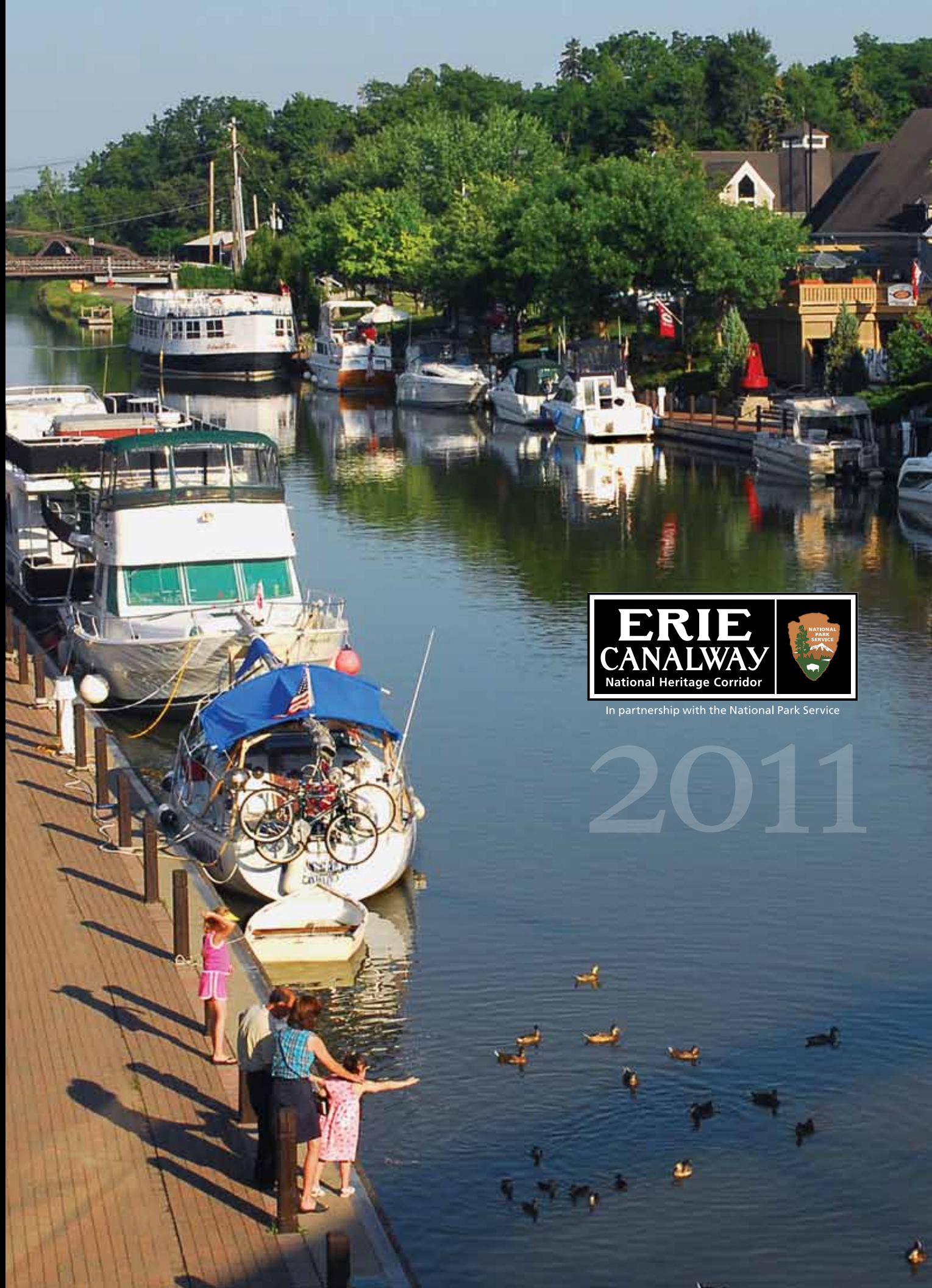




In partnership with the National Park Service

2011





2011

*"The can-do attitude of
New Yorkers in general
and canallers in particular
is as old as the canal itself."*

Above: New York State Museum, Michon Collection

On the cover: Erie Canal in Fairport, by Keith Boas

Resilience.



