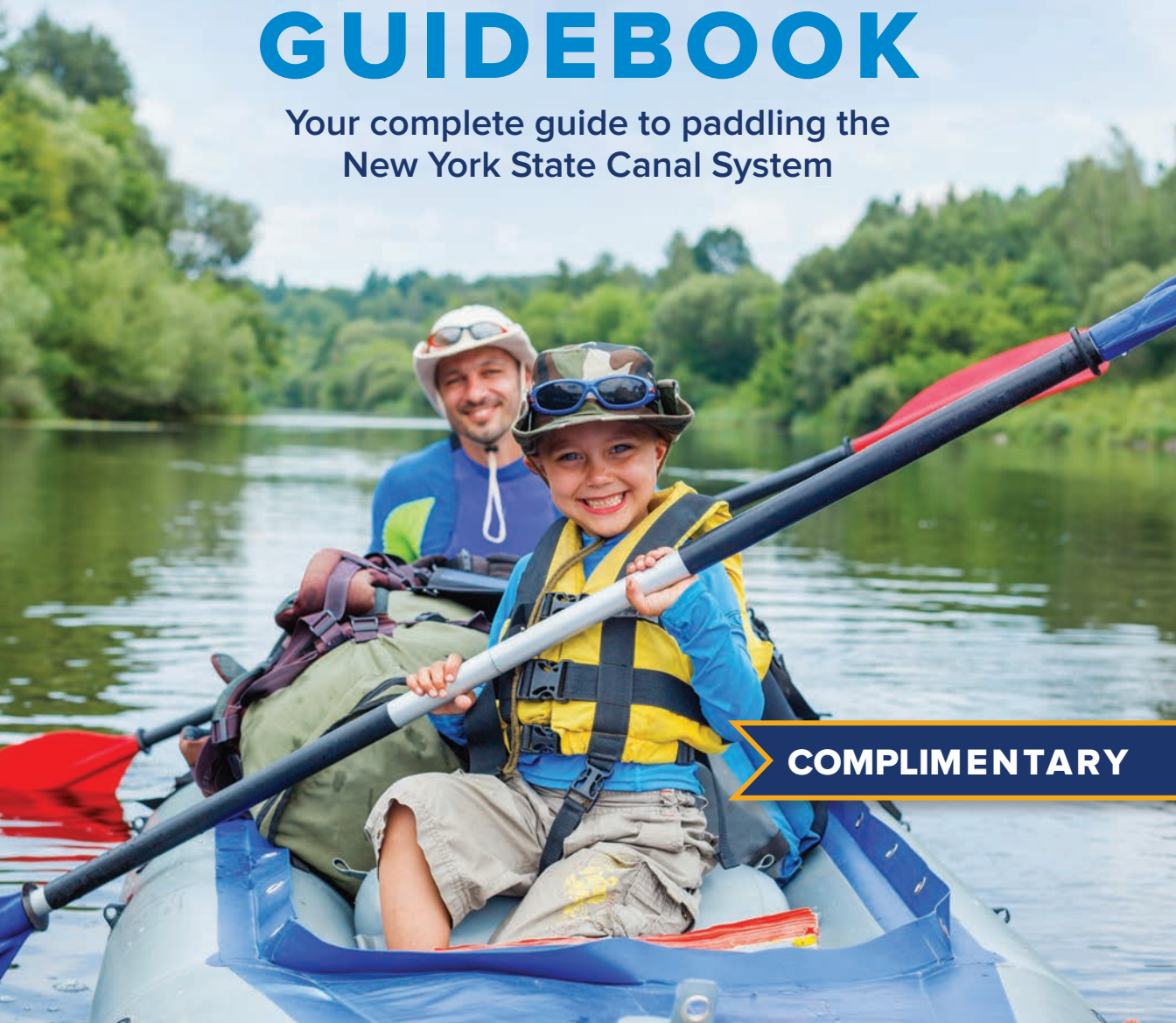




GUIDEBOOK

Your complete guide to paddling the
New York State Canal System



COMPLIMENTARY



NEW YORK STATE CANALWAY WATER TRAIL GUIDEBOOK

Including the Erie, Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca,
and Champlain Canals



In partnership with the National Park Service

Copyright © 2019 Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher at the address below.

Executive Director: Bob Radliff

Project Managers/Editors: Mona Caron, Jean Mackay, Brian Yates and Duncan Hay, National Park Service

Writer: Sheila Buff, Inc.

Editor: Lela Katzman, Full Spectrum Communications

Design and Layout: Kris Fitzgerald, 2k Design

Maps: Paul Hein, Topographics, LLC



In partnership with the National Park Service

Publisher:

Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Inc.

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

PO Box 219

Waterford, NY 12188

(518) 237-7000

eriecanalway.org

All images by Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor unless credited.

Printed in the United States of America

First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 978-1-7336901-0-2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guidebook was developed by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and its not-for-profit partner the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc., in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA).

Generous financial assistance was provided by: Market NY through I LOVE NY, New York State's Division of Tourism, as a part of the State's Regional Economic Development Council initiative; the National Park Service; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP); the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc.; Rome Community Foundation; Mohawk Valley Collective; and individual donors.

A special thank you to the members of the New York State Canalway Water Trail Advisory Committee: John Joyce, Jaime Deluca, and Sasha Eisenstein (NYS Canal Corporation); Scott Keller (Hudson River Valley Greenway/Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area); Fred Bonn (NYS OPRHP); Paul L. Comstock (Paul Comstock Partners); Donna Larkin (Upstate Kayak Rentals), Karl Beard and Duncan Hay (RTCA); and Bob Radliff, Jean Mackay, Brian Yates, and Mona Caron (Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor).

A special note of gratitude to our partners at our regional National Park units, including Frank Barrows, former Superintendent of Fort Stanwix National Historical Monument and Amy Bracewell, Superintendent of Saratoga National Historical Park.

Consulting services for the development of this book included Sheila Buff, Inc., writer and compiler of content, Lela Katzman of Full Spectrum Communications, Kris Fitzgerald of 2k Design, and Paul Hein of Topographics, LLC.

HELP US IMPROVE THE PADDLING EXPERIENCE

The NYS Canalway Water Trail guidebook and map set are living documents that will improve with feedback from paddlers like you. If you have suggestions for improvement, find an error, or simply want to share your favorite paddling spot or trip, we welcome you to contact us at **paddler@eriecanalway.org**. We will incorporate your ideas and revisions into future editions.



In partnership with the National Park Service

ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The New York State Canal System's exceptional scenery history, culture, and natural resources earned the 524-mile waterway and the communities along its shores Congressional designation as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000. The waterway was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016.

Many partners work together to preserve the best of the past, while ensuring a vibrant future along this legendary waterway.

The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** and **Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.** preserve our extraordinary canal heritage, promote the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and foster vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of historic waterway. These organizations work 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.

eriecanalway.org

THE CORRIDOR ENCOMPASSES:

524

Continuous miles of
navigable waterway

230

Municipalities

4,834

Square
miles

23

Part of 23 counties
home to
3.2 million people



**Canal
Corporation**

NEW YORK STATE CANAL CORPORATION

The New York State Canal Corporation operates and maintains the New York State Canal System. A subsidiary of the New York Power Authority, the NYS Canal Corporation oversees tourism promotion; renewable power generation; public, agricultural and industrial water supplies; commercial shipping; and recreational activities along the canals. It also oversees management of the Erie Canalway Trail, a 365-mile multi-use trail from Buffalo to Albany that attracts more than 1.5 million pedestrians, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers annually. The NYS Canal Corporation also works collaboratively with community partners to improve waterway access and services, sponsor major events, and honor the historic legacy of the Erie Canal and connecting waterways.

canals.ny.gov

THE NYS CANAL SYSTEM SUPPORTS

\$7.5 BILLION +

annually in economic activity, fostering sustainable economic development throughout the canal corridor.

NEARLY

80%

of Upstate New York's population lives within 25 miles of the Erie Canal.



New York State is celebrating the bicentennial of canal construction and opening from 2017 to 2025. Watch for special events, lectures, and tours marking significant anniversaries.

