the first of what will become an annual update on progress and remaining gaps that CTANY hopes will help focus attention on the importance of finishing the trail.

Alan Vincent, president of CTANY, said, “We believe that completion of the Erie Canalway Trail not only will enhance the quality of life in communities across the state but will make the trail a world-class tourism attraction that, with a rather modest investment, will help revitalize villages, towns and cities all along the canal corridor. We hope that this report will help our elected leaders realize that closing the gaps in the trail is a vital part of an upstate New York economic development solution.”

Closing the Gaps presents several facts about the Erie Canalway Trail, including the following.


Six major gaps in the trail remain to be filled:

- Amherst to Lockport, Niagara County – 6 mi.
- Lyons to Port Byron, Wayne, Seneca and Cayuga Counties – 30 mi.
- Camillus to DeWitt, through Syracuse – 12 mi.
- Utica to Little Falls, Oneida and Herkimer Counties – 20 mi.
- Amsterdam to Rotterdam Jct., Montgomery and Schenectady Counties – 7 mi.
- Cohoes to Watervliet via Green Island, Albany County – 5 mi.

While the cost of completing these gaps is estimated at approximately \$50 million, drawing 100,000 multi-day bicycle tourists annually could contribute \$120 million per year to the upstate economy. The Katy Trail in Missouri, one of the oldest long-distance trails, attracts 350,000 bicyclists per year; the Erie Canalway Trail has the drawing power to exceed that.

Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York, said, “The Erie Canal Corridor has all the right ingredients to become an international bicycle touring destination: picturesque villages, impressive historic sites and museums, charming B&B’s and inns, ample campgrounds, and country stores and farm stands but what it lacks is a trail that is fully complete. Finishing the Canalway Trail will create jobs while making a valuable investment in the infrastructure of communities Upstate.”

“With seventy-five percent of the Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany now complete it is already a long distance touring destination,” said New York State Canal Corporation Director Carmella R. Mantello. “Completing the remaining gaps in the trail will make it one of the longest multi-use trails in the country, thereby expanding the economic, health and quality of life benefits the trail already provides to Canal communities.”

The full report, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail*, is available on the Parks & Trails New York website, www.ptny.org. 

Canalway Trails Association New York elects officers




Members of the CTANY Board of Directors met in November for their annual meeting at Erie Canal Park in Camillus.

Front Alan Vincent, Herkimer RCTG, Scott Keller, At-large member. **Second Row L to R:** Linda Vishnesky West Onondaga-Cayuga RCTG; Barbara Spraker – Montgomery RCTG; Carol Schmelz – Erie-Niagara RCTG; Fran Gotcsik – PTNY. **Rear L to R:** Wally Elton – PTNY; Fenton Hanchett - West Onondaga-Cayuga RCTG; John Dimura – NYS Canal Corporation; Alan and Marlene Bissell - Central Champlain Canal RCTG

The Board of Directors of the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) re-elected Alan Vincent, Director from the Herkimer Regional Canalway Trail Group (RCTG), as its president for 2011. Southern Champlain Canalway Trail Group Director Nelson Ronsvale was elected Vice-President. At-large directors Joan Delaro and Scott Keller were chosen as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Joan Delaro was also re-elected to the board as an at-large member.

The CTANY Board of Directors consists of one voting member from each of 12 Regional Canalway Trail Groups, plus three at-large voting members. Additional non-voting directors represent the National Park Service, Parks & Trails New York, and the Canal Society of New York State.

CTANY is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to making the Canalway Trail a world-class, multi-use recreational trail. CTANY assists state agencies, local municipalities, counties, and civic organizations in developing, maintaining, and promoting the Canalway Trail System. CTANY functions in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation and operates under the non-profit status of Parks & Trails New York. 

Adopt a Trail Spotlight

Medina



Taking care of a 360-mile trail spanning most of New York State is no small task. The Canal Corporation, in partnership with the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) created the Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) program to help with just this challenge.