Flooding and high water in the spring. Tropical storms in late-summer. Lives lost. Homes, historic properties, and waterfront parks ravaged. Navigation channels and canal structures along the eastern Erie Canal destroyed. Millions of dollars in damages. Businesses shuttered. By any measure, 2011 delivered a deluge of adversity.

Yet in adversity's wake, astonishing resilience emerged.

Thousands of volunteers helped neighbors and strangers. Government leaders took decisive action. Public works departments unflaggingly engaged in waterfront and community clean up. Canal employees and contractors worked around the clock, repairing locks and dams and restoring navigation to a point that safely allowed stranded vessels to travel home before winter.

In between spring and fall floods, we saw vibrant celebrations of canal heritage, new waterfront docks and improvements to provide public access to the canal, and tremendous progress toward advancing a host of projects that protect and promote our national assets throughout the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

To be at the center of this storm of activity has made 2011 like no other. The work of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission has never been more needed or more valuable. By helping to coordinate and catalyze existing and new collaborative efforts, we are beginning to realize a 21st Century vision for the canals, not simply as a foundational part of our past, but as a dynamic part of our future.

This report shares results of this work. Credit is due to the many partners who are working with us to protect, promote, and connect our heritage assets. The can-do attitude of New Yorkers in general and canallers in particular is as old as the canal itself. Let's continue to capitalize on our resilience and determination to make 2012 a banner year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Judith Schmidt-Dean". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith Schmidt-Dean

Commission Chair

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

2011

Canal Corridor Highlights



Chittenango



Champlain Canal

Highlights reflect significant events and advances made by a variety of agencies and organizations

- **More than 300 events and festivals** were held. Over **4 million visitors** annually are estimated to have an economic impact of **\$380 million**.
- The inaugural **New York Heritage Weekend** in May featured 166 special programs, tours, and discounted admissions at heritage and cultural destinations statewide. Nearly 20,000 visitors attended and generated \$1.6 million in economic impact.
- More than **550 cyclists** representing 36 states participated in **Cycling the Erie Canal**, the 12th annual 8-day cross-state bike tour from Buffalo to Albany, organized by Parks & Trails New York. Participants ranged in age from six to 89 years old and included 70 children cycling with parents or grandparents.
- **Canal Splash!**—an annual celebration of the canal's history, culture, and recreational appeal held the second weekend in August—offered **75 events**, attended by an estimated **10,000 people**.
- **More than 3,500 children from 53 schools**, as well as thousands at canal festivals throughout the summer months, learned about canal history thanks to the Tug *Urger* Program, offered by the NYS Canal Corporation. **Tug Urger** celebrated its 110th birthday and was joined by the canal schooner **Lois McClure** for public tours in September along the Champlain Canal.
- More than **2,500 people** attended this year's **National Preservation Conference in Buffalo**, setting a new record in attendance for the 65-year-old conference.
- Organized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the event shone a spotlight on Buffalo's extraordinary architecture and the Erie Canal's prominence in shaping the city.
- **Buffalo's Erie Canal Harbor** took giant steps forward in 2011. An estimated **400,000 people** visited the waterfront—about four times the number that visited in 2010—thanks to a series of concerts, events, and canal harbor developments driven by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation and its partners.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, established in 2000 by an Act of Congress, spans 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York. 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 2.7 million people.



that contribute to the mission of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission.

- The annual **canal inspection tour** was carried out by boat for the first time since 1999. NYS Canal Corporation Director Brian Stratton lead the tour of the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals, inviting state and community leaders and local media to come aboard to learn about the importance of canals to the economy of upstate New York.
- Improved **amenities and public access to the canal**, including new docks, were completed in **Bushnell's Basin, Halfmoon, Rome, and Spencerport**.
- **Closing the Gaps Roundtables**, sponsored by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office, were held in Syracuse, Lockport, Utica, and Clyde. The roundtables generated local and state-wide support for completing gaps in the **Erie Canalway Trail**. Based on recent trail counts, use is projected to grow from **1.5 million to 2 million visits** annually when the trail is complete.
- **The Mighty Waters Initiative**, under the direction of Congressman Paul Tonko, organized state agencies, heritage areas, non-profits, and economic development organizations to articulate a regional vision for waterfront development and historic preservation in New York's greater Capital Region. Working groups penned an action plan to guide efforts in the coming years. More than 300 stakeholders convened at a 2nd Mighty Waters Conference in July, where Lieutenant Governor Duffy was the keynote speaker.
- Congressional Representatives Richard Hanna (NY-24), Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) and Louise Slaughter (NY-28) joined the bi-partisan **National Heritage Area Congressional Caucus** co-chaired by Representatives Paul Tonko (NY-21) and Charles Dent (PA-15). The caucus facilitates improved cooperation among members of Congress interested in promoting regional conservation and sustainability.
- Seven of the ten **Regional Economic Development Councils** established by Governor Andrew Cuomo overlap with the National Heritage Corridor. The councils are anticipated to foster improved regional strategic planning and collaboration and better direct funding from a variety of state agencies. Watch for more in 2012.

