

# Stake Your Claim to Outdoor Living



## Camping Along the Seaway Trail

By Suzanne Bixby

Some travelers choose the Seaway Trail because it is more than a route between points A and B, it is also a conduit that takes us back to fond memories and forward to new adventures. Along the way this Scenic Byway winds through amazing wide open spaces, around impressive water bodies, into charming towns and villages, and past an incredible collection of attractions, events and outdoor recreational opportunities. And when some travelers bed down for the evening, rather than enclose themselves within

the walls of the fine hotels, motels and bed & breakfasts on the Trail, they keep their connection to their surroundings by staking their tents or parking their RV's in one of a variety of campgrounds along the Seaway Trail.

A study by the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) finds that nearly 8 million U.S. households own at least one RV (recreation vehicle), and it is probably not a stretch to say that a lot of those RV owners may have had their first camping experience in childhood, either with their family or

with a social group like Scouts or 4-H. And now, those grown-up RV'ers are sharing the camping lifestyle with their own children, alongside other couples and families reliving the adventure of "roughing it" in a tent, enjoying modern creature comforts in a fully-loaded RV, or experiencing a mode of camping somewhere in-between with a travel trailer or pop-up, or even a cabin in the woods.

The campgrounds along Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway, are easy to find via roadside signage and by using the listings in the Seaway Trail's Journey Magazine or at [www.seaway-trail.com](http://www.seaway-trail.com). In fact, along the trail or nearby there are over 30 New York and Pennsylvania state parks in addition to several municipally-run parks and privately-operated campgrounds. These campgrounds range in amenities and activities, and can be enjoyed by both novice and experienced campers alike.

In the Northeast United States, most camping is done between April/May and October/November, when weather conditions are most permissible and the majority of campgrounds are open to the public. Some people camp by the day or week, while others set up for the entire season in one location. Along the Seaway Trail, the price range for camping can typically start at around \$10-15 per night for a simple tenting site with no additional amenities, to \$20-30 for a basic site with water and electric hookups, to \$50-60 per night for a pull-through RV site with "full" hookups for water, electric and sewer, and hookups for cable TV and internet. Like other lodging businesses, each campground has its own variable rules or restrictions regard-



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ing pets. Many are now also ensuring that they have web access available for campers who just can't totally navigate away from the information highway.

In some cases, especially at state-operated campgrounds, it is recommended that you book early, to ensure you have a site available when you arrive, and some campgrounds may have a minimum stay requirement of more than one night, depending on the time or season. Most campgrounds have websites these days, describing their campsites, amenities, activities and rates. Some also have online reservation services or toll-free numbers for ease in calling and reserving. And in some instances, you may have to e-mail your request or call their local telephone number to find out available days and rates, but those methods shouldn't necessarily reflect on the quality or enjoyment factor of the campground.

What, exactly, is camping? In simple terms, camping usually takes place away from urban areas, and involves erecting tents or simple buildings for shelter or temporary residence. Camping, as a recreation lifestyle however, can be pretty broad-

based. So, if your kids are having a slumber party in the tent behind your house, they are essentially camping, much like hikers setting up a tent at a primitive site along their route. But, campers may also be the retired couple who pull their air-conditioned 37-foot motor home (with vehicle or boat in tow) into a 2500 square foot manicured lakeside campsite with water, sewer and electric hookups, and settle in to watch satellite TV and surf the internet while waiting for their dinner to finish cooking in their oven. The camping lifestyle, taking off from its rudimentary definition, is pretty much what you make it these days.

Camping is a natural fit for travelers on the Seaway Trail. Couples and families don't have to look far beyond their door (or tent flap, as the case may be) to find memorable moments and engaging activities or just plain relaxation in the sun. Those memorable moments could range from watching your child catch his first fish, to sipping a glass of wine with your loved one as the sun sets over the water. It might also include roasting marshmallows and telling stories around the campfire, or joining the park parade

for "Christmas in July." Maybe you'll wake up and find a deer close by, or see a shooting star before you turn in at night. Most campgrounds have planned activities and onsite recreation to entertain both youth and adults, such as arts and crafts, talent shows, potluck dinners, volleyball, playgrounds, swimming pools or beaches. Even if you never left your campground, you would have something to do, perhaps play miniature golf or simply lounge at your campsite and catch up on your summer reading.

