

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Bill Guglielmo
Telephone: 315-337-1700
Position: Chamber of Commerce
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?

The environmental character, beauty of the land, one section of the community, tourist attraction, community visit, Quality of Life.

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

Not well known to public. Environmental "issues" (uniqueness?) unknown. Needs better Public Relations. His office is a public information center for events and activities. They have one brochure on the Rome Sand Plains. But people coming in during the summer are not looking for information on the RSP. They get more inquiries on Delta Park/Pixie Falls/Fort Stanwick. The RSP is not as popular, but could be. Needs to be boosted.

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

More consistent and effective promotion. Needs promotion money, perhaps from grants, sponsors or the government.

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

Needs someone out there on a daily basis devoted to explaining the beauty of the environment and the ecology to the public. Perhaps a nature center.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Dave Duer

Telephone: 315-793-6000 x 6211

Position: Oneida County Forester

Date: October 1, 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 uniqueness of the area. Although, as a forester, he recognizes that the unique areas are mixed into forest lands, such as those on the County land.

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

He thinks that the people on the RSP Management Team are trying to outdo eachother in being preservationists. His meat and potatoes is forestry. He manages an 800 acre forest. In his management of that area, he does recognize that there are unique flora and wildlife areas, and he leaves those alone. But the Management Plan is reflecting the thoughts of the preservationists, not his thoughts as a forester.

He does not think that the Management Plan can be written from the office. The plan must identify timber types, swamps, highlands on the land. But still, the timber is an asset too, such as white pine harvest. The oak is not that great, red oak is typically susceptible to heart rot at the diameter ranges which make the timber valuable. But other lands have timber worthy of a harvest, but under the preservationists plan, that is not going to happen. Without harvest, the quality of the timber is going backwards.

He wonders how the Management Plan will keep 4 wheelers and ATVs off the trails. How will the kids who live in the area be brought into the plan so that they will respect the area, rather than trashing the area.

Senior Citizens doing nature walks voice concerns about pitbulls on Hogsback Road. That is where the local people live. Welfare families with junkyards in

the back yard paying high property taxes. These conditions lead to poor forestry management of private lands, where people cut the forest hard adjacent to the sand plains in order to get the money out of the wood. Need to educate the clientele on how to best manage the timber to get long term money out of a forest. The kids on the 4x4s don't understand what the RSP project is trying to do. Policing of this area is going to be a very difficult problem.

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

Protect the pristine flora and fauna areas, but identify if there are areas that need to be harvested. He understands that the State agencies are more preservationist than he is. But he still thinks that the plan needs to break down the timber type for the forest into smaller unit areas than has currently been done.

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

As shown by what happened on the lands by Hogsback and Route 149, there needs to be an effort to educate the public on how to do good forestry and logging techniques. Perhaps this can be part of the public education and outreach, so that the private forests on the RSP are managed better.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: John DiMura

Telephone: 518-463-3034

Position: Canalway Trail Coordinator, NYS Canal Corporation

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?

He does not know much about the Rome Sand Plains, or the resource there. He is more familiar with the Canalway trail. He is very interested in the potential trails in the area.

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

The Erie Canal Trail from the west of the Erie Canal Village has an opportunity to link into RSP in this section. There is a difficulty expanding the Erie Canal Trail to the east because of a lack of clear developable trail lands – no publicly-owned right-of-way. He would like to get a trail east through that area.

The Erie Canal Trail is underutilized to the east and west of Erie Canal Village. He would like to see the RSP help with maintaining access through the trail area, improve trail heads, trail linkages and as that is done, the number of people who will utilize the trail should increase. He is also concerned that people in the area may not know that the trail is there.

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

Better trail linkages, parking, trailheads, signage, information for the public, development of canal way trails to the east.

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

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Tedd Cupp

Telephone: 315-336-6464

Position: President, Rome Country Club

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?

Uniqueness of the area. The lack of buildings or development. The trails, although they should get more public use.

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

The lack of a plan. The dumping of trash. The public can't use the area yet, and it needs more access.

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

There is no sense in acquiring land and not letting it be used by the public. The unique areas need trails for walking, and nature trails. If money is being spent, it should be used by the public the way the Izaak Walton League property put it to use by the public.

