



Recreational and Agricultural Use Citizens Committee
(RACC)

Rush Genesee River Reserve

Progress Report February 25, 2015

Rush Genesee River Reserve

support our community's vision,
protect the character of our rural community,
safeguard natural resources, wildlife,
farmlands, and open space.

Promote Outdoor Activities, Health, Fitness, Education,
Recreation, History,
Farming, and Gardening

Active Members of the Advisory Committee

- Marianne Rizzo
- Ted Strang (Board, NYS Transportation Museum)
- Philip T. Daggar
- Jim Smith
- Cecil Palmer
- Kathryn Hankins

Acknowledgement and Appreciation to: Kathryn Steiner, Town Board Liaison and Pat Stephens, Recreation Director

Resolution #130-2012 August 22, 2012

“The Committee’s mission is to provide suggestions to the Board for the uses of the BOCES property located at 6565 East River Road and the Division of Youth property located at 375 Rush Scottville Road”

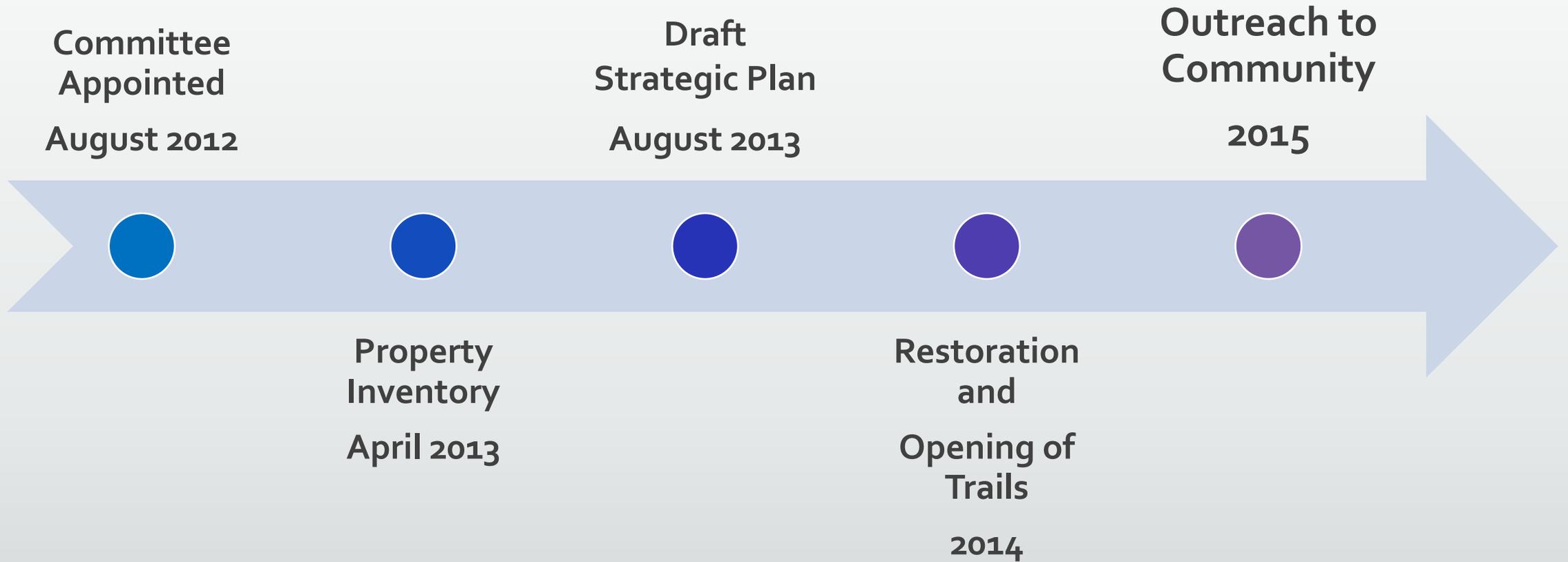
315 Acres of Land:

- 100+ acres, DFY, transfer 2010
- 215.73 acres, (BOCES 1995-2009) transfer 2011
- Both parcels were part of School of Industry (165 years old).

History of Citizens' Committee

- January 2012. Town resolution to form Citizens Committee
- August 2012. Chair and Committee appointed.
- October 2012. First Committee Meeting.
- April 2013. Inventory of Land and Buildings completed.
- June 2013. Clean-up day
- July 2013. Structure and Draft of Strategic Plan.
- August 2014. Committee regroups.
- Fall 2014. Trails restored and opened by Town Highway Department. Trail signage plan developed. No Hunting monitored. Tours for Conservation Board and residents.

