



Greenway Update

FALL 2012

Revitalizing Communities and Waterfronts

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The Department of State (DOS) has a long tradition of partnering with local leaders to develop and implement solutions to the challenges facing New York's waterfront communities. Since 1982, DOS has advanced the New York State Coastal Management Program (CMP) by promoting waterfront revitalization and creating new economic activity; promoting water-dependent uses; protecting fish and wildlife habitats; protecting and enhancing scenic areas; protecting and enhancing historic areas; redeveloping historic and abandoned structures; protecting and enhancing small harbors; improving recreation; protecting and enhancing public access; and coping with erosion and flooding hazards. These themes are also the basis of the Niagara River Greenway Plan, as well as the projects that implement the plan.

The CMP and the Greenway Plan also complement the effort and strategies identified by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council. This is one of ten Regional Councils created by Governor Cuomo to change the way New York approaches economic development – shifting from a typical top-down fashion to one that caters to the particular assets and challenges of each unique region of the State.

The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council prepared an award-winning strategy to generate jobs and revitalize communities. The strategy seeks to invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields by accelerating brownfield redevelopment, encouraging redevelopment of downtowns and main streets, and developing more

sustainable neighborhoods. The Council recognizes that promoting tourism is critical to the region's economic vitality.

DOS plays a major role in supporting both the Greenway and the Council through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), a voluntary program of DOS in partnership with over 300 communities statewide to promote revitalization and protection of resources. Working through the LWRP, communities can implement locally prepared, comprehensive land and water use plans for their natural, public, working, and developed waterfronts.

DOS enjoys excellent participation in the LWRP by communities along the Niagara River. Of the 13 municipalities located inside the Niagara River Greenway boundary area, eight have completed or are preparing a LWRP. The Villages of

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Events

Tuesday, September 18, 2012,
 meetings are open to the public
 Niagara River Greenway Executive
 Committee Meeting
2:00 P.M. Beaver Island State Park offices

Tuesday, September 18, 2012,
 meetings open to the public
 Niagara River Greenway Commission
 Meeting
3:00 P.M. Beaver Island State Park
 Clubhouse

Paddles Up Niagara 2012 Photos
 visit NiagaraGreenway.org



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Youngstown and Lewiston, the Town of Tonawanda and the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda have approved LWRPs, some of which are currently working on updates to those programs. The City of Buffalo, the Town of Grand Island, and the Town of Wheatfield are in the process of completing LWRPs. These LWRPs are aimed at restoring and revitalizing deteriorated and underutilized areas along the Niagara River, Lake Erie, and Erie Canal waterfronts, while enhancing public access and recreational benefits, and have made a significant impact on these communities.

More than \$9.2 million in grants from the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP) have been awarded to municipalities of the Niagara River Greenway to support the planning, design and construction of shoreline access and redevelopment projects. These projects, some of which are outlined below, have not only brought people to the waterfront, but improved both local economies and the environment.

As a community whose identity is tied to its waterfront, the Village of Youngstown recognized the importance of enhancing the appearance and improving accessibility through its public waterfront at South Waterfront Park – a key component in the Village's LWRP. Using professional guidance from DOS and an EPF LWRP grant, the Village leveraged public investment to improve South Waterfront Park and expand public access opportunities for pedestrians and boaters.

The LWRP has focused the Village of Lewiston on its waterfront and planning for appropriate redevelopment. Over the course of the past 23 years, the Village has redeveloped the four-block area along the waterfront, including Lewiston Landing. Funding under the EPF LWRP has been



instrumental in achieving this vision. Six awards totaling more than \$560,000 have helped revitalize Lewiston's business district and expand and enhance public access boosting tourism and economic development.

The cities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda both completed their LWRPs in 1987, establishing long-term revitalization strategies for each community's resources along both the Niagara River and Erie Canal. Since then, the communities have used the LWRP to guide a striking transformation of their waterfronts. Altogether, 14 grants totaling more than \$507,000 from the EPF LWRP have been awarded to these communities for the construction of shoreline access, boating, and redevelopment projects.

