

Canalway Trail Gap Segment
Assessment Report
Cayuga - Seneca Canal
Seneca and Ontario Counties, New York

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Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Introduction	3
<i>Location</i>	3
<i>Landscape Character</i>	5
<i>From Canal Recreationway Plan</i>	5
<i>Trail Partners</i>	6
Resources	7
Economic Opportunities	8
Proposed Routing/Ownership/Condition of Trail	9
<i>Ownership</i>	9
<i>Acquisition needs</i>	9
Constraints	13
<i>Bridges</i>	13
<i>ROW Encroachments</i>	13
Cost Estimates	13
Key Needs and Opportunities	15
<i>Wetland Delineation</i>	15
<i>Establish Property Ownership</i>	15
<i>Volunteer Organization</i>	15

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Introduction

This report is a product of the Canalway Trail Partnership Project which has been providing technical assistance to further the planning and development of this segment of the Canalway Trail. Under the Canalway Trail Partnership Project, New York Parks and Conservation Association (NYPCA), in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, is organizing and assisting Canal communities to plan and develop the Canalway Trail where critical gaps exist. When completed, the Canalway Trail will be a 524 mile continuous multi-use pathway along the New York State Canal System. As canal communities complete trails to link the canal both to their downtowns and to other canal communities, the economic benefits of the Canalway Trail will mushroom.

NYPCA is a statewide non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to protecting New York's parks and helping communities create innovative and popular forms of park lands such as greenways, rail and canal trails and heritage corridors. The trail segment in this assessment is a nineteen mile route, mostly in Seneca County, along the Cayuga - Seneca Canal. The canal in this segment is the canalized Seneca River and the terms "Canal" and "River" are used interchangeably.

The focus of the Canalway Trail Partnership Project activities in this segment has been within the Village of Seneca Falls. NYPCA recognizes that this assessment will need to be revised in 1999 to reflect the proposed trail route that will result from greater interaction with all the communities and trail partners in this corridor.

Location

This nineteen mile trail section is located along the Cayuga - Seneca Canal. The route is mostly in Seneca County, with the trail's western end in the City of Geneva in Ontario County and a small part of the eastern end in Cayuga County. The Cayuga - Seneca Canal proceeds south and west from the Erie Canal from where the two canals join in the town of Tyre, close to where Cayuga, Seneca and Wayne Counties come together. The Cayuga - Seneca canal connects the Erie Canal with Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. This connection links the Erie Canal to the Finger Lakes region of the interior of Central New York. The trail passes along the canal through the towns of Tyre, Seneca Falls, and Fayette. On its route it also passes Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and the villages of Seneca Falls and Waterloo. It ends in the city of Geneva on the shores of Seneca Lake in Ontario County. (See figures 1-3)

Landscape Character

The character of this segment of the trail varies from open field and second growth woodland through scrub vegetation, abandoned railroad right of way, and rural small town. Most of the length of the trail is on land close to the canal. A portion of the trail would pass through the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is an area maintained for the use of migrating and resident wildfowl and other native animals of the area. As such it represents a large area of natural habitat types such as wetlands, fields and woods.

On the western end of the segment the trail comes east from the city of Geneva along the North shore of Seneca Lake. This area is a city park and joins with Seneca Lake State Park after crossing into Seneca County. The character is typical of state parks with the addition of the views of Seneca Lake.

As the trail passes out of Seneca Lake State Park it goes through the town of Fayette and village of Waterloo and the town and village of Seneca Falls on abandoned railroad ROW. The village centers of Waterloo and Seneca Falls are a short distance from the trail. The trail between Waterloo and Seneca Falls varies but generally goes through fields, second growth forest, over streams and is rural in nature with some small commercial development. After the trail passes east of the town of Seneca Falls it is in a landscape of mostly rural character.

From Canal Recreationway Plan

The Canal Recreationway Plan of 1995 identifies this section as composed of the following segments in exhibit 7-7 *Canal Trail Route Segments*:

1. CTS-1 Montezuma to Lock CS-1 (Mud Lock). 5.5 miles. Ownership unknown or on local roads. ROW Status 3¹.
2. CTS-2 Mud Lock to Seneca Falls. 4.5 miles. Ownership attributed to Canal Corporation. ROW Status 2¹
3. CTS-3 Seneca Falls to Geneva and Lakefront Development Project. 8.5 miles. Ownership unknown or on local roads. ROW Status 3¹

These characterizations correctly describe the state of the Canalway Trail planning in this area in 1995 and up to 1998. This document updates the information based on the work done in 1998 by various parties to determine a route for the trail through the Cayuga - Seneca Canal area. Particularly important are the new owners of portions of the abandoned right of way in the village of Seneca Falls and the identification of other property owners along the proposed trail route.

