



Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership



INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT
Fasken Martineau Conference Centre
37th floor
800 Square Victoria
Montreal, QC
May 17, 2010
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

OPENING STATEMENTS

Bill Howland, *Manager*, [Lake Champlain Basin Program](#)

After welcoming the participants to the summit, Mr. Howland stressed the importance of common heritage and culture of New York, Quebec and Vermont. He noted that the role of the Lake Champlain Basin Program is to support efforts by organizations to promote this shared history. The Lake Champlain Basin Program should not be seen as a central authority by any means; it exists as a facilitation and support mechanism for projects within the region.

Raymond Chrétien, *Partner/Strategic Advisor*, [Fasken Martineau](#), *Former Canadian Ambassador to the United States, France, Belgium, Mexico and the Congo*

Mr. Chrétien made note of recent political actions in support of collaborative efforts between Quebec, New York and Vermont. In 2001, the Quebec-New York Trade Corridor was established. He also noted that in 2006, the US Congress recognized the Lake Champlain region as a National Heritage Area, with two interpretive themes: “The Making of Nations” and “Corridors of Commerce.” Furthermore, in March 2010, cultural partnerships were emphasized by an agreement between Vermont, New York and Quebec. This political momentum is promising, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program is in a good position to facilitate these partnerships.

Anne Drost, *Lawyer*, [Fasken Martineau](#) & *Meeting Facilitator*

Ms. Drost outlined the meeting objectives. Broadly, these were to begin to foster partnerships and to facilitate communications between like-minded organizations and individuals in the region. Ms. Drost functioned as the Summit's facilitator.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP

Bill Howland

Mr. Howland noted the 2006 designation of the Lake Champlain region as a National Heritage Area. He presented the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP) Draft Management Plan / Environmental Assessment. The plan is a result of meetings, scoping projects and analysis designed to gauge public interest and values, and to create an inventory of resources in the region. Hundreds of people were consulted in the drafting of this plan. The Environmental Assessment aspect is part of a compliance requirement with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Mr. Howland noted that the Quadricentennial offered a great opportunity to explore partnerships in Quebec. Of particular note were: the travels of the replica canal schooner *Lois McClure* through Quebec, and Quebec's gift of a sculpture representing the joint history of the region. The Summit represents a positive step toward future collaboration among these regions.

Jim Brangan, Assistant Director, [CVNHP](#)

Mr. Brangan reviewed some of the rich history of the region, from a First Nations presence over 12,000 years ago, to Samuel de Champlain and the vibrant fur trade, to battles between English and French, and eventually Americans.

Planning for the Quadricentennial saw a great focus on Franco-American heritage and the history of immigration from Quebec to Vermont & New York. This shared history became a focal point for many events (St. Albans Franco-American Festival, Vergennes' French Heritage Day, Champlain Community College symposium and Champlain College's symposium and report on French heritage).

As mentioned, the Lake Champlain Basin was recently designated a National Heritage Area (one of 49 in the US), with explicit goals to encourage partnerships and collaboration with Canada and Quebec in order to interpret and promote the history of the waterway, encourage stronger bonds between the regions, and promote the international aspects of the area and its history. Language should not be a barrier to collaboration, and we should all strive to provide bilingual services and publications.

Mr. Brangan reviewed the key sections of the Draft Management Plan / Environmental Assessment and invited feedback on the document.

The CVNHP can potentially receive up to \$1M/year in federal funds until 2021. This money will be available for grants, coordination, and technical support.

The CVNHP has proposed a new theme to add to “The Making of Nations” and “Corridors of Commerce,” themes is called “Conservation and Community,” which focuses on the natural heritage of the region.

Mr. Brangan noted that as many as six flights a day come from Paris to Montreal, with passengers intending to travel to New York City. This provides an incentive to capitalize on this movement, to generate tourism in the Lake Champlain region.

The CVNHP is hoping to receive between \$400,000 and \$700,000 in the coming year.

RESPONSES

Claude Bachand, [*Member of Parliament, St-Jean*](#)

M. Bachand noted the importance to act on these proposed partnerships, and noted the example of the “Triangle d’excellence” between Plattsburg, Burlington and St-Jean. He also encouraged the promotion of bilingualism in future activities.

Anne Drost

Ms. Drost pointed out that CVNHP granting funds cannot go to Quebec organizations directly. **Mr. Brangan** noted that they can provide support in other ways, such as technical support and hosting meetings, like the Summit, to facilitate coordination.

