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**130-year-old lighthouse opens in June**

Fishers Landing – Rock Island Lighthouse located on the St. Lawrence River in the heart of the 1000 Islands region of Northern New York opens to public touring in June. The opening provides unprecedented public access to one of the historical beacons that lit the way for boaters traversing the international waterway between New York and southeastern Ontario.

The lighthouse and other buildings on the island including the keeper’s quarters, nautical museum and gift shop will be open for daily touring starting June 22.

The metal tower and lantern room that serve as the top of the lighthouse were built on Rock Island in 1882. Formerly freestanding, they were moved atop the lighthouse’s current brick base at the river shoreline in 1903, bringing the structure to 50 feet. The island’s first beacon was a peak built on an existing brick home in 1847.

The lighthouse and island structures underwent significant repair following the awarding of a $1.1 million restoration grant in 2006. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation undertook the project with the goal of opening not only the grounds but all of the island buildings to the public. Work focused on the metal tower, brick base and iron spiral staircase as well as docks, bathrooms and walkways.

Access to the island is available to private watercraft and passengers of Clayton Island Tours (www.claytonislandtours.com). Tours will be self-guided and visitors will be assisted by trained docents.

Among the island’s lighthouse keepers was “Pirate of the 1000 Islands” Bill Johnston, who served from 1853 to 1861. Johnston famously plundered and burned the British steamship “Sir Robert Peel” in 1838 during the Patriot War/Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838 and is the inspiration for the 10-day “Pirates Days” festival held each August in nearby Alexandria Bay.

Admission is $3 for adults and $2 for children. Operating hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. State Parks took over the island from the National Parks Service in 1977. The island may be booked for daytime events for up to 50 people and evening events for up to 100. For bookings or more information on the attraction, contact Debra Spry, historic site assistant, at 315-775-6886 or [debra.spry@parks.ny.gov](mailto:debra.spry@parks.ny.gov).

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