

# PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

## GOAL

To identify, preserve, enhance, and protect the irreplaceable cultural heritage resources of the Lake Champlain Basin for the public benefit, now and for generations to come, and to promote an appreciation of their value as a vital aspect of the economic and community life of the Basin.



In 1998, an anchor was recovered from Lake Champlain that had been shot off the British ship *Confiance* during the Battle of Plattsburgh, in the the War of 1812. Since its restoration, it has been displayed at Plattsburgh City Hall.

The many historic and archeological resources throughout the Lake Champlain Basin tell of a human history spanning more than 10,000 years. These cultural heritage resources link us to our past, and include historic structures and settlements, sites of archeological interest on land and underwater, and traditional cultural properties.

The Basin's cultural heritage resources help us learn about our history and give us a sense of place to pass on to our children and communities. The Abenaki and Iroquois who live here today have long called the Basin home, and many Native American sites are of traditional sacred importance. Some Basin residents can trace their heritage to French and British explorers, or to farmers, industrialists, and merchants who settled here. Many military battles were fought on Lake Champlain, and the submerged historic shipwrecks comprise one of the largest, best-preserved collections in North America. These resources contribute spiritual, recreational, and educational value to our contemporary life. They help make our communities attractive and memorable places in which to live, work, and play, and they also draw thousands of visitors to the region.

## ISSUES

### Public Awareness and Appreciation

Public awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the Basin's cultural heritage is growing. There is, however, incomplete or cursory documentation as a result of partly varying perceptions of what constitutes cultural heritage resources. Lack of recognition and appreciation results in missed opportunities for stewardship, economic development, recreation, and education.

### Protection of Privately Owned Heritage Resources

Private property owners are the primary custodians of the cultural heritage resources in the Basin. There is sometimes a perception by landowners that recognition, including designation of their property as a cultural heritage resource, invariably means restriction on its use. However, most federal and state laws pertaining to heritage resources have little or no impact on private landowners. It is critically

important that the stewardship role and concerns of private landowners be fully acknowledged, and that stewardship programs support the preservation efforts of willing landowners. Programs such as Vermont's Historic Barn Grants, the Federal Investment Tax Credits Program, and the LCBP Cultural Heritage and Recreation Technical Assistance Program should be continued.

### Current Management and Protection: Government Issues

Vermont counties along the Lake. *The Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project Report*, produced by the National Park Service, lists national historic landmarks, buildings, sites, and structures on the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. Provincial and state historic preservation offices, regional marketing organizations, and planning commissions have maintained inventories of resources to differing degrees over the years. Comprehensive and coordinated historic resource inventories need to be developed.

### Improving Cultural Resource Data, Regional Data Management, and Information Access

Many existing cultural heritage resource inventories do not take advantage of current computer technologies, such as geographic information systems (GIS), and consequently are not well integrated into local and regional land use or economic development plans. Because the actions in this Plan rely on sound, current data that can be interpreted across the entire Basin, immediate action is necessary to make cultural heritage resource data comprehensive and accessible to communities throughout the Basin. Websites on the Internet are a good resource for readily available information. State, provincial, and regional data coordination efforts underway also offer an opportunity for disseminating information better.

Courtesy UVM Special Collections



Bird's eye view of the Burlington waterfront in 1877.

Management of cultural heritage resources within states, and also across international, state, and provincial boundaries, lacks coordination. Protection of resources, even on public lands and under public waters, is far from comprehensive. With numerous players throughout the Basin, reaching a consensus on a system of management and protection and coordinating its application across all jurisdictions and all levels of government continues to be a challenge. Cultural heritage initiatives should be developed in a manner that also addresses environmental concerns.

### Coordination of Current Information

Inventories of cultural heritage resources in the Basin have been assembled by numerous organizations, but there is need for further coordination of these inventories. The *Lake Champlain Byways Corridor Management Plan* includes a general inventory of cultural, natural, and recreational resources in New York and

## Expanding Economic Opportunities of Cultural Heritage Resources

In addition to enhancing our quality of life, the cultural heritage resources in and around Lake Champlain are integral, yet often unrealized, components of the regional economic base. Economic opportunities are linked to the continued commercial use of historic buildings, revitalization of historic downtowns and village centers, history-based tourism, and recreation within historic districts, landscapes, historic sites, museums, and the Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve System. Historic resources have contributed greatly to economic development of the Lake Champlain Basin. We should continue supporting local efforts to improve and market these cultural heritage resources without compromising long-term protection.

## HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

*(not listed in priority order)*

### 1) Develop and Promote Networks and Linkages of Heritage Trails and Programs around the Lake

Heritage resources are often best understood by the public when viewed as a network of sites and places that provide direct, unobtrusive, and economical access to historic communities and resources, whether for walkers, cyclists, motorists, or boaters. For example, Heritage Trails can link publicly owned natural, historic, and/or scenic vistas, historic districts, prehistoric and historic sites, museums, recreational areas, campgrounds, tourist attractions and services (shops, restaurants, lodg-

ing), and lake access in self-directed trails through public and private land (with the permission of willing landowners). These networks can have themes, such as the Revolutionary War, the industrial past, or Native American history. Specific components of such networks should be developed through local planning initiatives. The LCBP fact sheets, *Historic Sites on Lake Champlain* and *Boating to Lake Champlain's State Parks and Historic Villages*, describe the links among sites in New York, Vermont, and Québec. Bicycle theme loops in

communities allow riders to enjoy the view while exploring the history of the area. The Walkways Project of the Lake Champlain Byways planning process links hamlets and villages by foot. Heritage tourism and public appreciation of resources are best served by locally organized and managed resource programs. Ties to related efforts in the Richelieu Valley to the north and the Champlain Canal-Hudson River to the south of the Basin should also be developed.

## OBJECTIVES

*(not listed in priority order)*

- 1) Increase recognition and appreciation of the cultural heritage resources in the Basin.
- 2) Support initiatives that promote the sustainable use of cultural heritage resources and develop strong economic support for cultural heritage preservation and associated economic initiatives by expanding awareness of economic opportunities and identifying new financial resources.
- 3) Protect underwater archeological resources in the Basin, most specifically historic shipwrecks, and expand public access through the Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve System by providing reasonable access to appropriate sites.
- 4) Foster stewardship of cultural heritage resources by private landowners and communities and coordinate a more effective mix of protection strategies (public/private; federal/state/local; regulatory/nonregulatory).
- 5) Increase historical and archeological research (where needed) and accelerate the identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural heritage resources, based upon Basin-specific priorities.
- 6) Better integrate cultural heritage programs with ongoing and future environmental and natural resources protection programs being carried out by federal, state, regional, town, and nonprofit efforts.
- 7) Develop coordinated preservation and management plans for cultural heritage resources in cooperation with governments and organizations at all levels in Vermont, New York, and Québec.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### SURVEYING UNDERWATER CULTURAL RESOURCES

Since 1996, the LCBP has provided funding to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM) for the Lake Champlain Underwater Survey, resulting in the survey of more than 240 square miles of lake bottom. In 1997, the LCMM found Benedict Arnold's gunboat near Valcour Island in New York. An anchor shot off the British warship *Confiance* during the Battle of Plattsburgh Bay in 1814 is now on display at City Hall in Plattsburgh. It was recovered from the Lake in 1998.

### INCREASING UNDERWATER HISTORIC PRESERVES

In 1998, the *Champlain II* in New York and the *O. J. Walker* in Vermont were added to the Lake Champlain Bi-State Underwater Historic Preserve System, increasing the system to seven sites.

### INTERPRETING HISTORIC LANDINGS

In 2001, the LCBP opened the Historic Landings Heritage Trail with exhibits installed in Plattsburgh, Whitehall, and Port Kent, New York, and Vergennes, Vermont. The LCBP has identified more than 20 sites to be interpreted with outdoor exhibits. *continued on page 73*

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Landowners, businesses, nonprofits organizations, local and county governments, chambers of commerce, tourism offices, NPS, USEPA, NYS-DEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$250,000 per year

**Potential funding sources:** Federal and state appropriations, NPS, USEPA, NY & VT capital construction budgets, TEA-21, HPF (through states), private sector

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Completion of planning for heritage network and development of related maps and brochures

## 2) Develop and Implement a Management Strategy for Underwater Cultural Heritage Resources in Lake Champlain

Lake Champlain contains one of the best preserved underwater cultural heritage collections in North America. Research and documentation, public interpretation, heritage tourism, and recreation offer unique opportunities to preserve these historic artifacts and their meanings for current and future generations. Advances in marine survey technologies allow many sites not previously located to be found. This has added pressure to develop a management regime around these extraordinary time capsules. One response has been an ambitious Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM) project to survey and inventory the entire Lake (see Figure 10). This project is an eight-year endeavor and is being funded in part by the LCBP. However, there are new threats to the short-and-long-term stability of this collection, including the arrival of zebra mussels in the Lake in 1993. A new study, the *Impacts of Zebra Mussels on Shipwrecks and the Environment*, was initiated in 1999 by the