In Medina in Orleans County, five organizations have together adopted the entire Erie Canalway Trail through the village and beyond. These groups (west to east) are the Medina Rotary Club, Masonic Lodge #336, Medina Lion's Club, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 204, and Boy Scout Troop 35/Sacred Heart Church. According to Wayne Hale, AAT organizer for the Sons of the American Legion squadron, Medina residents take a lot of pride in their community, and these groups in particular have a history of putting that pride into action. "I brought the AAT idea to my Sons of the American Legion squadron because our mission is to serve veterans, our post and the community. Trail cleanup was a natural addition to our objectives," Hale stated. According to Cindy Robinson, AAT coordinator for Scout Troop 35, "We have been involved since 2007, and the boys (15 to 20 on each day) are always enthusiastic.

Anyone interested in participating in the Adopt-A-Trail program should contact Parks & Trails New York, (welton@ptny.org; 518-434-1583 x207).

◀ Medina's Sons of the American Legion Squadron 204 AAT group, one of 40 groups working throughout the Canalway Trail Corridor to assist with trail maintenance.

Who's on the Canalway Trail?

Annual Count estimates almost 250,000 visitors to Camillus section of trail

Volunteers were once again stationed along the Canalway Trail during July and August taking note of the number of persons walking, bicycling, jogging or pushing strollers as part of the 2010 annual Canalway Trail Count. For the first time in the count's six-year history, trail usage data were collected in central New York to the east and west of the City of Syracuse. At several locations results were found to be comparable to or in excess of those obtained in the Rochester area and Capital Region.

Not surprisingly, the largest number of trail visitors was recorded at the newly restored c.1840 Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct in Camillus. No doubt the publicity surrounding the opening of this important historic structure contributed to an annual estimate of almost 249,000 visitors, the largest estimate for annual trail usage at any location along the trail. Nearby at the popular Sims Store, a recreated canal-era store in Erie Canal Park, trail counts generated an annual estimate of almost 210,000 persons. The aqueduct may have also influenced the counts at the Route 173 trailhead, located



Results of the 2010 Canalway Trail Count estimated annual trail traffic of almost 249,000 persons at the Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct in Camillus.

approximately one mile east, where 170,000 annual visitors were estimated from the counts. About a mile west of the Sims Store at the Newport Road trailhead in Warners, the number of annual users was significantly lower, estimated to be only about 79,000 persons.

Equally popular with the public is the section of Erie Canalway Trail east of the city at the Town of DeWitt park entry between Butternut Drive and North Burdick St. Estimates of 224,000 annual users were obtained for this trail segment.

The lowest counts were recorded at the Centerport Aqueduct trailhead near Weedsport in the Town of Brutus in Cayuga County. As this trailhead is located at the eastern end of an approximately two-mile trail segment not linked directly to the trail to the east or west, only about 21,000 annual visitors were estimated to frequent this location.

Walkers in the majority

The counts demonstrated that the majority of trail users were walkers, a surprising finding in contrast to the results of every count taken since 2005. This year, 55% of all trail users counted were walkers, 22% were joggers and only 21% were cyclists. In 2009, 53% of trail users were bicyclists, 30% were walkers, 12% joggers. Also, only 50% of bicyclists counted were wearing helmets.

More information can be found in the report, Who's on the Trail? The Erie Canalway Trail User Count 2010, prepared by Parks and Trails New York for the Canal Corporation and available on the Parks & Trails New York's website at www.ptny.org under publications.

Cay-Sen Trail

A community connector for place and spirit

The 20-mile Cay-Sen Trail that is being constructed along the Cayuga-Seneca Canal does more than connect the municipalities of Geneva and Waterloo. It also connects the people and organizations working together to build and enjoy the trail.

Local government cooperation aids the effort

From the outset, construction of the trail has been a joint effort between the City of Geneva, represented by Vince Scalise, chairman of the Cay-Sen Trail Committee, and the Town and Village of Waterloo, represented by Supervisor Jim Mooney, Mayor Ted Young and Deputy Mayor Dave Duprey, active members of the committee. They are joined by residents, Rotarians, 4-Hers and Scouts, businesses and professionals who are focused on one goal: Completing the trail.

