

APPENDIX H

**STAGE 1A CULTURAL RESOURCES
REPORT**



STAGE 1A ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION
ROME SAND PLAINS
TOWN OF ROME
ONEIDA COUNTY, NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Stage 1A sensitivity study is to document the potential prehistoric and historic archaeological sensitivity of the location of the Rome Sand Plains in the Towns of Rome and Verona, Oneida County, New York through the review of existing archival, cartographic and published references and then, if necessary, to make recommendations regarding possible testing. In order to provide a context for evaluating any identified resources within the parcel itself, this survey includes a synthesis of published and unpublished prehistoric and historic data for the immediate area surrounding the project area.

The project area is located in the Town of Rome, Oneida County, New York. The project area comprises approximately 5000 acres. It lies to the north of Wood Creek, west of Seifert Corners. The parcel is irregular in shape. See Figure 1 for the location of the project area.

This study is organized in the following manner: first, a section describes the geography and physical setting of the project area; second, a section follows on the prehistoric sensitivity of the area; third, a review of the historic sensitivity of the area; and fourth, the conclusions and recommendations.



GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL SETTING

The Rome Sand Plains project area is delineated by Wood Creek to the south; Canada and Beaver Creeks to the east; Humaston Road to the north; and in the west by Lauther Road. At Teelins Pond the project area boundary juts west following an artificial line approximately 1½ miles then turns back southeast to meet with Wood Creek, thus completing the enclosure. This area consists of approximately 5,000 acres, about a third of which is low-lying freshwater wetland, the rest being composed more or less of the Rome Sand Plains themselves. The majority of the wetland area is situated in the southern portion of the management area, roughly flanking the length of the northern bank of Wood Creek. The exceptions are Huckleberry Swamp located in the north-central portion of the management area and, just south of this, some meandering wetlands adjoining the northern headwaters of Beaver Brook as they wind through the dunes area of the Rome Sand Plains. The wetlands are a combination of bogs, wooded wetlands, emergent marsh and riparian stream-side wetlands (Homburger 1986:1).

Although some local topographical fluctuations certainly exist, particularly among the now forested crests and troughs of the dunes, the land generally slopes gently from northeast to southwest, ranging in elevation from 450 feet north of Huckleberry Swamp to 400 feet along the Wood Creek bottom.

The largest modern thoroughfares to pass through the project area include Tannery Road, Oswego Road, Hogsback Road and Lauther Road, New York State Route 49 as well as the recently abandoned Penn Central Railroad. The only development within the project area is represented by scattered houses along the above-mentioned thoroughfares and a trailer park located roughly ¼-mile southeast of the junction of Oswego and Humaston Roads.

The Rome Sand Plains are some of the best examples in eastern North America of glacially deposited eolian sediments from the last ice age (c. 70,000 - 10,000 B.P.). Similar natural phenomena are common surrounding the Adirondack Mountain escarpment, but are particularly abundant in central New York State west of Albany (Cressey 1977:21). Here, between 16,000 - 10,000 years ago, when the Ontarian Lobe of the Laurentide Ice Sheet began to recede north, the glacial meltwaters gradually formed successive, and often very considerable, bodies of water filling the deep glacially-scoured basins left across New England and northern/north-central New York. In addition to the largest glacial bodies of water, Lakes Maumee, Iroquois and Albany (which inundated the Erie Basin, Ontario Basin and Mohawk Valley, respectively) were numerous smaller glacial lakes which developed in the north-south oriented valleys adjacent to the glacial front in northern New York State (e.g. the Finger Lakes).

The Rome Sand Plains originally formed part of the ancient beach along the southern side of glacial Lake Iroquois, the ancestor of Lake Ontario. The sand itself is actually lacustrine in origin. Over the course of several thousands of years, however, wind activity on the lake gradually carried portions of the ancient shoreline south and east until an accumulated series of inland sand plains and large dunes were created in present-day Rome. These have since become virtually immobile due to the forest that now covers them, species of which include white pine, pitch pine, hemlock, black

spruce, tamarack, high bush blueberry and oaks. Generally, evergreens dominate the area with hardwoods, primarily oak, occurring in better-drained areas. Combined with the classic bog vegetation of the aforementioned wetland areas, the forested sand plains and dunes provide a unique, resource-abundant habitat for unusual faunal and floral communities (Homburger 1999: Attachment B:1).

