

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Manifest for a 21st Century Canalway

Highlights of the
Preservation &
Management Plan

OCTOBER 2006



Dear Friend of the Erie Canalway:

On behalf of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and its 27-member Commission, I am pleased to share with you this Manifest for a 21st Century Canalway, which provides highlights of the Corridor's Preservation and Management Plan. The final plan received approval from the Governor of New York and the Secretary of the Interior, thus making it possible to begin implementation in June 2006. The plan has been well received and was recently honored by the upstate New York Chapter of the American Planning Association.

We hope that you will read the full benchmark document and be excited by its findings, ideas, and far reaching concepts for revitalizing this nationally significant corridor through heritage preservation and sustainable development. We also hope that you will take the time to share your ideas and concerns with us, in writing, by e-mail, or by phone, regarding plan strategies and implementation schedule.

Beginning in the summer of 2003, the Commission began its Congressionally legislated mission to prepare this plan so that the Canalway Corridor's 234 communities could take advantage of this much deserved federal designation. We envision a new, 21st century opportunity for all Corridor communities and residents to re-connect with the canal system and many other heritage resources—and to each other as members of a greater community with shared values and exciting potentials. The plan helps to fully reveal what wonderful, diverse resources we have, to imagine a really dynamic picture of the future, and to understand its many parts and how they might fit together.

As Commissioners appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, we serve as volunteers. We believe in the cause, but most importantly, we believe that others, perhaps you, have the values, talents and energy to appreciate this rich opportunity and to act on it at the grassroots level. Many of you have done much already and we have tried to include the most promising and useful of your ideas in this plan.

Our work proved to be a tremendous learning experience and, no doubt, we will learn more. We hope that the proposals found within the plan will be brought to life through partnerships involving all who embrace the spirit and living legacy of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

Sincerely,

Eric Mower, Chairman,
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission

Every child learns in school that building the Erie Canal was a heroic feat of engineering and construction. Hailed as a new world wonder, the Erie Canal stirred immense pride throughout the state of New York and the nation while forging fundamental aspects of the American character. In addition to establishing New York City as the nation's premier seaport and commercial center, the Erie and its lateral canals shaped settlement patterns in the Northeast and Midwest.



The canal system inspired early tourism — travelers published hundreds of accounts of their journeys — as well as songs, illustrations, and other ingredients of popular culture. Social movements including abolition, women's rights, and religious revivalism flourished along the canal. Historians also posit that the Erie Canal affected the outcome of the Civil War, transporting foodstuffs, material, and especially people and ideas that bound the northeast and upper Midwest together in support of the Union.

The canal system's influence is visible in the buildings and streetscapes of communities across the state, both large and small. They share similarities in layout and orientation to the waterway — dozens of upstate communities feature an Erie Boulevard, Canal Street, or Towpath Road, often where abandoned segments of the old canal have been filled in — as well as architecture reflecting the prosperity enjoyed during the canals' heyday.

But all this took place during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Today, the canals still link communities together; but what can they do for the region in the 21st century? Can they still drive economic development and stimulate cultural innovation? Can they again be part of the region's image to the world... and to itself?

A Preservation & Management Plan for the Future

In December, 2000 the United States Congress established the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The legislation:

- applies to the entire New York State Canal System, including the 524 miles of navigable waterway still in use today as well as historic alignments, some no longer readily visible;
- includes all 234 municipalities linked by the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca and Oswego Canals and Cayuga and Seneca Lakes;
- recognizes the crucial role the canals played in our nation's growth;
- affirms a national interest in preserving and interpreting the Corridor's important historic, cultural, recreational, educational, scenic and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations; and
- created the 27-member Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission, and charged it with developing and implementing a Preservation and Management Plan for the Corridor in concert with federal, state and local governments and other partners.

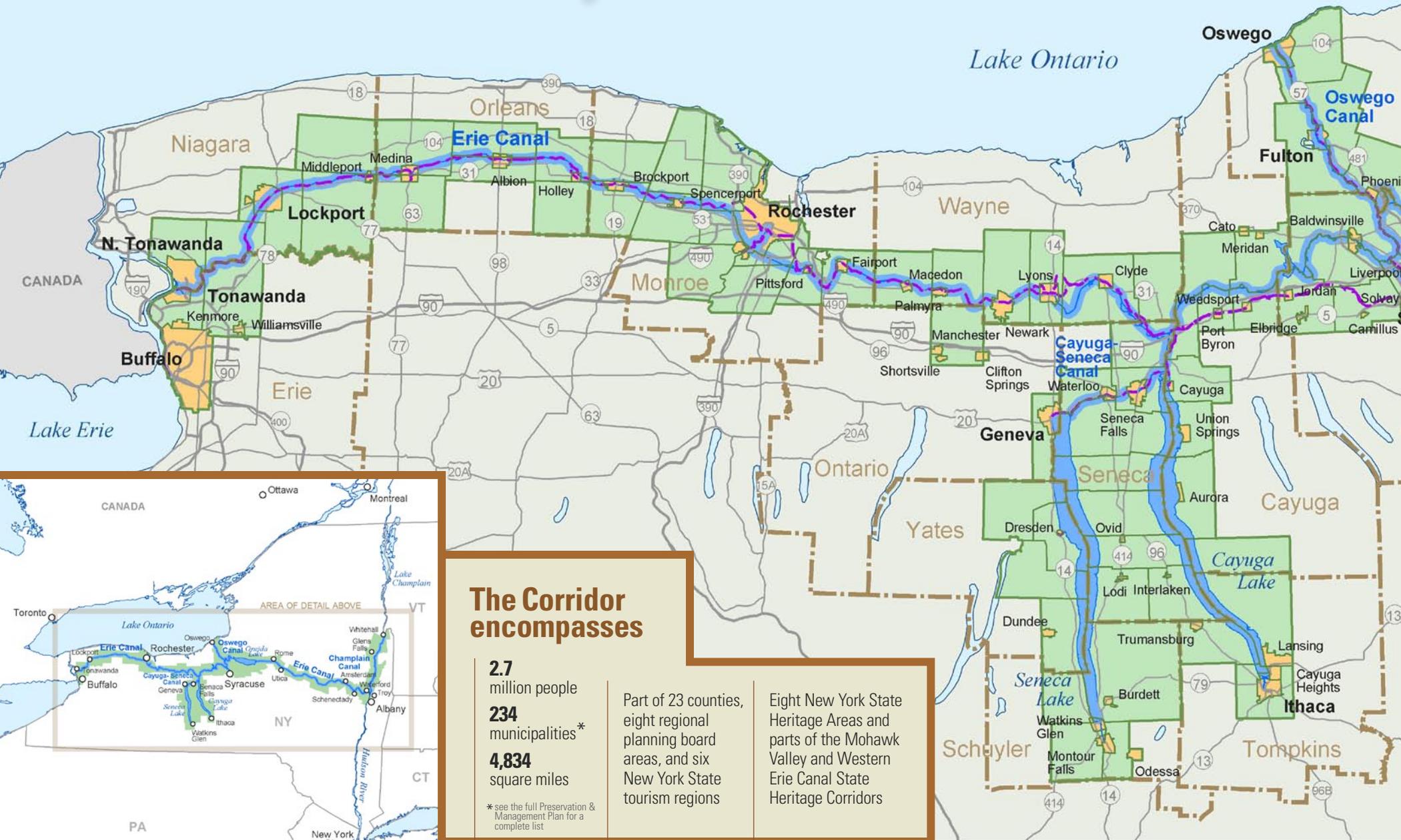
With the Congressional designation, the Erie Canalway joins a cadre of National Heritage Areas (including Corridors) acclaimed for their ability to build regional partnerships that blend heritage stewardship and development practices. By virtue of its broad scope, federal resources, and the high level of visibility and credibility provided by the National Park Service and Congressional designation, the National Heritage Corridor offers an opportunity to bring new clarity, vision, and energy to an extensive existing planning and implementation infrastructure — an “umbrella” to help convene, coordinate, and catalyze existing and new collaborative efforts. This document offers a brief overview of the Commission's proposed strategy: working with canal communities, for canal communities.



