



Erie Canalway News Release

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NYS Canal System Designated a National Historic Landmark

WATERFORD, NY- As New York State prepares to honor the bicentennial of construction of the Erie Canal in 2017, there is new cause for celebration. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and National Park Service Acting Director Michael T. Reynolds today announced that the **NYS Canal System has been designated a National Historic Landmark**.

The designation places New York's operating canals among the premier historic sites in the United States.

A celebration and media event hosted by Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Congressman John Katko is planned to announce benefits and impacts for Upstate New York on **Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 10am** at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown (former Hotel Syracuse) in Syracuse.

"This recognition from the highest levels of our nation reminds us once again of the essential role New York State and its waterways have played in our country's development and prominence," said **Bob Radliff, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor**. "This designation recognizes the canals' significance, raises community pride, invites new investments, and enhances their status for residents and visitors."

The National Historic Landmark designation includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals. Direct successors of canals built during the 1820s, these waterways were enlarged to their current dimensions between 1905 and 1918. They remain in service today passing commercial and pleasure vessels between the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes.

Less than 3% of the thousands of places currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places are designated National Historic Landmarks. The designation specifically recognizes the canal for its role in shaping the American economy and settlement, as an embodiment of the Progressive Era emphasis on public works, and as a nationally significant work of early 20th century engineering and construction. Its 450 miles of navigation channels, locks, lift bridges, dams, power houses, and maintenance shops together represent a significant, distinctive, and exceptional entity.

"As we approach the Barge Canal's Centennial year in 2018, as well as the observance of the Erie Canal's Bicentennial period between 2017 and 2025, National Historic Landmark designation of the Barge Canal will be a most deserving step in appropriately honoring the prominent role New York's Canals have played – and continue to play - in the development of the nation's economic and cultural heritage," said **Brian U. Stratton, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation**.

Much credit for the canal's historical integrity can be attributed to **generations of state canal workers** who have operated and maintained the system for the past 100 years. The ongoing stewardship of lock and bridge operators, bank walkers, and tug and dredge crews, engineers and administrators has preserved this nationally significant resource in remarkable condition.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, spearheaded the nomination, which **received full support from members of Congress** whose districts include the canal, as well as Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State agencies, canal communities, and others.

ABOUT THE ERIE CANALWAY

Nearly 200 years after its construction, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. We achieve our mission 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.

www.eriecanalway.org

www.eriecanalway.org/resources/NHL

ABOUT THE NYS CANAL SYSTEM

The New York State Canal System is comprised of four historic waterways, the Erie, the Champlain, the Oswego and the Cayuga-Seneca Canals. Spanning 524 miles, the waterways link the Hudson River, Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, the Finger Lakes, Niagara River and Lake Erie with communities rich in history and culture. The system is owned and operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.

www.canals.ny.gov

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Since 1916, the American people have entrusted the National Park Service with the care of their national parks. With the help of volunteers and park partners, the National Park Service safeguards these more than 400 places and shares their stories with more than 275 million visitors every year. The National Park Service is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

www.nps.gov

The [National Historic Landmarks Program](#) recognizes historic properties of exceptional value to the nation and promotes the preservation efforts of federal, state and local agencies and Native American tribes, as well as those of private organizations and individuals. The program is one of more than a dozen administered by the National Park Service that provide states and local communities technical assistance, recognition and funding to help preserve our nation's shared history and create close-to-home recreation opportunities.

ATTACHED IMAGE:

Tug Gov. Cleveland in Lock 9 of the Champlain Canal (credit: National Park Service)

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