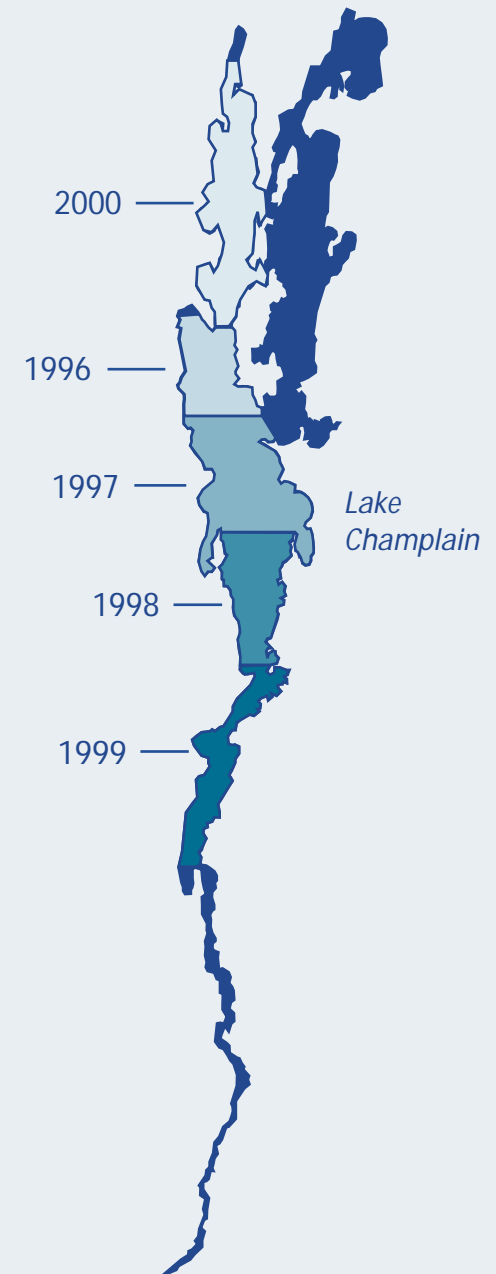


Figure 10. Lake Champlain underwater mapping, 1996-2000. Source: Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

University of Vermont and LCMM. In addition, LCMM has produced management studies for the states of Vermont and New York focused on the Lake Champlain Underwater Preserve System. These studies have looked at expanding reasonable public access to appropriate underwater sites.

This action recognizes the potential of underwater sites to enrich our understanding of the past and provide extraordinary interpretive opportunities to both divers and non-divers. It supports the development of a bistate, lakewide approach to managing underwater cultural heritage of Lake Champlain and Lake George geology. It supports further survey, documentation, and analysis of the impacts of zebra mussels, and ways in which to provide reasonable public access to appropriate sites. Protection of these sites and related law enforcement is an integral component of this approach. This action also strongly recommends enhanced interpretation of underwater cultural heritage resources for the non-diving public at land-based venues. Developing this strategy would include the following activities:

- a) *Continue to survey, document, and evaluate underwater cultural heritage resources.*
- b) *Continue to study of the impacts of zebra mussels on shipwrecks.*
- c) *Integrate the results of shipwreck work with other resource studies, such as collections of bathymetric, hydrodynamic, and environmental data.*
- d) *Make the results of these studies available to the public through a variety of land based exhibits, curriculum, and outdoor signage.*

e) *Develop a bistate management approach to the Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve program that includes reasonable public access to appropriate sites as well as enhanced protection.*

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Diver groups, businesses, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, LCMM, Bateau Below, Lake George Commission, Lake Champlain Byways, NPS, USEPA, NYSDEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, Sea Grant, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** To be determined

**Potential funding sources:** NY and VT state capital construction budgets, NY and VT State Historic Sites budgets, HPF, NPS, USEPA, NOAA, Sea Grant, universities, local governments, user fees, federal and state appropriations

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Completion of management strategy, including above elements

