



In partnership with the National Park Service





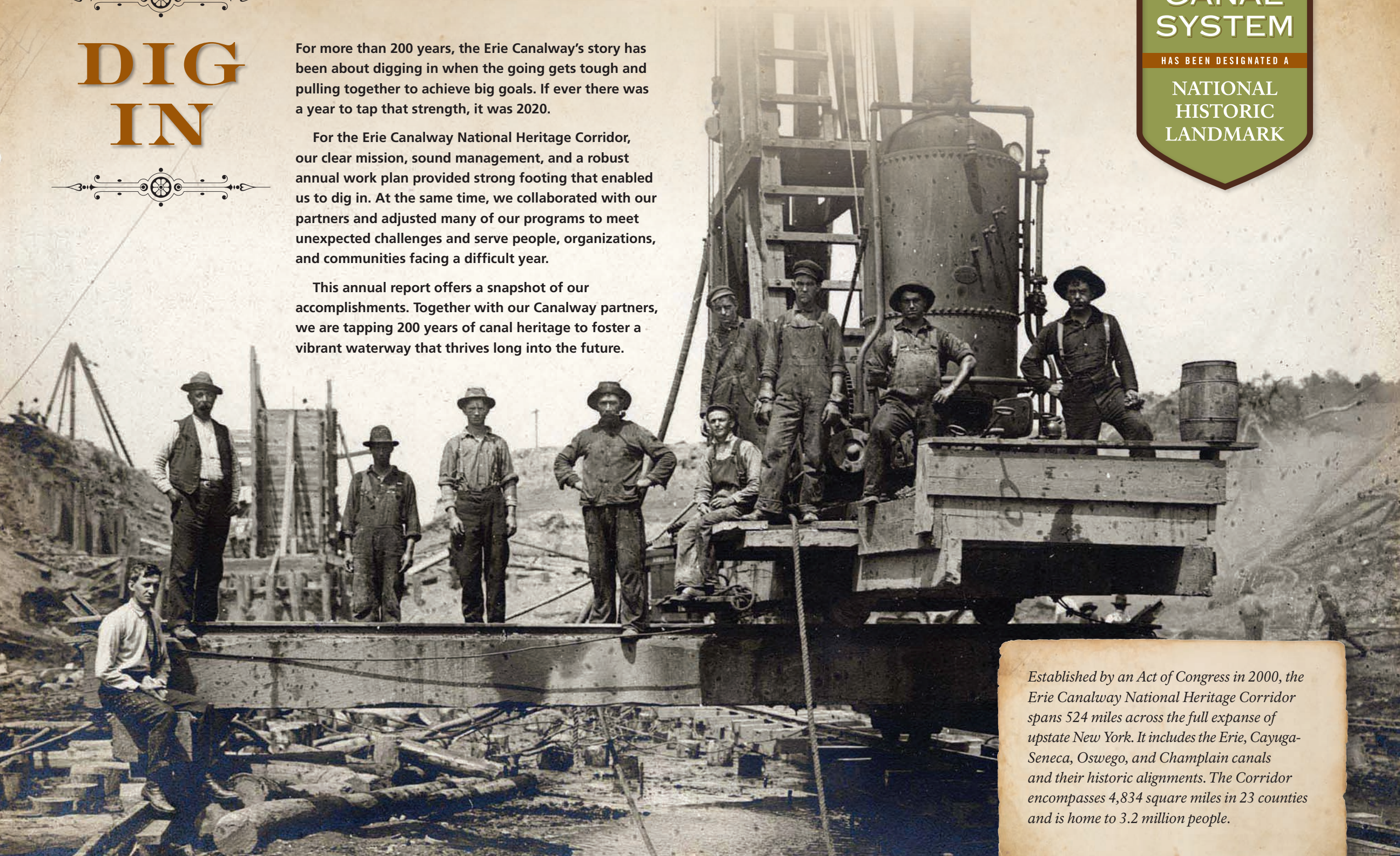
DIG IN




For more than 200 years, the Erie Canalway's story has been about digging in when the going gets tough and pulling together to achieve big goals. If ever there was a year to tap that strength, it was 2020.

