

TRACING HISTORY CANALWAY CHALLENGE

TRACKING MILES

The Canalway Challenge aims to solidify New York's canal corridor as a prime destination for world-class recreational experiences.

OBJECTIVES:

1

Create exciting new incentives and a structured program to drive visitation to the NYS Canal System, Canalway Trail, and communities within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

2

Increase visitation to heritage sites, parks, local businesses, and other attractions.

3

Increase multiday trips and maximize economic impact of canals, trails and recreational events.

4

Enhance wellness and pride of place.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2021

1,455 CHALLENGES CREATED, INCLUDING: **1,130** INDIVIDUALS, **297** TEAMS, AND **28** ORGANIZATIONS

143 people signed up for two or more Challenges

238,921 total miles logged

25 US states and the District of Columbia are where participants call home

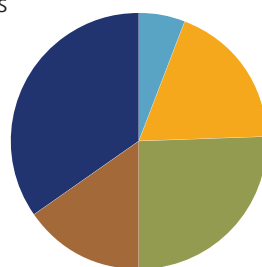
1,600 Facebook group members

56,457 video views on social media

55% visited multiple canal regions

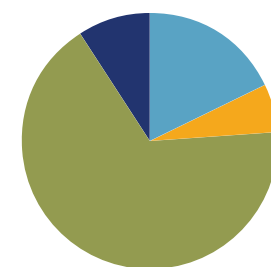
8 years old—Youngest Participant

83 years old—Oldest participant



MILES PLEDGED

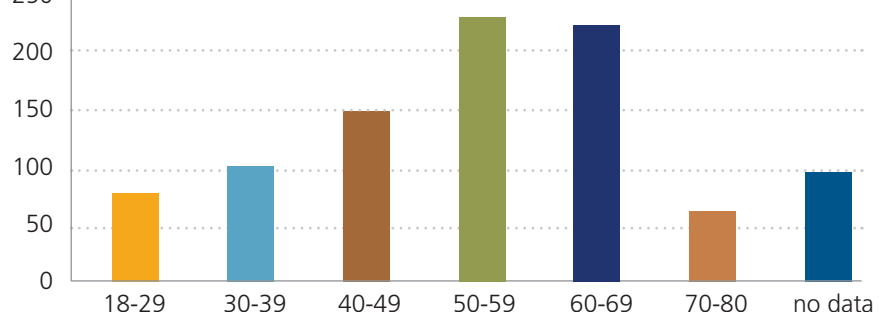
- 1st Mile
- 15 Miles
- 90 Miles
- 180 Miles
- 360 Miles



METHODS USED

- Walk/Hike
- Run
- Cycle
- Paddle

AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



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BEHIND THE NUMBERS 2021

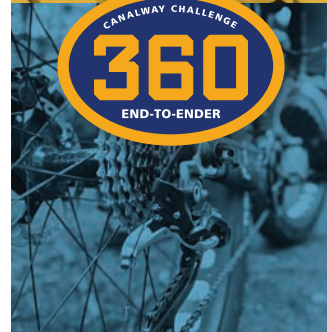
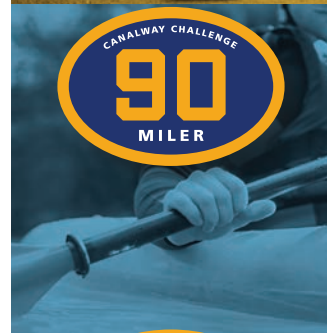
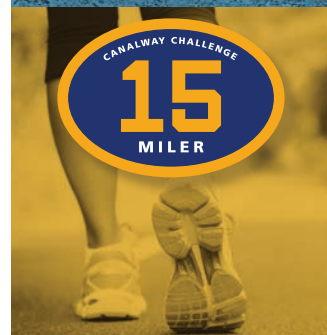


After a year of pandemic restrictions and staying close to home, Canalway Challengers were ready to hit the trail. The most popular choice of miles pledged in 2021 was 360; in 2020 it was 15.

Several participants completed epic journeys, while others used the Challenge to overcome significant obstacles. Ninety people signed up for our newly created 1st Mile Challenge and more than 300 participated in 1st Mile events where people with disabilities could try adaptive cycles, paddlecraft, and wheelchairs to experience the trail and canal.



Following are just a few of the hundreds of inspiring comments we received about what people liked best about the Canalway Challenge.





BEHIND THE NUMBERS 2021



THE CANAL EXPERIENCE



Coming from Texas, I learned so much about the Erie Canal. I loved getting to enjoy the beauty of the canal, the gorgeous weather of the seasons, the abundance of produce grown here, some of the friendliest people, and such charming cities, towns, and villages that NY state has to offer!!
– Meredith, 90 Miles

I enjoyed the unique experience of not only learning more about the canal, but also paddling on it, going through world renowned locks and talking to the lock keepers along the way. –Bill, 90 Miles

What a fantastic way to see the variety that NY State has to offer! And the history in the canal holds so many stories! This had been on my bucket for a few years and I am so glad to have completed it. – Lisa, 360 Miles

What did I enjoy most? By far, it was the endless variety of settings that I experienced - the bustling urban segments through Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Schenectady and Albany, the quiet, peaceful, tree-lined trails like the one through the Old Erie Canal State Park, the quaint little port towns, and the endless corn fields and apple orchards in the western part of the state. – Joe, 360 Miles

HEALTH & WELLNESS



I had open heart surgery this past May 2021 had a 6-way bypass...Using my bicycle and the beautiful new Canalway Trail as part of heart rehab. I actually have a few more miles to go before reaching the 90-mile mark—maybe next year.
– Glenn, 15 Miles

I fell and shattered my tibia, requiring surgery with pins and a plate, and was unable to walk for almost six months. I started physical therapy and eventually used a walker, then a cane, then slow walking. I am still recovering and doing the 15 miles helped physically and to lift my spirits.
– Patti, 15 Miles

This was such a great way to challenge myself to get up and going!
– Sarah, 180 Miles





BEHIND THE NUMBERS 2021



COMMUNITIES & HOSPITALITY



We met so many wonderful people along the way that restored our faith and hope in humanity, in that so many people were happy to assist (flat tires or navigation directions) and were kind and encouraging. It was an outstanding adventure!

– Holly, 360 Miles

I enjoyed exploring the towns and cities along the way. Each of my 38 runs had something unique about them. I learned so much about the places I visited and the history that goes with it.

– Sean, 360 Miles

We were most impressed by the daily friendliness of strangers. Everyone we met was kind, encouraging and welcoming. We did not expect this, and it was probably the best part of the whole trip—and that is saying a lot for a trip that had perfect weather and beautiful scenery the whole time.

– Molly, 360 Miles

AN AWESOME CHALLENGE



This was the biggest athletic goal I've ever had. As a 67-year-old who'd never ridden more than 12 miles at a time, it was a big challenge!

– Joan, 360 Miles

It was the most fun ride I have done in the United States! It was beautiful and worth every mile.

– Pauline, CA, 360 Miles

IT WAS AMAZING!

– Ashley, 180 Miles

This was so much fun to do, I am only 16. The most fun I had was when me and my stepbrother went for a ride to Little Falls—that was the best.

– Nathan, 90 Miles

Can't wait to do it again next year and explore more of the Erie Canal.

– Glenna, 180 Miles

The Erie Canalway trail is one of my favorite places on the planet!

– John, 180 Miles



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