CANASTOTA

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Festivals and events celebrating the canals attracted big audiences and publicity?</p> | |
| <p>People understood “the Erie Canalway” in the same way they understand “New England” or “the South of France?”</p> | <p>Area colleges and universities became even more competitive because prospective students and faculty want to live in the region?</p> |
| <p>Friends debated whether the region's summer or winter recreation opportunities are better?</p> | <p>Hikers, cyclists, and paddlers could travel the entire length of the canals and view it as the highlight of their athletic careers?</p> |
| <p>Travelers realized when they had arrived in the Erie Canalway—from any direction—by the colors and designs used on the signs?</p> | <p>The region became renowned for its sensitive historic renovations inter-woven with pristine natural settings?</p> |
| <p>Entrepreneurs found that by serving both visitor and resident markets, the region could absorb additional small businesses?</p> | <p>Systems were in place to help organizations share information and coordinate their activities?</p> |
| <p>Museums and historical sites in the region became nationally known for the quality of their interpretation?</p> | <p>Abandoned sections of the towpath-era canal were restored and rewatered?</p> |
| <p>Canal-side real estate attracted new private sector investment that complemented the historic setting?</p> | <p>Visitors found such consistent and high quality heritage experiences that they returned again and again?</p> |

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor



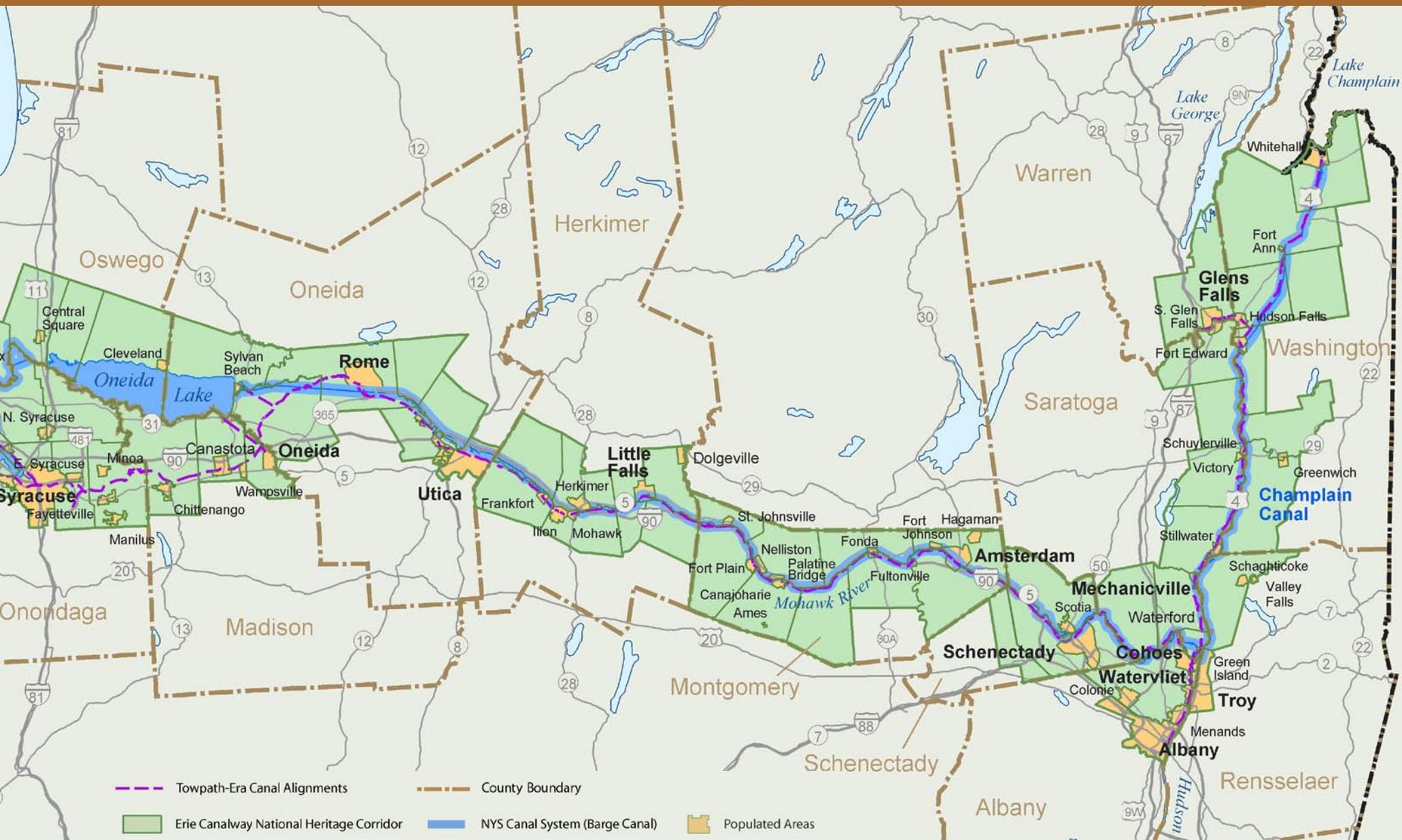
The Corridor encompasses

2.7 million people
234 municipalities*
4,834 square miles

* see the full Preservation & Management Plan for a complete list

Part of 23 counties, eight regional planning board areas, and six New York State tourism regions

Eight New York State Heritage Areas and parts of the Mohawk Valley and Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridors



Corridor Resources include

34 National Historic Landmarks

524 continuous miles of navigable waterway

Over 800 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, including over 14,000 properties

Four National Park System units, one National Forest, two National Wildlife Refuges, one National Scenic Trail and 4 National Natural Landmarks

Nine New York State Historic Sites, 11 State Wildlife Management Areas, and 24 State Parks

Hundreds of miles of urban and back-country trails, including the country's longest continuous pedestrian and bicycle trail (to be completed in 2007)

Parts of two New York State Bike Routes and 9 New York State Scenic Byways, including two designated as America's Byways



What is a National Heritage Area?

By designating the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Congress deemed it a nationally significant area. The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Heritage Areas (NHAs) program.

More than two dozen existing National Heritage Areas (including National Heritage Corridors) promote themselves as special destinations that combine a strong sense of place, natural scenic beauty, recreation opportunities, and heritage interpretation — defined by NPS as places “where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them.”

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation operates an analogous program at the state level. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor overlaps most of the Mohawk Valley and Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridors as well as eight State Heritage Areas (formerly Urban Cultural Parks). The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor also overlaps parts of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which is administered by the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

ABOVE: LOCKPORT
OPPOSITE: GLENS FALLS FEEDER CANAL

Many Partners Brought Together

Numerous federal, state, and local agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and others are working independently on a host of related endeavors that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Corridor’s heritage resources and economy. The National Heritage Corridor designation should be understood in part as an acknowledgment of their hard work. The Commission’s added value lies in its ability to focus on partnerships that cross jurisdictional boundaries and bind the mutual interests of regional economic revitalization and heritage asset enhancement.

The Corridor’s proposed Preservation and Management Plan builds upon a number of well-conceived state and local plans for portions of the region. These include the 1995 New York State Canal Recreationway Plan; the management plans for two state heritage corridors and eight state heritage areas; New York State’s Historic Preservation Plan, Open Space Conservation Plan, and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; regional plans for watershed management, waterfront revitalization, transportation and recreational development; interpretive frameworks, marketing plans, and wayfinding strategies for the canal system, scenic byways, and other regional resources; and countless local preservation and economic development plans.

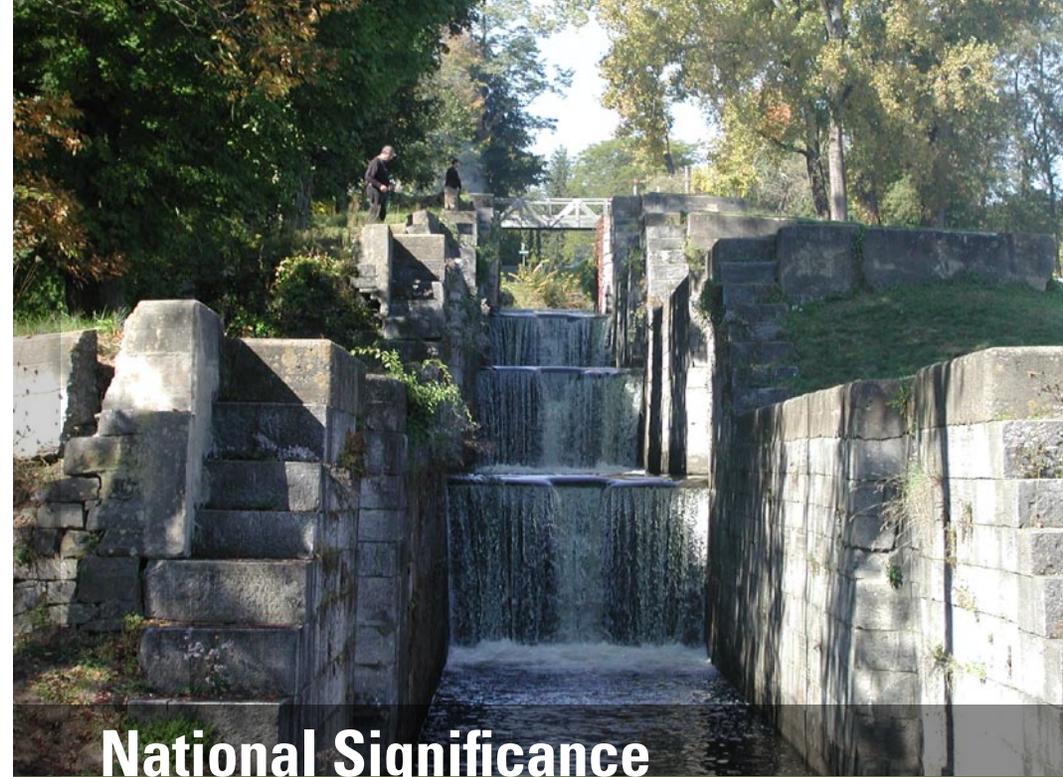
Guided by these plans, local, state, and federal agencies, as well as non-profit or private partners, have provided significant funding to a variety of public benefit projects and programs over the past decade in support of the canal system and related resources. Individuals and businesses, in turn, have responded to these efforts with new private investments. The Corridor’s Plan is designed to coordinate and enhance these efforts rather than replace or override them.

