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## NEWS RELEASE

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### REPORT CITES ADDITIONAL PROGRESS IN “CLOSING THE GAPS” IN ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

ALBANY, N.Y. – Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) have released their fourth annual report, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2013*. PTNY and CTANY note that 2013 was a year of many accomplishments in efforts to close the remaining 83 miles of gaps in the 360-mile trail that extends from Buffalo to Albany:

- Seven miles of trail were constructed, six miles between Newark and Lyons in Wayne County and one mile in the City of Little Falls.
- Construction will begin on 14 miles of trail in 2014. The most significant project will be the eight-mile gap between Amherst and Lockport, which, when complete, will result in more than 134 miles of continuous off-road trail in western New York.
- The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council completed the *Erie Canalway Trail - Syracuse Connector Route Project Part One* on behalf of the City of Syracuse. A preferred route with suggested on-road bike treatments and pedestrian options was prepared based on extensive public input and examination of existing routes.

Since PTNY and CTANY launched their “Closing the Gaps Campaign” in 2010 in conjunction with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, interest in completing the Erie Canalway Trail among citizens, community leaders, and local, state and federal government officials has reached an all-time high.

“We are encouraged by the accomplishments in 2013 and the trail construction work scheduled to begin in 2014. Especially inspiring is the heightened awareness among community leaders of the tourism and economic benefits derived from the Erie Canalway Trail,” said Nelson Ronsvalle, CTANY president.

## **Focus for 2014**

Additional progress in closing the gaps will result from the efforts of local Canalway Trail communities, the Regional Economic Development Councils, the NYS Department of Transportation, and the NYS Canal Corporation working together to address specific needs and challenges in discrete trail segments. CTANY and PTNY will continue to support and promote those efforts and emphasize the importance of the Canalway Trail to tourism, local economies, and the health and the quality of life of Canalway Trail-community residents.

“The Erie Canalway Trail is without parallel in scenery, history, and charm but it can’t reach its full potential of being an international tourism draw until it is complete,” said PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “Where funding is in some cases the only impediment to closing a gap, we urge local governments and the NYS Canal Corporation to take advantage of the \$50 million in available Transportation Alternatives funding to initiate projects that will further efforts to “*Close the Gaps.*”

Canal Corporation Director, Brian U. Stratton said, “Governor Cuomo recognizes the strategic importance of the Erie Canal and Erie Canalway Trail as economic engines for upstate New York. Over 15 miles of Erie Canalway Trail will be constructed by the Canal Corporation in 2014 in Monroe and Oneida Counties, demonstrating the Governor’s commitment to achieving the full potential of this important resource.”

*Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2013* is available on the Parks & Trails New York [website](http://www.ptny.org), [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).

Parks & Trails New York is the state’s leading advocate for parks and trails, working since 1985 to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for use and enjoyment by all. For more than 15 years PTNY has worked with the New York State Canal Corporation, CTANY, and Canalway Trail communities to foster development of the trail and oversee the Adopt-a-Trail Program. PTNY promotes the trail through its annual 400-mile Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour, *Bicyclists Bring Business* community roundtables and Canal Clean Sweep events and its publications, *Cycling the Erie Canal: A guide to 400 miles of adventure and history*

*along the Erie Canalway Trail and Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities.* For more information, visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) or call 518-434-1583.

The Canalway Trails Association New York is an all-volunteer organization that works both statewide and locally with citizens, state agencies and municipalities to develop the Erie Canalway Trail as a world-class multi-use recreational trail and international bicycle tourism destination. In partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, PTNY and others, it encourages the proper maintenance of the trail by coordinating the Adopt-a-Trail Program.

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