

OSWEGO CANAL

The Oswego Canal connects the Erie Canal at Three Rivers to Oswego Harbor at Lake Ontario. Though the Oswego Canal is fairly short, only 23 miles, it drops 188 feet and has long provided a critical connection to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The Oswego River's bays and back channels are well suited for boating, fishing, birdwatching, canoeing, and kayaking. Visitors from around the world are drawn to Oswego's active port, renowned for its festivals and exceptional sport fishing.

The Oswego Canal originally started at its confluence with the Erie Canal in downtown Syracuse, across from the weigh lock building, now home to the Erie Canal Museum. From there it ran along the east shore of Onondaga Lake. From Phoenix down to the Lake Ontario, the canal used a succession of constructed channels with locks and river segments with towing paths along the east side of the Oswego River. Remnants of these 19th-century structures are common along the modern canal and are easily explored by paddlers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

More information about things to do in the Oswego Canal area is available from visitoswegocounty.com.

To enter the Oswego Canal from the western junction with the Erie Canal, paddle straight ahead, keeping the double bridges for CR 57 and the CSX railroad on the right (east). The Oswego Canal channel entrance is marked by buoys G219 and R220 on the Erie Canal and buoy G1 on the Oswego Canal.

PADDLING NOTE: Red buoys on the Oswego River are on the east side of the channel, green buoys on the west.

O Mile 0.56, west side 43.203586 -76.282564

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 2-1 dock

O Mile 0.63, west side 43.211425 -76.288805

NYS Canal Maintenance Shops, Lysander
The Lysander Shops are responsible for maintenance of canal channels and structures on the Oswego Canal and the Erie Canal from Montezuma to Oneida Lake.

PADDLING NOTE: This is an active working dock during the canal season. Watch out for workboats.

O Mile 1.30, east side 43.222363 -76.293767

Stowell Island (also known as Treasure Island)
As the story goes, French missionaries in the area fled in the summer of 1658 and spent the night on the island. They left behind a cannon and a sack of gold. Neither has ever been found.

O Mile 1.80, west side 43.224477 -76.298946

The four concrete abutments that go halfway across the canal are the remains of a trolley bridge that once spanned the river.

PHOENIX

The Village of Phoenix dates back to the 1750s. Industry and commerce expanded when the Oswego Canal opened in 1828. In 1916, a massive fire destroyed 80 buildings along the waterfront. Most of the remaining buildings, now part of the Canal Waterfront District, date from 1917-1929.

Phoenix holds an annual Canal Day festival in June on Lock Island.

PADDLING NOTE: Lock Island Park at mile 2.33 is the best place to launch in Phoenix.

O Mile 1.96, east side 43.228101 -76.299113

Henley Park

Lock Street and State Street
Phoenix, NY 13135
(315) 695-1308
villageofphoenix-ny.gov

FACILITIES: Electric, wi-fi, water, restrooms, showers, pavilion. Facilities are difficult for paddlers to access at this location due to steep canal walls. Shops and restaurants are a short walk away.

The Bridge House Brats at the park are local teens who volunteer to assist boaters and tourists with errands and chores; bridgehousebrats.com.

O Mile 1.96, east side 43.227778 -76.298849

Bridge House Museum
55 State Street (at corner of Lock Street)
Phoenix, NY 13135
(315) 695-1308

The white, three-story bridge house was built in 1917 to contain the controls for a drawbridge over the Oswego River. The old bridge was removed in the 1980s and the control building became a small museum and visitor center. It contains a collection of artifacts relating to

Oswego Canal—Phoenix

the history of the Village of Phoenix and the Barge Canal.

ADMISSION: Free.

HOURS: July 1 through September 1: Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

O Mile 2.15 43.229390 -76.301200

Lock O1, Phoenix

87 State Street
Phoenix, NY 13135
(315) 695-2281

LIFT: 10.2 feet.

FACILITIES: At Henley Park.

PADDLING NOTE: The lock has a low dam and a hydroelectric station on the west side. Exercise caution and stay to the east of the channel markers for the lock.

O Mile 2.19 43.229869 -76.302098

Bridge O4, Culvert Street Lift Bridge
This movable bridge is controlled by the lock operator.

O Mile 2.33 43.230672 -76.304582

Lock Island Park

Off Culvert Street/Lamson Road
Phoenix, NY 13135

FACILITIES: A boat ramp and low dock are at the northern (downstream) tip of the island. Portable toilets are nearby. Parking for 20 cars. Overnight parking allowed. Distance from parking about 20 feet.

