

2021 Annual Report

RUSH RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF PROGRESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Greetings. We dream and we plan for the future. On behalf of the Rush RPA Board, we are pleased to present our 2021 Annual Report, and express our sincere appreciation to all who support our mission.

As stewards of the Hundred Acres Park, bordering the Genesee River, we acknowledge Rush Town Supervisor Gerald Kusse for his commitment to build this park for our community and region, and his ongoing recognition of the value of our association's volunteer efforts to safeguard our public lands.

We are also especially grateful to Bruce Howlett. In 2021, Bruce became the recipient of our first volunteer award. He has helped us in so many ways, including donating forty native trees (Sycamore, Hackberry, Red Maple, and Oak), mowing the 40 acres of fields, creating grass trails for visitors, and seeding 10 acres with pollinator flowers and native grasses.

In 2021 we launched our Professional Advisory Board. Bruce and the other members of our new Advisory Board have provided their knowledge and expertise. Their names are listed in this report.

In 2021, we successfully adapted our annual clean-up and Arbor Day event to our "15 Days of Spring." This expanded timeframe has made our community-wide event more accessible, since citizens can now choose to work at a time that fits their schedules AND provide a special day to gather, work together, and celebrate Arbor Day. Special appreciation goes to the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and their families and leaders; the Rush Highway Department; and Rush RPA board members who contributed countless hours to coordinate these events.

Rush RPA also continued to help coordinate our town's Beautification Committee, recruiting more than twenty volunteers – many members of our association – to plant and care for our town's 13 gardens.

One of the highlights of 2021 is Rush RPA being an active partner with the Rush Town Board and the Town of Henrietta to implement the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Planning Grant. The proposed plan includes a riverfront trail connecting Henrietta and Rush that will support outdoor and recreation activities for our region.

We conducted other activities, including community education, and we continue to encourage all to become volunteers and members. Thank you. We look forward to making progress together in 2022!

Marianne Rizzo, Board President

Rush RPA Board of Directors and Member Meetings

The Rush RPA Board of Directors had eight meetings in 2021: on January 13, February 14, March 14, June 16, July 1, August 8, August 22, and September 19. The general membership received a ballot in July and elected the Rush RPA Board of Directors for 2021-22.

Report on Annual Meeting of General Membership

The results of the balloting were announced at a live meeting of the general membership on July 13, 2021. The Rush RPA Board accepted the 2020 Annual Report, which may be viewed [here](#), and gave a presentation to the community setting forth the activities of the organization over the previous 12 months, which is posted at rushrpa.org.

First Annual Award At the July 2021 Annual meeting, the board presented Bruce Howlett with an award for his steady support of the Rush RPA and his generous contribution of seeds and trees, labor and use of equipment as well as the benefit of his knowledge and experience.



Bruce Howlett receives our first award at the July Annual Meeting with Ann McMican and Carol Barnett.

Report on Public Lands Activities

At the 2021 member meeting, the Rush RPA reported on its work to preserve and protect public lands, despite the continuation of the COVID pandemic.

The Rush RPA continued the active stewardship of the Hundred Acres Park which was negotiated with the Town Board in October 2019. During 2021, we worked to install native grasses which foster pollinators and nesting birds, in the easternmost field. We also conducted live staking along the Genesee River, to bolster the riparian buffer, and planned for a planting of native trees in one of the western fields near the river.

Other public lands and preservation activities:

- 4th Annual Rush Town Clean-Up and Arbor Day Celebration
- Tree planting on the Town Hall/Town Library campus
- Coordination of planting and maintenance of Town gardens
- Public education including a nature walk
- Active participation on the Town of Rush Comprehensive Planning update and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Planning Grant (LWRP) with the Town of Henrietta
- Education on the benefits of Tree City status for our town

In the following pages of this report, learn how these activities were carried forward throughout 2021.

