

9

Implementation



OVERVIEW

Achieving the vision and goals set forth in this Preservation and Management Plan will require a creative implementation strategy based on strong partnerships, a clear understanding of opportunities and objectives, and an entrepreneurial approach to funding. This chapter describes the roles and responsibilities of the key partners in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and sets forth a framework – an overall management direction and organizational structure – for implementation of this Plan. It describes priorities and funding options for implementation of specific actions based upon an understanding of the Corridor Commission’s resources and legislative charge.

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 the quality of life in corridor communities, and guiding the reemergence of the Erie Canalway as a 21st century “River of Commerce and Culture.” To this end, the stated 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 throughout the Corridor in a manner that promotes partnerships among the Corridor’s many stakeholders, and reflects, celebrates and enhances the Corridor’s national significance for all to use and enjoy.”

This chapter treats in general terms many of the organizational details that will be developed as part of the Commission’s operating program. The intent is to provide general direction for the key parties, and to allow flexibility for change and adaptation as the organization grows and matures.

Photo:
The historic motorship *Day Peckinpaugh*
enters a lock on the Erie Canal

Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor
Preservation and Management Plan

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Chapters 3-8 of this Preservation and Management Plan identified six goals (one for each “resource” chapter) to help achieve the vision for the Corridor:

- The Corridor’s historic and distinctive sense of place will be widely expressed and consistently protected (*Chapter 3*)
- The Corridor’s natural resources will reflect the highest standards of environmental quality (*Chapter 4*)
- The Corridor’s recreation opportunities will achieve maximum scope and diversity, in harmony with the protection of heritage resources (*Chapter 5*)
- The Corridor’s current and future generations of residents and visitors will value and support preservation of the Corridor’s heritage (*Chapter 6*)
- The Corridor will be a ‘must-do’ travel experience for regional, national and international visitors (*Chapter 7*)
- The Corridor’s economic growth and heritage development will be balanced and self-sustaining (*Chapter 8*)

The Commission has identified five interlocking strategies to achieve these goals. These strategies do not necessarily correspond exactly to the six goals, as they seek to encourage actions that cut across topical as well as jurisdictional boundaries. The strategies build one upon the other to render an integrated web of management actions to achieve the Corridor vision:

- Reinforce the Corridor’s Distinctive Sense of Place (*includes strategies designed primarily to achieve objectives set forth in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6*)
- Build Awareness and Understanding of the Corridor (*Chapters 6, 7, 8*)
- Expand the Circle of Friends Engaged in Heritage Development (*all chapters*)
- Increase Community Capacity to Achieve Stewardship Goals (*all chapters*)
- Stimulate Economic Revitalization (*Chapters 3 and 8*)

For each strategy, a series of possible action items has been identified and prioritized. The strategies and action items emerged from the vision for the Corridor outlined in the previous chapters of this Plan, an analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the Corridor’s resources, and consideration of the Commission’s legislative charge. Descriptions of potential mechanisms for implementation of these strategies are provided in the final section of this chapter.

REINFORCE THE 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. Efforts to increase this activity should include creation of a new New York State tax credit for historic residential property.

- **Assemble and distribute guidelines, tools, and best practices for preservation, 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, followed by a full inventory. Additional research, including cultural landscape assessments, is needed to support the protection and increase the visibility of other critical historic resources.

BUILD AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CORRIDOR

The New York State Canal System is North America's oldest continuously operated built transportation system. 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 wayfinding 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 – modular 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 and facilities 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 educational 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.

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 public 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.

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 grantseekers and 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 meeting facilities, staffing, and public outreach programs well-suited to help support key implementation activities.

STIMULATE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

In the 19th century heyday of the canals, public and private investments, 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 demonstration projects to raise visibility and show positive local impacts of heritage development**

Targeted investments in a limited number of heritage development 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 Canalway Corridor recreation facilities, including a major spectator event such as a multi-sport relay race along the length of the canals**

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.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The goals and strategies described above 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 this 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 secure funding, beyond federal appropriations, which will take time to set in place.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

In its first few years of existence, the Commission has focused its attention on building an organization and completing the Plan, with assistance from the National Park Service, according to the following timeline:

December 2000	Authorizing legislation passed by Congress
2002	Commission established
Fall 2003	Planning process begins; Commission activities begin
Winter 2003-2004	Public scoping meetings
Spring 2005	Initial demonstration projects completed
Summer 2005	Public review of draft Plan
Winter 2005-2006	Plan adopted; implementation begins
2006-2010	Plan implementation
2009	National Heritage Corridor sustainability study completed
December 2010	Commission authorization sunsets; National Heritage Corridor designation ongoing; implementation continues

In addition to the preparation of the Plan, Commission activities since the establishment of the National Heritage Corridor have included the following:

- public engagement including co-sponsorship of the Erie Canalway Convocation, public meetings, establishment of a website, and collection of surveys on local historic preservation, interpretation, and economic development activity from municipal leaders to engage and inform the public and key stakeholders;
- meetings with numerous organizations, state and municipal officials, educators, experts, and members of the public to discuss a vision for the future of the Canalway Corridor and strategies to achieve it;
- formal cooperative agreements with key organizations and agencies to share resources and pave the way for collaborative efforts;
- promotion of the Canalway Corridor's unique resources and way of life to tourism agents and potential visitors through mass communications and participation in symposia, trade shows, and other public events;

- production and distribution of National Park Service brochures, annual reports, and a portable graphic display of information about the Canalway Corridor;
- design of new wayside exhibit panels for the Canalway Corridor in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation;
- outreach through the New York State educational curriculum by connecting the state's canal school program to the National Park Service;
- matching grants to support several key projects to enhance tourism and economic development; and
- participation in planning for major economic development initiatives in the region, helping ensure that protection and promotion of the National Heritage Corridor's resources is an integral part of the development strategy.

This activity level will increase as the Commission focuses attention on specific projects and expands its staff to assist its partners and Corridor communities. The Commission will need to "start small" in the first year or two with limited demonstration projects, to test strategies, set protocols, and attain demonstrable results. As the Commission and Corridor gain recognition, funding sources become 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. These results, to be documented before 2010, will provide the necessary information to assist the Commission in determining alternatives for continued operation after its Congressional authorization period lapses.

The following are performance measures for the Commission to achieve in its first year; progress toward all of these benchmarks is already underway. By the end of the first year of operation, the Commission will 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;
- identified 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 next five years will be critical to setting the pace and character of National Heritage Corridor activities for years to come. As with any start-up operation, it is anticipated that the Commission's initial undertakings will be strategic and may be small in scale as models are being developed, protocols set, successes achieved. The table on the opposite page shows key milestones for the Commission for the first year and the next five years of Plan implementation.

By 2010, many of the Plan's strategies will be implemented and yielding positive results with a stabilized, sustainable program in place. The Erie Canalway and, by association, all of upstate New York, will be on the map as an international

BENCHMARKS FOR FIRST YEAR AND FIRST FIVE YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION

<p>First Year – Mobilize and Show Activity</p> <p>The Commission will have several immediate priorities to address upon completion of this Plan. The following start-up tasks will also need to be undertaken by the organization to jump-start implementation.</p>	<p>2010 – Substantial Implementation</p> <p>By 2010, many initiatives will be nearing completion or have tangible results. An emphasis will be placed on completing projects, creating visibility for the Corridor, and setting the groundwork for continued implementation activity.</p>
<p>Communications & Public Outreach</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With release of the Plan, set in motion a public outreach and tourism marketing effort to enhance name recognition and/or presence and foster relationships with communities and existing partners • Formalize partnerships with key agencies and organizations • Initiate groundwork for a canal-wide conference on heritage development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name recognition achieved • Corridor presence established through consistent wayfinding and interpretive signage throughout region • Broad distribution of coordinated tourism and marketing materials, strong website, positive articles in national publications • Diverse circle of friends still growing
<p>Project Development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select key projects to raise the visibility of the Commission and Corridor; identify funding sources, establish partner agreements, conduct outreach to communities, and set a timeline for implementation • Make linkages/connections with others for access to key grant programs • Support the development of key interpretive media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects completed, compendium of “lessons learned” published; visionary, high-visibility projects underway • Annual showcasing of successful demonstration projects underway • Certification program in place, technical assistance materials completed and distributed • Interpretive kit of parts completed
<p>Organizational Development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and hire staff and contractors • Develop new cooperative agreements with state agencies and other key stakeholders • Determine the need for and role of potential advisory groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff fully operational with visible presence in field • National Heritage Corridor sustainability study completed • Long-term state policy and funding strategies underway
<p>Financial Development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish fundraising foundation • Prepare business plan • Initiate feasibility/market studies and initial capacity grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising foundation is in place, project fundraising well underway • Operational funding sources secured • Diverse grants program underway