The project area is situated on the border of Cressey's (1977:28) subregions H-3 and H-6. The former represents the *Ontario Ridge and Swampland*, an area of poorly drained soil "characterized by man swamps and ridged ground moraine" (Cressey 1977:29). The latter comprises the *Oneida Lake Plain*, "a nearly featureless plain south of Oneida Lake which contains broad swamps and mucklands (ibid.:29). The underlying rock formations are shale, sandstone and shaly sandstone (ibid.:24).

Carter (1977:26) categorizes the project area under climatic Region IV, or one which experiences cold, snowy winters (January mean temperature=25 F) and warm, dry summers (July mean temperature of 70-71 F). One of the driest areas in the state, Region IV only receives 23 to 40 inches of precipitation annually. The nearby Erie-Ontario Plain, however, averages 8 inches of annual snowfall. It should be noted that the project area is situated just south of the Adirondack uplands (Region I), characterized by extremely cold, snowy winters and very cool, wet summers (Carter 1977:73-75). These conditions occasionally effect the more moderate climate found through the project area locale.

The Principal Investigator inspected the Rome Sand Plains project area during March 2002. A combination of pedestrian and windshield surveys was used in this effort. The inspection began at the eastern end of the project area. Plate 1 illustrates the conditions along the eastern boundary. Canada Creek is seen looking southwest from the former Penn Central Railroad bridge. Stands of young trees can be seen along both banks. The right-hand bank lies within the project area. Plate 2 provides a view of Wood Creek looking southwest from the Oswego Road bridge. Again both banks are forested. The right-hand bank lies within the project area, and includes the location of Armstrong's Cottage or Tavern. Plate 3 is taken from a location on the Oswego Road slightly northwest of Sand Plains Chapel. It shows the wooded conditions prevalent along the road. Most of the trees in this area are conifers.

The south-central portion of the project area is characterized by a band of marshes running from Canada Creek west to Beaver Brook. Plate 4 illustrates one of these marshes looking northeast from Hogsback Road. Wood Creek lies to the south of these marshes, and forms the southern project area boundary. Plate 5 shows Wood Creek looking northeast from the New York State Route 49 bridge. Plate 6 shows part of the western part of the project area adjacent to Teelins Pond. The pond was formed by damming part of Beaver Brook. This view is taken looking northeast from New York State Route 49. The right-hand bank lies within the project area.



PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the project evaluation process, this sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished sources in the files of the New York State Museum, Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, the Research Branch of the New York Public Library, the files of the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and data on file at Greenhouse Consultants. The area searched was a two mile radius centered on the project area.

A total of five confirmed prehistoric sites or site complexes are located within two miles of the project area.

New York State Museum site 9102 is labeled **A** in Table 1 and Figure 2. This site was reported by former New York State Archaeologist Arthur C. Parker during 1922. Parker numbered this site ACP-ONID-18B. He describes the site only as camps located along Canada Creek. No information regarding artifacts recovered, cultural affiliation or date range is offered. Canada Creek forms most of the eastern boundary of the project area, so a portion of Site **A** lies within the project area. The remainder lies to the east and north. This location includes the historic site of Gilbert's or Ranny's Tavern, north of Wood Creek and east of Canada Creek. Gil Hagerty investigated this site during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Hagerty found prehistoric material adjacent to the project area (Hagerty n.d.:1-2). This evidence makes it likely that related remains could exist within the southeastern part of the project area.

B in Table 1 and Figure 2 refers to New York State Museum Site 9103. This is Parker's site ACP-ONID-18C. It is described as camps along Brandy Brook. Once again, no information regarding artifacts recovered, cultural affiliation or date range is supplied. Brandy Brook is a tributary of Canada Creek. Site **B** lies east and northeast of the project area. The southwestern end of the site lies just to the east of the project area.

