



P.O. Box 219, Waterford, NY 12188 ■ P: 518-237-7000 ■ www.eriecanalway.org

Erie Canalway News Release

For Immediate Release: **April 20, 2016**

Contact: Jean Mackay, Director of Communications and Outreach
518-925-6721; jean_mackay@partner.nps.gov

Students Headed to National Parks in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Free field trips are part of the Every Kid in a Park Initiative

WATERFORD, NY- A partnership between the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and four national parks in upstate New York will enable **more than 1,000 fourth graders to visit the parks for free** this spring. Field trips will take place at Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome, Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site in Buffalo, Saratoga National Historical Park in Stillwater, and Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls.

"These field trips make it possible for kids to stand on the battlegrounds of the American Revolution, witness the place where the rights of women were secured, and see the innovation and grit that built the Erie Canal," said **Bob Radliff, Erie Canalway NHC Executive Director**. "These powerful learning experiences engage young minds and help kids understand what it means to be an American."

The field trips are made possible thanks to a grant to Erie Canalway NHC from the **National Park Foundation**, which is helping to support the White House youth initiative **Every Kid in a Park**.

Stanton Hudson, Executive Director of Theodore Roosevelt National Inaugural Site said: "The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site is most grateful to both the National Park Foundation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor for making possible this wonderful opportunity to welcome more children to our museum so they can experience a tour which helps create more informed citizens. As TR once said, 'The future of the nation depends upon the citizenship of the generations to come; the children of today are those who tomorrow will shape the destiny of our land, and we cannot afford to neglect them.'"

Frank Barrows, Superintendent of Fort Stanwix National Monument said: "This collaboration provides a unique opportunity for students to have meaningful experiences at Fort Stanwix while introducing them to nearby national parks. By engaging with the national parks in their own backyards, local students can be inspired to discover other parks and public lands in New York State and beyond."

Amy Bracewell, Superintendent of Saratoga National Historical Park said: "We are grateful to be able to work with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the National Park Foundation to bring students to this historic battlefield. Through Every Kid in a Park, students not only get to connect with American history, but they gain lifelong memories in their national parks."

Ami Ghazala, Superintendent of Women's Rights National Historical Park said: "Women's Rights National Historical Park tells the story of the first Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, NY on July 1848. Every Kid In a Park strengthens the awareness that history is more than looking back in time. It is an opportunity to relate past struggles with current global struggles that continue today. Each field trip reminds young people that all must be accepted as equals."

Since 2012, **more than 25,000 students** from 70 school districts have visited canal-related historic sites and museums for free as a result Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor programming.

“We want to help people everywhere, from all backgrounds, discover how national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands and waters are relevant to their lives, and the best way to do that is to give people the opportunity to experience them first-hand,” said **Will Shafroth, President of the National Park Foundation**. “Through our grants that provide funding for transportation and in-park learning, we are able to connect youth and their families to these special places and inspire people across the country to find their park which, in turn, can foster a lifelong connection to all that public lands and waters have to offer.”

ABOUT THE ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Nearly 200 years after its construction, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. We achieve our mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York.

www.eriecanalway.org

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 411 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at www.nps.gov, on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice, Twitter www.twitter.com/natlparkservice, and YouTube www.youtube.com/nationalparkservice.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help PROTECT more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts, CONNECT all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and INSPIRE the next generation of park stewards. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at www.nationalparks.org.

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