Three Levels of Planning:

1. Preservation and Management Plan

Describes resources, sets vision and goals, and proposes strategies to meet goals, with guidelines for approaches to specific types of resources; to be updated in five years

2. Short-Range Implementation Plan

Prioritizes specific actions over the first five years of implementation, with different levels of action based on funding potentials; to be updated within two years

3. Business Plan / Annual Work Plans

Initial business plan and year-to-year work plans for Commission staff, with adjustments to priorities based on availability of resources; to be updated annually

visitor destination, and there will be measurable signs of economic revitalization and new investment, along with a significant increase in preservation and conservation activity. A stabilized, sustainable organization for implementation will be in place, with a successful fundraising foundation assisting in the implementation of major Plan initiatives.

In order to accomplish all of this, the Commission will need to reassess on a regular basis which actions are most important, keeping in mind the fact that other agencies and organizations will be soliciting support, funding, or technical assistance from the Commission for their own priority projects. At the same time, the Commission's own level of funding will depend upon many variables likely to change from year to year. Thus, three levels of planning are called for: this Preservation and Management Plan; a five-year short-range implementation plan; and a business plan with annual work plans.

SHORT-RANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The short-range implementation plan will evaluate the merits of specific projects to be initiated or funded; will allow for the Commission to make course corrections or adjustments to past priorities in light of changing circumstances and opportunities; and will provide the basis for the Commission's ongoing reporting and public outreach activities. The following preliminary plan has been prepared to assist in the prioritization of actions and the establishment of an initial business plan, commensurate with funding potentials. It is emphasized that this initial implementation plan will change from year to year as operational capabilities become more fully known; the tables that follow should be viewed in this light and not interpreted as a final plan.

Essential Program Actions

The initial implementation actions of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission upon approval of the Preservation and Management Plan are dependent on continued partnerships with state and local organizations and assume that current annual funding levels* from the U.S. Congress would remain constant for the next several years. Along with the Commission's partners, a few key staff positions will be filled to initiate the following actions:

Essential Program Actions	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5
Launch Management Plan	X				
Develop business plan	X				
Establish a fundraising foundation for Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor programs	X				
Develop new cooperative agreements with state agencies, nonprofits, university consortium to formalize partnerships	X				
Complete graphic design standards	X				

*The 2005 federal appropriation for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission was \$700,000.

Complete signage design in accordance with NYS DOT / Thruway policies	X				
Launch website with improved interactivity/build public outreach	X				
Assemble & distribute targeted packages of existing tourism collateral materials	X				
Complete and distribute NPS brochure	X	X			
Co-sponsor roundtables: Historic Preservation, Interpretation	X	X			
Conduct Corridor-wide survey to collect baseline data	X	X			
Enhance name recognition	X	X	X	X	X
Hire key staff / build organization	X	X	X	X	X
Develop certification program for historic sites and interpretive facilities	X	X	X	X	X
Develop criteria and seek proposals for National Heritage Corridor technical and/or financial assistance via a small grants program	X	X	X	X	X
Identify demonstration projects / promote ongoing "model projects"	X	X	X	X	X
Complete and publicize success of initial demonstration projects		X	X	X	X
Initiate "circuit riders" multidisciplinary technical assistance program		X	X	X	X
Initiate foundation fundraising activities		X	X	X	X
Develop technical assistance materials for historic preservation research/documentation, curatorial (documents, artifacts, folkways)		X	X	X	X
Initiate awards program			X	X	X

Enhanced Program Actions

The following table lists the next highest priority actions for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission to initiate if sufficient funding is secured:

Enhanced Program Actions	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5
Complete and distribute initial Corridor-wide tourism materials	X	X			
Co-sponsor roundtables: Marketing, Recreational Development	X	X			
Develop water-based traveling exhibit/classroom	X	X	X	X	

Co-sponsor statewide conference on heritage development		X			
Develop visitor readiness guidelines		X			
Initiate oral history project		X	X		
Support research to identify needs and destinations of targeted visitor audiences		X	X		
Co-sponsor roundtables: Agricultural Conservation, Water Quality		X	X		
Initiate Corridor-wide road signage and wayfinding program		X	X		
Interpretive “kit of parts”: weekly radio stories, audio tour guide		X	X	X	X
Initiate Canalway Community Partner program		X	X	X	X
Initiate cultural resources documentation to support heritage efforts: National Register nomination for NYS Canal System; Historic Context Study with multiple property nominations; cultural landscape assessments		X	X	X	X
Complete cultural tourism demonstration project			X	X	
Co-sponsor roundtables: Invasive Species Management, Historic Vessels			X	X	
Complete first phase of Corridor-wide road signage and wayfinding program			X	X	
Complete Historic Context Study with initial National Register nominations			X	X	X
Initiate special events program including a signature canal-wide event			X	X	X
Develop technical assistance materials for water quality management, agricultural conservation, recreational development			X	X	X
Interpretive “kit of parts”: develop designs for wayside panels and modular museum exhibits; plan and assemble small traveling exhibits; complete and distribute curriculum materials; distribute wayside panels and modular museum exhibits; educational programs			X	X	X
Launch seasonal interpretive guides program			X	X	X
Complete National Heritage Corridor sustainability study and implement National Heritage Corridor sustainability program				X	X
Launch expanded winter recreational use initiative				X	X

Initiate tourism and marketing technical assistance to communities				X	X
National Register nominations completed and current					X
Establish and enhance touring routes throughout the Corridor in partnership with the New York State Scenic Byways program					X
Publish compendium of “lessons learned” from demonstration projects, roundtables, and ongoing technical assistance activities					X

Ideal Program Actions

The actions listed below are examples of the type of large-scale, high visibility programs the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission could undertake with significant new financial resources raised by a proposed foundation:

Ideal Program Actions	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5
Announce concept for New York City based Erie Canal educational exhibit	X				
Seek support for orientation film and documentary		X	X		
Work with partners to secure a location and design for New York City exhibit		X	X	X	X
Launch “virtual research collection” online		X	X	X	X
Launch side trails development initiative			X	X	X
Televisé documentary film				X	
Initiate a publication sales program				X	X
Complete second phase of Corridor-wide road signage and wayfinding program				X	X
Interpretive “kit of parts”: complete and distribute orientation film; highway rest area interactive media stations					X
Develop cable TV series					X
Develop an Erie Canal Hall of Fame exhibit or facility					X
Work with the Smithsonian Institution to develop Erie Canal programs and exhibits		X	X	X	X
Plan and assemble truck-mounted traveling exhibit					X
Host World Canals Conference					X

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION: COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

The successful implementation of this Preservation and Management Plan will depend upon partnerships. The Commission, supported by the National Park Service, will act primarily as a champion for the Corridor, steward of the Plan, and catalyst for action by leveraging the efforts of its partners, relying on the continued active participation of state and local agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals who are the “front line” in implementation. Much of the implementation will be carried out under existing programs and policies; the Commission will seek to stimulate whatever new or enhanced public and private actions and programs are needed to achieve the purposes of the Plan, building upon the great work already in place or underway. In addition, a non-profit foundation might also be established as a fundraising arm and extension of the Commission to increase the reach of this Plan.

ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

*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 throughout the Corridor in a manner that promotes partnerships among the Corridor’s many stakeholders, and reflects, celebrates, and enhances the Corridor’s national significance for all to use and enjoy.*¹

Legislative Framework

The purposes of the Commission, as established by Congress, are to (1) work with federal, state, and local authorities to develop and implement the Preservation and Management Plan; and (2) foster the integration of canal-related historical, cultural, recreational, scenic, economic, and community development initiatives within the Corridor.²

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission is a uniquely charged coordinating body that can be a catalyst for new ideas, bringing people and groups together to help achieve the goals set forth in this Plan. Established in 2002, the Commission is a 27-member, community-based federal commission appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, based primarily upon recommendations of the Governor of New York and the Corridor’s Congressional delegation. The Commission includes the U.S. Secretary of the Interior; the commissioners of seven New York State agencies, including the New York State Canal Corporation; 11 members recommended by the members of Congress whose districts overlap the Corridor;³ two members recommended by New York’s U. S. Senators; and six at-large community representatives who live in counties overlapping the Corridor, with one member who has knowledge and experience of the New York State Canal Recreationway Commission.

The enabling legislation for the Commission (Public Law 106-554, Title VIII) details both the powers and the duties of the Commission and provides guidance for implementation. The intent of Congress was for the Commission to

assist others in developing programs, facilities, and other activities to promote the implementation of the Plan. The Commission has no regulatory authority, and no responsibilities for land management or property administration. The legislation directs the Commission to:

- 1) undertake action to implement the Plan so as to assist the people of the State of New York in enhancing and interpreting the Corridor's resources and its potential; and
- 2) support public and private efforts in conservation and preservation of the Corridor's cultural and natural resources and economic revitalization consistent with the goals of the Plan.⁴

The legislation authorizes the priority actions to be carried out by the Commission:

- assisting in preservation treatment of the remaining elements of the original Erie Canal as well as other associated buildings, sites, or districts in the Corridor;
- assisting agencies and organizations with visitor centers museums, and other interpretive exhibits in the Corridor;
- encouraging enhanced economic development consistent with the Plan's goals; and
- ensuring a clear and consistent visual communications program in the Corridor.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Commission's primary focus will be to steward the Preservation and Management Plan – to maintain, disseminate, and help others make use of the Plan's analysis and recommendations. The following roles, drawing from the Commission's legislated mandates and mission statement and the vision set forth in the Plan, establish an operational framework for the Commission and provide a strategic direction for implementation activities. The Commission will:

- **Provide support, funding, technical assistance** and/or in-kind services to others to assist in leveraging or implementing projects that advance the Plan;
- **Catalyze collaboration** among those whose decisions impact heritage resources, and among organizations in allied pursuits;
- **Educate, communicate, and advocate** for the Plan as a guiding document for decision makers, entrepreneurs, residents;
- **Raise the profile** of the Corridor as a whole, bringing greater local and world-wide recognition of its unique history and resources; and
- **Build a foundation for the future** to ensure the stability and long-term sustainability of National Heritage Corridor activities.

In sum, the Commission will be both a supporter and an instigator. It will set and oversee the execution of policies as set forth in this Plan and monitor the progress made towards achieving the goals of the Plan. Its level of activism will vary depending upon the type of activity underway and the level of resources available. The Commission will maintain a direct linkage to key stakeholders and act as facilitators or brokers when they are needed to help advance projects and programs consistent with the Plan. 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 with minimal effort, 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.

Organization and Start-up Activities

The Commission's management and governance must support an ability to participate in existing partnerships while also crafting new ones, securing capital investment, and attracting philanthropic support. The Commission must have adequate staff and the necessary resources to provide leadership, set quality standards, and channel the actions and energies of others effectively. The Commission's organization must:

- be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions and new challenges;
- include staff with the expertise necessary to foster critical partnerships and projects across a spectrum of program areas; and
- ensure the economic viability of its operations.

In order to pursue these endeavors, the Commission will have a staff that may include persons on detail from government agencies, direct hires, and contractors. The staff will be the "eyes and ears" for the Commission and will be directly involved with projects and programs in local communities. Some actions, such as staff-intensive programs designed to assist others, may be most effectively provided through cooperative agreements; for example, state agency staff could lend their time and expertise to support a particular project or undertaking for a limited timeframe through a Memorandum of Understanding. Other actions, such as tourism development, may be contracted. All activities in support of this Preservation and Management Plan, whether executed in-house or through partnerships, will need to be coordinated by the Commission's core staff.

The Commission's staff will need to have a diversity of skills, and possess the ability to work in a complex, changing environment. The following are core areas of expertise that will need to be reflected in the staffing composition:

- administration, finance and budgeting
- fundraising, contracting and project coordination
- public affairs and outreach
- preservation of historic and cultural resources
- conservation of natural resources
- interpretation and education
- heritage development

Personnel with expertise in additional areas may be brought in or contracted on an as-needed basis, perhaps for specific projects. These areas of expertise might include:

- marketing and tourism development
- planning and urban design
- historical and archeological research
- curatorial and inventory management
- graphic design and signage standards

Currently the Commission has an Executive Committee and five Task Groups organized around discrete subjects addressed in the Preservation and Management Plan. The Task Groups may continue to operate after the Plan's adoption, or may be reconstituted to focus on particular aspects of implementation, such as:

- establishment of the potential new foundation (see below);
- requests by partners for funding assistance;
- review of annual budgets and financial planning documents; and
- monitoring of the Commission's goals, ongoing projects, and future needs.

The role of these committees would be to vet the issues and concerns of particular matters and then present alternatives to the full Commission. The Commission will also need to formulate policies and procedures for personnel, procurement, and budget activities, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Sustaining the Management Structure

Assuming that the Commission's federal authorization and appropriations period ends in 2010, when those legislative provisions expire, it must develop a strategy for sustaining an effective organization for the continued pursuit of the Plan's vision and goals. Before that date, the Commission will complete a sustainability study to assist it in determining and assessing alternatives for continuing National Heritage Corridor operations after 2010, and until the long-term goals of the Plan are substantially achieved. Given the relatively short period of time that will be reviewed by the sustainability study, the Commission's early actions will be an important factor in assessing its effectiveness.

The uncertainty of future funding for the Corridor creates a challenge to long-range strategic planning, implementation of multi-year projects, and staff retention. The Commission will need to establish a secure, base level of funding in the near term to support the work of its staff. In addition to the potential new foundation (see page 9.21), the Commission will explore opportunities to achieve long-term sustainability through the involvement of key institutions, businesses, and beneficiaries. Long-term sustainability also relies on building an effective constituency for the Commission – a regional network of active partners and supporters of the Plan. The Commission will conduct community outreach, and work with agencies and elected officials, to ensure that the vision and goals of the Plan are supported, understood, and pursued.

The authorizing legislation for the Corridor allows for the Commission “to seek, accept and dispose of gifts, bequests, grants, or donations of money, personal property, or services, received from any source.”⁵ Additional funds, beyond federal appropriations, raised by the Commission may be unlimited but will be managed consistent with federal fiscal requirements; a clear set of priorities will be in place for funding, including priorities for fundraising (see *Short-Range Implementation Plan* above). The Commission will also consider adoption of fiscal policies that include strategies for fundraising and investment of monies in accordance with applicable federal law.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

An ongoing working relationship between the Commission and the National Park Service is vital to a successful implementation program. While National Heritage Areas and Corridors are not traditional National Park System units, the NPS is the administrative sponsor and conduit for federal funding and technical assistance for the development and implementation of the Preservation and Management Plan for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Throughout the preparation of the Plan, the NPS has provided a full-time executive director and professional staff, as well as administrative support, to help lay the planning foundation for achieving the Commission’s vision and goals.

