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## **DEC Announces Finalization of Plan to Preserve Historic Remains at Lake George Battlefield Park**

Amendment Enables Preservation of 18th Century Human Remains Found in the Lake George Area

### ***Hallowing of the Ground Ceremony Held as a Respectful Prelude to the Reinterment of Remains***

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced the finalization of an amendment to the Unit Management Plan (UMP) for Lake George Battlefield Park enabling the construction of six above-ground columbarium structures within the Battlefield Park to store funeral urns. DEC announced the plan amendment today at a 'Hallowing of the Ground' ceremony in the village of Lake George ahead of the reinterment of remains from Revolutionary War era soldiers discovered on Courtland Street in 2019.

"Lake George Battlefield Park is an important cultural and historic resource for the State and nation, and DEC is committed to enhancing this site to commemorate its critical role in shaping our nation's history," **DEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar said.** "We commend our staff, local government partners, the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, and the many volunteers who quickly mobilized to ensure the proper reburial of the remains of more than 40 individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation, and it is an honor to unveil their new resting place in the Park."

The Lake George Battlefield Park is located at the south end of the lake in the town of Lake George, Warren County. DEC's Division of Operations manages the site. The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance manages the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Interpretive Center and other activities through a cooperative agreement with DEC. The Battlefield Park was created in 1898 when the State Legislature appropriated funds and directed the State Comptroller to acquire land within the area of the 1755 Battle of Lake George for the purpose of creating a commemorative park. Since the middle of the 19th century, more than three dozen newspaper reports account the discovery of human remains in the village and town of Lake George.

Most recently, 11 partially disturbed graves containing the incomplete remains of 13 individuals were recorded and recovered after being discovered during a basement excavation on Courtland Street. More than 100 volunteer professional and avocational archaeologists participated in this excavation effort. Experts determined that uniform buttons found in one grave and in a soil pile were associated with the First Pennsylvania Battalion, a Continental Army regiment raised in November 1775 and disbanded in November 1776. The unit served with the army that invaded Quebec from 1775 and into 1776. Over the next 15 months, excavators found the remains of many additional individuals during screening of the mechanically excavated soil. In all, searchers recovered incomplete remains of a total number of 44 individuals. The remains found

are primarily male and were predominantly late adolescent or young adults, further supporting the conclusion of a likely military origin.

In January, DEC proposed an amendment to the UMP to construct a facility for the interment of the remains. The finalized plan includes the construction of a granite columbarium in Battlefield Park that will be approximately six feet long and three feet high.