



Niagara River Greenway NEWSFLASH

Winter 2023 / 2024



The Niagara River Greenway has been hard at work lately; we held our second annual Environmental Ambassador Summit, we have been supporting grassroots community groups on the Shoreline Trail, and advising trail adopters on different amenities.

Environmental Ambassador Summit

In February of 2024, we held our second annual Environmental Ambassador Summit! Students, teachers, businesses, universities, and organizations came together at Linde, who donated their staff, space, and food to the event. Students from 9 WNY schools proposed their environmental projects via poster session and oral presentation. They had a busy day, learning about careers in sustainability and conservation from 6 environmentally focused organizations, about sustainable practices from local



businesses, and about internships and studies in the environmental science & studies field from local colleges.

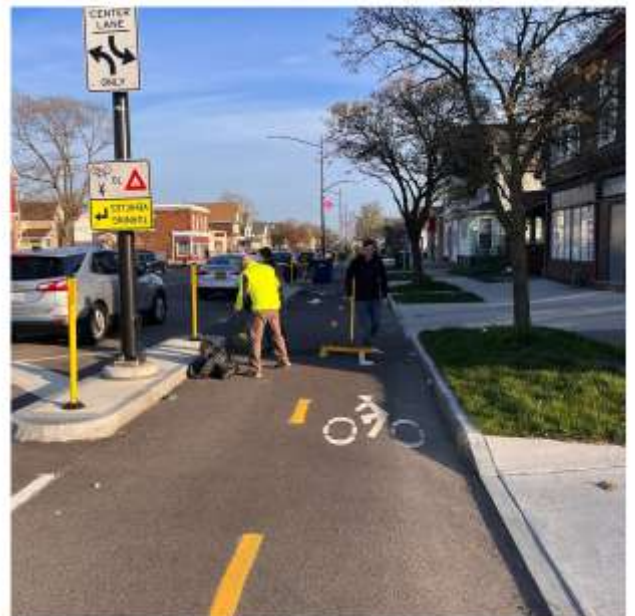
Marcus Rosten of Western New York Land Conservancy, the keynote speaker, gave great insight into the Western New York Wildway, as well as possible environmental careers. Tracy Skalski of Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, spoke about climate resiliency and the Community Climate Action Plan.

Tapestry Charter School came in first place for their project and presentation on microplastics! They will work to collect plastics, analyze them, and share their findings schoolwide with lessons and an informative art piece. Every school that participated will receive funding to complete their environmental project, with the top three competitors receiving an additional amount to finance their project further.

Niagara Street Adopt-a-Block Collaborative

Our newly formed Adopt-a-Block is a program that focuses on bringing organizations, businesses, government officials, and community members together to form an active and engaged community on Niagara Street. Working together for a safe and attractive Niagara Street, with a healthy pedestrian and cycling culture and retail scene, this group aims to keep the street and accompanying cycle track clean and inviting. Current participants are the Black Rock Riverside Alliance, WEDI, Campus Wheelworks, the City of Buffalo Sewer Authority and Department of Public Works, Breeser Group, and Northgate Church, among countless others. The group's first large seasonal cleanup is on March 23rd from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, with more to follow!

The goal for Adopt-a-Block participants is to serve as ambassadors and the eyes and ears on the cycle track, provide regular weekly sweeps for glass and trash on their adopted block, participate in larger seasonal cleanups, and support improvements and amenities that make Niagara Street more bike friendly and more attractive and interesting as a retail neighborhood. Niagara River Greenway works with the land owners,



municipalities, and businesses to help coordinate clean ups and any projects that the participants wish to complete along their segment of the block.

Grand Island Nature Alliance

The Grand Island Nature Alliance (GINA) is a group we have formed with Grand Island community members in the forefront. The group has planned outdoor education events, such as the Monarchs and Milkweed event, a Tree Identification Walk, and a Foraging Walk, all promoting community members to get outside. The alliance is made up of and run by community members who share a passion to protect the outdoors and hope to inspire others to do so, as well.

GINA has been kept quite busy this winter, planning a talk with the Western New York Land Conservancy, with hopes of reaching Grand Island community members who want to conserve their land. In the next few months, a purple martin demonstration with the DEC will also take place, as well as another foraging walk with Ellen Owens!

GINA also conducted an educational program at the 2024 Bird's on Niagara Festival. The group tabled at the Grand Island Welcome Center on Saturday of the festival, with bird books and stickers on display, as well as a bird themed scavenger hunt and "Birdo" available for interested passerbyers. The highlight of the day was GINA's member, Diane Evans, putting on a "Birding Basics" presentation, walking viewers through how to identify birds by their behavior, markings, and other observations.

We hope to continue to encourage community and school groups to develop healthy activities on the Greenway and through our HighMark Grant, sponsor programs to help grassroots groups get started in an effort to promote active outdoor recreation on the parks and trails of Western New York.