The next nearest site to the project area is New York State Museum site 4146. See **C** in Table 1 and Figure 2. This is another site reported by Parker during 1922. He numbered it ACP-ONID-38. Parker describes this site as a burial place for both EuroAmericans and Indians located to the west of Fort Bull. This description implies a date range including the contact period and possibly the preceding Late Woodland period. This site lies approximately 1.0 miles southeast of the eastern end of the project area.

D in Table 1 and Figure 2 refers to New York State Museum Site 7648. This site is known to the museum only through notes on the old 15 minute series U.S.G.S. Taberg, N.Y. quadrangle. No information regarding the site type, artifacts found, cultural affiliation or date range is included. Site **D** lies approximately 1.0 miles northwest of the northwestern corner of the project area.

The final site found during this search is New York State Museum Site 4126. See **E** in Table 1 and Figure 2. This site was reported by Parker as ACP-ONID-18A. Parker describes it only as camps located along Mud Creek. Again, no information on artifacts recovered, cultural affiliation or date range is supplied. Mud Creek is a tributary to



Wood Creek. Site E lies approximately 1.9 miles southeast of the eastern end of the project area.

In terms of potential prehistoric sensitivity, the project area was evaluated from two points of view:

1. the proximity of known prehistoric sites in or near the project area; and,
2. the presence of fresh water drainage courses in general, and particularly the identification of river or stream confluence situations, where two or more drainages come together, providing access to both water and food supplies of both systems.

There are numerous sources of fresh water available throughout the project area. Wood Creek forms the southern project area boundary. Beaver Brook runs from northeast to southwest through the project area, joining Wood Creek near the southwestern corner. Canada Creek forms most of the eastern project area boundary. It joins Wood Creek at the southeastern corner of the parcel. Beaver Creek is a tributary of Canada Creek. Beaver Creek runs from northwest to southeast along the northeastern project area boundary. The project area includes three confluences. Beaver Creek feeds Canada Creek near the northeastern corner. Canada Creek feeds Wood Creek near the southeastern corner, and Beaver Brook feeds Wood Creek near the southwestern corner. In addition to the streams, there are extensive marshes and swamps within the project area. These include marshes along most of the north bank of Wood Creek, and Huckleberry Swamp to the north of the east end of Beaver Brook. The streams could have supplied fresh water, fish and possibly shellfish. They would also have attracted game, as would the marshes and swamps.

At the time of European Contact, the tribe that controlled the Wood Creek Valley including the project area, was the Oneida. Their territory extended east into the upper Mohawk Valley and west to Oneida Lake. They were a member of the Iroquois Confederacy (Campisi 1978:481). The area just to the east of the project area was known as "the Oneida Carrying Place," which refers to the portage between Wood Creek and the Mohawk River. This was the only interruption in the water route from Albany to Oneida Lake (Hauptman 1988:330).

In conclusion, any locations with relatively elevated land near the streams or marshes would be suitable locations for hunting or fishing camps. The best locations would be adjacent to the three confluences. During the later part of the contact period most of the project area was at most only sparsely inhabited. According to the researchers on the Durham Project, locations immediately adjacent to Wood Creek "... remained uninhabited, even by Native Americans, to the closing years of the 1700's ..." (Lord 1992:Oak Orchard Page 1). This statement does not apply to the preceding prehistoric period.



TABLE 1
Known Prehistoric Sites within Two Miles of the Project Area

Site Name	Registration #	References	Date Range	Description
A.	NYSM 9102 ACP-ONID-18B	Parker 1922:635	?	Camps
B.	NYSM 9103 ACP-ONID-18C	Parker 1922:635	?	Camps
C.	NYSM 4146 ACP-ONID-38	Parker 1922:636	Contact ?	Burials of EuroAmerican & Indians
D.	NYSM 7648	Old Site Files Taberg 15 min quad	?	?
E.	NYSM 4126 ACP-ONID-18A	Parker 1922:635	?	Camps