

# Niagara River Greenway Commission Annual Report 2022

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# Table of Contents

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- Chapter One: Niagara River Greenway Team
- Chapter Two: Commission History
- Chapter Three: Performance 2022
- Chapter Four: Feature Project
- Chapter Five: Highlights



# A Message from the Director



Hello Greenway Enthusiasts,

2022 will be remembered as a **major inflection point** for our Niagara River Greenway efficacy and impact, thanks to expanded funding, staffing, proactive planning initiatives, strong new commissioners, youth engagement and more vigorous collaboration with standing committees, municipalities and agency partners.

Since its inception in 2007 Niagara River Greenway operations have been underfunded and understaffed, which limited capacity to proactively drive implementation of our bold and visionary mission to connect and enhance the ecological health of trail and open spaces across our Niagara waterfront. In recognition of the powerful potential of our small team to serve as a proactive change agent across our 2 counties and 13 municipalities our Commission authorized staff expansion from one to three. This allowed us to expand our reach into both Erie and Niagara Counties, deepening our relationships to nurture stronger community engagement and youth stewardship. We welcomed new NYS DEC Commissioner Erin Redding, Co-Chair of GESG; and new BECGSC Chair Dan Castle both of whom are highly capable additions to our Niagara Greenway team..

2022 also saw the completion our Wilson Foundation funded Lower Niagara Trail Study (LNTS) and the initiation of our Community Foundation Tonawanda Environmental Benefit Funded Youth Stewardship Program (YSP). The combined impact of \$630,000 invested has made a transformational impact on our engagement with the communities we serve. The Lower Niagara Trail Study sought to define the Lower Niagara Community's vision of regional trail connectivity that might best enhance their active recreation and economic development objectives. Through a series of 168 public engagement sessions Lisa Vitello led community meetings and we developed a visionary plan for healthier communities with better recreational assets to be implemented in phases through 2030. Our Youth Stewardship project allowed Michelle Lockett to expand our 2018 freshwater ecology awareness pilot projects in local area high schools supported by our Rotary – Greenway Partnership into much more significant engagement with 10 high schools culminating in our February 2023 Eco Summit, hosted at Linde Gas headquarters where 10 schools presented their riparian ecology projects to colleges, industry and Niagara River Greenway partners.

We are grateful for the leadership of our Governor, the New York Power Authority, our Commissioners, sister State agencies and many community partners such as the Western New York Land Conservancy, Buffalo-Niagara Waterkeeper, [GObike](#), and many others who champion the programming that engages the community in helping to create and enjoy our ever- improving Niagara Greenway.

Best regards,

Gregory Stevens

Executive Director, Niagara River Greenway Commission



# Chapter One

Niagara River

Greenway Team

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## Greenway Commision (16 Members)

### Six (6) Ex-Officio Members

- Empire State Development (ESD)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Department of State (DOS)
- Department of Conservation (DEC)
- New York Power Authority (NYPA)
- NY State Parks

### Eight (8) Appointed Members

- Governor (4)
- State Assembly (2)
- State Senate (2)

### Staff (3)

- Executive Director
- Community Engagement Director
- Administrative Director



### Standing Committees

Niagara Host  
Community  
(\$3 Million/year)

State Parks  
(\$3 Million/year)

Buffalo, Erie County  
and Olmsted  
(\$2 Million/year)

Ecological  
(\$1 Million/year)

# Niagara River Greenway Commission Members

- Lisa Chimera, Senate appointment 2020
- Treasurer Sean Edwards, Governor appointment, 2010
- Joseph Emminger, Assembly appointment, 2017
- Sam Magavern, Assembly appointment-*Community Liaison, 2014*
- Steve Broderick, Senate appointment- *Municipal Government Liaison, 2017*
- *New York Power Authority, Lou Paonessa 2013*
- *Department of Environmental Conservation, Erin Redding 2022*
- *Department of Transportation, Jim Cuzzo 2020*
- *New York State Parks, Mark Mistretta 2018*
- *Department of State, Ginger Ursitti 2023*
- *Empire State Development, Lynn Marinelli 2019*





# Niagara River Greenway Staff Members



➤ Greg Stevens, Executive Director



➤ Lisa Vitello, Administrative Manager



➤ Michelle Lockett, Community Engagement Manager

# Chapter Two

## Commission History

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# Commission History

- **On September 21, 2004 Governor George E. Pataki announced his approval of Chapter 460 of the Laws of 2004 establishing the Niagara River Greenway and creating a public benefit corporation for the purpose of creating a Niagara River Greenway Plan and its subsequent implementation.**
- **The Niagara River Greenway Commission was charged with creating the plan that would develop a linear system of parks and trails.**
- **The Niagara River Greenway plan was adopted by thirteen municipalities located along the Niagara River.**
- **The Niagara River Greenway plan would highlight the Niagara River in terms of its history, economic vitality and ecological significance. Key elements of this plan include increased public access to the Niagara River, development of a trail system with complimentary connections to land access points, balanced economic growth that compliments the natural scenic environment, preservation and enhancement of environmental resources and the celebration of the region's cultural, environmental and historical heritage.**
- **The mission and vision of the Niagara River Greenway Plan is to serve the communities located along the Niagara River in advancing the ecological and economic restoration of the Niagara Corridor to become a regional and global destination that tells the story of where we've been and where we would like to go in the future. The Niagara River Greenway Commission is tasked with stewardship of the Shoreline Trail, connecting parks, conservation areas and communities along the length of the Niagara River. This world class corridor of places, parks and landscapes celebrate and interprets our unique natural, cultural, recreational, scenic and historical heritage by providing access to and connections between these important resources giving rise to economic opportunities for the region.**



# Standing Committee Structure and Fund Allocation

Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee  
\$2,000,000.00

Ecological Standing Committee  
\$1,000,000.00

New York State Parks Standing Committee  
\$3,000,000.00

Niagara County Host Community Standing Committee

- **School Districts receive 40%**
  - Niagara Falls School District 14.0% (\$420,000)
  - Lewiston Porter School District 14.0% (\$420,000)
  - Niagara Wheatfield School District 12.0% (\$360,000)
- **Municipalities receive 60%**
  - City of Niagara Falls 17.0% (\$510,000)
  - Town of Lewiston 17.0% (\$510,000)
  - Niagara County 13.0% (\$390,000)
  - Town of Niagara 13.0% (\$390,000)





# Chapter Three

## Performance 2022

Finances and  
2022 projects voted Consistent

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# Niagara River Greenway Budget 2023



