

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc. 2009 Annual Report

Mission Statement

The Rensselaer Plateau Alliance promotes and facilitates the protection of the Rensselaer Plateau's undeveloped and unfragmented forests. These possess many significant natural features and provide natural habitats for plants and animals; forest products, recreation and most important, water and air quality.

Presidents Message

Each year the RPA grows and builds momentum. When we first started in May 2006 we were just an ad-hoc group of people interested in somehow doing something to protect a corridor of forest on the plateau for wildlife and a recreational trail. It took the better part of a year of what were for the most part brainstorming meetings to get a real focus and a path forward. During the next year we settled on a Mission Statement, developed a PowerPoint presentation and started planning for the development of the regional conservation plan. During the next year we took our presentation to each of the 10 towns of the Plateau, incorporated and started in earnest on building relationships with our Alliance Members.

2009 was the RPA's 3rd full year and first full year after incorporating as a New York State not-for-profit corporation. During the year we continued to build working relationships with our Alliance Members and with other organizations such as Wildlands and Woodlands. Our small group of 14 all volunteer participating members, (directors) continued to grow our working relationships as we moved forward on a number of projects. This group consists of numerous professionals of varying backgrounds who possess a wide range of technical, professional and practical skills and expertise. The group includes land owners, educators, biologists, foresters, geologists, ecologists, software developers, artist, master forest owners, lawyers, engineers and research scientists.

We have done so much in a very short time and have done this on an entirely volunteer basis. We have spent very little money. We have a very dedicated, talented and capable group of volunteers. I am very grateful and honored to be working with them as we move forward building momentum for the protection of the undeveloped and unfragmented forests of the Rensselaer Plateau.

Jim Bonesteel, President

2009 Accomplishments

In February we conducted a grass-roots e-mail campaign to show support for the Plateau in the New York State, DEC Open Space Plan. Supporters were asked to write letters and send e-mails stating their support for including the Plateau as a high priority in region 4 of the Open Space Plan. From this we received word that DEC received "extensive" support for the Plateau.

We were very lucky in March when Albany Times Union reporter Brian Nearing who had been cross country skiing at Pineridge Cross Country Ski Area saw one of our brochures. Brian asked Walter Kersch, the owner of Pineridge, and our treasurer, about the brochure, the Rensselaer Plateau and the RPA. Brian felt that our mission was a worthy story and the RPA was featured on the front page of the Times Union on March 12. You can see by the Web Site Unique Visits Report later in this document that this had a tremendous impact on the visibility of our organization. There is a link to

this story on our web site on the In the Media page. Also related to this, RPA President Jim Bonesteel was interviewed by Brian Nearing on "The Capital Green Scene" on WVCB radio on March 7th.

In August, Jim Bonesteel and Walter Kersch were interviewed on the Hope for the Earth radio show on WRPI.

Ecologist Dr. David Hunt continued his volunteer work gathering info for conservation plan. He drafted reports for the Plateau boundary and matrix blocks. He completed 1st draft of comprehensive tables of rare plants and animals. He and Rachel Rieman gathered air photos for the Plateau which is the first step for making a comprehensive map of each of the 14 ecosystems of the plateau and a comprehensive natural community map for the Plateau. David completed draft one of a 1:24000 scale map of the Plateau boundary. David continues his work on a slow volunteer basis. We are hoping to raise the funds necessary by May 2010 so that we can pay him to work full time on this project.

We conducted 2 Field Days in May and one in September in which we invited the public out to Pineridge Cross Country Ski Area. These free events were about 3 hours long and were very well received. They started with a short PowerPoint presentation given by Jim Bonesteel followed by a brief question and answer period. Adult participants were then given a choice of 3 interpretive walks:

Discover Plateau Wetlands - Conservation Ecologist, David Hunt, Ph.D, who led a visit into a wetland to discover special vegetation and wildlife communities, and discussed issues that endanger their status. Hunt was also on hand to talk about the scientific foundations that underscore the importance of maintaining the integrity of this region.

Forest Management - Master Forest Owner, Walter Kersch, led a party into a section of mis-managed forest to show and discuss its effects. In addition, Kersch highlighted unique stone formations on the walk, and address the land use issue of property line markings and other forest-related topics.

Stream Ecology - Wildlife Technician, William Hoffman explored the nearby streams and discuss ecology and the wildlife that depend upon them.

Childrens's Discovery Walk - Fran Egbert and Rachel Riemann led children to the forest and streams to discover the special things found there.

