



Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Bicentennial Projects and Initiatives

Overview

The year 2012 marks the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the War of 1812. This historic event provides a legitimate opportunity to increase Ontario's profile and visitation through community pride and public education of the significance of the events of the war between 1812 and 1815.

This plan provides an overview of the historical significance of communities in and around the Southern Georgian Bay area with reference to the War of 1812. The plan recognizes the opportunity for the community to promote this theme, and puts forward the ideas of local stakeholders in the Southern Georgian Bay area who are interested in developing capital projects, events and activities in recognition of the anniversary. This bicentennial anniversary will increase our regions profile through:

- Providing an opportunity to revitalize existing historic sites and expand tourism appeal to these sites;
- Providing an opportunity to enhance tourism events and create new ones;
- Celebrate the Bicentennial in an interactive and proactive way;
- Educating the public, particularly local residents and school groups, about the importance of the history of the War of 1812 in our communities;
- Providing an opportunity to instil national, provincial and community pride through a rediscovery of local history;
- Developing tourism product with significant potential to increase visitors and economic impact in the region.

The Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee is made up of representatives from various ministries, municipalities, museums, historic sites, organizations and businesses that have history related to the War of 1812 or an interest in taking an active role in the bicentennial itself.

Current Proposed Initiatives

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park - Nancy Island Heritage Welcome Centre

- \$1.5 million has been committed by Ontario Parks to build a new 3000 square foot heritage welcome centre to be located at Nancy Island Historic Site. An additional \$20,000.00 has been committed to date from the Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee for non-capital site improvements,

displays and preservation of the original hull. Estimated cost of all bicentennial projects located at the site is \$2.5 million.

Fort Willow Depot Historic Site

- To date over \$12,000.00 has been committed to the construction of a post and beam interpretive pavilion to be constructed on site. Funding partners to date include the Friends of Historic Fort Willow Depot, The Rotary Club of Barrie and the Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee. Estimated cost of all bicentennial projects located at the site is \$225,000.00.

Simcoe County and the War of 1812

- The 16 Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites of Simcoe County will collaborate to create and present a travelling exhibit about the events and impact of the War of 1812 in Simcoe County. To date \$2,500.00 has been committed to the project via the Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Committee. Estimated cost of this bicentennial project is \$106,000.00.

Penetanguishene Road Project

- The Penetanguishene Purchase was completed in 1797 from the Georgian Bay Ojibway to the British Crown for the purposes of creating a naval dockyard on Lake Huron. An overland route was surveyed in 1808 and the road constructed during the War of 1812 by members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Royal Navy. This project will highlight all the historical connections with the road, the most important transportation corridor in Ontario, publish a book and historical guide and mark the route with a bronze statue of the builders of the road. To date \$6000.00 has been committed to the project via local grants and the Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Committee. Estimated cost of this bicentennial project is \$200,000.00.

Huron Historical Parks - Discovery Harbour

- Discovery Harbour has various War of 1812 Bicentennial capital and special event projects that have been proposed over the bicentennial years. To date \$5000.00 has been committed to Discovery Harbour from the Southern Georgian Bay War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee for the development of their First Light Event in celebration of the Treaty of Ghent which will take place in December of 2014. Estimated cost of all proposed bicentennial capital and special events is \$10 million.

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Ships Company of Penetanguishene – Gunboat Project

- The Ship's Company of Penetanguishene, a non-profit volunteer organization has committed itself to the production of a replica 27' War of 1812 gunboat. This boat, unlike its existing 36' replica gunboat *HMS Badger*, would be specifically designed for quick and easy rigging and de-rigging, allowing it to be transported

by trailer to a large number of events and destinations throughout the Great Lakes area. Estimated cost is \$15,000.00.

Tall Ships & Battle of Georgian Bay Re-enactment

- As part of the Provinces War of 1812 Bicentennial Tall Ship Initiative for 2013 the Southern Georgian Bay Region is planning to host a two week heritage festival that would see tall ships visit various ports around the Southern Georgian Bay Region with War of 1812 re-enactments and activities being incorporated into the festival as well. The festival would take place over a two week period and split into a southwest and southeast sub-region. The proposed dates and confirmed participating communities and historic sites include:
- August 12th to 18th, 2013 – **Southwest Region** - Owen Sound, Meaford, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach & Nancy Island Historic Site
- August 19th to 25th, 2013 – **Southeast Region** - Penetanguishene, Midland, Township of Tiny

It is estimated that this bicentennial project will cost between \$800,000.00 and \$1 million. This will also be our regions significant event for 2013.