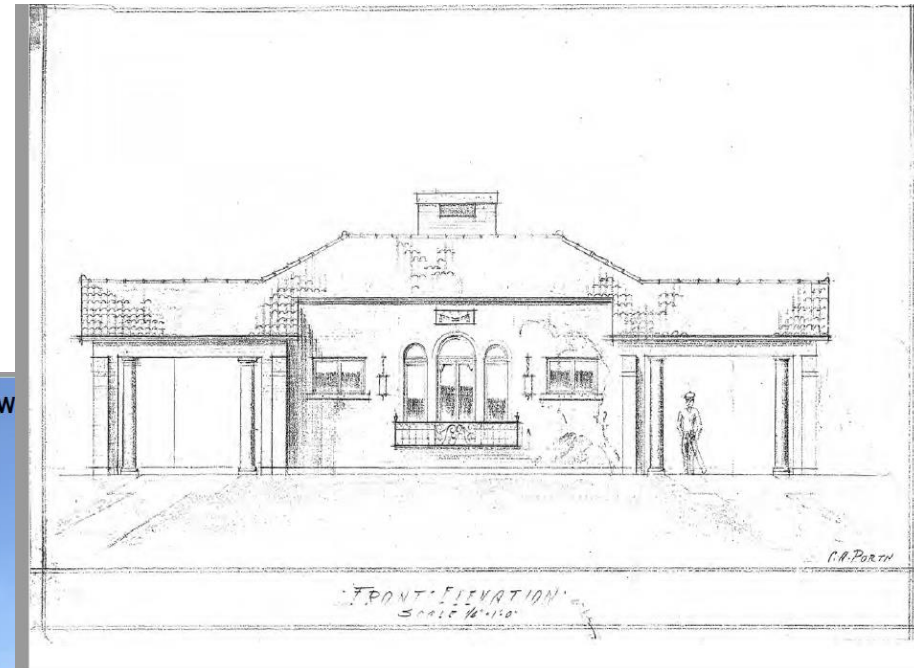
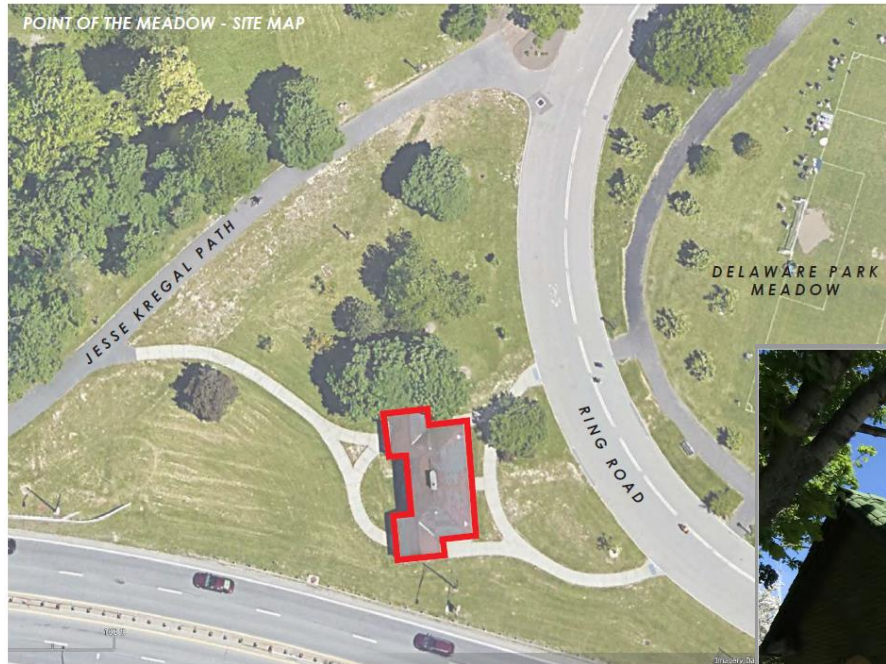
						not including CFGB grant revenue or costs	
<b>Niagara River Greenway Commission</b>							
2020/2021 budget vs fcst	2020 budget	2020 Actual	2021 budget		2022 actual	2023/4 bud	
<u>Income</u>							
prev year Carryover	\$ 280,000.0	\$ 273,000	\$ 177,438		\$ 240,000	\$ 60,000	
2020 State Grants/ Contracts	\$ 200,000.0	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000	\$ 300,000	
<u>Outside Grants</u>		\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000		\$ -	\$ -	
<u>TOTAL REVENUE</u>	<u>\$505,000 (est)</u>	\$ 498,000	\$ 402,438		\$ 440,000	\$ 360,000	
<u>Expenses</u>							
<b>Salary and benefits (50% fringe)</b>							
Executive Director	\$ 150,000.0	\$ 150,000.0	\$ 150,000.0		\$ 141,845.9	\$ 146,101	
Admin and Niagara Outreach Coordinator	\$ 75,000.0	\$ 75,000.0	\$ 75,000.0		\$ 75,284.2	\$ 77,543	
Community Engagement Manager	\$ 80,000.0	\$ 80,000.0	\$ 80,000.0		\$ 77,894.0	\$ 80,231	
Communications staffer 50% Part time	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 23,430	
sub total	\$ 305,000.0	\$ 305,000.0	\$ 305,000.0		\$ 295,024	\$ 327,305	
Travel	\$ 10,000.0	\$ 288	\$ 10,000		0	\$ -	
mileage							
other travel							
<b>NHT Admin Fee</b>	\$ 4,500.0	\$ 6,200	\$ 8,900		9600	\$ 15,000	
<b>Communications, printing, advertizing</b>	\$ 10,000.0	\$ 1,938	\$ 10,000		4323	\$ 5,000	
<b>Workshops/meeting/conferences/supplies</b>	\$ 8,000.0	\$ 100	\$ 8,000		2478	\$ 3,000	
<b>Contractual Services</b>	\$ 15,000.0	\$ 5,833	\$ 15,000		5625	\$ 5,000	
<b>operating costs, insurance</b>	\$ 3,500.0	\$ 1,203	\$ 3,500		1013	\$ 1,100	
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$ 356,000.0	\$ 320,562	\$ 360,400		\$ 318,063	\$ 356,405	
Year end balance:	\$ 149,000.0	\$ 177,438	\$ 42,038		\$ 121,937	\$ 3,595	



# Projects Reviewed and found Consistent by the Commission January 2022 to November 2022

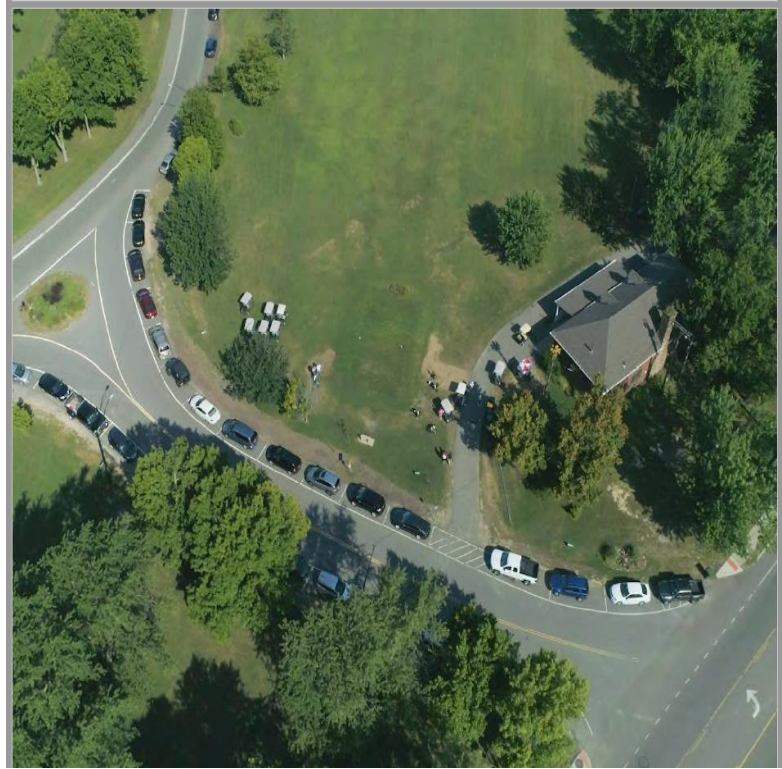
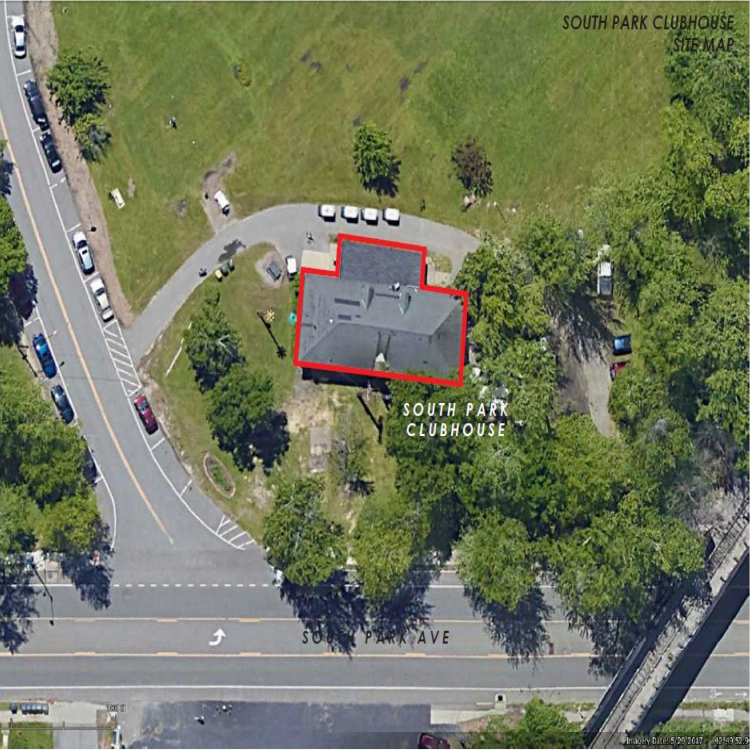
Delaware Park Point of the Meadow  
Shelter Enhancement Project

