



# Erie Canalway Map & Guide



Scotia, Frank Forte

## Enjoy the Great Outdoors Along New York’s Canals



Albany, Call of the Loon

**H**ead to the water to find adventure and fun along more than 500 miles of canals and connected waterways and trails. This is the perfect year to look to the canals for memorable and safe day trips and vacation getaways. From boat rentals to multiday bike rides to visiting state and national parks, there’s plenty to explore on and off the water.

### Get on the Water

The New York State Canal System—which includes the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals—is the centerpiece of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Relax and enjoy a canal boat tour or multiday voyage. You’ll find tours within an hour’s drive of every major city in the Canalway Corridor. You can also launch your own motorboat, paddle the canal, or rent a boat for a self-skipped vacation.

### Hit the Trail

The Canalway Trail is an ideal place for fitness and fun. Spend a few hours walking or cycling and seeing the sites or plan a longer cycling trip to really experience all the trail has to offer. The 360 mile east-west trail from Buffalo to Albany parallels the Erie Canal and is part of the newly completed Empire State Trail, which also extends north-south from New York City to Lake Champlain.

### Discover Canal Communities

One of the best parts of visiting the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is exploring the many cities, towns, and villages along the waterway. Many of these communities provide visitor centers with restrooms, showers, and other services for boaters, cyclists, and paddlers within walking distance of shops, restaurants, and attractions. Be sure to visit local museums where you’ll learn about people, places and innovations along the canals.

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### Canals and COVID-19

Please refer to current guidelines and recommendations from the State of New York and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to safely enjoy all the Canalway Corridor has to offer.

This guide presents exciting things to do, places to go, and exceptional activities to enjoy this year.



# Get on the Water



New York's canal system has been in continuous operation since 1825, longer than any other constructed transportation system on the North American continent. Over the years, it has been enlarged three times to accommodate larger boats and more traffic.

Lock E25, Mays Point, Frank Forte

Welcome boaters! The NYS Canal System is open from May 21 through October 13. After more than 200 years of continuous service, New York's canals are still working waterways that serve all types of boats, from pleasure boats to tugboats and barges to canoes and kayaks. Cruise or paddle the historic and scenic waterway and you'll discover scenic vistas, abundant wildlife, and unique communities where you'll find amenities and numerous sites of interest. Visit one of the NYS Canal System's 57 locks to see their massive gates and mechanical gears, and watch boats pass through.

### Launch Your Own Boat

There are more than 80 public boat ramps along the NYS Canal System where you can launch your own boat for a few hours or a multiday trip. The Erie Canal connects with Oneida, Onondaga, Cross, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes where you can enjoy other water sports, beaches, and sailing. Marinas and public docks provide services and overnight accommodations. Many communities offer showers, laundry facilities, hook-ups, and other boater amenities right in the center of town.

### Canal Boating Basics

- Boating is free and no permit is needed to go through a lock.
- Lock tenders are on hand to assist you and make your experience going through the locks easy and enjoyable.
- It takes 15 to 20 minutes to go through a lock.
- Power boats and paddlers share the canal, so be mindful of speed limits and wakes.
- There are more than 80 public boat ramps where you can launch your boat.
- The canal is open daily from 7am to 5pm, but many locks and lift bridges are open on demand until 10 pm.



Tribes Hill, Frank Forte

### The New York State Canal System includes:

- Erie Canal, which connects the Hudson River with Lake Erie, 338 miles to the west;
- Champlain Canal, which connects the tidal portion of the Hudson River with Lake Champlain, 63 miles to the north;
- Oswego Canal, which follows the Oswego River from the Erie Canal 23 miles north to Lake Ontario;
- Cayuga-Seneca Canal, which connects the Erie Canal to 92 miles of canalized rivers and lakes, including the Seneca River and Cayuga and Seneca Lakes.

The New York State Canal System is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority. For current information and up-to-date Notices to Mariners, visit [canals.ny.gov](https://canals.ny.gov).