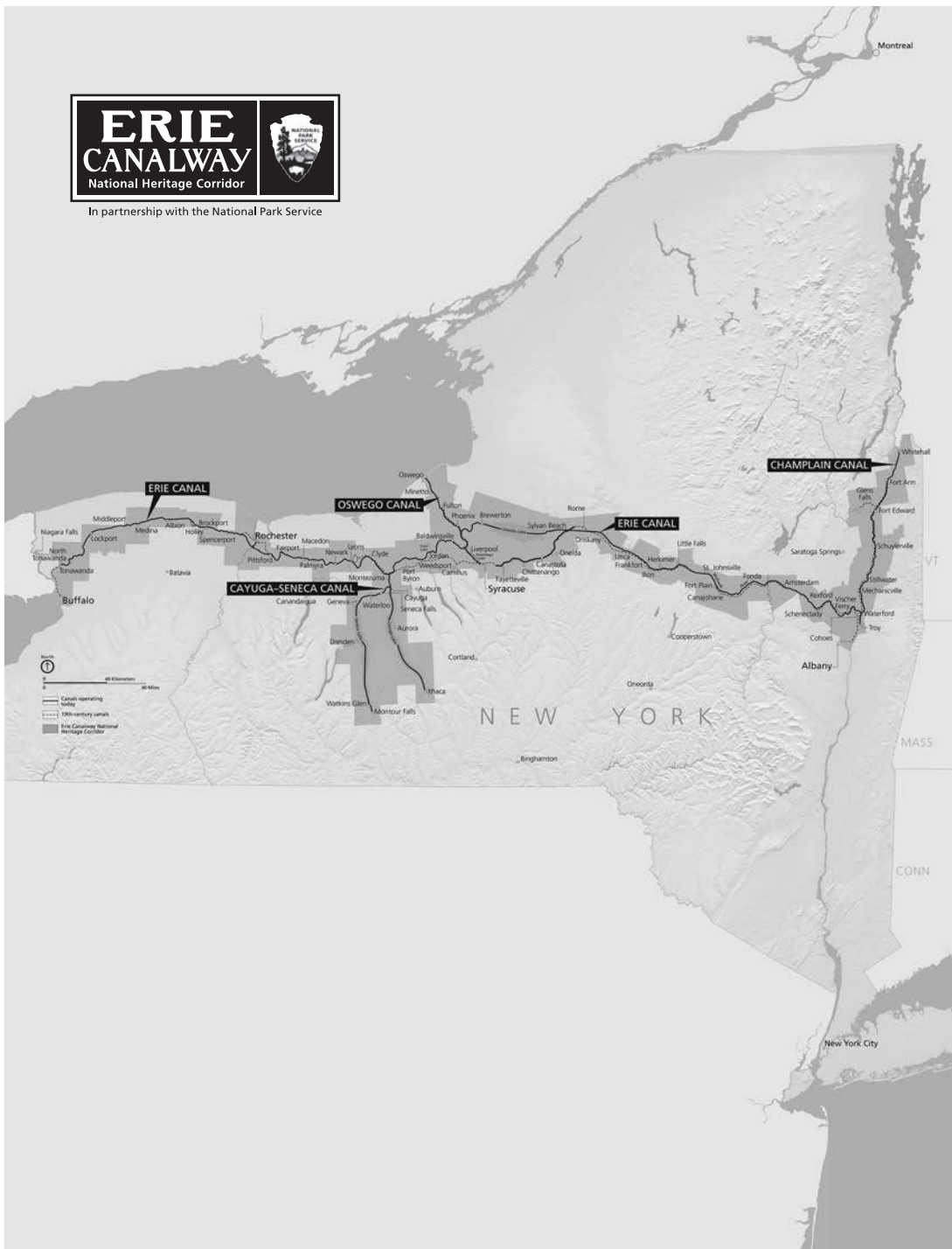


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|-----------|---|------------|
| Welcome | 1 | Best Bet Paddling Day Trips | 22 |
| The NYS Canalway Water Trail | 2 | Mile-by-Mile Guide | 26 |
| About this Guide | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Erie Canal• Cayuga-Seneca Canal• Champlain Canal• Oswego Canal | |
| A Brief History of New York's Canals | 4 | Resources for Paddlers | 263 |
| Paddling on the Canal System | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paddle On! Additional Trails to Explore• Rentals• Outfitters• Clubs and Organizations• Canalway Corridor Tourism Offices• Camping Along the Canals• Getting to the Canals• Further Reading | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canal Season and Hours• Canal Features and Structures• Canal Notices, Alerts, and Mileage• Paddling Through a Lock• Other Things to Know | | Index | 274 |
| Preparing for Your Trip | 11 | Profile and Mileage NYS Canal System | 284 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know Your Skill Level• Trip Duration• Adaptive Paddling• Equipment Checklist• Accommodations• Useful Websites and Planning Resources | | | |
| Be Safe on the Water | 14 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a Float Plan | | | |
| Things to See and Do | 16 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taste History Along New York's Canals• Canal Communities• Cultural and Heritage Sites and Museums• State Parks and State Historic Sites• Cycling the Erie Canalway Trail• Fishing• Birdwatching• Festivals and Events | | | |

NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL DISCLAIMER

Your utilization of these materials and/or use of the NYS Canalway Water Trail acknowledges that you are participating at your own risk. If you paddle with minor child(ren), you acknowledge that the risks apply to them as well, and you will take any necessary precautions to keep them safe. Paddling and related activities can be unpredictable and/or dangerous.

Paddlers risk injury and even death from drowning, hypothermia, and other hazards. These materials do not replace proper planning or instruction by a qualified instructor, nor do they replace the skill, proper equipment, experience, and judgment that every paddler needs. Be sure to read and follow all safety suggestions. By paddling on the NYS Canal System, you understand that there are risks including but not limited to physical injury, pain, and temporary or permanent disability which may arise from your or others' actions, inactions, or negligence or the condition of the activity's location. By participating, you acknowledge and agree the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. and its affiliates shall not be liable for any loss or damage of whatever nature (direct, indirect, consequential or other) that may arise as a result of your participation or that of any minor child(ren) under your care in this or any other activities.

WELCOME

BY PAUL L. COMSTOCK

I grew up around the Erie Canal. My grandfather, who I never knew, began working on the canal as a 10-year-old boy, leading mules along the towpath. Later, he became a tug captain, who traveled the waterway for the rest of his life. As a young girl, my mother joined him on some of his canal trips, and she often shared her experiences with me.

By the time I was growing up around the canal in the 1950s and 1960s, this waterway, once teeming with activity, was largely ignored. I took the canal for granted until 50 years later. While I was attending a kayak symposium, one of the presenters described an incredible water journey that had led him through the Erie Canal. A light went on. What a great idea! I would paddle the canal I had heard so much about as I was growing up. Perhaps I could also get a better sense of who my grandfather was by traveling the waterway that had been such a major part of his life.

I had no idea when I launched at the western end in North Tonawanda that by the time I pulled out in Waterford my paddle trip would become a major highlight of my life. I was permanently connected not only to my family history but also to the incredible role the canal played in the development of this country.

Once I became an “End-to-End,” I felt compelled to paddle each of the other three New York State canals: Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain. That led me down the Hudson River and up to Lake Champlain.

Knowing of my experiences, the organizers of this guide asked me to participate in its development. I am honored to have done so.

The guide you are holding contains the gateway to many incredible paddle opportu-

nities. Whether this is your first time visiting the Erie Canalway, you are returning again and again, or you are taking on the challenge of becoming an “End-to-End,” take advantage of this guide to make your trip special.

This guide will help you to plan the distance you will travel based on the time you have to spend. It will allow you to become familiar with what you will find at each launch and take out site. It will also help you find the many special land sites to visit during your trip. Time your trips, when possible, to include one or more of the many community celebrations that occur regularly throughout the Erie Canalway. Your trip will be enriched by the many new friends you will meet.

