

# Mohawk Towpath Byway

Visit New York's historic canal system and see the locks and bridges that made canal transport possible for almost two centuries. The Mohawk Towpath Byway links scenic, recreational, and historic resources. Architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries endures, as do the landscape and the perseverance of the canal builders.



Length: 26.2 miles / 41.9 km

Time     Take 40 minutes to drive the  
to         byway or a day or two to  
Allow:   experience the history,  
          recreational opportunities,  
          and unique communities.

## Local Information

### Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway Coalition, Inc.

518-383-8565

### Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau

25 Quackenbush Square,  
Albany, NY 12207

800-258-3582

518-434-1217

Fax: 518-434-0887

## Visitor Services



### Accessibility

All public and commercial facilities as well as most privately owned facilities are ADA compliant. There are many bicycle/pedestrian Facilities.



### Food

Food from "fast food" to fine dining are available along the byway.



### Gasoline

Gasoline is available.



### Information

Byway information is available at the following locations: \* Waterford Harbor Visitor Center in Tug Boat Alley, Waterford \* Erie Canalway Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Peebles Island State Park, Waterford \* Cohoes Visitor Center on 58 Remsen Street, Cohoes \* Clifton Park Town Hall and Parks and Rec Office on the corner of Clifton Park Center and Vischer Ferry

Road, Clifton Park \* Schenectady Visitor Center and Schenectady Museum in Nott Terrace Heights, Schenectady Each of these has restrooms and the latest byway publications.

### **Lodging**



Lodging is available from historic Inns, B&Bs, and modern national chain hotels. These are located in Schenectady, Colonie, and Clifton Park.

### **Phone**



Public phones are available along this byway.

### **Restrooms**



There are toilet facilities along this byway.

### **Retail**



There are places to shop within five miles of the byway.

## **Seasons**

### **Fall**

Fall is the most colorful season on the byway. Local festivals dot the corridor, celebrating the harvest, our heritage, and our waterways. Foliage on urban landscapes and across rural views are all shades of green, brown, yellow, and crimson. Visit an orchard and pick your own fruit.

### **Spring**

Spring is the ideal time to drive the byway because of the fresh green grass, spring flowers, bird songs, and emerging leaves that all make the byway magical. Urban streets are newly cleaned, historic features are most accessible, rural landscapes are freshly planted, and waterways all run with fresh water.

### **Summer**

Summer on the byway offers visitors a slower pace. Summer is the sound of children on the playgrounds, band concerts and fireworks in the park, and community theater. Discover a historic swimming hole and pick fresh berries at a local farm. Experience a dramatic sunrise or sunset.

### **Winter**

Winter on the byway is a wonderland. The first fresh snowfall provides deep contrasts so that landmarks obscured with foliage other seasons of the year become most visible. This is an interesting time to visit the Waterford Flight to see the engineering of dry locks.

# Map and Directions



## Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

### Driving Directions

The byway begins at the intersection of State Hwy. 32 and 9th St. in Waterford, New York.

From there:

- Drive south on State Hwy. 32/Saratoga Ave to New Cortland Street, about 1.7 miles.
- Drive northwest on New Cortland Street. It becomes North Mohawk Street.
- Drive northwest on North Mohawk Street. It becomes Cohoes-Crescent Road.
- Turn right onto Route 9 and continue for 0.6 miles.
- Turn left onto Crescent/Vischer Ferry Road and continue for 0.1 miles.
- Turn left onto Canal Road and continue for 2.3 miles.
- Turn right onto Clamsteam road and continue for 0.3 miles.
- Turn left onto Riverview Road and continue for four miles.
- Bear left to continue along Riverview road and yield to traffic entering from Vischer Ferry road. Continue for 3.7 miles.
- Continue straight through the stop sign. Riverview Road becomes Saratoga County Route 91. Continue for 1.7 miles.
- Turn left onto State Route 146 and continue for 0.3 miles.
- Turn right onto Aqueduct Road and continue for 2.1 miles. The road will become Van Vranken Ave.
- Bear right at the intersection with Maxon Road and continue for 1.2 miles.
- Turn right onto Erie Boulevard and continue for 1.3 miles to the western terminus of the byway at the intersection of State Street which is State Route 5 and the Revolutionary Byway.

An alternate route from Route 9 in Crescent, Halfmoon (fourth bullet above) returns to Waterford at the intersection of Eighth Street and Route 32.


- Turn right onto Church Hill Road and continue for one mile.
- Continue straight through the stop sign. The road becomes Saratoga County Route 94. Continue for 0.4 miles.
- Turn right onto Saratoga County Route 9 and continue for 0.2 miles.
- Turn right onto County 97 (Fonda Road) and continue for three miles.
- County 97 (Fonda Road) becomes Washington Street in the village of Waterford.
- Turn right onto Eighth Street and continue for 0.2 miles to the eastern terminus at the intersection of State Route 32 which is the Lakes to Locks Passage Byway.

## Getting to the Byway



### Nearby cities

Albany, NY (10 miles / 16.09 km, 14 minutes)

**Start:**  I-787 northbound, Albany, NY  
N 42.654° W 73.747° [?]

**Directions:**

- Take I-787 north to Green Island.
- Continue on NY-787 north to New Cortland St in Cohoes where the byway begins.

