

# LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM

*Fact Sheet Series*



*Number 6*

## Boating to Lake Champlain's State Parks and Historic Villages

**A**long the shores of Lake Champlain in Vermont, New York, and Québec, boaters in canoes, kayaks, sail, and motor craft have the opportunity to combine recreation on one of North America's largest and most beautiful lakes with exploration of the region's rich history and culture.

Lake Champlain's diverse shoreline includes natural and man-made public access points for boaters at numerous villages. Facilities include

marinas and car-top and ramp boat launching sites, as well as shore and beach access in campgrounds, fishing and wildlife sites, and state and local parks.

Here are just a few of the highlights boaters can enjoy when visiting Lake Champlain's state parks, historic villages, and historic sites. For more information on historic sites mentioned in this publication, refer to Fact Sheet Number 5: *Historic Sites on Lake Champlain*.

Gary Randorf



Lake Champlain – a Sailing Mecca

## City Excursions

In addition to the smaller hamlets and villages along the Lake, there are those that grew over time into cities. These cities have rich histories which can be explored through architecture and museums.

**Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu**, Québec was an important commercial center on the Richelieu River for more than 150 years; its history is evident in the many historic buildings. Features include: a towpath recreation trail and site of Fort Saint-Jean.

**Plattsburgh, New York** is the largest city on Lake Champlain's New York shore and was the scene of the American victory over the British during the pivotal War of 1812 Battle of Plattsburgh. Features include: the Kent-Delord House Museum, Clinton County Historical Association, the Heritage River Walk Trail, the Champlain Monument, the MacDonough Monument, and a ferry to Grand Isle, VT at Cumberland Head.

**Burlington, Vermont** flourished in the early 1800s with the opening of the Champlain and the Chamby Canals. In the 1870s, Burlington was one of the largest lumber ports in the United States; the wealth from the lumber industry produced many of the mansions that line streets overlooking the lake in the Hill Section. Features include: the Ethan Allen Homestead, historic districts, and a ferry to Port Kent, NY.



## Lake Champlain Underwater Historic Preserve System

Lake Champlain's history can be told by the many shipwrecks on the lake bottom. Seven of these shipwrecks are part of an underwater preserve system. Dive sites in the preserve system include the *Champlain II*, a steamboat that went aground near Westport; the Burlington Bay Horse Ferry, the world's only known surviving horse-powered ferry; and five others. For information contact the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, (802) 475-2022, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, (802) 828-3051, or the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, (518) 897-1200.

## Canals

**The Chamby Canal**, running from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu to Chamby, allows boats to bypass the rapids of the Richelieu River. For lock information call (450) 658-0681, or go to [www.parcsCanada.risq.qc.ca/canaux/canal-de-chambly/en/](http://www.parcsCanada.risq.qc.ca/canaux/canal-de-chambly/en/).

**The Champlain Canal** links Lake Champlain at Whitehall with the Hudson River at Waterford. For lock information call (518) 747-4613, [www.canals.state.ny.us/](http://www.canals.state.ny.us/).

## Ferries

### Lake Champlain Transportation Company:

- Grand Isle, Vermont to Plattsburgh, New York  
Crossing time 12 minutes; year-round.
- Burlington, Vermont to Port Kent, New York  
Crossing time one hour; seasonal.
- Charlotte, Vermont to Essex, New York  
Crossing time 20 minutes; seasonal.

For schedules and fees contact the Lake Champlain Transportation Company, (802) 864-9804 or [www.ferries.com](http://www.ferries.com).

### Other Ferries:

Shoreham, Vermont to Ticonderoga, New York  
Continuous six-minute crossings. For information contact Shorewell Ferries, (802) 897-7999.

Kamp Kill Kare to Burton, Woods, and Knight Islands State Parks. Contact Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, (802) 241-3655 or go to [www.vtstateparks.com](http://www.vtstateparks.com).

## Rentals and Excursions

Tour operators offer excursions and special-interest cruises; a variety of crafts are available for rental or charter from outfitters and marinas. See the Burlington and Plattsburgh Area Yellow Pages or the Basin Book.

