

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc. Annual Report 2012

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

RPA has existed as a not for profit corporation for 4 years and this, 2012, is the year that the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance started its transition from an emerging organization to a conserving organization. In the fall of this year RPA headed up the project with partners Agricultural Stewardship Association, Rensselaer Land Trust and NYS DEC, to submit the first Forest Legacy grant application on the Rensselaer Plateau to permanently conserve 2,538 acres of forestland owned by 14 private landowners. This represents the first phase in the Rensselaer Plateau Working Forest Initiative and will create the foundation for a continuous and connected forested corridor along the 30 mile length of the plateau, linking existing state and county lands with threatened private parcels.

At this time of this writing we know that this project ranked #3 in the mock review in the USFS Northeast Region but did not make the President's List (was not funded) nationally. We have learned that many organizations encounter this when they first apply for Forest Legacy funding. It was not that our grant wasn't strong, it was as evidenced by its strong showing the mock review, but rather that we are not yet a well-known entity nationally. We will not stop trying. We will succeed next year or the year after to make this project happen and to fully transition from an emerging regional conservation partnership into a conserving regional conservation partnership.

I encourage you to stay tuned, continue to follow our progress and perhaps jump in and help us move to the next level.

Our Vision Statement (Adopted June 7, 2010)

Vision of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

The Rensselaer Plateau Alliance envisions all human activities on the Plateau guided by consideration for the Plateau as a whole. The Alliance, a coalition of organizations and individuals, recognizes that the Plateau is greater than the sum of its parts. Our members will foster communication about the value of natural resources and other common values held by the communities of the region and, in concert, help to advance those values on a regional scale. Our vision will be realized when each of the wide range of human activities that occurs on the Plateau leaves the Plateau in better harmony with the ecological whole.

OUR VISION FOR THE PLATEAU

(100 years from today)

The Rensselaer Plateau remains a large unfragmented forest with abundant lakes, wetlands and streams that run with high quality water which helps provide the entire County with drinking water. The land consist of a patchwork of private and public properties that has been voluntarily protected by landowners and municipalities that are fully aware of the benefits of forested land and open space. The local economy thrives with recreation based businesses, tourism and locally grown forest products. People can hike, ski, bike, horseback ride and snowmobile on a trail system that connects the far corners of the Plateau. Wildlife abounds. There are healthy populations of large mammals such as moose, black bear, bobcat, forest interior bird species and an abundance of native fish such as brook trout. Native plant and animal species that existed on the Plateau in 2011 still thrive.

People visit the Plateau not only for its recreation and scenic beauty but to enjoy the hunting and fishing which have seen resurgence in popularity. A large percentage of the Plateau remains working forest providing valuable timber resources. There are core areas that have been left as wildlands and are now old growth forests supporting species such as Northern Goshawks. Visitors marvel at the large trees and undisturbed surroundings.

Well-planned development on the Plateau has resulted in a high quality of life and higher property values. It has minimized the cost of municipal services resulting in lower residential property taxes. Children have natural areas where they can play and explore freely, feeling as comfortable in the woods as anywhere. The residents that live on or near the Plateau share a special community and are proud of their forests, lakes and streams. Residents have excellent sources of information about tools that help them keep their land in forest and understand the ways they can live that minimize their impact on the ecological resources of the Plateau. The communities on the Plateau support land owners and are fully aware of the benefits of forested land and open space.

The surrounding cities and towns are proud to have the Rensselaer Plateau nearby and continue to find more ways to make green connections, wildlife and recreation corridors between the Plateau and other existing protected areas. The Plateau is an intact, functioning, unstressed ecosystem with the dynamic buffering capacity to sustain itself in the face of large scale natural disturbances.

2012 Accomplishments

January included participation in the Grafton Winterfest where winter outdoor enthusiasts learned about the Plateau Alliance.



RPA started 2012 exploring changes in our capacity and organization with plans for future part time staff, including an executive director as activity and projects increase. In early February we brought town supervisors together for a dinner and discussion of the outline for the Rensselaer Plateau Conservation Plan. Discussion included multiple topics and input from supervisors on what they would like to see in the plan. The “Ties to Woodland Legacy Planning” was presented in February in Petersburg. Landowners had the opportunity to hear about multiple legal options which could work together to preserve land and transfer land to family.

March saw the completion of the Economic Impacts section of the Conservation Plan by Brian Zweig, presentation of the study brought interesting facts to light including the high number of jobs created by tourists and recreationists coming to the plateau and the significant amount of income generated by the forest products industry on the plateau. The economic study will be a significant part of the conservation plan and may bring information to town supervisors as they plan for the town’s economic futures. Sarah Parks received the 2012 McHenry Award for her part of the economic study which focused on “The Economic Value of Ecosystem Services on the Rensselaer Plateau”. These services are essential to human well-being, as they provide a multitude of benefits such as clean water, medicine, recreation, crop pollination and protection from natural hazards.