O Mile 4.89 43.247140 -76.341594

Walter Island

O Mile 5.27

Bridge O5, Hinmansville Road (CR 46)

O Mile 5.40, east side 43.150051 -76.210774

Old Oswego Canal Lock 6

Remains of Enlarged Oswego Canal Lock 6 (Hinmansville Lock) can be found at the head of a side channel on the east side of the river, just downstream of the bridge opposite buoy G41.

O Mile 6.39, east side 43.261147 -76.362789

Old Oswego Canal Guard Lock/ Mishemokwa—Great Bear Springs Recreation Area

Remains of Old Oswego Canal and old Guard Lock 2 can be glimpsed at Mishemokwa—Great Bear Springs Recreation Area (original source of the bottled water of the same name). Paddlers can explore the section of the old canal and lock. Visit friendsofgreatbear.org for more information.

O Mile 7.43, west side 43.269513 -76.381813

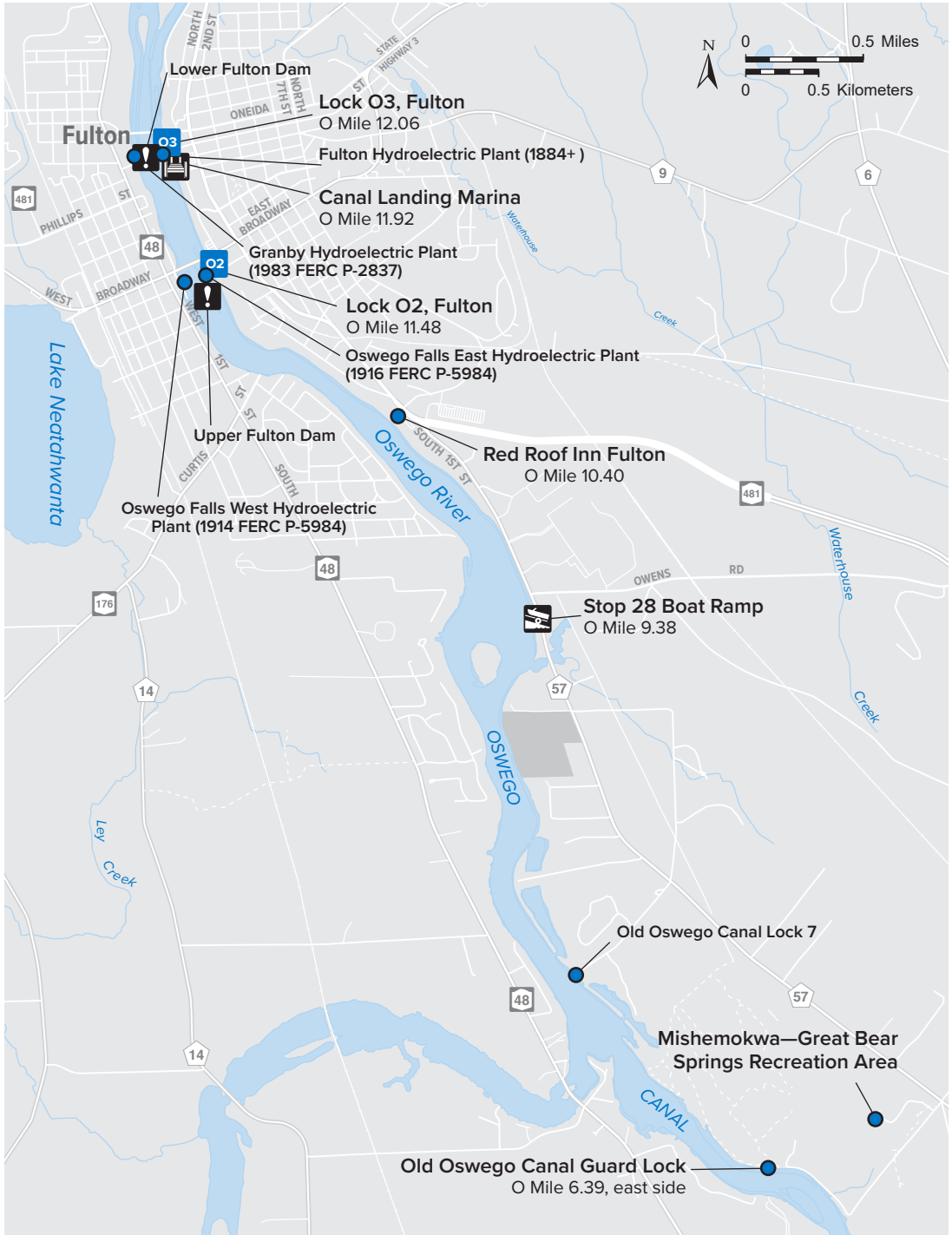
Ox Creek enters the canal from the west side.