For the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, our clear mission, sound management, and a robust annual work plan provided strong footing that enabled us to dig in. At the same time, we collaborated with our partners and adjusted many of our programs to meet unexpected challenges and serve people, organizations, and communities facing a difficult year.

This annual report offers a snapshot of our accomplishments. Together with our Canalway partners, we are tapping 200 years of canal heritage to foster a vibrant waterway that thrives long into the future.



Established by an Act of Congress in 2000, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor spans 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York. It includes the Erie, Cayuga-Seneca, Oswego, and Champlain canals and their historic alignments. The Corridor encompasses 4,834 square miles in 23 counties and is home to 3.2 million people.

An aerial photograph of a town built along a canal. A large steel truss bridge spans the canal in the foreground. The town is densely packed with houses and buildings, surrounded by lush green trees. The canal winds through the town, and a small boat is visible in the water. The sky is clear and blue.

**PRESERVING
~ AND ~
SHOWCASING
CANAL HERITAGE**

The NYS Canal System is public infrastructure that provides public benefit—just as state parks and roadways do. The benefit of the waterway is not merely to boaters. Positive economic benefits flow to canal communities, businesses, industries, and agriculture.

New York's canals mean business to hundreds of communities. They mean vital water supplies, recreation, and transportation to hundreds of thousands of people. This year's delayed opening brought the multidimensional value of the canals into sharp focus. We advocated for a full opening of the NYS Canal System and provided information to communities, residents and boaters impacted by closures and low water levels. We also invested in eight exciting projects to enhance canal access and visitation and celebrated three sites where canal heritage is taking center stage in community revitalization. ►

ERIE CANALWAY HERITAGE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Heritage Award recipients remind us that our past can serve as the bedrock of our future.

The Erie Canalway Heritage Award of Excellence celebrates significant places in the Erie Canalway where people have come together to preserve and share our canal heritage or to make part of the Corridor a vibrant place to live, work, or visit. We recognized three extraordinary places this year for their success.

- **Gateway Harbor of the Tonawandas** (winner) and the **Port of Newark** (honorable mention) developed welcoming and vital public spaces along the Erie Canal that are centerpieces of waterfront and community revitalization.
- The **Erie Canal Heritage Park at Port Byron** (winner) showcases the transformation of an abandoned 19th century canal lock along the NYS Thruway into a destination that shares New York's canal heritage with thousands of travelers from around the world each year.

By building upon historic assets, making strategic investments, and collaborating with diverse stakeholders, these sites prove the multifaceted rewards of creating strong, vibrant, and resilient places.



Tonawanda | Neil Ferguson

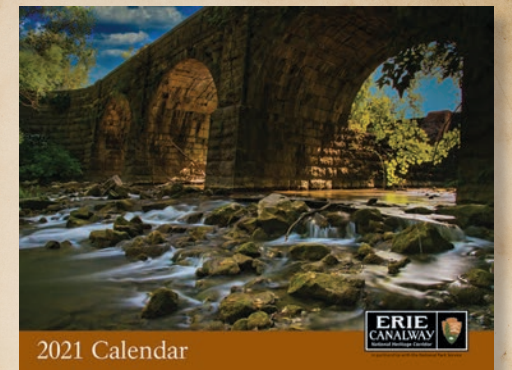
“Gateway Harbor Park’s development has transformed the downtowns of the Tonawandas into a vibrant summertime destination and allowed thousands of visitors every year to experience the history, heritage, and recreation that the Erie Canal offers. We are so honored Gateway Harbor Park has received the Erie Canalway Heritage Award.”

— Arthur G. Pappas, Mayor of North Tonawanda

AWARD JURY

Our jury’s perspective and expertise were invaluable to the program’s success.

- **Sarah Crowell**, Director, Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure, New York Department of State
- **Patrick Heaton**, Principal, Director of Cultural Resources, Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C.
- **Christine Hoffer**, Chief Operating Officer, New York State Tourism Industry Association
- **Marcia O. Kees**, Adjunct Professor, Department of Geography and Planning, University at Albany
- **Ruth Pierpont**, Former Deputy Commissioner, New York State Historic Preservation Office



2021 Calendar

The 2020 Photo Contest reached new heights with a record-breaking number of 443 entries. Winning images are featured in the 2021 Erie Canalway Calendar. The public snapped up 19,500 free copies quickly with the help of libraries and visitor centers that distribute them.