Strengthen community capacity

The many people working to preserve and enhance Corridor resources and local economies are eager to learn new skills, get help from new sources, and identify successful pathways. The Commission is fostering a climate of creativity and cooperation so that innovative ideas, expertise, and resources are shared and strengthened.

2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Erie Canalway Partner Program

Our formal collaboration with **25 canal-related museums and cultural heritage sites** gained momentum as we began to direct resources and technical assistance and connect sites spread across more than 500 miles of the Heritage Corridor.

- One hundred museum professionals and volunteers attended a series of six **listening sessions**, offered in partnership with Museumwise, a nonprofit professional development service organization. Information gathered is being used to develop a suite of technical assistance workshops to be offered in 2012.
- The Commission developed a **professional development grant program** specifically for partners. Each partner organization is eligible for up to \$1,000 per year to attend workshops, conferences, classes, or do research. Six partners took advantage of this offering in 2011.
- To enhance the visual sense that partner institutions are critical entry points to the National Heritage Corridor, sites worked with us to develop 24" x 36" semi-custom **indoor exhibit panels** with a unifying graphic theme. In all, 19 signs were created and installed at partner locations. Each consists of a core contemporary image, as well as an inset historical image. A map of the Corridor includes a "You Are Here" point of reference.

Partners also received Erie Canalway 101 information to share with staff and volunteers to help ensure that "front line" personnel are able to answer basic questions about the National Heritage Corridor that may be prompted by the new signs.

Collaboration to Advance Regional Initiatives

Erie Canalway staff offer guidance and technical assistance in support of a number of regional initiatives. Several made significant gains in 2011:

Mohawk River Watershed

The **Mohawk River Watershed Advisory Committee**, led by Soil and Water Conservation Districts, made progress in developing a watershed management plan. The **Mighty Waters Initiative**, spearheaded by Congressman Paul Tonko, developed a vision and action agenda to guide heritage development. Both groups were active in flood damage assessment and response throughout the Mohawk River watershed post Tropical Storms Irene and Lee.

Champlain Canalway Trail

The Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group completed a **Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan** in 2011. The Working Group is a volunteer, ad hoc partnership that includes local and regional canal and trail groups, public agencies, and park and preservation organizations, including the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The plan conveys a vision for the Champlain Canalway Trail corridor and offers recommendations to help support and coordinate regional and community-based efforts to develop the Canalway Trail from Waterford to Whitehall.



Fort Edward



Launched in 2010, the Partner Program seeks to develop a more integrated system of historic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources that collectively constitute the Corridor's national significance.

Stimulate economic revitalization through heritage tourism

Strategic partnerships forged among a wide range of agencies, organizations, and canal and heritage-related venues are bringing the National Heritage Corridor to the forefront as a world class tourism destination.



2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Middleport

Event Sponsorships

In 2011, Erie Canalway co-sponsored **four Corridor-wide events** and **15 community-based events** to boost visitation to the canal, the Erie Canalway Trail, and canal communities. Partnerships with the New York State Canal Corporation, Parks & Trails New York, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Western Erie Canal Alliance, and community partners were essential to the success of these events. Canal-wide events included: Heritage Weekend (May), Cycling the Erie Canal (July), Canal Splash! (August), and the Farm, Forest and Fishery Tour of the *Lois McClure* (July-October). In addition, 49 volunteers presented programs on the Erie Canal to an estimated **4,244 people** riding on Amtrak trains from Schenectady to Utica through the **NPS Trails & Rails Program**.

