

*Rome Sand Plains
Consolidated Management
Plan*

Appendices

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APPENDIX A

**STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW
SUMMARIES**

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Norm Denny
Telephone: 315-361-6500
Position: Oneida Nation
Date: September 28, 2001

Explained Purpose of Project: To develop a Comprehensive Management Plan for the public and conservancy owned lands in the Rome Sand Plains. The Plan is being prepared by a Team consisting of landowners, interested agencies and organizations and State and local government. The Chazen Companies has been hired to help prepare the plan. One of our tasks is to interview stakeholders to find out what goals and issues they may have with respect to the Sand Plains and what they would like to see happen in the future. You have been identified by the Team as a person with either particular knowledge or a stake in the future of the Sand Plains. Would you mind taking a few minutes to answer some questions?

Response: Mr. Denny said that Mr. Arthur Pierce had asked him to call me back. Mr. Denny questioned whether or not the Oneida Nation was really a stakeholder in the plan, because the Study Area is not within the Oneida Nation's land claim area. I discussed the perception by the general public that the Oneida Nation had a strong land ethic and could help in the efforts to protect the ecological resources on the state and conservancy lands within the study area. Mr. Denny indicated that the Oneida Nation would like to help its neighbors where possible.

I asked, given the offer to help their neighbors, whether the Oneida Nation would be amenable to providing the digital aerial photography data for the Rome Sand Plains area. I explained that the digital aerial image was an important part of our GIS database to help develop the management plan of the area. I indicated that Joe Homburger of the NYSDEC had previously spoken with Steve Tuttle of the Oneida Nation about the availability of this data. Mr. Denny indicated that Steve Tuttle was no longer with the Oneida Nation and that they were determining how their environmental programs should proceed. However, he said he would carry this request to the leadership of the Nation. I indicated I would fax him a map indicating the boundaries of the study area. The fax was sent. The other questions on the interview form were not asked.

I then received a telephone call from Art Pierce. He has not had very much involvement in the Rome Sand Plains, but had an opportunity to speak with both Steve Tuttle and Joe Homburger of the NYSDEC. Steve told Art that he had attended RSP meetings in the past, and Art said he would like to continue that involvement. The Oneida Nation would like to be kept informed about any public meeting dates in the future, and be kept on the mailing list for the project.

Art is continuing to look for the aerial photographs, and will try to coordinate that effort with the leadership of the Oneida Nation and the RSP Management Team.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Barbara Henderson
Telephone: 518-673-1045
Position: Regional Development
Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission
Date: September 27, 2001

Explained Purpose of Project: To develop a Comprehensive Management Plan for the public and conservancy owned lands in the Rome Sand Plains. The Plan is being prepared by a Team consisting of landowners, interested agencies and organizations and State and local government. The Chazen Companies has been hired to help prepare the plan. One of our tasks is to interview stakeholders to find out what goals and issues they may have with respect to the Sand Plains and what they would like to see happen in the future. You have been identified by the Team as a person with either particular knowledge or a stake in the future of the Sand Plains. Would you mind taking a few minutes to answer some questions?

What do you think are the major assets or best things about the RSP?

She had just received the Visual Resource Map and was in the process of looking through that document.

Geologic/Ecological Resources. The area is relatively pristine. Wood Creek is very historic. Wonderful recreational opportunities. Is scenic and beautiful.

What do you think are the major problems or issues with respect to the RSP?

Unauthorized use of the trails by different groups who are not as careful with the ecology of the area as others. It will be difficult to keep the ecological resources in their current condition, so that they are not degraded, and so that rare species are protected.

Excess trash in areas, hunting on properties without authorization, kids having parties and destroying facilities constructed for the RSP.

Need to educate the nearby public about the value of the resources. Need to educate the distant public about the presence of the RSP, the unique items in the area, so that it becomes either a destination or a stop in a destination trip.

What kinds of goals would you recommend for the future management of the RSP?

Protect and maintain the ecology, geology, and historic resources of the area.

Do you have any specific recommendations or suggestions for things you would like to see happen in the RSP or in this Plan?

No, not really. She has been working on this issue for a long time, and is in consensus with the ideas that have been formed by the core group working on this management plan. She does think that there needs to be a stronger connection between the Albany Pine Bush and the Rome Sand Plains Pine Bush, with each entity aware of the other and promoting the other, and encourage people to check out the different things to do between the two, or along the way. The general public is not aware of the availability of these different things to do.

