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LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK, June 5, 2026

American Battlefield Trust to Congress: Protect French & Indian War Sites

By Mirror Staff

If a bill before Congress is approved, funds may become available to protect lands in Lake George associated with the French and Indian Wars – such as the 1755 Battle of Lake George in general or the Bloody Morning Scout in particular.

A two-year \$50,000 study documented numerous military sites associated with the campaigns around Lake George and Fort George. Those lands may currently lie in private hands or have fallen under threat from development.

According to Dan Barusch, Lake George's Director of Planning and Zoning, the legislation could lead to authorizing the American Battlefield Trust to protect French and Indian War battlefields, in addition to those of the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

"For many years we've asked the American Battlefield Trust to include French & Indian War sites in their portfolio of historic properties," said John DiNuzzo, president of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance. "There are a number of sites in our region that would benefit from this protection."

According to a press release from the American Battlefield Trust, the legislation "creates the opportunity for the Trust, as a nonprofit partner of the National



The 1903 "Battle of Lake George – Sept. 8, 1755" sculpture in Battlefield Park, portraying Mohawk chief King Hendrick and Sir William Johnson.

Park Service, to study expanding eligibility for Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to include sites outside National Park Service boundaries at high priority battlefields related to the French and Indian War."

Passage of the legislation "means the Lake George Battlefield, site of a pivotal British victory in 1755, would for the first time stand to benefit from these critical funds," said David Duncan, president of the American Battlefield Trust.

"Preservation leads to greater opportunities for interpretation, which translates to more for visitors to see and do. This, in

turn, makes the site something more than a memorial: It becomes a living classroom that expands learning opportunities and an economic engine powering the community," said Duncan.

The bill would also reauthorize three American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grant programs through 2036.

Those grant programs, which have protected nearly 40,000 acres of historic sites in 20 states, could also be leveraged to help protect the burial grounds of those who died from smallpox at the Fort George Military Hospital in 1776, said Lake George's Dan Barusch.