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy



POINT OF MEADOW





South Park Clubhouse Enhancement Project  
Buffalo Olmstead Parks Conservancy



# Aquarium of Niagara Gorge Discovery Center Project



Hallway view of main gallery



Sturgeon touch habitat



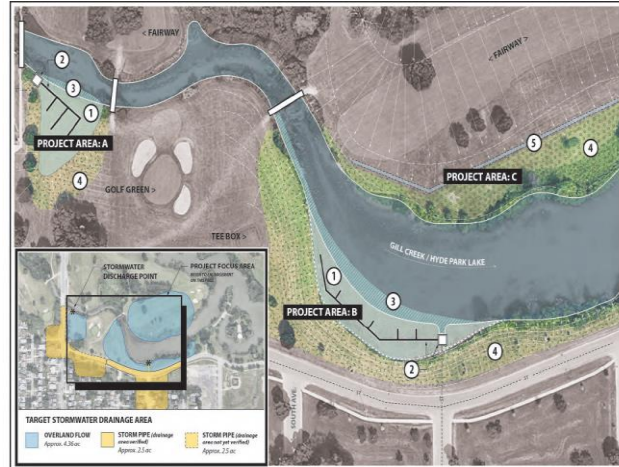
Accessible exhibit features





# Gill Creek Master Plan and Hyde Park Lake Living Shoreline

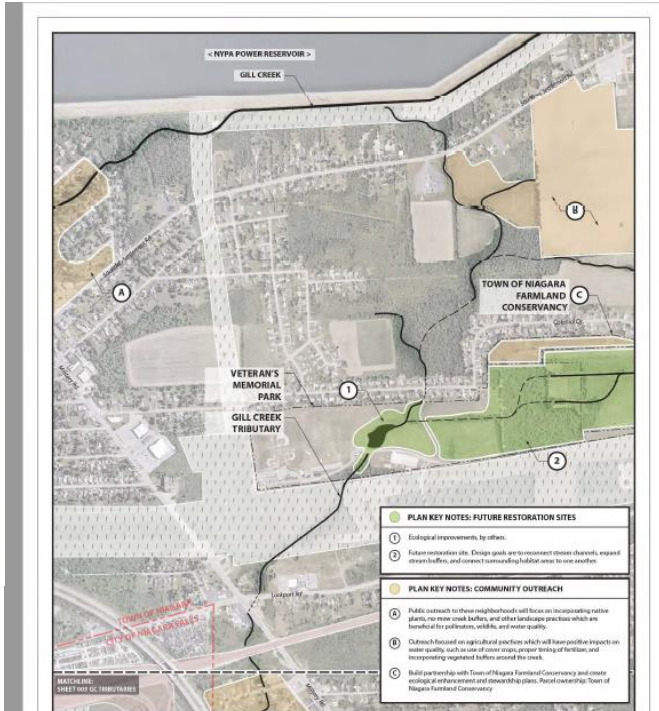
## Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper



AUGUST 2021  
**HYDE PARK LAKE - NATURE BASED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**  
 CONCEPT - PLAN  

 ATTACHMENT C

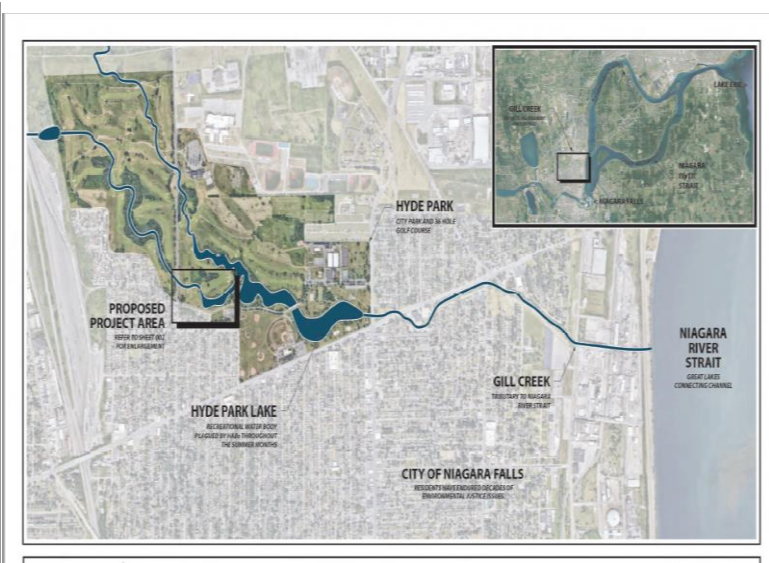
- ### CONCEPT PLAN NOTES
- SHORELINE FLOODPLAIN:** The floodplain has been preserved. It will be critical to the long-term health of the lake and the surrounding area. It will be critical to the long-term health of the lake and the surrounding area. It will be critical to the long-term health of the lake and the surrounding area.
  - STORMWATER DISCHARGE:** Stormwater discharge from the surrounding area will be managed through a series of retention basins and wetlands. Stormwater discharge from the surrounding area will be managed through a series of retention basins and wetlands.
  - PROPOSED WETLANDS:** Wetlands will be restored and enhanced to provide habitat for wildlife and to improve water quality. Wetlands will be restored and enhanced to provide habitat for wildlife and to improve water quality.
  - RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE:** Recreation and open space will be provided along the shore of the lake. Recreation and open space will be provided along the shore of the lake.
  - RESTORATION FUNDING:** Restoration funding will be provided through a variety of sources. Restoration funding will be provided through a variety of sources.
- ### CONCEPT PLAN KEY
- PROPOSED MEADOW AREAS
  - PROPOSED BIRCH PLANTING AREAS
  - PROPOSED EMERGENT WETLANDS
  - PROPOSED SHORELINE FLOODPLAIN
  - EXIST. SHORELINE
  - PROPOSED SHORELINE
  - CONTOUR
  - DRAINAGE RUNOFF
  - EXIST. ELEVATION
  - PROPOSED NEW AVE
  - PROPOSED DISCHARGE



### GILL CREEK UPPER REACH

- EXISTING RESTORATION SITES: Niagara River Living Shoreline
- FUTURE RESTORATION SITES: Living Shoreline / Native Plantings
- COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Trail Design / Public Space
- RAIL CORRIDOR: Buffalo Light Rail
- TRANSMISSION LINES: Power Line Right-of-Way
- CONTAMINATION: Level III / Parting Pool
- EXISTING TRAIL: Niagara River Greenway Trail
- PROPOSED TRAIL: Solid / Dashed / Dotted / Off Street
- CREEK: BURIED CREEK / INTERPOLATED CREEK
- PASSIVE FISHING ACCESS: Limited Access Along the River Edge
- EX. GOLF HOLES: F = Tee Box / G = Putting Green
- PADDLE CRAFT LAUNCH: Improvements to Existing and New

DRAFT - JUNE 2021  
**GILL CREEK MASTER PLAN**  
 RESTORATION, TRAILS, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION  
 ATTACHMENT A



AUGUST 2021  
**HYDE PARK LAKE - NATURE BASED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**  
 SITE CONTEXT  

 ATTACHMENT B





# Tift Nature Preserve Accessible Trail

## Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

Examples of treatments to be used in Tift Accessible Trail:



Tift Nature Preserve Accessible Trail Funding Proposal to the Niagara River Greenway Commission



Conditions outside Darling Environmental Education Center are uninviting and coarse stone walkways are challenging for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers.