O Mile 7.45, east side 43.273349 -76.382714

Old Oswego Canal Lock 7
Remains of Enlarged Oswego Canal Lift Lock 7 (Morseman's Lock), near Fulton, NY, are visible in a side channel on the east side near buoy R58.

O Mile 7.95 43.280480 -76.383491

The roar on Saturday evenings between buoys R54 and R64 comes from dirt track racers at Fulton Speedway on the east bank.



Oswego Canal–Fulton

O Mile 9.38 43.291463 -76.390684

Big Island is on the west side. Paddle to the east to stay in the channel and avoid shallow water and snags.

O Mile 9.38, east side 43.295299 -76.386449

Stop 28 Boat Ramp

Volney, NY 13069

FACILITIES: Gravel ramp and beach landing. Parking for 10 cars. Distance from parking about 20 feet.

O Mile 10.40, east side 43.307641 -76.398509

Red Roof Inn

930 South 1st Street
Fulton, NY 13069
(315) 593-2444
redroof.com

O Mile 11.48 43.316639 -76.414689

Lock O2, Fulton

304 South 1st Street
Fulton, NY 13069
(315) 592-4155

LIFT: 17.8 feet.

FACILITIES: Use facilities at Canal Landing Marina.

PADDLING NOTE: Hug the east (right) bank through Fulton. While there is a long approach wall above the lock, segments of it are open at and below the water's surface. Be aware of cross-currents toward the Oswego Falls dam with hydroelectric plants at either end. Steer clear of the safety cable with orange buoys. Stay to the east side of the channel after leaving Lock O2 to stay on track for Lock O3.

Lock O2, the dam, and its two hydroelectric plants mark the site of Oswego Falls, a source of

waterpower starting in the 1800s. They were all built around 1914 as part of Barge Canal construction.

O Mile 11.49 43.316815 -76.414766

Bridge O7B, swing bridge
This bridge spans the lock chamber and is operated by the lock tender.

O Mile 11.52 43.317215 -76.414988

Bridge O8, Broadway (NY 3)
Locally known as the "Upper Bridge."

O Mile 11.92, east side 43.323154 -76.417741

Canal Landing Marina

22 South 1st Street
Fulton, NY 13069
(315) 598-4399
fulton.ny.gov

FACILITIES: Electric, water, restrooms, showers. Dock. Ample parking. Shops and restaurants are nearby.

O Mile 12.06 43.324219 -76.418649

Lock O3, Fulton

22 South 1st Street
Fulton, NY 13069
(315) 592-5349

LIFT: 27.0 feet.

FACILITIES: Use Canal Landing Marina.

PADDLING NOTE: Hug the wall along the east (right) bank between Lock O2 and Lock O3. The upstream bullnose on the west side of Lock O3 is unusually short, leaving little room to correct between the dam spillway and intake for the Fulton hydroelectric plant. A safety cable with buoys marks this area, but it can be uncomfortably close to the dam when the river is running fast and the wind is out of the south. Do not paddle into this area.

Walls and artificial islands divide the river into three channels below the lock and dam. About 0.25 mile below the lock is a spillway that allows excess water from the center channel to spill into the navigation channel. The volume of water varies with operation of the lock, the hydro plants, and flow in the river itself and can sometimes change quite rapidly. Be aware and be prepared to make corrective strokes if the cross current pushes you toward the right bank.

There are hydroelectric plants at either end of the dam—Fulton on the east side, next to Lock O3, and Granby on the far bank. The Granby plant started operation in 1983 on the site of an earlier hydro plant. The area now occupied by the marina was the intake for a power canal that drove paper mills, machine works, and a huge flour mill along the east side of the river.

O Mile 12.10 43.324944 -76.418978

Bridge O9, Oneida Street
Locally known as the “Lower Bridge.”