### Boat Tours and Vacation Rentals

You can get on the water for a scenic ride or enjoy a lunch or dinner cruise on one of the many tour boats along the canals. Specialty cruises, sailing adventures, and wine tours are offered on lake and river sections of the waterway.

Vacation rentals provide an idyllic way to experience the canal at a relaxed pace. You'll get lessons in steering, docking, and locking before heading out, so you can feel confident on the water even if you're not an experienced boater. Rental boats are well-equipped with sleeping quarters, a galley, and deck space for relaxing; many come with bikes so you can enjoy the Canalway Trail too.

Find a list of boat tours and vacation rentals at [www.eriecanalway/explore/boating](https://www.eriecanalway/explore/boating). Additional boater resources and maps include:

- [nycanalmap.com](https://nycanalmap.com)
- [canals.ny.gov](https://canals.ny.gov)
- [eriecanalway.org](https://eriecanalway.org)



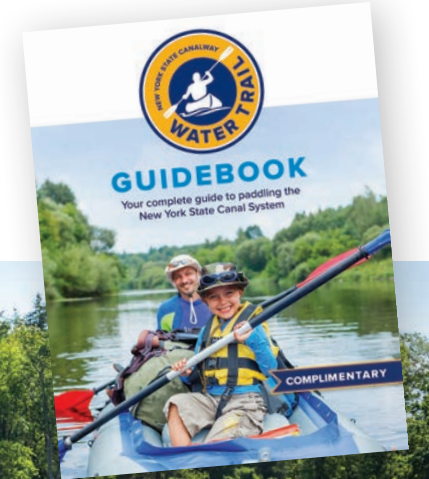
Fairport, Sandi Osterweis



Lock 12, Tribes Hill, Frank Forte

### Longer Voyages

The NYS Canal System is part of a 6,000-mile boating route known as the **Great Loop**. Boaters traverse 15 states, 100+ locks, and typically take a year to complete it. Retirees, families, and a growing number of 20-somethings take up the journey for the freedom and challenge it offers, as well as the opportunity to see and learn from people and places all along the route. [greatloop.org](https://greatloop.org)



Stillwater, Frank Forte

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### Make Boating Safety a priority

- Always wear a properly fitted PFD
- Stay away from dams, buoys and barriers
- Be cautious near hydropower assets, water levels can change quickly
- Respect all signs and warning signals
- Tell someone your plans, destination and timing
- Use designated boat launch sites
- Be smart, no drinking and boating
- Leave no trace: carry in/carry out
- Before heading out, check the weather forecast and [canals.ny.gov](https://canals.ny.gov) for current conditions



[brookfieldrenewable.com](https://brookfieldrenewable.com)



# Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

**D**esignated by Congress in 2000, the National Heritage Corridor extends along New York's canals from one end of the state to the other. As you travel, you will discover distinct regional differences that will keep you coming back to experience all that the Canalway Corridor has to offer.



North Tonawanda, Neil Ferguson

## Buffalo to Rochester (90 miles)

Find charming towns connected by water and trail along the longest section of the Erie Canal that still follows much of its original path.



Fairport, Keith Boas

## Rochester to Syracuse (90 miles)

The canal is the centerpiece of vibrant cities and small towns along this stretch of the Erie Canal, where you'll find varied terrain on water and land.



Oswego

## The Oswego Canal

Three Rivers to Oswego (23 miles)

Short but sweet! The canalized Oswego River flows north to Lake Ontario and is a popular place for sport fishing, boating, and paddling.

