

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Kathy O'Brien

Telephone: (518) 402-8864

Position: NYS Karner Blue Recovery Biologist

Date: October 3, 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?

Does not have significant personal knowledge about RSP. Visited area a couple of times, especially lupine patches. Area with lupines is a valuable wildlife habitat. Pine plains has community value as open community.

Area can also be used as education areas for schools and boy scouts working on projects related to habitat management programs, or wildlife management. There is also a nice boggy wetlands, and valuable habitats associated with the vernal wetlands wildlife habitats. Also good for water recharge.

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

Cannot address issues specific to the RSP without specific knowledge of area. However, based on experience at APB, may have problems in with different land ownerships and trying to develop a coherent management plan when cooperation between lands owners might be less than ideal. She understands that the state lands and other conservancy organizations are working together. However, non-participating adjacent owners can be a problem for management.

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

Needs to develop sustainable management goals for habitat restoration. Goals should usually be restoration first, maintenance second. Are finding that it is taking a long time to establish, let alone maintain, habitat in the APB. Two potential recovery units have been identified in NYS for the recovery of the Karner Blue Butterfly in NYS. One in Tonawanda – a very small area, and the RSP. Of the two, the RSP seems to have the greater likelihood of success. It is necessary to establish more than one butterfly location, and preferably two in the event that there is a catastrophe that wipes out habitat.

Discussed RSP as a recovery unit. Asked whether or not Karner Blue Butterflies and Frosted Elfins get along. Research suggests that they seem to get along, although there is interest in looking at the use of plants by larvae to see if there is competition. Frosted elfins eat the fruit and leaves, while Karner Blue larvae eat the leaves. There are sites existing where Karner Blues and Frosted Elfins co-exist, including Saratoga Airport. A report by Dale Schweitzer said that not only these two but the dusty wings also existed together, and typically the dusty wings drops out of the three first under stress. In New Hampshire, there is a scrawny habitat area where elfins and dusty wings co-habitat.

Discussed fact that we were incorporating portions of the Karner Blue Recovery Plan into this document as points of discussion and identification of research needs. Kathy said that it was an old plan, and that a new plan is being developed. She hopes that the RSP UMP can be guided by the Karner Blue Recovery Plan.

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

Goals: Public Access. From a habitat standpoint, there should be no ATVs in prime lupine habitat areas. ATVs are not allowed on state lands, except by the disabled who cannot walk. ATVs cause lots of damage, running over low growing vegetation.

Horses are also a problem in the APB. Do damage to trails, especially when they go off trail. Leave behind manure which is a problem for hikers, but also introduces weed seeds into areas one is trying to manage for lupines.

If she had her druthers, all areas, especially sensitive areas, would only be accessible on foot. Snowmobile trails cause some problems due to off-trail

riding, and the compacting nature of the snowmobile, which causes the snow to turn to ice, which does not allow it to still have insulating value, allowing plants underneath to be harmed in cold weather. Width of trail system, and where it goes needs to be taken into consideration.

Project should maintain hunting in order to control deer population, which feeds on lupines. Best way is with the antlerless deer taking, even though there sometimes is a problem with public perception of activity. Also need to look at conflicts of trail useage and hunting. They are doing signage at trail heads in the Wilton Preserve.

Project needs to include public access and education. Very important for helping people to understand why the project is being undertaken, what the habitat is, why it is different, and how and why it should be protected.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Paul Evans

Telephone: 315-793-2498

Position: Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator/ Reg. Landscape Architect
NYSDOT

Date: October 4, 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?

Diversity of the area, the species. Access to the area, the location is very good. Uniqueness. The Albany Pine Barrens is the only other area like this in the state.

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

Believes that the area needs a good management plan before any new access is proposed. Important that the access plan looks out for protecting sensitive areas. Have a good plan in place before access is planned. This is critical.

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

1st – Management plan in place prior to them advertising the area more and drawing in more visitors.

2nd – Access

3rd – Advertising to the public.

Development of access within the sand plains should be narrow pathworks.

Developing seating and reflective areas and interpretive areas.

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

The project should be looked at from both the inside and the outside. Important to view the project from within the boundaries and from access from exterior to the boundaries. Develop bike and pedestrian parking areas. Preserve protection of sensitive and unique species and areas first, then develop the plan to allow access to the areas second.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Girard Plant

Telephone: 315-797-4642

Position: Advocate for the Disabled, Resource Center for Independent Living

Date: October 4, 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?

Interview:

This was not an interview that followed the Rome Sand Plains Interview format. I found this agency by searching the internet for disabled advocates and Oneida County. Girard Plant, the person I spoke with, is the advocate out of the Resource Center for Independent Living. He has been in a wheelchair for 26 years, and has used a variety of wheelchair types on a variety of surfaces and situations.