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

*(not listed in priority order)*

### 3) Develop a Stewardship Program to Strengthen Nonregulatory Protection of Heritage Resources

Because the majority of heritage resources in the Basin are privately owned, landowners are their most effective stewards. While regulatory mechanisms protect a small percentage of cultural heritage resources, many organizations, groups, and individuals work to protect heritage resources in informal, voluntary ways. A good example of an effective, nonregulatory stewardship program is the LCBP Archeology on the Farm project, which provides a professional archeologist to assist farmers in planning water quality improvement projects. A stewardship program focusing on significant

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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### DESIGNING WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

In 2001, the LCBP designed a template for a unified system of outdoor wayside exhibits in the region. To date, the LCBP has provided technical and design assistance on 62 exhibits that will be posted around the Basin, some of which are bilingual. The LCBP also published the *Lake Champlain Wayside Exhibit Manual* which provides local communities guidelines for planning, designing, and fabricating wayside exhibits.



### PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Since 1997, the LCBP has provided \$48,000 for more than 70 projects through the Technical Assistance Program. These funds support conditions, archaeological, and engineering assessments; museum mentoring; property interpretation; design; and state and national register nominations.

heritage resources would enhance resource protection through education and technical assistance rather than increased regulation. This program would:

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation



Reenactments at Mount Independence State Historic Site in Orwell, Vermont.

- a) *Explore the creation of tax incentives for cultural heritage resource protection.*
- b) *Increase landowner awareness of nonregulatory protection tools, such as sale of development rights, tax benefits through donating easements, tax credits, barn grants, and other incentive programs.*
- c) *Build the stewardship capabilities of nonprofit groups.*

**Potential key LCBP partners:**

Landowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, regional commissions, chambers of commerce,

housing and conservation boards, NPS, USEPA, NYSDEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$60,000 per year

**Potential funding sources:** NPS, USEPA, VHCB, nonprofit organizations, USDA-NRCS, HPF, HUD, National Trust for Historic Preservation, USDA-FMHA

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Creation of stewardship program

#### 4) Demonstrate the Links between Cultural Heritage Resources and Economic Development

While tourism at historic sites obviously benefits the area economy, hard data about demographics or economic impact (i.e., employment, sales tax income, purchase of supplies and services from the community, derivative

income from tourism) is lacking. This action proposes a study to detail the contribution of heritage resources to the economic vitality of the Basin. Heritage resources include not only historic sites open to the public, but also historic downtowns, villages and landscapes. This information could be used in future regional economic development plans. Baseline data about cultural heritage tourism should be collected, including: visitor demographics, how visitors heard about sites, what sites they are going to, how much they are spending, how long they are staying, what they want out of the experience, what else they are visiting in the area, and what characteristics of the Basin they value. Analysis of this data would result in appropriate marketing and promotion strategies (see Action 8) and provide objective information about the role of heritage tourism in the economy of the Basin. The *Lake Champlain Cultural Heritage Tourism Survey and Marketing Plan*, based on 2,565 completed surveys, was completed in early 1997 and generated important data on the users of historic sites. An economic analysis of potential income generated by heritage tourism conducted by the National Park Service in 2000 indicated that future heritage resource-related tourism development offers tremendous economic potential in the Lake Champlain Basin. Using this study and additional information about local community interests, this action encourages a coordinated strategy to support heritage tourism development.

**Potential key LCBP Partners:** Landowners, businesses, diver groups, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, chambers of commerce, regional commissions, regional marketing organizations, tourism offices, NPS, USEPA, NYSDEC, VTANR, VTACCD, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$60,000 per year

**Potential funding sources:** Federal and state appropriations, NPS, EPA, NY and VT capital construction budgets, TEA-21, HPF (through states), private sector

**Timeframe:** 2001-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Completion of strategy and use in future economic development planning

## 5) Link Cultural Heritage to Existing Recreation/Tourism Marketing Programs

A regional approach to marketing the rich heritage resources in the Basin would promote its attractions to a wider audience more efficiently. This would greatly enhance economic development while giving a measure of control over the amount and type of access a site requires. Following the study proposed in Action 7, this action would: 1) establish goals and targets for marketing cultural heritage resources; and 2) build them into existing tourism and recreation marketing plans.

