

Public Information Meeting Information Packet

Crown Point Reservation

Crown Point Campground and Day-Use Area, and
Crown Point State Historic Site
Unit Management Plan

March 28, 2019

Crown Point, NY



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

Information Packet

Crown Point Reservation, Public Information Meeting

March 28th, 2019; Crown Point Museum at Crown Point State Historic Site

Agenda for Public Meeting

March 28th, 6:00 PM

Crown Point Museum

1. Open House
2. Welcoming Remarks
3. Overview of Crown Point Reservation and the Planning Process
4. Public Input

Introduction

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) are working together to create a joint Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Crown Point Reservation. The Crown Point Reservation consists of the Crown Point State Historic Site and the Crown Point Campground and Day-Use Area, totaling 440 acres. Since the underlying land is Forest Preserve, overall ownership, management and land use planning is that of the DEC. However, day to day management of the State Historic Site is the responsibility of OPRHP. The creation of a joint Unit Management Plan for Crown Point Reservation will allow for the highest protection of the site's historic and natural resources and better facilitate public use and enjoyment of the entire area.

DEC Agency Mission Statement

To conserve, improve and protect New York's natural resources and environment and to prevent, abate and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well-being.

OPRHP Agency Mission Statement

The Mission of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to encourage responsible stewardship of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of this public information meeting is to actively invite public participation into the planning process for the Crown Point Reservation UMP. Public participation will help DEC and OPRHP identify issues and concerns related to management of the site.

The information packet and public information meeting are intended to provide the public with an overview of the site and the known issues and resources. The meeting allows for public participation early in the planning process.

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Tentative Unit Management Plan Timeline

- Public Information Meeting- March 28, 2019
- Draft Unit Management Plan- Fall 2020
- Public Comment Period- Fall 2020
- Draft unit Management Plan revision as necessary- Winter 2020/2021
- Review by Adirondack Park Agency- Spring 2021
- Draft Unit Management Plan revision as necessary- Summer 2021
- Adoption of Final Unit Management Plan by DEC and OPRHP Commissioners- Summer/Fall 2021

Next Steps

- All comments, suggestions, and concerns made at the public meeting and through written comment will be summarized and made available.
- A public comment period will follow the completion of the Draft Unit Management Plan. Public input will be considered in preparation of the Final Unit Management Plan.
- Following the commissioners' adoption of the plan, the Final UMP will be posted to the DEC's and OPRHP's websites for public access.

Written comments will be accepted until May 31, 2019.

Please send to:

Rebecca Terry
NYS DEC
232 Golf Course Road
Warrensburg, NY 12885

Or by email to: r5.ump@dec.ny.gov

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Overview of the Site

Crown Point Reservation, located in Crown Point, Essex County, NY is a unique historical site. As designated in Article 9, Title 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law, the Crown Point Reservation includes the Crown Point Campground and Day-Use Area and the Crown Point State Historic Site. The entire site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a designated National Historic Landmark. The nearby Crown Point Bridge offers scenic views of Lake Champlain and the surrounding landscape. It connects New York and Vermont and has won awards for its design.

Following European colonization, Crown Point Reservation served as an important site for French, British, and American troops throughout the 18th and 19th century. The site contains the ruins of Fort St. Frederic and Fort Crown Point. A museum displays artifacts recovered from throughout the site that relay the history of its inhabitants and their material culture.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Europeans were looking to expand their empires through trade, industry and colonization. After establishing a settlement in Quebec, Samuel de Champlain made his way south through the waterways of the valley to set up a fur trade between the North American Indians and France. With the Algonquians as his guides, they were stopped by the Iroquois near the Crown Point peninsula and battle ensued between these two warring tribes. Over the course of the century and into the next, wars continued to control the area, including King George's War and the Seven Years' War.

Without roadways, Lake Champlain was viewed as a major thoroughfare in control of trade in North America. After building a small wooden fort across the point in 1730, the French decided to construct a more imposing, permanent structure at the location seen today. From 1734 through mid-1759, the French occupied Fort St. Frederic and defended their position no less than four times from British attack. British Commander Jeffrey Amherst, determined to finally overtake the stronghold, assembled 15,000 troops. Ft St. Frederic was occupied by 80-100 men and odds were slim they could withstand the British numbers. The French would be better served in retreating and defending Canada and the decision was made to destroy Fort Carillon (now Ticonderoga) and then Fort St. Frederic as to leave nothing for the Brits to capture. British took control of the area for Great Britain and built the largest fortification in the New World, His Majesty's Fort of Crown Point. The complex included three redoubts, blockhouses and a boat. They occupied this site until 1775, when both Crown Point and Ticonderoga were overtaken by American troops. The artillery on hand was moved to Ticonderoga and moved overland by Henry Knox to Boston, for use by General George Washington in defense of the Boston area. American occupation of the site lasted for 18 months during the Revolutionary War. The troops used the area as the staging grounds for the invasion of Canada in 1775 and retreated here after their defeat in Quebec in 1776. While no battles were officially fought at any of the forts during military occupation, the area served as a critical foothold and staging ground for three successive nations.

At the turn of the 19th century, the land was granted to Union and Columbia Colleges by the State of New York and divided into smaller parcels and sold as farms. Sylvester Churchill purchased the property in 1828 and was committed towards the preservation of the ruins of the forts. In the deed of sale for the property, Churchill stipulated future owners could not tear down any of the ramparts or walls or remove any materials. The State acquired the property in 1910 from the Witherbee, Sherman Corporation, and iron-ore mining operation based out of nearby Port Henry. It was placed under the

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jurisdiction of the NYS Conservation Department, now the Department of Environmental Conservation, when it was created in 1927. The State has continued to acquire surrounding parcels, expanding the site to its current size of 440 acres.

Crown Point Campground and Day-Use Area is located west of Bridge Road and was constructed in 1915. Subsequent additions expanded the Campground to its current size of 66 campsites in an open setting. The Campground includes a boat launch, picnic area, and several historic structures - Crown Point Pier, the Champlain Memorial Lighthouse, Coffin Point and two of the British redoubts.

The original lighthouse guided boats to safe passage through the narrowest part of the lake and was in operation from 1859- 1927. It was eventually converted to a memorial to honor Champlain's discovery of the lake. The steamboat pier was constructed in 1929 and is now a popular fishing spot.

Crown Point Reservation is a mix of open areas, forests, fields, and wetlands. A few unique ecosystems can be found at this site including successional red cedar woodlands, calcareous pavement woodlands, and calcareous shoreline outcrop. The site is a bird conservation area, supporting migratory bird species and is a main bird banding location along Lake Champlain.