

Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor
2005 Annual Report



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, working through a wide range of partnerships, is preserving and interpreting our nation's past, providing world class recreational and educational opportunities, fostering economic revitalization, improving quality of life in Corridor communities, and guiding the reemergence of the Erie Canalway as a 21st-century "River of Commerce and Culture."

ERIC MOWER
Erie Canalway NHC
Commission Chairman



Letter from the Chairman

This has been an exciting year for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated Commission, staff, and consultants as well as our many state and local partners, we have completed a Preservation and Management Plan that we think is unparalleled in its depth, breadth, and comprehensiveness for the Corridor. This plan provides a roadmap for us as we continue to combine our collective talents, resources, and energy to preserve this national treasure while unlocking its tremendous potential to bring cultural and economic renewal to each of the 234 communities across the Corridor.

The making of this plan has been a testament to the passion, dedication, and confidence we all share in this historic waterway. From the well attended initial planning meetings across the state to the enthusiastic response to and thoughtful comments on the draft plan, this effort has been a grassroots triumph that signals our ultimate success in realizing our shared vision for the Corridor.

2005 was a year for building a solid organizational foundation for Erie Canalway NHC. Along with the grand opening of our new headquarters and Visitor Center in Waterford, we've hired key staff that will take the lead in implementing many of the actions and programs identified in our Preservation and Management Plan. This year we welcome Hannah Blake as Community Planner, Duncan Hay as Cultural Resources Manager, Beth Sciumeca as Program Manager, and Mary Cunningham as Office Manager. In September of this year, Marcia Kees returned to her position as Director of the New York State Heritage Areas with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Marcia brought tremendous talent and knowledge to our team and we will miss her. Erie Canalway's Commission also suffered a great loss with the passing of Larry Stid, our Vice Chairman. We are deeply saddened by the loss of our friend and colleague and we owe him many thanks for his contributions to the Commission and our Management Plan.

These past three years of planning for the future of this Corridor has been inspiring and invigorating. I hope you'll join us as we roll up our sleeves and get to work making our shared vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Mower". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Preservation and Management Plan Completed

2005 marked an important milestone for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. A year-and-a-half after beginning a major undertaking to chart the course for the future of the Corridor, the Commission released its

Draft Preservation and Management Plan on June 29th. The public release of the plan kicked off with a press conference in Waterford, New York that generated excitement and media coverage

throughout upstate New York. This was followed by eight public meetings across the Corridor where the plan was received with great enthusiasm and many thoughtful comments provided by citizens, local elected officials, and regional planners.

The Plan is the result of extensive public input from the Corridor's 234 communities as well as the cooperation of numerous public agencies along with tribal representatives, nonprofit, and business partners. The Commission, staff, and consultants worked tirelessly to assimilate all this information to compile the best thinking and recommendations for this nationally significant corridor.

The Plan details the Commission's proposed strategies for ensuring that the Corridor retains the means both to protect and enhance the nationally significant resources that impart its distinctive beauty and character, and to increase economic opportunities and attract new residents, businesses, and tourists.

Preservation and Management Plan Implementation Strategies

- ▶ Reinforce the Canalway Corridor's Distinctive Sense of Place
- ▶ Build Awareness and Understanding of the Canalway Corridor
- ▶ Expand the Circle of Friends Engaged in Heritage Development
- ▶ Increase Community Capacity to Achieve Stewardship Goals
- ▶ Stimulate Economic Revitalization

As this annual report goes to print, the Preservation and Management Plan has been updated with the comments received from our state and federal agency partners, nonprofit organizations, elected officials and the general public. The final plan was sent to the Governor of New York and to the Secretary of the Interior for review in December 2005. We hope to celebrate the Plan's adoption and approval in early 2006.

"This (plan) is a massive undertaking which will, when implemented, make a major difference to the residents and businesses of the canal corridor and to New York State as a whole."

– Vicky Daly, Mayor of Palmyra



Erie Canalway Visitor Center Opens

On May 13, 2005 The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor teamed up with The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to open the first Erie Canalway sponsored visitor center in the heritage corridor



at Peables Island State Park in Waterford, New York. The Center, which also serves as the Peables Island Visitor Center and the headquarters for Erie Canalway NHC staff,

is located in a newly restored historic powerhouse built in 1912 as part of a large textile mill complex.

