APPENDIX J

SIGNAGE
What are the Rome Sand Plains?

Created 10,000 years ago at the end of the last Ice Age, the Rome Sand Plains were once at the bottom of a huge glacial lake — Lake Irequois — that covered much of central New York.

Sand and sediments at the bottom of Lake Irequois were exposed when the glacial waters receded. Prevailing winds then shifted these sands into a series of crescent-shaped dunes that still exist today. Low areas between the dunes became wetlands and pond bogs, while the dunes and the surrounding uplands support a pine barrens ecology typically found in xeric areas.

The combination of minerals and high dunes make the Sand Plains a unique natural area. The mixture of pine barrens, mixed northern hardwoods and open shrubland supports a diverse assemblage of plants and animals, including over 300 plant species, lupines, red shouldered hawk and the sparrow hawk.

The Rome Sand Plains is managed by the Rome Sand Plains Management Team, a group of state and local agencies, conservation organizations, and individuals. This group is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the unique ecology, the rare plant and animal species, and the historic resources that are found here, while offering opportunities for the public to enjoy this rare landscape.

For additional information about this area, please contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy or the Idaho Water Trails.

Please help protect this valuable resource...

Stay on marked trails. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.
Woody Creek

Two hundred years ago Woody Creek was the critical link in a network of inland waterways that stretched from Albany to Oswego, connecting the Great Lakes and the Hudson River.

This chain of ports, streams and lakes was a highway of international trade, exploration and warfare. Many consider it to be the Original Trail of the Seneca.

Hundreds of canoes and fur traders passed back and forth on Woody Creek every year, adding to the story of the people, gathering the furs of the region and laying the groundwork for the emergence of the New American Nation.

Native Americans, colonial armies and early exterminators followed this ancient water route until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

Western Inland Lock Navigation Company

The Western Inland Lock Navigation Company was chartered in 1796 by the State Legislature to improve navigation along the western section of the Mohawk Valley. Led by General Philip Schuyler, the Company experimented with innovative engineering techniques to create a continuous, lockless channel across New York State, decades before the start of the Erie Canal.

In 1793 it's Company moved the thirty-three passage along Woody Creek by 46 miles so that watermen can access thirteen locks in the creek. These were cleared and clear to canals were dug across the "neck" of each lock to the stream. The old channel was dammed and the creek was forced through the cuts to form a new channel deep enough for large boats.

These are some of the oldest artificial waterways in North America. Their remains can still be seen today.

The experience and information gained in this work was later utilized in building the Erie Canal.
In the nineteenth century, the old channel of Wood Creek was deep due to run-off and promoted by deforestation. The modern channel has eroded to many deep, while the modern channel has eroded to many deep, while the modern channel has eroded to many deep, while the modern channel has eroded to many deep, while the modern channel has eroded to many.

The old channel of Wood Creek in 1793, measured

in each view

prehistoric times, (Compare the channel alignment
was the result of a natural change out-of-inf
southwest appears to be of a similar nature, but it
another cut into the
modern channel of Wood Creek. Another cut to the
An old aerial photograph from the 1930s (right).

The old channel that was once on the south side of the creek,
stream and is depicted in the map legend as hand
1932 (left) it is shown as a cut off road on the
map of the Wood Creek Recreation area.

This historic "canal" on Wood Creek was recorded
size of the natural Wood Creek channel. This the new "canal" is much smaller than the natural. However, the next heavy rain or spring thaws, looked to run through this ditch by the log dams, would erode the ditch to the normal
channel. While the old "canal" could be used for pools at this time, it was shallow and the banks were in danger of slumping.

First the meander to be cut was selected. Then the area above the line of the cut was cleared and the stumps dug up. The logs were

Recorded during the summer of 1973 by travelers passing down Wood Creek in boats.

These mini-canal were created in an age when understanding like this was almost unheard of, and in a wilderness where no roads, trails,
Due to the state of preservation at the site, this location is one of the most historic places along the old inland transportation route. This site is one of nine on the original 13 that survived the construction of the Erie Canal in the early 19th century. Still seen along the east side of Route 46, this is one of the oldest artificial waterways in North America. Some of the oldest artificial waterways in North America - canals - were formed in New York State to improve this series of inland waterways from prehistoric times until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

Historic Wood Creek: Canal Cut #1 - 1793

Wood Creek was the launch point for an international navigation corridor that connected the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes via a network of waterways. The diagram above shows the historical waterways extending from the upper Mohawk River to the junction of the Oswego River and Oswego Lake to the west.

New York State Museum

The Durnam Project: Field Sheet for NYSW/DEC Field Trip - September 29, 1998