



In partnership with the National Park Service



2018  
ANNUAL REPORT



“Today’s canal is filled with connections, from past to present to future, from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, from village to village, and from generation to generation. The canal has carried it all.”

*A Long Haul, The Story of the New York State Barge Canal, Michele A. McFee*



**2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the opening of the NYS Canal System as we know it today.** Amidst celebratory events that marked the occasion over the past year, we also found ourselves called to envision a new century for New York’s most iconic waterway. Like our forebears who voted in 1903 to modernize the canals for motorized vessels, we, too, must pave the way for a 21st century waterway that preserves the best of New York’s extraordinary canal heritage, while ushering in the next generation of canal users.

Our major accomplishments in 2018 reflect our work to educate youth, widen the circle of canal supporters, engage new audiences, and expand uses of the waterway and Canalway Trail. Following the award-winning *Erie Canalway Preservation and Management Plan* and looking to innovative practices on canals worldwide, we worked with a wide range of partners to advance our mission.

Many thanks are due to organizations, agencies, and supporters at the federal, state, and local levels who collaborated with us. Our successes would not be possible without them. Together, we championed the unparalleled cultural heritage, tourism, and recreational assets of the Canalway Corridor, and we will continue to do so to sustain a vibrant Erie Canalway for the next 100 years.





2018  
HIGHLIGHTS

no.

1

## EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

**Seeing a lock in action; digging for canal artifacts; taking a boat ride over an aqueduct; collecting and analyzing water samples.**

These are just a few of the immersive learning opportunities that more than 6,600 students experienced in 2018, thanks to our Ticket to Ride and Every Kid in a Park programs.

The hands-on history and STEM lessons are the result of coordination and funding provided by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and outstanding field trips offered by 14 canal museums and historic sites and four national parks. These programs served students from 85 schools in 52 districts across the Canalway Corridor in 2018. Approximately 60 percent were from predominately lower-income urban and rural school districts.

Since 2012, more than 45,000 students from 266 schools in 115 school districts have participated. What a great way to enhance classroom studies and encourage the next generation to learn from and explore New York's remarkable canal heritage!



**6,600** STUDENTS

**85** SCHOOLS

**52** DISTRICTS

**60%** FROM LOWER-INCOME  
URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**14**  
CANAL MUSEUMS  
AND HISTORIC SITES