CULTURAL HERITAGE EFFORTS UNDERWAY IN QUEBEC

Maël Solen Picard, *Washington D.C. Desk Officer and U.S. National Affairs Advisor, North America Division, Ministère des Relations internationales*

M. Picard distributed a [Summary of the Quebec Government’s U.S. Strategy](#).

M. Picard was stationed in Boston for the past four years, but is now working out of Washington, D.C. M. Picard presented Quebec’s U.S. Strategy, released on January 14th, which heavily involves New England. The past three years have been focused on increasing economic development, and expanding Quebec desks internationally. M. Picard noted that ¾ of Quebec exports go to the U.S., and U.S. industry provides 200,000 jobs provincially. Furthermore, 8 million jobs in the U.S. depend on Quebec industry.

This interdependence has led to the drafting of five key improvement areas, which include: trade facilitation, security, environment, culture and capacity- and skill-building. Quebec hopes to see improvements in these sectors by increasing productivity, capacity and partnerships with U.S. industry. There is also a special provision for watershed management.

Within the cultural sector, Quebec hopes to promote its culture, an industry which provides 175,000 jobs, by increasing its presence, increasing the US visitor base, through education and research, and also by bringing American students to study in Canada.

There are over 20 ministers involved in the implementation of the U.S. Strategy, and many key partners (American Council on Quebec Studies, Association of Canadian Studies). The coordination of resources and the synergy of activities are essential to healthy development and a US-Quebec partnership is a vital to prosperity in both regions.

Judith Bissonnette, *Conseillère*, [Conseil régional des élus \(CRÉ\) de la Montérégie Est](#)

The CRÉ de la Montérégie Est is an organization of elected officials, including 107 municipalities and nine municipalités régionales de comté, covering an area with a population of 600,000 people. The CRÉ de la Montérégie Est is the first CRÉ to subscribe to a sustainable development strategy, which applies to all its activities. The CRÉ is directly linked to many ministries and sectors.

Mme. Bissonnette presented the CRÉ's new initiative, the "Route du Richelieu." The CRÉ will function as coordinator and promoter of this route, in partnership with Tourisme Quebec, Transport Quebec, and Tourisme Montérégie, which will be responsible for marketing the route. The route's U.S. partners include Lakes to Locks, as well as the Lake Champlain Byway. The route will span 265km, across 25 municipalities, and will focus on cultural and historical attractions in the area.

The official inauguration of the route will likely be in June 2010. The route will involve interpretation panels, a website, a map and brochure. All of these documents will be bilingual, and will be available in the U.S.

The route is looking to promote regional activities, and encourage three types of transportation: car, bicycle and boat. While it is in its nascent stages, Mme. Bissonnette noted that the route's scope would likely expand in the coming years and might be a good avenue for partnership.

François Lafrenière, *Comité de concertation et de valorisation du bassin versant de la rivière Richelieu* ([COVABAR](#))

M. Lafrenière represents the watershed organization managing the Richelieu River, a non-profit with the goal of creating awareness and education surrounding the watershed, encouraging sustainable development. The area covers 2 874km² and a population of 700,000 people.

M. Lafrenière reviewed the wealth of heritage and cultural attractions in the region, including Fort Chambly and Fort Lennox and Mont St-Hilaire, among others. COVABAR has been pursuing partnerships with the Lake Champlain Basin Program. M. Lafrenière is a knowledgeable historian whose involvement and association with historical societies in the region will prove beneficial in forging partnerships.

Luc-André Mercier, *Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Western Quebec Field Unit*, [Parks Canada](#)

Parks Canada manages 42 parks, 158 historic sites and several waterways. In the region in question, Parks Canada manages: Fort Chambly, Fort Lennox, the Chambly Canal, and the Canal de Saint-Ours. These attractions bring in thousands of visitors annually, yet some could be generating even more. Through integrated activities, an increase in the tourism base is possible.

M. Mercier then showed a brief movie outlining the Parks Canada sites along the Richelieu Heritage Corridor, called '[In the Heart of the Richelieu Valley](#).' The movie is available online by clicking this [Parks Canada link](#).