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

Repeat of above. Good access through trails. Protect private property owners adjacent to public property through posting. He owns 600 acres behind Huckleberry Swamp, which keeps people out, but there should be more posting, and more education about public respecting private property.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Don Leopold

Telephone: (315) 470-6784

Position: Professor Ecology SUNY CESF

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?

Large area unbroken containing rather unique communities, specifically the large pitch pine wetlands. Not something that is often seen in NYS. Scrub oak and pitch pine communities are unusual plant and support unusual flora including the frosted elfin, and perhaps the Karner Blue Butterfly. He believes that the Karner Blue Butterfly was in this area based on a 1952 notation about its presence, even though not collected, recovery people at the Albany Pine Bush think that the record at Rome is legitimate. The Frosted Elfin is also dependent upon Lupine, and it is a general opinion that the Frosted Elfin may even be more rare than the Karner Blue.

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

There is a scientific problem, which is also a socio-political problem related to the role of fire in the management of this landscape. The question is whether fire is a more recent (past 100 year) factor in landscape change, or whether the community of the Rome Sand Plains is actually fire dependent over the long term. If the habitat is only here over the past 100 years due to fires, then perhaps the area should not be managed as an open fire community. But if the habitat is a long-term unique fire adapted ecosystem, then the second question involves use of fires near population centers. Everybody says "burn the pinebush" but it is kind of like saying clear the Adirondacks for paper birch. Is the pinebush the climax community in the RSP. If it is, then the question of how to manage it within its societal context needs to be addressed.

Most TNC people like to claim that this is a fire managed system, but there is not a lot of data to support that this is a long-term fire managed system. It seems to point more to a short term change.

There is also the issue of unique species related to the early successional scrub oak community. Because these community areas are small, they are more susceptible to extinction. They are also more vulnerable to collection because the RSP is, relatively speaking, a small area, and it is hard to keep the location of particular important species secret.

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

Need to look at the long term trajectory of the communities on the site and develop adequate knowledge about the communities. Until then, it is not appropriate to establish goals for the RSP. It is not good to try to manage a community based on the results of the past 100 years of action in an area.

For example, the cool pitch pine wetland in the RSP may be similar to the Black Spruce Tamarack bog in the Cicero Swamp, where the pygmy rattlesnake lives. The Black Spruce Tamarack bog is an artificial community that appears to have resulted from a historic fire (100 to 300 years ago) that burned the peat down, and set back succession. This type of wetland typically does not exist in the county. So how should it be managed?

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

We need to understand how Natural Heritage ranks unusual communities. Some oddball communities get high rankings, which may place artificially high values on the communities. These communities are part of a successional trajectory that got off track for some reason, and have thus become "the only one in the state." He thinks we should think hard about how we expend resources in the management of ecosystems. He asks, should we try to protect communities that will be impossible to manage because they are "oddballs" or should we try to manage and protect the mainline ecosystems of a region.

Rome Sand Plains Interview Form

Name: Frank Tallorino

Telephone: (315) 337-6340

Position: Oneida County Legislator

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?

He has been involved in the project since its inception. Has not been able to participate more recently due to eye surgery. Has been trying to keep up to date by letters.

He likes the preservation of dunes off of Hogsback Road. This area has good character for preservation. Lupines, restoration of endangered butterflies, great ideas. The RSP is a great thing, and he is fully supportive. Cleaning out Wood Creek using convict labor. Very historical creek, a big asset. Should include installing fishing access, widening/cleaning out channel, handicap access at Hogstown/New London Road. Wood Creek/Fish Creek use as a public canoe area after clean out. Like the trail aspect of the project, including cross-country skiing, hiking.

Dedicated snowmobile trails. Yes, it can get out of control, but it goes back to marked trails, may be reluctant about their use in the RSP. Is a fan of ATVs, and Oneida County is developing an area in Vienna, northern portion of county where ATVs can ride. Oneida County discussed 10/2/01, area off of Routes 149. 900 acres for ATV access with improvements. Oneida County owns over 10,000 acre of public land, and 9,000 acres are going to be dedicated to recreational uses.