Wasaga under Siege “A War of 1812 Experience”

- Is an annual living history festival commemorating a War of 1812 battle between Americans, British and First Nations which resulted in an American victory with the sinking of the British schooner Nancy. The Town of Wasaga Beach, the Friends of Nancy Island and the local community have invested over \$200,000.00 in Wasaga under Siege over the past 7 years and have committed to build and support this event till the 200th anniversary in 2014. Event budget is around \$30,000.00 a year with an increase to \$60-\$100 thousand for the 2014 event.
- Event dates till 2014:
 - 2010 - July 23rd - 25th
 - 2011 - July 22nd – 24th
 - 2012 - August 17th - 19th
 - 2013 - August 16th - 18th
 - 2014 - August 14th - 17th – Regional significant event for 2014

Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival

- This ancient native trail once formed a land bridge between Kempenfelt Bay and the Nottawasaga River enabling a continuous trade and transportation route from Lake Ontario through to Georgian Bay for many centuries. During the War of 1812, the British military improved the route for the transport of supplies and personnel as Lake Erie and Huron were occupied by the Americans. The City of Barrie, Township of Springwater, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (Fort Willow) and the local community have invested over \$100,000.00 to date in this festival over the past 6 years and have committed to build and support this event till 2014. Event budget is around \$20,000.00 a year with an increase to \$40-\$60 thousand for the 2012 event which will expand to include Holland Landing and various communities along the shores of Lake Simcoe.

- Event dates till 2014:
 2010 – Sept 17th & 18th
 2011 – Sept 16th & 17th
 2012 – Sept 13th, 14th, 15th & 16th - Regional significant event for 2012
 2013 – Sept 20th, 21st & 22nd
 2014 – Sept 19th, 20th & 21st

War of 1812 Veterans Cemetery Marker Rededication

- Many of the communities across Ontario owe their founding's and growth to naval and military veterans of the War of 1812 who were given lands grants and became instrumental figures in the early development of their respective communities. This project would see communities that do not have a direct relation to the War of 1812 being able to celebrate or commemorate a founding father of their respective community. Through various activities including plaques, headstone refurbishing, or the requisition of an official War of 1812 headstone, etc, communities can now be part of this great bicentennial event. Prominent veterans from our region who had significant influence on the development of various communities include: James Keating, RA, Captain John Moberly, RN and Surgeon William "Tiger" Dunlop. Budget for this initiative would be determined by each community's project. Estimates can range from \$2,000.00-\$10,000.00 depending on the scope of the project. Canada's Veterans Affairs will also be contacted to see if they are interested in this initiative from a federal perspective.

Huronian Lookout

- The County of Simcoe, in partnership with Springwater Township, Friends of the Minesing Wetlands, Chippewa Tri Council, Rotary Club of Barrie and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority are pleased to announce the creation of the Huronia Lookout. The Huronia Lookout provides views extending 40 km, including those of the entire Minesing Wetlands, as well as the Niagara Escarpment, Blue Mountain, Georgian Bay, the Oro Ridge Moraine, the Village of Minesing and the Ancient Glacial Lake Algonquin Shoreline. The Huronia Lookout is part of the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Trail which links Lake Simcoe to Fort Willow Depot. There are plans to construct many historical plaques related to the region and a large bronze statue dedicated to our first Nations people. Estimated cost for the historical plaques and bronze statue is \$550,000.00. Most of this money is being raised through the partners mentioned above.

The Oro Black Settlement

- At Oro, Ontario, former members of the Loyalist militia from the War of 1812 established the only Black community sponsored by the government. Free Blacks from the northern United States later joined them. Located in the heart of a strategic and vulnerable region, the community guarded against an American invasion via Georgian Bay. The church built in 1849 and its cemetery is a national historic site and is testaments to the contribution of African Canadians to

the settlement and defence of Canada in the 19th Century. This may have been a first in the British Commonwealth that Blacks were given significant acreages of land on an equal basis as were white soldiers. Various capital and special event projects are being proposed and cost estimates are presently still being determined.

War of 1812 Pipes & Drums Band

- The Penetanguishene Pipes & Drums Band is interested in re-creating the uniforms of a highland regiment that was stationed in Canada during the War of 1812. The Penetanguishene Pipes and Drums have established a committee to investigate the uniforms, equipment and accouterments needed and the cost involved. If successful they would look forward to participating in a number of regional bicentennial events. Cost estimates are presently still being determined.

Miller Worsley Commemorative Voyage

- Plans are in the works in cooperation with the Canadian Navy's Colonial Sailor Program – "Canada's Navy Then: Canada's Navy Now" for a War of 1812 bicentennial naval event on Georgian Bay for 2014. The Colonial Sailor Program is considering the organization and support of a major longboat effort to be named the Miller Worsley Commemorative Voyage. After much study of distances/winds/time etc. There will be no effort to attempt a voyage up Georgian Bay to the Straits; rather it has been suggested that the flotilla do what some boats already do, which is a voyage from Discovery Harbour Historic Site in Penetanguishene to Nancy Island Historic Site in Wasaga Beach. The flotilla would be substantial in size, have "challenge events" along the way and would have the benefit of an escorting "mother ship". Contract support for the boats and crews is envisaged, and awards for historical accuracy, performance and seamanship would be awarded. Cost estimates are presently still being determined.

H.M.S. General Hunter Exhibit Project

- The *General Hunter* Shipwreck Working Group has designed plans for a major new *General Hunter / Hunter* exhibit for the Feature Gallery of the Bruce County Museum which will open on June 18th, 2012. This preliminary exhibit plan includes eleven storyline exhibit sections with suggested content (artifacts, illustrations, interactive displays, descriptive text, etc.) for each section. Also included in the exhibit proposal are numerous programming, events and publication plans - for 2011 and 2012 - in support of the General Hunter Exhibit at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre.