



Greenway Update

WINTER 2014
NiagaraGreenway.org

Stella Niagara Preserve

The Western New York Land Conservancy, a regional not-for-profit land trust, proposes to create the Stella Niagara Preserve, the first nature preserve along the Niagara River to be owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization. The Land Conservancy will purchase a 29-acre portion of a 130-acre property currently owned by the Sisters of St. Francis located on the shores of the Niagara River at 4421 Lower River Road in Stella Niagara (sbl# 87.00-1-28.1) in the Town of Lewiston. The Land Conservancy will open the property to public access, develop a walking trail system, provide new fishing, canoe and kayak access, place an entry kiosk, way finding and interpretive signage, restore 18 acres of grassland habitat, hold events and hikes there, and continue stewardship of the property.

The 29-acre site has 1,474 feet of Niagara River shoreline—the third longest privately owned river frontage in Niagara County—and is one of the few undeveloped privately owned tracts of land along the river. It has incredible ecological value; it is part of an internationally designated globally significant Important Bird Area and sustains rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. The Stella Niagara property has habitat of such diversity and quality—including a shallow off-shore shoal and large riparian zone—that it was placed on the Niagara River Area of Concern priority habitat list in 2012, making it an international priority for protection. It is also culturally significant; it is archaeologically sensitive with evidence of continuous Haudenosaunee use, was an important canoe landing site for the Haudenosaunee, is where the British landed in



1813 to invade the U.S., is a nationally designated Peace Site, and is part of the Niagara County Historic Trail. The chapel on the

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Events

Niagara River Greenway Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2014 - 2:00 P.M.
meetings are open to the public
Beaver Island State Park offices,
Grand Island

Niagara River Greenway Commission General Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2014 - 3:00 P.M.
meetings are open to the public
Beaver Island State Park Clubhouse,
Grand Island

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property famously survived a flood caused by an ice jam on the Niagara River in the 1950s. Because of the property's gentle slope down to the river, it is one of the few natural landing sites on the Lower Niagara. The shallow off-shore shoal, known locally as the 'Stella Drift,' creates ideal conditions for fishing. Considering these factors, the site is ideal for public access.

The proposed Stella Niagara Preserve will protect and enhance those critical habitats, celebrate those important natural and cultural resources, and improve Niagara River access. It will also fulfill the goals of the Niagara River Greenway and Olmsted's original vision of a necklace of open spaces along the length of the Niagara River. This public private partnership - with a not-for-profit taking the lead and committing to long-term legal and financial responsibility for the preserve - will be a model for creating new, high quality public spaces along the Niagara River Greenway without burdening public agencies with increased costs.



Niagara River Greenway Commission Critical Gaps Analysis Inspection Tour

Niagara River Greenway Chairman, Greg Stevens invited New York State agencies and stakeholders in the development of the Niagara River Greenway on a Critical Gaps Analysis Inspection Tour by bicycle on Friday, October



25th. Beginning at Gallagher Beach in South Buffalo the group toured the Shoreline Trail, with stops along the way to discuss ideas and concerns, to the City of Niagara Falls. The goal and vision of the Niagara River Greenway Commission remains as was developed in the 2007 Plan which is to create a continuous, linear park and multi-use trail from lake to lake along the Niagara River, restore the ecological health of the riparian zone of the Niagara River. All while promoting public access to the waterfront and create and enhance public amenities along the waterfront to encourage sustainable activities that enhance awareness and appreciation of the Niagara River.

The Niagara River Greenway Commission has to date made good progress in advancing 131 projects consistent with the goals,





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principals and criteria of the Niagara River Greenway Plan. As a next step, we have agreed to focus on the completion of the continuous trail to this end; we have formed a task force which has prepared a gap analysis putting the gaps in context of the overall greenway objective. They have concluded that there is a need to complete the “Spine” of the trail that runs 50 miles continuous from the southern city line of Buffalo to the northern point of the Village of Youngstown and Lake Ontario.

Their findings show that thus far we have approximately 25 completed miles of trail, with another 10 partially completed/ped-bike navigable miles (such as the northern most portion on the shoulder of the road and 15 miles where there is no trail or even a temporary detour with signage to direct trail users. Once complete the Niagara River Greenway trail will form a critical linkage to regional trail networks including: To the east The Erie Canal Trail extending from Canalside in Buffalo to Troy NY and the Hudson River Greenway connecting to New York City. To the north the Canadian trail systems and the Via Bike Train connecting by summer 2015 over the Whirlpool bridge to Toronto. Additionally in the north connections to the Seaway Trail and the Niagara Wine Trail. In the south connections to the Shore Line Trail to the Pennsylvania border, linking to a regional trail system being developed from Washington D.C. to Chicago.

The Niagara River Greenway Commission's immediate priority is to provide maps and signage that show both the ultimate trail and our proposed summer 2014 interim trail which will include a number of detours and temporary patches, but allow full length travel. While identifying viable solutions to bridge specific gaps, including budgets, responsible agencies, and project approval process.



for more information and news...
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New Projects Submitted Projects for January 21, 2014

Buffalo Audubon Society

*Niagara River Birding Trail Site and Bird Habitat
Enhancements at Buckhorn State Park and North
Tonawanda Audubon Preserve*

The Historical Society of the Tonawandas, Inc.
*Niagara River & Erie Canal Signage
Expansion Project*

Town of Lewiston
Pletcher Road Park Restoration

Town of Lewiston
Sanborn Park Restoration

Town of Lewiston
Colonial Village Park Restoration

To review current projects go to www.niagaragreenway.org



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