



Key Facts about Ganondagan

Cultural and Regional Impact

- Ganondagan was declared a National Landmark in 1964 by the U.S. Department of the Interior and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the only New York State Historic Site dedicated to Native Americans and was designated an official “Save America’s Treasures Site” in 1999 by the federal government.
- Ganondagan was the principle and largest town of the Seneca people, once populated with 150 bark longhouses and 4500 residents. Considered the final resting place of the Mother of Nations, who inspired the warring nations of this region to join together to form the Iroquois Confederacy, it is a revered landmark to the Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Mohawk and Tuscarora people.
- Ganondagan is the site of the only authentic reconstruction of a 17th Century Seneca bark longhouse in New York State. It is core to one of the few Native nations in the eastern United States that was able to preserve its cultural and historic identity as well as its government, its language, and some of its land base.
- Annually, Ganondagan has shared the authentic history of the Seneca and Haudenosaunee people with up to 45,000 people through special events, site visits, interpretation and outreach programs running from May 1 through the end of October. Year-round programming of more than 20 different events has been planned for 2010 to expand its educational objectives. Because of Ganondagan’s unique offerings, it draws domestic and international tourism which contributes significantly to both Ontario and Monroe County’s revenue base.
- Ganondagan’s key events, such as its Native American Dance & Music Festival, its Winter Games & Sports and its Living History Event, share important facets of U.S. history, show the Haudenosaunee influence on contemporary life, and introduce thousands of visitors to the Seneca and Iroquois people of today.
- Native American scholarly, artistic, dance and musical expressions are extraordinarily diverse. Native American artists have few opportunities to showcase their talents to new audiences, who in turn have few to no opportunities to experience Native artists. Ganondagan has presented over 1065 Native scholars and artists to almost 500,000 citizens in rural, suburban and urban communities, since 1998. This exposure heightens audience awareness about this diversity and contributes to the livelihood of Native families.

Educational Impact

- Ganondagan is the only destination in New York State where school children can come to learn about and be immersed in Native American life, as mandated in NYS curriculum. These children and their teachers are introduced to historically and culturally accurate information by Native site interpreters, leading to greater understanding and the breakdown of barriers and stereotypes.
- Ganondagan provides consultation to and collaborates with local colleges and universities, including Rochester Institute of Technology, Nazareth College, University of Rochester, Cornell University, St. John Fisher, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Keuka College, Monroe Community College and Finger Lakes Community College on service learning projects, conservation initiatives, cultural programs and environmental concerns. Achievements since fall 2009, as a result of these relationships, include: the development of a series of children's books about contemporary Seneca life; the curation and presentation of a high profile art exhibit showcasing the works of seven Haudenosaunee artists; the initiation of an environmental project to study native grasses; performance by Ganondagan's dancers at the re-opening of Nazareth College Arts Center.
- Ganondagan's website and social media interactions have become vital resources for the public, educators, students and researchers, as evidenced by research queries received and its demonstrable growth each month over the past year. Google analytics show "virtual visits" from 53 international countries and territories and from 49 of the 50 United States. Ganondagan's website is on track to receive more than 75,000 visits during 2010.

Environmental Impact

- In 1987, Ganondagan encompassed 237 acres of land. Today, it consists of 619 acres, and its five miles of hiking trails are the hub of more than 40 miles of trails that form the Genesee & Finger Lakes regional trail system. These trails provide health-oriented natural recreation for tens of thousands of individuals and families annually. Several of Ganondagan's trails are marked with unique historic and ethnobotanical signage for self-guided learning.
- Ganondagan is one of the few locations open to the public in NYS where visitors can see heirloom Seneca varieties of vegetables including Iroquois White Corn and medicinal herb gardens grown using traditional Native American organic agricultural techniques originating from traditions that predate European contact. Ganondagan has also undertaken projects to remove introduced plant species and restore the indigenous plants and grasses that were originally found in the Seneca homelands.
- A formal year round teaching and research partnership has been established in 2010 between Rochester Institute of Technology, GSHS and Friends of Ganondagan. The Indigenous Arts and Science Center at Ganondagan (IASC) is to be located at the Historic Site and will increase Native American students and Haudenosaunee participation in hands-on community learning and research programs that support Native Science as a method for discovery and innovation; and, help build a broader community of Native scientists in the country.