

The Planning Process

The planning efforts for the CVNHP are guided by the LCBP Steering Committee, which receives input from several advisory committees on matters of public outreach, education, interpretation and conservation. These include the Cultural Heritage and Recreation Advisory Committee (CHRAC), the Education and Outreach Committee, and the Vermont and New York Citizens' Advisory Committees. The CHRAC will serve as the primary advisor to the Steering Committee during the planning process.

The **National Park Service** has named the **Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park** as its official liaison to the CVNHP. Park staff work closely with the LCBP in negotiating the NHA planning process that requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which includes these steps: 1) public involvement; 2) the evaluation of different alternatives, including a no-action alternative, and their impact upon the environment, and 3) the selection of a preferred alternative.

Planning Task	Date
Public meetings scheduled/ NEPA process begun	May 2008
Initial public meetings	May-June 2008
CVNHP webpage developed	June 2008
Summer public meetings	July-Sept. 2008
Development of mission & vision, interpretive themes refined	Sept. 2008
Goals, objectives and strategies developed	Nov.-Dec. 2008
Alternatives developed	January 2009
Foundation statement drafted	February 2009
Draft plan/NEPA document released	March 2009
Public and NPS review period	April-June 2009
Revisions (if needed)	July-Sept. 2009
Design and publish	TBD

Interpretive Themes

The linked navigable waterways of Lake Champlain served as a strategic "water highway" for armed forces, commerce and communication for centuries. The enabling legislation identifies "**The Making of Nations**" and "**Corridors of Commerce**" the key interpretive themes of the CVNHP. Another theme, "**Living in the Natural World**" that focuses on the relationship between our people and the natural resources of the Valley, has been suggested early in the planning process. The scope of these themes will begin to be defined during the planning process.

The LCBP Planning Team

Bill Howland, Program Manager
Jim Brangan, Cultural Heritage & Recreation Coordinator
Colleen Hickey, Education Coordinator
Laura Hollowell, Resource Room Specialist
Kathy Jarvis, Office Manager

Contact us at:

Lake Champlain Basin Program
 54 West Shore Road
 Grand Isle, VT 05482
Tel: 802-372-3213
Fax: 802-372-3233
E-mail: heritage@lcbp.org

Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership

Planning Bulletin #1 Spring 2008



Dear Friends,

In November 2006, the communities along the interconnected waterways of Lake Champlain, Lake George, the Champlain Canal and the upper reaches of the Hudson River received a special recognition by the United States Congress. The region was designated as a national heritage area (NHA) named the **Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership** (CVNHP). Only 40 places in the country have the distinction of an NHA designation.

National heritage areas must be distinctive landscapes that possess cultural heritage resources that convey an era or movement of national significance. They range in size—Yuma Crossing NHA is only 22-square-miles; the Tennessee Civil War NHA includes the entire state. An NHA's geography, resources, and history determine what it is able offer residents and visitors. Most NHAs offer a range of activities and interests that link historical, cultural and natural resources. All NHAs work to promote an informed appreciation of cultural heritage and to enhance the tourism economy. A management plan guides the actions for each of the areas.

As the "managing entity" of the CVNHP, the **Lake Champlain Basin Program** (LCBP) wants your input on how the new NHA should function. The LCBP has traditionally focused on the watershed that drains into Lake Champlain. We've worked with partners to improve the water quality of Lake Champlain and its tributaries through many initiatives, including reducing phosphorus runoff to the lake, working prevent aquatic nuisance species from entering the watershed, and promoting and interpreting our natural and cultural treasures to build both appreciation and improved stewardship of our natural resources. Most of the new NHA designation area is located within the Basin, but it also includes Bennington and Saratoga counties outside the basin to the south.

Planning for the new CVNHP is an exciting endeavor for the staff at the LCBP; however, we need your help. Please let us know what you think is important as we begin developing a management plan for the new NHA. Comments, questions, and/or concerns can be sent to heritage@lcbp.org, or give us a call at 802-372-3213. Your involvement will make the CVNHP management plan more meaningful and useful, and your thoughts are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bill Howland

Bill Howland, LCBP Manager



Planning and Implementation

Designated by the U.S. Congress in 2006 under **Public Law 109-338**, the CVNHP was established to recognize the importance of the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the Champlain Valley; preserve, protect, and interpret those resources; enhance the tourism economy; and encourage partnerships among state/provincial and local governments; and non-profit organizations in New York, Vermont and Quebec to carry out the purposes of the legislation.

While the LCBP focuses on the planning process for the development of the CVNHP management plan, implementation of several Partnership actions are already underway. The LCBP can implement actions prioritized in the comprehensive management plan *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin (OFA)*, which the enabling legislation approved as an interim management plan for the NHA.

