



**NYS Canalway Water Trail
Request for Proposals
HAND LAUNCH GUIDELINES FOR NYS CANAL SYSTEM
Reissue: October 2, 2020**

I. INTRODUCTION

a. Purpose

Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. (Erie Canalway), the not-for-profit partner of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, is seeking written proposals from a qualified consultant to produce illustrated guidelines for facilities to launch canoes, kayaks, and other small-craft, tailored to conditions on the New York State Canal System.

These guidelines are intended to help organizations and communities plan and design facilities for hand-launch boats. They will be based on standards and guidelines previously developed for this and other waterways while focusing on structures, bank and channel features, and hydrologic characteristics that may be unique to New York's 450 miles of working canals.

While every launch site is distinctive, many on the Canal System share common features, structure types, and challenges. The goal of these guidelines is to provide drawings, photographs, equipment recommendations, and lists of desirable features and things to avoid at several types of canal-side locations that can be readily adapted to meet local conditions. Ideally, the guidelines will propose a range of options of each type of launch site – minimum standards required for paddlers to move their boats and themselves between water and land; design ideas for users of varying physical abilities; features, equipment, and amenities that could make a launch site exceptional.

Proposals will be evaluated and a consultant selected based on demonstrated experience designing launch facilities to suit different local conditions, experience designing facilities for users of varying physical abilities, an understanding of unique challenges posed by constructed waterways, ability to produce generic drawings and specifications that can be readily adapted to meet local conditions on the Canal System, ability to clearly articulate requirements, standards, guidelines, and recommendations in writing.

b. Budget

This is a fixed-price contract not to exceed \$40,000 including all consultant fees, sub-contractors, travel, and other expenses.

c. Contract Term

Work will begin in December 2020 and conclude no later than April 30, 2021.

d. Minimum Qualifications

Companies or organizations submitting bids should have demonstrated experience designing hand-launches and capacity on their team to produce drawings, illustrations, and a publication-ready document. If sub-contractors will be used, please indicate their qualifications and the components of the contract that they will fulfill.

II. BACKGROUND

New York's Canal System is experiencing a steady increase in use by human-powered boats including canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards (SUPs), and all manner of rowing craft. Canalside communities, businesses, and organizations are responding to this trend by building and upgrading launch sites and providing facilities for paddlers.

The United States Congress established the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000 to recognize the national significance of the Erie Canal. The Erie Canalway Corridor encompasses the 524 miles of the navigable New York State Canal System, including the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals, and their historic alignments, along with the state's two largest Finger Lakes. There are more than 230 communities in 23 New York counties with over 3.2 million residents within the 4,834-square-mile National Heritage Corridor.

The mission of Erie Canalway 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.

Erie Canalway leverages its unique assets to revitalize and advance the entire region by working in partnership with agencies, organizations and communities to promote the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, showcases and preserve the region's cultural history and superb recreational resources, and offer exceptional educational experiences for area schools and visitors. Its diverse portfolio of accomplishments includes: engaging more than 70,000 students in educational programs at historic canal sites and museums, securing designation of the Canal System as a National Historic Landmark, installing interpretive and wayfinding signs throughout the Corridor, organizing and hosting the 2017 World Canals Conference, revitalizing a former canal shipyard, managing recreational programs, and providing a suite of print and on-line visitor information. See Erie Canalway's website for additional information: <https://eriecanalway.org/>.

The Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization that works hand-in-hand with the federally-appointed Erie Canalway Commission.

III. PROJECT SCOPE

This project builds upon the development of the New York State Canalway Water Trail by Erie Canalway, its contractors, and partner organizations, New York State Canal Corporation, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, several municipalities, paddlecraft rental businesses, and the Canalway Water Trail Users Group: <https://eriecanalway.org/explore/watertrail>.

Erie Canalway published the first edition of the *New York State Canalway Water Trail Guidebook* and an accompanying set of maps in March 2019. They identified more than 140 public access points along the four branches of New York's Canal System with facilities ranging from a small highway pull-out with a place to scramble down the bank and launch a canoe to multi-lane ramps with ample parking areas for vehicles and boat trailers, roller docks for wheelchair users, and on-site restrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and food concessions. In addition, more than 70 commercial marinas and yacht clubs provide access and services for power boaters; some have facilities and rental fleets for human-powered craft. There are also many informal launch sites – not formally designated but clearly used by paddlers who know where to find them.