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Landowners, businesses, diver groups, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, chambers of commerce, regional commissions, regional marketing organizations, tourism offices, NPS, USEPA, NYSDEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** In-kind participation of key partners

**Potential funding sources:** Federal and state appropriations, NPS, USEPA, NY and VT capital construction budgets, TEA-21, HPF (through states), private sector

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Development of regional marketing goals and their integration into recreation/tourism plans

## OTHER ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

*(not listed in priority order)*

### 6) Develop and Implement Cultural Heritage Resource Management Plans

Bistate management plans for each major category of cultural heritage resources on the shores and in the waters of Lake Champlain are needed, and should focus first on those resources that are particularly threatened. These management plans would include:

- a) *Criteria for selecting priority heritage resources.*
- b) *Consistent policies for protecting them.*
- c) *Guidelines for county and town protection efforts.*
- d) *Recommendations for building staff capacity at state, regional, and local levels and within nonprofit organizations devoted to land and resource protection.*
- e) *Mechanisms for providing technical assistance to and building positive relationships with landowners, communities, nonprofit organizations, and other resource protection and economic development agencies.*
- f) *Improved levels of compliance with federal and state historic preservation laws.*



The public enjoys a wayside exhibit along the Burlington Heritage Trail in Burlington, Vermont.

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Landowners, businesses, diver groups, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, regional commissions, chambers of commerce, LCMM, Lake Champlain Byways, NPS, USEPA, NYSDOT, VTrans, NYSDEC, VT ANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$60,000 per year

**Potential funding sources:** NPS, USEPA, TEA-21, HPF, Community Block Grants (HUD), state coastal zone management programs

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Completion of management plans, including above elements

## 7) Review and Revise Protective Legislation for Cultural Heritage Resources

Protection of heritage resources on state-owned land requires governments to be both vigilant and swift in their response to potential impacts within their jurisdiction. As budgetary shortfalls, staff reductions, physical distances, and general lack of capacity have combined to reduce their effectiveness, new procedures and relationships need to be explored to strengthen existing legislation and ensure enforcement. Because underwater heritage resources are all state-owned, laws and regulations that affect these sites should be evaluated and revised first. Such laws should be consistent and enforceable on the entire Lake. Difficulties with the existing regulatory process are compounded by the lack of public awareness of the importance, goals, and procedures of these laws and regulations. This lack of knowledge and outreach about these processes leads to misunderstanding, loss of trust, possible delays, and, in some cases, loss of resources. Building stronger communication and understanding among regulators, landowners,

farmers, developers, and many others is imperative to accomplish resource protection. Also, the improvement of regulatory processes is necessary to make them clearer and more effective.

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Landowners, businesses, diver groups, chambers of commerce, developers, LCMM, NPS, USEPA, NYSDEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, VTACCD, USFS, USDA-NRCS, other agencies, and corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** In-kind participation of key partners

**Potential funding sources:** State and federal agency budgets, NPS, EPA, USFS, NRCS

**Time frame:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Review of state legislation and recommendation of revision, if needed; development of public outreach tools on existing laws and regulations

## 8) Encourage Local Efforts to Coordinate Heritage and Economic Development Projects

While a region-wide plan and promotional strategy would greatly contribute to economic development in the Basin, it is crucial that local communities and organizations maintain autonomy in developing their own plans and initiatives. Communities should be assisted in securing funding for innovative projects that demonstrate economic development through heritage resource protection.

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Businesses, nonprofit organizations, local and county governments, chambers of commerce, regional commissions, regional marketing organizations, NPS, EPA, NYS DEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$120,000 per year

**Potential funding sources:** NPS, USEPA, TEA-21, HPF (through states), HUD, Economic Development Administration

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Technical and financial assistance to communities for projects linking cultural heritage resource protection and economic development

## 9) Create a Basin-wide Cultural Heritage Resource Database

Compile cultural resource survey data from New York, Vermont, and Québec and create a region-wide inventory on a GIS-linked computer database. This database should provide an up-to-date historic record and promote integration in broader planning applications. To achieve this, Vermont, New York, and Québec need to cooperate in developing a uniform cultural resource inventory, evaluation process, and computerized system for all areas of study, analysis, evaluation, designation, protection, interpretation, and promotion. The inventory process should reflect this integration in both its planning and applications. Because the need for a comprehensive inventory is immediate, planning this action within a fixed timetable at the outset of implementing the overall Basin Plan, and listing survey areas according to priority is important.

**Potential key LCBP partners:** Regional planning commissions, VCGI, NPS, NYSDEC, VTANR, NYSOPRHP, VTDHP, corresponding agencies in Québec

**Cost estimate:** \$75,000 initial year; \$20,000 per year maintenance

**Potential funding sources:** NPS, USEPA, state and federal agencies

**Timeframe:** 2002-ongoing

**Benchmark:** Completion of database, including public access plan