In North Tonawanda, DOS drafted a special waterfront zoning district as a component of the LWRP to provide flexibility of uses and guide redevelopment of the numerous abandoned industrial parcels along the Niagara River, and guide their return to productive use.

In the City of Tonawanda, the development of Gateway Harbor established this area as a major regional activity center. EPF LWRP grants were used to complete Canal Overlook Park along the Erie Canal, a heavily used facility for many civic events; reconstruction of the Niagara Riverwalk retaining wall, assuring the continued public use of this regional shoreline trail; and, construction of public docks along the Erie Canal and Ellicott Creek, which serves the growing demand for docking for Canal boaters.

The Grand Island LWRP outlines a series of projects designed to provide much-needed Town-owned waterfront access to residents. A key project among these is Fisherman's Landing – the

NRGC MISSION

To continue and advance the state's commitment to the preservation, enhancement and development of the world-renowned scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources of the Niagara River Greenway Commission while continuing to emphasize economic development activities and remaining consistent with the tradition of municipal home rule.



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first project to be jointly funded through EPF LWRP and the Niagara River Greenway/New York Power Authority Relicensing Settlement Agreements. This design and construction project transformed an underutilized parcel into a safe and accessible waterfront park along the Niagara River.

Buffalo's substantially completed draft LWRP is aimed at restoring and revitalizing the deteriorated and underutilized areas along the City's Lake Erie, Niagara River and Buffalo River waterfronts. Since 1994, DOS has awarded 14 grants from the EPF LWRP totaling more than \$5.5 million for a variety of design and construction projects to revitalize Buffalo's waterfronts. There are a number of projects that are planned or underway. These projects include Ship Canal Commons, a new waterfront park within a newly developed urban commerce park built on reclaimed industrial land along Lake Erie; development of design and construction drawings and construction of improvements at Broderick Park, a 3.8-acre city-owned, Erie County-maintained park located at the southern tip of Squaw (Bird) Island on the Buffalo's west side; and, RiverFest Park, a new 2.5-acre park along the Buffalo River that converted a post-industrial vacant waste field to a park and popular venue for concerts and festivals, and now visited by hundreds of people each week.

DOS looks forward to continuing its work with Niagara River Greenway communities to provide professional and financial assistance, and to implement projects to meet the regional strategies articulated by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council as well as local priorities.



"Paddles Up Niagara 2012" sets record



Participants in "Paddles Up Niagara 2012" hoist their paddles for a pre-event photo, taken from a Grand Island Fire Co. ladder truck. (photo by Angela Berti)

Just under 200 boats hit the water off the shore of Grand Island for the Niagara River Greenway Commission's seventh annual Paddles Up Niagara.

Preregistration numbers for Paddles Up Niagara 2012 held on Saturday, July 28th were at an all-time high, but inclement weather south of Buffalo held down the participation, said Rob Belue, executive director of the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

Belue said the preregistration total of 160 far exceeded the average of 100 for the event. With some boats carrying more than one paddler, between 200 and 300 left Beaver Island for a leisurely trip to the East Marsh of the Niagara River and back. "But unfortunately the weather this morning looked ominous," said Belue. "But we ended up with a good number. We're happy with it."

The event, the showcase of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, also sends a message to the region, said Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster, vice chairman of the Greenway Commission.

"When the New York Power Authority was up for a 50-year relicensing in 2007, stakeholders from the grassroots level of the community came together and said some of the money from that power plant should go to help build a park system linking Lake Erie to Lake Ontario along the Niagara River," Dyster said. "By coming out here for your event today, you help to show that you're simpatico with the purposes and projects of the Niagara River Greenway, and we thank you."



for photos from the event go to:
NiagaraGreenway.org



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Projects for September 18, 2012

- **Historical Society of North German Settlements in WNY-The Haseley Einhaus Reconstruction**
- **Town of Wilson-Wilson Harbor Revitalization**



Contact Us

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for more information and news...
NiagaraGreenway.org

Paddles Up Niagara

*Thank You All for a Successful
Paddles Up Niagara on
Saturday, July 28th!*

for photos from the event go to:
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