On Sept 26th we cosponsored A Rural Landowners Workshop with Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York Forest Owners Association (Capital District Chapter), and the Robert Wentorf Foundation. This workshop was held at Tamarac/Brittenkill High School, Route 2, Brunswick, NY. Topics included forestry management, selling timber, wildlife conservation, preserving property for children, enjoying forests and ponds.

Fran Egbert and Yvonne Keefe developed a new display booth with photos donated by Nate Simms and a large glossy map developed by the Hudson River Estuary Program. We had a display presence at the Grafton Winter Fest, the Taborton Environmental Fair and the Rensselaer County Fair in Scaghticoke.

In May we submitted form 1023 to the IRS and in November we received our 501(c)(3) determination as a public charity. This enabled us to start receiving donations online via NYCharities, and to take advantage of free or reduced rate services and products from Vertical Response, TechSoup and ETapestry. This also makes us eligible for a vast number of grants only available to 501(c)(3) organizations as well as making us more attractive to individual donors. In the first month after receiving our 501(c)(3) and starting to accept donations online we received as much in donations as we had received for the entire year before.

2009 Thank You Volunteers

Thank you to everyone who donated their time or products:

Nate Simms - for his generous donation of many beautiful photographs. We will use these on our web site, in presentations, publications and perhaps in some products that we will make available to our supporters.

<http://www.natesimms.com/>

Linda Beliveau – for doing the voice over for our Public Service Announcement. You can listen to this from the In the Media page of our Web Site.

Ed Dickson – for many hours spent wrestling with data and cutting a 3D raised relief map prototype on his self made automated robotic milling machine.

Eric Ucci and Take Shape, Inc – for countless hours spent massaging the GIS data of the Plateau to make it ready for Ed Dickson to use to create the raised relief map. <http://www.takeshapeinc.com/>

Mark Keefe and Pat Tessitore of Cathedral Sound Studios for adding the background music to our Public Service Announcement. <http://www.cathedralsoundstudios.com/>

How You Can Help

Stay Informed/Keep Us Informed

Stay informed. Sign up for our e-mail list.

Let us know if:

- If you see or hear something about us in the press? This information helps us keep track of how well we are doing getting our word out.
- If you know of anything that is happening on the Plateau that you think we should know about.

Complete our online survey.

Volunteer

Join us as a participating member or just volunteer. Do you have any special skills? We are in need of people with experience in the areas of:

- writing/editing,
- grant writing
- fundraising (of course),
- photography
- videography

Support Us

Support us financially.

Spread the word.

Wish List

A Logo. We need a simple, easily recognized and remembered logo.

Photographs of people enjoying recreational activities on the Plateau.

Photographs of people working in the forests of the Plateau.

Financial Reports

Profit and Loss

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc.
Profit & Loss
January through December 2009

	<u>Jan - Dec 09</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Individual & Bus Contributions	1,272.00
Total Direct Public Support	<u>1,272.00</u>
Total Income	1,272.00
Expense	
Business Expenses	
Business Registration Fees	325.00
Total Business Expenses	<u>325.00</u>
Operations	
Postage, Mailing Service	94.55
Printing and Copying	545.00
Total Operations	<u>639.55</u>
Programs	
Educational Materials	165.00
Total Programs	<u>165.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>1,129.55</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>142.45</u>
Net Income	<u><u>142.45</u></u>

Balance Sheet

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc.
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2009

	<u>Dec 31, 09</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking (First Niagara)	392.45
Total Checking/Savings	<u>392.45</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>392.45</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>392.45</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	250.00
Net Income	142.45
Total Equity	<u>392.45</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>392.45</u></u>

Directors

In 2009, we were joined by 3 new Participating Members (directors), John Deignan, William Hoffman and Steve Pentak.

List of Directors

Director	Address	Term End Date (officers)
Jim Bonesteel	167 Brainard Road Averill Park, NY 12018	President Oct 2010
Sharon Gibbs	287 Hidley Rd. Wynantskill, NY 12198	Vice President Oct 2010
Fran Egbert	50 Maple Trail Sand Lake, NY 12153	Secretary Oct 2010
Walter Kersch	1509 Plank Road Petersburg, NY 12138	Treasurer Oct 2010
Doree Cox	104 Dutch Church Road Petersburgh, NY 12138	
John Deignan	807 Taconic Trail Petersburgh, NY 12138	
Jim de Waal Malefyt	Bayberry Circle Poestenkill, NY 12140	
Rachel Riemann Akera	27 Homestead Way Cropseyville, NY 12052	
Richard E. Gibbs	287 Hidley Rd. Wynantskill, NY 12198	
William Hoffman		
Lawrence Howard	PO Box 1000 Averill Park, NY 12018	
Lisa Hoyt	62 Dyken Pond Road Cropseyville,, NY 12052	
David Hunt	348 Jay Hakes Road Cropseyville, NY 12052	
Yvonne Keefe	PO BOX 368 Averill Park NY 12018	
Steve Pentak	1242 Garfield Road Stephentown, NY 12168	
Mark Wehnau	213 Old Rt 66 Averill Park 12018	