"We are so grateful to the army of volunteers who show up for work days, plan activities, and donate money and materials to make this trail a reality at a minimal cost to the county," Scalise said. Scalise was instrumental in securing a grant from Geneva Growth that allowed the committee to do some planning and purchase materials.

Seneca County made Mitch Rowe of its planning department and Peter Brown of its grant writing department available to help. Brown wrote successful grant applications that allowed the county to hire professional engineers. Rowe negotiated the lease with corridor landowner New York State Electric and Gas that allowed access for construction. He also worked with Finger Lakes Railway to obtain permission to construct a

pathway underneath the railroad bridge on Rtes 5 and 20.

Engineering drawings are being prepared for the design of the trail that will leave the State Park, continue parallel to Rtes 5 and 20 and south along 96A. Working with the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), Rowe and the county have already obtained and approved engineering drawings for the tunnel under 96A that will join the trail on the east side of the road. Bids for this section will go out in the near future.

The community contributes

Work began in earnest in the spring. Supervisor Mooney, Mayor Young and others enlisted the use of equipment and materials from Sessler Wrecking, Geneva Granite and Fegley Construction for a major trail clearing effort. Students from Hobart and William Smith colleges spent time clearing portions of the trail as part of their Community Service Day and workers from Applied Ecological Services based at Seneca Meadows Inc. cleared many trees

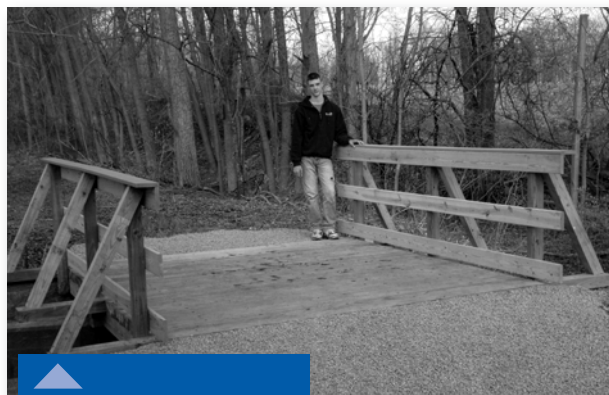
from the trail that could have been hazardous to walkers. Mayor Young worked with Seneca Meadows, Inc. to clear and level the 10-foot pathway between Route 96A and the village of Waterloo.

Three community groups stepped up to construct bridges along the trail: Waterloo Rotary, Geneva Bicycle Center and Eagle Scout candidate Laverne Sessler Jr. each worked with their volunteers – a total of nearly 100 men, women and teens – to finish the spans. Now the public can enter the trail at Barrett Marine near Route 96A and walk or bicycle along the Canalway Trail to the Village of Waterloo.

The Geneva and Ovid 4-H clubs have worked to improve the trailside environment by planting tree seedlings to screen properties and harvesting seeds from native plants that they will spread along the trail in the spring.

The trail already is being used by sports teams from Waterloo seeking a safe and attractive place to run. "It has been in the works for more than a decade, but finally we are seeing the light at the end of the trail," Scalise said. "We always believed that if we built it, they would come and the trail would be an attractive asset for our communities. We are so pleased to see that happening."

To learn more about the Cay-Sen trail go to the website at www.cay-sentrail.org or the group's page on Facebook. 



Trail bridge refurbished by LaVerne Sessler III as his Eagle Scout project.

Community businesses donated their equipment to help clear the old rail bed and open the Cay-Sen Trail between Geneva and Waterloo.



National Park Service Study Looks to Improve Access to Sites in Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

The National Park Service has awarded the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor a \$225,000 grant to study opportunities for an interconnected alternative transportation network, including bus, rail, and bicycle and pedestrian trails within the Corridor. The grant was made possible through a program created by the Federal Highway Administration to develop alternative transportation systems for lands managed by the federal government.