The Heritage Corridor Commission includes 8 counties in New York State. The Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission is a public benefit corporation in New York State, with a mission to enhance economic development through heritage tourism. She is, on her own, also interested in protecting the resources of the Sand Plains. She thinks the area is the type of place people will want to visit and revisit, and it enhances the quality of life of the residents in the area. She has worked on interpretative signage, especially at Wood Creek. She is also involved in the Scenic By-Way Revolutionary Trail. She sees the Rome Sand Plains as one resource that fits into to other larger projects in eastern New York State.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Christopher Haver,

Telephone: 518-785-1800 x 218

Position: Executive Director, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission

Date: September 28, 2001

Explained Purpose of Project: To develop a Comprehensive Management Plan for the public and conservancy owned lands in the Rome Sand Plains. The Plan is being prepared by a Team consisting of landowners, interested agencies and organizations and State and local government. The Chazen Companies has been hired to help prepare the plan. One of our tasks is to interview stakeholders to find out what goals and issues they may have with respect to the Sand Plains and what they would like to see happen in the future. You have been identified by the Team as a person with either particular knowledge or a stake in the future of the Sand Plains. Would you mind taking a few minutes to answer some questions?

I told Chris that we were looking for other local contacts for the Rome Sand Plains Management Plan. He suggested the following:

For burn plans, one should talk to Chris Haver, since he is still the State Fire Manager for the Nature Conservancy, in addition to being the Executive Director of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission.

Bill Paterson of the CNY Nature Conservancy (Jim Howe's shop) has been working closely with the Rome Sand Plains Management Plan. He is leaving shortly for the Long Island Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

Sandy Bonano of the CNY Nature Conservancy, also out of Jim Howe's shop.

Neil Gifford of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission is the Preserve's Ecologist, and is responsible for the restoration of the Karner Blue. He is at x 214.

Joel Hecht is the Director of Fire Restoration and of Stewardship at the Albany Pine Bush.

Chris was not aware of any contacts in the Rome Sand Plains beyond those mentioned above. The last time he was at the Rome Sand Plains was 1994.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Ernest Williams

Telephone: 315-859-4387

Position: Professor of Biology, Hamilton College

Date: September 28, 2001

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What do you think are the major assets or best things about the RSP?

Mosaic habitat. Wet and dry habitats. Within 100 feet you can have a sandy pitch pine area and adjacent to that a sphagnum bog.

Other unusual habitats such as Huckleberry Swamp.

Some unusual species there, various breeding red-shoulder hawks, frosted elfin, bog turtles, unusual turtles.

Historic components, like Wood Creek. He does not have as much knowledge about this.

Nice interesting piece of nature. Not well developed. This has protected habitats. Trails available for people to use.

What do you think are the major problems or issues with respect to the RSP?

Main issue is habitat. Uncertain how fire history established the Rome Sand Plains. Succession is taking place. How much open space should be identified as a management goal, and an plan of how to get to that goal. Fire use to be part of the management of the area, but fire is a tricky tool. The advantage of the area is that the mosaic of wet and dry allows fire to be more easily controlled than in other habitats such as the prairie, where fire can easily get out of control. The interspersation of bogs makes fire an easier tool to use here. However, it is still tricky, and fire is only one option for management.

Regardless of how it is done, the RSP cannot lose any more open space to succession.

What kinds of goals would you recommend for the future management of the RSP?

Main goal would be to keep open habitat for lupines, and other open habitat species, the dearest to him being lupines and frosted elfins. This might require fire management.

The management team is doing things right by not sealing off the lands from the public. Important to tell the public about things that they are seeing and educate them about the environment, like not trampling the lupines.

Maintain unusual species composition, including spagnum bogs, huckleberry swamp.

Maintain unusual species.

Do you have any specific recommendations or suggestions for things you would like to see happen in the RSP or in this Plan?

Joint management team is a great idea, and he supports the continuation of this management method. This is the way to manage the property, and should be continued.

Adding more lands to the RSP would help.

Should prepare plans for the restoration of lupines and open habitat for the frosted elfin.