Tourism Development and Marketing

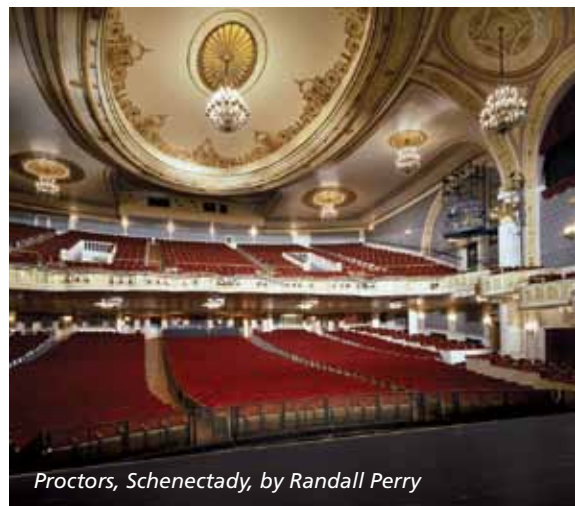
Thanks to collaboration with I LOVE NEW YORK, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Canal Corporation, Canal New York, and tourism promotion agencies, we promoted tours to the National Heritage Corridor at premier travel shows, including the **US Travel Association's International Pow Wow**, **World Travel Market**, and the **NY Times Travel Show**.

In addition, our involvement on the steering committee for the **NYS Travel and Vacation Association's** annual conference enabled us to champion heritage tourism along the state's canals with more than **200 New York State tourism professionals**.

Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

A multi-agency collaboration involving the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor; I LOVE NEW YORK; the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; 10 tourism promotion agencies, and Underground Railroad (UGRR) sites resulted in prestigious **National Park Service Network to Freedom** designation for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

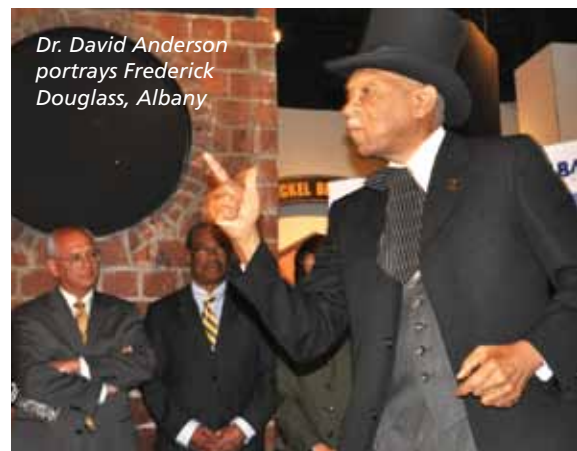
The partners organized an unprecedented **UGRR familiarization tour** for media from the United Kingdom and created new itineraries for exploring UGRR sites and stories. These efforts lead **Arena Travel of Great Britain** and the educational non-profit **Road Scholar** to offer UGRR tours along the Erie Canal and Hudson River in 2012.