IMPACT! GRANTS

“We care about ensuring people have fair access to discover and explore the numerous treasures right in our backyard. We will continue to do our part to support and advocate for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in the halls of Congress, and we are pleased to see these grants delivered to our local communities.”

— Congressman Tom Reed (NY-23)

Over the past 12 years, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor has made 83 grants to communities and non-profit organizations that have spurred \$2.35 million in additional investments in heritage preservation, recreation, and education.



Brian Tzedeak



Buffalo Maritime Center | Gene Witkowski

Eight organizations received Erie Canalway IMPACT! Grants in 2020 totaling \$60,000 and leveraging an additional \$515,291 in private and public project support. Funded projects include vital work to preserve and showcase canal heritage and welcome people to explore the canal in their local communities. A partnership with NYS Canal Corporation led to an increase in the award threshold and the funding of additional projects.

2020 GRANT RECIPIENTS

1st Amendment—1st Vote, Inc. in Seneca Falls (\$2,000) will explore civic engagement with high school girls from 19 school districts. A series of virtual tours will recognize the important contribution of the Erie Canal as a transportation and information highway in advancing equal rights.

Buffalo Maritime Center in Buffalo (\$5,000) designed exhibits for the Longshed at Canalside in Buffalo’s Inner Harbor, where volunteers are constructing a replica packet boat to celebrate the “Wedding of the Waters” bicentennial. Canalboat Commencement Weekend in October provided an exciting look at the Center’s progress.

City of Oneida (\$12,000) is developing four interpretive signs highlighting the city’s canal resources to be placed on walking trails in the city.

County of Oswego (\$12,000) designed an ADA accessible paddling access area that will provide access to a scenic four-mile section of the Oswego River between Locks O5 and O6.

Feeder Canal Alliance in Glens Falls (\$5,000) is developing a hands-on field school environmental lab on the Glens Falls Feeder Canal. Students will use an inquiry-based approach to focus on environmental themes, including water quality and invasive species.

\$515,291 of additional private and public project support was leveraged



1st Amendment—1st Vote, Inc.

National Women’s Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls (\$10,000) created a movable exhibit that honors women and their contributions in history. The exhibit is in the Hall of Fame’s new home in the historic Seneca Knitting Mill, which opened in August.

Town of Lyons (\$7,000) is landscaping a sustainable garden space alongside Lock 27 in Lyons to beautify the waterfront and welcome travelers.

Village of Brockport (\$7,000) is restoring a prominent mural on Main Street that depicts a scene from Peter Spier’s Erie Canal children’s book. Restoring the mural will ensure that the charm and grace of this canal community will continue to be appreciated by visitors and residents for generations to come.

TICKET TO RIDE RETOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

Technology met creativity in 2020 to continue bringing the Erie Canal to students.

Field trips to the canal? Not in 2020. The abrupt shift to virtual learning this year left more than 8,000 students who typically take advantage of our Ticket to Ride and Every Kid in a Park Programs high and dry. It was also a loss for the historic sites, museums and national parks that provide educational programs. We quickly shifted gears to provide online learning resources for schools and funding to help several of our educational partners find new ways to engage with students.

The result is a creative mix of new virtual lessons that provide additional options for canal-related education and the potential to reach wider audiences. Here's a snapshot of a few programs:

- The **Erie Canal Discovery Center** in Lockport developed five virtual lessons on the history, geography, engineering and national impact of the Erie Canal.
- **Corn Hill Navigation** in Pittsford is developing curriculum materials that support its Environmental Education on the Erie Canal program.
- **Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum** in Chittenango will use a virtual Lego Robotics program to interact directly with youth in their classrooms via video feed.

- Working in partnership with the **NYS Canal Corporation**, Erie Canalway will develop a series of **360-degree virtual tours** of canal sites and features to share with students and the public.
- **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** is collaborating with the **Erie Canal Museum, MOST, The R/E/D Group** (affiliated with Syracuse University School of Education), and **Syracuse City School District** to develop a program for seventh graders that offers a blend of **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and History**. Students from Syracuse City School District will learn about the many challenges encountered while building the Erie Canal and engage in hands-on engineering-based projects. This program is made possible thanks to a grant from **Central NY Community Foundation**.