Throughout the year 2012 the Peer to Peer Grant helped RPA to develop the expertise to connect with landowners and write a grant under the Forest Legacy Program. RPA was linked through this grant with the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, who with other presenters were enlisted at a daylong meeting with the RPA Board to develop a strategy for the Forest Legacy Grant.

Alice Howard initiated creation of a Rensselaer Plateau History Library and Gallery Project; books to be housed at Sand Lake Public Library and gallery at Sand Lake Center for the Arts. The project has begun with a Book Fund of \$500 donated by Alice and Harold Howard.

A stakeholders meeting for the organizational members of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance was held on June 27th to gather additional input for the Conservation Plan

During 2012 Fred DeMay wrote a series of articles that were planned for publication in local newspapers bringing attention to various aspects of the Rensselaer Plateau.

On June 16th in coordination with Ray Bradbury, Landvest Forester, a demonstration of logging practices was open to the public followed by a barbecue lunch and afternoon woods walk. The woods walk which was done jointly with New York Forest Owners Ass. Introduced the public to Ken James' property where American chestnuts are being reestablished.

September 8th and 9th brought the annual Plateau Traverse. The route continues to change with new areas to explore in a south to north journey with an overnight and dinner at Pineridge X-Country Ski Center. Saturday afternoon brought a thunderstorm as the group skirted Perigo Hill and hikers felt like it could have been in the 1800's as we searched for old woods roads to get back home in the storm. Sunday brought a delightful day with a 360 degree views from the fire tower in Grafton Lakes State Park.



(pictures)

After months of work by the Working Forest Initiative committee with significant support from Karen Strong, in October the grant application for Forest Legacy Funds was submitted to DEC for review. This was a combined effort of Rensselaer Land Trust, Agricultural Stewardship Association and Rensselaer Plateau Alliance. Many large land owners on the plateau had been contacted individually by members

of this committee often multiple times to learn about the Forest Legacy Program. Land owners were eager to participate and a grant was completed which tied these lands to large conservation blocks along a north south corridor. The final grant involving 14 landowners and 2,400 acres was reviewed and approved by DEC and submitted by NYS to the Federal Forest Service.

Supported by the Peer to Peer Grant a large Community Forest Workshop was held on November 8th at the Crooked Lake House. This conference brought our partners, landowners and Alliance members together to discuss the value of a community forest and begin the discussion of establishing a community forest on the Rensselaer Plateau. Taking place in the beautiful Old Daley Inn on Crooked Lake, it was a day full of expert speakers and time to develop contacts with like minded landowners on forest conservation and the specific goal of a Community Forest, to continue that education in the field.





Awarding of the Trail Vision Grant of \$8,000 to RPA by the Hudson River Greenway occurred in November and began a campaign of soliciting additional support from diverse trail groups to start envisioning a multiuse trail running north to south across the plateau. More good news in November included the awarding by the Hudson River Estuary Program of a \$9,000 grant for the development of User's Guides to promote understanding of the Conservation Plan to a variety of stakeholders.

After introducing our organization to the Land Trust Alliance, RPA wrote a grant to provide financial support for increasing our capacity through strategic planning and development of a written case statement. We also applied to LTA for a catalyst grant to coordinate efforts across organizations in promoting Woods Forums, dissemination and utilization of the Conservation Plan and establishment of a Community Forest Work Group.

The Annual Meeting on November 29th was held at Dick Gibbs home bringing together both Board members and supporters of RPA to review and celebrate the year of accomplishments.

2012 List of Donors

Thank you to the individuals and businesses that supported us financially:

Marcia and Richard Anderson	Kenneth Mangione
Donald Anthony	Bob Mayo and Linda Maier
Andy Beers	Eugene and Susan McLaren
Nancy Bell	John Meierhoffer
Christina and Edward Blanchard	Alan Opresko
Jim Bonesteel	Steven and Deborah Pentak
Heather and Rob Bruce	Bruce and Sally Perry
Ellen Burkhard	Neil and Susan Roberts
Kevin Carpenter	Jeffrey Rosch
Seema Chaudhari	Michael Schwarz and Tanja Eise
Constance Cooper	Douglas Scott
Barbara Cymerman	Elizabeth and John Siedhoff
John, Brad and Stephanie Deyo	Donna Simms
Fran Egbert	Robert and Eileen Stegemann
Mr. James E. Forbes	Marcy and John Steinberg
Thomas and Nancy Forster	Greg Taylor
Sheryl Galinski	David Trickey
Richard and Shari Gibbs	Kay and Bill Valentino
Paul Gregory	Mr. Carl Weidemann
I.M. Haettenschwiller	David Wemple
Rebecca Harrison	George Wilson and Pat Harrington
Alice and Harold Howard	Jeanine Wisniewski
Elaine and Donald Jones	Brian Zweig
Robert Juenger	Berlin Mt Fish and Game Club
Dr. Robert Loesch	Spring Lake Holding Corp.
John Loughlin	Trout Unlimited

