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

Two hundred years ago, the Erie Canal was hailed as a symbol of American ingenuity. Its impact was immediate and far reaching. Connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes by water, it transformed upstate New York—and our country—forever.

Like those who were drawn to the canals before us, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is investing in innovative approaches and infusing new ideas and resourcefulness to advance preservation, tourism, and community development along the canals. Combined with a dogged commitment to hard work and a sharp focus on the mission at hand, we are succeeding at reaching our goals.

Key to our approach is working in partnership with organizations, agencies, and individuals at the local, state, and federal levels. You will see in this annual report how these collaborations are bringing good ideas to life and fueling community and economic revitalization.

In these challenging times, New York’s iconic canals remain a powerful reminder that coming together to advance a shared vision is a formula for success. Let’s keep working together to improve the quality of life for Corridor residents and make the NYS Canal System—its communities, waterways, and trails—a welcoming destination for all.
## By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants awarded to organizations and municipalities</td>
<td>$108,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators and museum specialists participated in educational workshops and forums</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households watched our new documentary film Floating Ideas: How the Erie Canal Helped Shape America when it was released in June, according to Nielsen Ratings</td>
<td>7,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie Canalway Map &amp; Guides distributed</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie Canalway Calendars distributed</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles of the NYS Canalway Water Trail adopted by volunteer stewards</td>
<td>19,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges created</td>
<td>1,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People attended sponsored events</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Trail Guidebooks distributed</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddlers turned out for Paddle the Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households watched our new documentary film Floating Ideas: How the Erie Canal Helped Shape America when it was released in June, according to Nielsen Ratings</td>
<td>7,457</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the pandemic continued to present unprecedented challenges across the Canalway Corridor, it was especially gratifying to support diverse and innovative projects that contributed to the resilience of canal communities.

13 non-profit organizations and municipalities received Erie Canalway IMPACT! Grants in 2021 totaling $108,787.

**Buffalo Maritime Center ($12,000)** is creating an exhibit dedicated to the Haudenosaunee alliance of Native Americans and Erie Canal history to complement the Center’s building of the Packet Boat, Seneca Chief.

**Canal Society of New York State ($5,300)** is installing interpretive signs to improve outreach and accessibility at the Erie Canal Heritage Park at Port Byron.

**Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum ($9,967)** produced a virtual 3-D tour of the museum complex and a STEM-based distance learning program for youth.

**City of Amsterdam ($11,757)** is instituting creative, place-based visitor enhancements at Riverlink Park and Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook.

**Corn Hill Navigation in Pittsford ($11,388)** implemented a variety of new educational initiatives aboard the Sam Patch, including a bird watching tour and hands-on learning for students.

**Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse ($11,000)** offered Erie Eats, a major exhibition, tours, lectures, bike rides, and tastings which explored the canal’s many impacts on agriculture and foodways.

**Erie Canal Discovery Center/Niagara County Historical Society in Lockport ($4,180)** developed five virtual lessons on the history, geography, engineering and national impact of the Erie Canal.

**Lumber City Development Corporation in North Tonawanda ($3,500)** created a canal-themed mural at Gateway Harbor Park, strengthening the community’s sense of place and canal heritage.

**Montezuma Audubon Center in Savannah ($10,865)** is developing an early detection invasive species management program and STEM-based educational opportunities at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

**Village of Brockport ($4,830)** enhanced Brockport’s self-guided walking tour by upgrading tour materials and interpretive panels.

**Village of Medina ($10,500)** installed an ADA accessible kayak launch located on the Erie Canal near downtown Medina.

**Village of Newark ($1,500)** repaired vandalism damage to a prominent mural on the canal.

**Western New York Land Conservancy, Inc. in East Aurora ($12,000)** developed engineering and design plans for The Riverline, a project that will transform an unused rail corridor into a nature trail and greenway along the Buffalo River near the terminus of the Erie Canal.

IMPACT! Grants were made possible with funding support provided by the National Park Service and the NYS Canal Corporation.
The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, in partnership with the National Park Foundation and WCNY-TV, released *Floating Ideas: How the Erie Canal Helped Shape America* in June. The half-hour documentary examines the spread of ideas along the Erie Canal, with an emphasis on women’s rights, suffrage, and the quest for social justice. More than 100 people attended an online forum where we explored the film’s relevance to social justice movements today.

A 9-minute companion video and curriculum for grades 6-12, called *Opening the Gates to Change: The Erie Canal and Women’s Suffrage*, makes the quest for voting rights relevant for young people and explores ways that youth are making their voices heard in the face of today’s pressing issues.