**Junction with byway:** \* Intersection of NY-787 and NY-32  
N 42.776° W 73.697° [?]



## Road Trip: Unlock the Mystery of the Erie Canal

**Departure:** Waterford's Canal Harbor Welcome Center, New York

**Destination:** Historic Schenectady Stockade District, New York

**Time to allow:** 1 day

Follow the route of the Erie Canal - the waterway west. Plan a day to explore the stops along this itinerary including features of the original 1825 Erie Canal, the Enlarged 1847 Erie Canal and the present day Barge Canal.

### Day 1

- **Start: Waterford's Canal Harbor Welcome Center**

Walk three blocks south on Tug Boat Alley to the visitor's center that overlooks the harbor and the grand entrance to the present day N Y State Barge Canal system. An additional short hike along the water front will bring you along side Lock 2 where, during the busy warm months of the year, you can see, up close, how a lock works.

- **Stop 1: Cohoes Harmony Mills District**

**From previous stop:** 5 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

**Directions:** Proceed west on Broad Street, south on State Route 32. After crossing the bridge over the Mohawk take a right on Cortland Street which becomes North Mohawk Street to the Harmony Mill District.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 45 minutes

The first mill was erected in 1837 between the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River. Construction of other mill buildings followed. When completed in 1872, Harmony Mill #3 was the largest individual cotton factory in the world. Locals know the mill as "Mastodon Mill" because of the complete skeleton of a prehistoric mastodon discovered during construction of the building. A brochure containing a "Self Guided Tour: Harmony Mills Historic District" is available from the Sprindler City Historical Society by phoning 518-237-7999.

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- **Stop 2: Cohoes Falls**

**From previous stop:** 4 minutes / 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

**Directions:** Continue west on North Mohawk Street, turn right on Front Street, left on Cataract Street. The falls overlook is at the intersection of Cataract and School Streets. If no parking is available continue on School Street and take a right back onto North Mohawk Street. There's a parking lot on the left just beyond Church Street. It's a short walk back to the overlook.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 10 minutes

With a vertical drop of more than 70 feet, the Falls extends approximately 1000 feet across the Mohawk River between the City of Cohoes and the Town of Waterford. Water power provided by the falls was significant in the development of several large knitting mills that became leading manufacturers of cotton textiles, thus earning the name 'Spindle City' for the municipality.

- **Stop 3: Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve**



**From previous stop:** 15 minutes / 7 mi (11.2 km)

**Directions:** Go west on North Mohawk Street which becomes Cohoes Crescent Road to State Route 9. Take Route 9 north across the Mohawk and take a left at the first traffic light onto Crescent Vischer Ferry Road. Bear left at the first intersection and continue on the Byway's Canal Road to the stop sign at Klamsteam Road. Take a right up Klamsteam Road and take a left onto Riverview Road. Look for the preserve entrance on the left at the intersection of Riverview and VanVranken Roads.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

This 600 acre preserve includes the area between Riverview Road and the Mohawk River in the Town of Clifton Park. A segment of the original 1825 Erie Canal and Towpath; a segment and a number of structures of the 1842 Enlarged Erie Canal; and the current NY State Barge Canal are accessible within the preserve. The entrance to the preserve includes a restored 1862 Whipple Truss Bridge, a design used widely to bridge the canal during the later half of the 19th Century.

This is also a great place to stop for a family picnic, bird watch, fish, explore for amphibians and other wildlife, hike, mountain bike, cross country ski or snowshoe.

- **Stop 4: Rexford Aqueduct**

**From previous stop:** 12 minutes / 8 mi (12.8 km)

**Directions:** Continue west on Riverview Road. Drivers are required to stop at the intersection with Saratoga County Route 91 (Grooms Road). Continue straight on Riverview Road to State Route 146. Take a left on Route 146 across the Mohawk River. Look for the parking lot on the left just south of the bridge.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 30 minutes

The aqueduct was built of cut limestone in 1842 as part of the enlarged Erie Canal to carry boats safely across the Mohawk River. The trough that held the water was constructed of wood, making repair and replacement a constant necessity. Remnants of the aqueduct foundation are visible alongside the State Route 146 Rexford Bridge over the Mohawk.

- **End: Historic Schenectady Stockade District**



**From previous stop:** 10 minutes / 4 mi (6.4 km)

**Directions:** Proceed west on Schenectady County Route 10 (Aqueduct Road) which gradually turns southerly. Upon entering City of Schenectady limits the road bears right and becomes Maxon Road. At Erie Boulevard intersection take a left and follow the path of the original Erie Canal. Take a right after passing under the railroad bridge onto Union Street. You are in the Stockade. Park anywhere and take a walk to explore the community and its architecture.

A 17th century Dutch settlement, founded by Arendt Van Curler in 1661, located at the junction of the Binnecill and Mohawk River. Burned in 1690 by the French and allied Native Americans, the area was rebuilt with help from Albany settlers and Mohawks. The Erie Canal made this area an island between the canal (now Erie Blvd.) and the Mohawk River. The Stockade became New York State's first National Register Historic District in 1965 and retains the ambiance of an early colonial village.

### **Totals for Day 1**

**Total Distance Traveled:** 21.2 miles / 33.9 km

**Total Travel Time:** 46 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 3 hours 25 minutes