The National Park Service manages four national historic sites within the Corridor, and the dominant themes of the Erie Canalway are relevant to each of these National Park System units. There are obvious opportunities for mutually beneficial assistance in the areas of interpretive coordination, historic preservation, tourism and marketing, and administrative support. For example:

- Part of the historic Champlain Canal is within the boundary of Saratoga National Historical Park, which also includes the home of General Philip Schuyler, one of the main proponents of canal construction.
- Fort Stanwix, now a national monument, was constructed to protect the strategic portage and link between the Mohawk and Oneida Rivers that eventually became part of the Erie Canal route.
- Women’s Rights National Historical Park on the banks of the Cayuga-Seneca Canal commemorates the early efforts to establish equality for women in American society, one of several social and reform movements fostered by the exchange of ideas along the canals.
- The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site in Buffalo also recognizes the efforts of the 26th President to modernize the current Erie Canal when he was governor of New York.

The 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail, extending from the Adirondack Park westward to the Missouri River in North Dakota, is administered by the National Park Service in cooperation with numerous public and private partners. It connects with the Corridor at Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome and follows the historic towpath in Old Erie Canal State Historic Park west to Canastota, then swings south and connects with the Corridor once again at Finger Lakes National Forest, the village of Watkins Glen, and Watkins Glen State Park. The administrative office in Madison, Wisconsin provides financial

and technical assistance to partners for establishing and maintaining the hiking trail and interpreting significant natural and cultural resources along its route.

The Hudson Valley National Heritage Area, established by Congress in 1996, extends 150 miles along the Hudson River between Yonkers and Troy and overlaps the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in the greater Albany area. Legislation is under consideration to extend the Hudson Valley NHA north to include Saratoga County, further overlapping with the Erie Canalway NHC. This will present further opportunities to coordinate interpretive efforts, marketing, and development of wayfinding signage. These efforts will take advantage of the fact that the Hudson Valley NHA's national significance is based in part on its contributions to national commerce because of the connection that the river provided for barge traffic between the Erie and related canals, and New York City. To the west, the National Park Service is studying the feasibility of establishing a Niagara National Heritage Area in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, New York. As this effort progresses, the Corridor will continue to seek effective and coordinated partnerships with nearby and overlapping national heritage areas.

The National Park Service also works closely with the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on the listing of sites in the National Register of Historic Places, the approval of projects for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and the designation of Certified Local Governments (CLGs), helping to ensure that local preservation legislation and review commissions meet federal standards. In addition to support for historic preservation, interpretation, design, administration, and technical assistance skills available in National Park Service parks, regional offices, and technical centers, a number of special NPS programs can also provide specific assistance to the Commission, communities, and grassroots partners in the Corridor:

- The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program can assist in planning for recreation corridor conservation and development.
- The Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) can assist in technical documentation for historic buildings, infrastructure, and vessels.
- The Maritime Preservation Program can provide technical assistance in preservation planning for historic vessels.

Legislative Framework

As specified in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor's enabling legislation, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to provide assistance in the following areas:

- Plan development – The Secretary is authorized to assist the Commission in preparation of the Plan and may detail up to two Department of the Interior employees on a non-reimbursable basis to assist in this effort.
- Technical assistance – The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with, provide technical assistance to, and award grants to the Commission to provide for the preservation and interpretation of the Corridor's natural, cultural, historical, recreational, and scenic resources as per the approved Preservation and Management Plan.

These tasks may be delegated to Department bureaus such as the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Secretary or the Secretary's designee also serves ex-officio on the Commission; the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Director is the current designee.

Roles and Responsibilities

The ongoing participation of the Department of the Interior and National Park Service is critical not only to the start-up phase of the Commission but also to the long-term implementation of the Plan. The Commission will seek continued support from the Department and NPS in the areas of implementation, technical assistance, and, as feasible, staff assistance. The NPS will help provide a direct linkage to nearby National Park System units, the National Heritage Areas program, and available NPS technical assistance programs, and to other federal agencies that may be sources of additional funding and technical assistance. The NPS will work to make federal agencies aware of the Corridor and the importance of preserving and interpreting its resources.

Through their emphasis on quality resource protection and development and visitor experience, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service can make substantive contributions to Corridor preservation and interpretation and the enhancement of Corridor identity and recognition. Examples of the assistance the Department and NPS could provide include:

- bringing hands-on expertise to help save and interpret critical resources, including development of programs to document and monitor resources;
- promoting and educating preservationists in the application of the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties;
- establishing a certification program for preservation activities and interpretive facilities, to provide incentives for local groups to apply quality standards that will enhance the visitor experience and the integrity of historic resources;
- assisting the Commission and partners in scoping Corridor interpretive plans and developing standards for materials, media, and exhibits;
- facilitating strategic planning and regional collaboration on issues such as natural resource protection and recreation planning;
- advising and providing technical assistance to maintenance, conservation and curatorial efforts; and
- hosting technical work sessions for local communities, agencies, and organizations on subjects such as the Historic Tax Credit program.

In addition, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission's affiliation with the Department and NPS can help to facilitate access to other federal agencies that can provide other kinds of financial and technical assistance, including:

- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Corridor Presence

In addition to providing assistance with the preservation and interpretation of the Corridor's historic, cultural, and natural resources, the National Park Service, possibly through staff at the national historic sites/parks, could help orient and train seasonal interpretive personnel at a number of key canal related historic sites. The deployment of seasonal guides throughout the Corridor would help to improve the visibility of the Commission and its affiliation with the NPS, and promote the vision and goals of the Plan. This could be accomplished through Memorandums of Understanding or cooperative agreements with individual sites.

The NPS presence in the Corridor could also be supplemented through the designation of a new National Park System unit at an appropriate historic site or area directly related to the national significance of the Corridor. Any effort to establish a new National Park System unit in the Corridor would need to begin with a special resource study authorized by Congress, and would need to be closely coordinated with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other partners of the Commission as appropriate. A new NPS unit would also require Congressional legislation. The benefits from such a unit could include increased access by Corridor communities to NPS personnel and resources; greater recognition of the Corridor's national significance, due to the visible National Park System affiliation; increased NPS marketing and educational programs; and additional staff capacity and support for preservation, interpretation, and identity-building initiatives in the Corridor.

ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR FOUNDATION

In order to accomplish the goals set forth in this Plan, the Commission will need access to funding and project support above and beyond its present sources. For many organizations with a mission similar to that of the Commission, this has been achieved through the establishment of a separate foundation. Typically, an agreement between the foundation and the management entity identifies the organizations' respective missions and their reasons for working together, roles, protocols, and conditions of partnership.

In this case, the primary purpose of a foundation will be to aid the Commission in accomplishing objectives it wants to achieve but cannot take on alone, or where the Commission is limited by its legislated authorities and access to funding. The 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 marketing, tourism development, and other areas of activity that are not primarily supported by the Commission's other partners. Beyond fundraising, the foundation staff could contribute project management skills and administer contracts for Commission sponsored projects.

For purposes of this Preservation and Management Plan, the foundation is introduced as a concept that will require much more consideration. Most likely, the foundation would be incorporated as a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation with tax-exempt status at the state and federal levels. The Commission and foundation will have a shared vision about what both parties desire to achieve, and a common understanding of need, leadership, alignment, mutual respect and support. The foundation would pay its operating and project expenses through a combination of contributed and earned income derived from a mixed funding strategy, starting with a capacity building grant and eventually building to an endowment. Regardless of the form the new foundation might take, it will be an investment for the future and the long-term sustainability of the Corridor.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

One of the legislated purposes for the establishment of the Corridor is “to provide a framework to assist the State of New York, its units of local government, and the communities within the Erie Canalway in the development of integrated cultural, historical, recreational, economic, and community development programs in order to enhance and interpret the unique and nationally significant resources of the Erie Canalway.”⁶ To this end, the mission of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission is premised on the principle of partnership and emphasizes the role of supporting partners’ efforts to accomplish the goals of the Plan.

The Commission defines its partners as those organizations, agencies, and individuals working to preserve, interpret, and promote the Corridor’s heritage resources. Since implementation of the New York State Canal Recreationway Plan began in 1995, local, state, and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit and private partners, have provided significant funding to a variety of public benefit projects and programs in support of the canal system and related resources. Individuals and businesses, in turn, have responded to these efforts with new private investments. The continued participation of all of these players is critical for the ongoing preservation, interpretation, and sustainable development of the much broader range of resources encompassed by the Corridor.

