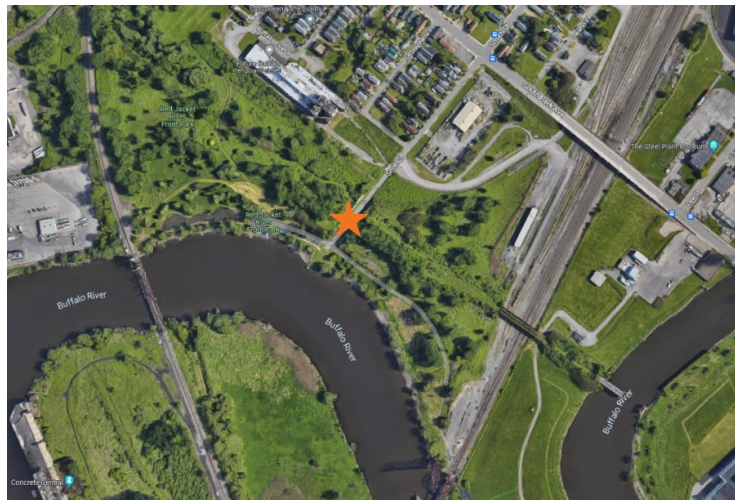


# Red Jacket Riverfront Park- Smith Street Mural Project

Call for Artists 2023

## Project Background

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (BNW) is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that leads regional efforts to safeguard water resources for present and future generations and connects people to water through education, recreation, and community engagement. BNW received funding for a community mural (the Mural) at Smith Street, near the entrance to Red Jacket Riverfront Natural Habitat Park (the Park) in the City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York. The Mural will be painted on one of the abutments of a deconstructed bridge owned by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). This project is made possible with funds from the Expanding Access to Arts Funding in WNY, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Cullen Foundation.



**Figure1:** Future Mural Location at the foot of Smith Street (42.86371, -78.85018)

BNW is seeking an artist or team of artists (the Artist) to design and implement the Mural. The scope of work will include designing a Mural based on community input collected by BNW, preparing the surface of the abutment, creating, and installing the Mural, and using the proper sealing techniques to ensure Mural longevity. More details, including existing conditions, budget, and application requirements, are described in this document.

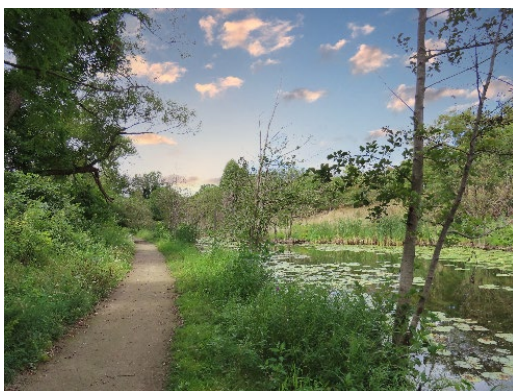
In the late 1960s, the Buffalo River was officially declared dead. In 1989, the Friends of the Buffalo River, the origin of our organization, was formed to restore the river. As the group forged many strong partnerships and evolved into the organization it is today, we continue to work tirelessly to bring the Buffalo River back to life. The ongoing success and investment in the restoration of the Buffalo River has played a large part in the city's resurgence and renaissance in recent years.

Through initial conversations with community members, BNW has identified three potential Mural themes that were recommended by those who live and work near the future Mural location. Those themes are Haudenosaunee heritage and history, Industrial heritage and Irish culture of the Valley and First Ward neighborhoods, and the natural history and restoration of the Buffalo River. The Artist should consider incorporating one or more of these themes into their Mural design.

The Park and future Mural are located on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, the People of the Longhouse. BNW acknowledges our sovereign Haudenosaunee neighbors and partners as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land and water. The Park is named after famed Seneca Nation diplomat and orator, Red Jacket. We encourage applicants to learn more about this important historical figure and consider incorporating Red Jacket in their Mural design. We also encourage artists to acknowledge and consult local Haudenosaunee nation leaders while designing.