Stewardship Agreement for the Hundred Acres Park

In 2019, the Rush RPA was granted stewardship of the Hundred Acres Park. In 2021, the Rush RPA far exceeded its annual minimum commitment to raise \$4800 of funding to support the development of the park, with the donation of selected native wildflower pollinator seeds and 40 native mature hardwood trees, as well as the professional labor and equipment for planting; membership contributions and targeted donations for the Hundred Acres; and in-kind donation of hundreds of hours of work by members, and by our volunteer board and professional advisors.

2021-22 Rush RPA Board of Directors

Marianne Rizzo, President
Janet Chaize, Vice-President
Carol Barnett, Secretary
Pamm Wait, Treasurer
Kathryn Hankins
David Kunsch
Jack Mould



Key 2021 Projects and Activities

Carol Barnett, Secretary's Report

In 2021, the Rush RPA carried forward its commitment to preserve and protect public lands, and to support a healthy connection with the natural world in our community.

Celebration of "15 Days of Spring" activities The 4th Annual Town-wide Clean-Up was conducted over two weeks by residents working in their own neighborhoods, in recognition of COVID restrictions.

Earth Day and Arbor Day The Town Supervisor launched the event with a community proclamation and recognition of Hans Schmitthenner, his son Joe Schmitthenner, and Bill Udicious, former Rush Town Supervisor, for their leadership in starting Earth Day activities in our town.

Gift of a native oak tree that was planted on the town campus near Rush Town Hall

Gardens Rush RPA members provided the leadership for the Town Beautification Committee's Garden Project. They are responsible for planting and maintaining our Town's 13 gardens, saving the town more than \$5000 of tax dollars.

Sponsorship of Candidates Forum on October 14.

Stewardship of The Hundred Acres Park The Rush RPA made measurable progress in building our town's park in 2021, with the support of our community support and town leadership. These efforts will enhance the already existing beautiful and serene natural setting.

Work included:

- Native warm season grasses and wildflowers planted to attract pollinators and provide a refuge for endangered birds and other native species
- 40 native trees planted
- Volunteer live-staking along the Genesee River to protect the river and riverfront
- Volunteer tree-fencing during the weekend of December 11-12
- Trails mowed for public access and passive recreational activities

Rush Riverside Refuge The Rush RPA maintains an active interest in the Rush Riverside Refuge/ former BOCES property as part of Rush's endowment, and seeks to contribute to its development as a treasured site for natural preservation, recreation, and public use.

Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad Museum (RGVRM) In 2021, through the active involvement of the Rush Town Supervisor, there was a formal resolution of their lease and the Rush RPA stewardship agreement. The resolution met the satisfaction of both parties and lays the foundation for a strong partnership going forward.

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Marianne Rizzo represented the association on the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to advocate for protection of farmland, open space and public parklands in our town.

NYS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Planning Grant In 2021, this project got well underway through a shared grant for the towns of Henrietta and Rush.

Tree City The Rush RPA worked towards achieving Tree City status for our town by responding to citizen ideas and concerns, and proposing revisions to a Tree Ordinance for consideration by the Town Board, the Highway Department and town residents. The Rush RPA continues to work to meet the criteria to apply for Tree City status for the Town of Rush. The nationwide program is managed by the Arbor Day Foundation and is designed to help communities protect and plant trees. There are many important benefits to being recognized as a Tree City including access to grants.

Grants Rush RPA maintained its standing with the NYS Grants Gateway.

Community Activities, Education and Tours While unable to hold in-person community education forums in 2021, the Rush RPA was able to stay active with tours and nature walks.

Helping our town stay and become more beautiful for all to enjoy.

Promoting our public parks and protecting all of our public lands for current and future residents and visitors to our town.



Gril Scouts help Clean-Up Day in the Hamlet



Janet and Jim Chaize , Marianne Rizzo, and Supervisor Gerry Kusse at Oak Tree Planting on Town Hall Campus



Supervisor Kusse honors Hans Schmittener

Rush RPA sponsors many annual events and activities to bring all sectors of our community together.