And what do campers do along the Seaway Trail during time spent away from the campground? Why, most anything they want to! There are so many opportunities for fun along the Seaway Trail, it would be impossible to name them all, but you can find many ideas and themed travel tours listed on the Seaway Trail's website. And campers are not unlike any other travelers in what they enjoy doing, from boating, kayaking, fishing and scuba diving in the freshwaters of the great lakes and rivers, to hiking, biking and golfing the rural landscape, to wine tasting, shopping and dining in the

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roadside villages. And, of course, the young and old alike will enjoy attractions such as historical sites, amusement parks, water parks, a museum devoted to play, river boat tours, huge castles on islands, and the Seaway Trail's own Discovery Center in Sackets Harbor, NY.

If you don't own camping equipment or an RV, it is easy to try out the camping lifestyle. Stay at a campground by renting a cabin, cottage or an onsite RV. Borrow some tenting equipment from a friend, or purchase tenting equipment at your local sporting goods store – Coleman provides a tent camping checklist on their website at [www.coleman.com](http://www.coleman.com), just click on "Coleman Services." Thinking of jumping into the RV lifestyle? Your local RV dealer may have rentals available, or find more "how to" information and rental resources at [www.gorving.com](http://www.gorving.com) or [www.cruiseamerica.com](http://www.cruiseamerica.com).

Over 30 campgrounds operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation are situated along the Seaway Trail corridor. For more information and booking, go to [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) (Pennsylvania) or [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com) (New York).

Many privately-operated campgrounds can be found listed in membership association websites, including the Pennsylvania Campground Owners Association ([www.pacamping.com](http://www.pacamping.com)) and Campground Owners of New York ([www.nycampgrounds.com](http://www.nycampgrounds.com)). Those campgrounds that are members of the Seaway Trail are in the following list.

### **Erie County, PA**

**Lampe Marina and Campground:** Owned and operated by the Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority, and opened in May 2006. Manager Doug Miley says the best part of camping here are the views of Lake Erie, and the amazing sunrises and sunsets. Enjoy fishing at the public access dock, and free public boat launching. Take off on the bike

path to Bayfront District and Presque Isle State Park. Located on Erie's Waterfront District at the foot of the Port Access Road. Erie, PA. [www.porterie.org](http://www.porterie.org), 814-455-7557 (Nov 1-Apr 30), 814-454-5830 (May 1-Oct 31).

### **Chautauqua County, NY**

**Camp Chautauqua:** Owned and operated by the Anderson family for 40 years. Situated on the shores of Chautauqua Lake, and just down the road from Chautauqua Institution, a renowned cultural and performing arts center. There are campsites available to accommodate everyone's needs whether they want grass, shade or a level cement pad. Stowe, NY. [www.campchautauqua.com](http://www.campchautauqua.com), 800-587-4849.

### **Erie County, NY**

**Point Breeze RV Resort:** This gated RV resort caters to seasonal campers, and features two heated in-ground swimming pools. More water recreation can be found with the resort's 2000 feet of Lake Erie shoreline with two private beaches. Fish from early spring to late fall and compete in the famous Battle of the Points Fishing Tournament. Waterfront campsites and cottages. Angola, NY. [www.pointbreezervresort.com](http://www.pointbreezervresort.com), 716-549-8917.

### **Orleans County, NY**

**Green Harbor Campground & Marina:** Located on the shores of Lake Ontario, within an hours drive of Rochester and Buffalo and many nearby attractions. 95 spacious sites with pull-thrus. Boat docks available. Have fun with the on-site boat launch, lake swimming, fishing (license required), paddle boats, playground, recreation hall, game room, basketball court and volleyball net. Lyndonville, NY. [www.greenharborcamp.com](http://www.greenharborcamp.com), 585-682-9780.