Proctors, Schenectady, by Randall Perry

The Arts! Commerce, Culture and the Canal

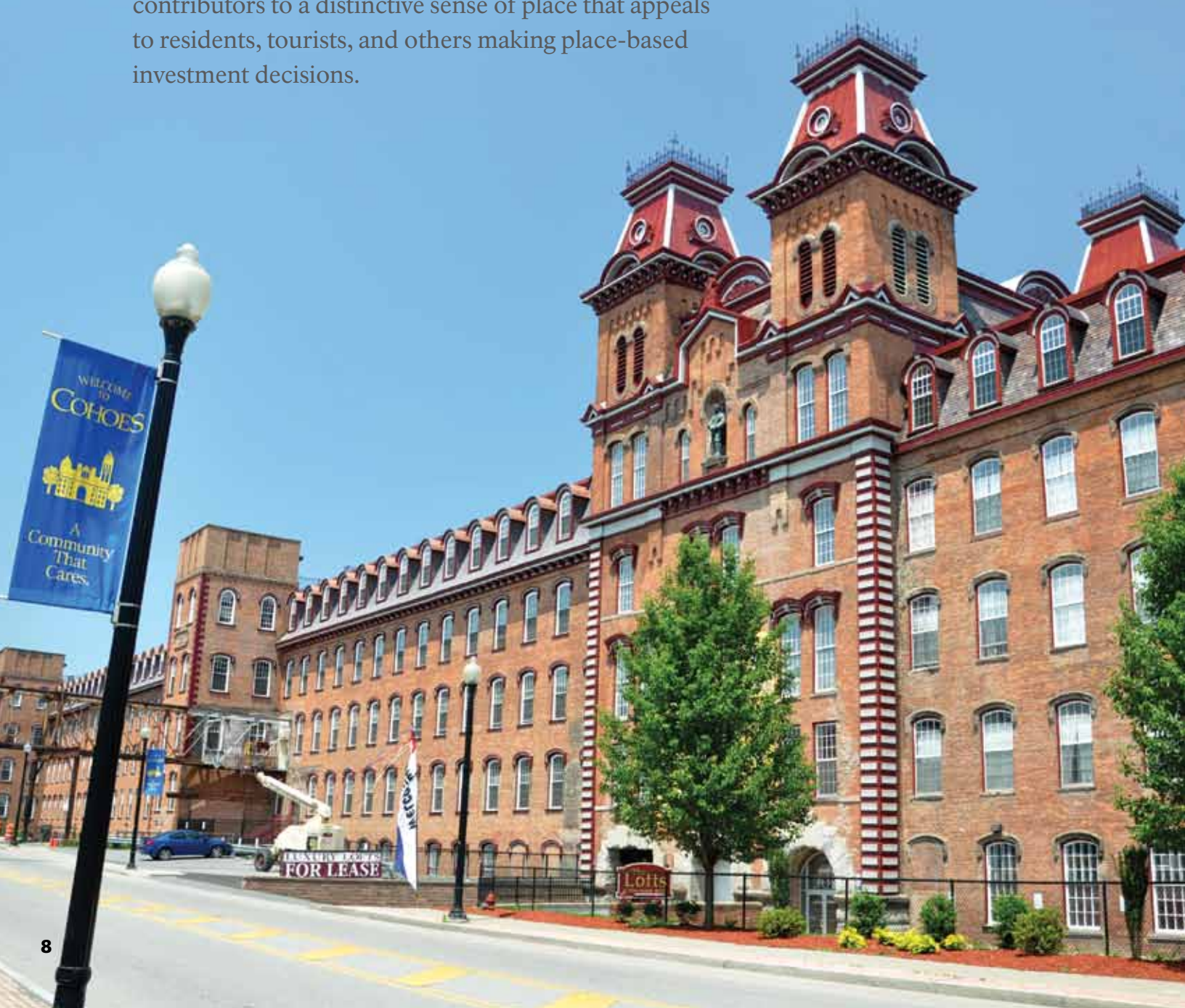
The Commission released a new online guide to help promote arts and culture in the Erie Canalway Corridor. Based on an extensive cultural asset inventory by the New York Folklore Society, the guide offers references for more than 60 arts venues, including: art museums and galleries, place-based artistic traditions, historic theaters, and artistic picks of places artists may want to visit for inspiration. The guide reveals how New York's canals influenced the development of various artistic traditions, including painting, photography, crafts, and theater.



Dr. David Anderson
portrays Frederick
Douglass, Albany

Reinforce the Corridor's distinctive sense of place

The Corridor's historic, cultural, and natural resources deserve protection on their own merits, but also as contributors to a distinctive sense of place that appeals to residents, tourists, and others making place-based investment decisions.



2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



New York Historic Preservation Tax Credit

New York State's recently expanded Rehabilitation Tax Credit program is attracting widespread use throughout the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, signaling strong interest in community revitalization efforts. The state credit is catalyzing new interest in the federal rehabilitation credit as well. Since 2009, **70% of the applications** for the federal rehabilitation tax credit for income-producing properties have come from **Upstate New York**, with key projects proceeding along the canal from Buffalo to Cohoes.

New York State's rehabilitation credit for owner-occupied homes is also seeing widespread use—**nearly 100 homes in the canal corridor** are being revitalized through that program. An economic benefits study for these rehabilitation incentives, funded by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and completed by the Preservation League of New York State, projected a **12:1 return on New York State's investment** in this program.

Developers of the Lofts at Harmony Mills took advantage of the federal preservation and New York State historic rehabilitation tax credit programs to redevelop the historic textile factory complex in Cohoes.