Finally, I encourage you to explore your personal family history for connections to this waterway. I am certain there will be surprises as you do so. Take time to read about the history of where you will paddle. Read one of the many accounts of the building of the waterway you will be on. Learn of the early development of the communities you will travel through or visit. Seek to understand the experience of those who plied the canal commercially, those who settled along the canal to enjoy the economic benefits it created—and continues to create—and the multitude of people who were transported on it to a better life. As you do, you’ll find commonality in what others before you experienced.

As you paddle along New York State’s iconic canals, you will discover all that is right in America. Now, open the pages of this guide and plan a trip. As you do, prepare to become hooked on paddling this incredible waterway. Welcome aboard!



THE NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

The NYS Canalway Water Trail is comprised of over 450 miles of canals and interconnected lakes and rivers with more than 140 public access points for paddlers. The water trail follows the NYS Canal System across the full expanse of upstate New York, offering paddlers a wealth of places to visit and sights to see. The waterway flows through time and history, connecting magnificent scenery and remarkable communities, many of which have been welcoming canal travelers for 200 years.

Among the things that makes the NYS Canalway Water Trail distinct from other water trails is the nature of the canal itself. Paddlers navigate century-old locks, pass stunning stone aqueducts used to carry boats over rivers and streams in the 1800s; paddle alongside tugboats and cruisers; experience narrow flatwater stretches and wider river segments. For a constructed waterway, the canal is surprisingly serene and natural. Paddlers can expect to see a diversity of birds and wildlife, unique geology, and varying terrain.

This guidebook will introduce you to its many treasures. It will help you get on the water for a few hours or an entire day, or to plan an overnight trip or longer excursions within the canal corridor.

Enjoy and paddle on!



GET CONNECTED @nyscanalwaywatertrail

Join the NYS Canalway Water Trail Facebook group to connect with other paddlers, ask questions, and share your experiences.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guidebook is divided into three main sections: the front section provides general information about paddling on the canals, staying safe on the water, and taking advantage of the great things to see and do here. The main section is where you will find maps and mile-by-mile information. You'll find useful references in the back section.

Refer to the guidebook when planning a trip to familiarize yourself with where you are going or carry it with you so that you have a valuable reference on the water. Use it alone or in combination with the navigational map set developed for paddlers.

Mile by Mile

This book is a mile-by-mile description of sites along the NYS Canal System. It begins in Buffalo and follows the Erie Canal east to Waterford. The Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain canals are also covered. The Canalway Water Trail includes portions of the Buffalo and Niagara rivers that are not officially part of the NYS Canal System but does not include the full length of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes.

- **NUTS AND BOLTS**

Each site description is designed to provide the information paddlers need to plan enjoyable trips, such as access points, parking, restrooms, and visitor information. Water trail sites are listed in bold face type and are highlighted on maps near the site listing. Launches are identified with an icon.

- **SITES ALONG THE WAY**

Locks and other canal structures, ports and towns, access sites, canal attractions, heritage sites, and other places of interest are also included. Distances are listed in statute miles. Coordinates are latitude/longitude (WGS 84). Most of the places described are on the canal system or within about one-half mile of the water.

- **SAFETY INFORMATION**

Hazards and important safety information appear in paddling notes that accompany the site listings. It is always prudent to check the NYS Canal Corporation's "Notices and Alerts" webpage before heading out: canals.ny.gov/wwwapps/tas/notices

- **NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST**

Although the canals don't run in straight lines, for the purpose of this guidebook the banks of the Erie Canal and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal are described as being on the north side or the south side, even when the compass direction might be different. Similarly, the banks of the Oswego Canal and the Champlain Canal, which run approximately north-south, are described as being west side and east side.

- **EXPLORING ON SHORE**

Half the fun of paddling is what you will find on shore. This guide includes many sites of interest, but does not include a listing of the many great places to eat, drink, and shop throughout the canal corridor. You will find ice cream and coffee shops, restaurants, breweries, wineries, farm stands, and other recreational opportunities in almost every community. We recommend you check with individual businesses regarding their services and operating hours. County Tourism offices, listed on pages 270-271, can help you plan your trip.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NEW YORK'S CANALS



New York State Archives

New York has long been a state of big ideas and the kind of can-do spirit that turns them into reality. Credit for this entrepreneurial attitude is due, in part, to a nationally-significant treasure: the Erie Canal. Built 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. Equally important, the Erie Canal solidified these central elements of America's national identity: vision, determination, ingenuity, and hard work.

For eight years of wet, heat, and cold, surveyors and laborers cut through fields, forests, rocky cliffs, and swamps; crossed rivers on aqueducts; and overcame hills with 83 lift locks. Upon completion, the Erie Canal and a system of connecting waterways fulfilled Governor DeWitt Clinton's prophecy

of making New York America's preeminent state, populated border-to-border and generating wealth for its people.

People and new ideas flowed into the many new cities sprouting up along the canal. Social reform movements like abolitionism and women's suffrage, Utopian communities, and various religious movements thrived in the canal corridor. The Erie Canal carried more westbound immigrants than any other trans-Appalachian canal. These newcomers infused the nation with different languages, customs, practices, and religions.

In 2000, the United States Congress recognized the Erie Canal's significance to our nation by establishing the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The 524-mile corridor threads more than 200 diverse communities connected by a waterway that changed not just the landscape of the state, but also our nation and its history. In 2016, the NYS Canal System became a National Historic Landmark.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As you read this guide, you'll see references to the three main eras of the Erie Canal:

- **1825–CLINTON'S DITCH**

This was the original Erie Canal dug between 1817 and 1825.

- **1862–ENLARGED ERIE CANAL**

If you see an old stone lock, canal wall, or aqueduct, it likely dates to the Enlarged Erie, a period from 1836 to 1862 when the canal was widened and deepened to accommodate more and bigger boats.

- **1918–BARGE CANAL**

The structures and channels of the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals operate today largely as they did when the canals were enlarged between 1905 and 1918. Renamed the NYS Barge Canal to reflect commercial shipping, the word “barge” is used infrequently today and the canals are now collectively known as the NYS Canal System.



Lock 12, Whitehall, 1917

The New York State Canal System Today

The NYS Canal System has been in continuous operation since 1825, longer than any other constructed transportation system on the North American continent. Since its grand opening, the canal has been enlarged three times to accommodate larger boats and more traffic. Changes were made to the route and to canal structures like locks and bridges each time.

Today, navigable portions of the system include:

- **Erie Canal**, which connects the Hudson River to the Niagara River, 339 miles to the west;
- **Champlain Canal**, connecting Lake Champlain to the Erie Canal and tidal portion of the Hudson River 62 miles south;
- **Oswego Canal**, descending along the Oswego River from the Erie Canal to Lake Ontario, 23 miles north;
- **Cayuga-Seneca Canal**, a 17 mile canal that connects the Erie Canal to New York's two largest Finger Lakes, each about 38 miles long.
- There are also short navigable branches that connect the Erie Canal to downtown Syracuse and Rochester.

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

PADDLING ON THE CANAL SYSTEM

Canal Season and Hours

The canals are typically open from May through October. Opening and closing dates vary from year to year, depending on conditions. The standard hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some locks and lift bridges have extended hours until 10 p.m. from mid-May to mid-September. Some sections of the canal close during mid-season floods. Check ahead at canals.ny.gov.

Canal Features and Structures

The NYS Canal System includes a number of unique and historic structures used to regulate the flow of water and enable boats to transit changing elevations.

- **LOCKS:** There are 57 locks on New York's canal system, including 35 on the Erie Canal, 11 on the Champlain Canal, seven on the Oswego Canal, and four on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.
- **LIFT BRIDGES:** Fifteen lift bridges built between 1905 and 1918 still carry traffic over the Erie Canal in western New York. Stairs and walkways allow pedestrians to cross while the bridge is up.
- **MOVABLE DAMS:** There are eight between Fort Plain and Schenectady that regulate water flow on the Mohawk River. There are a number of fixed dams on the canal as well. All are clearly marked. Stay away from all dams while paddling.
- **GUARD GATES:** These isolate sections of the canal in case of emergency, such as a break in a canal wall, accident, or extreme high water. Guard gates also allow sections of the canal to be drained for maintenance and winter freeze protection.



