

Proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary

PUBLICATION



**APRIL 17,
2019**

NOAA opens public comment period on the proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is invited to submit comments to the agency via www.regulations.gov using docket number NOAA-NOS-2019-0032.

**ENDS
7/31**

NEXT STEPS



PUBLIC MEETINGS

NOAA will hold four public meetings in New York. See <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/lake-ontario/> for dates and locations.



DRAFT PROPOSAL

Following the comment period, NOAA prepares a draft sanctuary proposal that includes potential boundaries and regulations. All interested parties provide input on the draft documents. NOAA may also form an advisory council to help inform the proposal.



FINAL DECISION

NOAA will consider all public comments before making a decision on sanctuary designation. If the decision is to move forward, NOAA will prepare final documents. The governor and Congress can review the documents before final designation.

**2-3
years**

Proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary

NOAA is asking the public to comment on the possibility of designating a national marine sanctuary in eastern Lake Ontario to protect historically significant shipwrecks and related maritime heritage resources. This is the first step in the designation process.

The proposed 1,700-square-mile sanctuary, adjacent to Oswego, Jefferson, Cayuga, and Wayne counties, would protect 21 known shipwrecks and one aircraft representing events spanning more than 200 years of our nation's history. An additional 47 shipwrecks and two historic aircraft are also likely located within the proposed sanctuary boundaries, based on historical records.

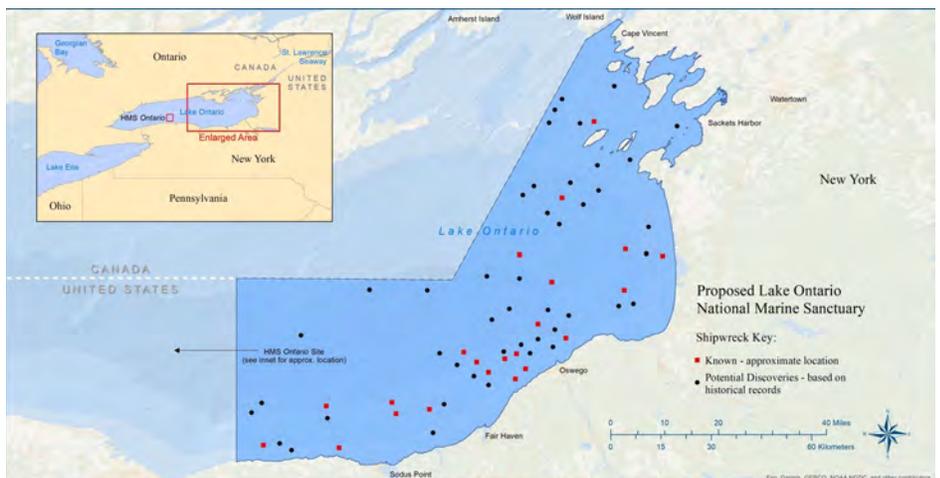
The proposed sanctuary also includes a separate area surrounding the HMS *Ontario*, which is both the oldest confirmed shipwreck (1780) and the only fully-

intact British warship discovered in the Great Lakes.

About the nomination

Eastern Lake Ontario is one of the most historically significant regions in the Great Lakes. Lake Ontario has dominated maritime trade and transportation for centuries, beginning with the canoes and boats of early indigenous peoples. During the colonial period, Lake Ontario was a strategic theater of conflict among European powers and the young American republic. Military actions occurred in the region during the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Later, this region was critical to the development of the American West and the nation's industrial core.

Vessels that plied Lake Ontario's waters often encountered treacherous conditions, resulting in numerous shipwrecks. The lake's cold, fresh water has preserved these "submerged museums,"



Map: NOAA

This map shows the proposed national marine sanctuary boundary and approximate locations of shipwrecks.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



making them ripe for protection, study, and interpretation as a national marine sanctuary.

In January 2017, the state of New York, the city of Oswego, and four counties (Oswego, Jefferson, Wayne, and Cayuga counties) submitted a nomination for the proposed Great Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary to be added to NOAA’s inventory for potential designation. New York nominated the area to protect and increase awareness of a nationally significant collection of shipwrecks; to foster partnerships with education and research groups; and to increase opportunities for tourism and recreation as part of the regional Blue Economy.

A diverse coalition of organizations and individuals at local, state, and regional levels endorsed the nomination. This included elected officials, government agencies, a Native American tribe, historical societies, businesses, museums, and environmental, recreational, conservation, tourism, and education groups.

About NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuary System

NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa.

The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. Through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, NOAA can identify, designate, and protect areas of the marine and Great Lakes environment that have special national significance.

For more information contact

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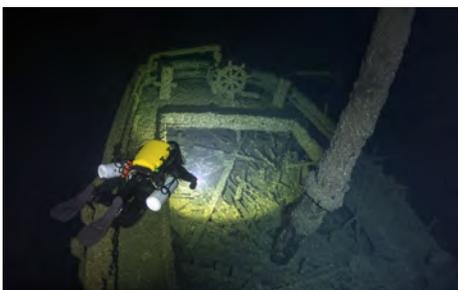


Photo: Courtesy of Jill Heinerth

A diver explores the stern of *Queen of the Lakes*, which remains upright and intact.



Courtesy of the Collection of Bowling Green State University

The wreck of the steamer *David W. Mills* lies within the proposed sanctuary.



Photo: Courtesy of Jill Heinerth

A diver inspects the bow of the suspected steamer, *Homer Warren*.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/lake-ontario/>