"We are so grateful for the opportunity to be able to share our Erie Canal heritage with students not just in Western New York but all over the country. This grant has provided us the ability to create virtual educational encounters far beyond the scope we ever imagined."

— Ann Marie Linnabery, Assistant Director/Education Coordinator, History Center of Niagara, Lockport

PROMOTING RECREATION ~AND~ TOURISM

Each year, the Canalway Corridor attracts residents and visitors to upstate New York for special events, tours, cycling trips, and to navigate one of the world's longest canals. This year's travel restrictions, delays in canal opening, and event cancellations took a significant toll on tourism. At the same time, the pandemic presented new opportunities to invite New Yorkers to rediscover the treasures in their own backyard and to enjoy beauty, history, nature, and outstanding recreation along the canals. ▶

The NYS Canal System is central to an emerging world-class recreation corridor that also includes the Empire State Trail and the NYS Canalway Water Trail.



Albany

A recurring theme among participants in 2020 was how the Canalway Challenge led to the discovery of places and communities close to home that they had not visited previously.

The Canalway Challenge offered a bright spot in a year marked by COVID-19. More than 1,000 individuals, teams, and organizations signed up and hit the trail for much needed mental and physical health. Finishers logged **83,280 miles** by walking, running, cycling, and paddling on the waterway and Canalway Trail.

While many participants stayed close to home, the outdoor nature of the Challenge also provided a safe way for people to explore farther afield. Participants came from 11 states (27% came from outside the Canalway Corridor) and 42% visited multiple regions.

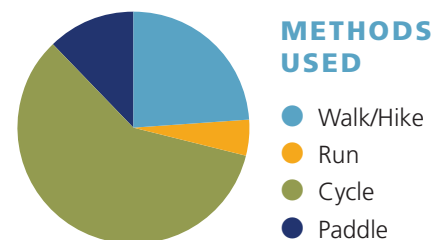
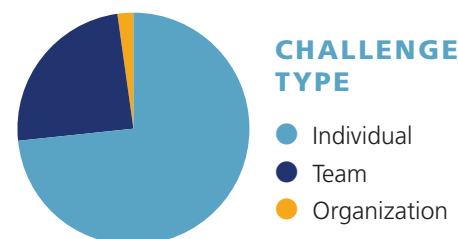
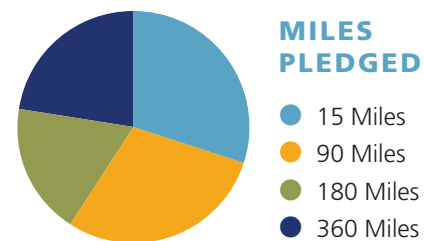
Inspiring stories from participants confirm the **can-do spirit** of New Yorkers and provide assurance that we are up for the challenge of triumphing through difficult times.

The Canalway Challenge reaches a wide audience thanks to more than **70 promotional partners** across the Corridor. It is funded in part by a grant from Market NY through I LOVE NY, New York State's Division of Tourism, as part of the State's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative. Additional funding support is provided by the National Park Service and the NYS Canal Corporation.

"I've spent much of my retirement flying off to distant lands, but 2020 made me rethink the obvious. The Canalway Challenge is an opportunity to see our backyard with new eyes, and to appreciate the scenic beauty and history that New York State has to offer!"

– Lee Nowakowski, 360 Miles

2020 PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOT



"Though I've lived in New York most of my life, the trail took me to places I'd never visited before and gave me a new perspective on those I'm quite familiar with. It also reassured me that I'm NY Strong in spite of the pandemic and its fallout."

– Glenn Cerosaletti, 360 Miles



Hot on the Trail, a new aspect of the Challenge, invited people to sample local food, beverages, and attractions while completing their miles and to select their favorites. Participants listed more than 170 "Hot" sites.