A week-long site visit in October kicked off the planning process, which will be administered by Erie Canalway staff in partnership with the National Park Service's Denver Service Center-Transportation Division and Wilbur Smith Associates. Stay tuned for more information on the program and formal opportunities to participate in the planning process through surveys and discussions. Contact Hannah Blake at the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor at hannah_blake@nps.gov or (518) 237-7000, ext. 202 with questions or to be added to the project's contact list.



Many modes of transportation meet in the canal corridor. Creating an interconnected network would improve access to the corridor's nationally-significant heritage resources.



Champlain Canalway Trail grants awarded

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Board of Directors has awarded two matching grants for projects related to the development of the Champlain Canalway Trail. The Open Space Institute will receive \$5,900 toward construction of a 0.5-mile section of trail extending from Saratoga National Historical Park north to the recently completed trail at Wilbur Road in the Town of Saratoga. The Town of Stillwater will use a \$10,000 grant for a trail feasibility study of a north-south trail route through the town.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is a New York State agency that provides technical assistance and small grants for planning, capital projects, and water and land-based trails that reinforce the Greenway Criteria of natural and cultural resource protection, regional and local planning, economic development, public access to the Hudson River (as well as other regional and local resources), and heritage and environmental education.



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.

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C/O PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK
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ALBANY, NY 12207 (518) 434-1583
www.ptny.org

New York's Canalway Trail System

About 270 miles of the 534-mile Canalway Trail System are presently off-road, making it one of the nation's premier cycling destinations. When complete, it will be the longest multi-use trail in the nation. The Canalway Trail follows both active and historic sections of the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals, the legendary inland waterways that played a key role in turning New York State into a preeminent center for commerce, industry, and finance and New York City into a major port.





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Senator Gillibrand focuses attention on “closing the gaps” in Canalway Trail

Parks & Trails New York’s “Close the Gaps” campaign took a major step forward in September when the office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand brought together more than 50 local, county and state leaders from government and the nonprofit and business sectors for a “Closing the Gaps Roundtable” in Canajoharie. The goal of this forum, held in collaboration with Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the New York State Canal Corporation, was to explore ways to complete the Erie Canalway Trail between Albany and Utica.

Presentations by Canal Corporation Director Carmella Mantello and PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin described the present status of the trail and its multiple current and potential benefits. During a

discussion of next steps facilitated by Amy Pollard, Regional Representative for Senator Gillibrand, the group affirmed the importance of completing the trail to the economy of the region. Several participants called for efforts to get elected leaders to realize that finishing the trail is, as one put it, the upstate economic development solution. Schenectady County also announced it has made completing the trail one of its top economic development priorities.

Participants agreed to work together in small subcommittees focused on specific gap segments to find ways for moving forward. Two of these subcommittees, focusing on the gaps between Amsterdam and Rotterdam Junction and between Schuylers and Ilion, are now forming and scheduling their first meetings. In one positive development, the NYS Office of State Parks, Recreation and

Historic Preservation has announced that it will seek funding in the next cycle of the Transportation Enhancements Program, expected in the spring of 2011, to construct the trail between Amsterdam and Lock 10 on an unused railroad bed it recently purchased from CSX.

Following the roundtable, Senator Gillibrand said, “The recent rehabilitation of two Erie Canalway Trail sections reminds us that this trail can become a major attraction for tourists from across the country and overseas and a driver of economic development and community revitalization in Upstate New York. To achieve this potential, we must find ways to complete the remaining 25% of the trail, which connects hundreds of communities between Albany and Buffalo. This and future “Closing the Gaps” roundtables are intended to stimulate creative thinking among interested parties on ways to accomplish that goal.” Similar future discussions are anticipated in central and western New York.

“This trail can become a major attraction for tourists from across the country and overseas and a driver of economic development and community revitalization in Upstate New York.”

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