Power House, Lock 20, Whitesboro

- **POWER HOUSES AND GATE CABINETS:** Most locks have distinctive white buildings on site where electricity was generated to power lock gates and valves. There are also blue-and-gold cabinets that display the number of the lock and house the motors and gearing that operate its valves and gates.
- **SHORELINE AND WALLS:** To keep the banks of the canal system from eroding, many parts are lined with rip-rap, a facing of layered rocks. Some sections are lined with vertical concrete walls. Paddlers should use designated launch and landing sites in these areas, rather than attempt to scramble up steep walls.



Lock 19, Frankfort

WATCH FOR HISTORIC CANAL VESSELS

As you paddle the NYS Canal System, you're likely to see distinctive blue and yellow tugboats and other workboats doing maintenance work to keep the canals safe. Most of these vessels were built prior to 1940. Thanks to the diligence of generations of canal captains, engineers, and deck hands, these vessels are still at work, brass and paint still gleaming. Two of the oldest are tugs *Governor Roosevelt* and *Governor Cleveland*, built in 1928.

Canal Notices, Alerts, and Mileage

The NYS Canal Corporation issues “Notices to Mariners” as needed, including openings/closures, water levels, construction, hazards, and other elements affecting navigation. These are posted on the website; notices and alerts are available by email and text message. For more information or to sign up for the messages, go to **canals.ny.gov** or follow **@NYSCanalCorp** on Twitter.

Also available on page 284 and the NYS Canal Corporation website is a “Profile and Mileage Table” for the NYS Canal System. It shows distances between many points and illustrates how much you will ascend or descend through a series of locks.

Paddling Through a Lock

Going through locks is one of the special experiences of traveling along the canal. The locks are 310 feet long and 45 feet wide, with massive steel gates at either end. Lifts range from six feet to more than 40. From a canoe, kayak, paddleboard, or rowboat, floating into this huge steel and cement structure can be a bit daunting at first—but it's also exciting. Lock operators are on hand to recommend the safest place to tie-up, answer questions, and assist if needed.

Here's what to do:

1. ALERT THE LOCK OPERATOR.

Don't assume that the operator will see you coming. Alert them by calling or signaling as you approach. Lock telephone numbers are listed throughout this guide. In places with poor cell coverage, use three blasts of a loud whistle or horn to alert the operator. Canal lock and lift bridge operators monitor and respond to Channel 13, if you have a portable VHF marine band radio.

2. WAIT FOR THE GREEN LIGHT.

Each lock has a green and red traffic light at either end. Wait for the green light for permission to enter and exit the lock.

3. PADDLE INTO THE LOCK CHAMBER.

Position yourself alongside the lock wall as directed by the lock operator.

4. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS OF THE LOCK OPERATOR.

You will be directed to hold on to vertical ropes or glide rails on the lock walls as the chamber fills or empties. Do not tie your boat to the drop line. Some boaters opt for gloves because the drop ropes and rails can be slimy. The sensation of rising or falling water is very gentle. You will be in the lock for about 15 minutes.

5. STAY CLEAR OF LOCK GATES AS THEY OPEN.

Don't rush to exit the lock. Lock operators will not see you if you get pinned behind an opening gate. When the lock gates open, paddle out slowly, taking care to avoid other boats.

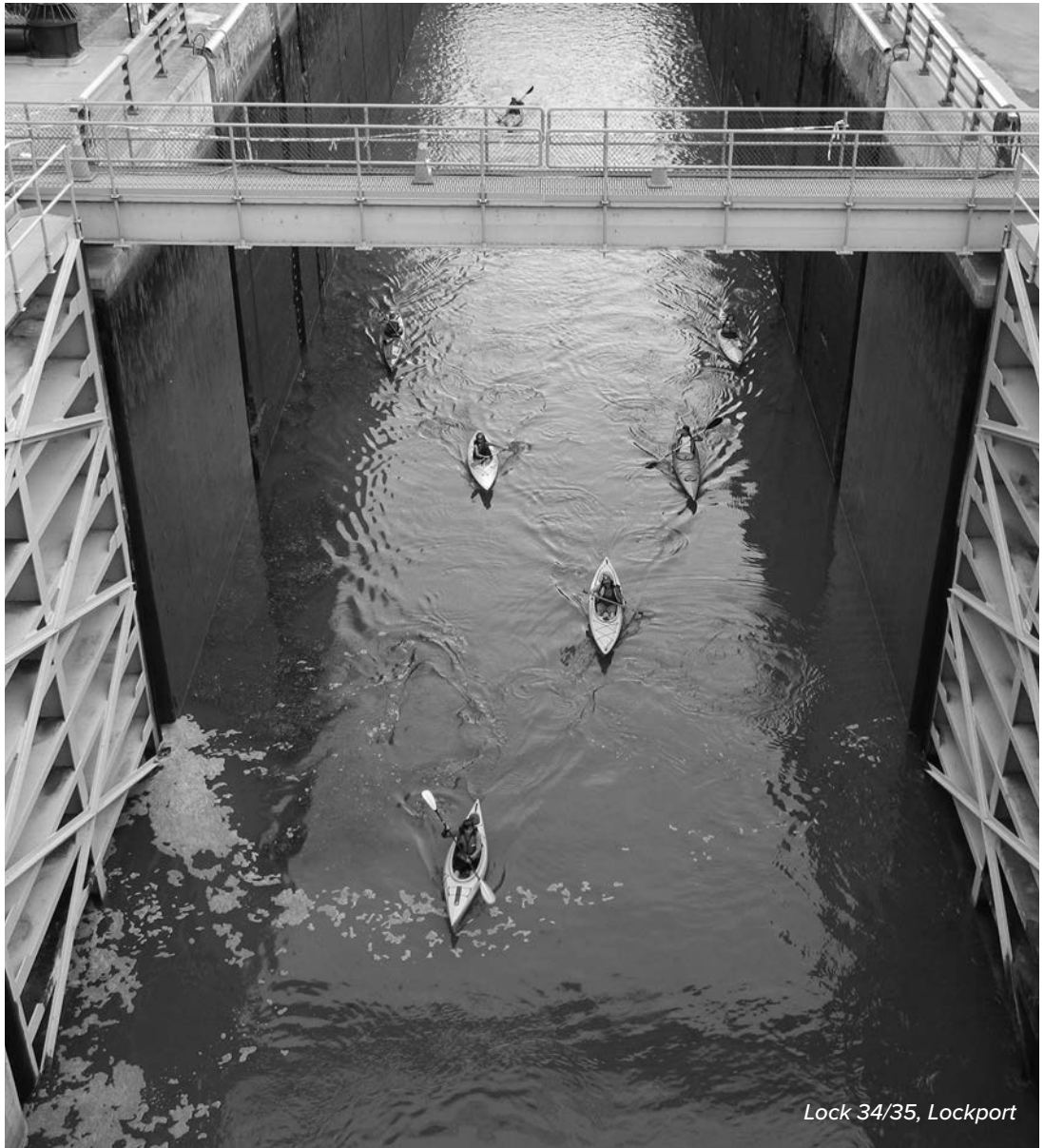
6. PAY ATTENTION AS YOU EXIT.

Some locks have adjacent dams and spillways that produce unexpected cross-currents downstream. Get stable before you leave the chamber.

TIP: Before you launch, make a float plan that includes the phone numbers of the locks you will pass through. (See page 15.)

NOTE: No permits or fees are required for locking through with a non-commercial vessel, including kayak, canoe, stand-up paddleboard, rowboat.

FOR A SIMPLE VIDEO GUIDE TO LOCKING:
canals.ny.gov/navinfo



Thomas Fitzrandolph

Lock 34/35, Lockport

Other Things to Know

- **RIGHT-OF-WAY**

Paddlers share the canal system with commercial vessels, tour boats, motor-boats, and personal watercraft (jet skis).