### **Wayne County, NY**

**Holiday Harbor RV Resort & Campground:** Grassy, bayside sites available with over 900 feet of Lake Ontario frontage and 425 feet of Bayside frontage. Boat ramp and boat dockage is available for over 50 boats. The village of Fair Haven is nearby, and a golf course and variety of restaurants are within three miles. Weekends in July and August brings the Sterling Renaissance Festival, just a short drive away. Red Creek, NY. [www.lakeontario.net/holidayharbor](http://www.lakeontario.net/holidayharbor), 315-947-5244.

**South Shore RV Park:** With spectacular Lake Ontario views, this campground is located in the historic village of Sodus Point, a resort community that offers beautiful scenery, historic and geologic

landmarks, fine dining, and a wide array of outdoor activities. Newly renovated sites comfortably accommodate the biggest rigs, and now also have full hookups. A new handicapped-accessible bathroom has also been added to the campground. Sodus Point, NY. [www.southshorervpark.com](http://www.southshorervpark.com), 315-483-8649.

**Cherry Grove Campground:** Twenty minutes from Lake Ontario, 30 minutes from scenic Sodus Point, and just a quick turn off the Seaway Trail. Heated swimming pool, pull-thru sites, recreation hall, shady trees and open areas for play invite camping groups both small and large. The attractions of the upper Finger Lakes regions are tantalizingly close. Wolcott, NY. [www.cherrygrovecampground.com](http://www.cherrygrovecampground.com), 315-594-8320.

**Lake Bluff Campground:** The closest campground to Chimney Bluff on Lake Ontario. Easy access to lake and bay fishing, and close to the Sterling Renaissance Festival, Hill Cumorah Pageant, Finger Lakes Race Track, wineries and more. A family-oriented campground with the on-site amenities campers are looking for, as well as daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal rates. Wolcott, NY. [www.lakebluffcampground.com](http://www.lakebluffcampground.com), 888-588-4517.

### **Cayuga County, NY**

**Sutter Creek Campground:** Sutter Creek Campground is located on Sterling Creek, and provides opportunities for fishing, nature trails for hiking, spectacular views for watching salmon run upstream in the fall, and a place to relax. Bring your canoe or kayak and enjoy a scenic trip down Sterling Creek; the truly adventurous will paddle 7 1/2 miles down Sterling Creek to the Fair Haven State Park and Lake Ontario. Sterling, NY. [www.suttercreekcampground.com](http://www.suttercreekcampground.com), 315-947-6007.

### **Oswego County, NY**

**Salmon Country Marina & Campground:** This family-owned campground is situated on the banks of the Little Salmon River, a starting point for fishing Brown Trout, King and Coho Salmon, Steelhead, Bass and Pike. The Salmon River Fish Hatchery is a short drive away, and so too are the beaches of several New York State Parks. Large wooded campsites for tenters and RV'ers, all in a relaxed setting. Mexico, NY. [www.salmoncountry.com](http://www.salmoncountry.com), 315-963-8049.

**Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park:** An award-winning park located on the Little Salmon River, a shallow stream that runs through the park providing fun for all ages whether wading, catching crayfish, lounging



ing in the sun, joining in the duck races, or watching the salmon run upstream in the fall. Large, shaded, grassy sites provide a relaxing atmosphere to unwind or join in the planned activities. Mexico, NY. [www.jellystonecnyc.com](http://www.jellystonecnyc.com), 800-248-7096.

**Bear's Sleepy Hollow RV Park:** This family-owned campground's motto? "A bad day of camping beats a good day of working!" Located on Grindstone Creek – enjoy Salmon and Steelhead fishing. 50 spacious sites as well as cabins. Pulaski, NY. [www.bearssleepyhollow.us](http://www.bearssleepyhollow.us), 315-298-5560.