Key Milestones



Committee's operating principles:

- Safeguard and preserve the gift of property for future generations.
- Restore land to natural state (e.g. remove landfill materials).
- Recommend uses that align to history of the property, our town's rural character, Comprehensive and Farmland Protection Plans.
- Assess town's unmet meeting, program and building space needs.
- Partner with farmers to use fields, open space, and grass areas.
- Assess start-up, maintenance costs and benefits of potential uses.
- Advise on necessary maintenance and security for buildings.

Property Use Restrictions

- **NYS Deed Restrictions:** “park and recreation and ancillary uses” Interpreted to allow Recreation, Education, Agriculture. Land cannot be sold or leased for any other purposes.
- “A development will not be created in that green space.” (Town Board minutes 2/8/12).
- Currently no drinking water, sewer or septic systems.
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 SEQR reviews done at time of transfer.
- Archeological sensitive areas; environmental sensitive areas; includes wetlands; forests; Genesee River buffer.

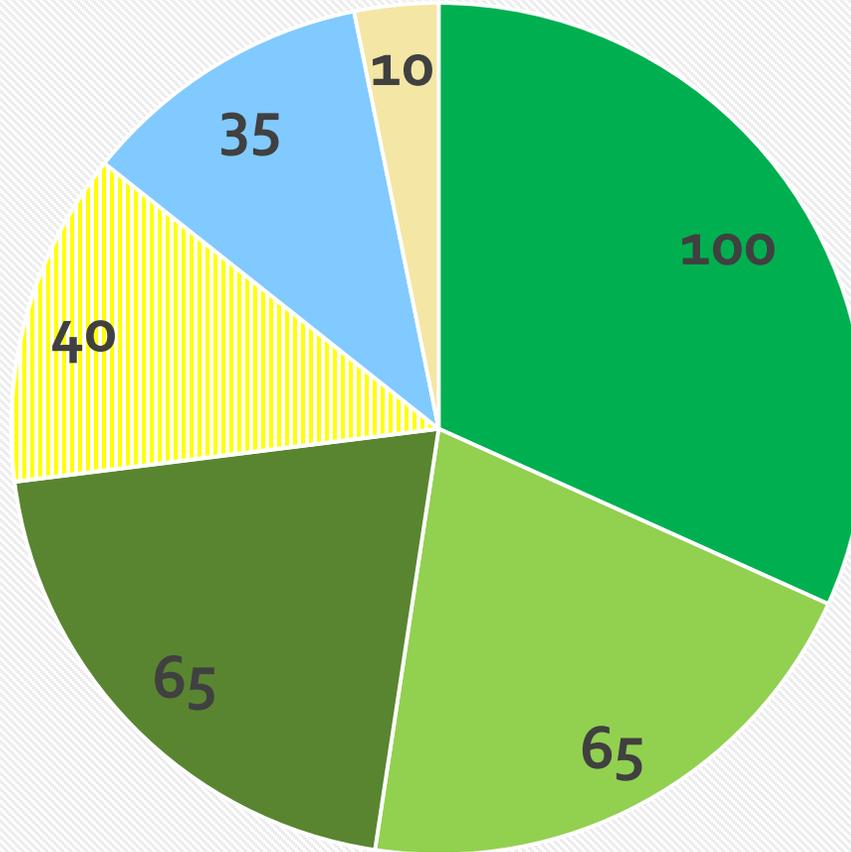
Current uses:

- 5 year leases, 2012 to 2017, for field crops for two parcels: 41.1 and 58.7; \$19,000/year income to Town General Fund.
- Cattle grazing, 25+ acres @ \$50/acre.
- Commercial retail business selling agricultural supplements (annual lease renewal).
- Fire Department Training
- BOCES Landscaping Program
- Hiking and Horseback Riding Trails

Natural Landscape Areas

Description and Acres*

■ Field Crops	100
■ Low Grass and Hills	65
■ Forests, River edge	65
▨ Wetlands, Trails	40
■ Buildings/Museum	35
■ Easements/Roads	10



* Estimates

More than 200 acres of Open Space, Fields, Wetlands



Rush is known for its open spaces, most of which is privately owned farm land. This property is unique in our region, offering natural public open space, including more than 100 acres bordering the Genesee River as a strong focal point and attraction for visitors.