Keith Boas

We began to build partnerships with disability advocates to offer a **1st Mile Challenge** for people with accessibility needs. While the pandemic dampened many of our plans, we sponsored The Arc Wayne's Color Wayne Virtual Walk/Run/Bike and supported Rochester Accessible Adventures Pass to Play program, which offered discounts on adaptive cycling and paddling rentals at the Erie Canal Boat Company in Fairport.



Little Falls | Frank Forte

“Kayaking the entire Erie Canal was the trip of a lifetime for us! . . . Our biggest surprise was the variety of scenery, topography, and communities along the way. We were left feeling deeply invested in the canal with a desire for others to experience this amazing and historic waterway.”

– Beth Walker and Sara Catalano

NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Karl Beard, retired, NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
- Fred Bonn, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Mike Cavanaugh, American Canoe Association
- Paul Comstock, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
- Sasha Eisenstein, NYS Canal Corporation
- Kris Fitzgerald, 2k Design
- John Joyce, NYS Canal Corporation
- Scott Keller, Hudson River Valley Greenway
- Donna Larkin, Upstate Kayak Rentals

Paddling proved to be a great socially distant activity in 2020. Resources developed by Erie Canalway helped many enjoy the waterway safely.

Erie Canalway’s leadership in developing the NYS Canalway Water Trail delivered big dividends in 2020.

We installed 340 signs to mark the trail at more than 140 locations. The signs are already assisting paddlers with clear identification of put-in and take-out sites. The NYS Canal Corporation provided critical financial support through the Governor’s Capital Region Economic Development Council.

We continued to distribute the **NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Map Set**, having now reached the eager hands of more than 2,000 paddlers. In addition, updates to Erie Canalway’s nycanalmap.com continued to provide information on boater-friendly facilities and amenities to paddlers and other Canalway Corridor visitors.

We used our monthly Water Trail newsletter, Facebook group, and website to share important information and build a growing network of canal paddlers. Visitors viewed the NYS Canalway Water Trail and best bet paddling trips web pages more than 13,000 times. The NYS Canalway Water Trail Facebook group grew to 1,600 members.

Pandemic-related delays in opening portions of the NYS Canal System produced uniquely low water levels in the Mohawk River and safety concerns, particularly regarding movable dams from Herkimer to Schenectady. Erie Canalway worked closely with our partners at the NYS Canal Corporation to share timely safety information with paddlers throughout the year.

Erie Canalway made good progress in 2020 on developing a long-term trail Stewardship Program. We also selected a contractor to develop Hand Launch Guidelines that will highlight and illustrate best practices for the variety of conditions existing on our distinctive upstate waterways.



2020 Map and Guide

Though events and conferences were cancelled and many of our distribution sites closed, we still managed to distribute 40,000 **Erie Canalway Map & Guides**. We were grateful to partner with Stewart’s Shops to distribute copies at 10 stores in Eastern New York.

RECREATIONAL HUBS, AMENITIES AND LODGING

Developing an integrated network of trails, waterways, and driving routes with amenities and lodging is key to maximizing the vibrancy and economic sustainability of the entire Canalway Corridor.

The Canalway Corridor serves both New York State residents and people from around the world who are attracted to its multi-day and multi-recreational opportunities. The impacts of boaters, cyclists, paddlers, hikers, car travelers and event goers are additive. Each contributes to the vibrancy and economic sustainability of the entire Corridor.

To best serve visitors and maximize impact, we advanced initiatives to create model **Canalway Recreational Hubs** in both the eastern and western gateways of the Corridor. These Hubs will be distinctive, environmentally and visitor-friendly immersion points with numerous amenities to meet the needs of varied recreational enthusiasts. The Hubs will complement existing community facilities and strengthen a network of amenities for users of the Erie Canal, Empire State Trail and the NYS Canalway Water Trail.

The twin cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda are working with us to further enhance their shared **Gateway Harbor**. Work has begun on a variety of fronts, including trail access and amenities, wayfinding and interpretive signs, wi-fi coverage, public art, small business

development, and events. In addition, the *Reimagine the Canals* initiative is supporting the lighting of a unique bascule bridge that will visually unify the two cities.

In the east, we continued to work with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the City of Cohoes to transform the former **Matton Shipyard** into a vibrant hub site. In 2020, we removed more than 50,000 pounds of contaminated materials and debris from the site. We also worked with engineers and architects on Hudson River waterfront and building stabilization and restoration, while archaeologists completed cultural resource studies. In addition, we developed content for three new interpretive signs.

