

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Schooner Lois McClure Begins Legacy Tour Marking Canal Bicentennial

As the nation celebrated its birthday, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's (LCMM's) replica 1862 canal schooner *Lois McClure* began her 2017 Legacy Tour commemorating the Erie Canal Bicentennial. "The groundbreaking for the Erie Canal took place just 200 years ago in Rome, New York on July 4, 1817," said Erick Tichonuk, LCMM Co-Director, "Our Legacy Tour will visit more than 35 canal communities along the way to the World Canals Conference." Programs presented by the schooner crew pay tribute to the legacy of the canals and the Northern Forest trees which built the thousands of wooden boats that plied these historic waterways. "The *Lois McClure* has a unique capability to bring 200 years of canal history to life, while engaging people to appreciate and protect our legacy waterways," says New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton. "It can also help inform how the canal system can best serve the evolving needs of present and future generations."

During the Legacy Tour the schooner crew will share with community members and students a maritime perspective on the relationship between waterways and trees, canal boats and forests through an initiative called *Stem to Stern*. Visitors can board the schooner free of charge to explore the 88-foot long boat and a special exhibit. This summer, the schooner crew will include four high school students who are participating in a new, hands-on educational initiative, the Robert Beach, Sr. Maritime Apprenticeship. "Being a part of the Bicentennial of the Erie Canal and traveling its waters is an exciting prospect," said Maritime Apprentice Oliver Cole. "After high school, I plan on attending college in order to pursue a career in the maritime field and eventually earning my Captain's license. The Bob Beach Sr. Apprenticeship will be a fantastic step towards my future plans."

"The schooner's message this season is that forests and the waterways are a key to understanding how America transformed into a powerful and prosperous nation," says Tichonuk. "Using human and animal power, the canal builders cleared a pathway 60 feet wide and more than 400 miles long, much of it through forested lands, to create the water highway that streamlined travel and communication between the interior of the continent and the coast, and brought an economic boom. Almost overnight, natural resources too bulky to ship overland became valuable commodities." The canals opened a floodgate of trade between the Champlain Valley, ports along the Hudson River and the Atlantic Seaboard, and through western New York to the Great Lakes.

However, the transformation also brought some unintended consequences. *Stem to Stern* is designed to spark insight into the impact of deforestation: eroded soil, silted waterways, loss of habitat for fish and wildlife, and the arrival of invasive species. Marking the transition to an era of sustainable forestry and environmental stewardship, the schooner will transport a cargo of white oak and white pine seedlings provided by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Trees for Tributaries Program, to be planted in communities along the canal. The schooner crew also distributes information about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, thanks to a project funded by an agreement awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program. NEIWPC manages LCBP's personnel, contract, grant and budget tasks and provides input on the program's activities through a partnership with the LCBP Steering Committee.

Further information and the full itinerary of the 2017 Legacy Tour can be found at www.lcmm.org. As an authentic replica, *Lois McClure* has no means of propulsion other than sail, so 1964 tugboat *C. L. Churchill* serves as power. Travel conditions for these traditional wooden vessels are weather dependent, so the schedule is subject to change.

Free admission is offered throughout the tour thanks to the generous support of sponsors including the New York State Canal Corporation and the State of Vermont. Additional support has been provided by Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the McClure family, the farm families of Cabot Creamery, Lake Champlain Transportation, Corning Museum of Glass, International Paper, and Vermont Family Forests. AmeriCorps Members have helped LCMM staff develop educational and interpretive materials for the project.

Schooner *Lois McClure* is an educational outreach program of Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM), Vermont. A museum with a difference, LCMM brings underwater discoveries and lake adventures to the public in exciting and imaginative ways. The Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through October 15, 2017. For more information visit www.lcmm.org or call (802) 475-2022.

DOWNLOAD IMAGES HERE:

Replica 1862 Canal Schooner *Lois McClure* on the Champlain Canal – Bow. Courtesy Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/23205751/Stem%20to%20Stern/Lois%20on%20Champlain%20Canal%20-%20bow.JPG>

Replica 1862 Canal Schooner *Lois McClure* on the Champlain Canal – Stern. Courtesy Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/23205751/Stem%20to%20Stern/Lois%20on%20Champlain%20Canal%20-stern.JPG>

Crowd at Medina, NY greets canal schooner *Lois McClure*. Courtesy, Fotoworks, Andy Olenick.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/23205751/Stem%20to%20Stern/Medina%20Crowdboat07FotoworksAndy%20Olenick.JPG>

Schooner *Lois McClure* and tugboat *C. L. Churchill* on the Erie Canal. Courtesy Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/23205751/Stem%20to%20Stern/Schooner%20Lois%20McClure%20and%20tugboat%20C.%20L.%20Churchill%20Erie%20Canal.jpg>

Load of lumber on canal boat *Frank A. Jagger*, at Albany, NY. Courtesy, Canal Society of New York.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/23205751/Stem%20to%20Stern/Lumber%20on%20Canal%20Boat%20Frank%20A%20Jagger%20-%20Albany%20-%20Canal%20Society%20of%20NYS.jpg>

World Canals Conference Logo

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