Buying a house, expanding a business, taking a job, choosing a retirement location, going on vacation ... all are investment decisions people make based in part on community character and perceived quality of life. Since natural, cultural, recreational, and historic resources all motivate these decisions, they are part of the basic infrastructure for economic growth. Protecting them and enhancing these resources, which are shared by the public, private, and civic sectors, requires a comprehensive regional approach.

The Preservation and Management 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. Rather than a physical master plan detailing infrastructural or building projects to be undertaken, the Corridor's Plan offers guidance to the Commission and its partners in formulating comprehensive regional policies and taking action to achieve the Corridor's full potential.

The Commission defines its potential partners as all organizations, agencies, and individuals working to preserve, interpret, and promote the heritage resources encompassed by the Corridor. Qualified partners will receive technical and financial assistance from the Commission to catalyze new initiatives, enhance organizational capacity, and leverage additional support. The Commission will also work closely with state and local agencies, private foundations, nonprofit organizations, universities and educational institutions to foster new programs and projects in direct support of the Plan's vision and goals, and to coordinate existing efforts for improved efficiency and impact. The New York State Canal Corporation will continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the New York State Canal System.

Preparation of the Plan has been informed by extensive public input. Community surveys provided a base level of information about the current status of historic preservation, interpretation, and economic revitalization activities. Nine public meetings were held between December 2003 and January 2004 in order to gather information and impressions from the public and explain to local communities the legislated purpose and mandate of the Corridor. Numerous meetings have been held with tribal representatives, political leaders, and private stewards of heritage resources.



National Significance

New York's Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals constitute the most successful and influential human-built waterway and one of the most important works of civil engineering and construction in North America. The Erie Canal facilitated and shaped the course of settlement in the Northeast, Midwest, and Great Plains, knit together the Atlantic Seaboard with the American interior, solidified New York City's place as the young nation's principal seaport and commercial center, and became a central element forging the national identity.

The original Erie Canal was a heroic feat of engineering and construction without precedent in North America, designed and built through sparsely settled territory by surveyors, engineers, contractors, and laborers who had to learn much of their craft on the job. Built through the only low-level gap between the Appalachian Mountain chain and the Adirondack Mountains, the Erie Canal provided one of the principal routes for migration and the transportation of agricultural products and manufactured goods between the American interior, the eastern seaboard, and Europe.

In addition to cargo, New York's canal system carried people and ideas—immigrants and New Englanders, drawn by the prospect of rich farmland in upstate New York and beyond, along with innovators who established businesses along the canal. The prosperity and ease of communication along the canal corridors created a climate that fostered a number of nationally significant social reform and religious movements. At the same time, however, completion of the canal system and its accompanying effects severely disrupted the pre-existing Native American culture and settlements.

Vision Statement

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."

Goals

The Corridor's historic and distinctive sense of place will be widely expressed and consistently protected

The Corridor's natural resources will reflect the highest standards of environmental quality

The Corridor's recreation opportunities will achieve maximum scope and diversity, in harmony with the protection of heritage resources

The Corridor's current and future generations of residents and visitors will value and support preservation of its heritage

The Corridor's economic growth and heritage development will be balanced and self-sustaining

The Corridor will be a "must-do" travel experience for regional, national and international visitors

Objectives

- Build public support for preservation
- Protect and enhance the canals and related resources
- Encourage investment in sustainable development
- Help Corridor communities plan for heritage development

- Increase public awareness and support for conservation
- Encourage quality stewardship policies and practices

- Increase access to and diversity of recreational opportunities
- Improve the quality of the Corridor experience
- Enhance connectivity between Corridor resources

- Develop a Corridor-wide thematic framework
- Integrate communities and sites into the larger Corridor story
- Improve educational and interpretive programs and media
- Extend awareness and interest beyond Corridor boundaries

- Harness tourism and development to reinforce sense of place
- Increase local capacity to undertake heritage development
- Establish a unifying Corridor identity of place and quality of life
- Integrate a heritage-based perspective into every message

- Attract visitors to maximize economic impact
- Help develop a memorable Corridor tourism product
- Provide coordination and assistance to marketing efforts
- Communicate to stakeholders the benefits of heritage tourism

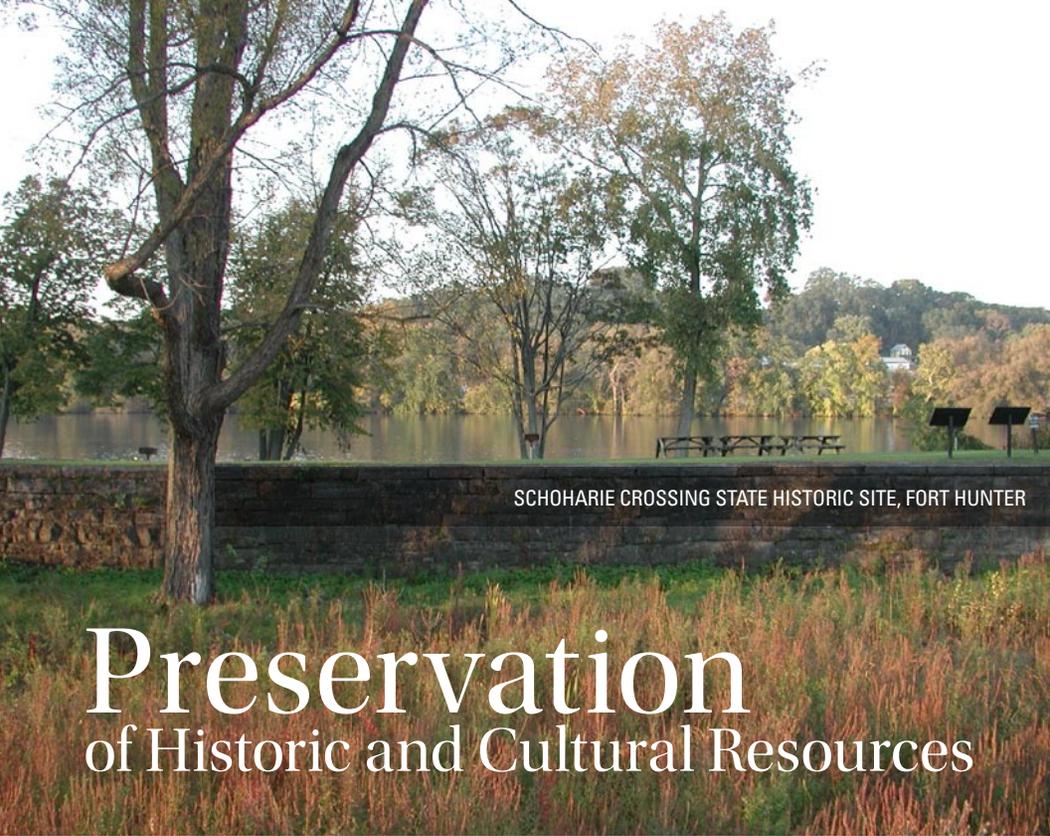
The Plan at a Glance

Mission Statement

The mission of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission is to plan for, encourage, and assist historic preservation, conservation, recreation, interpretation, tourism, and community development in ways that promote partnerships among the Corridor's many stakeholders, and reflects, celebrates, and enhances the Corridor's national significance for all to use and enjoy.