Land borders a mile on the Genesee River



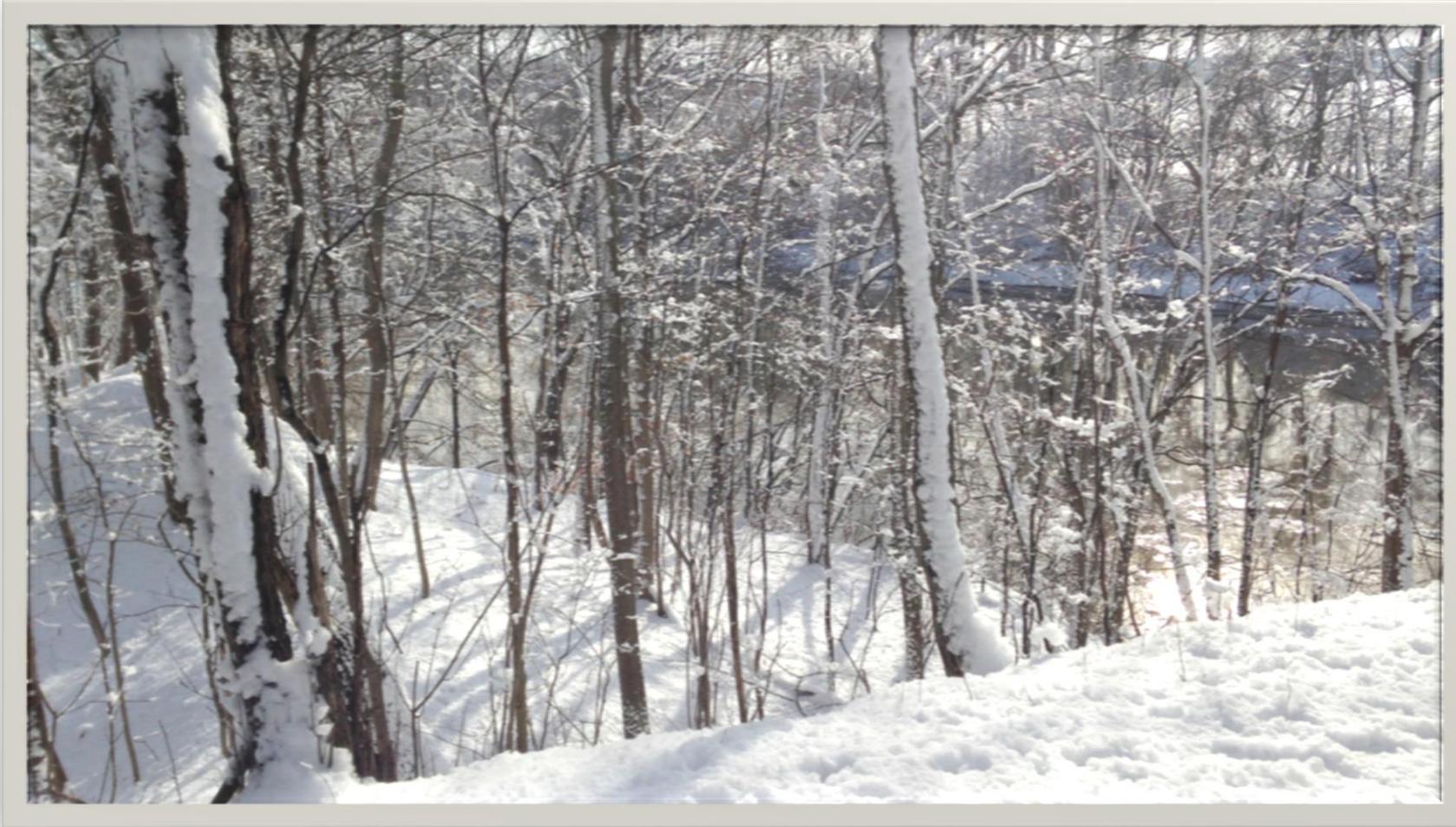
A rich history: Retreats, Horseback Riding, Scouts, 4H, Seniors, Youth Leadership (Ropes Courses)