The documentary was produced by WCNY Public Media for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor with funding support from the National Park Foundation, the National Park Service, and the New York State Canal Corporation.
We completed design and engineering drawings for building stabilization, shoreline restoration, and soil remediation to advance the Matton Shipyard Preservation and Adaptive Reuse Initiative in Cohoes. After securing historic objects, buildings on site were cleaned of all remaining non-hazardous materials. We also developed five new interpretive wayside panels to be installed in early 2022, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

**Workshops**

In collaboration with International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, we held five virtual workshops attended by 87 staff and volunteers at historic and cultural sites, museums, and national park sites. The workshops focused on volunteer recruitment and retention, and how to tell difficult stories.

**Innovative Education**

With support from the Central New York Community Foundation, we brought together the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST) and the Erie Canal Museum to develop and implement a cross-curricular education program combining science, engineering, and history. Lessons, field trips, and hands-on activities helped students understand the engineering design process used to solve a variety of problems faced during canal construction, from elevation changes to crossing rivers to weighing boats. The innovative curriculum will now become part of our Ticket to Ride program offerings.

In August, we hosted Congressmen David McKinley (R-WV-1) and Paul Tonko (D-NY-20) as part of the American Congressional Exchange (ACE), sponsored by the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, D.C. We were honored to represent National Heritage Areas and proudly showcase the NYS Canal System by taking the Congressmen to the Waterford Flight of Locks.

**Bipartisan Exchange**

In collaboration with International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, we held five virtual workshops attended by 87 staff and volunteers at historic and cultural sites, museums, and national park sites. The workshops focused on volunteer recruitment and retention, and how to tell difficult stories.

**Erie Canalway Photo Contest and Calendar**

More than 300 images submitted for the 16th Annual Erie Canalway Photo Contest remind us that the NYS Canal System is a state and national treasure worthy of preservation and celebration. We distributed 19,500 calendars to showcase the contest’s winning images, like this one of Adams Basin by Joe Pompili.
People from 25 states and Washington D.C. walked, ran, cycled, and paddled 238,921 miles on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System as part of the Canalway Challenge. More than 1,130 individuals, 300 teams, and 28 organizations signed on.

The most popular choice of miles pledged in 2021 was 360; in 2020 it was 15. Several participants completed epic End-to-End journeys, while others used the Canalway Challenge to overcome obstacles.

We are grateful for the promotional support of many organizations and individuals, including the NYS Canal Corporation, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Tourism Industry Association, county tourism promotion agencies, visitor centers, historic sites, and canalside businesses.
We made significant strides toward our goal of welcoming people of all ages and diverse accessibility needs to the Canalway Corridor. Our efforts in 2021 included building partnerships with disability advocates to offer programs and events, conduct accessibility assessments for 20 canal-related attractions, and develop new itineraries to be released in 2022.

We worked with several organizations to host and promote events that invited people with disabilities and their families and friends to experience adaptive recreation, music, and food along the canals. More than 300 people participated in events hosted by Rochester Accessible Adventures, the Fitness Inclusion Network at SUNY Upstate Medical University, ARC Wayne, the Village of Brockport, and the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse.

Events included recreational activities, tours, concerts, and heritage celebrations that brought residents and visitors to experience all that canal communities have to offer.

This year’s event highlights included a return of Cycling the Erie Canal hosted by Parks & Trails New York, summer concerts on the Erie Canal in Newark, Pittsford, Brockport, and Seneca Falls, Kayak Through History Tours in Schenectady, Amsterdam’s Riverfest, Local History Cruises on the Champlain Canal in Schuylerville, and Doors Open Buffalo.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the New York State Canal Corporation teamed up to support 27 events in 2021 to showcase the Canalway Corridor’s nationally significant heritage and the tremendous recreational appeal of the waterway and Canalway Trail. After a year with very few events in 2020, we were pleased to support community events that brought 42,000 people to the canals in safe and fun ways.

ERIE CANALWAY ACCESSIBLE TOURISM INITIATIVE

EVENT SUPPORT

RECREATION and TOURISM

Beers, Bikes, and Barges, Canastota

Local History Cruise, Schuylerville

Capital Walls Mural Bike Tour, Albany

Cycling the Erie Canal

Brockport
The canals continue to attract all sorts of paddlers, from adventurous solo thru-paddlers to weekend explorers to first-timers. Our New York State Canalway Water Trail Guidebook, suggested best bet trips, Facebook group, online map and on-the-ground water trail signs, and volunteer stewards are helping to make the NYS Canalway Water Trail an exciting paddling destination.

We launched the NYS Canalway Water Trail Stewardship Program in April with 41 enthusiastic volunteers. With training and tools in hand, these dedicated individuals, families, groups, and organizations went to work, helping to ensure that the canals are welcoming and safe for paddlers. This program will continue in 2022, with the goal of covering additional miles of the waterway.