Trails at each end of Heritage Boardwalk are seasonally flooded and soft preventing easy navigation by visitors.

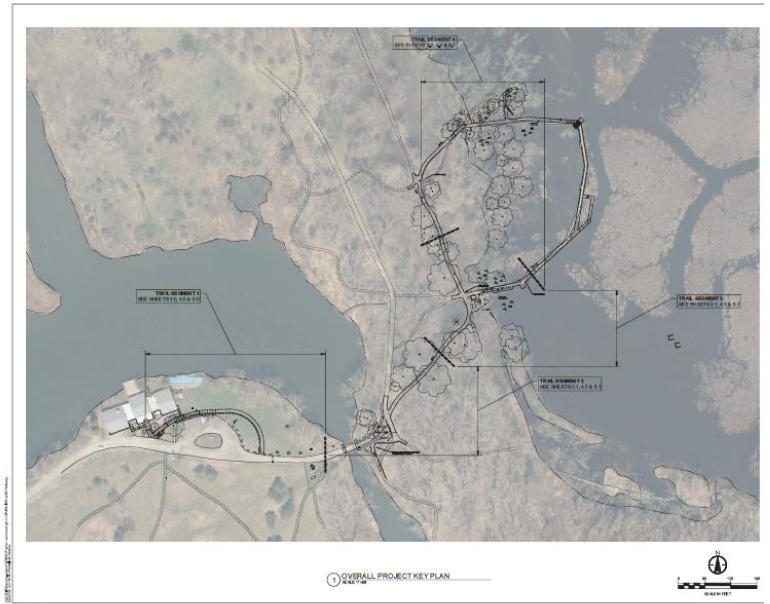


Natural obstructions occur on the trails such as roots and rocks that create additional challenges for wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, and visually impaired guests.

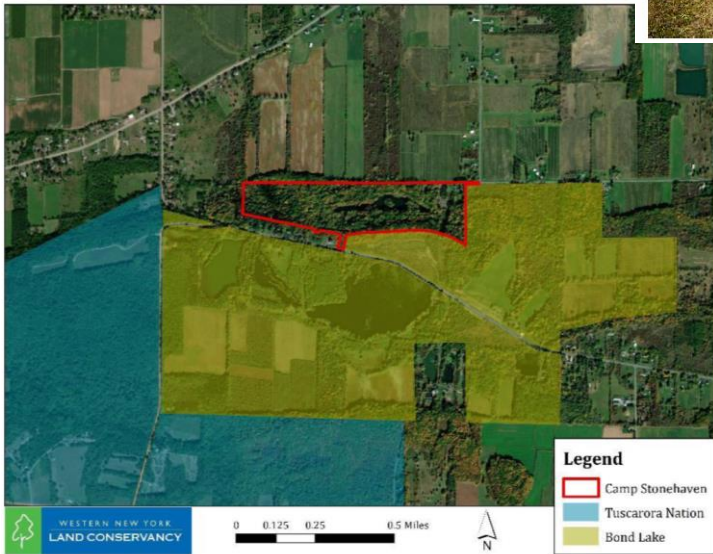
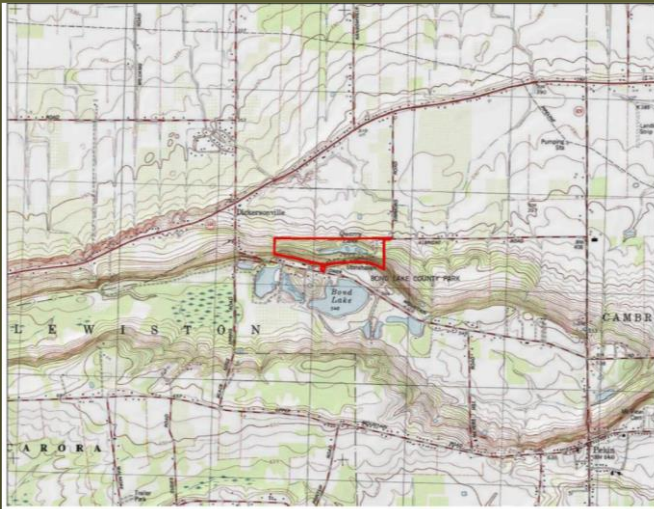
Heritage Boardwalk is just wide enough to accommodate most wheelchairs, but does not allow adequate room for another visitor to pass or the ability to comfortably turn a wheelchair to face out into the marsh to enjoy the view.



Tift Nature Preserve Accessible Trail Funding Proposal to the Niagara River Greenway Commission