Erie Canalway Heritage Award of Excellence

Our awards program recognizes outstanding places in the Canalway Corridor where people have taken positive actions toward achieving the goals set forth in the Erie Canalway Preservation and Management Plan. The awards promote best practices, raise visibility, and show positive local impacts of heritage development activities. Commissioners and staff facilitated an independent jury who selected finalists based on written applications and rigorous site visits involving not only project sponsors, but community members, stakeholders, and municipal leaders.

2011 Erie Canalway Heritage Award of Excellence

Restored 1842 Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct at the Camillus Erie Canal Park, Camillus

2011 Honorable Mention

Verona Beach Lighthouse, Verona Beach
Delta Sonic Heritage Farm at the Buffalo Zoo, Buffalo

National Register Nomination for NYS Barge Canal System Nears Completion

In recognition of a near century of service, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is working with the NYS Canal Corporation, State Historic Preservation Office, and Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) to nominate the NYS Barge Canal System to the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district will include over 250 structures—every lock, lift bridge, guard gate, and dry dock on the system.

A team from HAER, a program of the National Park Service, did an initial survey in 2009. Erie Canalway staff refined that information in 2010 and began preparing the nomination in 2011. We anticipate working with the State Historic Preservation Office to present the nomination to the state review board for historic preservation in June 2012.

Photo Contest and 2012 Calendar

Since its inception in 2006, the Erie Canalway photo contest and calendar have continued to capture and share the distinctive nature, history, and beauty that make the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor so unique. This year's winning images, which grace each month of the calendar, offer a stunning testament to our remarkable canal heritage. Thanks to the support of 70 libraries and heritage sites, we were able to distribute 10,000 free calendars.





Build awareness and understanding

Raising awareness and understanding of the region's nationally significant history and diverse cultural and recreational assets is among the primary strategies for ensuring that current and future generations of residents and visitors will value and support preservation of the Corridor's heritage.

Port Byron

2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Telling the Story

Three projects funded with grants from the Commission and completed in 2011 are helping to tell local stories of the canal's national significance.

Interpretive Signs at River Fest Park, Buffalo

A formerly abandoned property along the Buffalo River was transformed into a beautiful new park, thanks to many years of work by the Valley Community Association. Opened in 2011, the park provides public access to the river with trails, boat docks, gardens, and an amphitheater. Funding provided by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor enabled the association to develop six outdoor exhibits that tell the story of Buffalo's industrial heritage as the grain milling capital of the world.

Digital Site Interpretation, Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park

Millions of travelers drive past old Erie Lock 52 in Port Byron each year as they travel east on the NYS Thruway I90. They may one day get more than a passing view, thanks to a unique partnership among the Canal Society of New York State,

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and landscape architecture graduate student Nathan Ogdahl. The team developed a digital flyover of the site which shows the stone lock chambers, 1895 Erie House, mule barn, and black smith shop. The digital presentation is currently available for teachers to use in Erie Canal lesson plans. In June, the NYS Thruway Authority and Canal Corp pledged financial support for the Port Byron project, which moves it one step closer to fruition.

Erie Canal Heritage Walking Tour, Village of Jordan

The Erie Canal was completed in 1819 through the Village of Jordan and opened across the state in 1825. Though construction of the Erie Barge Canal in 1918 bypassed the village, Jordan's canal history continues to contribute to the village's distinct character. A team of residents, village employees and mayor, and a consultant developed a walking tour with a brochure and signs to direct residents and visitors to prominent sites, including the 1840 aqueduct over Skaneateles Creek, locktender's house, and former Clinton Hotel.



"Since the project was unveiled on Memorial Day, people have commented on how much they have learned about our community from the signs and brochures. Others have said that this project has inspired them to learn more about the Erie Canal and visit other small, canal communities to learn about their rich history."

Mayor Richard Platten, Village of Jordan

BUILD AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

News and Media

Our website, e-newsletter, and media outreach continue to be essential vehicles for promoting the nationally-significant cultural, historic, natural, and recreational assets of the National Heritage Corridor.

New online: Canal Stories Videos

Nine video stories featuring people who lived or worked on the Erie and Champlain Canals from 1900 to the present are now available online at the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor website. From hiding bootleg liquor in the 1920s to learning from old-time canal workers, each short story offers a glimpse into life on the canal.