O Mile 12.90, east side 43.335920 -76.415480

 **Indian Point Landing**

North 1st Street
Fulton, NY 13069

FACILITIES: Picnic tables, gazebo, grills. Ramp, dock, rocky beach landing. Parking for 20 cars and 10 vehicles with trailers; overnight parking permitted. Distance from parking about 20 feet.

O Mile 13.40 43.342290 -76.423547

Pathfinder Island
The island is named for the title character in the James Fenimore Cooper 1840 novel *The Pathfinder*. Much of the book takes place during a trip down the Oswego River. Paddle to the west of the island to stay in the channel.

O Mile 14.80, east side 43.364353 -76.429811

Paddle under NY 481 opposite buoy G105 to enter an old Enlarged Oswego Canal lock.

O Mile 15.60

Battle Island

The island was the site of a battle between French and British forces in 1756. The island is made up of two segments. The smaller, original Battle Island on the southwest side is joined by a land segment called “New Island” from the east mainland, made by a canal cut when building the barge canal. Large old growth oak and hickory trees can be found on the island. Paddle to either side; the canal channel is on the east.

A cut can be found across from Battle Island Golf Course on the east side. There is an entrance and exit of the old Oswego Canal with Guard Lock 4 at that location. With the original rapids and elevation drop, the lock is a double lock twice the length of the regular locks and is accessible by canoes, kayaks and small cartop boats.

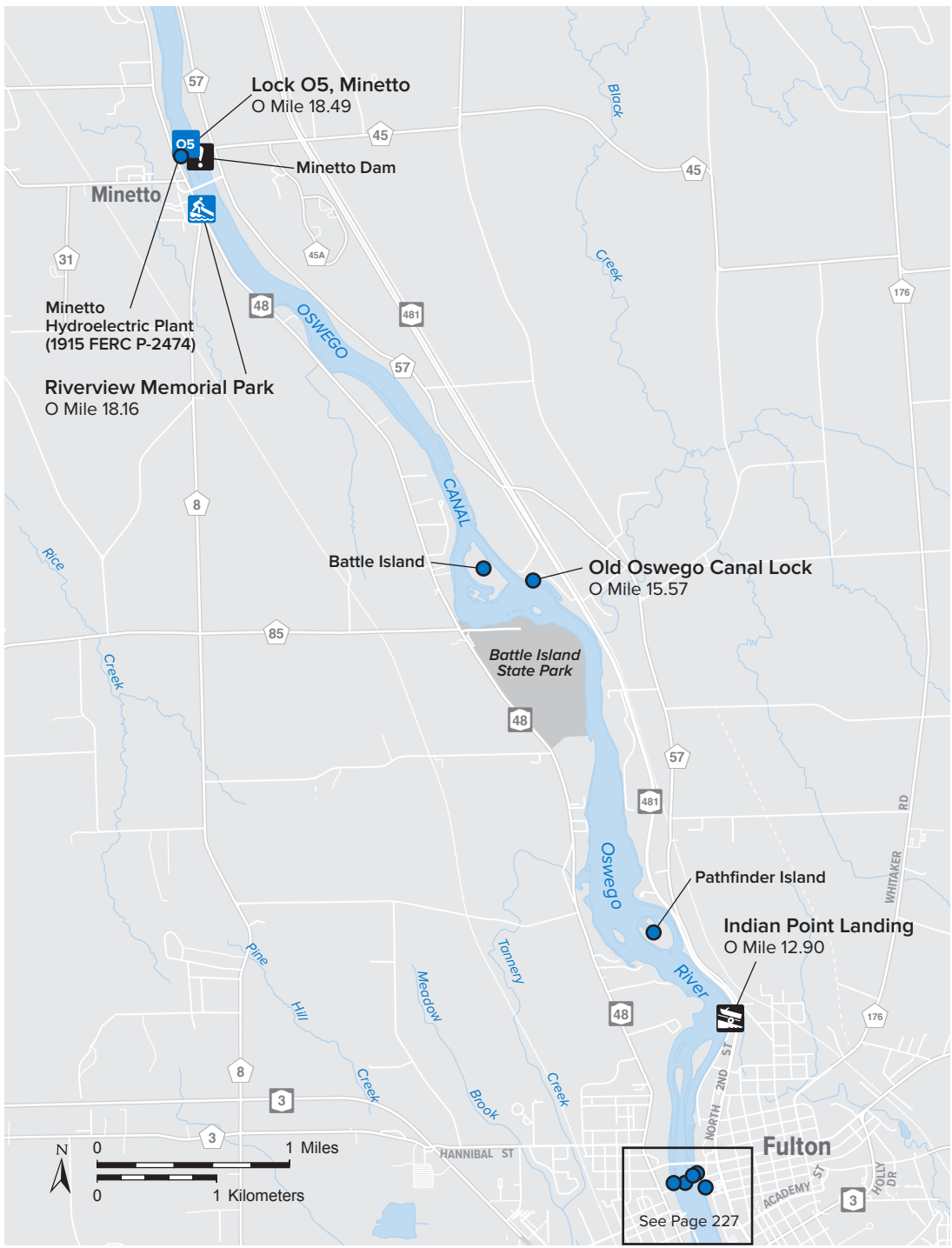
O Mile 18.16, west side 43.396182 -76.471502