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The following themes were to be explored during the breakout sessions:

- **Working Together:** identifying potential projects for future collaboration
- **Building Stronger Relationships:** identifying mechanisms for enhanced communications among stakeholders in New York, Quebec and Vermont
- **Getting the Word Out:** using the CVNHP to jointly market the heritage of the Champlain Valley and Richelieu River

ROOM 16-17

Facilitated by **Anne Drost**

Working together – Identifying projects for future collaboration

- The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 was identified as a focal point on which to consolidate efforts.
- Comments were made to the effect that the War of 1812 is little known outside of the region and should be a focal point to showcase the partnership between Vermont, Pittsburgh and Quebec;
- A representative of CRÉ mentioned that lessons can be learned from the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's arrival to the region, further specifying that they had missed out on opportunities to celebrate the 400th anniversary;

- A representative from Parks Canada also mentioned that there could be opportunities to tie the event with Parks Canada's activities (e.g. Battle of the Châteauguay National Historic Site of Canada);
- The need for better communication from both sides of the border when organizing such events for a better consolidation of efforts from all groups involved was also discussed;
- It was also submitted that, when involving First Nations, it is best to get as many different groups as possible involved to avoid conflict between these groups;
- It was then suggested that the events should focus on traditions rather than on the differences between each group. For instance, participating First Nations organized events and workshops for the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's arrival to the region, during which they invited people to learn about their customs and traditions rather than about the conflicts between the First Nations, French and English;
- The importance of finding a project that includes all stakeholders and organizations concerned, for instance the area of Baie Missisquoi, was also discussed;
- Another project discussed was the wine route, which could potentially create links across the border. Within this project, and following the example of CRÉ's Charter for Sustainable Development, an idea would be to also emphasize local and sustainable food production. This project could also lead to the creation of a toured route, by boat or by bus, to each winery and farm.

Building Stronger Relationships

- A first idea submitted was to meet once a year, at which time organizations would have to hand in and present reports on the steps that have been achieved over the course of the year. Plattsburgh was proposed as the location of the next annual meeting;
- It was further discussed that meetings should not be limited to large summits, as these might not ensure the successful and efficient advancement of projects. It was proposed to establish connections between smaller groups, for instance via video conference;
- It was proposed to include business representatives (e.g. from the tourist industry) to help support and promote the various initiatives;
- Encouraging language programs was another idea proposed, with emphasis on Quebecois French rather than Parisian French;
- It was further proposed to create a more detailed link on the website to every organization involved, with a description of its activities.

ROOM 5

Facilitated by **Adrienne Blattel**, *Associate Director, Northern Gulf and Heritage Program, [Quebec-Labrador Foundation](#)*.

Jane Lendway, *Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee, Lake Champlain Basin Program*

Ms. Lendway suggested organizing a "Fam," or Familiarization, Tour for heritage professionals in the region to visit each other's sites so that everyone can promote each other's sites. She also suggested putting in place visual cues that let people know they are in a unified region.

Ms. Lendway brought up the common suggestion of committing to bilingual communications within the U.S. government and beyond. Finally, Ms. Lendway noted that planning should not only focus on encouraging tourism, but on creating a shared sense of belonging and identity in the region, which will pay off in the long term.

Judith Bissonnette

Mme. Bissonnette suggested building on existing partnerships, including the Route du Richelieu, the Champlain Byway and Lakes to Locks partnership.

Dan Senecal-Albrecht, Senior Planner, [Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission](#)

Mr. Senecal-Albrecht suggested capitalizing on the power of word of mouth to promote museums and sites throughout the region.

He also suggested putting in place focus groups to measure how well one state or province is serving visitors from another.

Furthermore, Vermont needs to improve its signage while protecting the landscape.

Giovanna Peebles, State Historic Preservation Officer, [Vermont Division for Historic Preservation](#)

Ms. Peebles suggested using Facebook to involve youth, transcend political borders, and as a forum to practice each other's language, and a place to promote and share the region. Similarly, it would be useful to create a mechanism such as the Virtual Museum of Canada, to provide funds and a template for small museums/heritage sites within the whole region to have an online presence.

Another strategy should be to raise awareness of sites and significance among government departments and officials.

Daniel Laven, Management Assistant, [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park](#)

Mr. Laven suggested the development of "shared branding" for the region, which would include a shared map for the whole region. The focus should not only be on a "shared past," but also a "shared future." There should be a way to help visitors sort through the excess of data that exists.

Ruth Wallman, Director, [Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce](#)

Ms. Wallman suggested that a model, such as the bicycle map produced by Augerge Harris, could be adapted to integrate more activities. She also suggested encouraging private sector involvement in future activities. The lack of public transportation should also be addressed, and ways to help visitors get to various sites need to be identified.

Cross-promotion could be achieved by displaying brochures at welcome centers via the Chamber of Commerce. This action could be taken on immediately.

Albert Smith, [Quebec Historical Corps](#)

There was much interest in coordinating 1812 commemoration events, and Mr. Smith suggested a map of 1812 sites with links to small museums.

We should also work to find an Quebec equivalent of the US National Heritage Area system. As mentioned by **Adrienne Blattel** and **Janet Kennedy**, the heritage corridor is not an official designation.

Military heritage could function as an organizing framework.