Activities include education, guided walks in our parks, improving our public parks, caring for our town's twelve gardens, sponsoring our community wide 15 Days of Spring where neighbors, families, and friends are encouraged to get outdoors and enjoy nature; participation in Annual Clean- Up Day, Earth Day and Arbor Day.

2021



Stewards of the 100 Acres Park

VISION FOR FUTURE

The Hundred Acres Nature Park and Trail borders one mile of the Genesee River and is directly accessed on state route 251. The park includes 52 acres of mature and old growth forests, and 48 acres of river floodplain currently being restored with native grasses and trees as a natural riparian buffer. The Rush Recreation and Park Association is the steward for this riverfront land. To the east is the Rush Riverside Refuge; the former BOCES Campus with 215 acres of fields, wetlands, and grasslands; it is home to the Monroe County Fair and the NYS Museum of Transportation. Conservation areas on both parcels are connected through grass trails.



The proposed River Trail would continue from Henrietta along the river and would be enhanced by interconnecting trails to guide visitors to some of the rich plant and animal life in the area as well as provide accessible trails for exercise and relaxation for families. Possible future improvements could include parking areas on Route 251, fitness stations on the trails east of the railroad, and 2-3 river lookouts. In addition to the trails, there are portions of the river that would benefit from riverbank stabilization. Together with the Rush Recreation and Park Association, the NYS DEC, NYS Parks and Recreation, Monroe County, an area farmer, Scouts, local fraternal organizations, the State Residential Center for Youth at Industry, and regional naturalists are potential partners in this project.

Tree Fencing December 2021

Members of the Rush Recreation and Park Association gathered in a work party December 11 and 12, 2021, to do some important prep work and place cages around the forty native trees donated to the Hundred Acres by Bruce Howlett. Thank you to Mr. Howlett, and to Rush RPA members for working hard to protect these trees and give them a good chance to survive and thrive. Thanks to the following: Carol Barnett, Janet Chaize, Jim Chaize, Dave Glocker, Janet Glocker, Mark Henry, Beth Hoak, Bruce Howlett, Dave Kunsch, Jack Mould, Carol Ralph, Marianne Rizzo, and Pamm Wait. Donations for the costs of mesh and stakes made by: Chris Giordano, Janet and Dave Glocker, Kathryn and Lee Hankins, Mark Henry, Pat and Robert Kraus, Dave Kunsch, Linda Phillips, and Pamm Wait.



Mark Henry helps cages new trees.



David Kunsch stakes a new tree at the park.



Jim Chaize, Marianne Rizzo, Janet Chaize and Carol Barnett staking the new trees.



The Hundred Acres Park includes more than 50 acres of mature forest..

2021 Financial Summary

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Activities for the 12 Months ending
December 31, 2021

Revenues

Memberships	\$ 2,275.00
Donations	<u>\$ 475.00</u>
Total	\$ 2,750.00

Expenses

General & Administrative	\$ 43.17
Board and Liability Insurance	365.00
Forum -Meet the Candidates Night	150.00
Advertisements	149.40
Oak Tree Planting Town Hall	199.97
Fencing/Stakes 40 Trees	<u>967.50</u>
	Total
	\$ 1,875.04

Net Assets At Beginning Of Period \$11,417.36

Net Assets At End of Period \$ 12,292.30

Finance Report

Pamm Wait, Treasurer

Our goal is to protect our public parks and lands; and develop our recreation and open space to promote increased outdoor recreational activities for our citizens.

We have accomplished our work by recruiting volunteers, and monetary and in-kind donations,. We want to save our tax-payers money as we develop our parks.

In-Kind Gifts

The chart highlights the value of volunteer labor, donated supplies and materials for the 2021 fiscal year.

It should be noted that this review does not include the monetary value of many other hours of volunteer support and in-kind contributions that we have received.