**Brennan Beach RV Park:** Located on the shores of eastern Lake Ontario, combining the benefits of inexpensive RV vacationing with the advantages of an ocean holiday. 1,400 sites - put your RV right on the beach, or enjoy wooded sites closer to the playground and recreation hall. Local charter boats nearby for "deep sea" style freshwater lake fishing. Pulaski, NY. [www.brennanbeachrvresort.com](http://www.brennanbeachrvresort.com), 888-891-6979.

**Rainbow Shores Campsite & Motel:** This campground, celebrating its 40th anniversary, invites you to "register as our guest, depart as our friend." Planned activities, themed weekends, modern facilities, and a sparkling pool are just some of the enjoyable features. New 40' x 80' sites. Pulaski, NY. [www.rainbowshorescampsite.com](http://www.rainbowshorescampsite.com), 315-298-4407.

### Jefferson County, NY

**Adam's Chaumont Bay Marina:** Eight RV hookups by the water in Chaumont Bay, also known as the "Golden Crescent" of Lake Ontario and the largest freshwater bay in the world. Come sail away on the Bay, or take a hike in nearby Chaumont Barrens, featuring unique alvar landscape and geography. Travel the Seaway Trail to Tibbetts Point Lighthouse and watch the sun set over nearby Canada, where Lake Ontario approaches the St. Lawrence River. Chaumont, NY. 315-649-5050.

**Association Island RV Resort & Marina:** Resort Manager Louise Shim says, "Local legend has it that National Geographic once rated our area as one of the top 10 areas in the world for viewing gorgeous sunsets." Sailors may enjoy the waters around Association Island and Henderson Harbor, at one time the training center for the 1976 US Olympic sailing team. 305 RV sites are situated on this actual island (accessible via causeway), with full hookups and cable TV. Henderson Harbor, NY. [www.associationislandresort.com](http://www.associationislandresort.com), 800-393-4189.

### Bedford Creek Marina & Campground:

Purchased in 2005 after 37 years operating under another name, the new owners have made improvements to the facility including free WIFI, cabin and RV rentals, refurbished beach front and marina, and a new playground. Located between historic Sackets Harbor and scenic Henderson Harbor on the eastern basin of Lake Ontario, with plenty of full hook-up sites. For fun, try the golf course across the road, or rent kayaks, canoes or boats onsite. Sackets Harbor, NY. [www.bedfordcreek.com](http://www.bedfordcreek.com), 315-646-2486.

### St. Lawrence County, NY

#### McLear's Cottage Colony & Campground:

A vacation spot on Black Lake for the serious angler or the whole family. The McLear family has been in the fishing and recreation business for 75 years, and they pride themselves on establishing personal, first-name relationships with their guests. Here, it is about relaxation and leisure-time, with campsites that are located away from the highway and near the crystal clear water in a natural and picturesque setting. Hammond, NY. [www.mclears.com](http://www.mclears.com), 315-375-6508.

**Boo's 1000 Islands Campground:** Watch the ships go by on the St. Lawrence River from this 100-site campground accommodating both tenters and RVers. Enjoy the river frontage for

boating, fishing, tubing, and water skiing, or utilize the large pool, volleyball area, horse-shoes, and large pavilion. Ogdensburg, NY. [www.boos1000islandscampground.com](http://www.boos1000islandscampground.com), 315-394-0134.

### Loon Landing Camps & Cottages:

The owners invite you to come for the peaceful, relaxing and shaded setting, great fishing, beautiful sunsets, stargazing evenings, and stories told 'round the campfire. Located directly on the St. Lawrence River, and close to the Seaway Locks and Power Project, with fully-furnished housekeeping cottages. Ogdensburg, NY. [www.loonlandingscamps.com](http://www.loonlandingscamps.com), 315-393-0804.

Descriptions and other information derived in part directly from campground operators and from their published promotional materials. ♦

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