Adrienne Blattel

Ms. Blattel suggested building upon a current online, interactive and participatory map of the arts, culture and heritage of the region, the [Atlas Richelieu Missisquoi](#). The focus is currently on English-speaking and bicultural sites, but this could be expanded.

Jim Brangan

Mr. Brangan noted the importance of ensuring ample public information is available, for instance, encouraging people to have passports or enhanced driver's licenses to cross the border. This should be built into marketing strategies.

Mr. Brangan also brought up the idea of youth cultural exchanges across the border. He suggested encouraging research on our cultural connections through symposia.

He also suggested that the proposed cross-border Heritage Area Partnership Advisory Committee of the Lake Champlain Basin Program could be a great conduit for collaboration of cultural programs and tourism efforts.

Janet Kennedy, Executive Director, [Lakes to Locks Passage](#)

Ms. Kennedy suggested making use of the Lakes to Locks existing base map. She also noted that New York is unlikely to have an 1812 Commission, but there is a committee through the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce that is working on the 1812 commemorations.

ROOM 15

Facilitated by **Brent Mitchell, Vice President, Quebec-Labrador Foundation.**

Don Gibson, National Manager, [Canadian Heritage Rivers System](#), Parks Canada

Mr. Gibson mentioned the War of 1812 would provide another opportunity for collaboration, much like the Quadricentennial did. There should be an 1812 directory set up, to facilitate partnerships.

Jack Jedwab, *Director*, [Association for Canadian Studies](#)

Mr. Jedwab pointed out that some key partners were missing around the table, including representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage (commemorations division), who will be key to partnerships especially given the funding restrictions of the CVNHP outside the US. Also missing were representatives from US Cultural Affairs, and customs officials, who will be good allies to have in this partnership.

Mr. Jedwab noted that he hosts a national biennial history conference that will be taking place this year in November 2010 in Toronto, and also in 2012, most likely in Niagara Falls. It is possible that pre-planning forums be held in the Richelieu region.

He also noted the importance of developing a strategic plan that emphasized multi-sector involvement, including universities and research entities, and that the plan be global in nature.

Mr. Jedwab suggested that a common calendar of events should be publicized, possibly as a supplement in *Le Devoir*, a medium circulation newspaper, in advance of the 1812 commemorations. The 1812 activities should attempt to coincide with existing annual local events, such as the Champlain Valley Fair, which already generates high traffic.

He also suggested a cross-border school essay contest as a means to incorporate the youth.

Lou Bresee, [Lake Champlain Bikeways](#)

Mr. Bresee noted that the Battle of Plattsburg and the Battle at Fort McHenry took place at the same time, and this story should be emphasized.

Mr. Bresee also noted the need to integrate many websites run by small organizations into a single portal. At this point, the information is often available, but accessing it is a challenge.

Mr. Bresee suggested all participants take the time to go through the appendix of contacts in the CVNHP plan, and contact them with organizations or individuals that might have been missed, who should be involved.

Rolf Diamant, *Superintendent*, [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park](#)

Mr. Diamant noted that the “locavore” (local food and agriculture) movement was gaining momentum in the U.S. There might be an opportunity to create a linkage through

this local foods movement. For example, the *Lois McClure* could do a farmers' market tour. Contemporary environmental issues are a potential way to create linkages, as well.

Mr. Diamant echoed **Lou Bresee**'s suggestion of one web-based clearing house. He suggested that a series of different suggested travel itineraries be easily available based on different themes (ie, cycling, local food, etc.). This must be done, since reopening visitor centers is much more challenging and this provides an alternative.

Steve Garceau, *Biologiste, Ministre des ressources naturelles et de la faune*

Another linkage that should be explored is the fishing community.

François Lafrenière

M. Lafrenière mentioned that in previous years, the Richelieu Valley Historical Society had hosted and international heritage forum, which should be reconvened. There could be an opportunity to partner with the Association for Canadian Studies National Biennial History Conference, brought up by Jack Jedwab.

Martin Mimeault, *Direction régionale de l'analyse et de l'expertise de l'Estrie et de la Montérégie, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*

M. Mimeault brought up the issue of accessibility to the waterway as an area that needs improvement.

Musical connections within the region should also be explored.

The agricultural community should also be at the table, given the large part of the land that they occupy.

M. Mimeault commended the Lake Champlain Basin Program website, and suggested it as a good base website, which could accommodate additions, in the effort to integrate online resources.

Jim Connolly, *Director of Planning, [Adirondack Park Agency](#)*

Mr. Connolly cautioned that many park agencies are being forced to close visitor centers, due to financial struggles (New York and Vermont). There is a movement to get the private sector involved in this industry. In this era of financial instability, online resources become crucial. The web-based activities and promotions should be a main focus, as well as GPS system-based tours, which will be a good strategy to explore in the coming years.