The Recreationway Plan also identifies several facilities along this trail as support facilities. In Exhibit 7-8 *Proposed Canalway Trail Support Facilities, Hiking and Cycling* the plan identifies lock 25 on the Erie Canal and Locks 2 & 3 along the

¹ The Recreationway Plan divides the status of trail right-of-ways into four groups as follows:

- 1 Improved Trail in use
- 2 Right-of-way assembled-Trail needs improvement
- 3 Trail sited, Right of way or easement to be acquired
- 4 Trail not sited.

Cayuga - Seneca Canal as trail service areas with facilities for hikers and bicyclists. Lock 2 is identified as a half day hiking stop. Seneca Lake State Park is identified as a full day hiking stop and a half day bicycling stop.

Trail Partners

There is a diversity of entities involved in the routing and planning of the Canalway Trail in this section. The focus of the Canalway Trail Partnership Project in this gap area has been in the village and town of Seneca Falls. Routing of the trail has been extensive through the village and a proposed route has been determined. The trail passes through three counties, three towns, two villages and one city. Members of the planning departments of all these political divisions are participating in the routing of the trail but as of this date no routing has been determined. The routing of the trail through these jurisdictions is described in the report section on routing but at this time these are only suggested routes.

Members of a local trail committee, The Friends of the Frank J. Ludovico Sculpture Trail, in the village of Seneca Falls, have obtained ownership of a 1.5 mile segment of abandoned railroad adjacent to the canal through their village and have begun to plan for the construction of the trail on that land. They are also looking for funding sources and other volunteers who will help in construction and maintenance of the trail. New York Parks and Conservation Association has participated in an advisory capacity to this committee.

The planning departments of Cayuga, Seneca and Ontario Counties are involved with planning the trail through their jurisdiction. The villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls have each participated in reviewing plans for the trail in their localities.

The village of Waterloo has hired an community development consultant. This consultant has identified the Canalway Trail as an important aspect of economic development to be undertaken.

Another partner in trail development in this area is the National Park Service (NPS). NPS has several resources in this area which could be linked to the Canalway Trail. The input of this important partner has been invaluable.

Other entities that should be included in trail route planning in the future are the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Site Manager, the City of Geneva and the Seneca Lake State Park Manager.

The City of Geneva is developing its sixty acres of lakefront land into a multi-use, public and private development project, known as the Geneva Lakefront Development Project. Currently developed are the beginning of an extensive public trail system which links Seneca Lake State Park to historic downtown Geneva, a newly improved boat launch site, various festival and park areas, and the 150 room Ramada Inn Geneva Lakefront project. Other planned projects include a public marina and an expanded trail system, the renovations to historic Long Pier as a pedestrian walkway, and the development of a visitors Interpretive Center to serve the fourteen county Finger Lakes Region. Funding for these projects have come and are coming from a number of sources including the HUD Canal Corridor Initiative and several State grants.

Resources

Many important and interesting resources in this segment are within easy walking and cycling distance from the trail. Starting in the east, the trail connects directly with the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is a major stop along the flyways of many migratory birds. Additionally, the refuge has many educational exhibits, kiosks and trails through its natural areas for touring and observing wildlife. The refuge also serves as a research facility for the National Fish and Wildlife Service and protects habitat for resident and migratory wildlife. The canal, at the southern tip of the wildlife refuge, allows access to Cayuga Lake, the longest of New York's Finger Lakes.

The villages of Seneca Falls and Waterloo have figured prominently in the nation's history. This prominence has been in the areas of women's rights and abolition of slavery. The National Park Service has recognized the area's historical importance and operates the Seneca Falls Women's Rights National Historical Park which includes the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House and Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls and the M'Clintock house in Waterloo. These sites would be directly linked by the trail and constitute nationally important historic resources. The villages of Seneca Falls and Waterloo also have historic areas and other resources. The Seneca Falls Heritage Area, operated by the Village of Seneca Falls, is dedicated to the exhibition and interpretation of the historic significance of Seneca Falls in the development of the national discussion on women's rights.

