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Fundraising Campaign For Battlefield Park Memorial Begins

By Mirror Staff

Now that the DEC has finalized changes to the Unit Management Plan for the Lake George Battlefield State Park, fundraising can now begin for the memorial in Lake George Battlefield Park to the 44 individuals who are believed to have perished in the summer of 1776, when the area was the site of a smallpox hospital which treated soldiers of the Continental Army.

According to Dan Barusch, Lake George's Director of Planning and Zoning, the Town has been working with the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance to develop a campaign that is expected to include funding from the Lake George Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant, private foundations, corporations and the general public.

"We know the public is strongly behind this," and we'll be knocking on doors throughout the region to be sure the financing for it is sufficient," said Barusch.

Officials expect the memorial to be completed by July, 2026 - the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and of the Lake George military hospital.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) finalized the amendment to the Unit Management Plan (UMP) for Lake George Battlefield Park on June 14, enabling the construction of six above-ground columbarium structures within the Battlefield Park to store funeral urns.

Following the discovery of the remains in 2019, teams of archaeologists, under the direction of the New York State Museum, determined the number of individuals involved and the circumstances of their burial. The remains of 44 distinct humans were identified; evidence led to the conclusion that the victims had died of disease and were associated with the military.

Both the Village Board of Trustees and the Town Board passed resolutions soon after the discovery, calling for reburial of the remains in the Lake George Battlefield State Park.

US Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer, State Senator Dan Stec, and Assemblyman Matt Simpson have all endorsed the proposal.

"We're very fortunate to have benefited from the work of so many who have helped set the stage for a respectful tribute site," Barusch said. "Now we need to get to work developing and implementing a plan that fits in seamlessly with the beauty and history of Lake George Battlefield Park."