# Creating the Stonehaven Nature Preserve



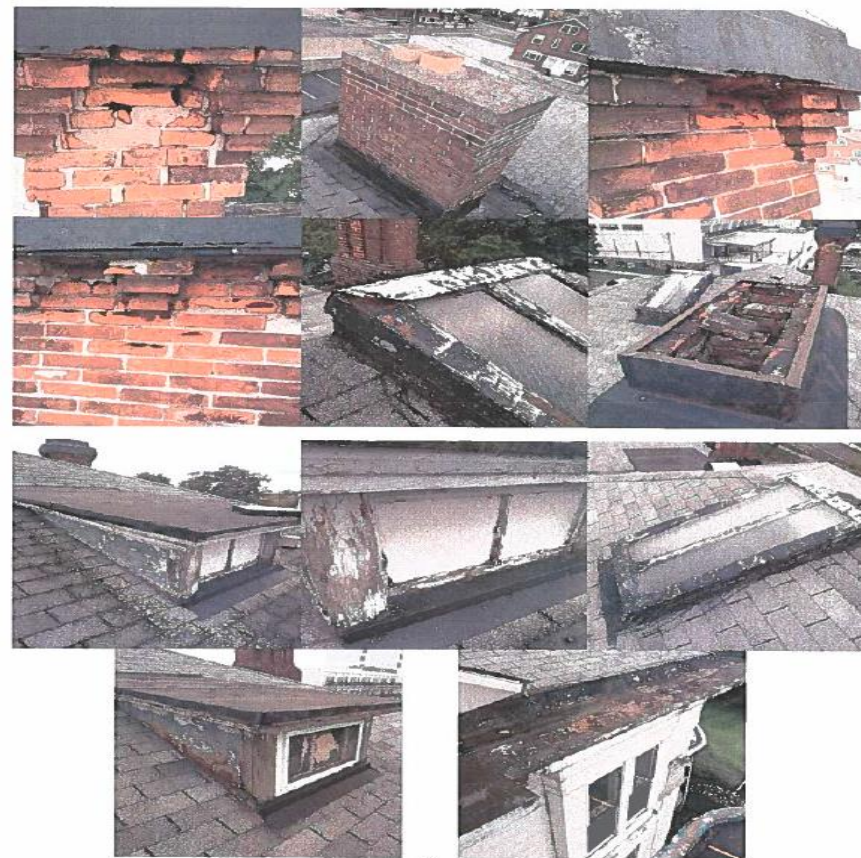
WESTERN NEW YORK  
LAND CONSERVANCY



# Tatler Club Renovation Project



**Chimneys and Dormers  
In need of Repair and Restoration**







New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

# Art Park Trail Connector Project



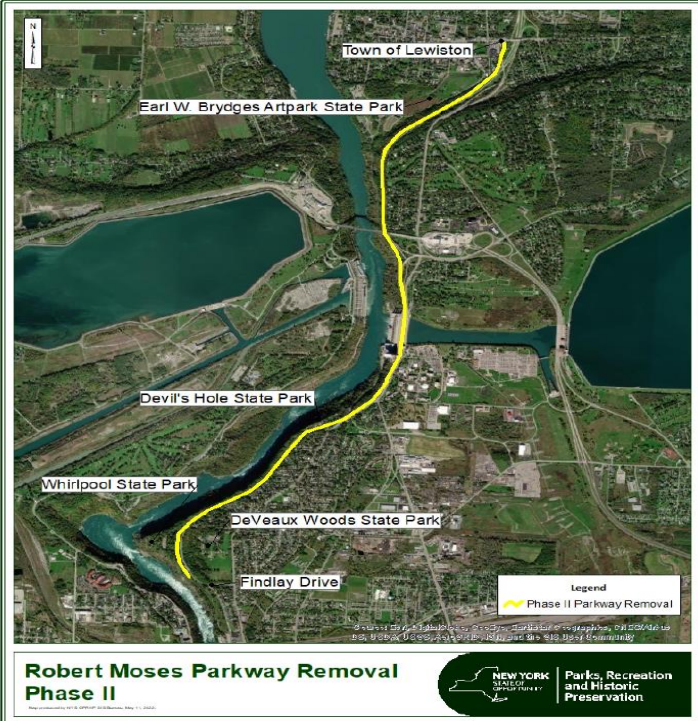


Photo 1. Completed result of Phase 1 (Gorgeview). The end result of Phase 2 will have a similar design. Image is facing south.



Photo 8. The closed parkway facing north.

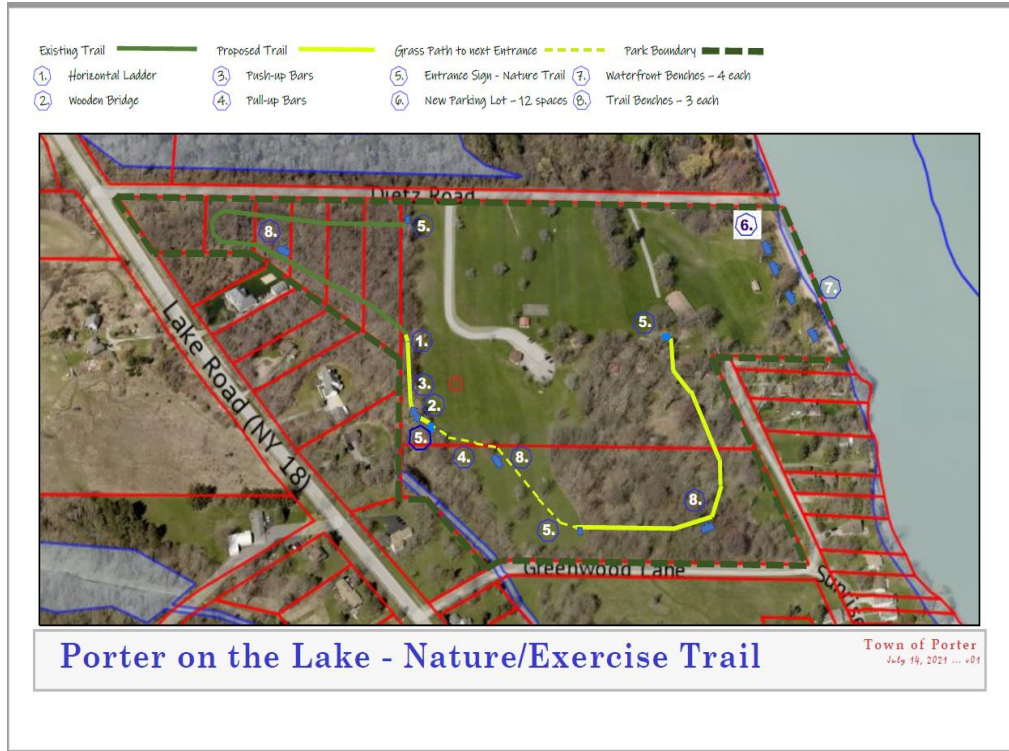
# Robert Moses Parkway Removal Phase 2 - Scoping



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**



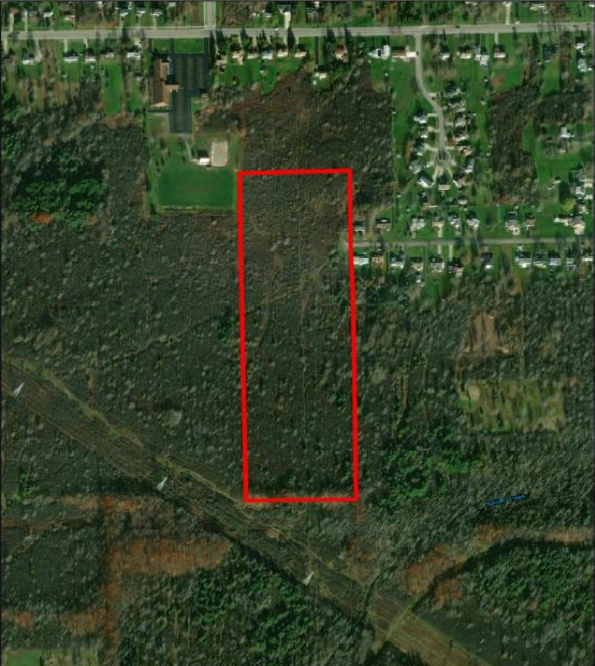
# Town of Porter Fitness Court



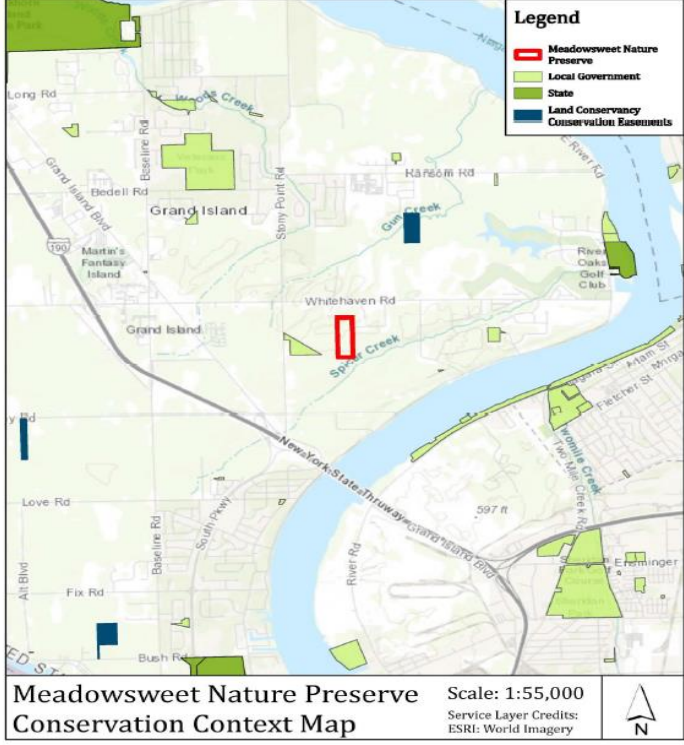
TOWN OF  
**PORTER**  
NEW YORK



# Meadow Sweet Nature Preserve



Meadowsweet Nature Preserve Imagery Map  
 Scale: 1:6,500  
 Service Layer Credits: ESRI: World Imagery