The NYS Canal Corporation, with assistance from the New York State Senate and Senator Michael F. Nozzolio, recently completed phase I of a canal harbor project in Seneca Falls. This waterside park provides slips and utilities for people travelling the Cayuga - Seneca Canal by boat. It is also a recreation amenity for hikers and bicyclists. It provides improved canal access to the village streets and businesses. Many businesses along the canal have started opened up their buildings to the canal by adding entrances and window displays.

The village center of Waterloo will also connect to the proposed Cayuga - Seneca Canal Trail. The village center offers many amenities to travellers as well as a rich infrastructure of historic commercial and residential structures. The planned waterfront park and marina at Oak Island will provide traveller services.

The trail connects to Seneca Lake State Park which is the location where the canal enters Seneca Lake. Seneca Lake, deepest of the Finger Lakes, is a popular spot for boating and other water related recreational activities. From there the Canalway Trail will run toward downtown Geneva along the city's waterfront park on the shore of Seneca Lake. The city of Geneva offers numerous historic, recreational and retail opportunities for trail users. The trail end will be located near the downtown business district of the city. This area offers restaurants, shopping, tourist facilities and historic amenities. The city also offers many choices for overnight accommodations.

Services of interest to persons travelling through the area on a long trip are within close proximity to the trail throughout the entire section in the village centers and the city of Geneva and its venues such as the Smith Opera House, the South Main Street Historic District and the proposed Finger Lakes Interpretive Center.

Economic Opportunities

The Cayuga - Seneca Canal is the gateway to the Finger Lakes region of New York. The Canalway Trail is framed by Montezuma Wildlife Refuge and Cayuga Lake at one end and Geneva and Seneca Lake at the other, with Seneca Falls and the Women's Rights National Historical Park in the Center.

The Canalway Trail will not only play a significant role in bringing tourists to the area but will also lengthen the stay as they meander along the canal from one destination to another. Completion of this trail will bring people into the area from the Erie Canalway Trail and from the Finger Lakes region.

Persons on extended and cross-state trips will not be the only ones to use the trail. It is anticipated that residents of the area will use the trail as an alternative to driving, and as recreation. This will increase the number of persons utilizing the tourist destinations and historic downtown facilities along the corridor.

When this section of the trail is completed it will link the broadly spread rural communities of Seneca, Ontario and western Cayuga County. It will also link the city of Geneva to the rest of the state through the Erie Canal trail system. This area's location already places it strategically in the heart of the Finger Lakes region of central New York. Area business leaders should be aware that the completion of this segment will result in many bicyclists visiting from surrounding areas. Hiking and bicycling tourists from all directions will find this area a fascinating and convenient spot to stop for a meal, shopping, repairs, rest, or overnight. The facilities that exist will enjoy increased usage and new opportunities will appear. The potential for bicycle and hiking based tourism, including rentals and equipment repair and sales will increase. Canal-side restaurants and overnight boarding establishments will enhance the trail experience and encourage visitors and residents to take advantage of the recreation potential of the canal.

The concurrent development of links to the historic facilities along the trail will bring many additional visitors and tourists to these communities.

The completion of this segment of the Canalway Trail will provide an important recreational and transportation facility for area residents and showcase the significant historic resources of the canal and the communities along it. This will measurably add to the quality of life and the view that this is a great place to live and work. The economic implications are significant. The perceived quality of life in a community is a major factor in many business's decisions either to stay in a community or to relocate there.

Proposed Routing/Ownership/Condition of Trail

This description of the proposed routing proceeds from west to east. The sections of trail through Seneca Falls and Waterloo represent trail sections that have undergone discussion and are proposed trail routes. The other trail routes described here are suggested routes that have not necessarily been endorsed by planning entities. However, these suggestions represent a viable route for the trail in this area. All routing descriptions given are preliminary. Detailed routing will be done considering site-specific conditions and may differ from these descriptions. This assessment will be revised at a later date to clarify the final route.