**4**  
NATIONAL PARKS

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF EVENTS

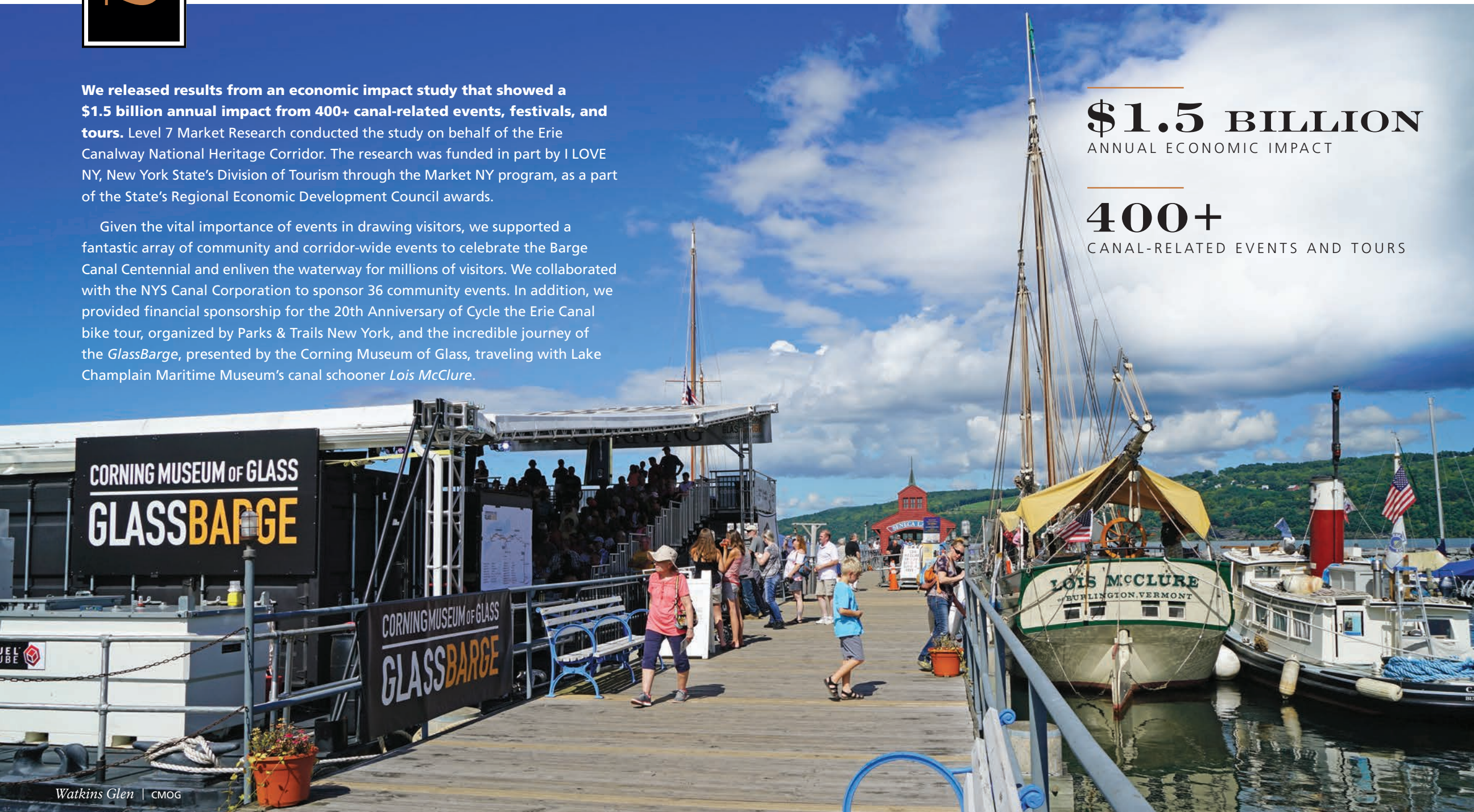
**We released results from an economic impact study that showed a \$1.5 billion annual impact from 400+ canal-related events, festivals, and tours.** Level 7 Market Research conducted the study on behalf of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The research was funded in part by I LOVE NY, New York State's Division of Tourism through the Market NY program, as a part of the State's Regional Economic Development Council awards.

Given the vital importance of events in drawing visitors, we supported a fantastic array of community and corridor-wide events to celebrate the Barge Canal Centennial and enliven the waterway for millions of visitors. We collaborated with the NYS Canal Corporation to sponsor 36 community events. In addition, we provided financial sponsorship for the 20th Anniversary of Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour, organized by Parks & Trails New York, and the incredible journey of the *GlassBarge*, presented by the Corning Museum of Glass, traveling with Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's canal schooner *Lois McClure*.

*Fifty thousand people attended 500 sold out shows of the GlassBarge as it traveled with the Lois McClure from New York City to Buffalo to Watkins Glen in 2018.*

**\$1.5 BILLION**  
ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

**400+**  
CANAL-RELATED EVENTS AND TOURS





2018  
HIGHLIGHTS

no. **3**

## BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND SERVING VISITORS

**More than 1,000 people participated in our Visitor Profile Study, carried out by Level 7 Market Research and released in 2018.** The comprehensive data showed that most canal visitors were highly satisfied with their trips. Still, the study gave us great insights for improving ways to attract and serve visitors. We presented the findings to more than 125 regional tourism providers and promoters at four separate meetings, as well as at the World Canals Conference in Ireland.

