

# **Sandy Bottom Park Management Plan**

## **Introduction**

Sandy Bottom Park is an invaluable asset to the future of the Town of Richmond and the quality of life for the community of Honeoye. This community park is centrally located in the town and nestled in the heart of the Honeoye community. It has been welcoming tourists and families for generations. A potential park trail system could connect the East Lake Road communities and West Lake Road communities to each other and also to the Main Street business and cultural district. This trail system would be an investment in the quality of life for our community and economic driver for the future of the Town of Richmond.

## **Acquisition of the Park Land**

The 35.146-acre area of Sandy Bottom Park commonly known as the beach, lagoon, ball fields, and trail from the beach to Main Street was acquired from Jack and Madlyn Evans on August 2, 1973 at a cost of \$120,000. On October 16, 1973 the town acquired an additional 24.601 acres from the 3M Corporation at a cost of \$7,500 and this is the area commonly known as The Nature Trail. The 54.24 acre area of the park commonly known as the 3M parcel was donated to the town by 3M on 3-27- 2009 to provide a pleasant and continuous reminder of 3M's 35 year involvement with the Honeoye Community. The appraised value at transfer was \$270,000. This acquisition was the result of a twelve-year effort by community citizens.

## **Summary of Past Park Activities and Projects**

Once the town owned the first two sections of the park a Sandy Bottom Parks Committee was formed. Committee members had interests in developing recreation programs and outdoor activities at the park. The town became one of the first rural communities to hire a recreation director. Activities such as the swimming program, water safety, arts and crafts, baseball, and many others developed over the years.

The Honeoye Lake Rotary Club has been a long-time benefactor of the Sandy Bottom Park. The Rotary has been responsible for the enclosed pavilion, the shuffleboard board court, and the handicap accessible sidewalk to the pavilion among other projects.

In 1993 the Nature Trail was conceived and constructed by Marty Dodge of the Finger Lakes Community College Environmental Department. Utilizing students, Boy Scouts, community volunteers, and even Ontario County Jail prisoners the bridges across Honeoye Outlet Creek, the viewing platform, and boardwalk were constructed. Jack Evans donated the materials that were used for the project. Marty Dodge came back in 2017, inspected the bridges and boardwalk, and leveled one bridge utilizing local forces.

In 1999 it was discovered that the fishing lagoon in the park had silted in and was only about six inches deep. A partnership including Richmond, Canadice, Ontario County, the DEC, and private contractors worked together to remove the silt and restore the lagoon to its original depth of about twelve feet. Within weeks of completion the vegetation and fish returned and fishing again became a popular activity at the park.

Following the acquisition of the 3M parcel a new Parks Committee was formed. The Committee held public meetings between 2009 and 2011 so community members would have the opportunity to present their ideas for future park uses and projects. In December, 2011 the Parks Committee presented an extensive report to the town board.

In 2011 a Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Historic Waterfront Planning Grant was offered by New York State. The town applied for and was awarded the grant to develop a trails plan to connect Main Street with Honeoye Lake. The Genesee / Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) was contracted to develop a basic trail plan to include a base inventory of natural resources, built features, trail corridor infrastructure, and appropriate signage. The completed plan was presented by the G/FLRPC representative to the Richmond Town Board in December, 2013.

Based on multiple prior archeological investigations by the Rochester Museum and Science Center among others it was common knowledge that the 3M parcel likely contained Native American artifacts. In 2012 Heritage Preservation and Interpretation Inc. was retained to conduct a required Phase 1A research investigation of the property. Their 2013 report indicated the property as highly sensitive for archeological deposits and recommended that a Phase 1B field investigation be conducted before any development was considered. The Phase 1B investigation was authorized and conducted in 2017 and significant artifacts were located which will significantly limit the types of projects on this parcel. The reports and all the artifacts are now located in the Honeoye Historical Society area of the Richmond Town Hall.