This proposed routing is the product of meetings and site visits with individuals representing various interest groups. Organizations that have participated in this process include NYS Canal Corporation, The Friends of the Frank J. Ludovico Sculpture Trail, National Park Service, Seneca County Planning Department, Village of Waterloo, Village of Seneca Falls and New York Parks and Conservation Association. (See Figures 4 & 5)

Ownership

The land used for the trail in this section is varied in ownership. The town and village of Seneca Falls, the town of Fayette and the village of Waterloo own most of the proposed trail right of way where it is on public streets. NYS DOT owns the land where the trail uses state highway 20.

The ownership of much of this proposed and suggested route not been confirmed at this time. Preliminary indications are that the railroad right-of-way in Seneca County is owned by New York State Electric and Gas, Inc.

The New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation owns the land in Seneca Lake State Park and the City of Geneva owns the rest of the shore park.

NYS Canal Corporation owns a significant part of the land in the northern most extent of the trail and all the locks and canal related resources that the proposed trail route uses.

CSX owns the active rail line that is being suggested for part of the trail east of Seneca Falls.

Acquisition needs

- Easements or licenses will be needed where the trail follows utility line ROW along the abandoned railroad.
- Agreements will need to be discussed with CSX for use of the land along the rail line.
- If any land in Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge is proposed for the trail,

Proposed Route Description	Present Condition of Trail	Ownership
Ontario County - City of Geneva (.75 miles)		
Downtown Geneva marks the western terminus of the trail with a planned link to the city's Lakefront Development Project. This project has its own trail that runs near the shore of Seneca Lake.	The trail is developed within the lakefront park. It is an asphalt paved trail.	The park and trail are owned by the city of Geneva.
Seneca County - Seneca Lake State Park (.75 miles)		
The trail continues east on existing trails in Seneca Lake State Park to a highway bridge over the canal on Rt. 96A.	The trails in the state park are asphalt and suitable for the use intended in the Canalway Trail. The crossing over the canal using the Rt. 96A bridge needs to be examined and a separate bike/pedestrian way may need to be constructed.	The parkland is owned by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. (OPRHP) The highway bridge is owned by NYS DOT.
Seneca County - Rt. 96A to Village of Seneca Falls (7.5 miles)		
The trail follows abandoned railroad ROW on the south side of the canal through the town of Fayette and village of Waterloo and the town of Seneca Falls to the village border.	The condition of the ROW varies from open to overgrown with shrubs and second growth small trees. Additionally, some lengths of the ROW in the village of Waterloo may have residential encroachment and some bridges will need to be replaced.	Ownership of the ROW is attributed to New York State Electric and Gas Corporation. The exact ownership needs to be confirmed as there may be some other entities involved.

Proposed Route Description	Present Condition of Trail	Ownership
Seneca County- Village of Seneca Falls (1.5 miles)		
<p>The trail continues to follow the bed of the railroad ROW. It comes out onto the village streets where it proceeds past the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House and on to locks 2&3. The trail crosses to the north side of the canal at the locks and follows village streets north.</p>	<p>The portion of the trail on the railroad bed is overgrown with second growth small trees and shrubs which must be cleared before grading and paving can be done. The portion on village streets needs striping and signing. The portion at the locks is already paved and can be used as is with signage added.</p>	<p>The western part of the trail on the railroad ROW is attributed to be owned by NYSEG. There is a piece of land at the eastern end of this property that is owned by Canal Corporation. The remainder of the railroad ROW is owned by the Friends of the Frank J. Ludovico Sculpture Park. The village of Seneca Falls owns the streets that will be used by the trail and Canal Corporation owns the locks.</p>
Seneca County - Town of Seneca Falls to Cayuga County (8.5 miles)		
<p>The trail has no specific routing from the point where the trail crosses the lock to the north side of the trail, to the village streets and north to meet the trail on the Erie Canal.</p> <p>There are two suggested routes in the <i>Canal Recreationway Plan</i>. One route would take the trail on streets north to Rt. 31 in Cayuga County. The suggested road route would utilize Rt. 20 & 5 which is NYS Bike Route 5 to County Road 90 and then north to Rt. 31.</p> <p>A second route would be to follow the CSX rail route north to where it crosses the canal. At that point the trail would remain on the north side of the canal to Lock 1, cross the canal and go north on Rt. 90.</p>	<p>If the trail is on road it will need extensive signage and striping. Where the trail is near the railroad, an agreement with CSX needs to be arranged and there may be a need for engineered safety structures, grading and paving.</p>	<p>The NYS Bike Route 5 is owned by NYS DOT, other county roads are owned by Seneca and Cayuga counties respectively. Land along the north side of the canal needs to be assessed as to ownership if the route along the canal is used.</p>