The Corridor’s authorizing legislation specifically called for the Secretary of the Interior to appoint to the Commission seven members with knowledge and experience of the following New York State agencies (or those agencies’ successors):

- Canal Corporation and Thruway Authority
- Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (including the State Historic Preservation Office and the Heritage Areas program)
- Department of Agriculture and Markets
- Department of Environmental Conservation
- Department of State (including the Division of Coastal Resources and the Quality Communities Initiative)
- Department of Transportation (including the Scenic Byways program)
- Empire State Development Corporation (including the Division of Marketing, Advertising and Tourism)

Other key partners that have also been involved in the preparation of this Preservation and Management Plan include:

- New York State Canal Recreationway Commission
- New York State Division of Housing
- New York State Department of Education (including the New York State Museum, Library, and Archives)
- Governor's Office of Small Cities
- Regional Planning Boards/Councils and County planning agencies
- Tourism Promotion Agencies and Regional Tourism Organizations
- Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area/Hudson River Valley Greenway
- Lakes to Locks Passage
- Mohawk River Valley (State) Heritage Corridor
- Western Erie Canal (State) Heritage Corridor
- Canal Society of New York State
- Parks & Trails New York
- Preservation League of New York State
- Canal New York, Inc.

Essential input has also been provided by the following American Indian tribes and groups:

- Haudenosaunee (confederation of Iroquois nations)
- Oneida Indian Nation
- Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
- Onondaga Indian Nation
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Seneca Nation of Indians
- Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Wisconsin
- Tonawanda Band of Seneca
- Tuscarora Nation

The Commission will continue to work closely with tribal representatives to ensure that interpretive development in the Corridor addresses the impacts of the canals on Native American settlements and lifeways.

There will be many opportunities for existing organizations to adopt within their own work plans specific projects and programs that help to achieve the goals in this Plan. Qualified partners will receive technical and financial assistance from the Commission, based upon basic project and organizational criteria (see *Support for Partner Organizations' Projects and Programs* below). Philanthropic, private, and community foundations will also play an important role and will be encouraged to maintain a close involvement in the Plan's implementation as they choose local and regional initiatives in which to invest. The Commission will also work closely with universities and educational institutions and organizations to foster programs and projects in direct support of the Plan's goals.

The Commission and its partners will also work together to build local support for projects, which will allow more ready solicitation of matching funds from federal, state, and private sources. One step toward this goal might be the estab-

POTENTIAL LEVEL OF PARTNER PARTICIPATION IN ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

- * contributing role – partner contributes direct assistance to Commission and/or other partners with lead responsibility
- * major role – Commission and partner share major implementation responsibility
- * lead role – Commission endorses lead implementation by partner

		Thruway Authority / Canal Corp.	Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation	Dept. of Agriculture & Markets	Dept. of Environmental Conservation	Dept. of State	Dept. of Transportation	Empire State Development Corporation	Div. of Housing & Community Renewal/ Housing Trust Fund Corp.	Governor's Office of Small Cities	Canal Society of New York State	Parks & Trails NY	Preservation League of New York State
REINFORCE SENSE OF PLACE	Assemble and distribute guidelines, tools, and best practices	*	*	*	*	*						*	*
	Champion sustainable preservation and conservation policies, practices, and projects	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*		*
	Encourage wider availability and use of historic tax credits for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse		*							*			*
	Advance historical research and National Register listings	*	*				*				*		*
BUILD AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING	Implement strategic marketing and promotion program to increase visitation	*		*	*		*	*				*	
	Support development of key informational and experiential products	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	
	Establish graphic identity and incorporate into wayfinding signage and orientation tools			*	*	*	*						
	Develop and install an interpretive kit of parts to – make every site a gateway	*	*	*		*		*			*		
	Provide roving interpretive guides and programs	*	*									*	
	Enhance schools' use of Canalway Corridor stories to teach required educational elements										*		
EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS	Engage civic participation with a vigorous public outreach program	*		*		*	*					*	*
	Create roundtables and broker promising initiatives that result	*	*	*	*	*	*		*				
	Work with agencies/organizations to increase outreach and establish the Corridor as a priority		*	*	*	*		*	*		*		
	Enlist community support for the Plan through a voluntary Canalway Community Partner Program	*				*							
INCREASE COMMUNITY CAPACITY	Dispatch "circuit riders" to help Canalway Corridor communities		*						*				*
	Initiate a certification program for preservation and interpretation	*	*		*						*	*	
	Help grantseekers and pursue creative funding strategies	*	*			*			*				*
	Work with colleges and universities to provide research, analysis, and technical assistance			*		*		*			*		
STIMULATE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION	Promote investment strategies and opportunities in the Canalway Corridor					*	*						
	Identify, support, and promote key Canalway Corridor demonstration projects	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	Coordinate programs to transform communities into a network of destination towns	*		*		*	*	*	*			*	
	Leverage enhanced recreation facilities to build enhanced economic opportunities	*	*			*		*		*		*	

lishment of a grassroots membership organization of enthusiasts dedicated to raising the Corridor's profile, enlisting volunteer assistance, and expanding the constituency in support of the Commission's goals. This role could be taken on by an existing organization or coalition of organizations that share the Commission's vision, such as the Canal Society of New York and Parks & Trails NY. The New York State Canal Corporation will continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the New York State Canal System.

POTENTIAL LEVEL OF PARTNER PARTICIPATION IN ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

The preceding chart shows how current key partners of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor presently envision their potential roles in helping the Commission to execute its implementation strategies. Rather than indicating specific commitments of funds or support, the chart shows each organization's desired level of participation in those strategies for which its resources are best suited, with three assistance levels indicated as noted. The Commission values these partners' significant expressions of support in undertaking implementation roles. When Plan implementation is at hand, the Commission will consider its responsibilities and capabilities, and further define the cooperative relationships it desires with its current and future partners.

- * lead role – Commission endorses lead implementation by partner
- * major role – Commission and partner share major implementation responsibility
- * contributing role – partner contributes direct assistance to Commission and/or other partners with lead responsibility

MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Implementation of this Preservation and Management Plan creates a need to cover both operational expenses for the Commission and project expenses. Operational expenses include things such as staff, support services, office space, travel expenses, etc. Project expenses may be ongoing costs associated with programs or one-time costs associated with "bricks and mortar" construction projects, which would be undertaken by the Commission's partners. Additional one-time costs will be associated with the start-up of Commission operations. Through fiscal year 2005, the Commission had received \$2,010,000 in federal funds.

The Commission is authorized to receive Congressional appropriations of no more than \$1,000,000 each fiscal year over a period of ten years, for a maximum total of \$10,000,000. However, the funding provided by Congress may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of any activity carried out with such funds. The non-federal "matching" share may be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. The experience of other National Heritage Areas has

shown that their Congressional appropriations have helped leverage significant amounts of funding beyond the required “match.” Although the remainder of the Congressional appropriations will be instrumental to establishing the Commission’s organization and supporting priority projects over the first five years of implementation, it will be essential for the Commission to secure additional, sustainable funding from a variety of sources in order to achieve all of the Plan’s goals.

The Commission is authorized to and will conduct fundraising campaigns and will work to obtain necessary resources from both public and private sources. Members of the Commission lead or represent state and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other key partners, and will be able to reach into their communities or organizations for funding and in-kind support toward achieving the goals of the Plan. These leaders will also help identify other partners, or prospective partners, whose help will be critical for success. A new foundation (see above) with a focus on major fundraising efforts would be an additional mechanism for supporting particular projects and programs as well as Commission operations.

A variety of potential funding sources is available, including grants and assistance programs through federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector groups. Federal sources of funding and support for other National Heritage Area programs and projects beyond their Congressional appropriations have included the National Park Service (discretionary funding); U.S. Department of Transportation – Transportation Enhancements Program; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Community Development Block Grants; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the National Endowment for the Arts/National Endowment for the Humanities. Key national nonprofit supporters of heritage areas have included the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Trust for Public Land, the Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance, and the Rural Policy Research Institute.