## The Champlain Canal

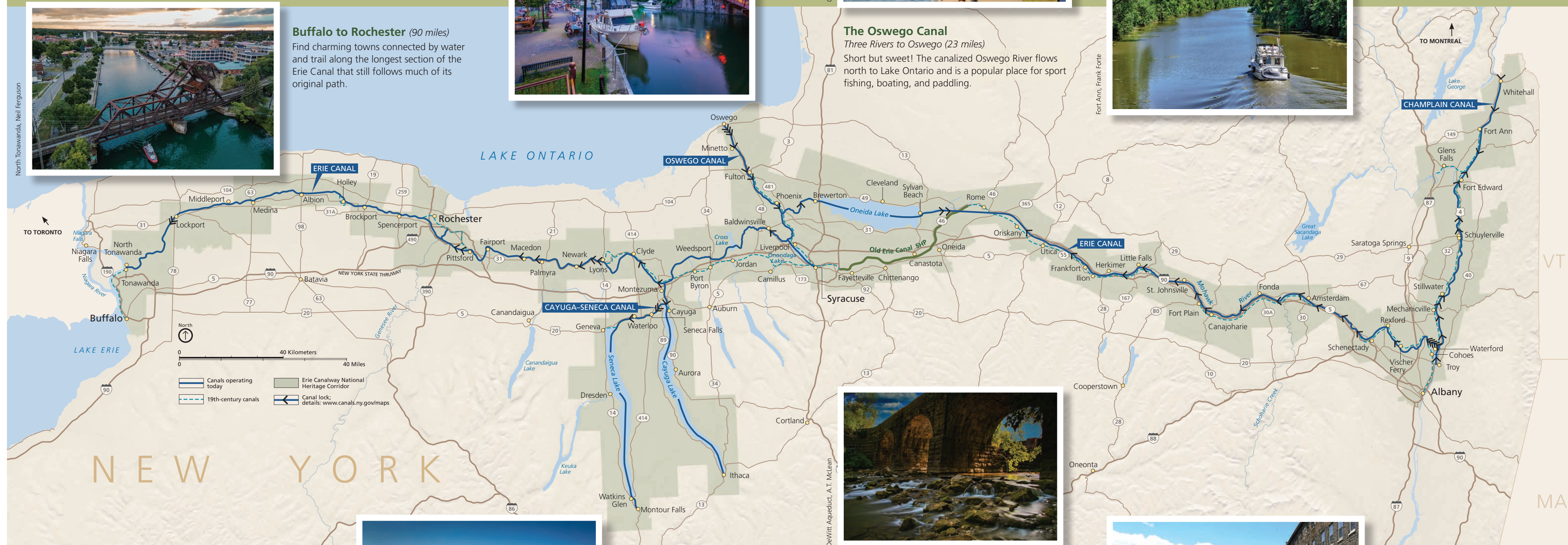
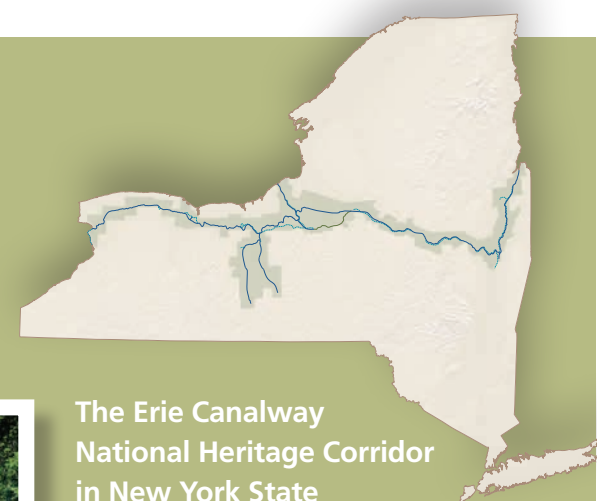
Waterford to Whitehall (63 miles)

Boat, paddle, or cycle a region steeped in American history along the picturesque Hudson River and Champlain Canal.



Fort Ann, Frank Forte

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in New York State



## Plan Your Trip

Use the online **New York State Canals Map** to find a wealth of information on places of interest, visitor centers, boat rentals and tours, and paddling access sites. You can filter by features such as municipal centers, public restrooms, camping, and picnic facilities. Directions and a distance calculator make it easy to plan trips by bike, kayak, boat, or car.

[nycanalmap.com](http://nycanalmap.com)



Seneca Falls, Frank Forte

## The Cayuga-Seneca Canal

Montezuma to Geneva, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes (92 miles)

Famed for its wineries, wildlife, and beautiful Finger Lakes, this region also includes Seneca Falls, the birthplace of the women's rights movement in 1848.