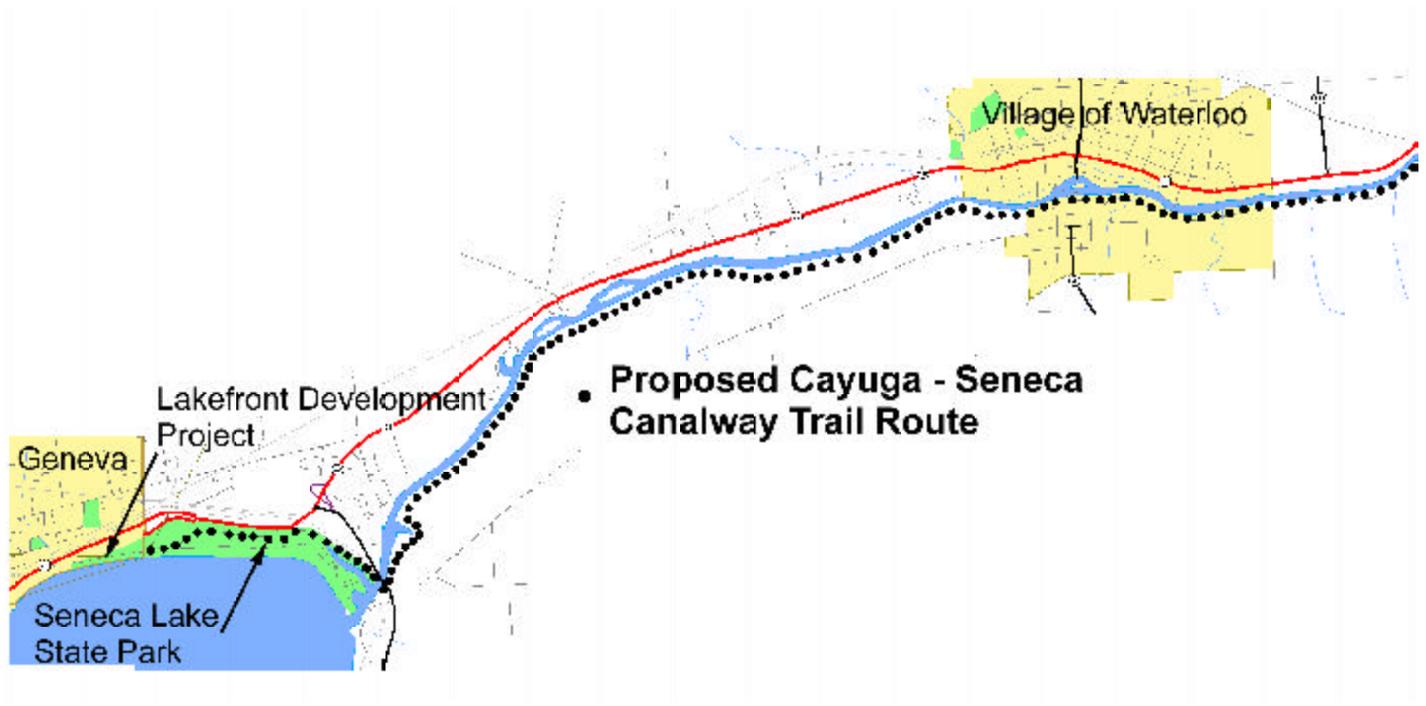


Figure 4 Cayuga - Seneca Proposed Canalway Trail Route (Western Section)

