

“Everybody needs beauty...places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to the body and soul alike.” — John Muir



First Annual Report Rush Recreation and Park Association (Rush RPA) 2018 - 2019



Purpose of the Rush RPA

To 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;

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

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

To promote health and wellness by preserving green space and providing or facilitating outdoor activities;

To establish and promote local environmental education on issues related to the preservation of natural resources;

To establish and promote programs to monitor the protection of natural resources;

To provide a framework for volunteers who wish to support the goals of the Association;

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

To support other activities that promote, protect, preserve, enhance and expand the community's natural resources.

Membership: Please consider joining the Rush RPA, or becoming a 2020 business sponsor. Your active participation is of the utmost importance to us. Please share our first annual report with friends and neighbors. Ask them to visit our website and encourage them to join online or by sending a minimum gift of \$12 to “**Rush RPA**,” to P. Wait, 431 Five Points Rd., Rush, NY 14543.

To receive timely notices about the park and other important town 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.

Website: www.rushrpa.org

Email: info@rush.ny.rpa@gmail.com



Trail connecting Breese Park and The Hundred Acres Park. The Waterfront Revitalization Grant submitted for the trail has been approved and work will begin this year.

To further enhance the area next to the proposed trail, we've submitted an Urban and Community Forest (UCF) grant for a native tree planting with the endorsement of the Rush Town Board and their agreement to be a partner together with many area experts, businesses, and non-profit organizations. We appreciate the support of the 2019 Town Board: Jillian Coffey Cathy Frank, Gerry Kusse, Rita McCarthy, and Dan Woolaver. A special thanks to Bruce Howlett, Dave Kunsch, Dave Sluberski, Jim Engel of White Oak Nursery, Garrett Koplun of the NYS DEC and all of our speakers who are listed in our community education report.

We appreciate all the support we have received during the year. Our group is open to everyone and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming educational forums, nature hikes, Rush Clean-up Day and other events. We hope many more citizens will get involved and help us to realize our goals for the community.

Carol Ralph, President

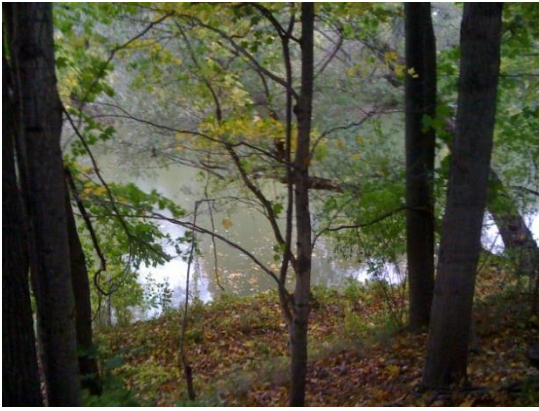
We acknowledge our charter members and express gratitude for their support of our mission.

Carol & Ted Barnett	Laura & Mark Henry	Carolee & Bob Powers
Deb Burgio & John Kaman	Florence Higgins & John Lebens	Carol Ralph & Tom Petrus
Lynne & Mike Burke	Beth Hoak	Marianne Rizzo
Elise & Hal Carter	Don Kingsley	Susan & Jim Roach
Janet & Jim Chaize	Pat & Robert Kraus	Charles Rorick
Bethany Choate & Matt Heimbueger	Shirley Kucera & Michael Tallon	Amy Schubach
Julie & Al Choate	David Kunsch	Sandra & Dave Sluberski
Annette Coraci	Debra & Gerry Kusse	Trish & Dave Vanable
Amber & Paul Corbin	Doreen & Hal Manning	Diane VanLare
Carolyn & Michael J. Ganley	Ann McMican & Jack Mould	Pamm Wait
Chris Giordano	Jeanne & John Morelli	Phyllis & Tom Wickerham
Janet & David Glocker	Laura & Cecil Palmer	
Kathryn & Leroy Hankins	Sue & John Porubek	

2019 Financial Report

We opened our Canandaigua National Bank account and started keeping our financial records on October 4, 2018. From that date to December 31, 2019, we have raised \$4,821.00 in membership contributions. In addition, we have had many in-kind contributions. We had many partners who donated their expertise as well as goods and services. We especially appreciate Colby's, Montesano's, the Rush Highway Department and the Rush Methodist Church for their ongoing support to our education and civic activities. Many dedicated volunteers contributed hundreds of hours of their time to provide their knowledge, skills and professional expertise to support the association. Their contributions amount to thousands of dollars of value to our community. In 2020 we will keep more detailed records to document our successful volunteer recruitment and recognition program.

Pamm Wait, Treasurer



Stewardship of The Hundred Acres

On October 23, 2019, the Rush Town Board unanimously passed a resolution giving the Rush RPA responsibility, in partnership with the town, to preserve the Hundred Acres in the Rush Riverside Refuge. We appreciate the trust that the Town Board has demonstrated, and firmly believe that by working together, we can succeed.

Our plan aligns with the Comprehensive Plan, which designates the land as open green space.

Our plan complements the Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. There is a growing interest in the history of railroads in our region, and the nature park

will be a good partner with the museum.

Our plan will be implemented in stages and public access will be able to start within a relatively short time. Our plan does not require extensive infrastructure, and will include trails and tree plantings to enhance the natural setting that is already in place.