## **Current Park Projects**

### **Sunset Trail**

The trail connecting Main Street to the Sandy Bottom Beach area of the park is known as the Sunset Trail. Washouts during the fall of 2017 damaged trail bridges and the surface of Sunset Trail was severely eroded. After a lengthy permitting process, the Hill and Valley Riders Snowmobile Club restored the bridges and the trail leading up to the bridges. The Town of Richmond Highway Department installed several culvert pipes under the trail and resurfaced the rest of the trail to facilitate safe and dry walking.

### **Inoculation of Healthy Ash Trees**

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive species that arrived in the Midwest in 1992 and now affects over 30 states. There is a 100% mortality rate of trees infected. It is estimated the EAB arrived in this area in 2016 or 2017 and has infected a significant percentage of the Sandy Bottom Park forest. Ash trees constitute about seventy percent of the forest in the Sandy Bottom Park. Arborists have a product that can be inoculated into and protect an uninfected ash tree at about \$300 per tree every two years. The Sandy Bottom Beach area has two very valuable and healthy ash trees that provide shade for the public using the beach and were inoculated in 2018 to maintain the park atmosphere at the beach. Another Ash tree near the shuffleboard court was considered to be healthy enough to reasonably expect success and has also been inoculated.

### **Municipal Ash Tree Salvage Sale**

The level of mortality in park ash trees has elevated the risk of flooding along Mill Creek and danger to the walking public within Sandy Bottom Park. Infected trees can fall unexpectedly posing a significant danger to the public using the park trails. This project will manage the forest within Sandy Bottom Park along our trails, beaches and ball fields for future generations. Strategic removal of accessible dead and dying ash trees is an ongoing 2018 – 2019 project. Future best management forestry practices for the park will include the reduction of invasive species, promote native plantings, and allow wetland wildlife to thrive.

The town requested a Forest Stewardship Plan be prepared by the NYSDEC regional forester. The Plan, which recommends practices out to 2026, was provided to the town in 2016 and all activities have been in keeping with the plan. A NYSDEC Consulting Forester was retained to manage and conduct the ash salvage sale.

### **Risk Inventory and Cleanup**

During 2018 and 2019 several discarded corrugated metal culvert pipes have been removed from the park near the trail head. Inventory and the removal of rusted metal auto/truck components along the banks of Mill Creek are scheduled.

Abandoned electric boxes from the 1960's era mobile home park that once existed on the west side of the park have been removed. During the mulching of underbrush in this west area of the park several abandoned pits were found which were pumped out and filled in. There appears to be an abandoned piece of well head infrastructure along Mill Creek which will be analyzed and likely removed.

### **Sandy Bottom Beach Houses and Open Pavilion**

The shingle roof on the enclosed pavilion is severely deteriorated with the plywood roof deck now exposed. The goal is to replace the roof before there is damage to the interior of the building as a result of the deferred maintenance. About fifty percent of the funding needed to deal with the deferred maintenance of the bath house roof has been placed in a reserve fund with additional funds planned for the near future. The floors and interior have not been painted in several years and there are areas where the paint has peeled away or is nonexistent. The interior infrastructure (shower stalls, faucets, toilets, introduce hot water) of the building is in disrepair and renovations are being planned. The wood fence around the handicap parking area and loop road is in disrepair and will need to be repaired or replaced.

### **Mill Creek Bank Stabilization Project**

The force of the water draining down Mill Creek through the park has severely eroded the stream banks and much of the gravel washed downstream and fills in the creek bed under the Main Street bridge and the Honeoye Outlet Creek north of the bridge. The US Fish and Wildlife Department, the NYSDEC, the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the town are working together on jointly developed restoration plan. The contractor has been hired and work is scheduled to start in Spring, 2019.

### **Parks Zoning District**

In 2019 the town board officially adopted a new zoning district designation for certain town owned property – H Municipal Parks and Open Space District. This designation will protect the parkland from undesirable uses.