Membership

At the beginning of 2009 our Alliance Members consisted of:

- Rensselaer Land Trust
- Friends of the Dyken Pond Center
- Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park
- Grafton Trail Riders
- Mohawk-Hudson Cycling Club
- The Nature Conservancy

We welcomed 9 new Alliance Members (organization) in 2009:

- The Conservation Fund
- Babcock Lake Estates
- The Trust for Public Land
- The Village of East Nassau
- Berlin Mountain Fish & Game Club
- New York Forest Owners Association (CDC)
- Audubon New York
- Black River Raiders
- Spring Lake Association

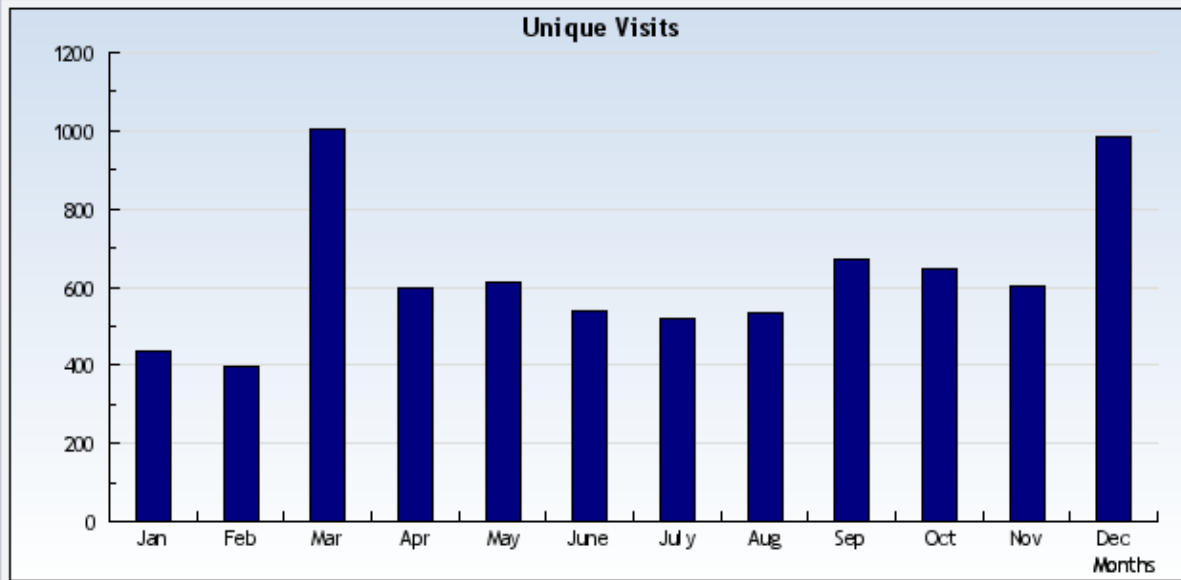
Web Presence

Web Site

Unique Visits Report

Results Shown in Graph Format

From January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009



Results Shown in Table Format

From January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009



1-12 of 12



Date	Month	Unique Visits
1/1/2009	January	436
2/1/2009	February	398
3/1/2009	March	1,004
4/1/2009	April	598
5/1/2009	May	611
6/1/2009	June	538
7/1/2009	July	520
8/1/2009	August	535
9/1/2009	September	672
10/1/2009	October	648
11/1/2009	November	602
12/1/2009	December	984

7546 Unique Visits

Pages per Visit Report

Results Shown in Graph Format

From January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009



Results Shown in Table Format

From January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009



1-12 of 12



Date	Month	Pages per Visit
1/1/2009	January	1.89
2/1/2009	February	2.99
3/1/2009	March	4.14
4/1/2009	April	2.76
5/1/2009	May	2.48
6/1/2009	June	2.57
7/1/2009	July	2.49
8/1/2009	August	2.29
9/1/2009	September	2.88
10/1/2009	October	2.56
11/1/2009	November	2.60
12/1/2009	December	2.44