

## Former Colchester Reef Lighthouse relit using solar power

SHELBURNE — The Colchester Reef Lighthouse, which protected traffic on Lake Champlain from 1871 to 1933 and is now an exhibit at Shelburne Museum, shines its light once again.

Through the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard station in Burlington and a local historian of Lake Champlain lighthouses, the light has been relit with blinking bulbs powered by solar-powered cells. It is the first time the light has shone since the lighthouse was decommissioned in 1933; the structure was moved to Shelburne Museum in 1952.

There are 11 historic lighthouses remaining on or near Lake Champlain. The Colchester Reef Lighthouse is the seventh to be relit since 2000 thanks largely to the efforts of lighthouse historian George Clifford of Plattsburgh, NY.

Coast Guard members installed the lighting system and will maintain it. The new bulbs are 55 watts, certainly very mild by lighthouse standards, and are mounted in the lighthouse's Fresnel lens. The resulting blinking light is visible to passers-by on U.S. Route 7.

The Colchester Reef Lighthouse was designed in 1869 and began operating on Lake Champlain in 1871. It was home to 11 successive lighthouse keepers until being replaced by an automatic beacon in 1933. Whale oil first lit the lighthouse, then kerosene, and today solar power.