Launches are the places where land and water transportation meet. They are the locations where boats, people, and gear move from land vehicles – roof racks & trailers, and on to the

water. They may be called put-ins or take-outs, depending on individual travel plans, most serve both functions and many are stopping points along the way.

Appendix A lists previously published guidelines and on-line documents that identify necessary and desirable features of small craft hand-launch sites and trailer-launch boat ramps. Although these works identify characteristics and features of any good launch site, New York's Canal System poses some special challenges:

- Shoreline: Vertical walls at locks and village centers. Most extend at least 4' above the waterline during the navigation season while walls in riverine sections are especially high to accommodate fluctuating water levels; Steep rip-rapped banks in land-cut and river sections between locks and villages.
- Water conditions: Currents; Fluctuating water levels; Floating debris; Ice.
- Operations: Need to maintain a clear approach path and docking space for large commercial and canal maintenance vessels at locks and terminal walls; Large vessel wakes in confined channels; Seasonal draw-downs requiring installation and removal of floating docks at the beginning and end of each season; Provision for safe access to and egress from watered segments of the Canal System during the "off-season" when water levels may be far lower and currents stronger than during the normal navigation season.

Docks on canal land and waters require a Use and Occupancy Permit issued by the New York State Canal Corporation. Their installation requires a Work Permit. Design, fabrication, and materials must comply with Canal Corporation requirements.¹

Erie Canalway will help identify key staff, partner organizations, businesses, and individuals who were especially helpful during development of the Water Trail Guidebook and provide introductions to key staff at NYS Canal Corporation. Erie Canalway staff and the Consultant will work together to contact and interview those people in order to benefit from their experience as water trail users and managers.

Travel will be required to visit potential launch sites and examine conditions first-hand. Although the water trail is 450 miles long, includes 57 locks, and passes through nearly 200 communities, a representative sample of structures, channels, launch types, opportunities, and challenges can be found within an hour's drive of Rochester, Syracuse, or Schenectady. Bidders should anticipate spending at least one or two full days in the field with Erie Canalway staff to get a sense of conditions on the Canal System.²

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

The Contractor shall develop and produce an illustrated set of design guidelines for hand-launch facilities, tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the New York State Canal System with drawings, illustrations, equipment suggestions, and operational recommendations that can be readily adapted for both new construction and improvements to existing sites. The guidelines shall address conditions found at five or six types of sites that are typical to the NYS Canal System. They shall illustrate a suite of options with rough cost estimates for minimum requirements, accessible facilities, and desirable equipment and accessories. The guidelines shall identify and explain the rationale behind recommended practices and design features as well as pitfalls to avoid. Beyond docks, ramps, and launch equipment, the guidelines shall address considerations from the edge of the highway to the water.

¹ "Design and Construction Requirements for Residential/Non-Commercial Docks, Decks, Platforms and Boat Launches/Ramps." (Albany: New York State Canal Corporation, Office of Real Property Management, July 2011)

² Subject to COVID restrictions. Demonstrated familiarity with the NYS Canal System and its structures from previous work may be substituted for some portion of the fieldwork if adequately documented in the proposal.

V. DELIVERABLES

- a. Launch Design Guidelines – A clearly organized narrative and written checklist of necessary and desired features in any hand-launch site on the NYS Canal System with special attention to universal access.
- b. Photographs – Illustrations of recommended design features and, where appropriate, “dos and don’ts” illustrations.
- c. Drawings – Depicting platforms, gangways, docks, launch ramps, storage racks, and other features that might have application at multiple locations along the Canal System.
- d. Equipment Recommendations – An assessment of currently available dock, launch, boat storage, and self-service rental equipment with prices, installation requirements, and recommendations about those best suited to the NYS Canal System.
- e. A description of permits and operational considerations required by NYS Canal Corporation and other regulatory agencies.
- f. A recommended schedule of periodic, seasonal, and special maintenance activities for launch facilities and equipment.
- g. Case Study Examples – ECNHC staff have compiled a list of comparable hand-launch sites on other waterways. The contractor should expand upon that list and format information in a consistent manner for the guidelines with data including location, date of installation, management entity, current point-of-contact for people seeking additional information (name, organization, website, email, phone), photographs, drawings (where available), installation and ongoing maintenance costs, issues, and comments about where and how these facilities might be adapted to needs on the NYS Canal System.