 **Riverview Memorial Park**

Community Drive and NY 48
Minetto, NY 13126
(315) 598-4399
townofminetto.net

FACILITIES: Water, restrooms, showers, picnic tables. Floating docks. A concrete ramp for emergency vehicles is about 300 feet downstream. Paddlers may hand-launch only from the ramp. Parking for five cars. Distance from parking about 20 feet. Follow the canalside path north under the Minetto Bridge to reach nearby shops and restaurants.

Oswego Canal–Minetto





Pete Pinkerton

Mile 18.27 43.398002 -76.471274

Bridge O10, Minetto Bridge Road (CR 57)
 The eastern section of this bridge has three open spandrel concrete arches spanning the Oswego River. This bridge and others on the Oswego were originally designed to be operable, but the drawbridge machinery was never installed.

O Mile 18.49 43.400539 -76.473269

Lock O5, Minetto

2790 NY 48
 Oswego, NY 13126
 (315) 343-5232

LIFT: 18.0 feet.

FACILITIES: Use the Riverview Memorial Park dock.

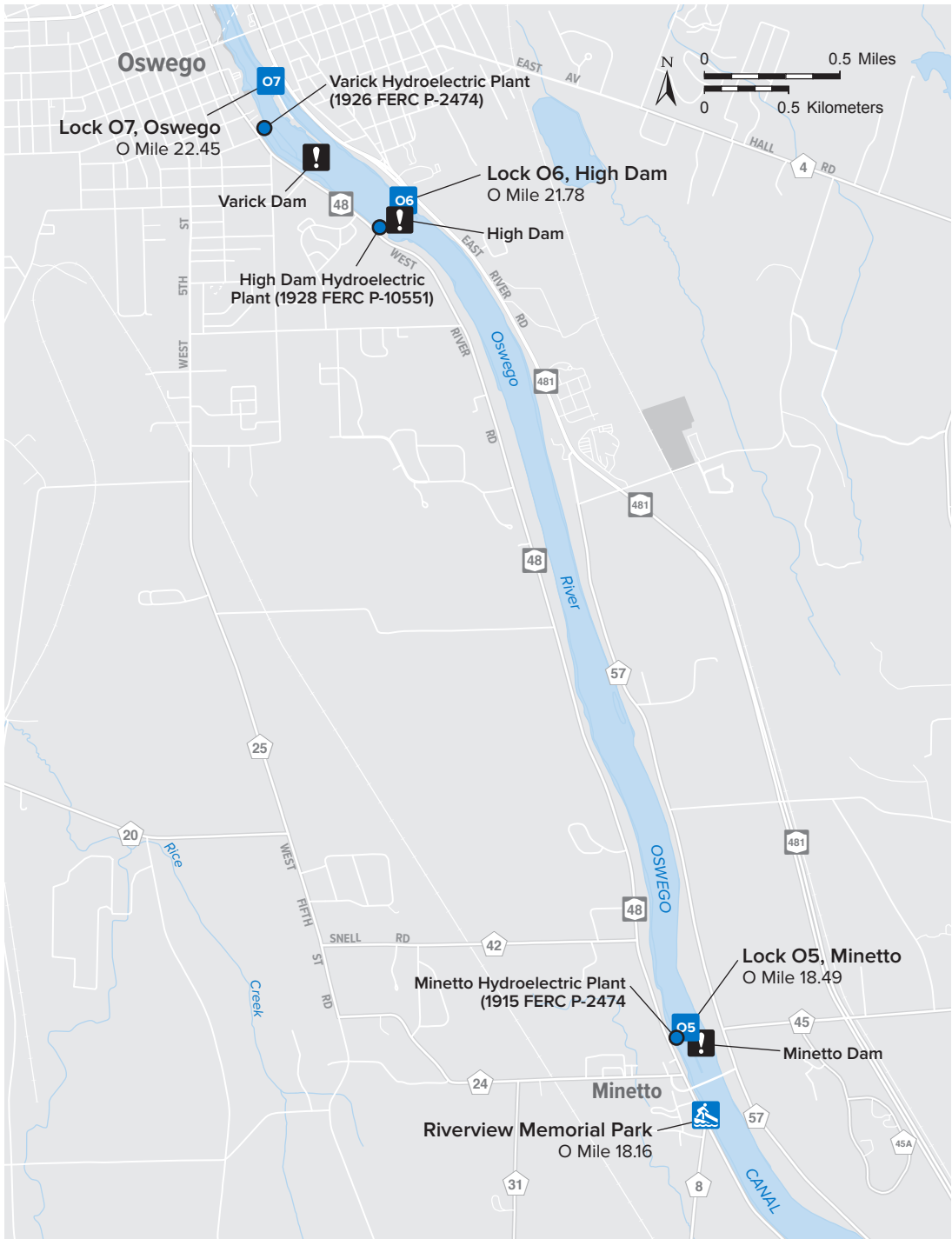
PADDLING NOTE: The lock is on the west side of the river between the hydroelectric plant and the dam. Follow the marked channel to

