

CHAPTER FOUR

RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES:
Managing Recreation Resources
Protecting Cultural Heritage Resources

The history of humans in the Lake Champlain Basin spans more than 10,000 years. It includes Native American and early Euro-American settlements, French and British explorations and occupations, pivotal military conflicts, and a dynamic period of 19th century commerce. Many archaeological and historic sites provide a context and sense of place to people today. Although strong stewardship exists, public awareness and understanding of cultural heritage resources is often limited. The Basin also provides many recreational and tourism opportunities, such as swimming, boating, skiing, hiking, birding, and fishing. Unfortunately, in some areas recreational activity has created congestion, conflicts between different types of users, and safety concerns.

Les ressources récréatives et culturelles

L'histoire de la présence humaine au lac Champlain remonte à plus de 10 000 ans. Elle s'étend de la venue des Amérindiens puis des Européens, à l'exploration et à l'occupation par les Français et les Britanniques, aux nombreux conflits militaires, au commerce florissant du XIXe siècle. Les nombreux sites archéologiques et historiques donnent à la population actuelle du bassin un contexte stimulant son sentiment d'appartenance. Bien qu'il existe de nombreux organismes s'occupant du patrimoine culturel, il reste encore des efforts à fournir afin d'aviser le public sur l'existence de ces ressources culturelles et de toute la valeur que représente cet héritage.

Le bassin du lac Champlain rend également possible la pratique d'activités récréatives et touristiques comme la baignade, la voile, le ski, la marche, l'ornithologie et la pêche sportive. Malheureusement, les activités récréatives ont entraîné des conflits entre différents usages et, suscité par endroits, des craintes liées à la sécurité des usagers.

MANAGING RECREATION RESOURCES

GOAL

Manage Lake Champlain, its shorelines, and its tributaries for a diversity of recreational uses while protecting its natural and cultural resources.

Lake Champlain is a popular resource for Basin residents and visitors alike. Swimming, fishing, scuba diving, and boating are just a few of the activities enjoyed on the Lake. Popular shoreline activities include bicycling, hiking, sightseeing, and bird watching. Recreation also contributes to the local economy. Total tourism-related expenditures in the Basin were estimated at \$3.8 billion in 1998-99. Lake Champlain recreationists affect, and are affected by, the state of the natural, cultural, and historic resources in the Lake Champlain Basin. Protection and enhancement of the environment and cultural and historic resources is clearly important to recreationists—as these resources are often the main focus of their experience. Fostering more opportunities to access and enjoy the Lake will encourage more people to value it and support water quality protection, ultimately increasing the number of people engaged in Lake stewardship.

ISSUES

Promoting Economically and Ecologically Sustainable Tourism

The overall management issue in addressing tourism in the Lake Champlain Basin is to support initiatives that promote ecologically sustainable economic activity utilizing natural, cultural, and historical resources in the Basin. In 1999, Lake Champlain Byways produced a *Corridor Management Plan* and a *Celebration Champlain!* proposal. *Celebration Champlain!* will celebrate the 400th anniversary of Samuel

de Champlain's arrival and the cultural diversity that characterizes the Basin today. This multi-year event (2003-2009) will focus on regional scenic byways as the means of travel between the various venues and events of the Celebration. The Celebration will help identify the scenic byways as key elements of the regional tourism, and contribute to byway sustainability. Also, in 1999, the National Park Service completed a study of the Champlain Valley that assessed the potential of establishing a national heritage corridor in the region. Currently, the LCBP is

embarking on a follow-up project of this initial study to develop a framework for heritage tourism in the region that is compatible with local interests. Other initiatives—the Lake Champlain Birding Trail, the Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail, Lake Champlain Walkways, the Lake Champlain Underwater Preserve System, and Lake Champlain Bikeways—have also

made notable progress in promoting low-impact tourism in the Basin.

The Waterfront Revitalization Program in New York has focused on enhancing water-related tourism, improving lake access, and strengthening community centers along Lake Champlain and Lake George. Local plans for parks, improvements, preservation, and reuse of historic buildings, public access enhancements, museum development, and community revitalization have been developed as part of this program.

Continuing and expanding these and similar initiatives in a more coordinated manner fosters stewardship for the Lake and its surrounding natural, cultural, recreational, and historic resources within the Basin. It also presents tremendous opportunities to enhance the economic vitality of the region.