Mr. Connolly also proposed the model of "sister communities" to facilitate coordination and collaboration. He also mentioned that reenactment groups on both sides of the

border should connect with each other for the 1812 commemorations. He noted that group bus tours would be an effective means to overcome the language barrier.

Jean Bélisle, [*Department of Art History, Concordia University*](#)

M. Bélisle brought up the importance of “thinking long-term.” He mentioned the Éconature model, which involves buying island and shore properties. This model could potentially be applied to a larger body of water like the Richelieu River and the Lake Champlain region.

Tom Hughes, *Manager*, [*Crown Point State Historic Site*](#)

Mr. Hughes pointed out that the US lags in translation and bilingualism. There is a need to address this, possibly through a subsidized translation service that would increase accessibility in the U.S. This would be available to small organizations working in the region, which need translation services but do not have the resources to pay for these services.

Mr. Hughes also suggested the notion of seeing the region “through Champlain’s eyes” as a means to remove the emphasis on political boundaries, and focus on the shared history and culture.

Tom suggested creating a comprehensive directory of relevant contacts.

Colleen Hickey, *Lake Champlain Basin Program*

Miss Hickey brought up a pilot program offered by the Chamber of Commerce, which offered conversational French classes to local business leaders. This type of program should be replicated to address the language limitations in New York and Vermont

Adam Kane, *Deputy Director*, [*Lake Champlain Maritime Museum – Marine Research Institute*](#)

Mr. Kane echoed the idea that the *Lois McClure* should travel through Quebec in 2012. He also noted that there is a wealth of bicultural underwater archeological sites that should be explored. This was supported by **Jean Bélisle**, who encouraged pushing the marine aspect.

Dr. Mark Richard, *Coordinator*, [*Canadian Studies Program, State University of New York \(Plattsburgh\)*](#)

Dr. Richard mentioned that in November 2010, the American Council on Quebec Studies would meet in Burlington, and this might offer an opportunity to connect with university faculties from both countries.

Luc-André Mercier

Mr. Mercier echoed **Jack Jedwab's** suggestion of a means to exchange program activities, through a common calendar.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ART COHN

Mr. Cohn, of the [Lake Champlain Maritime Museum](#), delivered an inspired talk about the incredible history of the Lake Champlain region and the underwater archeological resources that remain. He touched on the shared heritage of the region, as well as present collaborations in the region through the travels of the *Lois McClure*. The support received in Quebec was crucial to the success of the McClure's trip for the Quadricentennial. Mr. Cohn stressed the importance of the waterway to life in the past, serving as an industrial highway the site of many battles, as well as day-to-day activities.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Giovanna Peebles

Collaboration for 1812 commemorations is a top priority.

Anne Drost

In terms of First Nations involvement, it is important to cast the net wide, and be inclusive in inviting participation, if we are to tell the whole story.

Judith Bissonnette

A smaller committee should meet more often to keep the momentum going. Furthermore, Judith is open to collaborating on the wine tour suggestion.

Dan Senecal-Albrecht

The directory/common portal seems like a quick-win project that would set the wheels in motion for future partnerships.

Bill Howland

Mr. Howland encouraged collaboration on a small-scale and reemphasized the fact that there needn't be a central authority for collaboration.

Jim Brangan

Mr. Brangan echoed the need for a solid communications infrastructure and suggested looking at innovative ways to communicate over long-distances (for instance, video conferencing).

FOLLOW UP

The CVNHP has begun work on several projects discussed at the Summit:

A War of 1812 International Heritage Conference among stakeholders in New York, Quebec and Vermont will be hosted by the CVNHP on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 (with a reserve date of January 13 in case of inclement weather) at Clinton Community College in Plattsburgh, New York. Participants will learn what initiatives are underway and discuss how individual organizations, municipalities and the states/province can collaborate on the bicentennial of the conflict.

The creation of a War of 1812 Interpretive Trail is underway. Working with partners in Vermont and New York, the CVNHP has selected 6 sites for interpretation using wayside exhibits. As part of "phase I" of the project, which could be international in scope, all the text on the interpretive signs will be translated into French.

The CVNHP has begun work on an international wine trail that will link vineyards in New York and Vermont in the CVNHP region with vineyards in the Richelieu River Valley.

The CVNHP Organizational Database is being updated to include contact information for cultural heritage, recreation and tourism staff.

The 2011 Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Summit will be held on **Monday, May 16 in Plattsburgh, New York.**