stay on track for Lock O5 and to avoid the Minetto Dam. Buoys support a safety cable in front of the dam. The approach structures on either side above the lock are piers with timbers in between. Be very careful here—paddlers have found themselves pinned under these structures. Downstream of the lock, be prepared for turbulence from the hydroelectric plant tailrace on the left and the dam spillway on the right.

The Oswego Canal has no Lock 4. The original plans for the Barge Canal expansion called for a lock, but as the work progressed the engineers realized it wasn't needed. Rather than renumber all the plans, they simply left it out.

The Minetto lock, dam, and hydroelectric power plant were constructed in 1915.

Oswego Canal–Minnetto



OSWEGO

The City of Oswego has a long maritime history, from native peoples through some of the earliest European explorers and traders, colonial armies, and canallers to today's international commerce by way of the Saint Lawrence Seaway. In 1828 the Oswego Canal established an all-water link between the Port of Oswego and the Erie Canal, allowing people and goods to travel between Lake Ontario and the Atlantic Ocean without having to carry goods past waterfalls.

The city is home to the State University of New York at Oswego, a campus with some 8,000 students. Oswego has an active arts scene, a wide range of bars, restaurants, and shops, and a long Lake Ontario shoreline ideal for boating and fishing.

In late July, Oswego sponsors the annual Harborfest, a four-day event featuring fireworks, food, rides, living history, and fun.

Paddlers can enjoy the unique beauty of the historic Oswego River as they pass through four canal locks during Oswego County's annual Paddlefest. The recreational event offers three routes ranging from five to 13 miles. Paddlefest is sponsored by the H. Lee White Maritime Museum with support from law enforcement, fire and marine safety units and many volunteers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, go to visitoswegony.com.

LODGING

43.459470 -76.509088

**Best Western Oswego
Hotel and Conference Center**

26 East 1st Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 342-4040
bestwestern.com

43.458268 -76.508599

Quality Inn and Suites Riverfront

70 East 1st Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-1600

PADDLECRAFT RENTALS

43.463399 -76.515309

Oswego Expeditions

11 Lake Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 561-0223
oswegoexpeditions.com

Kayak and bike rentals; guided paddling, biking, and walking tours.

PLACES OF INTEREST OFF THE WATER

43.465882 -76.508142

Fort Ontario State Historic Site

1 East 4th Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-4711
parks.ny.gov

43.455514 -76.503729

Richardson-Bates House Museum/ Oswego County Historical Society

135 East 3rd Street
Oswego, NY, 13126
(315) 343-1342
rbhousemuseum.org

Located in Oswego's Washington Square Historic District, the house is on the National Register of Historic Places.