Our plan will be implemented with donations, sponsors, grants, volunteer participation, and the support of the entire community. Thank you!
Carol Barnett, Secretary

First Board of Directors and why they want to be involved in Rush RPA

Carol Ralph, President I am concerned about the state of our natural environment. It is my duty to do what I can, in the short time I am here, to protect and improve the aspects of the environment that are in my control. My focus is on educating myself and sharing that information with the public. I enjoy spending time in nature studying plants, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.

Marianne Rizzo, Vice President I am committed to helping the town of Rush and surrounding areas to preserve and maintain our rural character and achieve ecological balance. I will do what I can to help protect and restore the soil, air quality, trees, etc. and Genesee River quality. I am dedicated to parkland and all green space. "Every participant in the ecosystem has an important role to play." I pledge to help habitat.

Pamm Wait, Treasurer I love living in Rush. I want to help protect and preserve our green space and rural character. I believe my 40+ years of work experience in banking and finance can help the Rush RPA as we continue to grow and accept new responsibilities and challenges.

Carol Hee Barnett, Secretary I have always been dedicated to environmental protection and I believe that preserving local green space is one of the most effective things I can do to protect the environment. I hope to use my communication skills as secretary.

Janet Chaize I am a steward of the earth. I garden organically and study natural herbal remedies. My 40 years of work in the mental health profession has taught me that people are healthier, mentally and physically, when they can walk in nature. It is incumbent upon us to preserve nature, especially parks that have forests.

Kathy Hankins I hope to benefit the board in the areas of land use, small business, nonprofit management, fundraising, advocacy, and grant writing. I am deeply committed to preserving our town's green space, park and recreation lands.

Jack Mould I believe that preservation of the earth starts at home. I will use my communication skills and community connections to protect Rush's beautiful natural assets to the absolute best of my ability.

Carolee Powers I want public lands to be available and accessible to everyone in the community. I want to be part of a group that gives its ongoing support to this treasure of unspoiled lands. I will put my people, relationship and communication skills, gained from years of being a therapist, to use for the Rush RPA.

2019 Highlights

- ❖ Launch of Rush RPA, including NYS incorporation, By-laws and obtaining tax-exempt status.
- ❖ Development and launch of our website, www.rushrpa.org.
- ❖ Election of first board and officers, and launch of charter member campaign.
- ❖ Development of proposal and plan for The Hundred Acres.
- ❖ Town Board's unanimous approval for Rush RPA to be stewards of The Hundred Acres
- ❖ Successful approval of our application to NYS Grants Gateway to apply for state grants.
- ❖ Submission of our first grant proposal for \$50,000 with town and local business partners..
- ❖ Support partner with Towns of Rush and Henrietta for Riverfront Trail Development grant.
- ❖ Educational Forums and Outreach Activities.
- ❖ Second Annual Celebration of Arbor Day and Town Clean-Up.
- ❖ Sponsor of 2019 Local Candidates Night.

Community Education Forums 2018-2019

Report by Janet Chaize

7/10/18 "Preserving Parkland and Pollinators" Ashley Fersch, Cornell University Bee Expert discussed pollination; the effect of pesticides and climate change on pollinators; the decline of flying insects; what residents can do; and what practices effect pollinators such as destruction of ditches.

8/7/18. "Preserving Parkland and the Benefits of Forest Walks on Health" Deborah Denome, Finger Lakes Forest Therapy, shared experiences of improved health, both physical and mental, after forest walks; and research done over many years from Japan and U.S.A.

10/3/18 "Birds of the Rush Riverside Refuge" Ted D. Barnett, MD, an avid birder and photographer, shared his photos and tales of identifying birds in Rush by sight and sound. Rush Riverside Refuge include specialties such as: Scarlet tanager, Yellow warbler, Wood thrush, Rose-breasted grosbeak, Great crested flycatcher, Eastern pewee, and Rufous-sided towhee.

11/7/18 "A Walk in the Woods – What You May Discover" NYS Parks Biologists: Whitney Carleton, Kyle Webster, and Brigitte Wierzbicki shared their amazing wisdom of plants, and the special environments and unique habitats found on The Hundred Acres of Rush Riverside Refuge. .

2/28/19 "Preserving the Soil and Organic Farming" Erin Bullock, Organic Farmer of Wild Hill Farm CSA presented Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and the double benefits of "Going Organic" being "Health to Us! Health to the Environment!"

4/3/19 "Sharing Nature with Young People" Leah Mould, Outdoor Educator, Ithaca College-Cornell University graduate student in Agricultural Education, shared methods for teaching children and teens the joys of nature and how to have fun doing it.

4/6/19 Launched **"First Saturday Morning Hikes"** led by Ann McMican, avid birder and citizen scientist and others for May, June, and July.

4/27/19 "Rush Town Clean-up for Earth Day" building on our successful day in 2018.

5/7/19 "Preserving And Restoring Community Green Space" TOM Whitlow, Cornell University School of Integrative Plant Science led us through the steps of how a community can preserve green space and the importance of doing so.

7/27/19 "Reforestation and Rewilding Solutions for any Outdoor Space" Kay Megorden-Staten, certified in Permaculture Design, Teacher, Herbalist, Artisan, Consultant and Designer led us through a 2 ½ hour outdoor workshop, that included a remarkable walk on The Hundred Acres. We examined nature's way for re-wilding fields using proven principles and methods from permaculture; they can be applied to outdoor spaces of any type and size; from homes, urban and suburban to municipalities and outlying farms, fields and forests. We increased our understanding of how forests regenerate water, produce food and restore the eco system.