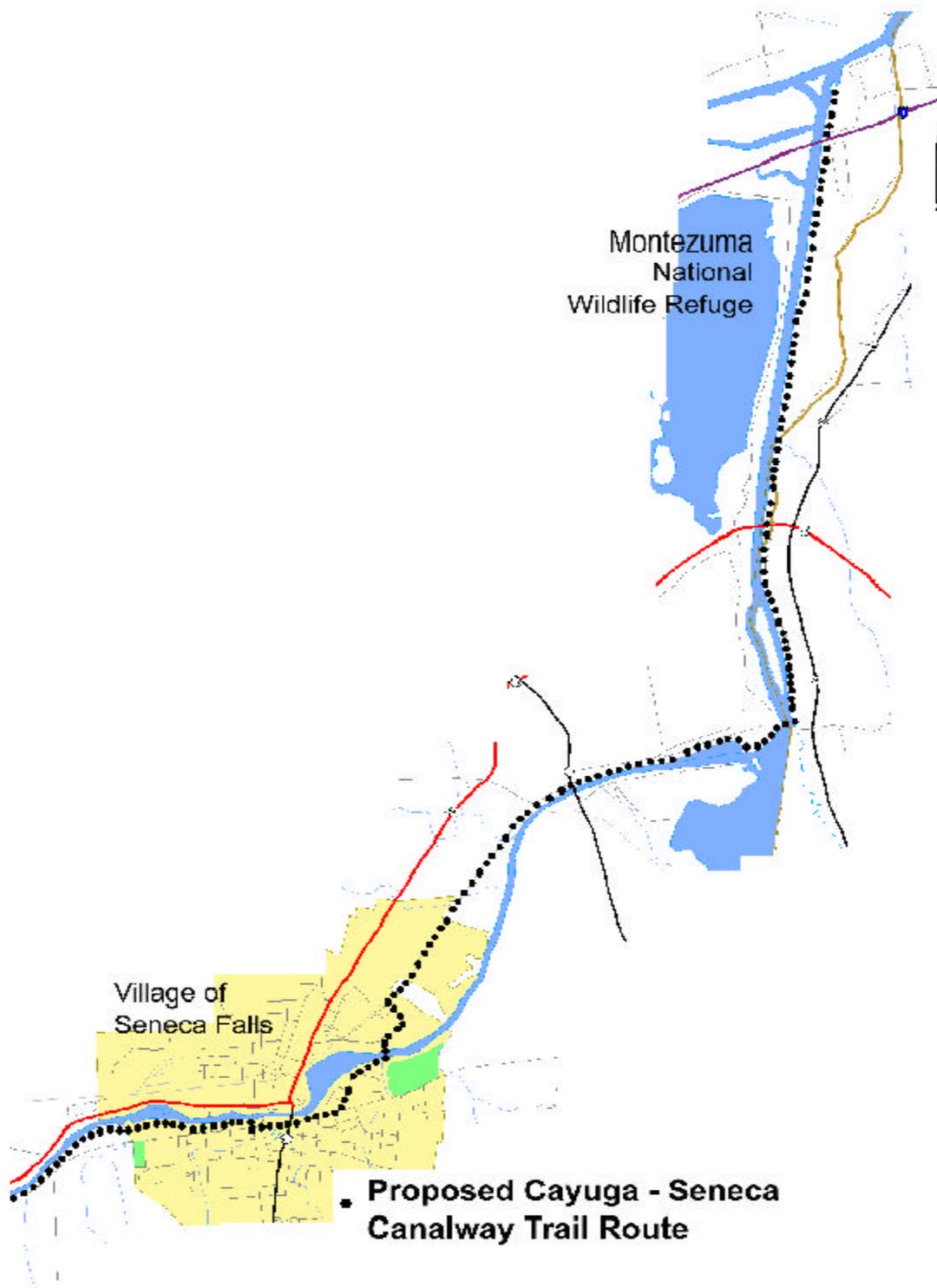


Figure 5 Cayuga - Seneca Proposed Canalway Trail Route (Eastern Section)

agreements will need to be discussed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Constraints

Bridges

The portion of the trail west of the village of Seneca Falls crosses four creeks and the canal itself. The canal crossing is made concurrent with the Rt. 96A crossing and it is possible that NYS DOT would provide an added pedestrian crossing to this bridge that the trail would use.

The remaining creek crossings are along the abandoned railroad ROW. The remaining bridge abutments need to be examined by an engineer and the bridges replaced with appropriate structures. This may include bridges that can carry emergency vehicles at several crossings.

R.O.W. Encroachments

The section through the village of Waterloo and town of Fayette may have some private property encroachments. These would need to be resolved before construction of the trail could begin.

Ownership

The ownership question along the Cayuga - Seneca Canal presents a constraint to development in two ways. First, establishing the ownership of the abandoned railroad R.O.W. is important and the owner of that property will need to be approached to discuss use of the R.O.W. for trail. Secondly, there may be a number of private landowners along the proposed trail route. These ownership questions need to be answered before final routing and trail development can take place.