# Chapter Four

## Feature Project and Greenway Priorities

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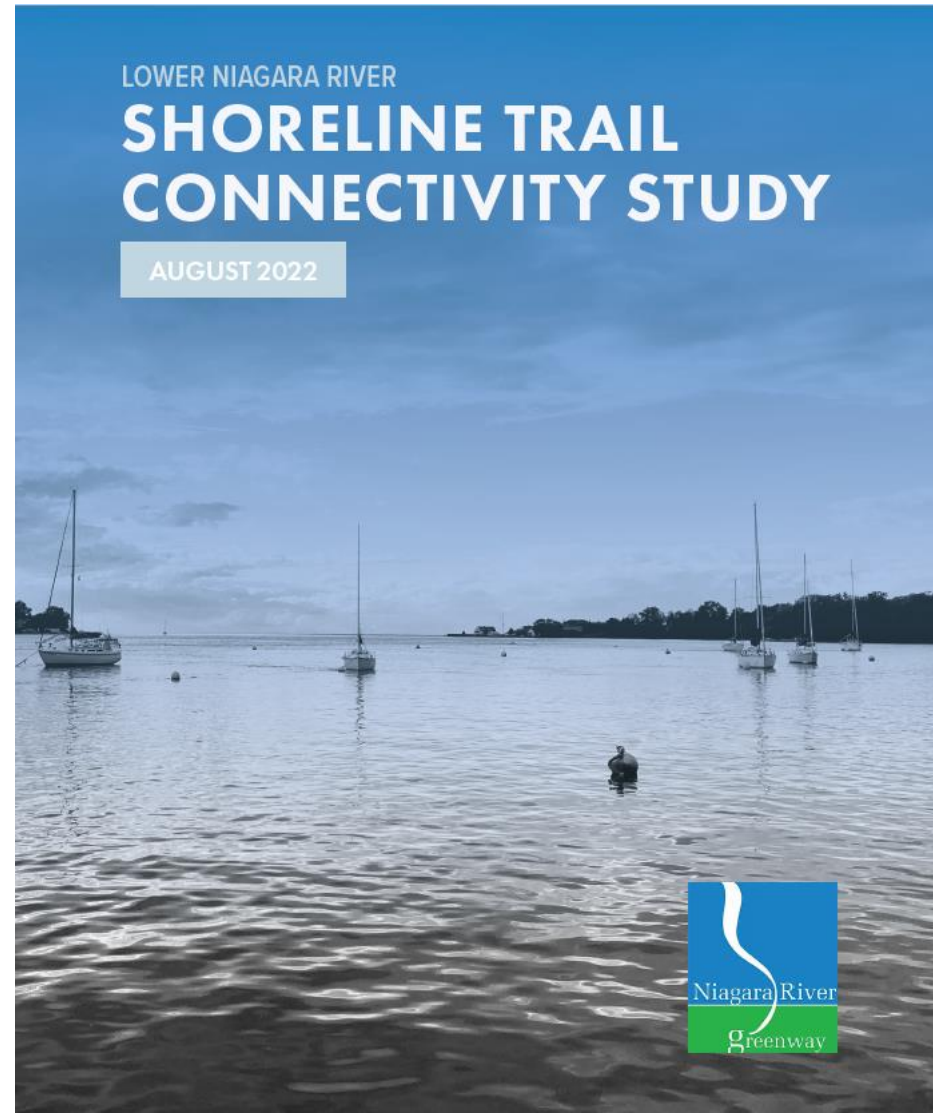


# Niagara River Greenway Priorities

- Comfort Facilities and Bike Stations
- Programs and funding to maintain trails and amenities
- Continue with Youth Stewardship and Education
- Generating and pursuing high quality projects. Encourage municipalities to develop and propose projects that are highly consistent with the Greenway Plan
- Creating partnership signature events
- Public Art that tells a story



# Feature Project





## PROJECT TEAM

The Project Team spearheaded this Study and consisted of staff from the Niagara River Greenway and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP). The Project Team included:

Angela Berti, NYS OPRHP

Carl Flora, NYS OPRHP

Michelle Lockett, Niagara River Greenway

Mark Mistretta, NYS OPRHP

Greg Stevens, Niagara River Greenway

Lisa Vitello, Niagara River Greenway

## CONSULTANT TEAM

This Study was supported and compiled by Bergmann and Alta Planning + Design.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic  
Preservation**