We worked with the Preservation League of NYS, with support from the 1772 Foundation, to complete a study of **lodging in close proximity to the Corridor's land and water trails** and evaluate the potential for abandoned or under-used historic buildings to be revitalized to provide recreational user facilities and amenities. Mapping the results enabled us to identify gaps in services so that we can focus on areas of greatest need going forward.



Waterford



Albany

EVENT AND FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

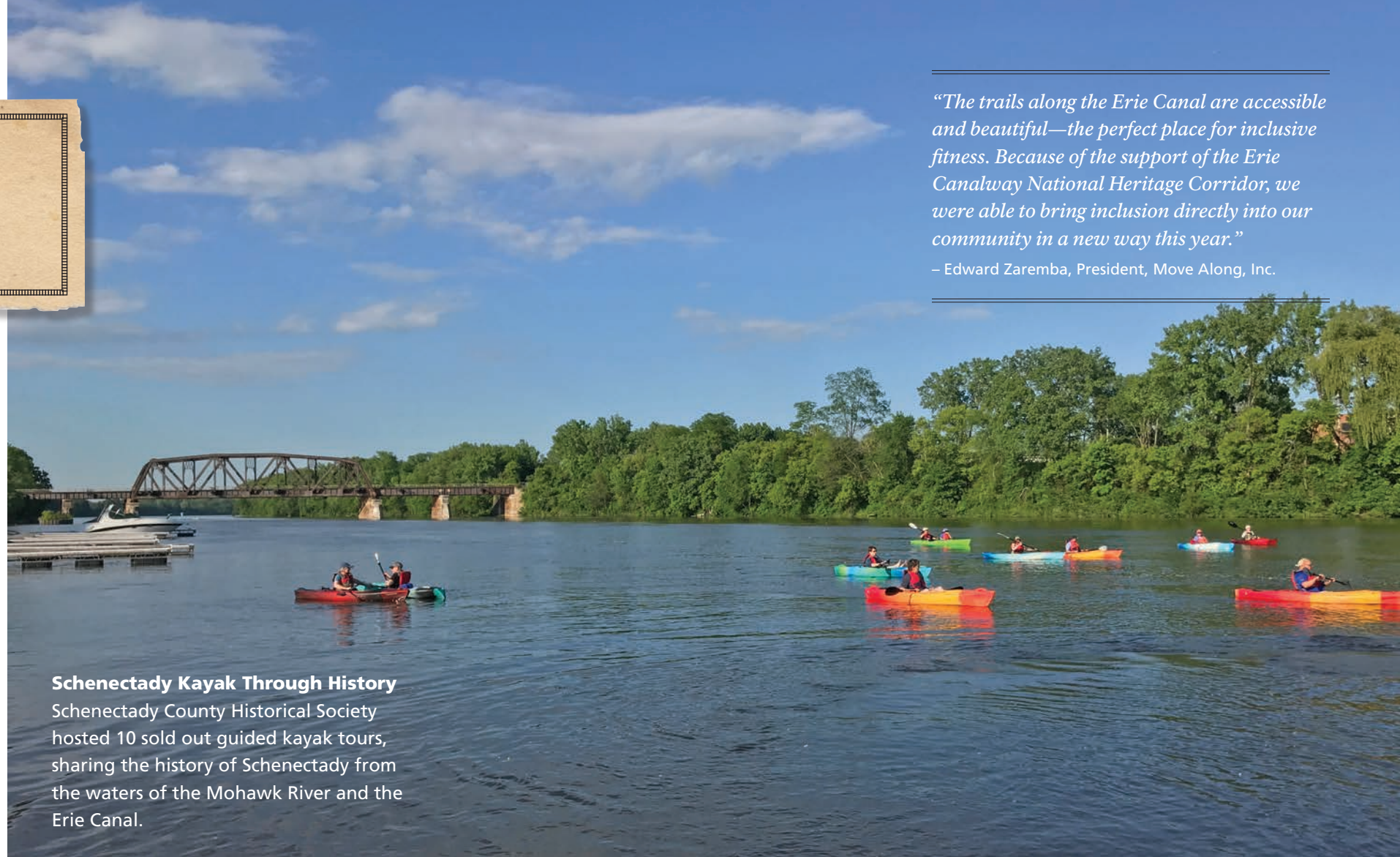
In partnership with New York State Canal Corporation, we awarded 28 sponsorships for a total of \$15,000. Being flexible with funding enabled us to work with many event hosts to ensure safe events or to repurpose the sponsorships for other tourism-related projects.