The LCBP has fulfilled the role of the managing entity of the CVNHP for several years prior to the 1999 NPS special resource study, which examined the suitability of the Champlain Valley as an NHA. In 2001, LCBP produced the *Lake Champlain Wayside Exhibit Manual*, a "how-to" guide for parties interested in utilizing a basin-wide signage system design template. To date, the LCBP has provided design services to groups and organizations for more than 150 exhibits, kiosks and site markers using the template. In addition, the LCBP

What is a National Heritage Area?

A "national heritage area" is a place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These areas tell nationally important stories about our nation and are representative of the national experience through both the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved within them. (NPS)

has provided more than \$1 million in funding to communities and organizations to implement the proposed actions listed in the Recreation & Cultural Heritage chapter of OFA.

The enabling legislation of the CVNHP and the goals, objectives and actions of OFA, state that the LCBP encourage partnerships among governments, organizations and individuals in Vermont, New York and Quebec. The LCBP is spearheading planning efforts for the upcoming 400th anniversary of **Samuel de Champlain's** 1609 voyage up the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain. Vermonters and New Yorkers are working with their neighbors to the north to implement the goals of OFA, which specifically identifies the "Quadricentennial" as a tremendous economic and cultural opportunity for the Champlain Valley. Both Quadricentennial Commissions (Vermont and New York) have identified OFA as a guiding document for their planning and implementation efforts.

The LCBP will also work with partners to the south, the **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** and the **Hudson River National Heritage Area**. These NHAs connect and overlap just north of Albany where the Mohawk River flows into the Hudson. This confluence is the hub of three transportation corridors on which extraordinary historical events occurred and social movements began.

Lake Champlain flows northward into the Richelieu River, which joins the St. Lawrence River 75 miles to the north. This waterway was an important international transportation corridor for Native Americans long before European arrival. The subsequent empire-building campaigns of the French and English highlighted the importance of this corridor on a world-wide scale. The Province of Quebec, Vermont and New York are cooperating to interpret and promote the shared heritage of the Champlain and Richelieu River valleys.

The management of the CVNHP will rely heavily on local, regional and international partnerships. The LCBP will reach out to all of its partners—government officials, community leaders, and the general public—to develop an effective management plan for the new NHA.



The Partnership Area

While the LCBP traditionally focuses on the landscape that drains into Lake Champlain, the area of consideration for the CVNHP includes any historic site or community along the "linked navigable waterways" of Lake Champlain, Lake George, the Champlain Canal, and the Upper Hudson River that contains a physical, cultural, or historical resource representing either of the Partnership's themes: "Making of Nations" and "Corridor of Commerce." The Vermont and New York counties within the consideration of the Partnership include Grand Isle, Franklin, Chittenden, Addison, Rutland, Bennington, Clinton, Essex, Warren, Saratoga and Washington.

The CVNHP was established...

1. to recognize the importance of the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the Champlain Valley;
 2. to assist in preserving, protecting, and interpreting those resources;
 3. to use those resources and the themes: "Making of Nations" and "Corridors of Commerce" to revitalize the economy of the Partnership's communities in the Champlain Valley and generate and sustain increased levels of tourism in the Champlain Valley;
 4. to encourage partnerships among State and local governments and nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and Quebec to:
 - a) interpret and promote the history of the region's waterways;
 - b) form stronger bonds between the United States and Canada; and
 - c) promote the international aspects of the Champlain Valley region;
 5. to provide financial and technical assistance for the purposes described above.
- (U.S. Public Law 109-338)

Enabling Legislation Requirements

The CVNHP is the only NHA with "partnership" as a descriptor in its title. The region has many effective local, regional and state groups that work to highlight and conserve our cultural resources and link them regionally. The planning process will strongly consider and evaluate the plans, efforts and products of these partners in developing the management plan that must (according to Public Law 109-338) include:

- I. recommendations for funding, managing, and developing the Heritage Partnership;
- II. a description of activities to be carried out by public and private organizations to protect the resources of the Heritage Partnership;
- III. a list of specific, potential sources of funding for the protection, management, and development of the Heritage Partnership;
- IV. an assessment of the organizational capacity of the management entity to achieve the goals for implementation; and
- V. recommendations of ways in which to encourage collaboration with Canada and the Province of Quebec.

Grants Available Soon!

The Lake Champlain Basin Program will award \$100,000 in CVNHP Implementation Grants (up to \$10,000 each) in 2008. The criteria for these grants will be identified through the intent of the enabling legislation and Opportunities for Action, the interim management plan for the CVNHP. A request for proposals (RFP) announcement is anticipated for late-spring 2008, with grants awarded this summer. Check www.lcbp.org for updates.

National Park Service Requirements

The NPS recommends that the following items should be included in the management plan:

- ◆ Resource inventory
- ◆ Interpretive themes
- ◆ Comprehensive goals, strategies and actions
- ◆ Partner roles and commitments
- ◆ Implementation plan
- ◆ Interpretive plan
- ◆ Business plan
- ◆ Performance goals, benchmarks and evaluation



The replica canal schooner *Lois McClure* will represent the CVNHP as she voyages throughout Quebec this summer.