

Closing the Gaps on the Erie Canalway Trail

- Extending 360 miles across New York, the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT) brings important economic, public health, tourism, and quality of life benefits to more than 3.7 million New Yorkers living within the 14 counties where the trail is located. Parks & Trails New York's (PTNY) 2014 study, *The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail: An Assessment and User Profile of New York's Longest Multi-use Trail*, reports **1.6 million annual visits, \$253 million in economic impact, \$28.5 million in taxes, and 3,440 jobs are supported by the Erie Canalway Trail.**
- Since PTNY and the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) launched their "Closing the Gaps" campaign in 2010 in conjunction with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, **interest in completing the ECT among citizens, community leaders, and local, state, and federal government officials has reached an all-time high.**
- With 281 miles now open to the public, the ECT is 78% complete and on its way to becoming **the longest, continuous intrastate multi-use trail in the nation** and a world-class destination for cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts.
- **There still is much work to do: 79 miles of trail are still unfinished** (see map on other side), federal transportation funding for trails has shrunk, budgets are tight at all levels of government, and, in several locations, right-of-way issues still present challenges to defining or developing a trail route. It is PTNY's goal to have the entire 79 miles of trail under construction or in design by the bicentennial of the start of construction of the Erie Canal in 2017.
- For 24 miles of trail there is an identified source of funding and work is programmed to start within the next three years. For an additional 55 miles of trail, **an estimated \$40.3 million in funding is needed for corridor purchase and/or design and construction.**
- PTNY's annual, *Cycling the Erie Canal* bike tour brings more than 500 cyclists to Upstate New York. Cyclists from across the country, and from around the world – including Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, and Israel – come to cross the state using the Erie Canalway Trail. This year's tour will occur between July 12 and 19.
- **The ECT cannot offer maximum economic and quality of life benefits to the more than 200 communities along its length until it is finished from Buffalo to Albany as a continuous off-road trail.**
- Government and elected officials can help Close the Gaps along the Erie Canalway Trail by:
 - Establishing a \$20 million fund dedicated to statewide bicycle and pedestrian projects
 - Pushing to include ECT in local and regional economic development plans
 - Representing the interests of the ECT with state and local agencies, including DOT and local transportation departments
 - Brokering negotiations with utilities and other landowners for use of existing rights-of-way (ROW) and with local and state governments for creation of new on-road ROW where necessary.

Erie Canalway Trail Status