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

Rome has had a very dramatic reduction in population. Rome has lost more population than anywhere else in NYS. As a result, new home starts have been nil in the area. 2 last year and 1 the year before.

He has been a county legislator for 6 years, and will probably be elected to another 2-year term. He heard some complaints/concerns from people who attended the September 10, 2001 meeting, as well as concerns from the public about development of the plan, and has discussed them with Ro Anne. These concerns are 1) development, 2) pre-existing/non-conforming uses 3) road frontage; and 4) property boundary and trail marking and impacts on adjacent property owners.

These are issues that not only were raised by the public, but issues he has dealt with first hand, as a landowner on Route 46/49 near Wood Creek, where he has a sand mining permit for a piece of property that has been in his family for over 100 years. He is also aware that the Whitehead Brothers on Hummaston Road have a mining permit there. He also owns a piece of property next to the IWL property on West Thompson Road.

Development: He and the taxpayers of the area were at the forefront of the fight against the landfill, but that doesn't mean that he or they want to limit development potential of their properties as a result of the process of the plan. He wants to have input on the proposal. He wants to expand the tax bases of the area. The plan should not curtail Whitehead Brothers, or lots owned in the outer fringe area of the City. In order to spur growth, they would like to extend the water lines so that the road frontages can be developed along Hummaston, Oswego and Lauther Roads. This would just involve the road frontages, not large parcels, and the residential use is good. Homes along Hummaston go for \$300,000 to \$400,000. He wants to be able to review plan and have input into plan in this regard.

Pre-existing Non-conforming Uses: The IWL property on West Thomas Street goes way back. Walmart deeded property to IWL in 1969. In the past 5 to 6 years there have been serious problems between elected officials and adjacent landowners, of which he has personal knowledge. The IWL would like to curtail non-conforming uses (construction/excavating/hauling activities) around their property. He owns that business. This is a non-conforming use that pre-dates the zoning regulations. There was a lawsuit and IWL did not like the settlement over the property dispute.

Road Frontage: The IWL took property frontage for ½ a mile along West Thomas Road. This frontage was subdivided for 22 lding lots. The property has no environmental value. The property was donated to the IWL by the property owner as a tax write-off. The landowners in the area would like to extend sewer and water past that area, but because the IWL is a not-for-profit entity, and do not have a need for sewer and water, they don't have to pay for the extension of service, even though it goes past the IWL property. This has caused problems, both from a financial standpoint, because it places

a more costly burden on the rest of the property owners, but also because they can't get a complete sign-off by the property owners on the extension. The result is that the sale of the 22 lots to the IWL is stopping the remainder of the property owners along that road from being able to extend water/sewer services along that frontage. This is causing a hardship to tax paying citizens by a non-tax paying entity. He is concerned that this is going to happen in other areas of the Sand Plains including Oswego and Hummaston Roads.

Boundary and Trail Marking and adjacent property owners: The conservation and public lands groups are taking on too much property. They do not have the manpower to manage or even post the property that they own now. When is it going to stop? They can't sell off the property. For example, people are continuously walking off the IWL property and exiting onto his property. This is happening due to park marking of trails and boundaries. He doesn't like the liability of someone walking out of IWL property onto his property where there is heavy equipment. He is concerned about hunting with bows, arrows, guns, ATV use, dogs etc. This must be strongly addressed in the plan. Lands must be mapped. There should be a buffer established between public lands and private lands in order to have a safety factor. Trails need to be marked. Property needs to be marked. He doesn't want people visiting the IWL property ending up on his land. Jim Howe understands this issue.

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

Plan should allow for development to occur. Plan should not cause hardships for pre-existing non-conforming uses. Plan should not recommend acquiring road frontages as a means to control development when there are not environmental resources being protected. Plan should propose proper marking of property boundaries and trails, establish buffers or safety zones between public land and private land, and explain respect for private property.

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

The public has strong objections on many issues to the plan. He does not know what will be in the plan, but, as an elected official representing the public, he has made suggestions and inputs that should be incorporated into plan. He is trying to bring the public complaints to us. He wants to be able to review the finalized plan. He would like to meet with Chazen Companies staff and show these examples first hand.