Commercial vessels have the right of way. Stay well clear—they move a lot faster than you expect and can produce big wakes. Rowing shells and organized events also take precedence. Stay clear.

Paddlers should move to the right when facing oncoming boats and when being overtaken. Sometimes it's safest to move outside the marked channel to allow big boats to pass.

- **BUOYS AND NAVIGATIONAL MARKERS**

Red and green buoys and fixed markers line the edge of the 12-foot deep navigation channel. Buoys are numbered sequentially (even for red, odd for green). Red buoys mark the north side of the channel on the Erie and Cayuga-Seneca canals and the east side on the Oswego and Champlain canals. Things can be a bit confusing where the Cayuga-Seneca and Oswego branch off from the Erie. Pay attention to the maps and guidebook descriptions in those two areas.

- **CURRENTS**

Although it appears placid on the surface there is a noticeable current in most segments of the canal system. While flows in the Erie west of Rochester are fairly consistent, they can fluctuate widely in canalized rivers that make up about two-thirds of the system. The Seneca, Oswego, Oneida, Mohawk, and Hudson rivers drain very large areas of New York State. Some high flow events in those sections are produced by storms far from the canal.

This guide was compiled in a generally downstream direction (west to east on the Erie, north to south on the Champlain, south to north on the Oswego). End-to-end boaters on the Erie and Champlain will need to do some upstream paddling in order to get over drainage divides. If you want to start and end your trip at the same launch site it's usually a good idea to paddle upstream on the first leg so you have the current helping your return.

- **PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES**

Boats, trailers, and other equipment can spread invasive species from one waterbody to another unless properly cleaned after use. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations prohibit boats from launching or leaving DEC launch sites without first draining and cleaning visible plant and animal material from the boat, trailer, and other equipment. Follow these DEC guidelines to prevent the spread of invasive species:

1. Inspect your boat, trailer, and other equipment and remove any visible mud, plants, fish, or animals before transporting equipment.
2. Eliminate all water from equipment before transporting.
3. Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with the water, including boats, trailers, and all other boating and fishing equipment. Paddlers should be particularly aware of areas that are difficult to inspect and dry.
4. Disinfect if you cannot dry equipment.
5. Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

Know your skill level

The canal system presents opportunities suited to beginners through advanced paddlers. Novices and families with children will find protected sections of the dug canal with flat water, particularly from Tonawanda to Lyons and along the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. More experience is needed to paddle river and lake sections where currents and wind affect conditions on the water. Plan your destination and time on the water according to your skills.

Trip Duration

How far can you paddle in an hour, an afternoon, a day, a weekend? On average, most adults paddle about 3-4 miles per hour when straight paddling in open water, without any significant current or wind.

Build your float plan around the slowest person in your group. Also account for going through locks, which take about 15 to 20 minutes each.

Paddlers going from end to end of the Erie Canal typically plan 2.5 to 3 weeks to make the 338-mile journey. For day or weekend trips, choose mileage that will be comfortable for you to cover in a day—and leave time to stop and explore on land.

Lastly, give serendipity its due. You might discover a lovely place to stop for lunch or a historic site you can visit.

ADAPTIVE PADDLING

Paddling on the NYS Canal System is an increasingly inclusive sport. Many municipal and NYS DEC docks have been improved to allow handicapped access.

Rochester Accessible Adventures (RAA) helps companies make recreation on the canal system simple and inexpensive for people with disabilities and their families and friends. In 2016, RAA formed a partnership with the Erie Canal Boat Company (ECBC) in Fairport and developed the Adaptive Paddling and Cycling Center (APACC). In addition to experienced staff and volunteers, the center at ECBC has a dock-mounted Hoyer lift, floating docks low to the water, and a ramp entry that opens paddling opportunities to people of all physical abilities. RAA's free CanalPal program sends a trained volunteer out with kayakers to provide training and support.

The ECBC and RAA are expanding this model program. A second site in Lockport opened at the Wide Waters Marina in 2018 and more are planned.

TO LEARN ABOUT ACCESSIBLE KAYAK LAUNCHES, CONTACT:

Rochester Accessible Adventures
2165 Brighton Henrietta Town Line Road
Rochester, NY 14623
(585) 491-6011
rochesteraccessibleadventures.org

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

BOAT GEAR

- ☐ Canoe, kayak, stand-up paddle-board, rowboat, or other vessel(s) suitable for the water conditions and number of people on the trip. [Do NOT overload]
- ☐ Coast Guard Approved wearable Personal Flotation Device (PFD/life vest)—required for every participant
- ☐ Whistle/horn (required)
- ☐ Waterproof light (required)

ADDITIONAL BOAT GEAR

- ☐ Paddles (and a spare)
- ☐ Bailer or pump
- ☐ Bow and stern lines (painters)
- ☐ Waterproof gear storage bags
- ☐ Cable and lock (to secure boat when you go into town)

COMMUNICATIONS AND SAFETY

- ☐ Cell phone in waterproof container
- ☐ Portable VHF marine band radio (useful but not required—canal lock and bridge operators and many boaters monitor Channel 13)
- ☐ Binoculars (useful but not required for reading buoy numbers and far-off bridge names)
- ☐ Float plan with emergency contact information

PERSONAL GEAR

- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Wide-brimmed hat
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Gloves (to handle lock lines)
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Cold and warm weather clothing
- ☐ Water shoes
- ☐ Quarters (coin-op shower, laundry, parking meters, etc.)

SHELTER

- ☐ Tent
- ☐ Sleeping bag
- ☐ Sleeping pad

FOOD AND COOKING

- ☐ Meals and snacks
- ☐ Portable stove
- ☐ Fuel
- ☐ Waterproof matches and/or lighter
- ☐ Water jug
- ☐ Cooking gear and utensils
- ☐ Trash bags (if you pack it in, pack it out)

Accommodations

Some portions of the canal system pass through populated areas with a choice of hotels, motels, B&Bs, and other lodgings. Other parts are more sparsely populated where lodgings may be scarce or far from the water. This book includes lodgings that are easily accessible from the canal. Additional options for lodging are available off the canal system. See pages 269-271 for information on camping sites and tourism offices.

The NYS Canal Corporation has designated a number of biker-hiker-boater campsites along the canal system. These tent-only informal campsites have space for tents, and offer potable water, portable toilets, picnic tables, and grills. Stays are limited to 48 hours. Contact the site in advance to make sure space is available.

Camping is permitted at most other canal locks on a case-by-case, first-come, first-served basis. Camping at these non-designated sites is limited to a maximum of four tents per night. Contact the Lock Operator in advance to determine if camping is permissible and where to set up. At most non-designated locks, the camping facilities are limited—drinking water and restrooms may not be available for overnight stays.

Paddlers should think ahead about overnight boat storage and security. When booking lodgings, ask about parking lot security and whether there is a place to store your boat overnight. We recommend bringing a cable lock system to anchor your boat to a tree, fence, boat rack, or your car roof rack.

