

A scenic view of the Hennepin Canal. In the upper portion, a small boat with two people is passing under a stone archway. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The lower portion shows a paved path along the canal, lined with trees displaying vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow and orange.

Outdoor Beauty ...

Hennepin Canal

BIKING • HIKING

FISHING • BOATING

HORSEBACK RIDING

SNOWMOBILING

www.friends-hennepin-canal.org

MAIN CANAL MILEAGE CHART

East to West beginning with list below

Distance from Illinois River	Reference Point
0.0	Illinois River
1.3	Lock #2 Bureau Junction
1.8	Bridge #1 S, E (Route 29)
3.5	Lock #4 & AQ#1 (inverted siphon)
4.6	Lock #5
6.4	Lock #6
7.2	Lock #7
8.2	Lock #8
9.2	Bridge #5 (Tiskilwa)
1.3	Lock #9
10.2	Lock #10
11	Lock #11D
11.7	Lock #12 & AQ #2 (inverted siphon)
12.4	Lock #13
14.0	Lock #16
15.0	AQ #3
15.3	Lock #18
16.1	Lock #19 (Wyanet)
17.4	Lock #21 and Lift Bridge B,E
17.9	Bridge #11 (Route 6)
21.4	Bridge #14
22.3	Bridge 14A (Route 40)
23.0	Bridge #15 E,B,S
22.5	Visitor Center
25.1	Bridge#16 (Sheffield)
26.0	Bridge #17
27.0	Bridge #18
27.8	Bridge #17A
27.9	Feeder Junction
28.9	Lock #22 & Bridge #19
30.5	AQ #4
30.8	Bridge #20 (Mineral)
34.6	Bridge #23 (Annawan Route 78)B,D
35.2	AQ #5
37.4	Bridge #25
38.0	Lock #23
39.6	Bridge 28 B
40.7	Bridge #29 (Atkinson)
43.5	AQ #6
45.7	Bridge #34
48.1	Lock #24 & Bridge #36 (Geneseo) E, S, B
49.2	Bridge #37 (Route 82) B
50.3	AQ #7
52.6	Bridge #39 B
53.6	Lock #25
54.7	Lock #26 and Lift Bridge #40
56.9	AQ #8 (Inverted Siphon)
57.0	Lock #27
58.1	Bridge #41 (Dayton Corners)
59.5	Lock #28
60.1	Bridge #42 (Colona – Route 84) S
61.8	Lock #29 and Rock River

FEEDER CANAL MILEAGE CHART

North to South

Distance from Rock River	Reference Point
0.1	Guard Lock
0.1	Bridge #43 (Rock River)
0.6	Bridge #44 (Dixon Avenue)
1.0	RR Bridge #7 (C,B & Q)
1.1	Bridge #44B (Eleventh Street)
2.0	Bridge #44A (Route 30)
2.2	Bridge #45 (Route 40)B,S
3.6	Bridge #46
4.9	Bridge #47
5.5	Bridge #48
8.5	Bridge #49
8.9	Bridge #50 (Route 172)
12.0	Bridge #51
13.0	Bridge #52
13.4	RR Bridge #8 (C, B, Q)
14.0	Bridge #53
15.0	Bridge #54
16.1	Bridge #55
17.2	Bridge #56 (Route 92) B,E
18.6	Bridge #57
19.5	Bridge #58
21.2	Bridge #59
22.6	Bridge #60
23.1	AQ #9
23.4	Bridge #61
25.4	Bridge #62
27.0	Bridge #63
27.4	Bridge #64
29.3	Feeder Junction

TRAIL ETIQUETTE AND SAFETY

- Bicyclists should yield to walkers, & all trail users should yield to equestrians.
- Keep right & pass left.
- Announce "on your left" before passing.
- Avoid stopping & blocking the path.
- Leash all pets.
- Dispose of all trash properly to keep your trail clean.
- Be courteous of others regardless of their mode, speed or skill level.
- Respect private property that adjoins trails.
- Contact a trail manager to volunteer, & help the canal be a trail-friendly system.