About 50 acres of forests

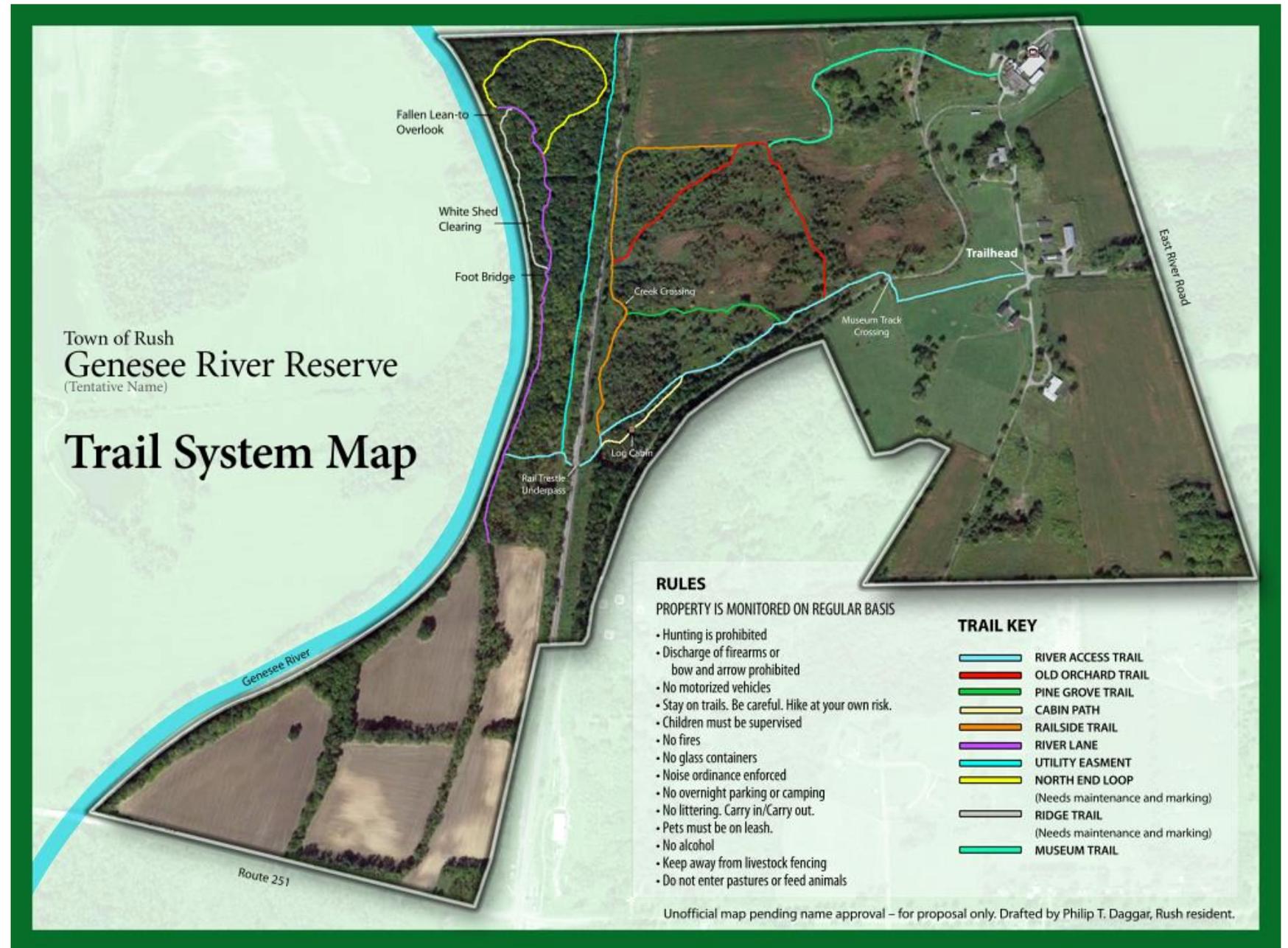


Beautiful landscapes in every season



Our own beautiful year-round established trail system

Hiking level: Easy



Proposed Park Rule Sign

Size: 12" x 18" or 20" x 30"

Material: Painted Aluminum with vinyl graphics

Structure: Two steel posts

Locations: Trailhead and other access points (four signs recommended)

Benefits:

Durable and economical



Proposed Trail sign Style

Size: 8" x 10"

Material: Painted Aluminum with vinyl graphics

Structure: One steel post per sign

Locations: One sign per trail intersection (see map: approximately 15 signs recommended)

Actions and recommendations for land include:

- **Proposed name:** Rush Genesee River Reserve.
- **Protect and preserve land:** wildlife, bird sanctuary, prohibit hunting, snowmobiles, ATVs, unauthorized uses.
- **Field Crops and grazing (2017):** environmental, best management practices; protect soil; buffers to reduce loss of phosphates, non-point pollution, and sediment run-off to river.
- **Maintain trails** for hiking and horseback riding. .
- **Restore grassland and wetland areas** (remove dumping areas). Remove tree stands.
- **Coordinate volunteer clean-up days,** tours, and outreach activities and events.
- **Signs:** Dos and Don'ts, No Hunting, No ATVs, Snowmobiles.
- **Strategies for enforcement** of prohibited activities.
- **Reject proposals that do not support education, recreation or agriculture,** and could result in loss of natural setting (e.g. 2012 request to lease land for Summer Campground for Seasonal Trailers)

Low cost use possibilities include:

- Engage community through monthly hikes and guided tours.
- Photographers, Students of Wetland Habitats, Birdwatching,
- Gardening, Wildflowers, NYS Specialty Crops
- Practice/competition site for Rush Henrietta Cross Country Race Teams.
- Senior activity center run by senior volunteers.
- Scout and 4H activity and meeting site.
- Future site of Rush Fall Festival, and other outdoor community events.
- Home for City and/or Mo. Co. Mounted Patrol, which would offer a unique educational attraction while providing benefit of added security.
- Agricultural, livestock and horse events and activities.
- An educational program with MCC's Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute (Bob King, Director)

Many Buildings and Many potential uses (see map)

1. "World of Work Cottage" – **South Building**, kitchen, activity rooms.
2. **Livestock Barn** (being used for Cattle)
3. **Mechanics Shop** (being used for training by Fire Department)
4. **Tractor Shed** (storage for BOCES Landscaping Program)
5. **Greenhouse/Carpenters Shop** (current lease for retail business)
6. **Riding Arena**
7. **Horse Stable** (capacity 10-12 horses)
8. **Blacksmith Shop** (current lease for retail business)
9. "Administrative" **North Building** (contains an apartment)
Log Cabin Retreat (use for Scouts, 4H, Youth Leadership, Hikers)

Building Renovations:

- ✓ Building descriptions are done
- ✓ “Do No Harm” Maintenance Plans (March 2013, September 2014).
- ✓ Focus Proposals for North and South Buildings.

Next steps include:

- Building clean-up for residents to safely tour.
- Start electric power to assist clean-up.
- Exterior repairs and landscaping.
- Install security for buildings.
- Beautification of paths from building to building (plantings).

Buildings offer wide range of potential uses:



- Some uses require drinking water, septic systems, or potential sewer agreement with State.
- Support and align with our Farmland Protection Plan
- Alignment with Town's updated Comprehensive Plan

Barns offer a wide range of potential uses



- One barn is currently used for training by Town of Rush Fire Department
- Other barn is currently used to shelter cattle
- Both barns need roof repairs.
- Barns are attractive and promotes a rural farming landscape.

NYS Transportation Museum, a cornerstone for Rush Genesee River Reserve



NYS Transportation Museum

- Founded in 1975 (40 year anniversary).
- More than 5000 visitors each year.
- More than 2 miles of track connecting with the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum located on Rte 251 at the South West end of the Genesee River Reserve.
- NYS Transportation Museum offers town residents: Parking lot. Accessible. Bathroom facility and septic. Drinking water.
- Visitors are able to access Rush Genesee River Reserve trails from museum.

What do we know going forward:

- ✓ **The land has unique features**, and a rich history as an educational and agricultural setting for youth – a legacy that is well worth protecting and safeguarding for generations to come: forest, open space, wetlands, pasture, and grass fields should remain in their natural state.
- ✓ **One mile of Genesee River front puts us “on the map”**, and offers our community an opportunity to partner with other communities bordering the Genesee River from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario.
- ✓ **Continue to research** regional and statewide grants and partnerships.
- ✓ **Each building has many potential uses** that must be evaluated based on a framework that includes taxpayer costs, need assessment, utilization and duplication

Next Steps for our committee include:

- **Create smaller property sections** to further identify unique land features, wildlife habitats, flora, beautification plans, restoration.
- **Outreach to town boards, departments, and Rush residents** (e.g. Rush Seniors, Veterans, Lions, Recreation and Highway Dept., Library, Assessment, Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Boards, Town Historian, places of worship...)
- **Analyze current town building use** (town hall, pavilion, library, Fire Department) Do we need more space? What are operating costs? Who uses services: Rush residents vs. out-of-town residents?
- **Analyze demographics**, projected growth, needs for next 3-5 years?
- **Make recommendations for potential uses for buildings.**
- **Investigate, recommend appropriate funding and partnership grants.**