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum has a small boat livery where traditional regional wooden sailboats, rowboats, kayaks, and canoes can be rented. (802) 475-2022 or go to [www.lcmm.org](http://www.lcmm.org).

Some of Vermont's state parks have boats available for rental. Consult *Vermont State Parks*, available through the *Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation*, (802) 241-3655, (800) VERMONT, or [www.vtstateparks.com](http://www.vtstateparks.com).



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Mark Kurtz

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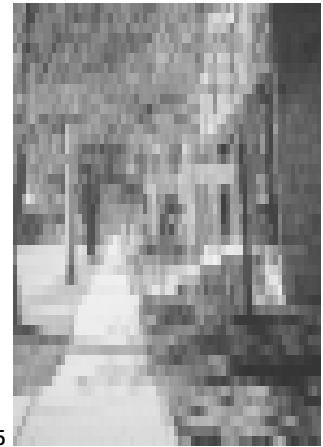
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## Paddling

The Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail (LCPT) is a formal designation of nearly 18 public sites accessible by paddlers in New York and Vermont. The LCPT encourages safe and responsible boating, stewardship of the Lake's resources, and active volunteer involvement. Several of the state parks described in this publication are designated Paddlers' Trail sites. For more information and to purchase a copy of a guidebook, call the Lake Champlain Committee at (802) 658-1414.



## Cycling

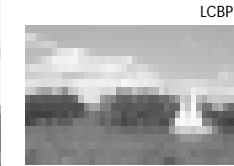
Lake Champlain Bikeways offers cyclists a network of interconnected, international bicycle routes around Lake Champlain in New York, Vermont, and the Upper Richelieu Valley of Québec. For more information contact the Bicycling Information Clearinghouse, RR 1, Box 220, Crown Point, NY 12928, [lcvisit@capital.net](mailto:lcvisit@capital.net), or go to [www.lakeplacid.com/bikeways](http://www.lakeplacid.com/bikeways).

## Boaters' Responsibilities

Lake Champlain weather can change very rapidly. Get charts, follow navigation rules and safety regulations required by the U.S. Coast Guard, Vermont State Police, New York State Troopers, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Be sure to check customs and immigration regulations in advance to ensure easy border crossing.



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1. Champlain Memorial
2. Sand Bar State Park
3. Fort Ticonderoga
4. Lake Champlain Ferry
5. Essex, NY
6. LC Maritime Museum
7. Divers in Burlington Harbor
8. Sailing the Western shoreline
9. Crown Point State Historic Site
10. Burlington Harbor
11. Fort Lennox



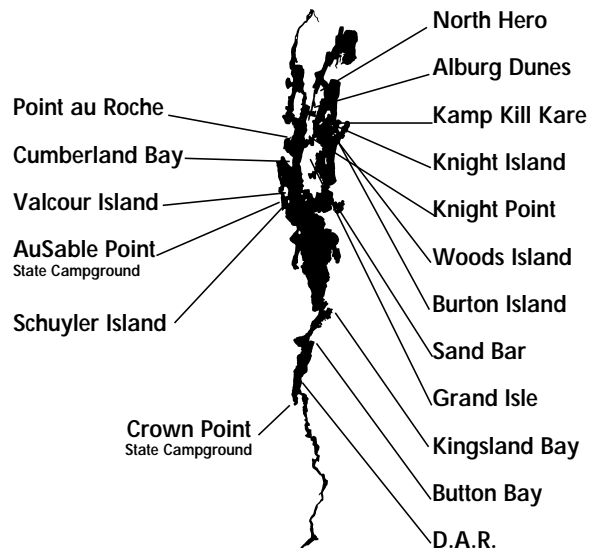
Fort Lennox

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## Stewardship

Lake Champlain's ecology is fragile. Boaters should respect the Lake, its shoreline, plants, and wildlife, and others who are enjoying it. Care should be taken along shorelines to avoid eroding the banks and crushing the vegetation. Much of the shoreline is private property. Respect land-owners' rights. Don't pick plants and flowers. Place trash in proper receptacles or carry it with you and use only designated toilet facilities or follow standard primitive disposal guidelines. Boaters should use pump-out stations. If you find trash others have left behind, take it with you. Build fires only in designated areas.