Since he was a college professor, I also asked him about educational and research opportunities. He said that the two things were on slightly different tracks. For research he feels that the following issues should be addressed:

- Role of fire as a means of controlling succession. We have one study on the history of fire in the sand plains. Is it representative or not?
- Aquifers/soil structure/geology under the RSP. What is the waterflow, the direction of water movement, are toxins getting in and if so how, and what will they impact?
- Research the abundance and presence of stuff...more than just birds and mammals, but plants, turtles, elfins, butterflies. Get to know the flora and fauna of the RSP better. History and what produced, don't have a good understanding.

- How to expand lupine colonies, and propagate lupines.

Education – get public to understand and appreciate what the RSP are, and why they are they, and why they are interesting. More marked trails than just two of them. Educate how the public's behavior can have an impact on the habitat. He saw an ATV traveling through a large lupine patch, and that behavior needs to be modified through education.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: James DiBella

Telephone: 315-336-7890

Position: Chair, City of Rome Planning Board

Date: September 28, 2001

Explained Purpose of Project: To develop a Comprehensive Management Plan for the public and conservancy owned lands in the Rome Sand Plains. The Plan is being prepared by a Team consisting of landowners, interested agencies and organizations and State and local government. The Chazen Companies has been hired to help prepare the plan. One of our tasks is to interview stakeholders to find out what goals and issues they may have with respect to the Sand Plains and what they would like to see happen in the future. You have been identified by the Team as a person with either particular knowledge or a stake in the future of the Sand Plains. Would you mind taking a few minutes to answer some questions?

What do you think are the major assets or best things about the RSP?

He said that, honestly, he is not all that familiar with that section of the City of Rome. He knows the RSP area is on the west side of the city. He did go mushroom picking in the Rome Sand Plains once, and has visited the Izaak Walton League property with his family to go hiking. He knows that by being on the City of Rome Planning Board he can provide some protection to the area. He said the Rome Sand Plains was another geologic wonder that needs to be protected.

What do you think are the major problems or issues with respect to the RSP?

Ignorance and money. The people in the area don't want anybody standing in their way to make a buck off of the land. Money and ignorance.

What kinds of goals would you recommend for the future management of the RSP?

Keep the politicians out of the process. Keep money out of the politician's hands. That way there is no politician giving approval to a project because the project proponent gave money to the politician to help his political campaign. He feels that the public needs to be educated about the area, and the area needs to be preserved.

Do you have any specific recommendations or suggestions for things you would like to see happen in the RSP or in this Plan?

The whole process of rewriting the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rome should include the Rome Sand Plains, as well as the Erie and Barge Canals in an effort to sell the area as a complete package for tourism. There is no one big attraction in the area, but instead a lot of little afternoon trips and weekend get-aways. Need to offer people more, especially the outdoorsy yuppies who have come of age doing outdoorsy things for fun.

He is aware of other people who are doing work in the area, including Bruce Carpenter working on rivers and streams and Roger Bartholomew.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Angela Petty

Telephone: 315-339-4434

Position: 3rd Ward City Counselor, and lives in RSP area. Proposed canoe launch is behind her house.

Date: September 28, 2001

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What do you think are the major assets or best things about the RSP?

Natural assets, beauty. She saw that trees had been cut down in the area near her house...stripped the area, which was unfortunate. She appreciates the natural resources.

What do you think are the major problems or issues with respect to the RSP?

Trying to develop the area. Putting in the dump/landfill near Meadows Road. The sand is not a good area for a landfill, but still, some people want to sell their property for a dump.

What kinds of goals would you recommend for the future management of the RSP?

Sand Plains people need to work with the city, and the City Counsel. Need to figure out a way to balance the competing interests of development versus saving the natural resources.

Do you have any specific recommendations or suggestions for things you would like to see happen in the RSP or in this Plan?

Is positive about the route going in terms of lupines and walking paths. Ro Anne Destito has been helpful in moving the project forward. 'Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rome should help the planning progress.

The TNC and IWL and NYSDEC need to be cognizant of the fact that properties go off the tax rolls when they are bought for preservation. Need to examine the development potential of some properties and work compatibly between development and preservation. This area is the only untouched undeveloped land in western Rome. Development anywhere else in the area requires demolition of existing facilities. So this area is important for development, and that should be considered in the planning process.