Identify Benefits of Potential Partnerships

Schools

- Rush-Henrietta
- BOCES
- RIT, MCC
- UofR
- Finger Lakes
- Geneseo

Transportation Museums

- Grant Partner
- Historical Restoration

Local Area Farmers

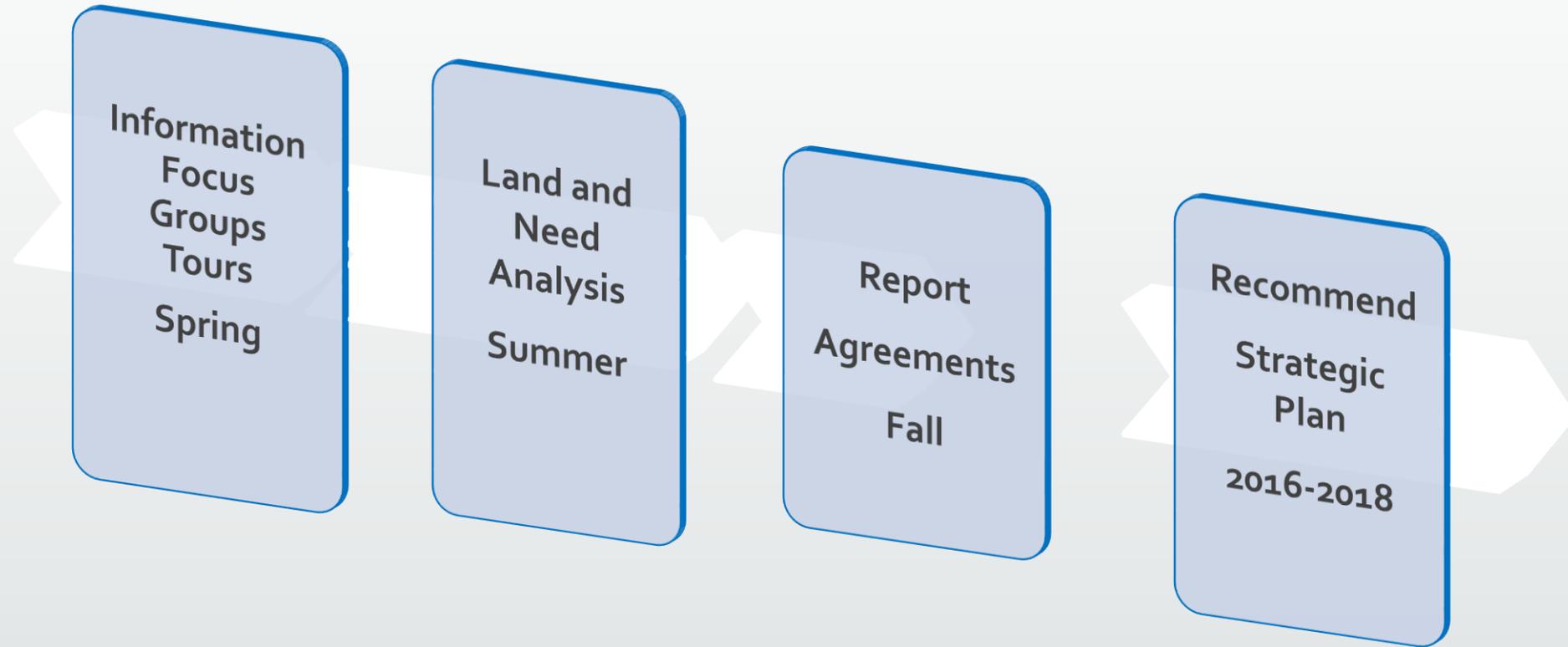
- CSA
- Gardening
- Specialty Crops
- Model Practices
- NYS Ag & Mkts.

Genesee River

Greenway Trails

- Monroe County
- Finger Lakes
- DEC

Proposed Milestones 2015



A landscape photograph featuring a vibrant rainbow arching across a pale, overcast sky. The foreground consists of a flat, brownish field, possibly a harvested crop field, with a dense line of dark green trees in the distance. The overall scene is serene and atmospheric.

Questions ?