Additional considerations

- Final guidelines shall be formatted in accordance with established Erie Canalway and NYS Canalway Water Trail Graphic Standards.
- Guideline document shall be delivered in Adobe .pdf format to facilitate distribution
- In order to allow future updates and revisions by Erie Canalway, photographs and drawings shall be delivered as individual graphic files. Text shall be delivered in MS WORD .docx or approved equal.
- All text, drawings, and illustrations shall be delivered to Erie Canalway without copyright or other restrictions and with sources noted so that they can be freely distributed.

VI. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

The following is a list of information that must be included in each response. Erie Canalway reserves the right to disqualify a proposal that does not include the required information.

a. Cover Letter

The cover shall include the following:

1. The organization’s name, nature of organization (e.g., corporation, partnership, etc.), location of main office, mailing address, telephone numbers, email addresses, and the name and contact information of the person who will be the primary point of contact concerning the proposal.
2. A statement that the proposal is irrevocable for 60 days from the date when proposals are due, or longer by mutual agreement.
3. A statement that, if awarded the contract, the provision of services to the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. will not create a conflict of interest. If it is believed that a conflict, or even the potential of conflict of interest may arise, the nature of the conflict should be described.

b. Executive Summary

A concise summary of the work proposed and the organization's key staff, experience, and qualifications.

c. Statement of Qualifications

Each proposal shall contain the following information regarding qualifications to provide the requested services:

1. A brief history and description of organizational structure including size, scope of services, capability and area(s) of specialization.
2. Detailed documentation of qualifications and experience related to the scope of work required by the RFP.
3. Concise resumes of key personnel who will provide services to Erie Canalway and a description of the specific function each will perform. This information should include each individual's qualifying experience and his/her position and length of service.
4. Identification of items that may require sub-contractors, including the use of minority or women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs).
5. Samples of previous relevant work.
6. At least three (3) client references including a description of the size, total dollar value, and specific services provided. Specify the name, address, telephone number and email of the individual at the client organization who supervised delivery of services.

d. Statement of Proposal

Proposals should address each deliverable including a proposed schedule of implementation and milestones. This narrative should be as specific as possible.

e. Budget

The total budget for this contract is not to exceed \$40,000. Proposals should include a summary budget hourly rate and estimated hours for each team member, sub-contractor fees, travel expenses, and indirect costs.

VII. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Erie Canalway will evaluate each proposal using the criteria for selection set forth below, not necessarily in priority order:

1. Experience designing hand-launch sites
2. Experience designing for universal access
3. Familiarity with the NYS Canal System
4. Demonstrated record of experience and capability
5. Portfolio of previous related work
6. Overall philosophical approach to work plan and timeline
7. Fee schedule
8. Overall completeness, clarity, quality and responsiveness of the proposal to the RFP
9. References

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

a. Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. Rights to Proposals

The Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. retains all rights to submitted proposals.

b. Method of Payment

Submittals should include requested payment milestones and amounts.

c. Virtual pre-bid meeting
Potential bidders are encouraged to attend an online pre-bid meeting at 11:00am Eastern on Thursday, October 15, where Erie Canalway staff will answer questions about the project and illustrate some of the conditions to be addressed along the Canal System. Pre-registration is required. Please send an email to: duncan_hay@nps.gov by October 13 in order to receive a Microsoft “Teams” meeting invitation with log-in instructions.

d. Inquiries and Additional Information
Please direct inquiries and requests for additional information to:
Duncan Hay
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
P.O. Box 219
Waterford, NY 12188
(518) 817-6279
duncan_hay@nps.gov

e. Proposal Submission
Proposals shall be submitted via email in .pdf format and must be sent no later than 4:00pm on Friday, November 20, 2020.