Expanding or Enhancing Public Access

“Public access” is defined as those places where the general public may enjoy the Lake. Public access sites accommodate both water and non-water recreational activities and include: boat launch areas, shoreline parks, marinas, beaches, campgrounds, scenic overlooks, fishing piers, and shoreline walking and bicycling trails. The overall management issue concerning public access on Lake Champlain is how to expand and enhance access opportunities in a manner that allows for a variety of recreational activities while minimizing congestion, user conflicts, and impacts to the natural environment. In providing better access, the challenge is to accommodate a diversity of

Courtesy UVM Special Collections



Scene on Lake Champlain with the ruins of Fort Ticonderoga. Engraving by Welstood & Kirk from an original drawing by J.Kirk, published in the Ladies Repository, 1851.

users. Many of the problems associated with public access are caused by conflicts between the various user types. Options for addressing such conflicts include designing and organizing sites to meet a variety of needs, or separating different uses by establishing designated use areas. Another challenge is to provide opportunities for people with low incomes and those with disabilities to take advantage of public access facilities.

Alleviating Congestion and Conflicts of Use

Certain areas of Lake Champlain experience high levels of congestion and conflicts of use. These issues can be addressed through user cooperation, education, or a combined approach on a site-by-site basis, depending on the severity of the problems and the nature of the conflicts. Rather than attempting to establish a carrying capacity for the Lake (which research has shown to be ineffective), communities develop overall management objectives for areas of concern. In 1995, the LCBP funded a demonstration project that identified solutions to the boating congestion and other problems in Malletts Bay. The *Malletts Bay Recreation Resources Management Plan* addresses ways to manage the public waters in Malletts Bay, the density of moorings and marinas, and the allocation of recreational uses to reduce conflicts among the various boaters, swimmers, paddlers, etc., who frequent the bay area. This plan should serve as a model for addressing similar issues in other parts of the Lake.

Improving Safety and Enforcement

Boating safety and related concerns can be addressed by increasing the number of enforcement officers on the Lake. The US and Canadian Coast Guards, and state and provincial enforcement entities, need adequate resources to ensure public safety and law enforcement in view of increased recreational

OBJECTIVES

(not listed in priority order)

- 1) Support initiatives that promote sustainable recreational activity using natural, cultural, and historical resources in the Basin.
- 2) Increase and improve public access opportunities to the Lake for a diversity of water and non-water activities.
- 3) Minimize congestion and conflicts of use in high-use areas by developing management strategies appropriate to the locale.
- 4) Develop a public education and information program that emphasizes recreational user ethics, boating safety, and wise use of resources.
- 5) Increase resources available to enforcement agencies; improve coordination among all enforcement entities.
- 6) Identify appropriate locations for shoreline recreational uses that do not adversely impact shoreline environments.
- 7) Secure funding to achieve recreation management objectives.



Gary Randorf

Sunset on Lake Champlain.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DEVELOPING A BIRDING TRAIL

The Lake Champlain Birding Trail began in 1999 as a project of the George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development Council. In 2001, the Birding Trail published a brochure highlighting 87 bird watching sites in the Basin.

IMPLEMENTING LAKE CHAMPLAIN BIKEWAYS

With LCBP support, Lake Champlain Bikeways (LCB) created the Champlain Bikeway, a 350-mile loop encircling the Lake, and 27 shorter interpretive theme loops, totaling 1,100 miles. LCB also published 8 guidebooks on the network of routes. Through an LCBP grants program, LCB implemented 17 bicycle enhancement projects. In 1999, the Whitehouse Millennium Trails Council designated Lake Champlain Bikeways as Vermont's Millennium Legacy Trail.

IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC ACCESS GRANTS

Since 1997, the LCBP has funded 26 public access projects, totaling \$97,500, to support local communities in improving and enhancing public access on Lake Champlain.

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activity on the Lake. Another need is to increase boating safety education through schools and other means. Finally, improved coordination among various enforcement entities on the Lake is key to addressing safety.

HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

(not listed in priority order)

1) Encourage New Opportunities for Ecologically Sustainable Recreation in the Lake Champlain Basin

Recreational opportunities are essential in the development of tourism in the Lake Champlain Basin. Review regional tourist promotion efforts for consistency with other resource management goals of the Plan. Promote the Basin as a total package, and improve coordination among tourism organizations and initiatives in New York, Vermont, and Québec. Encourage collaboration between various organizations, and avoid duplication of efforts by developing a specific framework from which project work may be accomplished in partnership. Develop and implement a tourism strategy that promotes tourist activities that are sustainable over the long term with minimal impact on natural, cultural, historic, and archeological resources. Tourism activities that are either underway or could be initiated include the following:

a) Develop natural and cultural heritage interpretive trails, such as the existing Lake Champlain Historic Landings Heritage Trail, through wayside exhibits and other informative media.

b) Continue to encourage the Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail, Lake Champlain Birding Trail, Lake Champlain Walkways, Lake Champlain Bikeways, and similar ecotourism around Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River.