Given the existing scope of their programs and level of commitment to goals complementary to those emphasized in this Preservation and Management Plan (see *Existing and Potential Partners* above), New York State agencies will be key sources of support for Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor programs and projects. Through cooperative agreements (see below) and other arrangements, state agency programs could be more readily leveraged to initiate new National Heritage Corridor projects if they were to (1) acknowledge the Corridor’s Congressional designation and national significance, and (2) set as priorities for funding or support, those projects that help achieve the Corridor Plan’s goals and/or lie within the Corridor boundary.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

The Commission is able to enter into cooperative agreements with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to leverage funding as well as to allow the Commission to more effectively and economically accomplish its mission. Cooperative agreements are legal instruments that establish a formal relation-

ship between a federal agency and a state or local government, tribal government, nonprofit organization, or other party.

The principal purpose of a cooperative agreement is to transfer funds, property, services, or anything of value in order to stimulate or support a public purpose authorized by law. Typically, a cooperative agreement is established in anticipation and in affirmation of substantial collaboration between both parties in carrying out the activities contemplated. A cooperative agreement differs from a grant because a grant provides for a transfer of funds or assistance without necessarily requiring substantial involvement by the grantor in the funded activity.⁷

Cooperative agreements are often developed around specific projects, but the agreed-upon collaboration may contemplate more than one project. Each cooperative agreement undertaken by the Commission will identify the various types of activity supported under the agreement, the common objectives and specific responsibilities of the Commission and its partner, legal mandates and other terms and conditions binding each party, estimated time frame, funding sources, and an estimated cost ceiling.

To date, the Commission has developed cooperative agreements with key organizations to facilitate collaboration, sharing of information, and execution of some limited projects. These include:

- New York State Canal Corporation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
- Mohawk River Valley (State) Heritage Corridor
- Western Erie Canal (State) Heritage Corridor
- Canal Society of New York State
- Parks & Trails New York

With completion of this Preservation and Management Plan, these existing agreements will need to be expanded, and new agreements with additional partners will need to be established, to assign specific responsibilities to advance the Plan's implementation.

SUPPORT FOR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS' PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The Commission will have a finite amount of funds each year for distribution to worthy partners in support of the Plan's vision and goals. The Commission can provide direct funding to serve as an important match for a grant, to assist with initial project permitting or provide seed money to make a project or program viable, or for related studies needed to support a project or program. For most of these partners, financial assistance from the Commission will serve to supplement existing funding or leverage additional support. As of April 2005, the Commission had authorized \$406,000 in support of 14 projects and programs in the Corridor.

To help the Commission focus on those projects and programs that best help to fulfill the Plan's goals, the following organizational and project funding criteria will be used:

1. *Consistency with Plan vision and goals* – The project or program must help to fulfill one or more of the six goals for the Corridor set forth in this Plan. In keeping with the Plan, projects or programs must demonstrate

- a high degree of public support and community engagement;
- compliance with federal and state law, environmental regulations, and regional and local planning and preservation guidelines;
- compliance with quality guidelines and standards, including, if appropriate, the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the guidelines for heritage development provided elsewhere in this Plan; and
- evaluation and understanding of the existing condition, significance, and/or integrity of any historic, cultural, or natural resources affected.

2. *Realistically achievable* – In order to help jump-start implementation of the Plan, emphasis will be placed on projects or programs for which there is a high probability of delivering promised results by 2010. New projects or programs undertaken by high-capacity organizations, or projects and programs by others that are already planned, underway, and/or approved and in need of additional funds, services, or attention to complete, will be emphasized.

3. *Funding and leverage* – In order to make the most effective use of the Commission's limited initial funding base, the ability of the project, program, or organization to leverage or raise funds from other sources will be taken into account. Even as the Commission gains the ability over time to provide more significant levels of funding, it will continue to be important for projects and programs to show a broad base of support. Emphasis will be placed on projects or programs for which the Commission's support would serve as a key investment for:

- creating momentum to catalyze something bigger/bolder; and
- building consistent, coordinated Corridor-wide *systems* (interpretive media, wayfinding signage, tourism marketing, regional plans, etc.).

4. *Visibility* – In order to establish the Commission's presence as a valuable partner, to encourage more communities and organizations to seek the Commission's support and uphold Plan values, and to inspire further action by others, the ability of the project or program to attract sustained public interest, local or regional participation, and ongoing support will be taken into account.

5. *Critical action* – The Plan has established specific priorities for preservation, conservation, recreation, interpretation, tourism development, and community revitalization activities. In particular, projects or programs designed to address multiple issues, preserve or enhance endangered or critical resources, or create economic benefits for disadvantaged communities will be emphasized.

As a first step, the Commission will support a series of demonstration projects to help establish these criteria in practice. The Commission will then initiate a Call for Proposals process for organizations and communities to apply for National Heritage Corridor support. This process will challenge applicants to

demonstrate how their individual projects fit within the larger regional context of the Corridor, add value to the Corridor's distinctive sense of place, and help to achieve the Plan's vision and goals. One outcome of this process will be to encourage applicants, as well as other sources of support, to work collaboratively.

OTHER TOOLS AND INCENTIVES

Guidelines, Models, and Best Practices

Chapters 3-6 of this Preservation and Management Plan include heritage development guidelines to promote an integrated, regional approach to preserving, enhancing, and interpreting the Corridor's nationally significant resources. These guidelines, which describe illustrative models and best practices already underway in the Corridor, are intended to help the stewards of critical resources realize the social and economic benefits that accrue to communities with authentic historic character, a healthy natural environment, diverse recreational opportunities, and a strong sense of identity. The guidelines, which may need to be updated over time (see *Additional Studies and Compliance*, page 9.35), also point the way toward specific strategies, public policies, state and regional programs, and other resources that communities can use to enhance local efforts. The guidelines will be at the center of the Corridor's technical assistance, certification, and the Canalway Community Partnership Program (see page 9.30).

Advice and Comment

The Commission is not empowered to enact laws or regulations, or direct the expenditure of public funds by other governmental entities. However, in pursuit of a collaborative, comprehensive, and efficient approach to preservation, conservation, recreation, interpretation, economic revitalization, and tourism development for the Corridor, the Commission may be asked to participate in reviews of policies, practices, or projects under consideration by its partners, or may issue public comment on topics within the purview of its mission, through position papers, press releases, or other means. Any such actions by the Commission will be informed by the heritage development guidelines of this Preservation and Management Plan.

Circuit Riders and Technical Assistance

Technical assistance includes workshops, referrals, expert consultation, and other "how-to" help with the preparation of local and regional visions, plans, projects, and applications for grants and other financial assistance (see *Assistance to Grantseekers* below). The Commission intends to provide technical assistance to communities through "circuit riders" – experts in preservation, conservation, interpretation, and recreational, tourism, and heritage development who will spend much of their time "in the field" providing onsite consultation to organizations, programs, and projects designated as priorities by the Commission (see *Support for Partner Organizations' Projects and Programs* above). In addition to providing assistance on a project-by-project basis, the circuit riders will seek out additional projects worthy of Commission support,

build local and regional partnerships, broadcast the Commission's vision and goals for the Corridor, solicit public input and engagement, and administer the Corridor certification program (see below). Circuit riders could be recruited from the ranks of highly dedicated professionals and volunteers who currently manage many of the Corridor's heritage resources.

Certification Program

The Commission will establish a certification program to provide incentives for property owners and stewards of eligible historic, cultural, and interpretive resources to apply quality standards that will enhance the visitor experience and protect the Corridor's national significance. Through this program, the managing entity of the resource would voluntarily agree to uphold specific stewardship practices. In return, the Commission would offer technical assistance in historic preservation, resource protection, and interpretation and give official recognition to the resource, such as permitting the managing entity to use the Corridor's graphic identity (see *Logo Management* below) and participate in enhanced promotional activities (see *Tourism Development and Marketing* below). While best suited for historic preservation and interpretive activities, the certification concept can be applied to a variety of areas, ranging from volunteer and docent programs to land conservation activities.