Evidence of Buffalo’s rich industrial history is visible from the Park entrance, where visitors can see two rail bridges as well as the Concrete Central Grain Elevator. When Buffalo became the terminus for the Erie Canal in 1825, the city and the Buffalo River were quickly transformed. The grain and steel industry boomed along the banks of the river, where the location made it a prime spot for shipping. Many Irish immigrants lived and worked here, and they built strong communities that still exist and thrive today. We encourage applicants to consider incorporating the industrial and cultural heritage of the Valley and First Ward neighborhoods into their Mural design.

The Buffalo River was once a shallow stream brimming with wildlife that meandered through Buffalo on its way to Lake Erie. Industrial pollution and shoreline alterations led to the river being declared “dead” and devoid of life in the 1960s. Today, after decades of work by community organizations like BNW, community leaders, volunteers, and local, state, and federal agencies; life is returning to the river. Birds like the Great Blue Heron can again be seen hunting for fish amongst the vegetation along the banks. Beaver, mink, and white-tailed deer are returning. Even the Eastern Spiny Softshell turtle, a species of special concern in New York State, has been observed! With the wildlife, people are also returning to enjoy and appreciate the river once again. We encourage applicants to consider incorporating the natural history and restoration of the Buffalo River into their Mural design.



**Figure2.** Red Jacket Riverfront Natural Habitat Park trails (left) and kayakers (right)

The Park is a public access point and habitat restoration site owned by Erie County and located adjacent to the Buffalo River. As the river continues to recover, the Park is regularly used by the community and provides visitors with the opportunity to be surrounded by natural beauty in the heart of the city. The Park is also a BNW Buffalo Blueway (Blueway) site. The Blueway program is implementing a series of waterfront public access sites along the Buffalo River and adjacent Lake Erie. As part of the Blueway program, BNW recently oversaw enhancements to upgrade the Park and improve access:

<https://www.buffalorising.com/2022/06/the-newly-renovated-red-jacket-riverfront-natural-habitat-park/>

Over five thousand individuals visit the Park each year and the impact of the Mural will last for many years. The Mural will imply how cared for the Park is and inspire visitors. We hope some visitors will take and share photos of the public art (promoting the Artist and generating more interest in people visiting the Park and, thus, connecting to a local waterway). BNW will promote the finished mural on social media, with a following of close to 10,000 followers, to generate interest in visiting the park and give recognition to the Artist.

The entrance bridge to the Park had previously been disconnected and what remains are the abutments, the canvas for the Mural. Currently, the abutments have existing murals that have been graffitied and faded. We envision that cleaning up the abutments and installing a Mural will beautify the entrance to the Park.

### Community Engagement

BNW is committed to engaging the community in developing the Mural. BNW will leverage its connections to community organizations like the Valley Community Association and the newly formed Friends of Red Jacket Riverfront Park to offer opportunities for those who live near the Park to provide their input.

BNW has developed a Mural Survey that will be available for all interested individuals to complete from **April 1 – 30<sup>th</sup> 2023**. The Mural Survey is available here: <https://forms.gle/9JzrU9GVvWComQKC7>

The Artist will incorporate the results of this survey into their final Mural design. We encourage applicants to demonstrate creative ideas for incorporating community input into the Mural design and implementation process. Please review the survey questions and indicate how you may modify your Mural design to incorporate the results. Applicants may also suggest additional survey questions and include ideas for community involvement in the mural process.

### Project Area Conditions

The Mural will be installed at the foot of Smith Street, near the entrance to Red Jacket Riverfront Natural Habitat Park on one (or more) of the four NFTA abutments. The exact location and extent of the Mural will be determined in coordination with the Artist, NFTA, and BNW. The existing art on the abutments was installed prior to 2008 and has since been damaged through graffiti and faded over time.