Cost Estimates

The standard cost estimates being used by NYS Canal Corporation for the Canalway Trail at this date are \$70,000 - \$80,000 per mile for stone dust surfacing and \$110,000-\$125,000 for asphalt surfacing. Asphalt surface would be most appropriate in this area. The stone dust surface encourages slightly slower bicycling than the asphalt surface and requires more maintenance after installation.

If the route is taken along the streets east of the village of Seneca Falls, some cost is saved. This is because only striping and signage would be needed rather than grading, clearing and paving.

The route off road east of Seneca Falls will require more engineering, grading and trail bed improvement as well as paving.

The following tables incorporate the above estimates and adds in costs of surveys, engineering and contingencies. The totals have been rounded up to the nearest quarter million dollars.

Table 1. Summary of Cost Estimates

Option 1 - On road east of Seneca Falls				
Item	Cost	Amount	Unit	Sub Total
Asphalt Surfaced Trail	\$125,000.00	10	mile	\$1,250,000.00
Stone Dust Surfaced Trail	\$80,000.00	10	mile	\$800,000.00
Signage	\$7,000.00	19	mile	\$133,000.00
Striping Streets for Bike Lane	\$5,000.00	9	mile	\$45,000.00
Bridges	\$125,000.00	4	each	\$500,000.00
Total for Asphalt Trail	Corrected to include contingencies, engineering, and rounded up to the nearest quarter million dollars.			\$2,500,000.00
Total for Stonedust Trail				\$2,000,000.00
Option 2 - Off road east of Seneca Falls				
Item	Cost	Amount	Unit	Sub Total
Asphalt Surfaced Trail	\$ 125,000.00	18	mile	\$2,250,000.00
Stone Dust Surfaced Trail	\$ 80,000.00	18	mile	\$1,440,000.00
Safety Lanes near railroad	\$ 50,000.00	3	mile	\$150,000.00
Signage	\$ 7,000.00	19	mile	\$133,000.00
Striping Streets for Bike Lane	\$ 5,000.00	1	mile	\$5,000.00
Bridges	\$125,000.00	4	each	\$500,000.00
Total for Asphalt Trail	Corrected to include contingencies, engineering, and rounded up to the nearest quarter million dollars.			\$4,000,000.00
Total for Stonedust Trail				\$3,000,000.00

Key Needs and Opportunities

The priorities and steps listed below should be followed so that the trail can be designed and built as quickly as possible. Because of the constraints involved it is most important that these tasks be dealt with in a chronologically logical manner so that information they will provide will promote trail development.

Establish Property Ownership

The owners of all property along the canal trail route in this section should be identified, and where private ownership exists, the owners should be contacted and queried as to their willingness to have the trail run on their property. The ownership of the abandoned railroad ROW should be established so that negotiations with the owners can proceed.

Wetland Delineation

The trail route should be investigated for wetlands (both DEC and ACOE regulated). If any wetlands are found, they should be delineated and surveyed as soon as possible. This would be especially important in any section close to or running through Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (except where the trail is on roads). The DEC wetlands will be delineated by DEC in the field if requested, but it will still be the responsibility of the landowners or municipalities to survey the delineation. The ACOE should be contacted as soon as possible to determine the method for delineating those wetlands under ACOE regulation.

Volunteer Organization

One of the first needs in this area would be to form a regional committee that will help support trail development along the entire trail section rather than in any one municipal division. It is important to work closely with and assist the municipalities along the corridor and at the same time construct a vision for the section as a whole. This group would be made of a mix of representatives from the businesses, municipal and county officials, and community residents. Participants for this group should be actively recruited and meetings should start as soon as possible. The group will complement the activities of the Friends of the Frank J. Ludovico Sculpture Park, which has organized in the Village of Seneca Falls to develop the trail in that community.

During the trail development stage, the committee could participate in trail clearing and construction activities. The committee could recruit volunteers and businesses willing to donate time, money and materials to the development of the trail. The committee could also be active in encouraging trail development and helping to overcome impediments.

This group could also be active after the trail is constructed by becoming part of a statewide "Friends of the Canalway Trail" organization. This involvement would mean participating in maintenance of the local trail under the auspices of the statewide organization as well as organizing and administering local trail events and initiatives, which would enhance the economic benefits of the trail.