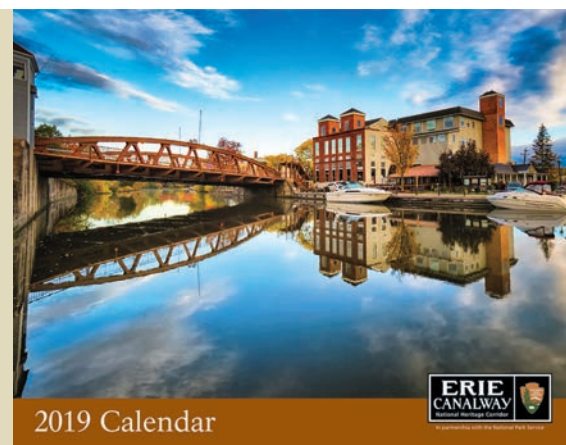
We also incorporated recommendations from the study into our website and publications to make it easier for visitors to find things to see and do in the National Heritage Corridor. We produced 70,000 Erie Canalway Map and Guides and distributed them with the help of 180 visitor centers and heritage sites, as well as at numerous tourism trade shows and the New York State Fair.

*Left: Results of the Visitor Profile Study are helping us better serve canal travelers like John Biggs, Kevin Dodd, Tom Hammond, and Amanda Hus. In 2018, Amanda and Tom paddled from Buffalo to Albany, then returned to Buffalo and cycled end-to-end with John and Kevin. What a journey!*



### Dockside Exhibits

Visitors to canal waterfronts are finding it easier to find their way to local amenities thanks to new dockside kiosks that include walkzone maps and canal historical information. Forty communities are receiving new dockside kiosks through a joint initiative of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the NYS Canal Corporation.



### Sharing the Beauty and Character of the Canalway Corridor

Our annual photo contest drew more than 300 entries from 126 photographers. Winning images are showcased in our coveted 2019 Erie Canalway Calendar, which provides a snapshot of what makes the Canalway Corridor so special. Eighty libraries and visitor centers distribute the calendars on our behalf each year to eager patrons.

## WELCOMING PADDLERS TO THE NEW YORK STATE CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

524  
MILES OF  
WATERWAYS

125  
PUBLIC  
ACCESS  
POINTS

**A growing number of paddlers are finding fun and adventure on the canals and we are hard at work to make their experience even more enjoyable.** Our Water Trail Advisory Group and editorial team completed a detailed assessment of the NYS Canal System and is in the final stages of publishing a paddling guidebook and navigational map set for the entire NYS Canal System, due out in 2019.

The NYS Canalway Water Trail is comprised of 524 miles of canals and interconnected lakes and rivers with more than 125 public access points for paddlers and a wealth of places to visit and sights to see. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and its not-for-profit partner the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc., are developing the guidebook in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). The project is funded, in part, by I LOVE NY, New York State's Division of Tourism through the Market NY program, as a part of the State's Regional Economic Development Council awards.

More than 700 paddling enthusiasts joined our NYS Canalway Water Trail Facebook group. This passionate community of paddlers has created a welcome place to share experiences, expertise, and questions leading to greater use of the canals by paddlers.

*Waterford* | Stefanie Obkirchner

## PROVIDING FUNDS TO GET THE JOB DONE

7  
GRANTS

\$77,231

ADDITIONAL FUNDS LEVERAGED  
IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUPPORT



Rotterdam Junction | Peter Rossi

**Seven organizations and municipalities spearheaded innovative recreation and education projects this year with funding support from Erie Canalway grants.** The grants ranged from \$2,000 to \$7,000 and leveraged an additional \$77,231 in private and public project support.

- **Corn Hill Waterfront and Navigation Foundation** brought students from the Rochester City School District aboard the canal boat *Sam Patch* to test water quality as part of a new environmental education/STEM program on the Erie Canal.
- **Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation** installed interpretive signs at the Flight of Five Locks in Lockport that explain the significance of the *Erie Traveler*, a replica Durham-style boat. Future signs will share the story of the Locktender Tribute Monument.
- **Madison County Planning Department** conducted a feasibility study for four hand-launch sites for paddlers along the Old Erie Canal State Park between Dewitt and Chittenango.
- **Montgomery County** is developing an app for use along the Erie Canalway Trail to share stories of the people and history of the Mohawk Valley.
- **Rochester Accessible Adventures (RAA)** is expanding access to recreational opportunities along the Erie Canal to people with disabilities and their family and friends. Funding supported an adaptive paddling and cycling center at CityGate in Rochester, which will be used by Monroe Community Hospital rehabilitation programs.
- **Schenectady County Historical Society** offered a suite of programs and events that enabled visitors to experience rowing on the Mohawk River in replica bateaux—period accurate reproductions of vessels that traveled and traded along the river prior to construction of the Erie Canal.
- **Village of Newark Art in Education** worked with Mural Mania and students from the Newark School District to refurbish an existing mural at the T. Spencer Knight Canal Park and create a new mural celebrating Newark's heritage on the Erie Canal.

Over the past 10 years, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor has made 69 small grants to communities and non-profit organizations that have spurred \$1.67 million in additional investments in heritage preservation, recreation, and education.

## REIMAGINING THE CANALS



Jurors selected our proposal “Go the Distance” as one of seven finalists from 145 entries in the Reimagine the Canals competition launched by the New York Power Authority and NYS Canal Corporation. The proposal called for a network of unique land and water-based accommodations to fill gaps in existing amenities and increase overnight stays along the canal. Though our project did not win, it gave us the opportunity to thoroughly analyze visitor facilities, develop a business plan and prototype designs, and build relationships with potential partners should we choose to pursue the project further.

## GO BIG Creating a Network of Accommodations & Amenities



## ADVANCING PLANS FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE OF MATTON SHIPYARD

Thanks to the dedicated support of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and the NYS Canal Corporation, our work to transform the former Matton Shipyard in Cohoes is progressing steadily. This multi-year redevelopment effort focused principally on planning and securing financial resources in 2018, including more than \$800,000 secured to date.

We also completed a Hazardous Materials Survey in 2018, which identified environmental contamination on site. As a result, we will begin additional testing and remediation for buildings and grounds in spring 2019. This work is critical to ensure that the entire site is safe and secure before we begin building stabilization and site enhancements.

## COLLABORATING FOR PRESERVATION

**The Preservation League of New York State listed the Schoharie Aqueduct at the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site on its 2018 Seven to Save List.**

This resulted in an expert group of canal historians, preservationists, state agencies, and non-profit organizations coming together to focus attention on the aqueduct and find solutions to stabilize and showcase it. We are proud to be at the table and to bring resources from the National Park Service's Historic American Engineering Record to bear on the site's future.

We also worked closely with the Preservation League of New York State, Canal Society of New York State, State Historic Preservation Office, and others to call attention to the fate of the state's historic canal fleet. Many historic vessels in the fleet, including the NYS Canal Corporation's flagship *Tug Urger*, may be retired from service in the coming years. We advocated to the NYS Canal Corporation and New York Power Authority for greater transparency and input from canal stakeholders to determine future uses for historic vessels.



Halldor Sigurdsson



2018  
HIGHLIGHTS

no.

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## WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

**Thanks to major grants and donations from foundations, federal and state agencies, and corporate and individual donors, we are able to take on new programs and advance our mission each year.** We are especially grateful for major funding support and in-kind contributions from the National Park Service; National Park Foundation; NYS Canal Corporation; NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Empire State Development and I LOVE NEW YORK; Brookfield Renewable; and many other individual and corporate donors.

We expanded the circle of friends who support our work at two “friend-raising” events. Nearly 50 people attended an event at the Buffalo Yacht Club in June and 150 canal enthusiasts attended and supported our Enterprising Waters reception at the NYS Museum in October.