## State Parks



## Boating to State Parks

State Parks in New York and Vermont give boaters special opportunities to enjoy, the Lake's distinctive natural and scenic attractions. Parks can be accessed by a variety of watercraft. Some parks have moorings or ramps for docking; in others, boaters can land on a sandy beach or rocky ledge. Facilities vary and range from primitive to developed areas that offer picnic sites, campgrounds, hiking trails, and nature centers.

### New York State Parks and Campgrounds

**Point au Roche State Park**, Beekmantown, offers a mixture of natural and undeveloped forest areas, a sandy beach and open land. A nature center with a variety of programs and nature trails educates visitors about habitats that range from forest to marsh to shoreline. (518) 563-0369.

**Cumberland Bay State Park**, Plattsburgh, is a large park located on a large peninsula just north of Plattsburgh. It is a favorite of campers and paddlers who enjoy the expansive beach. (518) 563-5240.

**Valcour Island Primitive Area**, Plattsburgh. In 1776, the island's bay facing the mainland was the site of the first major naval battle of the Revolutionary War. Features include: one of the Lake's 12 lighthouses and hiking trails that pass marine fossils in 450 million-year-old limestone deposits. (518) 897-1300.

**AuSable Point State Campground**, Peru, offers a pure sand landing beach, as well as a four-mile paddle through the wildlife sanctuary on the AuSable River which feeds into Lake Champlain. (800) 456-2267.

**Schuyler Island** is a designated primitive area. Two primitive campsites are available for paddlers. (518) 897-1300.

**Crown Point State Campground**, Crown Point, features a memorial to Samuel de Champlain. The stone structure was formed from the tower of a lighthouse and includes a Rodin relief sculpture representing France. (518) 597-3603.

### Vermont State Parks

Vermont State Parks are generally open mid-May through mid-October. Contact specific parks for specific dates. To make reservations, call the individual parks directly. To make reservations prior to opening call 1-800-VERMONT or (802) 241-3655. The Vermont State Parks web site address is: [www.vtstateparks.com](http://www.vtstateparks.com).

**Alburg Dunes State Park**, Alburg. Sand dunes create one of the longest beaches on Lake Champlain at this park. Call: (802) 796-4170.

**Knight Island State Park**, once an island farm, the island offers scenic vistas across the Lake to the Green and Adirondack mountains. Boat access only. Call Burton Island State Park at (802) 524-6353.

**Knight Point**, North Hero, features expansive lawns on the lakeshore and a reconstruction of Knight Tavern, built in 1790. (802) 372-8389.

**Woods Island State Park**, St. Albans, is a quiet spot to study the natural habitat or walk along the unique gravel and shale shoreline. (802) 524-6353.

**Burton Island State Park**, St. Albans, highlights the remains of an early 20th century farm and other reminders of the agricultural past. Access is by boat or ferry from Kamp Kill Kare. (802) 524-6353.

**Kamp Kill Kare State Park**, St. Albans, is a late 19th-century railroad resort hotel that now houses historic displays. A small ferry links this mainland park to Burton, Woods and Knight Island state parks. Wonderful views of the Lake and Adirondack Mountains are a major attraction. (802) 524-6021.

**North Hero State Park**, North Hero, is a large, peaceful park with trails through varied wildlife habitats, where farmland is slowly returning to forest. (802) 372-8727.

**Sand Bar State Park**, Milton, in the marshland of the Lamoille River delta, is an expansive shallow warm beach which makes it a favorite of wind surfers and paddlers. More than 150 nesting boxes scatter this area as part of an extensive wood duck nesting program underway since 1948. There are many species of waterfowl and marsh birds and other viewable wildlife. (802) 893-2825.

**Grand Isle State Park**, Grand Isle, has an original summer resort building still used for park activities including interpretive programs. As the second largest campground in the state park system, the park offers sweeping views of the Green Mountains. Boat access is limited to registered campers only. (802) 372-4300.