**Figure3.** Existing murals at the entrance to the Park

Applicants are encouraged to visit the site and view the existing mural conditions prior to applying. The Park offers parking and is open from dusk to dawn. Please visit the Erie County website for more information: <https://www3.erie.gov/parks/red-jacket-riverfront-natural-habitat-park>

### Project Timeline

The mural should be completed by 8/31/2023.

Project Timeline 2023	Anticipated Tasks
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call for Artist released on April 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Artist applications due on April 30<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Survey Results will be available on May 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Artist receives notice of award / signs contract</li> <li>• Artist meets with BNW and community partners at project location to discuss surface preparation, mural design, and community input</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist, with guidance from BNW and community partners, incorporates survey results into mural design</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist completes surface preparation</li> <li>• Artist finalizes mural design</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist completes mural installation</li> <li>• Mural completion and grand opening celebration</li> </ul>



## Who can Apply?

We encourage all people to apply, particularly those with a strong connection to the Buffalo River and its adjacent communities.

The selected Artist(s) should demonstrate the ability to finish a large-scale mural over the course of one to two months. Multi-person teams will also be accepted. Only one application is required per team. All persons involved must be over the age of 18 and the compensation rate will remain the same, regardless of team size.

## Project Budget and Artist Compensation

The budget for this project is \$5,000. This sum will be directly awarded to the Artist, as compensation and to be used for project supplies. Muralist will be required to sign a contract for work with BNW. BNW will not provide any insurance to Artist.

## Application Details

Please include the following in your application:

- **Artist or artist team biography:** Please describe your background, artistic experience, and your connection to the Buffalo River and surrounding communities.
- **Budget:** Demonstrate how you will complete the project within the \$5,000 budget. Please indicate how you will prepare the abutment surface for the Mural, what extent of the abutment your Mural will cover, and what techniques you will use to ensure Mural longevity. \*
- **Design description:** Describe your Mural design idea and how you will incorporate community input into the final design. Can include a draft design if desired. \*
- **Three art examples from your portfolio:** If possible, please include at least one example of a mural project.

*\*The Artist can refine and finalize both the budget and the design after awarded. We look forward to working collaboratively with the artist to ensure a cohesive and long-lasting design that fits within the budget of this project.*

Materials should be submitted by email to Claudia Rosen at [crosen@bnwaterkeeper.org](mailto:crosen@bnwaterkeeper.org) with *Red Jacket Riverfront Park - Smith Street Mural Project* in the subject line. Please combine all files into one PDF document. Applications must be submitted by 5pm on **April 30<sup>th</sup> 2023**.

## Application Scoring

The Artist will be selected based on the following criteria: personal connection to the Buffalo River and surrounding communities, strength of previous work experience, budget, and creative commitment to incorporating community survey results into the Mural design.

## Resources

### Haudenosaunee Resources

<https://indigenousvalues.org/exploring-haudenosaunee-and-scientific-perspectives/>

<https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf>

<http://www.hetf.org/resources>

### First Ward and Valley Neighborhood Resources

<https://www.pbs.org/video/wned-tv-documentaries-buffalos-first-ward/>

<https://thevalleycenter.com/parks/museum/>

<https://www.steelplantmuseumwny.org/>

### Buffalo River Restoration Resources

<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/buffalo-river/>

<https://videos.fisheries.noaa.gov/detail/video/6077322626001/buffalo-river-restoration-project>

## Questions?

Questions should be submitted to Claudia Rosen at [crosen@bnwaterkeeper.org](mailto:crosen@bnwaterkeeper.org) by April 15<sup>th</sup> 2023. Those questions and answers will be posted on BNW's website at [www.bnwaterkeeper.org/mural](http://www.bnwaterkeeper.org/mural) by April 20<sup>th</sup> 2023.

### Not an artist but have Mural ideas?

We'd love your input! Please complete the Mural Survey: <https://forms.gle/9JzrU9GVvWComQKC7>

*\*The first question asks for your email. By filling it out, you'll be added to our list and receive updates about the mural project.*