

Follow in History's Wake

Discover the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

By Jean Mackay

Whether you explore 15 miles or 500, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor connects history and nature with outdoor pursuits from boating to biking to birding. Here, we'll introduce you to some of its treasures, through images by amateur photographers from across the state who were among the winners of the 2007 Erie Canalway Photo Contest.

Kathy Eichorn



Erie Canalway Trail, Spencerport. Walking the Erie Canalway Trail offers glimpses of what walking across the state with a canal boat in tow might have been like. The trail is open to hikers, joggers, and bicyclists, as well as cross-country skiers in winter.

Terry Potoczny



Lock 33, Minden. Dug by muscle and sweat, and later enlarged with machinery, the Erie Canal and the growth it attracted fundamentally altered the landscapes of New York. Yet nature is reclaiming abandoned sections of the original canal. Columbines and ferns grow from stone lock walls, while canal wetlands provide excellent habitat for songbirds, dragonflies and amphibians.

Paul Blue

Erie Canal, Little Falls. The Mohawk Valley is one of the most picturesque sections of the canal. Maintaining high water quality all along the corridor is key to a vibrant future for the region, where water resources are shared by many users. The river supports people and agriculture and is also the basis for recreation, tourism, and sport fishing, while also providing valuable habitat for aquatic plants and animals.



Joe Carey



Kayakers, Pittsford. What better way to explore the NYS Canal System than on the water itself? On-water activities include cruising, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, motorboating, and fishing. The New York State Canal Corporation operates the canal from early May to early November.

New York State Conservationist, April 2008

Paul Blue



Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct, Camillus.

New York's canal system was a nationally and internationally significant work of engineering. Eighteen aqueducts, including this one over Nine Mile Creek in Camillus, carried the canal over rivers and ravines. These and other canal relicts, including old locks and bridges, are part of the allure of a visit to the Canalway Corridor.

Deborah Otis

Rome. Cyclists can explore the Canalway Corridor for a few hours or several days on the 380-mile Erie Canalway Trail which follows both active and historic sections of the Erie Canal. Trail maps are available from the NYS Canal Corporation and a more detailed cycling guide is published by Parks & Trails New York. PTNY also hosts an eight-day, 400-mile bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany each July. Visit www.ptny.org for more information.



Call For Entries

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor invites amateur and professional photographers to participate in its 2008 Erie Canalway Photo Contest. Prints and digital images are accepted and winning entries will appear in the Erie Canalway 2009 Calendar. Deadline for entries is September 15, 2008.

Details are posted online at:
www.eriecanal.gov

Bart Carrig

Great Egret, Little Falls.

The quiet waters of today's canal are perfect places for birders to explore, offering premier birdwatching sites for wading birds, waterfowl, and songbirds.



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor— connecting history and nature with outdoor pursuits.



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

In 2000, the U.S. Congress recognized the Erie Canal's significance to our nation by establishing the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The corridor, one of 37 national heritage areas, stretches 524 miles across upstate New York, from Buffalo to Albany and north along the Champlain Canal to Whitehall. Charged with interpreting, preserving, and celebrating our nation's heritage for the benefit of today's residents and future generations, it threads through 234 diverse communities connected by a waterway that changed the landscape of our state, our nation and history.

Connect to Nature

The New York State Thruway (I-90) roughly parallels the Erie Canalway route from Albany to Buffalo, while the I-87 Northway provides access from Albany to Whitehall. Yet, the best way to explore the Canalway Corridor by car is along state and county roads that hug the water more closely and thread through the hamlets, villages, and cities that grew along these waterways:

- NY Rt. 31 in western New York
- NY Rt. 5 and 5S; Mohawk Valley
- NY Rt. 57 along the Oswego Canal
- NY Rt. 4 along the Champlain Canal

For boating information, maps and information about the Erie Canalway Trail, and tourism resources:

- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: www.eriecanal.gov
- NYS Canal Corporation: www.nyscanals.gov
- Parks & Trails New York: www.ptny.org
- I Love NY: www.iloveny.com