Implementation Strategies

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Reinforce the Canalway Corridor's Distinctive Sense of Place</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote sustainable preservation and conservation policies, practices, and projects ■ ■ ■ ■ Encourage wider availability and use of historic tax credits for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse ■ ■ ■ Assemble and distribute guidelines, tools, and best practices ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Advance historical research and National Register listings ■ ■ |
| <p>Build Awareness and Understanding of the Canalway Corridor</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement a strategic marketing and promotion program to increase visitation ■ ■ ■ Establish a graphic identity and incorporate into wayfinding signage and orientation tools ■ ■ ■ ■ Develop and install an interpretive kit of parts to make every site a gateway ■ ■ ■ ■ Support development of key informational and experiential products ■ ■ ■ ■ Enhance schools' use of Canalway Corridor stories to teach required educational elements ■ ■ ■ ■ Provide roving interpretive guides and programs ■ ■ ■ |
| <p>Expand the Circle of Friends Engaged in Heritage Development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create roundtables and broker promising initiatives that result ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Work with agencies/organizations to increase outreach and establish the Corridor as a priority ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Engage civic participation with a vigorous public outreach program ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Enlist community support for the Plan through a voluntary Canalway Community Partner Program ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <p>Increase Community Capacity to Achieve Stewardship Goals</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Initiate a certification program for preservation and interpretation ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Dispatch "circuit riders" to help Canalway Corridor communities ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Help grantseekers and pursue creative funding strategies ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Work with colleges and universities to provide research, analysis, and technical assistance ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |
| <p>Stimulate Economic Revitalization</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote investment strategies and opportunities in the Canalway Corridor ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Coordinate programs to transform communities into a network of destination towns ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Identify, support, and promote key Canalway Corridor projects ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Leverage enhanced recreation facilities to build economic opportunities ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ |



SCOHARIE CROSSING STATE HISTORIC SITE, FORT HUNTER

Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources



NINE MILE CREEK AQUEDUCT, CAMILLUS

The canals link a series of cultural landscapes — geographic areas, including cultural and natural resources, associated with specific events, activities, or people — that are unique to the region. All have evolved but retain elements specific to distinct historical periods — patterns of settlement, land use, and transportation, as well as natural features altered by human habitation:

- **Towpath-Era Canals** — including features of the original Erie, or Clinton’s Ditch, completed in 1825, and the enlarged system, completed in 1862 — require preservation of buried and overgrown sections of the canal prism, some of which may be candidates for rewatering, as well as vulnerable structures such as lock chambers and aqueducts and rare intact groupings of canal-related buildings.
- **20th Century Barge Canals** — including land cuts and riverways — require comprehensive planning and strong incentives to prevent further erosion of traditional settlement patterns. The Canal Corporation should be supported in its exemplary efforts to maintain, operate, and improve the Barge Canal for commercial and recreational use while preserving and interpreting its historic elements.
- **Settlements** — hamlets, villages, and cities — should be encouraged to leverage their concentrations of historic resources into economic assets. Strategies include showcasing former canal alignments that have been turned into streets or parks, and pursuing adaptive reuse of historic properties, mixed-use infill development, and revitalization of main streets and waterfronts.
- **Industrial Landscapes** — often the hinge between communities and the canals — should be surveyed for scenic and environmental impacts to natural resources and historic downtowns, and landowners offered incentives to undertake waterfront improvements and provide unused parcels for recreational use. Where industrial uses have ceased, sites should be remediated and made ready for adaptive reuse.
- **Rural Landscapes** should be better connected to the preservation of the canal system’s historic settings and open space conservation. New support for continued agricultural land use, rehabilitation of historic farm structures, and agritourism should preserve, increase awareness, and enhance the economic benefits of the Corridor’s agricultural heritage.



AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE, MOHAWK VALLEY REGION



GRAIN ELEVATOR, BUFFALO

Although the nature of commerce and culture in the Corridor has changed, the canals' continuity of use remains the foundation for the entire region's historical authenticity and interpretive value. Discrete elements that continue to support the region's unbroken living tradition of waterways include:

- **Historic Vessels** — canal maintenance vessels, commercial ships and tugboats, restorations or reproductions of historic canalboats and pleasure craft — should become centerpieces of efforts to interpret the Corridor's history, supported by antique boat shows and rallies, advance publicity for significant commercial lock-throughs, and documentation of the Canal Corporation's floating plant.
- **Archeological Sites** — often uncovered by new development — should be the focus of improved interpretation, continued efforts to improve the application of the State Environmental Quality Review Act, and a campaign to publicize their contributions to research, education, and heritage tourism.
- **Documents and Artifacts** — records and material remnants of historic events and day-to-day life — require outreach efforts by and to museums, historical societies, and archives to encourage collecting, preservation, exhibition, and information exchange. Public access to canal-related historical images and documents should be increased through the creation of a "virtual research collection" on the internet.
- **Arts and Folkways** — folklore, oral histories, crafts, and performing arts — should become a central part of efforts to preserve and understand Corridor history. New efforts should be made to designate cultural landmarks, collect oral histories of lives spent living and working on the waterways, and document the skills of canal workers.



CITY OF LOCKPORT

The Old City Hall block provides an opportunity to better connect Lockport's downtown to its waterfront through the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings and the construction of key building elements. The upper portion of the Old Electric Building can be reconstructed to enclose the existing viewing terrace for year round use as a community space, supported by a restaurant in the reused Old City Hall. A new residential building or hotel on Main Street can provide controlled access to the viewing terrace. To provide further continuity to the Main Street retail frontage, the existing helical parking garage can be sheathed with an interpretive reconstruction of an historic retail facade, housing shop windows from an earlier era. The city should also consider establishing a special downtown historic district, adopting design guidelines and preservation standards, and establishing an architectural review commission to review new buildings and additions.

ABOVE LEFT: SKETCH OF NEW COMMUNITY SPACE ATOP THE OLD ELECTRIC BUILDING, CONNECTED TO THE OLD CITY HALL (RIGHT) AND THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE ERIE CANAL

RIGHT: SKETCH OF BENTON'S LANDING BUILDINGS ADAPTIVELY REUSED AS RESIDENCES AND A RESTAURANT

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Historic Preservation



CITY OF LITTLE FALLS

Over time, Little Falls has grown up and away from the canal and is separated from its traditional center by a major highway and railroad. New or rehabilitated pedestrian bridges can create better connections between the city and its waterfront, create highly visible landmarks for the city, and encourage use of an expanded canalside trail system. Surviving remnants of the historic Inland Lock Navigation Company guard lock and aqueduct should be stabilized; the aqueduct's archways can be reconstructed or built into an interpretive structure along the new trail that illustrates the placement of the original stones. Canal Place, a center of recent additions to historic buildings, should be designated a special historic district. An enhanced enforcement mechanism can help new development meet design guidelines and preservation standards, and encourage land uses that generate pedestrian activity, such as residential, hotel, retail, and restaurants.

Conserving Natural Resources

Natural resources were integral to the historical and cultural development of the Corridor region. The form and composition of the land, abundant waterways, and variety of vegetation and wildlife made the region a center of pre-European culture and commerce for centuries prior to the canals, with a scenic character that remains distinct from other areas of the country. Today, these resources are the basis for many recreational activities and are one of the Corridor's essential quality of life ingredients:

- **Geology and Soils** determined the alignment of the canals, provide a striking setting for tourists and other visitors, and serve as the basis for sustaining the region's agricultural economy, but are vulnerable to pollution, erosion, and the effects of development, landfills, and sand and gravel mining.
- **Water in the Corridor** includes 40 percent of New York's freshwater resources, much of it carried by the canal system and the rivers, lakes, feeders, and reservoirs that supply it — all requiring careful management to balance the competing needs of drinking supplies, navigation, power generation, industry, agriculture, and habitat.



COHOES FALLS



AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE
IN FINGER LAKES REGION



PILOT KNOB, LITTLE FALLS



TOWPATH-ERA CANAL, GLENS FALLS



WHIPPLE BRIDGE IN VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND
HISTORIC PRESERVE, CLIFTON PARK

■ **Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat** worth protecting abounds in the Corridor, even though much of it has lost its original ecological character. Forest and natural preserves, freshwater wetlands, wildlife management areas, and other lands need their native species protected and safeguarded from pollution, encroaching development, and invasive species.