**Kingsland Bay State Park**, Ferrisburgh, has rare plants and stands of sugar maple, hickory, and other hardwoods. The site also includes the 1790 Hawley House. (802) 877-3445.

**Button Bay State Park**, Ferrisburgh, is named for the abundant button-like clay deposits found in the park, offering an opportunity to learn about fossils of coral and other marine animals that are visible in limestone bedrock some 500 million years old. The park has good bird watching, especially in spring and fall. (802) 475-2377.

**D.A.R. State Park**, Addison, features the foundation of the area's first English settlement, dating from 1765. The park adjoins John Strong Mansion. Boat access from nearby marina only. (802) 759-2354.

## Québec

**1** Chambly is the terminus of the Chambly Canal, which takes boaters around the rapids of the Richelieu River. Features include: Fort Chambly, architecture from the early 1800s, and a towpath recreation trail.

**2** Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix  
Features include: Fort Lennox and Lacolle Blockhouse.

## New York

**3** Rouses Point, a busy 19th century rail and water transportation center, was a key location for cross-border smuggling of liquor during Prohibition. Features include: remains of post War of 1812 Fort Montgomery.

**4** Chazy was once a bustling area with stage, water, and rail routes crossing here during the 19th century. Features include: the Alice T. Miner Collection, historic buildings dating from the early 1800s, and a library used as British headquarters during the War of 1812.

**5** Port Kent was a popular resort area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Laid out in a grid pattern, Port Kent overlooks Lake Champlain. Features include: a ferry connection to Burlington, VT.

**6** Willsboro is one of the oldest settlements in the area and the only North American source of wollastonite, a mineral Native Americans used for pottery and now used for industrial and commercial purposes. Features include: the Adsit Cabin, the 1812 Homestead, architecture that reflects the village's past as a center for stone quarrying, and blue limestone, quarried on Willsboro Point, that was used to build the Brooklyn Bridge.

**7** Essex, a bustling port in the early and mid-19th century, has one of the United States' most outstanding collections of intact pre-Civil War architecture. The entire village is designated as a National Register Historic District. Features include: Greystone Mansion, a ferry connection to Charlotte, and a self-guided walking tour (Essex Community Heritage Organization, (518) 963-7088).

**8** Westport, destroyed in the Revolutionary War after its settlement in 1770, was rebuilt with elegant buildings. Westport has been a quiet and popular destination for boaters and summer travelers since the early 1900s.

**9** Port Henry prospered as a town when high-grade iron ore from the region was made into horseshoes used during the Civil War and, later, tracks for the transcontinental railroad. Features include: the Iron Center and Railroad & Mining Heritage Park, a self-guided walking tour (Economic Development Zone Office, (518) 546-3606), and a boat access just northeast of town.

**10** Crown Point was an important commercial center for the iron ore industry in the mid-1800s. Features include: the Penfield Homestead Museum, the Ironville Historic District, and Crown Point State Historic Site.

**11** Ticonderoga, located between Lake Champlain and Lake George, was an important portage point between the two lakes before the construction of the Champlain Canal in 1823. Features include: the Ticonderoga Heritage Museum, the Hancock House, and a Fort Ticonderoga self-guided walking tour (PRIDE, (518) 585-6366).

**12** Whitehall, at the headwaters of Lake Champlain along the Champlain Canal, was a key commercial port during the 19th century and is known as the birthplace of the United States Navy. Features include: the Skenesborough Museum, Skene Manor, and the War of 1812 warship *Ticonderoga*.

## Vermont

**13** North Hero and South Hero are named in honor of Revolutionary War heroes Ethan and Ira Allen.

**14** Isle La Motte, source of the limestone used throughout the Islands, is another picturesque place to spot fine buildings made of the local stone. Features include: St. Anne's Shrine and Fisk Quarry Preserve.

**15** St. Albans Bay was a busy shipping port until the prominence of the railroad led to the development of the commercial center inland at the City of St. Albans. Features include: numerous red brick buildings in the Greek Revival style and St. Albans Bay Park.