Niagara River

greenway



# Niagara Shoreline Trail



Newly paved  
Parkway  
Trail







Niagara  
Shoreline  
Trail Bike  
Logos







Academy Park  
Public Art and  
Placemaking





# Chapter Five

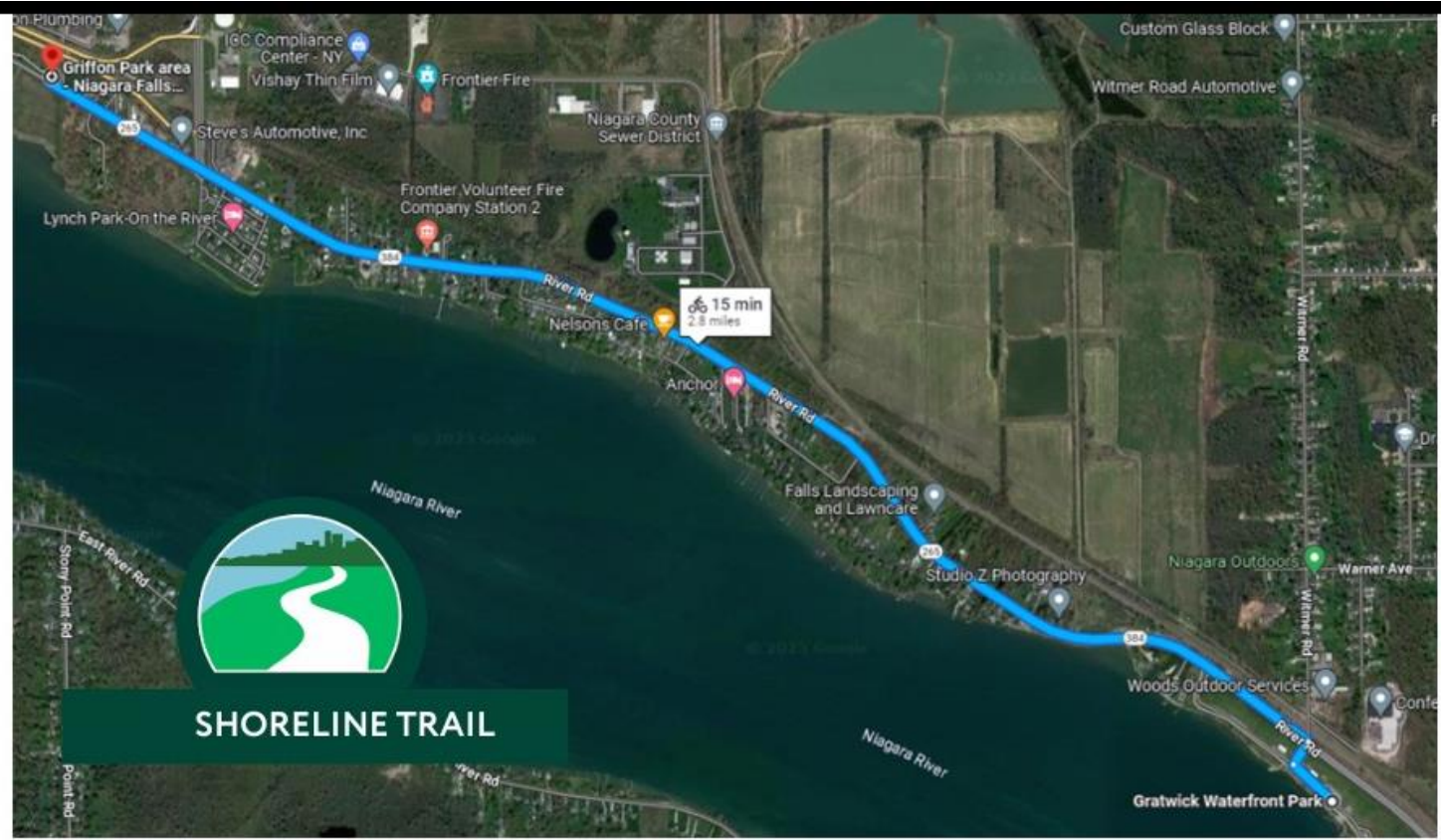
## Highlights

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NYS Scenic By-Ways Project Multi-Use Trail (NY Route 265 and NY Route 384 (River Road) Pin 5760.75



PUBLIC HEARING ON SHORELINE TRAIL IN NIAGARA COUNTY





# Reddy Bike and Niagara River Greenway Partnership

- Devils Hole State Park
- Whirlpool State Park
- DeVeaux Woods State Park





# Lewiston Council of the Arts/Niagara River Greenway Partnership for the Lewiston Art Festival







# Paddles Up Niagara



**Mark Your Calendars for the 17th Annual  
Paddles Up Niagara set for Saturday July 29th!**





April 05, 2023

Michelle Lockett  
Niagara River Greenway Commission  
National Heritage Trust  
Beaver Island State Park Office  
2136 West Oakfield  
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Ms. Lockett,

The Erie County Environmental Management Council (EMC) is pleased to inform you that the Niagara River Greenway's Environmental Ambassador Summit has been selected to receive a 2023 Environmental Excellence Award. By engaging the youth to take on climate related projects, using nature-based solutions that will be implemented in the community, this program helped young people discover their role in addressing climate change. By including local sustainability professionals in the competition, it helps connect classroom learning to real world opportunities that can inspire young people to pursue a career in the field. We're excited to see that several projects will be implemented in the coming year!

This EMC award program is designed to showcase and promote projects, like yours, that improve access to our environment, improve our natural systems, engage the youth and regional stakeholders, and can inspire others across Erie County and beyond.

We're excited to invite you and the participating teams to an Earth Day Awards Ceremony at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, located at 93 Honorine Drive in Depew (flier included). The awards will be presented at 10:30 am as part of the Earth Day events and anticipate the awards ceremony to be wrapped up by noon. In addition to the awards ceremony the EMC will promote your excellent work through social media and at various events throughout the community.

Announcement of the 2023 winners can be found on the EMC website here: [www.erie.gov/EMC](http://www.erie.gov/EMC)

If you are unable to attend the Earth Day event at Reinstein Woods, and would like to arrange receipt of your award, please contact Bonnie Lawrence at [Bonnie.Lawrence@erie.gov](mailto:Bonnie.Lawrence@erie.gov).

Sincerely,

Jason Kulaszewski, Chairperson  
Erie County Environmental Management Council



# EARTH DAY FAIR

SAT. APRIL 22, 2023 | 10AM - 1PM



Visit with electric car owners.  
View rain barrels decorated by Erie County students,  
and sample bird-friendly coffee.  
Kids and adults can play the Carbon Challenge Game.  
Light refreshments will be available for sale.

**Bring your batteries to recycle (size AAA to D)!**

#### Learn about:

- Electric vehicles
- Erie County Climate Action Plan
- Heat pumps
- How to buy electricity made from renewable energy
- Sustainable food choices
- And more!



No Registration Required. Donations Welcome.

For More Info: (716) 683-5959

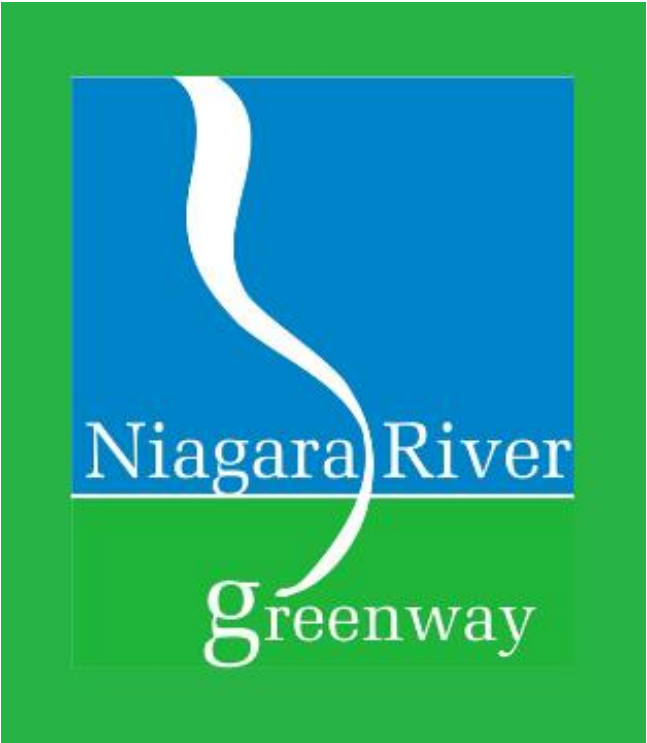
[www.reinsteinwoods.org/events](http://www.reinsteinwoods.org/events)

SPONSORED BY:

Friends of Reinstein Woods  
[www.reinsteinwoods.org](http://www.reinsteinwoods.org)