## Syracuse to Little Falls (90 miles)

Travel the route of today's canal through lively summer communities along Oneida Lake or follow the historic route of the 1800s Erie Canal through the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park. The Canalway Trail runs through the park and paddlers are welcome to explore the shallow waters of the old Erie.



DeWitt Aqueduct, A.T. McLean



Little Falls (artist), Keith Boas

## Little Falls to Albany (90 miles)

The Erie Canal merges with the scenic Mohawk River through a region rich in history and culture.



# Experience the Epic Empire State Trail

## The longest state multiuse trail in the nation



Put on your sneakers or hop on a bike and explore New York State’s extraordinary experiences, people, and places along the 750-mile Empire State Trail. The trail welcomes people of all abilities, from all walks of life, and all backgrounds to enjoy the longest state multiuse trail in the nation.

### Great Day Trips and Adventurous Journeys

The trail is both accessible and varied, so you can head out with your family for a few miles, enjoy a full day’s journey to see the sites, or have an unforgettable multiday adventure. Lodging, dining, and visitor services are readily available short distances off the trail.

Plan trips from different starting points and you’ll quickly see that no two sections are alike. What makes each journey great is the changing scenery of land and water; diverse and historic cities, towns, and villages; local eateries, ice cream, and craft beverages; and variety of attractions along the route.

### Guidebooks, Maps and Tours

Whether you want to cycle on your own or with an organized ride, you’ll find comprehensive guidebooks, maps and online resources to help you find trailheads, sites of interest, best bet trips, and amenities. We recommend consulting maps in advance of your trip.

**Cycle the Erie Canal** in July is an annual 8-day bike tour from Buffalo to Albany organized by Parks & Trails New York. Several private companies offer supported rides throughout the season. Find cycling resources at:

- [empiretrail.ny.gov](http://empiretrail.ny.gov)
- [cycletheeriecanal.org](http://cycletheeriecanal.org)
- [nycanalmap.com](http://nycanalmap.com)
- [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org)

## BY THE MILES

### 750 miles

**New York’s Empire State Trail** extends north-south from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to Lake Champlain and east-west from Albany to Buffalo. It includes the following segments:

### 360 miles

**The Erie Canalway Trail** is a show-piece of the Empire State Trail network. The trail closely parallels both active and historic sections of the Erie Canal and is mostly flat. Eighty-seven percent is off road and suitable for all ages and abilities. The remaining on-road sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways, intended for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding adjacent to vehicle traffic. You’ll see unique structures like locks and lift bridges, working tugs and other vessels, friendly vacationers in boats of all stripes, and you’ll discover canal communities and historic sites that are intriguing and fun cycling destinations. Parking areas, restrooms, and canal amenity centers that serve boaters, hikers, and cyclists are located all along the route.

### 210 miles

**The Hudson Valley Greenway Trail** from New York City to Albany starts at the Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan overlooking New York harbor and the Statue of Liberty, and winds north through the Hudson Valley

passing through bustling cities, vibrant villages, and scenic rural landscapes. Trail users can visit numerous historic sites, museums, and cultural attractions near the trail route, including the iconic Walkway Over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie. Seventy-five percent of the Hudson Valley route is off-road trail. The remaining on-road sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways, intended for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding adjacent to vehicle traffic.

### 180 miles

**The Champlain Canalway Trail** includes a mix of off and on-road segments from Waterford to Whitehall. The trail closely parallels the Hudson River/Champlain Canal through a region rich in Revolutionary War history. Forty percent of the route is off road trail. At Fort Edward, the 9-mile off-road **Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail** connects to the Glens Falls Bikeway and Lake George. North of Whitehall, the Empire State Trail is an on-road route running north through the Champlain Valley to the Canadian Border at Rouses Point.