**16** Ferrisburgh is home to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum which displays watercraft once used on the lake.

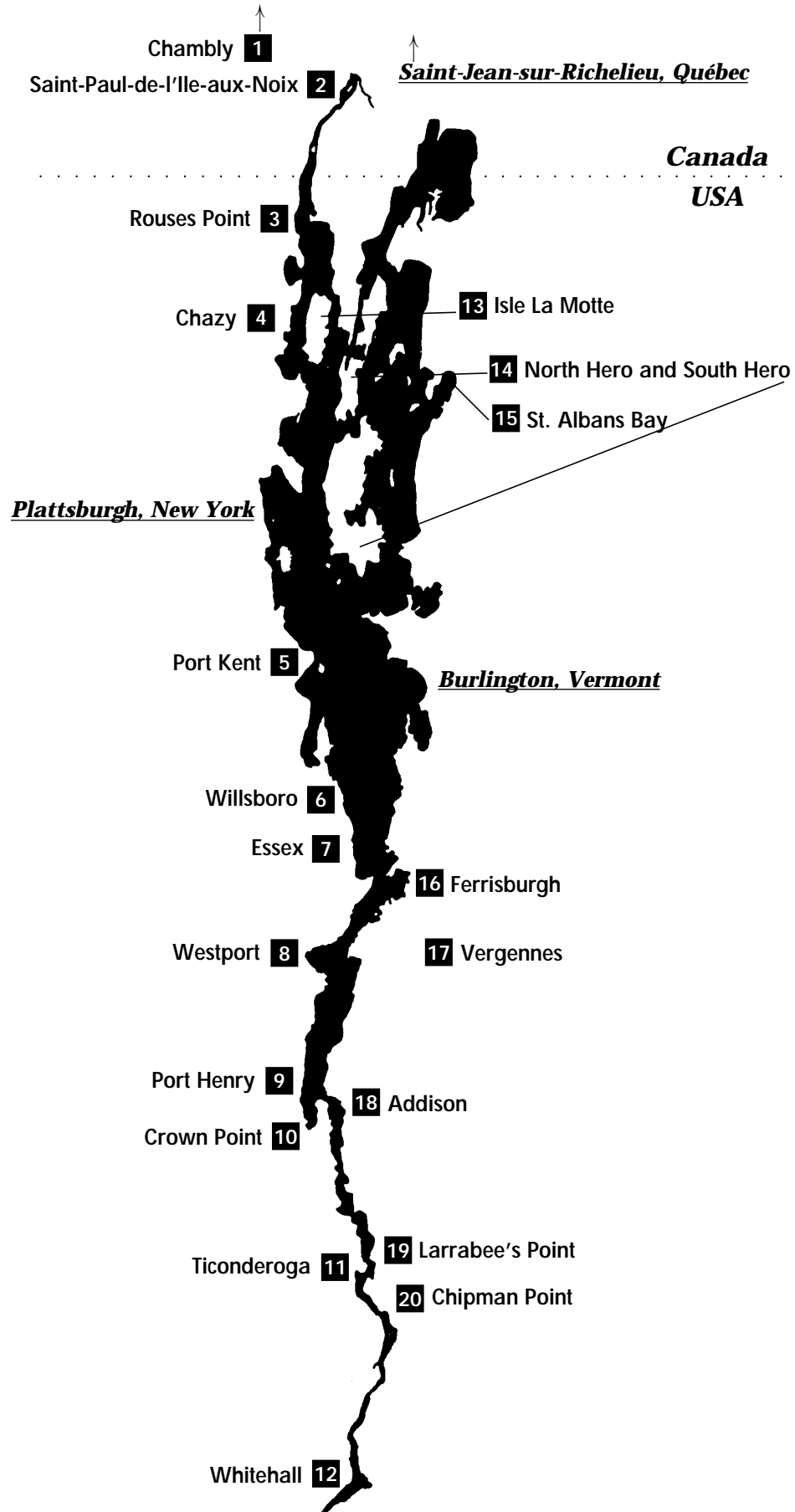
**17** Vergennes, one of the country's smallest cities, has many buildings dating from the 19th century when the Otter Creek falls fueled local industry. The city was an important shipbuilding center during the War of 1812. Features include: the historic downtown and the Bixby Memorial Library which contains local history and shipbuilding industry collections.