Canal Stories was produced by City Lore and the Erie Canal Museum, in collaboration with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission and the New York State Museum, with additional funding provided by the New York Council on the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



Lock 10, Cranesville,
by Howard Ohlhaus



Erie Canalway Map and Guide

The Commission distributed 40,000 copies of the Erie Canalway Map & Guide to introduce visitors to the many things to see and do in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The eight page guide gives people a sense of the whole National Heritage Corridor and offers direction for day trips and excursions. Seventy sites—including visitor centers, locks, and cultural heritage sites—all along the New York State Canal System partnered with the Commission to distribute the free guide.

National Publications

Several prominent national publications featured travels to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2011. These included: *LA Times* (January 23, 2011), *New York Times Magazine* (June 12, 2011), *Country Living* (June 2011), *Marina Life* (Summer 2011), and *Common Ground* (Summer 2011).

In the Wake of Tropical Storms... the Need for Information and Resources

The torrent of floodwaters from Tropical Storms Irene and Lee wrought devastating impacts on lives and livelihoods, but also resulted in extensive damage to the canal system itself. As we cleaned up nine inches of water and mud from the lower level of our own office, we also found a need to play a role in providing information about the floods—both to those affected and to canal enthusiasts throughout the National Heritage Corridor and beyond.

In the days and weeks following the storm, we:

- Disseminated information on flood damage resources and funding;
- Worked with the NYS Canal Corporation to develop a web-based gallery of images to convey the full impact of the storm along the Erie Canal/Mohawk River. The gallery was viewed nearly 4,000 times;
- Spread the word about the extent of regional damage to historic resources to state and national agencies and organizations charged with providing direct assistance;
- Provided information on what was open and closed along the canal to help ensure that canal boat tours, cultural sites, and museums not affected by flooding didn't suffer loss of patronage, while those sites that were closed could focus on clean up.



2011 Financial report

FEDERAL APPROPRIATION\$729,000

PROGRAM AREA SPENDING:

Interpretation, Outreach, and Orientation \$273,360
Preservation of Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources . . . \$76,433
Economic Revitalization \$101,089
Heritage Tourism and Recreation \$278,118

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor leveraged an additional \$1.17 million in 2011 to support projects and programs throughout the Corridor by working with federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

Sustaining the Heritage Corridor

Over the past year, the Commission and staff developed a five-year strategic plan to further define priorities and set a course for achieving financial sustainability. As anticipated federal budget cuts take effect, we must offset our federal appropriation with new sources of funding. This is essential for ensuring that we can continue to build on the accomplishments and momentum achieved over the past ten years with our partners. The Commission and staff are working closely with our nonprofit fundraising partner, the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, to pursue strategies to diversify our funding and build a secure future.

For more information about the programs and projects in this report, visit us online at www.eriecanalway.org.

Corridor Commission

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Vice Chair Russell S. Andrews, Syracuse
Secretary Alan N. Vincent, Little Falls
Treasurer Peter J. Welsby, Lockport
Ex Officio Dennis Reidenbach, Secretary of the Interior Designee

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Carmella Mantello, NYS Canal Corporation
Robert A. McNary, Empire State Development Corporation
Norvall "Chip" Pratt, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
NYS Assemblyman Robert P. Reilly, Newtonville
Robert Shibley, Buffalo
Pieter W. Smeenk, Fairport
Stuart W. Stein, Ithaca
Peter Wiles Jr., Macedon

Many thanks

After years of dedication and service as Director of the NYS Canal Corporation and as an Erie Canalway Commissioner, Carmella Mantello passed the reigns of leadership to Brian Stratton. Carmella's unflagging enthusiasm and mantra of "*partnerships, partnerships, partnerships*" helped to advance economic and heritage development along the NYS Canal System.