# Take the Canalway Challenge

## Walk • Bike • Run • Paddle



### Cycling with Kids

The Erie Canalway Trail is fantastic for families. Flat sections are easy for kids to manage and you can practice good bike etiquette and safety when passing, stopping, and turning. Plan shorter rides initially and lengthen them as your child’s interest and stamina grow. Choose a destination to give kids a point to shoot for as they ride and a sense of accomplishment when they reach it. Your destination may be the next lift bridge or town, a lock, park, historic site, or ice cream stand. In New York State, all children under the age of 14 are required to wear certified bicycle safety helmets. Model smart cycling and wear yours, too. Find suggested **Kid Friendly Rides** at [eriecanalway.org/explore/cycling](http://eriecanalway.org/explore/cycling).



Join a growing community of canal enthusiasts who are finding fun, fitness, and adventure through the Canalway Challenge. Part fitness challenge, part journey of discovery, the Canalway Challenge is an invitation to discover all you can do along New York’s canals and Canalway Trails.

Participation is free and registration is open to individuals, teams, and organizations. Simply register online and choose a mileage goal of 15, 90, 180, or 360 miles (End-to-End/Buffalo to Albany); then walk, run, cycle, or paddle on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System to achieve it. Earn mileage status and recognition when you finish. You can complete the Canalway Challenge in one big trip or many small ones. Visit the website to hear inspiring stories of people who have completed the Challenge and sign up today.

- [canalwaychallenge.org](http://canalwaychallenge.org)
- [Facebook.com/groups/canalwaychallenge](https://www.facebook.com/groups/canalwaychallenge)

### Every Journey Begins with a Single Step

The Canalway Challenge is open to people of all ages and abilities. If you’re not used to regular exercise or you have a disability, start with the 1st Mile Challenge. Begin with small steps and work up to doing one mile. Then challenge yourself by signing up for more through the Canalway Challenge.

There are numerous places along the canals and Canalway Trail that are accessible and several that offer adaptive bikes and kayaks. Complete your 1st Mile at an official 1st Mile event, or on your own with family and friends. Learn more at: [canalwaychallenge.org](http://canalwaychallenge.org)



Trail markers and wayfinding signs make it easy to follow the trail and to connect off-and-on-road segments. Trail surface conditions vary from stone dust to paved. Hybrid tires are recommended for stone dust segments.



# A National Treasure

**B**uilt between 1817 and 1825, the original Erie Canal traversed 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo. It was the longest artificial waterway and the greatest public works project in North America.

The canal put New York on the map as the Empire State—the leader in population, industry, and economic strength. It transformed New York City into the nation's principal seaport and opened the interior of North America to settlement. As the Erie Canal carried immigrants westward, they infused the nation with different languages, customs, practices, and religions.

World travelers embarked upon the Grand Tour to see the engineering marvel of the Erie Canal. Local residents packed tour boats for summer outings.

The canal was enlarged several times to accommodate larger boats and increasing traffic. The version we use today was completed in 1918 and remains fully navigable. In 2016 it was designated a National Historic Landmark for its exceptional national significance and historical integrity.

**Come touch history and experience for yourself the iconic canals that changed the nation.**



In partnership with the National Park Service

The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of historic waterway. We achieve our mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York.

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#eriecanalway #NYSCanals  
@eriecanalway

## Canal Festivals & Events

Please find a list of events online at [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org). Check with event organizers for up-to-date information and COVID-19 safety information.



Brockport, Kyle Preston

## Enter the Erie Canalway Photo Contest

Share your view of the places you love and unique scenes along the waterway for our annual photo contest. Winning images will be published in the 2022 Erie Canalway calendar. Find an entry form and tips on our website: [eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest](http://eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest)

Deadline for entries: **August 27, 2021**

**Note:** Images must be horizontal format.

## NEW YORK STATE CANAL STORE

### Take the Memories With You!

Visit the **online canal store** to find shirts, hats, mugs, and totes to show your love for canals, sport your Canalway Challenge mileage, or gear up for paddling on the NYS Canalway Water Trail. All net proceeds support Erie Canalway programs.



[shop.eriecanalway.org](http://shop.eriecanalway.org)

### Many thanks!

The Erie Canalway Map & Guide, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Canalway Challenge are made possible with generous support from:



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