



Niagara River Greenway

NEWSFLASH

Spring 2025



Pictured above are collaborators who made the new Wheatfield Trail possible, including representatives from the Towns of Wheatfield, Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, NYSDOT, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the Frontier Volunteer Fire Company, and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to bringing this beautiful and inspiring project to life!

Two New Segments of the Shoreline Trail are Open!

This spring marks an exciting milestone for the Niagara River Greenway with the completion and celebration of two major additions to the Shoreline Trail. On Monday, May 12th, ribbon cutting ceremonies for newly completed trail segments at Artpark in Lewiston and in the Town of Wheatfield. These projects reflect years of hard work, thoughtful design, and incredible collaboration across communities, agencies, and funders.



Artpark's Switchback

Artpark's brand-new switchback and scramble trail is officially open-and it's stunning! This addition brings two unique ways to traverse the escarpment: a gentle, accessible switchback trail and a more adventurous scramble route, both offering breathtaking views. Whether you're heading to a summer concert or out for a hike, this new trail makes it easier (and more fun!) to connect from the Shoreline Trail to the Upper Artpark parking area.

We were blown away by the beautiful stone staircase and how the design balances accessibility with a sense of adventure. This project is part of a larger vision to expand the Lower Niagara River Trail network, improving connections north to Old Fort Niagara, south to Niagara Falls, and west into the Village of Lewiston.

Managed by New York State Parks and made possible through the support of the Ralph C. Wilson Jr.



Foundation, New York Power Authority/Niagara River Greenway Commission, Empire State Development, and many others, this trail is an example of what we can achieve when great minds and strong partnerships come together. We can't wait for you to check out the view from the top!

Wheatfield's New 2.5-Mile Trail Segment

Later that same day, we gathered again in Wheatfield to celebrate the opening of a 2.5-mile segment of the Niagara River Shoreline Trail. This new stretch runs along an old rail line from Gratwick Park in North Tonawanda to Griffon Park in Niagara Falls, providing a scenic, off-road connection between riverfront communities.

This project has been a long time coming-it's been in the works since 2013! It was amazing to see it all come together with a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Frontier Volunteer Fire Company, where we were joined by State Senator Rob Ort, North Tonawanda Mayor Austin Tylec, and many local bicycle groups.



The trail's completion is the result of years of collaboration between the Towns of Wheatfield, Niagara Falls, and North Tonawanda, NYSDOT, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the Frontier Volunteer Fire Company, and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. Thanks to everyone involved, this new segment is officially ready to be enjoyed by walkers, runners, cyclists, and nature lovers alike.

Spring Cleanups & Garden Revitalization

This spring, the Niagara River Greenway has seen a remarkable outpouring of community engagement and stewardship. From hands-on gardening efforts to shoreline cleanups, volunteers from across the region have come together with a shared commitment to enhancing our public spaces. Rain or shine, their dedication has helped restore and revitalize key areas along the Greenway!

We kicked off our Freedom Park Gardening Series on April 19th, uniting expert gardeners, local landscapers, students, and community organizations to breathe new life into the park. Volunteers from Friends of Freedom Park, Vision Niagara, Urban Roots, the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens, Buffalo Women of Environmental Learning & Leadership (Bwell) and McKinley High School are all collaborating on a



reimagined garden design that's already beginning to bloom. A special shout-out to McKinley High School students, who got a head start on beautification by planting the urns at Freedom Park on May 19th!

We're also thrilled to be partnering with Bwell for the upcoming Freedom Park Planting Day on May 31st, where volunteers will help plant a vibrant selection of hardy native perennials to enhance the park's natural beauty.

These efforts at Freedom Park were part of a larger wave of spring stewardship



along the Niagara River Greenway. At the same time, we saw an incredible turnout for our Earth Day shoreline cleanups, with nine Rotary Clubs, students from KenTon, Nichols School, Canisius Rotaract and other community groups coming together to care for 13 sections of the Shoreline Trail - including areas around Freedom Park and Aqua Lane Park. In total, over 400 volunteers contributed 28 hours, collecting an impressive 213 bags of litter from the shoreline trail network. Thank you to everyone who came out to help clean up the Shoreline Trail this spring! You're making a real difference in keeping our waterways clean and our trails safe and beautiful for everyone to enjoy.



GINA's 3rd Annual Native Plant Sale, Habitat Program & ID Walks

The Grand Island Nature Alliance, with support from Niagara River Greenway, has been busy this spring getting the word out about their Habitat Certification Program, with two educational talks about native plants and fostering biodiversity, a plant id walk, a bird walk and their third annual Native Plant Sale & Talk. Master Gardener Lyn Chimera was the guest speaker this year and did an excellent job describing all the benefits to gardening with natives and how to get started. North Tonawanda Botanical Gardens, CW Native Plant Farm and Primeval Forest Nursery were the plant vendors.

The Grand Island Habitat Certification program is designed to build a community/support network around efforts to garden with native plants in property owners yards, reducing turf grass and adding more biodiversity for the benefit of wildlife, soil, air and water quality. Although it is geared towards GI residents, GINA welcomes everyone to their events.



On May 10th, Alec Humann, world reknown birder, led a bird walk along East River trail in Beaver Island State Park.

We had a beautiful blue sky to search and listen for birds. Some of the birds spotted included Palm Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Common Tern, Oriole and Wood Ducks.

If you are interested in donating to the Niagara River Greenway, to help us continue projects such as these, please visit our website at www.NiagaraRiverGreenway.com and click on the DONATE button at the top of the page.