More than 200 paddlers enjoyed the scenic and historic Erie Canal/Mohawk River during Paddle the Mohawk Valley, our signature paddling event, on August 7. We started at Schoharie Crossing, paddled through Locks 12 and 11, and ended at Port Jackson, where everyone gathered for lunch on the lawn and enjoyed the beautiful day.


Stewards’ gathering on the Champlain Canal, Mechanicville

NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Karl Beard, retired, NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
Fred Bonn, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Mike Cavanaugh, American Canoe Association
Paul Comstock, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
Sasha delPeral, NYS Canal Corporation
Kris Fitzgerald, 2k Design
Scott Keller, Hudson River Valley Greenway
Alex Kuttesch, Montgomery County
Donna Larkin, Upstate Kayak Rentals

41 Volunteer Stewards
159 Miles Adopted
365 Work Visits
433 Hours
127 Trash Bags Filled
CANALWAY RECREATIONAL HUB

We continued to work closely with the Tonawandas on implementation of a pilot Canalway Recreational Hub at the Gateway Harbor of the Tonawandas. The goal is to develop an immersion point where residents and visitors alike will be able to enhance their canal experiences with comprehensive amenities and services. In November, Governor Kathy Hochul delivered transformational news that will further fuel this initiative. North Tonawanda was selected as the recipient of a $10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award to “make their downtown a vibrant, mixed-use district centered on the confluence of two waterfronts: the Niagara River and the Erie Canal, to create a unified and interconnected environment as the ‘Gateway to the Erie Canal.’”

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Kal Wysokowski, Canandaigua, Committee Chair, Erie Canalway Commission
Scott Bell, Watkins Glen, Hart Hotels
Judy McKinney Cherry, Watkins Glen, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
Kevin Clark, Fairport
Paul Comstock, Houston, TX, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
Annette Jiminez Gleason, Rochester Area Community Foundation
Susan Holland, Ithaca, Erie Canalway Commission
Nicoile Mahoney, Canandaigua, Break the Ice Media
Bob Stivers, Geneva, Stivers Seneca Marine & Lake Street Station Winery

CANAL RECREATIONAL HUB

By working with municipal and nonprofit partners, Erie Canalway also leveraged $1,458,034 in FY2021 in support of program and project activities.

SUPPORT & REVENUE

- Federal .......................................................... $739,285
- State ............................................................ $467,045
- Contributions, Grants & Sponsorships ................ $226,071
- In-kind Contributions ................................. $177,959
- Program Fees & Other ............................... $12,446
Total .......................................................... $1,562,806

EXPENSES

- Preserve & Share
  Our Extraordinary Heritage ...................... $377,415
- Promote the Corridor as a
  World Class Destination ......................... $634,933
- Foster Vibrant Communities
  Connected by the Waterway .................. $349,362
- Program Support, Management & Resource Development ....... $155,984
Total .......................................................... $1,517,694

* The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor benefits from the work of two entities—a federal Commission and the nonprofit Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. These simplified financial statements reflect a summary of both entities. The Commission auditor is Jones & Company, PC. The Heritage Fund auditor is Cusack & Company, CPAs LLC. More detailed and audited financial statements for both entities may be requested by contacting our office. In addition, financial statements for the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund may be obtained from the NYS Office of the Attorney General’s Charities Bureau, www.charitiesnys.com or (212) 416-8686.
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Erie Canalway Leadership Circle ($10,000+)
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Environmental Protection Fund
National Park Foundation,
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partners including Union
Pacific Railroad and donors
across the country
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New York State Canal
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DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

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Village of Fairport, Office of
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Bergmann Associates
Blue Haven Cottage
Buffalo Maritime Center
Community Foundation for the
Greater Capital Region
Ess-Kay Yards, Inc., Kimberly
Vochsmeier
GE Foundation
Krackdale & Tallent
NYS Society of Children of the
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Syracuse & Company
STI Steel, Inc.
The Baird Foundation
The Cogroppa Firm
The King Group LLC
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Joseph Morelle (25th District)
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Chris Jacobs (27th District)

TRANSITIONS AND NEWS
More than 120 guests gathered in October to honor founding Heritage Fund Board Chair Tom Blanchard for his decades of service in support of upstate New York waterways and waterfront redevelopment. We said farewell to retiring Commissioner Peter Ryan, NYS Department of Transportation, and Board Member Kent Barwick. We gratefully acknowledge their insights and contributions to strengthening the organization. Joining us this year is staff member Patrick Stenshorn who serves as Education Program Manager.