In a year when the global pandemic necessitated restrictions on large gatherings, we quickly modified our event sponsorship program. Working with the hosts of events sponsored before the pandemic, we provided options that enabled them to repurpose funding to complete alternative tourism-related projects that encouraged visitation and enhanced the canal experience.

- Arkell Museum, Canajoharie, *Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal Rack Cards*
- Black Girls Do Bike, Rochester, *BGDB Black Lives Matter Ride for Justice*
- Boilermaker Road Race, Utica, *Erie Canal Virtual Half*
- Camillus Canal Society, Camillus, *Camillus Erie Canal Park Promotional Brochures and Rack Cards*
- Chittenango Museum, Chittenango, *Civil War Living History at Chittenango Museum*
- CycleADK, Johnstown, *Ride the Women's Revolution (postponed)*
- Erie Canal Community Partners, Montezuma, *Treasures Along the Erie Self-Guided Bike Tour*
- Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, *Gingerbread Exhibit*
- Explore Buffalo Inc., Buffalo, *Erie Canal Historic Profiles*
- Friends of the Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway, Clifton Park, *Audio Tour Brochure*
- Fort Miller Reformed Church, Fort Edward, *Fort Miller Days/Sacred Sites History Tour (postponed)*
- H. Lee White Maritime Museum, Oswego, *Canal to Shore, History Hunt Challenge*
- Hudson Crossing, Schuylerville, *Folklore, Heritage, Mysteries, and a Little Bit of Historical Gossip*
- Kayaking 4 Meso, Mechanicville, *10th Annual Kayaking 4 Meso*
- Little Falls YMCA, Little Falls, *Movies on the Canal*
- Lockport Main Street, Lockport, *Locktoberfest*
- Montezuma Audubon, Savannah, *Birding and Boating*
- Move Along, Inc. & Oswego Expeditions, Baldwinsville, *Inclusive Canal Ride*
- Rochester Accessible Adventures, Rochester, *Pass to Play Program*
- Rome Rotary Club, Rome, *Rome Canalfest (postponed)*
- Schenectady County Historical Society, Schenectady, *Paddle Through History Series*
- Seneca Museum, Seneca Falls, *Celebrating 2020 Through Women in Music*
- Sylvan Verona Beach Resort Association, Sylvan Beach, *Sylvan Beach Boat Show*
- The Arc of Wayne Foundation, Newark, *Color Wayne Virtual Walk/Run/Bike*
- The Cobblestone Society, Albion, *History at Home: Exploring the Cobblestone Museum*
- Village of Brockport, Brockport, *Welcome Center Bike Lending Signage*
- Village of Ft. Edward, Fort Edward, *Yacht Basin Kiosk Update*
- Village of Phoenix/Phoenix Rising, Phoenix, *Adaptive Kayak Launch Update*

“The trails along the Erie Canal are accessible and beautiful—the perfect place for inclusive fitness. Because of the support of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, we were able to bring inclusion directly into our community in a new way this year.”

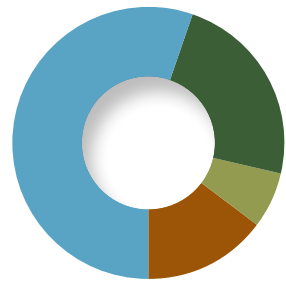
– Edward Zaremba, President, Move Along, Inc.



Schenectady Kayak Through History
Schenectady County Historical Society hosted 10 sold out guided kayak tours, sharing the history of Schenectady from the waters of the Mohawk River and the Erie Canal.