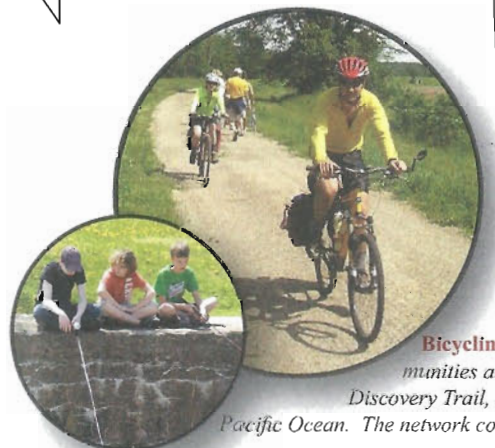
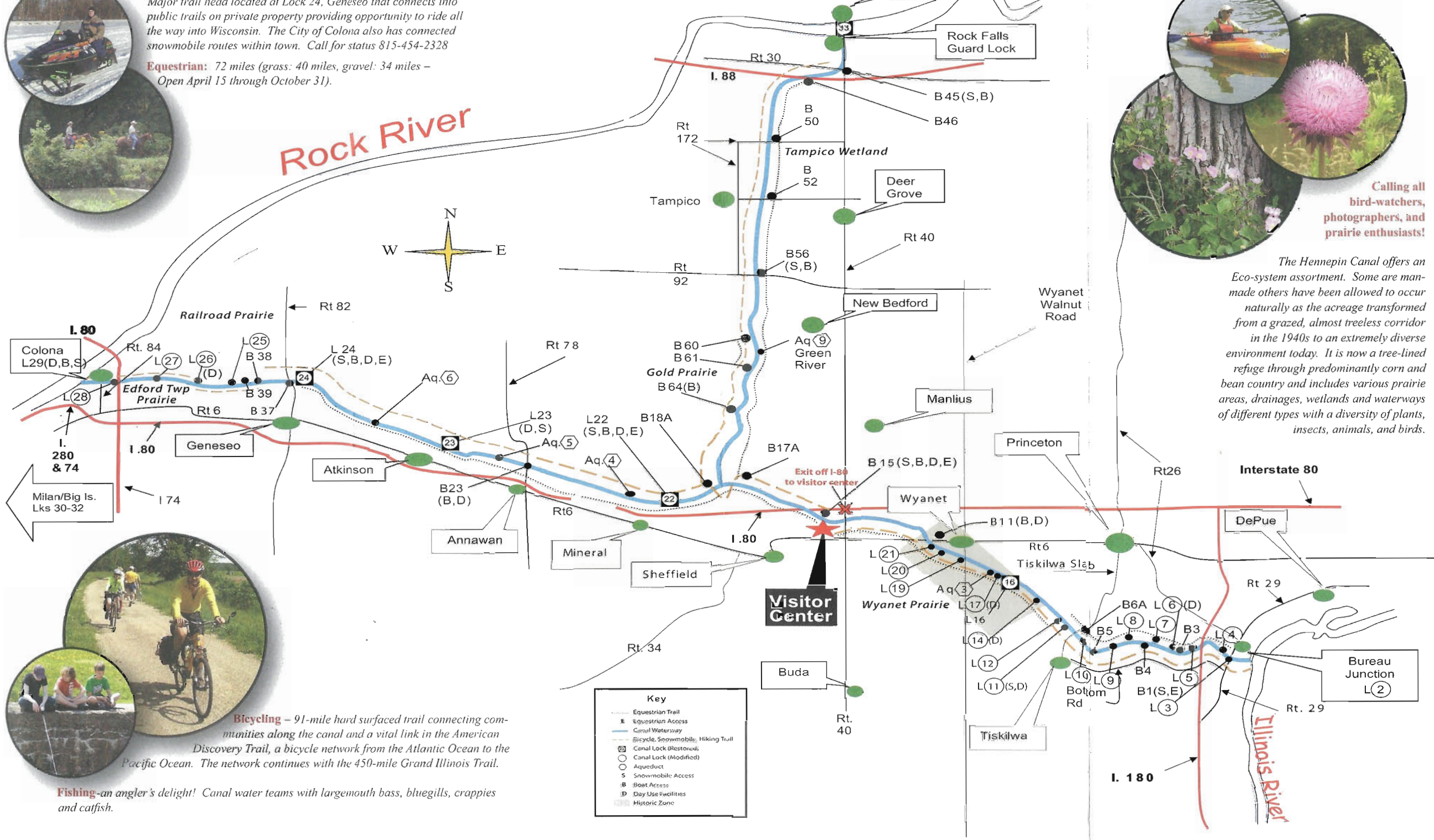
USEFUL INFORMATION

- Restrooms located at Locks 3, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24 & Bridges 14, 15, 23, 50, 56, & 64.
- Drinking water located at Locks 21, 22, 24 & the Visitors Center.
- Primitive camping is allowed at Locks 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 23, & 26 & Bridges 14 & 23.
- Equestrian camping at Lock 21 (south unit only).
- Fires permitted in state-installed grills only.
- Swimming is prohibited.
- Motor vehicles are prohibited.

Major trail head located at Lock 24, Geneseo that connects into public trails on private property providing opportunity to ride all the way into Wisconsin. The City of Colona also has connected snowmobile routes within town. Call for status 815-454-2328

Equestrian: 72 miles (grass: 40 miles, gravel: 34 miles – Open April 15 through October 31).

Rock River



Calling all bird-watchers, photographers, and prairie enthusiasts!