**18** Addison features the John Strong Mansion and the Chimney Point State Historic Site.

**19** Larrabee's Point in Shoreham once bustled with activity as products and livestock were brought to market from the surrounding farmland. Features include tours on the historic *Carillon* and a ferry to Fort Ticonderoga.

**20** Chipman Point in Orwell is home to two magnificent stone warehouses remaining from a larger settlement that thrived in the 1800s before the village center moved inland.

# Historic Villages and Cities



## For more information

### Québec

Tourisme Québec (800) 363-7777,  
www.tourisme.gouv.qc.ca

### New York

Lake Placid/Essex County Visitors Bureau (518) 597-4646,  
www.lakeplacid.com

New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (518) 474-0456, www.nysparks.state.ny.us

New York Department of Environmental Conservation (518) 897-1200, www.dec.state.ny.us

Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce (518) 563-1000, www.northcountrychamber.com

Washington County Tourism Bureau (518) 746-2294

### Vermont

Addison County Chamber of Commerce (802) 388-7951, www.middlebury-info.com

Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce (802) 372-5683, www.champlainislands.com

Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce (802) 863-3489, www.vermont.org

Rutland County Chamber of Commerce (802) 773-2747, www.rutlandvermont.com

St. Albans Chamber of Commerce (802) 524-2444, www.stalbanschamber.com

Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation (802) 241-3655, (800) VERMONT, www.vtstateparks.com

Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (800) VERMONT, www.travel-vermont.com

### Regional

Lake Champlain Visitors Center Crown Point, NY (518) 597-4646, lcvisit@capital.net

#### Published resources available at area bookstores:

DeLorme, *New York State Atlas and Gazetteer*, topographic maps of the entire state, available for purchase in area stores.

DeLorme, *Vermont Atlas and Gazetteer*, topographic maps of the entire state, available for purchase in area stores.

*Guide to the Marinas of Lake Champlain and the Champlain Canal, 1999*; includes information on commercial facilities, the laws of the waterways of Vermont, New York, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Canada. Call Morning Sun Productions, (802) 863-4416.

*Lake Champlain Basin Atlas, 1999*, published by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, (800) 468-LCBP.

*Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail, 1998/99 Guidebook & Stewardship Manual*, for information about purchase, contact the Lake Champlain Committee, (802) 658-1414.

*Lake Champlain Region Road Map and Recreation Guide — Vermont, New York, Québec, 2nd edition 1998-2000*, published by Northern Cartographic, available for purchase at area stores or call (802) 860-2886.

McKibben, Alan and Susan, *Cruising Guide to Lake Champlain*; complete information on St. Lawrence River, Richelieu River, Chambly Canal, Lake Champlain, the Champlain Canal and Hudson River, from Montreal to New York City. Available for purchase at area bookstores or call Lake Champlain Publishing, (802) 845-0028.

Vogel, R.W., *Lake Champlain Atlas of Navigation Charts, 1999 edition*. Detailed nautical charts with depths, moorings. Available for purchase at area bookstores.

The development of this fact sheet is through a cooperative agreement between NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, VT Division for Historic Preservation, and VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Funding provided by the National Park Service and the Environmental Protection Agency through the Lake Champlain Basin Program.



VT FP&R

Kingsland Bay State Park



The Lake Champlain Basin Program has developed a plan to insure that the Lake and its drainage basin will be restored, protected and maintained so that future generations will enjoy its full benefits. If you would like to learn more about the program or get involved with associated projects, contact us at: (800) 468-LCBP (within New York and Vermont), (802) 372-3213, or visit our web site at [www.lcbp.org](http://www.lcbp.org).

#### LCBP Fact Sheet Series

- Number 1 – Zebra Mussels
- Number 2 – Nonpoint Source Pollution
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- Number 4 – Wetlands in the Lake Champlain Basin
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