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Contact: Shane Mahar | 518-603-0791 | shane.mahar@nypa.gov

NEW YORK STATE CANAL CORPORATION RELEASES NEW EARTHEN EMBANKMENT INTEGRITY PROGRAM (EEIP)

New EEIP Reflects Feedback Received During 15+ Hours of Public Information Sessions & 1,000+ Comments Submitted to NYS Canal Corp.

While Keeping Public Safety at the Core of Canal Maintenance, New EEIP Gives Communities Significant Input in Decisions of Earthen Embankment Vegetation

The New York State Canal Corporation today began utilizing the Earthen Embankment Integrity Program – or EEIP – which reflects significant input from affected communities and creates a new system for restoring and managing critical earthen embankment infrastructure along the New York State Canal system while maintaining the safety and integrity of water impounding structures.

The new EEIP follows a robust community outreach effort undertaken by the Canal Corporation and New York Power Authority, which included an extended 11-week State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) public comment period – generating over 1,000 comments – as well as feedback received during more than 15 hours of public information sessions conducted in fall of 2021.

New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton said, “The Canal Corporation engaged in a multi-faceted public outreach effort that produced meaningful changes to the EEIP program. We listened to the concerns expressed by members of the public, and I am proud to say that communities will now have significant input in the project design process moving forward, as the Canal Corporation maintains the critical structural integrity and safety of the canal’s earthen embankments.”

The EEIP is a Canal Corporation initiative to create a comprehensive and programmatic approach to restore, maintain, and manage earthen embankments. An earthen embankment is an engineered structure or dam wall of the canal, which is made from soil, rock, clay, and other “earthen material,” holding water for a prolonged period above the adjacent land surface elevation. Earthen embankments are found throughout the state, however only about 130 miles of the 524-mile Canal system is made up of inventoried earthen embankments.

As part of the new EEIP, the Canal Corporation has developed and will adhere to the **Embankment Inspection & Maintenance Guide Book**, a manual that will be used when

inspecting, restoring, and maintaining engineered embankments, including when repairing seeps and managing vegetation on certain sections of the embankment. The Guide Book also calls for communities to be informed or consulted based on the proposed EEIP activity's effect on the locality by using objective thresholds. For example, when a project is identified adjacent to a park, within a Local Waterfront Development Area, or under other conditions that exceed Community Thresholds as defined by the Guide Book, an arborist and a landscape architect will participate in the development of conceptual design alternatives. Where community character and aesthetic impacts cannot be mitigated by alternative designs, communities will have the option to preserve healthy, mature trees on the outward slope of embankments.

Embankment failures could have significant consequences for the communities nearby and areas downstream of the dam, which include loss of life, property damage, damage to essential infrastructure, and the loss of benefits such as hydroelectric generating, recreation, and water supply. In recent years, water levels in a few areas of the canal have been reduced due to concerns about embankment integrity. Reduced depths limit the amount of water available for agriculture and fishing, complicate inspections for officials, and present safety concerns for boaters.

For more information about the Earthen Embankment Integrity Program (EEIP) program, please visit [here](#).

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About the New York State Canal Corporation

New York's Canal system includes four historic canals: the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga – Seneca. Spanning 524 miles, the waterway links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain. The canals form the backbone of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and connect hundreds of unique and historic communities.

The New York State Canal Corporation is a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.

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