c) Seek development of a fishing license agreement between New York and Vermont.

d) Continue to develop the Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve System.

e) Develop a comprehensive guide to all types of public access opportunities on Lake Champlain and its tributaries, including winter access sites.

f) Use existing tourism information centers and marketing organizations to coordinate and disseminate information on opportunities for year-round use of recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Lake Champlain Basin.

g) In coordination with regional planning, development, and marketing organizations consider scenic byway designation for routes possessing significant scenic, recreational, and/or historic resources in the region, subject to local or county government approval, and encourage actions of the Lake Champlain Byways Corridor Management Plan.

h) Use existing tourism information centers and regional planning initiatives to expand and create interpretive and educational programs about natural, cultural, and historic resources in the Basin to inform tourists and local users about wise use of these resources.

i) Expand facilities and services along the Lake, such as restaurants, lodging, and equipment rentals, in a manner that minimizes impacts on recreational, cultural, and historic resources.

Potential key LCBP partners: Tourism and business organizations, regional marketing organizations, chambers of commerce, state and county tourism departments, state agencies, local and regional planners, private businesses, municipalities, Lake Champlain Byways, Adirondack North Country Association

Cost estimate: \$150,000 per year per activity

Potential funding sources: Local, state, and federal appropriations

Time frame: Ongoing

Benchmark: Development of overall strategies to coordinate various tourism promotional activities

2) Determine, Monitor, and Mitigate the Impact of Increased Recreational Use in Ecologically Sensitive Areas

Identify and monitor ecologically sensitive areas potentially impacted by recreational use, and establish a monitoring program and mitigation strategy to help avoid these impacts.

Potential key LCBP partners: LCRC, VTFWD, VTDEC, VTDFPR, NYSDEC, NYSOPRHP, nonprofit organizations, universities

Cost estimate: \$5,000 to \$30,000 per site depending on level of research

Potential funding sources: Local, state, and federal appropriations

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Identification and initial evaluation of 2-4 sites

3) Develop New Public Access Opportunities

At the state level, New York and Vermont will work cooperatively to develop and maintain new public access opportunities along the shores of Lake Champlain, particularly in underserved areas. This will include: locating potential sites (on a willing seller basis) for future access (both boating and non-boating); establishing priority for potential access sites based on results of recreation studies in progress and municipal priorities; exploring options for funding; and considering public-private partnerships to secure new access through cooperative agreements, conservation easements, and land trusts.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, VTDFPR, VTANR Facilities Division, NYSDEC, VTFWD, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, chambers of commerce, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments, businesses

Cost estimate: \$50,000

Potential funding sources: Federal, state, and municipal appropriations

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Development of new access sites as recommended by the states of Vermont and New York

PRIORITY ACTIONS

(not listed in priority order)

4) Pursue Funding Alternatives for Public Access Site Enhancement

Improved public access to Lake Champlain would benefit from a dedicated fund to support new access locations and to enhance existing access sites. This should be a lakewide boat-

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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DEVELOPING LAKE CHAMPLAIN BYWAYS

Through a FHWA Scenic Byway planning grant, New York and Vermont agencies and communities developed a Corridor Management Plan for Lake Champlain. Completed in 2000, the plan focuses on activities to further establish a partnership approach to unify the Lake as a region. A major outcome of the planning project is the proposed *Celebration Champlain!*, a quatracentennial celebration of the arrival of Samuel de Champlain in the basin. Planning for *Celebration Champlain!* will serve as the catalyst in implementing the Corridor Management Plan. A component of the Byways effort is Lake Champlain Walkways, an initiative to establish linked walking paths and trails around the Lake.

PADDLING LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Managed by the nonprofit Lake Champlain Committee, the Paddlers' Trail began in 1993 as a water trail linking camping and access sites for paddlers along the shores of Lake Champlain. To date, the Trail consists of 26 public and private sites ranging from primitive sites to developed campgrounds.

ing facilities program fund to be used exclusively for the enhancement of public access boating sites.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC, VTDFPR, VTFWD, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments
Cost estimate: In-kind participation of agency representatives initially; \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year to administer program

Potential funding source: Dedicated funds to administer program

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: The securement of funding mechanisms to maintain and improve existing public access sites

5) Continue a Grants Program for Local Governments and Nonprofits Organizations to Develop New Public Access Sites

Continue a grants program to provide funds to government entities and nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis for the development of new boating and non-boating access opportunities.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, VTDFPR, NYSDEC, VTFWD, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments, nonprofit organizations, municipalities

Cost estimate: \$5,000 per year to administer program; \$20,000 to \$75,000 per year for grants