STAFF

Beth Sciumeca, Executive Director
Hannah Blake, Director of Planning and Heritage Development
Rosemary Button, Budget Analyst
Duncan Hay, Historian
Diane Jennings, Office Manager
Andy Kitzmann, Project Manager
Jean Mackay, Director of Communications and Outreach
Lori Solomon-Duell, Director of Heritage Tourism

2010 Congressional Delegation

U.S. SENATORS

Charles Schumer
Kirsten Gillibrand

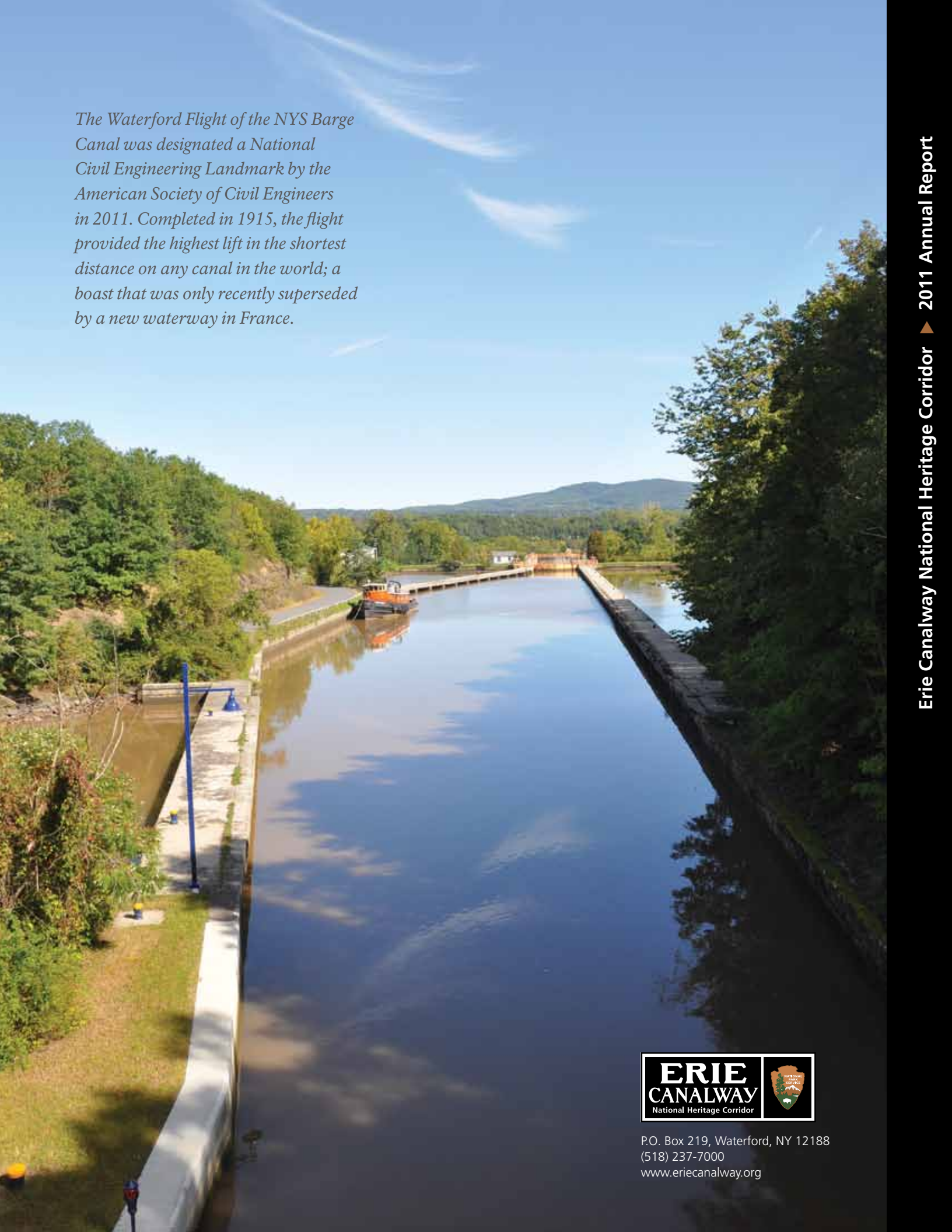
U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

Ann Marie Buerkle
Chris Gibson
Richard Hanna
Brian Higgins
Maurice Hinchey
Kathy Hochul
Bill Owens
Tom Reed
Louise Slaughter
Paul Tonko



Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
P.O. Box 219
Waterford, NY 12188
(518) 237-7000
www.eriecanalway.org

The Waterford Flight of the NYS Barge Canal was designated a National Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 2011. Completed in 1915, the flight provided the highest lift in the shortest distance on any canal in the world; a boast that was only recently superseded by a new waterway in France.



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