Although the Corridor's natural resources benefit from extensive investments in conservation, they remain particularly sensitive to the adverse effects of uncontrolled development. Existing state, regional, and local efforts to conserve open space, encourage sustainable development practices, preserve agricultural economies, and pursue intermunicipal and interagency planning for waterfronts and watersheds already provide incentives and regulations to protect and enhance the Corridor environment and develop a community ethic of stewardship for natural resources. The Corridor's natural resources will also benefit from renewed efforts in support of the following strategies:

- **Ecological restoration**, the science of reintroducing or fortifying native plant and animal communities, can be bolstered by public outreach and the involvement of universities, colleges, and high school science programs.
- **Natural resource buffer areas**, located between developed areas and natural areas or water bodies and designed to complement historic cultural landscapes, can mitigate flooding and non-point source pollution.
- **Protection of viewsheds**, which provide crucial windows into the evolving relationships between geology, hydrography, and patterns of human settlement, can be enhanced through landscaping, new roadside pulloffs, and careful siting of new landfills, industrial sites, and development.
- **Invasive species management**, particularly coordinated water management and increased public outreach efforts to encourage routine boat maintenance and rinsing, can help restore natural systems.
- **Canal maintenance** should include continued efforts to reduce impacts on critical habitat, aided by regional watershed management and sustainable development planning to help reduce the rapid runoff and erosion that causes siltation.



CANAL CORP TUGBOAT

New York State Canal System

New York's canal system has been in continuous operation since 1825, longer than any other constructed transportation system on the North American continent. Today, navigable portions of the system include the:

Erie Canal, which connects the Hudson River with Lake Erie, 338 miles to the west;

Champlain Canal, which connects the tidal portion of the Hudson River with Lake Champlain, 63 miles to the north;

Oswego Canal, which follows the Oswego River from the Erie Canal 23 miles north to Lake Ontario;

Cayuga-Seneca Canal, which connects the Erie Canal to 92 miles of canalized rivers and lakes, including the Seneca River and Cayuga and Seneca Lakes.

The system is owned and operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York State Thruway Authority.

In their current form, these canals follow alignments and utilize structures that were placed in service between 1915 and 1918, but all four have predecessors that opened to horse- or mule-powered navigation in the 1820s. Those towpath-era canals, in turn, can trace direct ancestry to short canals and navigation improvements to the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers built during the 1790s, and to the network of natural waterways that had been used for centuries for travel and commerce by members of the Iroquois Confederacy and other native peoples.

Promoting Recreation



The Corridor offers abundant recreational activities in settings ranging from urban areas to the deep woods. Outdoor recreational opportunities and environmental quality are directly related: anglers, swimmers, and boaters benefit from pristine waters; trail users like bicyclists and hikers seek out unspoiled scenic vistas. The abundance of cultural and historic resources also enhance the recreation experience. Outdoor recreation can be integrated into heritage tourism marketing efforts and related to other leisure time pursuits, including shopping, festivals, museums, and performing arts experiences.

Factors affecting the value of a recreational resource to visitors and residents include the quality of the resource, its continuity and consistency, whether it is part of a critical mass of things to see and do, and whether accessibility to the resource is appropriate to the experience. The Corridor's major recreational resources accommodate the following activities:

- **Heritage Tourism Activities** — experiencing cultural landscapes, historic sites, natural resources, and cultural institutions;
- **Water Activities** — engaging in boating (including paddle sports), water skiing (on some lakes and rivers), swimming, and fishing;
- **Trail Activities** — enjoying hiking, bicycling, walking, in-line skating, horseback riding, and picnicking;
- **Back-Country Activities** — going camping, bird watching, hunting, and trapping; and
- **Winter Activities** — undertaking cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, ice fishing, and snowmobiling.



FISHING AT OSWEGO



CYCLING ALONG THE CANALWAY TRAIL



KAYAKING ON CHAMPLAIN CANAL

New York State

The National Heritage Corridor provides an opportunity to expand the concept of the New York State Canal Recreationway Plan (see sidebar). In particular, the Corridor’s outreach and educational efforts, technical assistance, and targeted investments seek to advance the Recreationway Plan’s recommendations for increasing recreational and tour boating opportunities, developing side trails off the end-to-end Canalway Trail, and encouraging open space conservation and the creation of a continuous greenway along the canal system. The Corridor will also support new recreational development designed to:

- **Accommodate diverse uses**, maximizing the utility of investments by serving multiple users, such as a marina that offers restrooms and bicycle rentals near a trailhead;
- **Capitalize on existing infrastructure**, facilitating linkages between existing recreational destinations and focusing on the canals and related resources;
- **Enhance accessibility** to recreational facilities for people with disabilities;
- **Improve access to scenic areas**, creating routes or views to natural features (e.g., waterfalls, cliffs) and historic structures (aqueducts, locks) that showcase the region’s heritage;
- **Protect natural resources**, factoring the vulnerability of habitat and ecosystem function into planning for new or enhanced facilities;
- **Uphold cultural significance**, avoiding or mitigating impacts to archaeological sites and character-defining features of the landscape; and
- **Manage visitor use**, providing adequate support infrastructure and services, and safety and orientation devices, to address the concerns of private property owners and others affected by new facilities.

PITTSFORD WATERFRONT



Canal Recreationway Plan

In the 20th century, use of the New York State Canal System dwindled in the face of competition from railroads, highways, and the St. Lawrence Seaway. Some sections of the towpath-era canals were abandoned or covered for use as parks or roads, and commercial traffic on the Barge Canal declined. In 1995, the New York State Canal Recreationway Commission developed a plan to launch “the next chapter in the canal system’s story” — a new vision of the canals as a recreational resource.

Many of the planned improvements outlined in the Recreationway Plan have been completed by the Canal Corporation and its partners. At the same time, the Canal Corporation is working on a number of fronts to support commercial use of the canals, with positive results. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor supports full implementation of the Recreationway Plan and the regional plans on which it was based.

Interpretation & Orientation



The Corridor’s resources provide numerous entry points for people seeking to learn about the canals’ past influences, current impacts, and future potential. The region contains many groups devoted to preserving and presenting local stories to residents and visitors. A multi-part strategy is needed in order to help these groups communicate their messages in ways that allow people to understand the broader national context of the resources they experience:

- **an interpretive framework** to provide a contextual “umbrella” connecting local stories and themes to a larger sense of shared history;
- **guidelines** for enhanced or new interpretive and educational media and facilities to engage and inform diverse audiences; and
- **parameters for a graphic identity** and wayfinding system to facilitate the arrival, orientation, and movement of people in the Corridor, and maximize their access to resources in their historic and natural settings.

The core theme of the Corridor’s interpretive framework is American Identity. The emergence of an American national identity corresponds to the building and early operations of the Erie Canal. The traits that emerged during the canal system’s construction are now considered to be fundamental elements of the American character: charismatic leadership, bold risk-taking, expansionism, technological prowess, economic and industrial power, and social diversity. Within this core theme, several sub-themes emerge:

- **Progress and Power** — the canals as an expression of political will and economic power, and the dislocation of Native American societies;
- **Connections and Communication** — the economic implications of the nation’s first effective inland interstate commerce network, and its contributions to New York City and the “Empire State;”
- **Invention and Innovation** — how the determination to do whatever was necessary to “float over the mountains” translated into both technological and organizational innovations; and
- **Unity and Diversity** — the canal system as an agent of social and cultural change that attracted immigrant laborers, connected previously isolated communities, and provided a destination for visitors.



CHITTENANGO LANDING CANAL BOAT MUSEUM



WOMEN'S RIGHTS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, SENECA FALLS

Using consistent communication devices throughout the Corridor will reinforce its sense of place and help people grasp interpretive themes while meeting the needs of different audiences. Interpretive materials should be designed to increase the accessibility of resources by humanizing their experience with specifics about real people and real communities. Travel and orientation materials should be designed to do double duty, orienting people to interpretive themes as well as to routes, attractions, services, and accommodations, and setting a new standard for accuracy, consistency, and usefulness.

Interpretive development in the Corridor should focus on enhancing and connecting existing media and facilities, and filling critical gaps, to enable a dynamic and satisfying user experience across the entire breadth of the region. Wherever possible, the Corridor's interpretive framework should be integrated into travel and orientation materials, interpretive signs, audiovisual programs, documentary and orientation films, special events and cultural planning, curriculum materials, traveling exhibits, and interpretive centers.

A Corridor-wide graphic identity is needed to provide a welcoming and recognizable visual cue that signifies a reliable standard of quality and national significance. In order to physically and conceptually tie together the region's resources, the graphic identity should be integrated into interpretive media and facilities as well as a comprehensive system of directional signs to orient people as they move from gateway locations or regional highways to local roadways to individual resources and communities.

The town of Schuylerville along the Champlain Canal faces the challenge of interpreting multiple, overlapping stories and histories and reconciling the themes of several designated historic regions, including Lakes to Locks Passage, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the Mohawk Valley (State) Heritage Corridor, and possibly, in the future, the boundary expansion of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. In contrast, the communities along the Old Erie Canal from Camillus to Rome, which have already initiated a cooperative effort through the informally organized Partners Along the Canal Towpath (PACT), share similar stories but interpret them in multiple ways, putting visitors at risk for a repetitive or confusing experience.