43.463662 -76.504369

Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum

Fort Ontario State Historic Site
2 East 7th Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 342-3003
safehavenmuseum.com

43.473201 -76.516725

West Pierhead Lighthouse

facebook.com/OswegoLH/

This lighthouse stands at the entrance to Lake Ontario. Do not attempt to traverse the breakwater or access the lighthouse from the water. The best view of the lighthouse is from Lake Street.

43.473201 -76.516725

H. Lee White Maritime Museum

1 West 1st Street (on the pier)
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 342-0480
hlwmm.org

MORE INFORMATION about the area including brochures are available that map out self-guided walking tours of Oswego's Washington Square, downtown area, and Franklin Square Historic District is available from the Heritage Foundation of Oswego. Visit facebook.com/pg/oswegoheritagefoundation.



Pete Pinkerton

O Mile 21.78 43.444679 -76.494939

Lock O6, High Dam

300 East River Road
 Oswego, NY 13126
 (315) 343-9001

LIFT: 20.0 feet.

FACILITIES: Tie up at the north or south lock walls on the east side. Facilities are difficult for paddlers to access at this location due to steep canal walls.

PADDLING NOTE: Buoys support a safety cable in front of the dam. Do not paddle into this area. When leaving the lock, be prepared to encounter cross-currents and turbulence from the dam spillway. From the north end of Lock O6, stay to the east within the channel to avoid the Varick Dam and to stay on track for Lock O7 (0.56 miles north).

The High Dam Hydro Station on the west side was built in 1926 and is owned by the City of Oswego.

O Mile 22.45 43.450989 -76.504710

Lock O7, Oswego

3 Leto Island
 Oswego, NY 13126
 (315) 343-6304

LIFT: 14.5 feet.

FACILITIES: Tie up at the south wall inside the inlet or at the north wall. Facilities are difficult for paddlers to access at this location due to steep canal walls. Lock O8 is 0.38 miles north.

PADDLING NOTE: The canal channel between Locks O7 and O8 runs behind a concrete wall that keeps it at a higher elevation than the river. It makes for an interesting view, but be aware of the open spillway sections about 600 feet below Lock O7 and just above Lock O8. The east bank between the locks is a park with pavilions, grills, and picnic tables.

Leto Island is on the west side of the lock. The Varick hydropower plant is on the far side of the river.



O Mile 22.64 43.453355 -76.506960

Bridge O12, Utica Street

O Mile 22.73 43.454471 -76.507596

Bridge O13, pedestrian

This former railroad bridge is now part of the Harbor Trail Walk. It connects to the Oswego River Walk on the west bank, which begins near the Varick hydropower plant and ends at the Oswego lakefront. The walkways on both sides are heavily used by anglers during salmon and steelhead runs.

O Mile 22.89 43.456589 -76.508780

Lock O8, Oswego

2 Canal View Drive
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-0280

LIFT: 11.1 feet.

FACILITIES: Picnic tables, shelter, grills, dockside exhibit.

O Mile 22.92 43.457189 -76.509060

Bridge O14, Bridge Street (NY 104)

O Mile 22.93, east side 43.457300 -76.508920

 **Lock O8 Boat Ramp**

Oswego, NY 13126

Located at the northern end of the lock under the supports for the Bridge Street bridge. Access by car from Canal View Drive.

FACILITIES: Ramp. Parking for five cars. Distance from parking about 20 feet.

PADDLING NOTE: The shore area around the ramp is rocky. This ramp is heavily used during the salmon run by drift boats fishing the rapids between Varick Dam and the lake. Be aware of traffic and that anglers/guides are often in a rush to get on or off the water.

O Mile 23.19, east side 43.461379 -76.510440

Oswego Marina

3 Basin Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 342-0436
portoswego.com/marina

FACILITIES: Electric, water, restrooms, showers. Ramp, low dock. Ample parking. Large marina operated by the Port of Oswego Authority. The marina is a U.S. Customs entry location.

Lake Ontario, west side 43.464230 -76.518827

Oswego Yacht Club

19 Lake Street (on the pier)
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-9459
oswegoyachtclub.org

FACILITIES: Electric, water, restrooms, showers. Low dock.

Public yacht club.

Lake Ontario, west side 43.462606 -76.521484

 **Wright's Landing/Oswego International Marina**

29 Lake Street
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 342-8186
oswegony.org/government/waterfront

FACILITIES: Electric, water, restrooms, showers, picnic tables, pavilion, grills. Car top launch, ramp, low docks. Ample parking. Distance from parking about 20 feet. Kayak rentals available.