He said that the most important thing in a nature area is to have clear disabled parking identified, and then to have signage and information from that location as to paths or areas that are available or accessible. There are a number of studies that discuss accessibility by disabled individuals, including those in wheel chairs, scooters, walkers, as well as blind or visual impaired. He said that some material is better for wheelchairs than other. Signage is very important. Good to have written signage above and braille below. I asked him if all the trails in an area should be accessible, or just some of them. He said that he likes as much as possible to be accessible, but he understands that sometimes terrain or other difficulties cause that not to be possible.

The Center for Independent Living is not a place where people live. It is an office that helps people with disabilities get through the system to find answers and assistance to meet their needs. For example, they help with getting disability insurance, and medical care. They refer people to legal aid. They also do site surveys to see whether or not places of public accommodation are ADA compliant. His office would be responsible for the

Rome Sand Plains area. However, he is leaving this job to move to Massachusetts around November 3rd.

He suggested a Danny McClaine, who is an ADA "guru" on design and accessibility, and serves on the General Access Committee. He is located out of the Center for Independent Living's office in Herkimer and is at 315-866-7245. He is also in a wheelchair but drives his own car. He can evaluate a facility for compliance with the federal design guidelines, and could also provide advice on compliance on proposed projects. I asked if he had a fee. I don't know if I understood the response correctly, looking back on my notes now. He says that they advertise free barrier free design advice, and they also often do work on their own time. Regardless, this group appears to be a good resource on this issue. Perhaps they can help in the design of access and accessibility or review designs prepared by someone else.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Todd Raynes

Telephone: 315-859-4698 trayne@hamilton.edu

Position: Professor of Geology, Hamilton College

Date: October 5, 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?

The area is not far away from him. It provides a unique set of soils and hydrological characteristics to study that are not like anything else that is nearby. It is a great place to take students. Also now the access is easier than in recent years with the improvements in parking. Many of the private lands that have been sold to the TNC/DEC provide plenty of access to public lands.

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

Continued concern about access, who should access and how it is used. It would be nice to have even more access with greater trails, but is concerned about the negative aspect of that, regarding illegal dumping and other illegal activities given the remote nature of the area. Is also concerned that activities in areas adjacent to wetlands in the RSP are having adverse impacts on the water quality in the wetlands. For example, the Tarrintino property adjacent to the Izaak Walton League property is a place where old tanks and pipes and materials are being dumped in the back near the wetland, by the landowner. What impact is it having on water quality?

Concerned that there is the potential that the sites could be closed off from educational uses. He doesn't think that would happen, but would be concerned if it did.

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

See the area kept as it is with more access and trails. Need trails through the dunes, and wetlands...more parking spaces near the peat bogs. He only uses two where the van can be left, and also knows of parking on non-public lands to access state lands. Needs more access to the interior.

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

It would be great to have a trail out to one of the bogs. The trail that winds through the dunes off of the Hogsback/Wood creek area should continue into the peat bog area. He understands that the peat bog is fragile (botany/hydrology), but thought should be given to how a trail could be developed that would minimize human impacts.

He knows that there is a relatively new display at Hogsback parking dealing with the geology and flora of the area, but the display doesn't talk about human history and humans' impact on the area. He thinks that should be included so that people understand that the area by the dune cross-section was a sand pit, and this is why there is a big flat area in there. Or the fact that some of the peat bogs were mined for peat moss. This information should be included in the interpretive signage, so people understand why it is what it is.

Research/Education/Interpretation

This got us talking about research and education... and other ideas.

- Carbon dating of layers in peat bogs to develop history.
- Hydrogeological work – examine relationship between the water in the peat bogs and the sand aquifer below.
- Why are the water levels between the bogs different than the sand.
- Why is the chemistry between the peat bogs and the sand aquifer different?
- Wetland research. Are the wetlands discharge or recharge areas, or do they do both - seasonal variations.
- Relationship between the age and chemicals in the sand aquifer and the bedrock aquifer. The rural potable water use is mostly in the aquifer, but in the RSP, the use is the sand aquifer. Is there a difference between water quality/quantity between the two aquifers.
- Flow and toxics. Is the Tannery Road land fill (state superfund site) having an adverse impact and the aquifer.

- Can peat bogs affect contaminant removal from the aquifer flows.

Education

He takes his soils class out to RSP to look at development and structure and profile of soils in the old dunes, in the bogs and in the area between the dunes and the bog. He takes his spring hydrogeology class out to look at wells that flow versus wells that don't flow to examine why. Looks at simple chemistry differences between water in the two wells, one of which is in a peat bog. Other years they have done testing of the temperatures of water in the wells in the sand near Wood Creek. Mostly sophomore and junior level classes. He is interested in curriculum development to share with high school teachers, and has wanted to go out with some HS teachers to share information but has been too busy. Had a high school student, Megan Heyes that was part of the Regional Program in Excellence through BOCES that did an independent study project on hydrology.

He is very appreciative of the Rome Sand Plains Management Team acquiring land and making it available to the public.