# Continuing Youth Stewardship

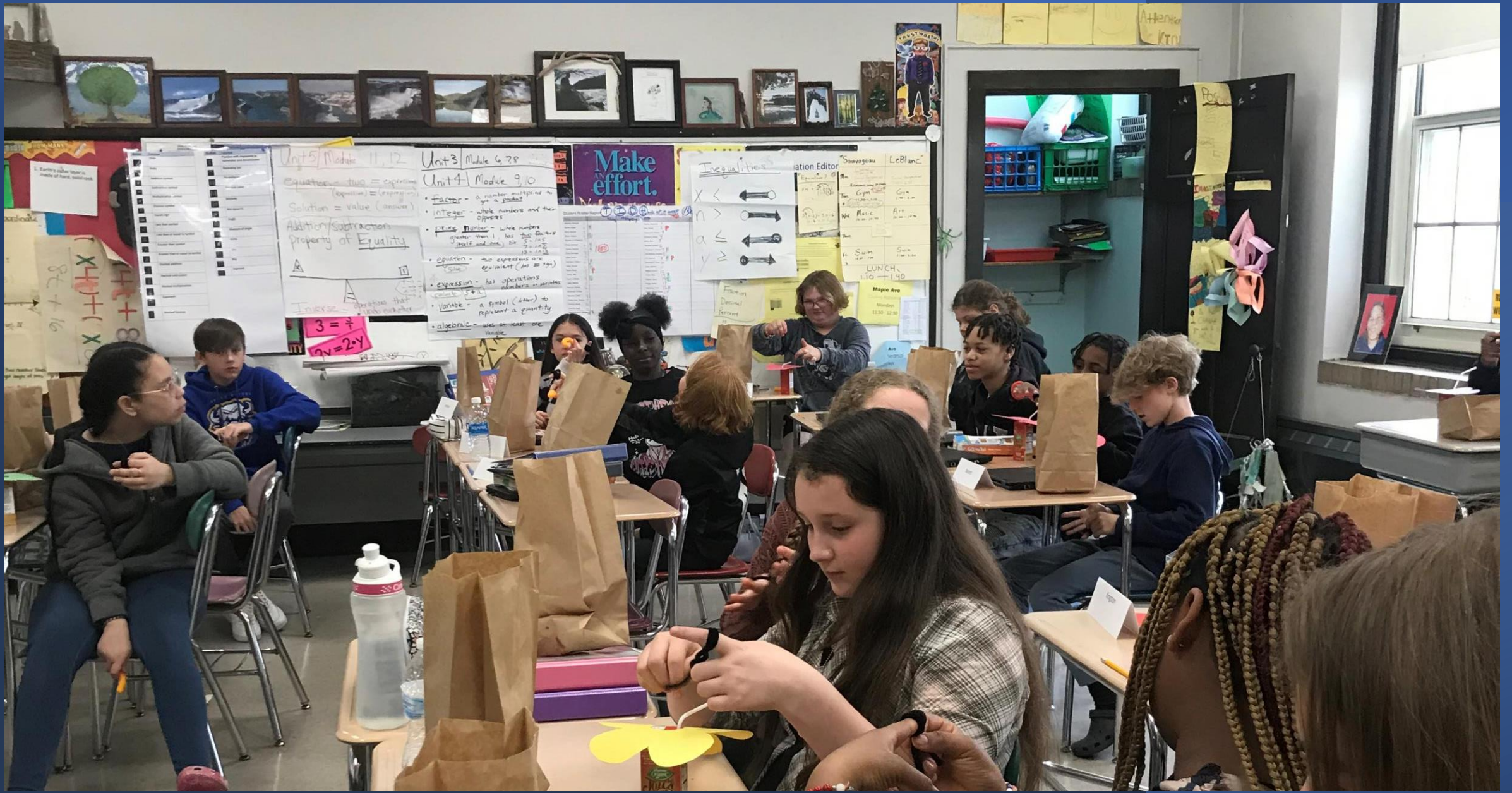




# Maple Avenue School Pollinator Garden Activities







Unit 5 Module 11, 12  
Equation = two expressions  
(equation) = (expression)  
Solution = value (answer)  
Addition/subtraction  
Property of Equality

Unit 3 Module 6, 7, 8  
Unit 4 Module 9, 10

**Factor** - a number multiplied by  
a product

**Integer** - whole numbers and their  
opposites

**Prime Number** - whole numbers  
greater than 1, has two factors  
(one and itself) Ex: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19

**Equation** - two expressions are  
equivalent (for all values)

**Expression** - has operations  
algebraic expressions

**Variable** - a symbol (letter) to  
represent a quantity

**Algebraic** - uses at least one  
variable

**Make  
effort.**

**Inequalities**

$x <$  ←

$n >$  →

$a \leq$  ←

$y \geq$  →

Maple Ave  
LUNCH  
11:00 - 1:00

Monday  
11:30 - 12:30

1. Every number has a  
multiplicative inverse.

$8x + 16$

$x + 16$

$x + 8$

Attention  
KTV

Focus



Thanks to Cerrone Construction and the Niagara Falls School District Maintenance Team for preparing our Pollinator Garden Site



**CERRONE** INC.  
*Safety and Quality First*



Niagara Falls City School District  
Learning For ALL...Whatever It Takes



# Underground Railroad Hike



Maple Avenue  
School  
Niagara Falls





# Telling the story-Saladin Allah from the Underground Railroad Museum





# Students from Niagara Falls at the New York Power Authority





# Student Projects

Building and Installing Birdhouses with Grand Island Interact Club and Buffalo Audubon Society





# Day in the Life of the Niagara River /Lake Erie Watershed with Nichols



NTHS Learning about NT Nature Preserve and preparing garden plot





Adopt a Trail Groups doing clean ups on their trail sections

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Riverside HS Students receiving Environmental Ambassador Award for best proposed project at the summit



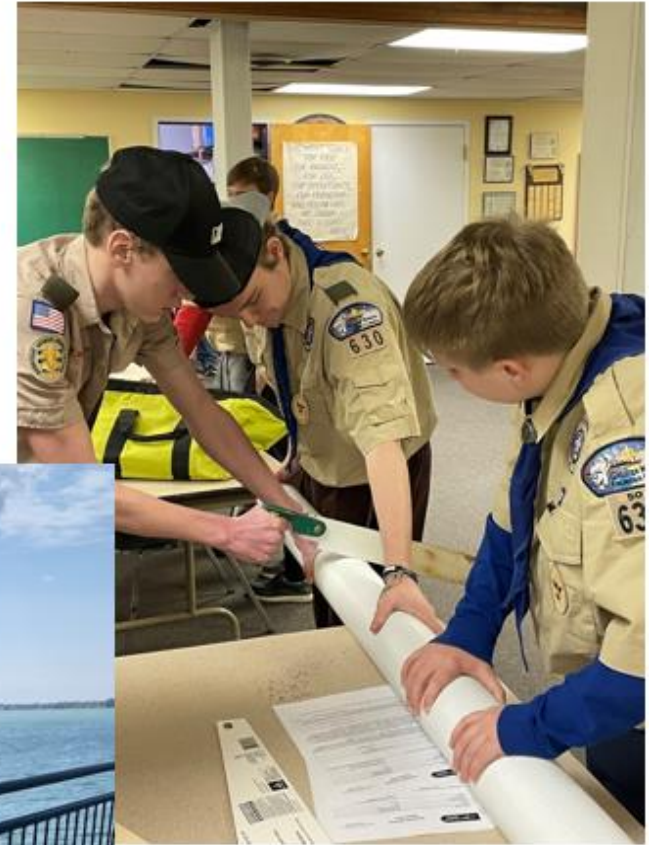
# North Tonawanda MS Pollinator Garden





# Student Projects

Building and Installing Fishing Line Receptacles with the Grand Island Boy Scout Troup





# Our Partners



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION



BUFFALO NIAGARA  
WATERKEEPER



New York Power  
Authority

Generating more than electricity



NIAGARA FALLS  
USA

WHERE ADVENTURE COMES NATURALLY



WESTERN NEW YORK  
LAND CONSERVANCY

Community Foundation  
for Greater Buffalo



Audubon

REDDY  
bikeshare



PCA

POLLINATOR  
CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION



NIAGARA FALLS  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



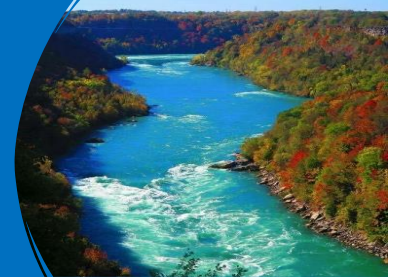
GOBike

PRESENTED BY INDEPENDENT HEALTH





# Get in Touch



[Home | niagaragreenway \(niagararivergreenway.com\)](https://niagaragreenway.com)

Visit our Niagara River Greenway Website

[Niagara River Greenway Commission - Home | Facebook](#)

Join our Facebook page

[Contact our Staff](#)

Stevens, Gregory (PARKS) [Gregory.Stevens@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Gregory.Stevens@parks.ny.gov)

**(Executive Director)**

Vitello, Lisa (PARKS) [Lisa.Vitello@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Lisa.Vitello@parks.ny.gov)

**(Administrative Manager)**

Michelle (PARKS) [Michelle.Lockett@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Michelle.Lockett@parks.ny.gov)

**(Community Engagement Manager)**