Both demonstration projects found that destinations within these communities can be strengthened through a culture where information is shared and tourists are encouraged to visit related sites. In order to achieve an enhanced visitor experience, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and its partners will need to collaborate on a sustained program of coordinated improvements:

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Interpretation

- develop and disseminate cohesive visit planning materials, and install a coordinated system of wayfinding and interpretive signage, all encouraging cross-visitation to sites within the region and incorporating the ECNHC designation and graphic identity;
- provide professional technical assistance to individual sites and communities in order to enhance their ability to coordinate their separate offerings, and to improve the overall quality of interpretation throughout the region; and
- develop a long term strategic interpretive plan for the region, which outlines a framework for development over a 5- to 10-year period, identifying specific goals and objectives, action items, and annual implementation benchmarks.



ERIE CANAL MUSEUM, SYRACUSE



GENERAL SCHUYLER HOUSE, PART OF THE SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



TONAWANDA

Preservation, conservation, recreation, and interpretation activities and resources alone do not generate tourism. A viable tourism economy results from marketing the attractions to appreciative audiences whose expectations match the offerings, including services available from the local hospitality industry: places to eat, sleep, and shop. Significant tourism marketing efforts, by numerous state and local organizations, are in place and delivering visitors. However, there is general agreement that the Corridor would benefit from raising its profile as a tourist destination and making more strategic use of its canal and heritage resources. Issues to address include:

Tourism Development and Marketing



SIGHTSEEING CRUISE AT BALDWINVILLE



SIM'S STORE, CAMILLUS LANDING

■ **Coordination** — Encouraging repeat visitation to the Corridor will require visitors to experience its heritage resources as a “string of pearls” arrayed along the length of the canal system, cutting across multiple jurisdictions and encompassing diverse visitor interests. Marketing the whole Corridor as a destination would avoid duplication of effort, create consistency of image, brand and message, and convey a more compelling destination.

■ **Product Development** — Developing the Corridor’s tourism product requires both new physical and conceptual linkages between related destinations to create critical mass, and new efforts to help the stewards of heritage resources collaborate to achieve higher standards of quality, diversity, consistency, cohesiveness, continuity, and comprehension.

■ **Visitor Infrastructure and Services** — The capacity and quality of the Corridor’s tourism infrastructure (shopping, dining, lodging, services, and information) has been limited by seasonality and limited capital investment. New infrastructure and improved standards of visitor readiness — ensuring predictability and reliability in wayfinding signage, information, restroom availability, etc. — are required throughout the Corridor.

■ **Research and Evaluation** — Reliable measurements of tourism trends, visitor satisfaction, and economic impact are the only way to target high-value customers and assess the effectiveness of tourism development and marketing efforts. Effective efforts to collect, analyze, and manage the use of Corridor tourism data require a regional approach.

The Corridor’s approach to tourism development seeks to balance resource protection with visitation and its economic contributions to local quality of life, recognizing that the best projects create amenities for both visitors and residents to enjoy. The Corridor’s approach to marketing seeks to coordinate local marketing efforts, recognizing that an established regional brand can position the Corridor as a destination for target markets (see sidebar).



WATERFORD TUGBOAT ROUNDUP

Market Segments with Potential Affinity for the Canalway Experience



OSWEGO HARBORFEST

Traveler destination decisions reflect the activities and experiences available as well as practical considerations like access and cost. Potential travel markets for the Corridor include:

Historic and cultural travelers, including canal “buffs” and others with a special interest in stories such as transportation, engineering, women’s rights, underground railroad history, religious and international community groups

“Soft adventure” travelers who engage in boating, camping, biking, hiking, and other outdoor activities, including fitness enthusiasts, nature- and eco-tourists, winter recreation enthusiasts, and outdoors enthusiasts who enjoy hunting, fishing, trapping, etc.

Antique shoppers, Shutterbugs, and Art lovers

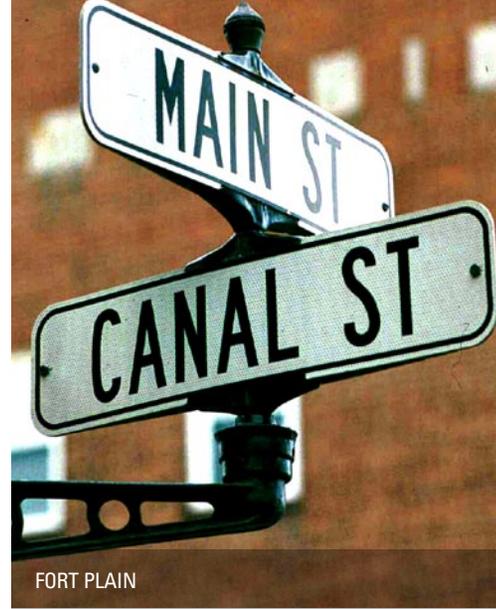


CONCRETE ELEVATORS, OSWEGO

Economic Revitalization

Upstate New York has been undergoing extensive economic restructuring for nearly two decades. The transition from reliance on traditional manufacturing to a diversified economic base featuring strong service, tourism, and high tech sectors has been challenging for many communities and families. Positioning the Corridor’s economy for future expansion means:

- recognizing that education and health care will be central to the region’s future economy, and nurturing those sectors;
- helping traditional industries and enterprises engaged in business and professional services to supplement the remaining manufacturing base;
- investing in social and economic infrastructure, including childcare, affordable housing, internet access, local school systems; and, most pertinent for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission,
- engaging in placemaking activities and investments to increase quality of life.



FORT PLAIN



GLENS FALLS

For many people—recent graduates, families, retirees, and, in particular, creative people who launch or work for fast-growing companies driven by innovation, productivity, and talent—the selling points describing why a location makes sense as a place to run a business parallel its advantages as a place to live and a destination to visit. Pleasant neighborhoods, a vibrant downtown, accessible recreational opportunities, beautiful natural settings, architectural character, diverse cultural offerings—all of these “quality of life” amenities support growth by attracting place-based investments by new residents, businesses, and tourists.

Heritage development is an economic revitalization strategy that strengthens an area’s ability to compete for place-based investments through actions—preservation, conservation, recreational and interpretive development, and above all regional partnership and community capacity-building—that demonstrate respect for the people, the place, and the past. When communities blend a mix of heritage development and traditional economic development strategies—targeted tax incentives, infrastructure improvements, assembled and prepared commercial or industrial sites, and other techniques—they maximize their competitive advantages.

Case Studies

Successful heritage development efforts meet multiple objectives, make the most of existing resources, and have a regional outlook. Comprehensive projects combining preservation, conservation, interpretation, or recreation objectives can cobble together funds from multiple sources and enjoy broad community support. Waterfronts, town centers, parks, and other locations that combine historic, natural, and recreational resources can provide the best opportunities to leverage both new development and adaptive reuse. By working together, individual communities can attain the scale and assemble the resources needed to be competitive nationally and internationally.

Upstate New York currently benefits from a multidimensional effort by state and regional agencies and economic development organizations providing business development services, investing in infrastructure, and coordinating large-scale projects. The Corridor seeks to extend these efforts to encompass a comprehensive regional approach to heritage development, including:

- **regional coordination** to reduce duplication of effort and create critical mass;
- **identity-building and marketing** to expand the place-based investment pool;
- **community consensus-building** to help move the political process forward;
- **predevelopment planning and approvals** to remove barriers to appropriate development and reduce the perception of risk;
- **assembling public-private partnerships** to provide crucial start-up or gap financing and create momentum;
- **leveraging existing programs** and creating new funding sources to achieve economic sustainability; and
- **increasing understanding** among local and state officials, business and civic leaders, lenders and others of the potential for a systemic approach to heritage development.



ROCHESTER'S CORN HILL LANDING

ROCHESTER

When railroad companies proposed to dispose of excess waterfront land in the 1980s, Rochester's South River Corridor Plan, produced by a citizens advisory group, established a redevelopment strategy to improve access and visibility to the Genesee River. Over the next 10 years the city and its partners, including the University of Rochester and Bausch and Lomb, acquired waterfront land, constructed trails and greenways, removed a riverfront road and blighted warehouses, and linked the riverbanks with a pedestrian crossing. Together with the construction of a harbor center by the NYS Canal Corporation, these improvements have prompted a number of private and public/private investments along the previously neglected waterfront, including major new mixed-income housing, commercial, and retail developments, a marina, and a waterfront sports center that promotes rowing, kayaking, and canoeing and provides a staging area for an annual regatta that attracts approximately 40 universities and over 30,000 spectators.