Criteria for consideration for the Corridor certification program would include those outlined for general Commission support (see *Support for Partner Organizations' Projects and Programs* above) as well as the ability to:

- establish a direct connection to at least one theme relating to the Corridor's national significance, as outlined in the Corridor's interpretive framework;
- visually, physically, and/or thematically connect to and complement adjacent or nearby Corridor resources;
- manage the resource in a manner that protects its authenticity and integrity, environmental or scenic quality, and/or interpretive value according to the guidelines or standards outlined in this Preservation and Management Plan;
- provide public access and accurate interpretive information to visitors as appropriate; and
- maintain a clean, orderly facility that meets applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations for health and safety, equal employment opportunity, environmental compliance, and handicapped accessibility.

Canalway Community Partner Program

Voluntary partnership agreements have been used by many heritage areas and other regional planning organizations to help build community awareness of and support for basic heritage development goals. The Commission will work with its partners to develop a concise written agreement or "compact" that will provide the Corridor's 234 municipalities with the opportunity to affirm the Commission's vision and goals through a local public process. Participation in the program will not require a community to take any specific actions, but will call on the community to join the Commission, its partners, and other part-

ner communities in pursuing the mutually beneficial strategies provided for in the Plan. In order to ensure the continued meaningfulness of program membership, communities will be asked to periodically submit to the Commission information on activities they have taken in support of Plan goals. Partner communities may receive priority in applying for Corridor technical or financial assistance, will be included in Corridor promotional activities (see below), and will be permitted to use the Corridor's graphic identity (see *Logo Management* below) in official community wayfinding signage and communications.

Tourism Development and Marketing

The Commission will undertake a number of activities as part of its tourism development effort and strategic tourism marketing and promotion program. Part of this effort will be implemented through the circuit riders program (see page 9.29), which will seek to help individual heritage sites and communities to set tourism goals, identify strengths and weaknesses in heritage resources and interpretive or informational media and facilities, and build linkages to create regional destination clusters. Through its certification program (see page 9.30), the Commission will work to enhance the Corridor's tourism product and visitor infrastructure by helping heritage sites to assess and improve their level of visitor readiness. The Commission's approach to tourism development will be multi-disciplinary, encouraging the integration of cultural programming, interpretation, and education into efforts to enhance heritage sites and visitor services facilities.

The Commission will also act as a clearinghouse for Corridor-wide tourism marketing and promotional information, support new tourism research (see *Additional Studies and Compliance*, page 9.35), and foster the development of new Corridor-wide "soft" tourism products such as travel packages and itineraries, guides and brochures, and other promotional and informational materials (see Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*, and Chapter 8, *Tourism Development and Marketing*). Many of these activities may be undertaken in partnership or under contract with a Corridor-wide convention and visitors bureau or similar organization, which would bring additional resources to the effort to maintain high standards for the Corridor tourism experience (see Chapter 8). An independently funded tourism partner for the Commission will be sought to help position the Corridor, target high-value customers, and operate a dynamic Corridor tourism marketing and sales mechanism to generate maximum economic impact from tourism. Although the Commission's marketing and promotional efforts will seek to be inclusive of all communities throughout the Corridor, participants in the Corridor's technical assistance, certification, and Canalway Community Partner programs (see page 9.30) will have enhanced opportunities to work with the Commission and its tourism partner.

Awards and Recognition Program

The Commission will administer an awards program to celebrate and enhance the visibility of particularly successful heritage development projects and programs that uphold the vision and goals of the Corridor. This program will seek

to recognize the Commission's partners and others responsible for supporting Plan goals; motivate higher levels of commitment and collaboration between partners; call attention to best practices or models for success; inspire others to take on similar efforts; show potential project funders and supporters what their participation can provide; and enhance the collective sense of community and civic involvement in the preservation, conservation, interpretation, or development of Corridor resources. The program will also serve as a means for tracking progress toward achieving Plan goals and acknowledging the importance of completed projects as a measure of success.

Logo Management

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission will employ a unique and distinctive graphic identity or logo (see Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*) as a means of establishing the Corridor's presence and marking official Corridor communications, projects, and programs. The logo will also be used to help provide clarity and consistency to Corridor heritage development, orientation, interpretation, and tourism marketing efforts.

The graphic identity will be a protected federal mark, published in the Federal Register; further protection by trademarking may also be warranted. Use of the Corridor's graphic identity by others must be licensed or authorized through formal agreements or letters of use, with appropriate stipulations and safeguards. In order to ensure consistency in policy, government agencies and other heritage areas will be asked not to reproduce the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor logo without permission; in return, the Corridor will provide the same courtesy with respect to its use of others' logos.

Authorized uses of the Corridor logo by others could include promotional materials and interpretive media; independent publications associated with the Corridor; products sold or distributed by nonprofit organizations for Corridor-related fundraising or promotional activities; wayfinding signage for roads (as approved by the New York State Department of Transportation), municipalities, districts, and trails; and markers for individual historic, cultural, and interpretive sites certified by the Corridor (see page 9.30). All such uses will be subject to Corridor approval of the purpose, layout, context, and a sample, to ensure the quality of the logo reproduction. Alteration of the logo by others will not be approved.

In general, use of the logo by the Corridor and others should connote a commitment to the Corridor's goals. Use of the logo should not be used for commercial site advertising, should not be associated with any materials that are discriminating or express offensive views, and must not imply endorsement of a particular business to the exclusion of others, or endorsement of any political or religious viewpoints.

Assistance to Grantseekers

Projects undertaken by the Commission's partners in support of the Plan will be eligible for a broad variety of funding sources. Funneling the best or most

appropriate projects toward the best-fit funding source will be a significant challenge. A “funding clearinghouse” role will facilitate the Commission’s efforts to encourage partnering between organizations with similar projects and goals, helping them to submit stronger, more compelling funding applications with a regional or interdisciplinary outlook that is part of a coordinated, Corridor-wide effort. The Commission can also help direct funding applicants toward specific services such as marketing and economic research, finance and business planning resources, and grant-writing assistance. It is expected that grantseekers may also look to the Commission to provide seed money, technical assistance, and information that will make their projects more viable from a grant application standpoint.

CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Ongoing public involvement and outreach, including partnerships with government agencies and organizations, will be critical to the Plan’s successful implementation. The Commission and staff have already begun to develop a vigorous public relations program that strives to increase awareness about, and increase support for, the Commission’s vision and goals for the Corridor and its strategies for achieving them. The Commission will also utilize its existing network of partners, and actively seek additional partners, to increase public awareness and deliver its message through their outreach activities. The short-range implementation plan (see page 9.10) and annual report (see page 9.36) will also be important tools for public engagement, announcing new agendas, sharing progress toward goals, and providing opportunities for public input and feedback.

Ongoing public involvement through project implementation will be essential. Projects, particularly those in which the Commission takes the lead, will give the Commission an opportunity to share its vision and the Plan’s goals with a broad group of stakeholders, help establish the National Heritage Corridor’s credibility, and build outside capacity needed for future projects. Through an ever-expanding and evolving civic engagement process, the Commission and project proponents will be able to enrich the concepts and final product of an undertaking. Consequently, new partners will also become involved, thus resulting in an expanded constituency for the Corridor at large.

Advisory Groups

The Corridor’s authorizing legislation allows the Commission to consider the establishment of advisory groups as it deems necessary and beneficial toward the implementation of the Plan. Advisory groups, following Federal Advisory Committee Act provisions, could be formed around particular long-term strategies or programs, or they could be regional or geographically based. Alternatively, they could be formed around technical subject matters, such as heritage development or preservation, and linked to the corresponding Commission committees (see *Organization and Start-Up Activities*, page 9.16).