## **Parks and Recreation Committee**

This group is comprised of community volunteers who coordinate park events, establish activities for the parks and recreation programs, plan youth nature education programs for the park and creeks, and gather community input on parks and recreation issues.

## **Friends of Sandy Bottom Park**

This group has been formed as a New York State nonprofit corporation to provide a way for interested parties to donate toward park projects and amenities.

Municipalities, such as the Town of Richmond, are not permitted to solicit or accept donations. This independent group will allow more participation of interested parties to work on park vision, planning and implementation of approved projects, fund raising, and community public relations.

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## **Future Projects**

### **2019 Tree / Reforestation / Park Plans**

There are four events currently planned.

- Arbor Day Event: April 26 at 5:30pm at the Richmond Town Hall: Join the Friends of Sandy Bottom Park to honor Arbor Day with the planting of a native species tree at Town Hall.
- Love Your Park Day: May 4 at 9am at Sandy Bottom Beach: Calling all volunteers: join the Friends of Sandy Bottom Park to start planting trees for our future! Meet at Sandy Bottom Beach to form teams and get assignments. Please bring available shovels, buckets, gloves or anything else that will help with our task ahead. Make sure to dress for the weather.
- National Trails Day: June 1: Community celebration with guided trail tours from town hall covering historical and natural resources information throughout the Sandy Bottom Park; Summer recreation program information and sign up; health and family fair information; small woodland garden planting projects. Time and additional information will be forthcoming
- Make a Difference Day: October 26: Forestry education and tree planting along park trails and Mill Creek; Time and additional information will be forthcoming

The town was awarded an \$18,598 NYSDEC Trees for Tribes grant to do the reforestation of the Sandy Bottom Park to help improve wildlife and stream habitat. A wide variety of native tree species will be planted so if a future invasive comes to the park only a minimal number of trees will be lost.

### **Lagoon at Sandy Bottom Park**

Periodic measurements will be taken to check the depth of the lagoon so any dredging can be budgeted and scheduled well in advance of need. It has also been suggested that a handicap accessible fishing platform in the lagoon would be welcome addition. Fishing has been very popular with park visitors.

### **Kiosks**

There is currently a kiosk at the south end of the Sunset Trail that was constructed and installed as an Eagle Scout project. A grant application has been submitted to provide an enclosure to display a map of the park. Part of the grant would also purchase brochure boxes so visitors to the park could pick up a descriptive map of the park. Another part of the grant could provide an additional kiosk elsewhere in the park.

### **Trail Signage**

Plans will be developed to implement a trail signage program. The signage could not only be directional but could identify native flora and fauna, Native American history, the mill race that was formerly on the west side of the park, and fish populations in the creeks among other items.

### **Parking**

With the park improvements completed and planned it is anticipated there will be additional visitors to the park which will require adequate and safe parking. The County Road 36 side of the park has adequate paved parking. There should be adequate parking on the Main Street side at the town hall although directional signage will be needed to direct visitors to the Sunset Trail. There is a gravel parking lot on the East Lake Road that should be considered for future expansion.

### **Agricultural Lease**

The town is going into the third year of an agricultural lease on the 54 acres on the 3M side of the park. The lease keeps the land in production while community planning can occur for future uses of this area of the park.

### **Sandy Bottom Beach Stabilization Grant**

A grant was obtained to stabilize the beach at the park to minimize erosion. An engineering firm has been retained to develop the detailed plans for the project.

### **Friends of Sandy Bottom Park**

This group has been formed as a New York State nonprofit corporation to work on park vision, planning and implementation of approved projects, fund raising, and community public relations.

### **Community Involvement**

Whether it be the town board, the Friends of Sandy Bottom Park, or the Parks and Recreation Committee, all should be continuously seeking input from town residents through community meetings, special events, or individual suggestions.

Compiled by Friends of Sandy Bottom Park  
April, 2019

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