

For Immediate Release: 5/19/2023

GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES SEASONAL OPENING OF NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM

All Canal Locks and Lift Bridges Operating Today through October 11th

Free On the Canals Excursions Return with Expanded Offerings

Champlain Canal Celebrates Bicentennial

[Photos](#) & [Video](#): *First Vessels Entering Erie Canal At Waterford*

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced the opening of the 2023 Navigation Season for the 524-mile New York State Canal system, kicking off the 199th consecutive opening of the historic waterways. Locks and lift bridges on the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals will operate daily today through October 11th, providing opportunities for boating, fishing, and sightseeing to tourists, canal enthusiasts and all New Yorkers.

"The historic waterways of the Erie Canal and canals across the state have been an integral part of New York's story that continues to support our local communities, small businesses and tourism," **Governor Hochul said.** "The Canal system is a hub of recreation and tourism, and as a longtime boater, I encourage all New Yorkers to explore the endless recreational opportunities and adventure available throughout the canal system."

To prepare for the navigation season, the New York State Canal Corporation undertook an essential annual winter maintenance program that helps to ensure Canal infrastructure remains safe, operable, and in a state of good repair. This winter, the Canal Corporation completed rehabilitation projects at Lock C-6 (Fort Miller), Locks E-4 and E-5 (Waterford), Lock E-10 (Cranesville), Lock E-17 (Little Falls), Lock O-8 (Oswego), Lock E-30 (Macedon), Lock E-32 (Pittsford), and Lock E-34 (Lockport). Additionally, other maintenance and construction projects were completed along the Glens Falls Feeder Canal, the Erie Canal at German Flatts, Delta Dam, Lock CS-4 (Waterloo), Lock E-27 (Lyons), the Macedon By-Pass Lock Chamber, the concrete

embankment at Bushnell's Basin and the Great Embankment in Pittsford, the Park Avenue Lift Bridge in Brockport, and along the earthen embankments in western Monroe County and Orleans County. Canal Corporation staff also performed required maintenance on its tugboats and vessels as well as other operating machinery and infrastructure.

New York Power Authority Acting President and CEO Justin Driscoll said, "As we approach the third century of the Canal's operation, we envision a system that celebrates its iconic past and is revitalized for future generations. We recognize that the Canal system continues to serve as an economic engine for Upstate New York, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to its continued success."

The free [On the Canals](#) excursions program returns this year with new and expanded opportunities to experience the outdoors along the Canal corridor and Empire State Trail. This program, now in its fourth year, has driven substantially increased tourism along the Canal waters and Canalway Trails and last year attracted more than 13,000 participants. Excursions this year include expanded accessible offerings allowing individuals of all abilities the opportunity to recreate safely, plus boat, kayaking, and walking tours, en plein air painting, water safety courses, pollinator hikes, birding, cycling, and yoga along the canal. The On the Canals [website](#) lists all the excursions as they become available over the summer and early fall.

New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton said, "Whether you are looking to embark on an adventure or simply seeking a peaceful retreat, the state's canals offer a unique and memorable experience for everyone. I am incredibly proud of our workforce that each day tirelessly ensures our infrastructure is safe, so that we can welcome boaters and offer so many unique ways to see and experience this remarkable waterway through the On the Canals program. I encourage every New Yorker to mark their calendars and take advantage of the adventure our canals and trails have to offer."

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Executive Director Bob Radliff said, "We welcome New Yorkers and people from around the world to experience the canals that transformed America. The canals belong to all of us. They speak to our history of perseverance and innovation in pursuit of big ideas; of working through struggles to create a brighter future; and of forward-thinking planning and investments that ensure the canal system not only endures but serves present and future generations."

This year also marks the 200th anniversary of the Champlain Canal, a historic landmark in New York State. Opened in 1823, the 60-mile-long first canal served as a vital link between Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, providing access to New York City for

Upstate communities. With the addition of the Erie Canal in 1825, the Champlain Canal opened a water route to Buffalo and the Great Lakes, connecting Montreal, Canada, and Vermont with the rest of the world. Today, the canal plays an essential role in both recreational boating and commercial shipping.

Along the Champlain Canal, the Canal Corporation has once again joined forces this season with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to implement a rapid response plan to mitigate the potential spread of the round goby, an aquatic invasive species, to the Lake Champlain Basin. To learn more about these efforts and how you can assist in the preservation of the waterway for generations to come, please visit [here](#).

All New York residents and visitors have a role to play in protecting state waters from invasive species. Visit DEC's website for [more tips on how to clean, drain, and dry watercraft, fishing gear, and other equipment](#) and for more [information about New York's Watercraft Inspection Steward Program](#).