Potential funding sources: State appropriations or dedicated funds

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Ongoing annual grants

6) Evaluate the Need for Local Recreation Management Plans in High Use Areas of the Lake

In cooperation with local communities, determine whether the process used as part of the *Malletts Bay Recreation Management Plan* is likely to be an effective process for alleviating congestion and user conflicts occurring in other high use areas of the Lake.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC, VTDFPR, VTFWD, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments, municipalities

Cost estimate: In-kind participation from local and state agency representatives

Potential funding sources: Same as key partners

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Evaluation of the *Malletts Bay Recreation Management Plan* and implementation and identification of high-use areas likely to benefit from similar local plans and appropriate implementation actions

7) Assist Communities That Wish to Develop Local Recreation Management Plans

Provide assistance to communities or groups of communities identified through Action 6, above, that desire to develop management plans similar to that recently developed for Malletts Bay.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC, VTDFPR, VTFWD, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments, municipalities

Cost estimate: \$15,000 to \$50,000 per site, depending on the size of the area and complexity of issues to be resolved

Potential funding sources: NPS, state appropriations

Walt Lender



A dock installation in Ticonderoga was funded by a LCBP Public Access grant.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Development of local recreation management plans for communities needing and desiring assistance

OTHER ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

(not listed in priority order)

8) Use Regional Partnerships to Manage Public Access Improvements

Encourage the establishment of regional partnerships of local, state, and federal governments; nonprofit organizations; and private enterprises to manage boating and non-boating public access improvements. The partnerships will establish priorities for improvements and pursue federal, state, and local funding options to accomplish them. Encourage the development of public-private cooperative agreements that describe the responsibilities of various parties to improve and maintain access opportunities.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, VTDFPR, NYDEC, VTFWD, municipalities, land trusts, APA, USFWS, VTDEC (Public Facilities Division), regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments, sporting groups, businesses

Cost estimate: In-kind participation of key players; additional costs to be determined on a site by site basis

Potential funding sources: NPS, states of NY and VT (e.g., VT Housing and Conservation Board), USFWS, TEA-21 Program

Timeframe: 2002-2003

Benchmark: Management agreements and funds to improve priority sites

9) Encourage Adopt-an-Access Programs

Encourage Adopt-an-Access programs to help local citizens groups become directly involved in the enhancement of public access sites on Lake Champlain. Local groups would be responsible for guiding access improvements for a given section of the Lake, with overall program coordination at the state level.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRHP, VTDFPR, NYSDEC, VTFWD, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, regional marketing organizations, regional planning commissions, county planning departments

Cost estimate: \$20,000 per year (\$10,000 per state) to administer program

Potential funding sources: State appropriations, in-kind contributions from nonprofit organizations and volunteers

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Establishment of Adopt-an-Access program as described

10) Evaluate and Improve Consistency of Regulations and Enforcement

There are many differences in recreation-related regulations of New York, Vermont, and Québec.

Improving consistency does not predetermine that regulations and enforcement will be more or less stringent than they are presently.

a) Evaluate existing boating and non-boating regulations and measures of enforcement. Establish a committee with broad representation (see potential key partners, below) to evaluate existing federal, state, provincial, and munic-



Kelly Dziekan

Marina in Rouses Point, New York.

pal boating and recreational use regulations for their ability to impose and enforce safe boating and recreation on Lake Champlain. Assess the status, limitations, and consistency of federal, state, and provincial boating laws and enforcement, and recommend changes necessary to improve the safety and quality of recreation on Lake Champlain.

LCBP



Sailboat moored off North Beach, Burlington, VT.

b) Implement (a) with an emphasis on devising ways to make regulation and enforcement more consistent across political boundaries by establishing interstate/provincial agreements for recreation management and law enforcement.

Potential key LCBP partners: NYSOPRH, NYSDEC, VTANR, state, provincial, county and local police departments, US and Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian and US Power Squadrons, boating advisory boards, marine trade associations, state legislatures

Cost estimate: In-kind participation of agency partners

Potential funding sources: Same as key players

Timeframe: Ongoing

Benchmark: Improved consistency of boating and non-boating regulations and law enforcement.

11) Continue to Evaluate Navigational Charts

In coordination with the US and Canadian Coast Guard and NOAA, encourage continued evaluation and updating of navigational aids and charts, identifying areas where safety has increasingly become an issue.

Potential key LCBP partners: US and Canadian Coast Guard, NOAA, state police, NYSOPRHP, NYSDEC

Cost estimate: In-kind participation of agency representatives

Potential funding sources: US Coast Guard, NOAA

Timeframe: 2002-onward

Benchmark: The development of updated navigational aids and charts, as necessary