PITTSFORD WATERFRONT

PITTSFORD

Pittsford's citizen-led Historic Preservation Group and elected officials have consistently emphasized historic preservation as a basis for attracting private investment by establishing historic districts, facilitating historic preservation technical assistance to residential and commercial building owners, and setting standards for the architectural compatibility of new developments. Since the 1970s, village investments have focused on enhancing public spaces — converting former industrial sites, reusing historic commercial structures, and building new waterfront amenities to attract boater traffic, encourage recreation, and maintain an accessible and pedestrian-friendly "small town" experience that is conducive to specialty retail uses and strong residential demographics.

Pulling It Together

Strategies for Implementation

The Corridor is too large, diverse, and complex to accommodate a single approach to the preservation, enhancement, and interpretation of its historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources. Many of these strategies call for a cross-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional approach built on partnerships.

1 Reinforce the Canalway Corridor's Distinctive Sense of Place

The Corridor's historic and cultural resources deserve protection on their own merits, but also as contributors to a distinct sense of place that appeals to tourists, residents, and others making place-based investment decisions. These strategies are designed to safeguard the ability of these resources to convey meaning and enhance their contributions to local character:

Promote preservation and conservation policies, practices, and projects that direct new development toward existing population centers

Formerly distinctive transitions between town and countryside are becoming blurred by new development that also stresses the environment and decreases the efficiency of municipal services. Policies that incentivize infill development, brownfield remediation, and adaptive reuse will help communities protect and build on the value of their heritage resources.

Encourage wider use of historic tax credits in the Canalway Corridor to accelerate adaptive reuse of heritage resources and justify additional tax credit allocations

The availability of federal historic tax credits and grants has encouraged preservation-minded development in the town centers of several Corridor communities. The Commission will work with the state and others seeking to create a New York State tax credit for historic commercial and residential properties.

Assemble and distribute guidelines, tools, and best practices for preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties, conservation, interpretation, and heritage development

An integrated, regional approach to protecting and enhancing the Corridor's heritage resources will be encouraged by pointing the way toward top priorities, effective techniques, and sources of support for local efforts.

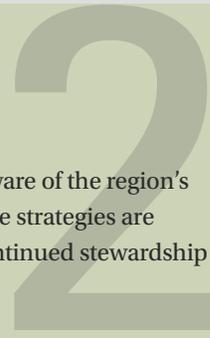
Advance historical research of Canalway Corridor resources and National Register listings for key sites

A new Multiple Resource nomination for the New York State Canal System and its previous alignments will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Additional research, including historic vessels and cultural landscape assessments, is needed to support the protection and increase the visibility of other critical historic resources.



Build Awareness & Understanding

Too few people today, including some Corridor residents, are fully aware of the region's rich history and extraordinary impact on the American identity. These strategies are designed to increase appreciation and develop a constituency for continued stewardship of the Corridor's historic, natural, and recreational resources:



Implement a strategic marketing and promotion program to increase Canalway Corridor visitation

While existing organizations will remain primarily responsible for intra-regional marketing, the Corridor will help to manage a multi-jurisdictional marketing effort with more extensive cross-promotion, improved collection and use of tourism research, and broader reach

Establish a graphic identity for the Canalway Corridor and incorporate its elements into way-finding signage and other system-wide communication, orientation, and interpretation tools

A welcoming and recognizable visual signal, sensitively integrated into new signage and informational media throughout the region, will announce the Corridor presence and connote quality and a unified sense of place.

Develop a kit of parts—displays, exhibits, multimedia programs, and other interpretation tools—and install throughout the Corridor to make every site a gateway to the Canalway's principal stories and themes

A visually and thematically consistent system of high-quality interpretive components, complementing existing media and facilities, will ensure that the total story of the canals is fully and accurately told throughout the Corridor and establish a standard of quality and sense of continuity.

Support development of key informational and experiential products to make Canalway Corridor stories more accessible to residents and visitors, including a world-class documentary, traveling exhibits, an Erie Canalway Hall of Fame, an interpretive exhibit in Lower Manhattan, and collaborative efforts with the Smithsonian Institution

Targeted to fill existing gaps, a limited number of major new interpretive media, facilities, and programs will expand the Corridor's national and international recognition and provide much-needed exposure to key visitor markets.

Furnish resources to enhance public schools' use of Canalway Corridor stories to teach required elements

Engaging study plans for use in local schools, making use of historic records and artifacts, visits to key sites, cultural activities, and traveling exhibits or interpretive programs, will broaden the audience for Corridor history.

Provide roving interpretive guides and programs to bring Canalway Corridor stories to communities, schools, and historic sites

Deployed throughout the Corridor, seasonal guides can extend the reach and impact of existing interpretation and education, coordinate new cultural programming, and provide a signature presence for the Corridor vision.



WHITEHALL'S CANALSIDE MAIN STREET

WHITEHALL

The 1995 Recreationway Plan designated Whitehall as a Canal Harbor Community. In 2000, the NYS Canal Corporation funded park improvements including an amphitheater and gazebo overlooking the Champlain Canal, a community building with public facilities for boaters, floating docks, and a bulkhead with tie-downs that attract boaters to stop overnight and frequent the local bank, laundromat, and stores. At the north end of the park, the Whitehall State Heritage Area visitor center and the Skenesborough Museum, housed in an historic wooden canal terminal building, interpret local history.

Young and old, visitors and residents alike use the park. Renewed public interest in the waterfront and a Small Cities grant from the NYS Governor's Office helped to convince the private owners of four canalside commercial buildings, part of a 19th century Main Street district that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, to rehabilitate their properties and restore their original uses as ground floor retail spaces with residences above. By consistently demonstrating that they value their heritage, the people of Whitehall are making their waterfront work for them once again.

3

Expand the Circle of Friends Engaged in Heritage Development

Partnerships can't be forced; they only work when they arise from a shared sense of purpose. One way the Commission hopes to contribute to the Corridor is to create a climate of creativity and cooperation: a major asset. These strategies are designed to create an environment in which collaboration based on mutual respect and interests can flourish:

Create roundtables to foster creative alliances among existing Canalway Corridor agencies/ organizations and broker promising initiatives that result

With broad community and expert participation, a series of summits on critical resource management and heritage development topics will facilitate information exchange, consensus-building, and increased awareness.

Work with key agencies/ organizations to increase their outreach in the Canalway Corridor and establish the Corridor as a priority for existing programs

There are many opportunities for existing agencies and organizations to adopt, within their existing work plans and funding streams, specific projects and programs that will help to achieve the Corridor's vision and goals.

Engage civic participation with a vigorous outreach program and recurring community forums

Public meetings and workshops will increase awareness about, and support for, the Corridor's vision and goals while soliciting diverse perspectives to inform future implementation.

Enlist community support for the Preservation and Management Plan with a voluntary Canalway Community Partner Program, offering supplementary assistance to collaborating communities

Communities that agree to pursue Corridor implementation strategies will receive priority in applying for Corridor technical or financial assistance and will be included in Corridor promotional activities and wayfinding signage.

4

Increase Community Capacity to Achieve Stewardship Goals

The many people working to preserve and enhance Corridor resources and local economies are eager to learn new skills, get help from new sources, and identify successful pathways. These strategies are designed to enhance their ability to escort complex heritage development projects through acquisition, planning, financing, permitting, construction, programming, and making physical and conceptual connections to the larger Corridor environment:

Initiate a certification program, accompanied by appropriate technical assistance, to help interested property owners and site managers advance resource preservation and interpretation

Enhanced technical assistance, official recognition, and promotional activities will encourage resource stewards to apply quality standards to enhance the visitor experience and protect the Corridor's national significance.

Dispatch "circuit riders" to help Canalway Corridor communities identify opportunities and pursue strategies for preservation, interpretation, and heritage development

Experts will provide onsite consultation, referrals, workshops, and other "how-to" help with the preparation of local and regional visions, plans, projects, and applications for grants and other financial assistance, while seeking out additional projects worthy of Corridor support.

Help grant seekers pursue creative funding strategies for Canalway Corridor programs

A "funding clearinghouse" role will encourage organizations pursuing Corridor implementation strategies to work together, find the best-fit funding source, and submit stronger, more compelling funding applications with a regional or interdisciplinary outlook that is part of a Corridor-wide effort.

Work with Canalway Corridor colleges and universities to provide research, analysis, and technical expertise supporting heritage development

In addition to faculty and students with proven capabilities on topics related to resource management and heritage development, the Corridor's higher-education institutions have staffing, public outreach programs, and meeting facilities well-suited to help support key implementation activities.