2018  
HIGHLIGHTS

no.

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## SPEAKING OUT

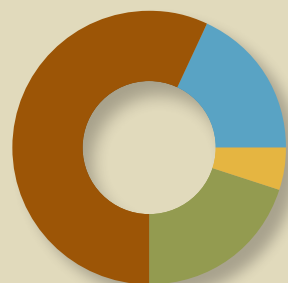
**Each year, we exhibit and speak at a variety of conferences and events, convene meetings with state agencies, and visit the offices of our congressional representatives in Washington, DC to ensure that the work we do is shared and supported.** In 2018, we participated and spoke at more than 25 conferences and events, including: World Canals Conference, Athlone, Ireland; NYS Canal Conference, Staten Island; Museum Association of NYS, Rochester; New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), Buffalo; ADK Sport and Fitness Expo, Saratoga; and New York by Rail, New York City.

*Above: Members of the New York delegation to the World Canals Conference enjoy a tour of Ireland’s Shannon-Erne waterway. From left: Andrea and John Robinson (Our Ability), Sharon Leighton (NYS Canal Corp), Duncan Hay and Jean Mackay (Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor)*

*Congressman Paul Tonko tours the Enterprising Waters exhibit with New York State Museum Senior Historian Brad Utter and Director of Exhibitions Nancy Kelly during the opening reception.* | New York Power Authority



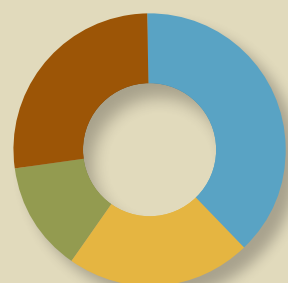
For the period October 1, 2017  
through September 30, 2018



## SUPPORT & REVENUE

Federal	\$757,414
State	\$234,086
Contributions, Grants & Sponsorships	\$64,993
In-kind Contributions	\$268,626
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,325,119</b>

By working with municipal and nonprofit partners, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor also leveraged more than \$2.34 million in FY2018 in support of program and project activities.



## EXPENSES

Preserve & Share Our Extraordinary Heritage	\$348,688
Promote the Corridor as a World Class Destination	\$483,598
Foster Vibrant Communities Connected by the Waterway	\$289,112
Program Support, Management & Resource Development	\$169,331
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,290,729</b>

\* The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor benefits from the work of two entities—a federal Commission and the nonprofit Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. These simplified financial statements reflect a summary of both entities. The Commission auditor is Jones & Company, PC. The Heritage Fund auditor is Cusack & Company, CPAs LLC. More detailed and audited financial statements for both entities may be requested by contacting our office. In addition, financial statements for the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund may be obtained from the NYS Office of the Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10271.

## DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

### Erie Canalway Leadership Circle (\$10,000+)

Central New York Community Foundation, Inc., John F. Marsellus Fund  
New York State's Empire State Development and the ILNY Division of Tourism under Governor Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative  
National Park Service  
New York State Canal Corporation/New York Power Authority  
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

### Erie Canalway Legacy Partners (\$5,000-9,999)

The Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region  
Brookfield Renewable  
National Park Foundation  
National Trust for Historic Preservation's Johanna Favrot and Brink Funds

### Erie Canalway Heritage Supporter (\$1,000-4,999)

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New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)  
Phil Scalia Photography  
Dorian L. Wells

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Note: donations through 11/30/2018. Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions. Please contact us at 518-237-7000 x 207 with any corrections.

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

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### TRANSITIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions and years of service of departing Board of Director Lee DeAmicis of Syracuse. Program Manager Brian Yates also left the staff in the fall after spearheading efforts to improve the NYS Canalway Water Trail. We also acknowledge the passing of U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter (NY-25) in 2018. Congresswoman Slaughter was a longtime supporter of Heritage Areas, including activities of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