We have included in this report only those hours reported for specific projects, and documented receipts; and budgeted approved cost-savings.

Professional Advisory Board

We thank our Professional Advisory Board members: Bruce Howlett, a well-respected regional farmer and business owner; Steve Leopold, forester; Paula (Penny) Smith, PE, Senior Park Engineer with NYS Parks.

We are also grateful for the ongoing help and support of the staff at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

RUSH RPA 2021 POSITIVE FINANCIAL IMPACT

Description	Cash		In-Kind	
	Tax Savings	Cash	Materials	Labor
Park: Seeds, Mowing and Planting			3,797	1,530
40 Trees/Planting			9,200	1,485
Tree Care, Fencing			1,000	1,500
Totals for Park			\$13, 997	\$4,515
Membership Fees		2,275		
Gifts Donations		475		
Town Clean-Up				1,320
Town Gardens	5,200			3,500
Totals Town Projects	5,200			4,820
Grand Total	\$ 5,200	\$2,750	\$ 14,997	\$7,335

**We acknowledge our 2021 members and
express our gratitude for their ongoing support
of our mission.**

Nancy and Carl Ast	Beth Hoak	Carol Ralph & Tom Petrus
Carol and Ted Barnett	Bruce Howlett	Marianne Rizzo
Debbie Burgio and John Kaman	Carl Jutzin	Susan & Jim Roach
Lynne & Mike Burke	Don Kingsley	Amy Schubach
Elise & Hal Carter	Pat & Robert Kraus	Sandra & Dave Sluberski
Janet & Jim Chaize	Shirley Kucera & Michael Tallon	Jeanine Smith
Bethany Choate & Matt Heimbueger	David Kunsch	Milda Vaivada
Julie & Al Choate	Debra & Gerry Kusse	Trisha & Dave Vanable
Amber & Paul Corbin	Doreen & Hal Manning	Diane Van Lare
Jessica Drenk	Ann McMican & Jack Mould	Pamm Wait
Christy Dryden	Jeanne & John Morelli	Phyllis & Tom Wickerham
Carolyn & Michael Ganley	Davies Nagel	
Chris Giordano	Erma & Leon Perkins	
Janet & David Glocker	Linda Phillips	
Kathryn & Lee Hankins	Sue & John Porubek	
Laura & Mark Henry	Carolee & Bob Powers	
Florence Higgins & John Lebens	Emma Rainwater & Naomi Salama	

Mission of Rush Recreation and Park Association

Protect, preserve, and assist in the proper management of the public lands of the Town of Rush, New York, and contiguous areas, for the benefit of current and future residents of our town and region;

Promote preservation of open space, forests, farm land, park land, clean air and waterways;

Promote use of public lands in a sustainable way that protects the climate and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and erosion;

Promote health and wellness by preserving green space and sponsoring outdoor activities;

Establish local environmental education related to preservation of natural resources;

Establish and promote programs to monitor the protection of natural resources;

Provide opportunities for volunteers who wish to support the goals of the Association;

Support community efforts and programs that are consistent with the land and resource preservation goals of the Association, including public-private partnerships.

Membership: Please consider becoming a member of the Rush RPA, or a 2021 business sponsor. Your active participation is important to achieving our goals. Please share this report with friends and neighbors. You can join by visiting our website at www.rushrpa.org, or by sending a minimum contribution of \$12 to “**Rush RPA**,” c/o Pamm Wait, 431 Five Points Rd., Rush, NY 14543.

Rush Citizens E-List: To receive notices and updates about the Rush RPA and other Town of Rush matters, **please join the RUSH CITIZENS email list**. Your contact information is kept secure and is not shared. Simply send an email to rushcitizens@gmail.com with “Rush Citizen” in the subject line.

Membership is open to everyone who shares our mission to help our community improve our parks and public lands and protect and safeguard them for current and future residents.

For more information on the mission and activities of the association, and to find out how you can join or volunteer, please check out our website, www.rushrpa.org.