Public Meetings

Public meetings of the Commission will occur at least on a quarterly basis each calendar year. These forums will allow for the exchange of ideas about projects and planning objectives. Periodic workshops may also be held to ensure broad public participation and diverse perspectives to consideration of specific issues. Public meetings and agendas will be announced in advance, and notice will be published in local newspapers throughout the Corridor. The public will have an opportunity to comment at public meetings.

Roundtables and Conferences

The Commission will also take the lead in hosting a series of summits or roundtables on critical resource management and heritage development topics that would benefit from targeted investigation, partnership-building, and increased public awareness. Specific Corridor-wide issues that would benefit from informal roundtables include water supply and quality, visitor use management and recreation development, agricultural conservation, preservation of historic vessels, invasive species management, and heritage tourism marketing. One issue that would benefit from a conference – which might have a longer and more formal agenda than roundtables, with workshop sessions and requests for papers or presentations from experts – is heritage development, focusing on specific opportunities for generating economic growth through the preservation, enhancement, and interpretation of Corridor heritage resources.

These roundtables and conferences, hosted by the Commission in partnership with local, regional, or expert partners, will provide opportunities for interested parties, agencies and organizations to exchange information, develop consensus on priority action items, set collaborative strategies in motion, and further advance Plan objectives. In particular, the Commission will seek out the involvement of the Corridor's colleges and universities, which have proven technical expertise and research and analysis capabilities on topics related to resource management and heritage development, as well as meeting facilities, staffing, and public outreach programs well-suited for roundtables. The Commission will also seek to support specific recommendations and collaborative initiatives that arise as a direct result of these roundtables or conferences (see *Support for Partner Organizations' Projects and Programs*, page 9.27).

Publications and Website

Readily accessible media are a key element of any proactive public involvement strategy. The Commission will continue to develop and enhance its website as a primary hub of information on the Corridor, with connections to partner organizations and activities and events occurring throughout the National Heritage Corridor. Periodical publications such as newsletters, distributed by mail and posted on the website, will be another important form of outreach to communities, organizations, and individuals, alerting them to new information about Corridor programs, funding opportunities, best practices, and awards.

The Commission and Corridor staff will also benefit from a coordinated suite of targeted communications materials to use in public presentations and meetings. In addition to the Executive Summary of the Plan, which is intended to generate enthusiasm and interest in Corridor resources and strategies among key stakeholders and potential partners and supporters, these materials might include a PowerPoint show, an at-a-glance “agenda” distilling the Corridor vision, a “case statement” of key points for insertion into Corridor communications and grant applications, and a glossy tri-fold brochure in the highly recognizable National Park Service “Unigrid” format.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES AND COMPLIANCE

The preceding chapters of this Preservation and Management Plan have identified further research needs and plans required to support some of the Commission’s priority strategies for the Corridor. These include:

- *Guidelines for heritage development:* In Chapters 3-6 of this Plan, guidelines have been provided to help inform and coordinate future planning of preservation, conservation, interpretation, and recreational development activities in the Corridor (see above). While these guidelines have been developed through extensive study of Corridor resources and consultation with key stakeholders, they will require adjustment and enhancement to accommodate changing conditions, new discoveries and opportunities, or changing standards of treatment and practice. Ongoing efforts to update the guidelines will be informed by the results of Commission projects as well as by a proposed Corridor-wide heritage development conference (see above).
- *Impacts of canal development on Native Americans:* While Chapter 2 of this Plan briefly describes the significance of the canals as a major factor in the disruption and dispossession of the region’s Native American settlements, scholarship on this aspect of Corridor history is currently limited. More attention should be applied to the task of presenting Native American points of view on Corridor history and culture through the interpretive and educational media and programming proposed by this Plan. The efforts of the Commission and its partners to enhance and communicate these essential stories will be informed by continued consultation with the region’s Native American nations.
- *National Register nomination:* As noted in Chapter 3 of this Plan, an updated statement of significance is needed to support a multiple resource nomination of the New York State Canal System and towpath-era canals to the National Register of Historic Places. This statement, which would update a statement prepared in 1993 by the New York State Historic Preservation Office, may be based on information contained in this Plan as well as the 1998 special resource study by the National Park Service. Subsequent to the nomination, additional research on the canal system and related historic and cultural resources will be required, including a full inventory and condition assessment.

- *Graphic identity and signage design guidelines:* Chapter 6 of this Plan describes the graphic identity that has been developed to represent the National Heritage Corridor and serve as a unifying and consistent presence in Corridor-related communications, promotional materials, interpretive media, signage, and other orientation tools. Detailed graphic standards and designs for signage and other applications, with complete specifications for colors, fonts, materials, and usage, are required to facilitate the use of the graphic identity by the Commission and others.
- *Tourism research:* Chapter 8 of this Plan describes gaps in existing tourism-related research required to effectively target marketing activities and assess the economic impacts of heritage tourism in the Corridor. Official New York State tourism data is collected by tourism regions that are not correlated to the Corridor boundary, and much of the data available from other sources on related topics such as recreation are gathered from residents rather than tourists. The Commission will support efforts that will enable tourism promotion agencies and others to make the most effective use of limited marketing resources.

The Commission will also consider supporting additional research, inventories, or studies critical to the completion of priority projects (see *Support for Partner Organizations' Projects and Programs*, page 9.27), such as an inventory in support of a National Register nomination or market research that supports the development of enhanced tourism products and new heritage-related businesses. In general, the Commission will seek the assistance of its state and federal partners, as well as the Corridor region's colleges and universities, to provide financial or technical assistance for these activities.

An environmental assessment has been conducted for this Plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Applicable laws and processes governing further legal, cultural, and environmental compliance required for Plan implementation is described in the environmental assessment.

MONITORING AND AMENDING THE PLAN

The Commission will assess the Plan's effectiveness on an ongoing basis and track its progress in meeting the goals and implementing the strategies of the Plan. The Commission will use conventional planning, budgeting, and benchmarking tools to monitor progress toward achieving Plan goals and long-term sustainability. The short-range implementation plan will allow for adjustments to be made along the way with public input. These adjustments, along with any legislative modifications that may be recommended, will be called out in an annual report.

The Commission will prepare an annual report that will describe and evaluate the progress toward implementing its short-range implementation plan, and the overall effectiveness of the Preservation and Management Plan's strategies for preserving, interpreting, and protecting the Corridor and its resources. This may include a spotlight on success stories, such as completed projects, innovative programs, and key partnerships contributing to Plan implementation. The

annual report will be prepared in conjunction with the Commission's recurring and non-recurring federal appropriations requests, and will specifically address how its performance is affected by budget changes. The report will be made available to the Secretary of the Interior, Congress, and the public.⁸

While the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor designation is permanent, the authorizing legislation for the Corridor Commission sunsets in December 2010. As this date approaches, the Commission will conduct an evaluation, or sustainability study, of its operations and work to date with an eye toward options for the future. This analysis will include a review of the accomplishments of the Commission, National Park Service, and partners to date; an assessment of how effective federal funds invested in the Corridor have been in leveraging additional federal, state, local and private sector investment; an evaluation of the Commission as a form of management for the National Heritage Corridor; and identification of further actions and commitments needed to fulfill the legislative intent of the Corridor. This information will be used to assist the Commission in determining alternatives for continued National Heritage Corridor operations after 2010 and until the Plan's goals are substantially achieved.

Endnotes

¹ ECNHC mission statement

² PL 106-554, Title VIII, Sec.804 (a)

³ After redistricting that took effect in 2004, the number of districts overlapping the Corridor is now 10.

⁴ PL 106-554, Title VIII, Sec.805 (b)

⁵ PL 106-554, Title VIII, Sec.804 (h,7)

⁶ PL 106-554, Title VIII, Sec.802(b)(4)

⁷ National Park Service *Agreements Handbook*, Version 6, October 2002.

⁸ PL 106-554, Title VIII, Sec.805(d): "...The Commission shall submit an annual report and shall make available an audit of all relevant records to the Governor and the Secretary identifying its expenses and any income, the entities to which any grants or technical assistance were made during the year for which the report was made, and contributions by other parties toward achieving Corridor purposes."