Thank you to all who donated at events and anonymously in support of our mission

How You Can Help

Help us Develop the Rensselaer Plateau Regional Conservation Plan

We will continue to hold public meetings in 2013 as we bring you the completed draft of the conservation plan. We are looking to you for feedback on what is most important to your community, what will help you as landowners and town officials in your concerns about the plateau. We want to hear from everyone who works, lives or plays on or near the plateau.

Stay Informed/Keep Us Informed

Sign up for our e-mail list and keep updated on development of the Conservation Plan, outings and other programs

Volunteer

Join us as a participating member or volunteer. Meetings are the third Monday of the month at Pineridge Cross Country Ski Center and all are welcome.

We need people with experience in:

- Writing/editing
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Photograph
- Videography
- Leading Outings
- Coordinating membership data

Alliance Members

- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Trout Unlimited (Home-Waters Chapter)
- ☐ Taconic Hiking Club
- ☐ New York Flora Association
- ☐ Northeastern Cave Conservancy
- ☐ Friends of Cherry Plain State Park
- ☐ Capital Region Nordic Alliance
- ☐ Saratoga Mountain Bike Association

During 2012 we welcomed these new Alliance Members

Stockport Alliance
SKYHIGH Adventures
Sidney Albert Albany JCC
Regional Plan Association
Albany Area Amateur Astronomers

2012 Financial Reports

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc. Balance Sheet Dec,31,2012

As of December 31, 2012

	Dec 31, 12
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking (First Niagara)	
Fund - Conservation Plan	380.00
Checking (First Niagara) - Other	5,816.10
Total Checking (First Niagara)	6,196.10
Total Checking/Savings	6,196.10
Total Current Assets	6,196.10
Fixed Assets	
Equipment and Software	69.00
Total Fixed Assets	69.00
TOTAL ASSETS	6,265.10
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	7,834.34
Net Income	-1,569.24
Total Equity	6,265.10
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	6,265.10

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Cash Basis

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc.
Profit & Loss
January through December 2012

	Jan - Dec 12
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	3,540.00
donations	90.00
H R E Grant	26,882.40
Land Trust Alliance	
donation	1,000.00
Land Trust Alliance - Other	350.00
Total Land Trust Alliance	1,350.00
Open Space Institute Grant	4,750.00
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	62.00
Other Types of Income - Other	1,500.00
Total Other Types of Income	1,562.00
Peer to Peer Gr.	11,200.00
Program Income	
Program Service Fees	255.00
Program Income - Other	94.25
Total Program Income	349.25
Rens Plateau Library	500.00
Total Income	50,223.65
Expense	
Bank Charge	
Credit Card Processing Fee	40.95
Total Bank Charge	40.95
Business Expenses	
Business Registration Fees	250.00
Total Business Expenses	250.00
Contract Services	
Accounting Fees	400.00
Outside Contract Services	
H R E Grant	34,933.00
Outside Contract Services - Other	1,500.00
Total Outside Contract Services	36,433.00
Peer to Peer Grant	200.00
Total Contract Services	37,033.00
Operations	
Postage, Mailing Service	147.98
Printing and Copying	
H R E Grant	125.00
Printing and Copying - Other	257.98
Total Printing and Copying	382.98
Supplies	164.14
Operations - Other	129.95
Total Operations	825.05
Other Types of Expenses	
Insurance - Liability, D and O	506.00
Total Other Types of Expenses	506.00
Parks & Trails N.Y Grant	-1,105.00
Peer to Peer grant	
contract services	3,000.00
Peer to Peer grant - Other	260.36
Total Peer to Peer grant	3,260.36

10:42 AM
06/13/13
Cash Basis

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc.
Profit & Loss
January through December 2012

	Jan - Dec 12
Programs	
Educational Materials	25.00
H R E Grant	491.29
Northeast Forest Assoc.	995.34
Programs - Other	450.40
Total Programs	1,962.03
Rens. Plateau Library	500.00
SMBA	295.00
software	348.58
Travel and Meetings	415.22
Travel and Meetings Peer to Pee	7,461.70
Total Expense	51,792.89
Net Ordinary Income	-1,569.24
Net Income	-1,569.24