



The Paddle Nation Project

A funding initiative provided by [Outdoor Nation](#) of the [Outdoor Foundation](#).

Created by The Outdoor Foundation and supported by a diverse coalition of public, private and not-for-profit partners, Outdoor Nation and its community of Outsiders are committed to increasing and expanding youth participation in outdoor activities through entertainment, education, engagement and action.

Contact Information

*Salutation	Mr.
*First Name	Mike
*Last Name	Sullivan
*Address	3369 Guyanoga Rd
*City	Branchport
*State	New York
*Zip	14418
*E-mail Address	msullivan@fingerlakesmuseum.org
*Telephone	315-694-6922

Organization Information

*Applicant Type	501c3 Organization
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Please enter your organization's legal name.

*	The Finger Lakes Cultural and Natural History Museum
Tax ID	27-0385022
*Address	3369 Guyanoga Rd
*City	Branchport
*State	New York
*Zip	14418
*E-mail Address	msullivan@fingerlakesmuseum.org
*Telephone	315-694-6922

Project Information

***Project Title** Carriages and Canoes

***Requested Amount** \$2,500.00

***Project Abstract** The Finger Lakes Museum's (FLM) pilot paddling program, "Carriages and Canoes," facilitates first-time canoe and kayak excursions for youth and their families from local Mennonite and Amish communities. Most Mennonite and Amish community members live on farms located far from navigable waterways and most frequently travel the region by horse-drawn carriage and bicycle. Even the few families with boats have difficulty transporting vessels to a put-in location, let alone ferrying large groups, but many youth visit creeks, rivers, and lakes all year round to go fishing and swimming. Those that are able to locate a canoe will hide it in the woods near the waterway for later use, which is resourceful and clever but not an ideal situation. This program partners with a local outfitter to provide canoes, kayaks, life jackets, paddles and transportation to self-selected youth and families who wish to explore the Sugar Creek and Keuka Lake area in Guyanoga Valley at the edge of the Finger Lakes Museum property in Branchport, NY. These excursions will take place on 10 weekend dates this spring and summer as part of FLM's new 2013 Outreach Plan.

***Paddle Nation Project Description** "Carriages and Canoes" brings together two communities which rarely interact recreationally: a new natural history museum in an area populated by Old Order cultures. The FLM is a start-up institution committed to celebrating the cultural history and natural science of the Finger Lakes region of New York State. This region is known for being geographically remote and economically depressed, but it is also characterized by rich agricultural lands, unique cultural histories, and world-class natural beauty. Yates County sits at the top of Keuka Lake and contains several small-town communities, but in all the arable land around and between each hamlet, village, and town lie over 500 farms mostly belonging to the Groffdale Conference of "Horse 'n Buggy" Mennonites. There exists a very benevolent history of living and working together but rarely do members of the "mainstream" society and the Mennonite society share educational or even recreational experiences. The cultures respect and depend on each other greatly but exist mostly in parallel with one another, rarely crossing more intimate paths. But how does the new Museum connect, celebrate, and stimulate the entire Finger Lakes region, which comprises 9,000 not-so-square miles of twisting and dipping topography, without extending a welcoming hand to a large and rather dominant population in the area? As the new Education Director of the FLM, Mike Sullivan seeks to start strong but small by reaching out to various community groups in simple but meaningful ways. "Carriages and Canoes" is exactly in line with this strategy: it's a program that provides self-selecting Mennonite and Amish families from Yates County and the surrounding area with the opportunity to paddle canoes and kayaks in an incredible waterway located in their own collective backyard and on their own terms, which means with their families and out of public view. Judson Reid, a Groffdale Conference leader, sits on the FLM board and assists Sullivan with this program.

***Number of Participants** 400 (estimate)

***Number of Youth Participants** 300 (estimate)

***Hours Spent Outside**

2400 (6-8 hour estimate per participant)

Project Details

- *Increasing Recreational Paddling** This project provides first-time paddling experiences to many young Americans of Mennonite and Amish communities who have little opportunity to play, explore, learn, and grow together on the water. The main feature of "Carriages and Canoes" is providing equipment and transportation, enabling the self-selecting participants to engage in their own experiences and build their own connections with the water, with the boats, with each other, and with the Museum.
- *Innovation and Sustainability** "Carriages and Canoes" will have an immense impact in the local community because no other program has ever been organized to deliver this experience to Amish and Mennonite communities. It is sustainable on its own merit because of the warm relationships that already exist between a few key Groffdale families, as well as with Reagan's Canoe and Kayak Livery. The program's biggest strength is in its simplicity: sustaining interest and support by validating and legitimizing the rights of local Mennonite and Amish kids to explore paddling in their own way.
- *Paddle Nation Project Partners** Doug Reagan of Reagan's Canoe and Kayak Livery in Himrod, NY approached the FLM for partnership opportunities in January of 2013. Progress is already being made! He is extremely supportive of the FLM and eager to assist program efforts by providing access to his 100 boats at half-cost (\$10/day)
- *Paddle Nation Social Media and Other Online Platforms** The target community rarely uses social media but the FLM employs it regularly and, upon receiving appropriate media release forms, will be exhibiting images and stories and testimonials from "Carriages and Canoes" to encourage wider perspectives among the "mainstream" community and to ensure continue support for its funds.
- *Project Timeline** 10 Saturday dates for program delivery:
- April 20
 - April 27
 - May 4
 - May 11
 - May 18
 - May 25
 - June 1
 - June 8
 - June 15
 - June 22
- *Project Budget** 10 dates at \$250 each. \$200 for 20 boats at \$10 each. \$50 in gas costs.