

Natural Area

Day Use Area

Pool
Bathhouse
Shelter

phone/
Bathhouse

trash

Sites 32-72

trash

toilet

Sites 1-31
and leantos

toilet

Parking

Ranger's
Quarters/
Park Office

Vergennes (6 mi.)

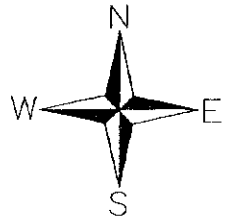
Pantou (2 mi.)

End of vehicle
access except by
handicapped permit

Campground

Dock

Ship Island *



LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Boat
Launch

Nature
Center

Handicapped
Parking

Button Island

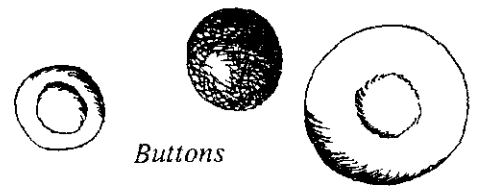
BUTTON BAY STATE PARK

Champlain Foot Trail - - - - -

Pathway to Point



BUTTON BAY STATE PARK has three distinct areas offering different recreational opportunities: a campground, a day use area and a natural area. From June through Labor Day, a resident naturalist maintains a nature center and schedules activities and field trips.



Buttons

BUTTON BAY NATURAL AREA

The natural area has a foot path through a small but impressive oak-hickory woodland with lovely vistas of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks. Old growth forests like this one are rare in Vermont, especially in the Champlain lowlands where most land was cleared for farming.

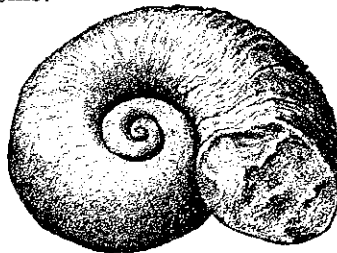
Many of the plants and shrubs are state-listed rare and endangered species. They grow here because of the rich limy soils, the cliffs along the lake-shore, and the undisturbed natural state of the environment. The naturalist frequently schedules guided walks through the natural area and can provide more detailed information.



*Ram's-head
Lady's Slipper*

The bedrock is limestone, formed about 450 million years ago. It contains some of the oldest fossilized coral in the world as well as the remains of snails, trilobites and other marine organisms.

Visit the nature center to view a collection of these. A geology pamphlet and a fossil identification sheet are available at the nature center or ranger station.



THE NAMESAKE OF BUTTON BAY

Clay deposited by a glacier 10,000 years ago has since naturally cemented into many interesting shapes, the most common of which are circular and have holes in the center. British soldiers, during the American Revolution, named the area Button Mould Bay because the round concretions reminded them of the button molds used in England.

Buttons are no longer abundant. Most have been collected or no longer wash ashore because of the reedy growth in the shallows. A button collection may be viewed at the nature center.

HISTORY

Lake Champlain has long been an important waterway. For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, Abenaki Indians fished, hunted and camped here and throughout the Otter Creek Basin.

This sheltered and strategic location has witnessed many important events in early American history. During the French and Indian War, Robert Rogers and his Rangers camped at Button Bay en route to slaughter the St. Francis Indians in Canada.

General Benedict Arnold sank America's first naval fleet here while retreating from the British after the Battle of Valcour in 1776. His military tactics delayed the British advance, helping the Americans to regroup and strengthen their forces.

*Arnold's flagship,
the Congress*

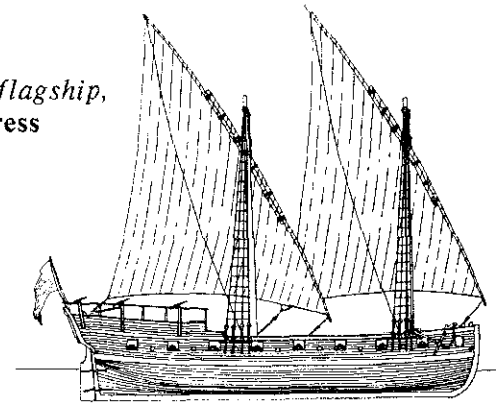


Illustration by Kevin Crisman, courtesy of the Vt. Division for Historic Preservation

In more recent times, Button Bay was the summer residence of Samuel Putnam Avery, whose family was the first to import art masterpieces from Europe. Mr. Avery purchased Button Point and Island from the state in the late 1800's. His niece, Miss Amy Welcher, inherited the land and in the 1970's sold Button Point Natural Area back to the state. Button Bay is now preserved for the protection of its unique natural beauty and the pleasure of all visitors.

The nearby Basin Harbor Maritime Museum offers maritime history exhibits, a lecture series and field trips for the public. History exhibits are also displayed at the park nature center. A self-guided driving, biking and walking tour of historic Lake Champlain is available at the nature center or ranger station.