This was a true partnership between the federal and state governments that has enabled the Commission to establish a much needed headquarters and visitor orientation center at the southeastern gateway to the corridor. Stop by to enjoy our new exhibit and visit the Erie Canalway staff.

Historic Canal Motorship Begins a New Journey

After 73 years of service on the Erie Barge Canal and Great Lakes, the massive motorship *Day Peckinpaugh*, has begun a new journey that will transform it from cargo-hauling workhorse into a floating museum and classroom. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor teamed up with The New York State Museum, The Canal Society of New York State, and The NYS Canal Corporation to bring the historic vessel from Erie, Pennsylvania to Buffalo and through the canal system to its current home in Waterford, New York. The 259 foot long motorship passing through the canal locks is a remarkable sight that drew interested onlookers and members of



Photo courtesy of The New York State Museum

the media throughout its trek across the state. The *Day Peckinpaugh* is truly an enduring and compelling symbol of the Barge Canal era, and will serve as both storyteller and time machine for years to come. We look forward to working with our partners on this storied vessel's continued transformation in the future.

Federal Highway Funding Secured for Erie Canalway Projects

Thanks to Congressman James Walsh of Syracuse, \$800,000 in federal funds was included in the federal transportation bill to develop an identity and signage program that will let residents and visitors know when they are in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. With this funding, we will begin to develop a consistent look and feel to Erie Canalway signs and exhibits.

Other Erie Canalway related projects funded in the transportation bill include:

- ▶ \$2.6 million for restoration work for the "Flight of Five" locks in Lockport
- ▶ \$1.2 million to restore the Erie Canal Aqueduct in downtown Rochester
- ▶ \$1 million to develop access from the Thruway to historic remnants of the Erie Canal in Port Byron
- ▶ \$480,000 to restore a historic warehouse on the Erie Canal in the Town of Lyons
- ▶ \$400,000 for exhibits at the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse
- ▶ \$240,000 for Erie Canal projects in Orleans County



Erie Canalway Sponsored Events

Erie Canalway NHC was a major sponsor of the “Cycling the Erie Canal” eight-day, 400-mile bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany July 10-17th. The tour, organized by Parks and Trails New York, drew 500 participants from 37 states and 3 continents. The tour is in its seventh year and continues to introduce people to the beauty and recreational opportunities of the canalway corridor.

The Second Canalway Trail Celebration was held on June 4th with the support of Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Parks and Trails New York organizes and promotes a series of local events to highlight the progress being made on the Canalway Trail – the bicycle and pedestrian trail that parallels the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany. The event was a big success marked by trail dedications and groundbreakings across the state.



Erie Canalway NHC was also at the New York State Canal Conference in Rochester on September 11-13th. We are proud to sponsor this event that draws canal enthusiasts, professionals, and elected officials from across the state.

Corridor Commission

Officers

Chairman Eric Mower, *Syracuse*
Vice Chair Larry Stid, *Rochester*
Secretary Megan Levine, *Niskayuna*
Treasurer Joseph M. Callahan, *Syracuse*
Ex Officio Mary A. Bomar, *National Park Service*

Commissioners

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NYS Department of Transportation
Bernadette Castro, *Commissioner, NYS Office of*
Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
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Peter J. Welsby, *Lockport*

Staff

Frank Dean, *Executive Director*
Marcia Kees, *Director of Planning and*
Program Development
Hannah Blake, *Community Planner*
Mary Cunningham, *Office Manager*
David Gaines, *Senior Planner*
Duncan Hay, *Cultural Resources Manager*
Beth Sciumeca, *Program Manager*

Formal Partnerships

Canal Society of New York State
Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor
New York State Canal Corporation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and
Historic Preservation
Parks and Trails New York
Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Commission

Fiscal Year 2005 Appropriations

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission receives a Federal Congressional Appropriation. As the Commission moves into implementation of the recently completed Preservation and Management Plan, the Commission expects to leverage the Federal Appropriation with state and private funds to implement priority projects.

Income:

Federal Appropriation\$690,000
Housing and Urban
Development Grant\$100,000

Expense:

Preservation and
Management Plan\$361,614
Heritage Development\$110,881
Public Outreach \$207,255
Interpretation and Education\$110,250

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor also leveraged and matched these Federal appropriations with an equal amount of non-Federal funds by working with our state and nonprofit partners on numerous preservation and recreation projects in the Corridor.

Cover photo courtesy of Parks and Trails New York



Photo from the book "Cruising America's Waterways: The Erie Canal"

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
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