Oversize drawings and printed documents that supplement the proposal may be mailed or shipped to one of the following addresses:

Sent via US Postal Service:
WT Access RFP
c/o Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 219
Waterford, NY 12188

Hand or overnight deliveries
(Fed Ex, UPS, DHL, &c.):
WT Access RFP
c/o Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.
1 Delaware Avenue
Cohoes, NY 12047

f. Key Dates

October 2, 2020	Release of RFP
October 15, 2020	11:00am Eastern – Virtual Pre-Bid meeting via Microsoft “Teams” (pre-registration required)
October 21, 2020	Deadline for written questions
October 26, 2020	Responses to questions posted on Erie Canalway website
November 20, 2020	Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 4:00pm
November 30, 2020	Target date to notify selected Provider
December 2020	Work on Project authorized to begin
January 29, 2021	Outline and preliminary sketches submitted to Erie Canalway for review & comment – Response by February 12, 2021
March 12, 2021	Draft text, images, and drawings submitted for review – Response by March 26, 2021
April 30, 2021	Project completion and project deliverables submitted on, or before

g. Meetings

Erie Canalway staff will be available to the Provider via telephone and email and a series of regularly scheduled online or in-person meetings will be established during the Contract Term.

APPENDIX A: References

Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails, (Missoula, MT: USDA Forest Service Technology and Development Center, August 2012).

www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Accessibility-Guide-Book.pdf

Better Boater Bathrooms: A Sourcebook for River Managers, (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho, Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, nd).

“Bladensburg Waterfront Accessibility Project” (Bladensburg, MD: Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps, nd (c 2013)).

Max Burns, *The Dock Manual*. (North Adams, MA: Storey Books, 1999).

“Building Better Boat Ramps.” Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF).

www.dgif.virginia.gov/boating/building-boat-ramps/#Design

“Design and Construction Requirements for Residential/Non-Commercial Docks, Decks, Platforms and Boat Launches/Ramps.” (Albany: New York State Canal Corporation, Office of Real Property Management, July 2011).

“Design Development” *Developing Water Trails in Iowa*. (Des Moines: Iowa DNR, June 2010).

www.iowadnr.gov/things-to-do/canoeing-kayaking/water-trail-development

Design Handbook for Recreational Boating & Fishing Facilities (Washington: States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA), 1996).

Floating Trail Bridges and Docks. (Missoula, MT: USDA Forest Service, July 2002).

<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf02232812/pdf02232812dpi72.pdf>

“Guidelines for Developing Non-Motorized Boat Launches in Florida.” (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2010). <https://myfwc.com/media/4118/non-motorizedboatingaccessguidelinesver4.pdf>

“Historic Water Trail for the Erie Canal and Mohawk River: Planning Document & Recommendations” (C.T. Male Associates for Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, 2016).

“Logical Lasting Launches: Design Guidance for Canoe and Kayak Launches” (Washington: NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, 2004).

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/RTCA/GetAsset/86bb0d45-8417-4904-97ae-771c8eba5a42/original>

Michigan Water Trails Manual (Traverse City: Land Information Access Association LIAA, April 2017). www.michiganwatertrails.org/downloads/water_trail_manual_20170609_web.pdf

New York State Canalway Water Trail Guidebook (Waterford: Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, 2019). <https://eriecanalway.org/explore/watertrail>

“Old Erie Canal Boat Launch Feasibility Study” (Syracuse: EDR -Environmental Design & Research, October 2018).

“Outdoor Recreation and Accessible Routes.” (Northeast ADA Center).

www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/hrerecaccessroutes.pdf

Prepare to Launch: Guidelines for Assessing, Designing, and Building Launch Sites for Carry-in Watercraft (Washington: National Park Service & River Management Society, April 2018).
<https://www.river-management.org/prepare-to-launch->

“Recreational Boating Facilities: ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities.” (Institute for Human Centered Design / New England ADA Center, 2016).
<https://www.adachecklist.org/doc/rec/boating/boating.pdf>

“River Access Planning Guide: A Decision-Making Framework for Enhancing River Access” (National Park Service & River Management Society, October 2019). [www.river-management.org/assets/RiverAccessGuide/02212020%20Layout RAPG FINAL PRINT v21.1.pdf](http://www.river-management.org/assets/RiverAccessGuide/02212020%20Layout%20RAPG%20FINAL%20PRINT%20v21.1.pdf)

San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Design Guidelines (San Francisco: Association of Bay Area Governments, January 2019). https://sfbaywatertrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Final_reduced_BayAreaWT_DesignGuidelines_Jan2019.pdf

“Team River Runner Adaptive Paddling Primer” (2016).
www.teamriverrunner.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/EditedAdaptiveVersion.docx-1.pdf

Water and Land Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WALROS): Users' Handbook, Second Edition. (Denver: USDOI Bureau of Reclamation, September 2011).

Janet A. Zeller, Canoeing and Kayaking for People With Disabilities. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2009).