Useful Websites and Planning Resources

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor:
eriecanalway.org

New York State Canal Corporation:
canals.ny.gov

NYS Canalway Water Trail Facebook group:
facebook.com/groups/nyscanalwaywatertrail

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: **dec.ny.gov**

Parks & Trails New York: **ptny.org**

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration: **weather.gov**

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation: **parks.ny.gov**

I LOVE New York: **ILoveNY.com**



Enter the Erie Canalway Photo Contest

Entering is a snap: find an entry form and tips on our website:
www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest

Winning images will be published in the annual Erie Canalway calendar

BE SAFE ON THE WATER

- **Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD).** The U.S. Coast Guard requires a PFD for each person on board. Canal regulations require that the PFD be worn when passing through a lock. Wear a PFD whenever you're on the water.
 - **Learn to swim.** Better yet, take a lifesaving course.
 - **Check the NYS Canal Corporation "Notices and Alerts" website** for current information about the segment you plan to paddle: canals.ny.gov/wwwapps/tas/notices
 - **Check the weather forecast before leaving shore.** Start with the weather report page for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at weather.gov or use the free NOAA app.
 - **If you get caught in a storm:** Paddle to shore and hug the shoreline until reaching a safe place to exit the water. Lightning is a major hazard for boaters. Do not pull over and tie up to the tallest isolated tree. A far safer strategy is to keep paddling, briefly, until you find a safe take-out place, preferably one with shelter nearby.
 - **Identify launch and exit sites.** Consult the mile-by-mile information in this guide and on navigational maps to identify places you can exit the water if needed during your trip. Carry a waterproof map or nautical chart with the exit points marked.
 - **Bring your cell phone.** Keep it in a waterproof case, dry bag, or zip-lock plastic bag. Secure the phone to your boat or PFD.
 - **File a float plan with someone on shore.** See opposite page for details.
 - **Carry identification and emergency contact information.**
 - **Carry drinking water and snacks,** such as energy bars. You'll want them both during a long paddle.
 - **Protect yourself from the sun.** Wear sunglasses, a hat, and sunscreen.
 - **Be prepared for a variety of conditions.** Wear water shoes or old sneakers. Pack bug repellent and a small first aid kit, with materials to deal with blisters. Have dry clothing waiting for you in your car on return. If you're paddling a long distance, take dry clothes on board in a waterproof bag.
 - **Use the restroom before you leave.** In a waterproof bag, carry toilet paper and some sanitary wipes, plus another sealable plastic bag for waste paper. Carry out everything you carry in. Leave no trace behind.
 - **Bring a bailer or pump** to bail out the boat.
 - **Bring enough line** to tie up both the stern and the bow of the boat along the shore or at a dock should a storm approach and to allow for a tow, if necessary.
 - **Paddle with others whenever possible.**
 - **Do not use alcohol or recreational drugs while paddling.**
- In an emergency, call 911 or request assistance using channel 16 on a VHF radio.**



Commercial Slip, Buffalo

MAKE A FLOAT PLAN

A float plan will help to ensure your safety should something unexpected arise during your trip. Leave the information with a reliable person who will notify the authorities if you do not return as scheduled. If you are delayed and it is not an emergency, inform the person with your float plan to avoid an unnecessary search. Let the person know when you arrive home.

Include the following in your plan:

- Departure time and expected return time
- Names and phone numbers of all persons on the trip
- Trip route, with direction and destination(s)
- Boat description
- Description of your vehicle, plate number, and where it will be parked
- List of emergency safety equipment on board (flares, VHF radio)

BE SMART: Put your name and contact information in or on your boat in a way that easily can be seen. This will aid in tracking down a boat that has gone missing, on or off the water. Paddlers should always carry some sort of waterproof ID with emergency contact information that can ride along with you in your pocket or in your boat.

Some areas of the canals have poor, or no, cellular signal reception. This could affect access to 911 emergency services or other communication needs. Most canal facilities and other private businesses do have landlines should you find limited cellular service during your journey.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

In addition to great paddling, there is a lot more to do in the canal corridor. Here is a sampling; you will find additional details in the mile-by-mile information and in “Places of Interest Off the Water” highlighted throughout the guidebook. Extensive online resources are available at eriecanalway.org.

Taste History Along New York’s Canals

In the 1800s the Erie Canal carried New York’s rich agricultural products to the nation. Today agriculture remains an important part of life along the canal corridor, and most paddling journeys would not be complete without sampling the local fare. Visit the canal corridor’s many microbreweries, wineries, farmers markets, farm stands, ice cream parlors, local shops and ethnic restaurants for a great taste of the many flavors of the region.

- Inquire about local market days in the towns you visit or find locations and dates at localharvest.org or agriculture.ny.gov.
- Find pick-your-own orchards, farm tours, apple festivals, and more apple fun along the canal system at applesfromNY.com. To find farm cideries producing hard cider, check, NYcider.com.
- For information about wineries, visit fingerlakeswinecountry.com.
- Check out breweries along the Adirondack Craft Beverage Trail (adkcrafbbev.com), the Finger Lakes Beer Trail (fingerlakesbeertrail.com), the Heart of New York Craft Beverage Trail (brewcentralny.com), and the Rochester/Finger Lakes Craft Beverage Trail (rocflxcrafbbevtrail.com).



- You can also discover locally grown and made food and drink while getting to and from your travel destination at the Taste NY Markets found at three travel plazas in the canal corridor:

Chittenango Travel Plaza

New York State Thruway I-90 Westbound
Milepost 266
Chittenango, NY 13037

Finger Lakes Welcome Center

35 Lake Front Drive
Geneva, NY 14456

Mohawk Valley Welcome Center

New York State Thruway I-90 Westbound
Milepost 187 between exit 28 and 29
Randall, NY 12072

Canal Communities

Be sure to spend time in the villages, towns, and cities along the canal. You'll discover communities that showcase their canal heritage through waterfront festivals, historical murals, walking tours, and preservation initiatives. Look for evidence of New York's canal age in the buildings and streetscapes of communities along the canal. Not only do canal towns share similarities in layout and orientation to the waterway, in most cases, their architecture reflects the prosperity that characterized upstate New York from 1825 through the end of the 19th century.

Cultural and Heritage Sites and Museums

World class museums, four national parks, 34 national historic landmarks, historic canal sites and vessels, grand movie palaces and theaters, and a 100-mile mural trail provide a wealth of choices for exploring culture and history. Canal-themed museums share the powerful story of this waterway's role in shaping New York and the nation. Art lovers will enjoy a wealth of local galleries, outstanding museum collections, craft festivals, and art trails. The changing light and mood of the waterway also presents excellent opportunities for photography and painting.

State Parks and State Historic Sites

Within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, there are nine New York State Historic Sites and 24 state parks managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). State parks generally have parking areas, roads, trails, docks, and restrooms. Some have recreational facilities, including beaches, swimming pools, and playgrounds.

Most state parks charge a vehicle use fee for day use, and some may also charge additional fees for boat launches, picnic shelter reservations and other amenities. Historic sites generally charge an admission fee.

Empire Pass holders get unlimited day use vehicle entry to most facilities operated by New York State Parks and the state DEC. For details, visit shop.parks.ny.gov or call 518-474-0458.

Camping is allowed at many state parks. Reservations are strongly suggested and can be made from one day to nine months in advance. To reserve a campsite, visit newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com or call 800-456-CAMP.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about park and historic site locations, fees, hours, and facilities, visit parks.ny.gov.



PASSPORT TO PARKS

A fun way to remember your canal journey is with the special Passport to Your National Parks program's cancellation stamps, available free at more than 30 canal heritage sites. Find a list at eriecanalway.org/explore/culture-heritage.



Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, Chittenango Creek Aqueduct

Cycling the Erie Canalway Trail

Enjoy unparalleled cycling along the 365-mile Erie Canalway Trail. The paved and stone dust trail follows both active and bypassed sections of the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany—much of it along the canal’s former towpath. More than three-quarters of it is off-road; trail markers and wayfinding signs make the trail easy to follow and connect the off- and on-road segments. The trail is a perfect way to access all sorts of interesting canal sites that you might miss in a car. The Erie Canalway Trail is a central element of the Empire State Trail, a 750-mile network that will soon be the longest multi-use state trail in the nation.

Fishing

As a gateway to New York’s waterways, the canal offers access to a wide range of fishing opportunities—from small streams to the Great Lakes. Many anglers seek out areas near the canal system’s locks, where fish often congregate. Common catches include: walleye, northern pike, small and large mouth bass, panfish, and carp. New York State requires everyone above the age of 16 to have a license to fish in New York’s freshwaters. The NYS DEC maintains a number of fishing access sites along the canal that are also boat launches—these sites are included in this book. Find details:

dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html

Birdwatching

The quiet waters of today's canals, along with the many wetlands that have filled in the original 1800s canals, are perfect places to watch for birds. Migratory songbirds and waterfowl use the corridor on their yearly travels and many stay to nest along its shores. Swallows, herons, and waterfowl are common.