The Hennepin Canal offers an Eco-system assortment. Some are man-made others have been allowed to occur naturally as the acreage transformed from a grazed, almost treeless corridor in the 1940s to an extremely diverse environment today. It is now a tree-lined refuge through predominantly corn and bean country and includes various prairie areas, drainages, wetlands and waterways of different types with a diversity of plants, insects, animals, and birds.

Bicycling – 91-mile hard surfaced trail connecting communities along the canal and a vital link in the American Discovery Trail, a bicycle network from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. The network continues with the 450-mile Grand Illinois Trail.

Fishing—an angler's delight! Canal water teams with largemouth bass, bluegills, crappies and catfish.

Key

- Equestrian Trail
- Equestrian Access
- Canal Watersway
- Bicycle, Snowmobile, Hiking Trail
- Ⓜ Canal Lock (Restored)
- Canal Lock (Modified)
- Aqueeduct
- S Snowmobile Access
- B Boat Access
- D Day Use Facilities
- Historic Zone

Hennepin Canal both ahead and behind its time

By Lydia Sage, Dispatch/Argus Staff writer

From its inception in 1834, the Hennepin Canal and its feeder canal have played important roles in local history.

The first boat passes through the Hennepin Canal near Hennepin about 100 years ago. It was about at this same spot that a boy who would grow up to be president, Ronald Reagan, first learned to swim. It's unique construction methods were a proving ground for techniques used to build the Panama Canal, and former President Ronald Reagan learned to swim in the feeder branch near his boyhood home in Tampico.

The canal system was built between 1890 and 1907, but, according to historians, was obsolete almost before it opened as a planned major waterway between the Illinois River in Bureau County and the Mississippi River in Rock Island.

The waterway, originally called the Illinois and Mississippi Canal, was to provide a "shortcut" from Chicago to the Mississippi, via its sister canal, the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

Although those plans didn't pan out, now the 96-mile-long Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park provides a recreational paradise for an estimated 750,000 visitors annually, according to parkway site superintendent Steve Moser.

The parkway's 400-acre visitors' center and recreation area is located near the intersection of Illinois 40 and U.S. 6, just off Interstate 80, which parallels the main east-west canal. The center includes hundreds of pictures and items which tell the story and provide a living history of the Hennepin.

The T-shaped waterway was designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after decades of debate about its value. It meanders through five counties - Whiteside, Lee, Bureau, Henry and Rock Island.

Fed by water from the Rock River in Rock Falls by the 29-mile-long "feeder" canal, the Hennepin was open for free commercial navigation from 1907 until 1951, unless it was frozen during winter months. It never achieved the predicted success, in part, because it was a different size than the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

Although it didn't pan out, it held the shipping prices down, noting at the time, railroads offered the quickest and cheapest methods. By the time the Hennepin was constructed, rail rates had dropped and load capacities had increased.

In the 1830s, it was the local farmers that wanted a way to get their goods to market. The Hennepin would provide a shortcut for the businesses in the Quad-Cities to get their goods to Chicago, noting no one realized technology would change so quickly as the Hennepin was being built.

However, the approximately five-mile stretch of the main canal between Colona and Milan was successful in its early years, because it was finished in the late 1900s.

During the early construction phase, many local residents benefited financially by contracting to work, often using their own teams of horses and mules to pull earth scrapers that carved the waterway.

A handful of small towns struck financial pay dirt during those construction years when the work camps settled near the communities. Tampico, Wyanet, Sheffield and Geneseo were among those where businesses, boarding houses and individual families made extra money from the workers.

In the 1900 census, the towns on the eastern end of the canal had a lot of taverns that disappeared and, by the 1910 census, were gone.

One first-hand accounts tell of the hobo camps that followed the construction. The hobos worked for a few days for some money and then went back to their 'slothful' ways, the story went.

The staff especially would like to hear from descendants of the Hennepin lockmasters and other employees who lived in the 52 houses that lined the canal during the years it was in use. Today, six of the original houses still stand along the parkway.

During its life, the Hennepin always provided recreational uses for people from the surrounding communities. Some people even took their vacations there in the early years.

The Corps also allowed ice businesses along the Hennepin during the era before electricity, when people still used blocks of ice to chill food in "iceboxes". Grain elevators also sprung up along the Hennepin to serve local farmers.

By 1951, the Corps closed it to commercial navigation, but allowed recreational use to continue until the Illinois Department of Natural Resources took over the parkway when the state acquired it from the federal government in 1970.

The 6,000-acre parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its innovative construction methods that have withstood the tests of time.

It was the first federal canal project in which concrete - mixed on site - was used without stone facings to build the 33 locks, nine aqueducts and other critical structures.

As testament to the innovative method, 32 of the locks are still visible and five are in working condition, though not in use. Only six of the aqueducts remain, but one which carries the Hennepin over the Green River south of the visitors' center provides tourists a remarkable view of nearly century-old technology ahead of its time.