

NEWS RELEASE

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**New York’s Largest Earth Day Celebration Kicks Off Friday, April 21
With More Than 140 Canal Clean Sweep Events Scheduled Across the State**

Volunteer groups across New York State are making final preparations for the [18th annual Canal Clean Sweep](#), April 21-23, 2023. Canal Clean Sweep is an annual clean-up event held across the NYS Canal system and Canalway Trails. More than 140 Canal Clean Sweep events are scheduled across the 400-mile-long Canalway Trail system and the 524-mile-long Canal system, providing opportunities for thousands of residents to give back to their local communities and to show pride in one of New York’s most iconic cultural and recreational resources.

Canal Clean Sweep coincides with New York’s annual Earth Day celebrations, representing one of several events held around the state to recognize the ongoing commitment to improving the health of our natural environment, in addition to being part of a nationwide celebration to encourage people to get outside and enjoy our exceptional trails and trail systems.

Over the last few years, the Canalway Trail system has seen unprecedented use, reflecting significant investments made as part of the completion of the Empire State Trail, and increased interest and participation in outdoor recreational activities due to COVID-19. Through the efforts of volunteers across the state during Canal Clean Sweep 2023, communities will ensure the Canalway Trail system will remain a pristine recreational resource for locals and visitors alike.

Canal Clean Sweep 2023 is organized by the non-profit Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation. To learn more about Canal Clean Sweep, and to view a map of scheduled events, visit: www.ptny.org/events/canal-clean-sweep.

New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton said, “We very much appreciate and cannot thank enough the hundreds of volunteers that are participating in our 18th annual Canal Clean Sweep this weekend. Together, New Yorkers will demonstrate their steadfast commitment to helping the Empire State preserve one of its most iconic recreational assets – all while giving back to their local communities. Keeping our Canal system and Canalway Trails clean and healthy is an essential part of ensuring that we will provide another amazing season for thousands of visitors to enjoy.”

Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Paul Steely White said, “The overwhelming number of calls, emails, and messages we have received about Canal Clean Sweep over the last few months in anticipation of the 18th annual event is truly inspiring. We expect over 3,000 volunteers to help get the Canalway Trails ready for the summer recreation season, and we couldn’t be more appreciative.”

About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York is the state’s leading advocate for parks and trails. Since 1998, PTNY has been working in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation to help canal communities plan, develop and promote the Canalway Trail. PTNY organizes Cycle the Erie Canal, an eight-day bicycle tour along the historic Erie Canal that attracts more than 650 participants each year. In 2021, the organization published an updated version of the popular guidebook, *Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 360 miles of Adventure and History along the Erie Canalway Trail*. Learn more at www.ptny.org.

About the New York State Canal System

The New York State Canal Corporation runs the New York State Canal system, which includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca Canals. Spanning 524 miles, the waterway links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain. In 2017, the Canal Corporation celebrated the 200th anniversary of the groundbreaking for the Erie Canal, which occurred in the city of Rome on July 4, 1817. The Canal System includes the Canalway Trail, a network of approximately 400 miles of multi-use trails across upstate New York. The Canalway Trail follows the towpaths of both active and historic sections of the New York State Canal system as well as adjacent abandoned rail corridors. Together, the canals and trail create a world-class recreationway that is a vibrant, scenic, and unique New York resource. To learn more about the New York State Canal and Canalway Trail System or to obtain a free map, please call 1-800-4CANAL4 or visit the Canal Corporation’s website at www.canals.ny.gov.

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