The following locations offer premier birdwatching for wading birds, waterfowl, and songbirds and are directly accessible from the water:

- **BUCKHORN ISLAND BIRD CONSERVATION AREA**

Part of Buckhorn Island State Park north of Grand Island; within the Niagara River corridor, near the western terminus of the Erie Canal.

- **MONTEZUMA WETLANDS COMPLEX**

Located at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, this famed site features massive numbers of migratory waterfowl.

- **CAYUGA LAKE**

All 38 miles of Cayuga Lake, including the Cayuga-Seneca Canal.

- **ONEIDA LAKE ISLANDS**

Three small, rocky islands (Little Island, Long Island, and Wanry Island) in western Oneida Lake.

- **THREE MILE BAY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

Located on the north shore of Oneida Lake.

- **VISCHER FERRY NATURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVE**

Important wetland habitat with cattail marshes located along the eastern Erie Canal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit ibirdny.org. The I Bird NY program is an excellent source of up-to-date information, including where to see and learn more about birds.



Fred Bertram

Festivals and Events

Communities throughout the canal corridor celebrate their canal connection with annual events, including fairs, festivals, concerts, fireworks, boat floats, races, and more. These events are fun, great for families, and usually free. They make a great destination for a day trip or overnight paddle.

In the list of annual canal events below, bear in mind that dates vary—always check ahead for dates, times, and cancellation. You can find updated details about canal events at eriecanalway.org and canals.ny.gov.

| LOCATION | EVENT | MORE INFORMATION |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| APRIL | | |
| Corridor-wide | Canal Clean Sweep | ptny.org |
| MAY | | |
| Brockport | Low Bridge High Water Festival | brockportny.org |
| Niskayuna | Pedal-Paddle-Run Triathlon | schenectadycounty.com |
| Pittsford | Paddle and Pour | townofpittsford.org |
| Waterloo | Commemorate Memorial Day | waterloony.com |
| JUNE THROUGH AUGUST | | |
| Baldwinsville | Summer Concert Series | baldwinsville.org |
| Newark | Music on the Erie | newarknychamber.org |
| JUNE | | |
| Baldwinsville | Seneca River Days | baldwinsvillerotary.org |
| Chittenanago | Old Erie Canal Boat Float | tourthetowpath.com |
| Fairport | Canal Days | fairportcanaldays.com |
| Phoenix | Canal Days | villageofphoenix.ny.gov |
| JULY | | |
| Fort Hunter | Schoharie Crossing Canal Days | parks.ny.gov |
| North Tonawanda | Canal Fest of the Tonawandas | canalfest.org |
| Oswego | Harborfest | oswegoharborfest.com |
| Rotterdam Junction | Mabee Farm Canal Fest | schenectadyhistorical.org |
| Spencerport | Canal Days | spencerportcanaldays.com |
| AUGUST | | |
| Albion | Canal Splash | eriecanalway.org |
| Amsterdam | Rock-the-Park Festival | villageofalbionny.com |
| Camillus | RiverFest | amsterdamny.gov |
| Clyde | Towpath Day | townofcamillus.com |
| DeWitt | Fireworks Display | clydeny.com |
| | Annual Canal Day | townofdewitt.com |



Jim McKnight

Fulton-Oswego
Little Falls
Medina
Pittsford
Rome
Schuylerville
Schuylerville
Sylvan Beach

Oswego Paddlefest
Canal Celebration
Canal Heritage Festival
Lockapalooza
Canalfest
Cardboard Boat Race
Champlain Canalway Trail Bicycle Tour
Canal Fest

visitoswegony.com
littlefallsny.com
orleansnyheritage.wordpress.com
lock32.com
romechamber.com
hudsoncrossingpark.org
saratoga.com
sylvanbeachny.com

SEPTEMBER

DeWitt
Holley/Albion/Medina
Waterford
Waterford

Tour the Towpath
Orleans County Heritage Festival
Tugboat Roundup
Kayaking 4 Meso

tourthetowpath.com
orleansnyheritage.wordpress.com
tugboatroundup.com
kayaking4meso.org

OCTOBER

Fairport
Fort Edward
Lockport
Rome
Phoenix
Rexford
Rochester
Seneca Falls

Oktoberfest
Locktoberfest
Locktoberfest
Locktoberfest
Locktoberfest
Mohawk Towpath Byway Duathlon
Genesee River Romance Weekend
Locktoberfest

fairportoktoberfest.org
villageoffortedward.com
locktoberfest.org
romenewyork.com
villageofphoenix-ny.gov
mohawktowpath.org
cityofrochester.gov
locktoberfest.senecafalls.com

BEST BET PADDLING DAY TRIPS

| Region | Canal | Start Location | Start Mile | End Location | End Mile | Total Miles |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|-------------|
| Cayuga-Seneca | Cayuga-Seneca | Oak Island Park, Waterloo | 12.45 | Lock CS2-3, Seneca Falls | 8.01 | 4.44 |
| Champlain | Champlain | Moreau Boat Launch, Fort Edward | 36.79 | Lock C5 Launch, Schuylerville | 26.28 | 10.51 |
| Champlain | Champlain | Alfred Z. Solomon Launch, Lock C5, Schuylerville | 26.15 | Stillwater Hudson Riverfront Park | 17.21 | 8.94 |
| Buffalo to Rochester | Erie | Canalside Buffalo | 351.7 | Smith Street/Red Jacket Riverfront Park and return | 355.02 | 6.6 |
| Buffalo to Rochester | Erie | Ransom Creek Kayak Launch, Amherst | 328.88 | Nelson Goehle Public Marina Boat Launch, Lockport | 319.50 | 9.38 |
| Buffalo to Rochester | Erie | Harvester Park, Brockport | 278.85 | Holley Canal Park and return | 283.43 | 9.16 |
| Rochester to Syracuse | Erie | Genesee Waterways Center, Genesee Valley Park, Rochester | Off the canal | Corn Hill Landing and return | Off the canal | 6.8 |
| Rochester to Syracuse | Erie | Erie Canal Boat Company, Fairport | 246.77 | Bushnell's Basin and return | 250.63 | 7.7 |
| Rochester to Syracuse | Erie | Above Lock E25, Mays Point, off NY 89 | 203.11 | Montezuma Heritage Park, Montezuma and return | 200.82 | 4.6 |

| One-way or round trip | Number of Locks | Notes |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| one way | 1 | This scenic paddling trip takes you on the Cayuga-Seneca canal, through one lock at Waterloo, and on to Seneca Falls. If you don't have your own boat you can rent one from Stivers Seneca Marine, Fuzzy Guppies, or Canalside Experiences, a short distance upstream of Oak Island Park. |
| one way | 1 | This trip is a nice mix of river and land-cut paddling, passing through Lock C6 Fort Miller and ending at Lock C5 and Hudson Crossing Park. |
| one way | 0 | Enjoy a lovely float past Saratoga Battlefield with places to stop and stretch at Fort Hardy Park or the Schuyler Home in Schuylerville. |
| round trip | 0 | Paddle up the winding Buffalo River between towering grain elevators where midwestern grain is stored. It was once transferred here from lake freighters to canal boats, but now goes by rail. River Fest Park and Mutual Riverfront Park are nice places to get out and stretch. There are several places to rent canoes and kayaks at Canalside and along the river or you can launch your own at Ohio Street. |
| one way | 2 | Descend the Niagara Escarpment without going over the falls. Pass through the "deep cut" and staircase Locks 34/35 of the Lockport Flight. A low dock at the top of Lock E35 provides an opportunity to get out, stretch your legs, and explore Lockport. Good ice cream and food options available near take out. |
| round trip | 0 | Paddle up to Holley for a picnic in the gazebo and let the canal's mild current help on your return. |
| round trip | 0 | Rent a canoe or kayak or launch your own at Genesee Waterways Center and follow the river through Genesee Valley Park, designed by the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. You'll paddle past the University of Rochester campus and into the heart of downtown Rochester. The variety of riverscapes is striking along this short stretch. Just remember that you'll be paddling against the river's current on your return. |
| round trip | 0 | Rent a canoe or kayak at Erie Canal Boat Company or launch your own at their ramp and paddle up to Bushnell's Basin. Enjoy ice cream, coffee, and several places to eat there before your return to Fairport. |
| round trip | 1 | Pull out on the shoreline just north of the aqueduct. Explore the nature trails and historic canal sites within the park, including the remains of Clinton's Ditch Lock 62, a paper mill, drydock, bird lookout deck, and old Cayuga-Seneca Canal Lock 11. Two murals are also located in the park. |