2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

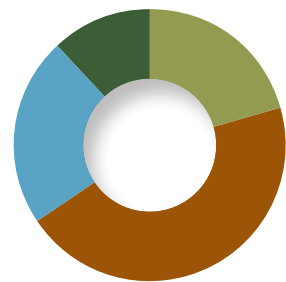
For the period October 1, 2019
through September 30, 2020



SUPPORT & REVENUE

| | | |
|--|-------|--------------------|
| ■ Federal | ..... | \$736,572 |
| ■ State | ..... | \$310,057 |
| ■ Contributions, Grants & Sponsorships | ..... | \$87,169 |
| ■ In-kind Contributions | ..... | \$194,203 |
| Total | ..... | \$1,328,001 |

By working with municipal and nonprofit partners, Erie Canalway also leveraged \$1,677,843 in FY2020 in support of program and project activities.



EXPENSES

| | | |
|--|-------|--------------------|
| ■ Preserve & Share Our Extraordinary Heritage | ..... | \$285,781 |
| ■ Promote the Corridor as a World Class Destination | ..... | \$614,839 |
| ■ Foster Vibrant Communities Connected by the Waterway | ..... | \$309,288 |
| ■ Program Support, Management & Resource Development | ..... | \$163,164 |
| Total | ..... | \$1,373,072 |

* The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor benefits from the work of two entities—a federal Commission and the nonprofit Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. These simplified financial statements reflect a summary of both entities. The Commission auditor is Jones & Company, PC. The Heritage Fund auditor is Cusack & Company, CPAs LLC. More detailed and audited financial statements for both entities may be requested by contacting our office. In addition, financial statements for the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund may be obtained from the NYS Office of the Attorney General's Charities Bureau, www.charitiesnys.com or (212) 416-8686.

DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Erie Canalway Leadership Circle (\$10,000+)

CNY Community Foundation, Inc.
National Park Foundation
National Park Foundation: Project made possible through generous support of partners including Union Pacific Railroad and donors across the country
National Park Service
New York State Canal Corporation/New York Power Authority
New York State's Empire State Development and the ILNY Division of Tourism under Governor Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Preservation League of New York State/The 1772 Foundation

Erie Canalway Legacy Partners (\$5,000-9,999)

Brookfield Renewable
NYS Society Children of the American Revolution

Erie Canalway Heritage Supporters (\$1,000-4,999)

Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Barbara Blanchard
Tom & Paula Blanchard
Carl & Suzanne Blowers
Judy & Philip Cherry
Paul L. Comstock
Creatacor, Inc.
Emil Muller Foundation
Environmental Design & Research Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, DPC
Mark P. & Roxanne A. Hettler
John & Michele McGlone
Stephen and Mary Muller Fund of Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Paul & Linda Neureuter
Northwest River Supplies, Inc.

Tom Phelan Memorial Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Harry Sicherman
Village of Fairport, Office of Community + Economic Development
Brian Yates & Kate Gagliardi

Businesses, Organizations and Foundations (up to \$999)

2k Design
Erie Canal House
Ess-Kay Yards, Inc./Kimberly Vorchheimer
Harter, Secrest & Emery LLP
Paul and Alane Hohenberg Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Johnson & Johnson
Keith Boas Photography
Parks & Trails New York
The Coppola Firm
Robert and Susan Touhsaent Charitable Fund at the Rochester Area Community Foundation
United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region
United Way of Greater Rochester
United Way of Western New York-Rochester
Xylem, Inc.

Individuals

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Bob Ames
Jacob Amidon
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Lex Anderson
Richard Anderson
Dr. & Mrs. Robert P. Anderson

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Martin Armstrong
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Kelly Buck
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Rosemary Button
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James S. & Renee A. Campbell
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Christopher P. Carey
Joe Carey

Note: individual donations through 12/31/2020. Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions. Please contact us at 518-237-7000 x 207 with any corrections.

DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS, *continued*

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We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of departing Commissioners **Carol Greenough** and **Paul Webster**. Greenough was a founding commissioner who represented the Champlain Canal and brought her wisdom, good humor, and expertise to the variety of initiatives she touched. Webster supported the development and success of the Ticket to Ride program through his extensive networks of education professionals throughout the state. We said farewell to Program Manager **Miyoko Fullinger**, who returned to her native Canada, and welcomed **Ashley Quimby-Simoni** as the newest member of our staff.