Stimulate Economic Revitalization

In the 19th century heyday of the canals, public and private investments that were intended to advance individual competitiveness ultimately reinforced each other and advanced the entire region. These strategies are designed to help Corridor communities generate economic growth once again through the preservation, enhancement, and interpretation of their heritage resources:

Promote investment strategies and opportunities in the Canalway Corridor by sponsoring heritage development conferences and other outreach efforts

Convening heritage development experts, investors, and Corridor community leaders will help communities to overcome challenges such as capitalizing viable business opportunities, attracting people with the requisite expertise, and identifying and preparing sites for redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

Coordinate existing planning and economic development programs to transform Canalway Corridor communities into a network of destination towns

Reorienting existing public sources of funding and technical assistance to help Corridor communities capitalize on their historic neighborhoods, downtowns, and waterfronts will help attract new private-sector place-based investments.

Identify, support, and promote key Canalway Corridor projects to raise visibility and show positive local impacts of heritage development

Targeted investments in projects in critical locations, consistent with the Corridor vision and goals, will increase public interest and encourage similar improvements nearby.

Leverage Canal Revitalization Program investments to build on the economic opportunities associated with enhanced Corridor recreation facilities, including a signature athletic event

Enhanced special events, marketing, and new trails and signage connecting recreational facilities to each other and to downtowns or waterfronts will integrate the Corridor's extensive recreational resources into the bigger picture of heritage tourism and leisure activity.



OSWEGO WEST PIERHEAD LIGHTHOUSE

OSWEGO

Designated a Canal Harbor Community in the 1995 Recreationway Plan, the City of Oswego designed and constructed a park along both sides of the Oswego Canal with assistance from the Environmental Protection Fund and the NYS Canal Corporation. The park's 1.5-mile promenade, transient boat docks and services, interpretive pavilions, and performing arts amphitheater provide the central focus of the city's downtown commercial district and the basis for tourism marketing activities.

Oswego is now updating its Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, initially completed in 1986, to identify the next generation of projects needed to continue its revitalization effort. The city is also exploring ways to improve public access to fishing sites along the canal, and is taking a proactive role in preserving and redeveloping its historic retail business district through the use of historic tax credits to purchase and renovate a block of seven commercial buildings. The city estimates that recent state and local public investments totaling over \$1 million have leveraged nearly \$16 million in additional private investment in properties adjoining the waterfront.

Case Studies



CANAL DAYS CELEBRATION IN FAIRPORT

FAIRPORT

Since the mid 1970s, the Village of Fairport has been leveraging its history and public investments to plan and implement projects that have attracted additional private sector investment. In addition to traditional land development activities and innovative public management, including ownership of a municipal public utility that provides low-cost electricity to community businesses, the village has undertaken an active heritage development program including low interest loans and a retail merchandising plan to support main street façade improvements, enhanced green space along the canal, and support for arts programming and cultural events. Aggressive promotional activities have successfully positioned Fairport as the region's "Canal Town."

Current Partners

In addition to the National Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior, the following agencies and organizations have been consulted by the Canalway Corridor Commission in its preparation of the Preservation and Management Plan:

| | |
|--|--|
| | NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal and Housing Trust Fund Corporation |
| | Empire State Development Corporation, including the Division of Marketing, Advertising and Tourism |
| | NYS Department of Education, including the NYS Museum, Library, and Archives |
| | Governor's Office of Small Cities |
| | Regional Planning Boards / Councils and County planning agencies |
| NYS Canal Corporation and Thruway Authority | |
| NYS Canal Recreationway Commission | Tourism Promotion Agencies and Regional Tourism Organizations |
| NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, including the State Historic Preservation Office and the Heritage Areas program | Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area / Hudson River Valley Greenway |
| | Lakes to Locks Passage |
| NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets | Mohawk Valley (State) Heritage Corridor |
| NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation | Western Erie Canal (State) Heritage Corridor |
| NYS Dept. of State, including the Division of Coastal Resources and the Quality Communities Initiative | Canal Society of New York State |
| | Parks & Trails New York |
| | Preservation League of New York State |
| NYS Dept. of Transportation, including the Scenic Byways Program | Canal New York, Inc. |

Getting Going

Organizing for Implementation

Promoting partnerships and addressing stakeholder needs is the foundation of the Commission's approach to its mission. In relation to existing organizations and projects that already enjoy local support, the Preservation and Management Plan defines the Commission's role as one in which it will:

- **provide tools** to others to leverage their efforts in support of the Plan's goals;
- **catalyze collaboration** among those whose decisions affect heritage resources and among organizations engaged in allied efforts;
- **educate, communicate, and advocate** for the Plan's use as a guiding document for decision-makers, entrepreneurs and residents;
- **provide funding** and in-kind services to help implement projects that support Plan goals;
- **raise the Corridor's profile**, bringing greater local and worldwide recognition of its unique history and resources; and
- **build a foundation for the future** to ensure the Corridor's stability and program sustainability.

The Commission's primary focus is to steward implementation of the Preservation and Management Plan — to maintain, disseminate, and help others make use of the Plan's analysis and recommendations. For those projects that already have public or private support, are consistent with the Plan's goals, and for which there is an organized team ready to take action, the Commission can provide critical additional support through funding or other means, to ensure the project's success. In other instances, where there is a lack of leadership, vision or resources to carry out a critical element of the Plan, the Commission may take the lead in making that project happen.

The Commission will need to "start small" in the first year or two, with limited demonstration projects, to test strategies and attain demonstrable results. As the Commission and Corridor gain recognition, funding sources become more available, and partners join in to help, momentum will build behind the Plan's implementation, and it will be possible to undertake larger, comprehensive, and more sustained projects requiring a greater commitment of funds and political capital. Within a short period of time, the Commission expects to have:

- managed and delivered on initial expectations with proven results — several projects will be underway or completed;
- gathered a solid group of “friends” and partners, with active relationships with key leaders and stakeholders in place and a growing constituency to lend support in the future;
- provided funds to others strategically chosen for projects and programs in support of the Plan’s goals and strategies;
- secured alternative sources of funding beyond the matching funds for federal appropriations; and
- achieved widespread recognition for the accomplishments of the National Heritage Corridor and its partners.

The goals and strategies described in the Preservation and Management Plan constitute a long-term proposition, to be implemented over a ten- to fifteen-year period. The ability to achieve all that is set forth in the Plan will depend on the success of continued and enhanced partnerships and collaboration, policy decisions at the state and federal levels, and the availability of financial and other resources. Fortunately, many partnerships are already in place and poised for immediate action, and the Commission has been working closely with state and federal agencies throughout the preparation of the Plan. Long-term financial and organizational sustainability will require funding beyond the Corridor’s federal appropriations.

The Commission has the legislated authority to “seek, accept and dispose of gifts, bequests, grants, or donations of money, personal property, or services, received from any source.” Like many heritage areas, the Commission will also seek to form a parallel not-for-profit organization to help it achieve its mission. This foundation would use fundraising and a range of capital financing tools to fund or provide matching grants for specific, big ticket projects, or for programs in Corridor marketing, tourism development, and other areas of activity that are not primarily supported by the Commission’s other partners. Beyond fundraising, the foundation’s staff could also contribute project management skills and administer contracts for Commission sponsored projects.

The Commission is pledged to assess its effectiveness on an ongoing basis and track progress toward meeting Plan goals, implementing Plan strategies, and stimulating private sector investment. The Commission’s Annual Report evaluating progress and spotlighting projects and partnerships will be available to the Secretary of the Interior, Congress, elected officials, partners and the public. As the 2010 expiration date for the Commission approaches, the Commission will assess its operations and work to date to identify options for sustaining implementation of the plan’s vision and goals beyond 2010.

Commission Activities

An initial five-year implementation plan is outlined in the Preservation and Management Plan. In addition to the development of specific, targeted projects, the Commission’s tools and incentives for implementation include:

| | |
|--|---|
| Cooperative agreements | Community partner program |
| Support for partner organizations’ projects and programs | Tourism development and marketing |
| Guidelines, models, and best practices | Awards and recognition program |
| Advice and comment on policies and issues | Management and use of the Corridor graphic identity |
| Circuit riders (traveling experts in preservation, interpretation, and heritage development) and technical assistance | Assistance to grantseekers |
| Certification program | Roundtables and conferences |
| | Continued public involvement through advisory groups, public meetings, publications and the Corridor website |

Commission Funding

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission may receive up to \$1,000,000 per year from Congress for a period of up to ten years. All federal dollars must be matched on a one-to-one basis. Matching dollars may include contributions from individual or corporate supporters, grants from foundations or local/state government sources, and most in-kind contributions. According to the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, NHAs on average leverage about eight non-federal dollars for every federal dollar.



Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission

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For More Information

For a calendar of events, maps and travel guides, and information on how to get involved, or to view the full Preservation and Management Plan, visit the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor online:

www.eriecanalway.org

You can also contact the Corridor at:

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COVER ART:
New York and the Erie Canal
WILLIAM WALL (1862)
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARKELL MUSEUM

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