Best Bet Paddling Day Trips

| Region | Canal | Start Location | Start Mile | End Location | End Mile | Total Miles |
|--------------------------|--------|--|---------------|--|---------------|-------------|
| Syracuse to Little Falls | Erie | Old Erie Canal State Park, Cedar Bay Park, DeWitt | Off the canal | Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum, Chittenango | Off the canal | 9.40 |
| Syracuse to Little Falls | Erie | Ilion Marina (or Fulmer Creek Access, Mohawk or Gems Along the Mohawk, Herkimer) | 89.07 | Little Falls Rotary Park | 80.1 | 8.97 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Little Falls Rotary Park | 80.10 | Lock E18 and return | 83.19 | 6.20 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Little Falls Rotary Park | 80.10 | Saint Johnsville Municipal Marina | 69.48 | 10.62 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Schoharie Crossing Boat Ramp, Fort Hunter | 43.90 | Port Jackson/ South Side Launch, Amsterdam | 38.5 | 5.40 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Aqueduct Park, Schenectady | 17.33 | Lock E7 and return | 13.07 | 8.50 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Aqueduct Park, Schenectady | 17.33 | Niskayuna Lions Park | 11.2 | 6.13 |
| Little Falls to Albany | Erie | Alcathy's Boat Ramp, Waterford | 3.02 | Waterford Point Boat Ramp | 0.28 | 2.74 |
| Oswego | Oswego | Indian Point Landing, Fulton | 12.90 | Lock O8 Ramp, Oswego | 22.89 | 9.99 |
| Oswego | Oswego | Lock Island Park, Phoenix | 2.33 | Indian Point Landing, Fulton | 12.9 | 10.57 |

| One-way or round trip | Number of Locks | Notes |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| one way | 0 | Paddle a stretch of towpath-era canal, still watered but bypassed since 1918. Cross two stone aqueducts above Limestone and Chittenango creeks. |
| one way | 1 | Paddle a lovely combination of river- and land-cut canal sections. This stretch is generally free from road noise once you get past the New York State Thruway I-90 bridge east of Herkimer. Good places to stop for a break at Fort Herkimer Church and Lock E18. |
| round trip | 0 | Rent a canoe or kayak at Little Falls Harbor or launch your own and paddle up to Lock E18 through a beautiful part of the Mohawk Valley. It is generally quiet here with the roads far from the river. At Lock 18 you can paddle for some distance up the Mohawk to get a sense of what the river looked like before it was canalized. |
| one way | 2 | This trip provides the opportunity to pass through the highest lift on the canal system (Lock E17), stop at the home of Revolutionary War General Nicholas Herkimer, pass through Lock E16, and end at a place with warm showers. |
| one way | 2 | Take time to paddle up Schoharie Creek and explore Schoharie Aqueduct, then head down river through Locks E12 and E11, stopping to explore the old Yankee Hill Lock along the way. |
| one way | 0 | Rent a canoe or kayak at the Boat House or launch your own to explore a deep and largely unknown gorge of the Mohawk River. NOTE: You will be paddling upstream on your return. Leave extra time and energy. |
| one way | 1 | Paddle through a deep gorge that few people know about. Explore Rexford Aqueduct, Enlarged Erie Lock 21, drop 27 feet at Lock E7, get out and explore the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. NOTE: This trip is best done in spring/early summer, before the water chestnut gets too dense to take out at Niskayuna Lions Park. Use Vischer Ferry Car Top Launch in August or September. |
| one way | 5 | Take a fascinating trip through the Waterford flight of five locks. Enjoy varied paddling through rock cut sections, wide open basins with big views east to the Hudson River Valley, past the Waterford Canal Shops, and through the locks. Restrooms and amenities available at the end in Waterford. |
| one way | 4 | This is the route of the annual Oswego River Paddlefest. Minetto is a nice place for a break. |
| one way | 2 | Here's a great opportunity to paddle through old Oswego Canal locks along the east shore, get out for a stretch at Great Bear Springs Recreation Area, and pass through two deep locks in Fulton. A take-out at the Stop 28 Ramp, upstream of Fulton, shortens the trip by 4 miles and 2 lockages. |

MILE BY MILE GUIDE:

NYS CANALWAY

WATER TRAIL SITES

TYPES OF SITES

The following pages provide a mile-by-mile listing of sites along the Canal System beginning at the Erie Canal in Buffalo and ending in Waterford. The Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain canals follow.

Locks and other canal structures, ports and towns, access sites, canal attractions, heritage sites, and other places of interest to paddlers along the water trail are described in detail. Paddlecraft sales and rentals, outfitters, waterway cruises, as well as camping and lodging options are broken out in sidebars for easy reference. Most of the locations listed are directly on the canal or are within about one-half mile of it.

Additional historical sites and popular attractions are listed as places of interest off the water. Throughout the canalway, you will find ice cream and coffee shops, restaurants, breweries, wineries, farm stands, boat tours and other recreational opportunities. Where possible, we have listed websites where you can find additional information for those businesses.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site descriptions include information paddlers need to plan enjoyable trips, such as address and contact information, access points, restrooms, parking, and other amenities. While some listings may include hours of operation, we recommend you check with individual businesses regarding their current schedule.




When available, mileage and coordinates are provided. Although the canals don't run in straight lines, for the purposes of this guide the banks of the Erie Canal and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal are described as being on the north side or the south side, even when the compass direction might be different. Similarly, the banks of the Oswego Canal and the Champlain Canal, which run approximately north-south, are described as being west side and east side.

Map scales vary, so please be sure to check each scale to gauge distances between sites and points of reference. In most cases distances can be calculated using the mileage marker with the site listings.











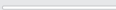
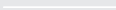
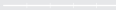
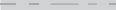

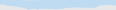
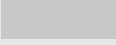
MORE INFORMATION for exploring all there is to see and do along the canalway, including suggested itineraries, can be found at **eriecanalway.org**.

Water trail sites listed in bold face appear on maps near the site listing. Mileage and canal structure names (locks, bridges, and guard gates) are listed with the prefix “E” along the Erie Canal, “CS” on the Cayuga-Seneca, “O” on the Oswego, and “C” along the Champlain. Mileages are based on the official NYS Canal Corporation “Table of Distances.” Mile 0.00 on the Erie and Champlain canals is in the Hudson River opposite Peebles Island, Waterford, about 2 miles above the head of tide at the federal lock and dam in Troy. Mile 0.00 on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal is at Kipp Island, which marks its confluence with the Erie Canal. Mile 0.00 on the Oswego Canal is at Three Rivers Point where the Seneca River and Oneida Lake Outlet come together to form the Oswego River and the Oswego Canal branches off from the Erie. Mileage is not shown for points of interest and businesses that are off the water or on side channels.

Coordinates appear as decimal Latitude, Longitude based on WGS 84 datum.

Hand launch sites are identified with a  icon. Public boat ramps, suitable for both trailer and hand launch are indicated by a  icon. The dock  icon is used for sites that are accessible from the water but are not suitable for put-in or take-out. Canal communities are building additional paddler-friendly facilities every year. Check the **eriecanalway.org** website for updates.

Hazards and important safety information appear as **PADDLING NOTES**.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Water Trail Site |
|  | Lock |
|  | Navigation Hazard! |
|  | Hand Launch |
|  | Ramp Launch |
|  | Dock |
|  | Interstate or Limited Access Highway |
|  | US Highway |
|  | State Highway |
|  | County Road |
|  | Major Local Road |
|  | Minor Local Road |
|  | Railroad |
|  | County Boundary |
|  | Stream |
|  | River or Canal |
|  | Park or Recreation/ Wilderness Area |