

REPORT



SANDY CREEKS STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Prepared for the



New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council

By *EcoLogic*, LLC, NOVEMBER 2007



SANDY CREEKS ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

REPORT

Prepared for:

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Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION.....1

SECTION 2: METHODS

- 2.1 Initial open-invitation stakeholder meeting.....3
- 2.2 Focus groups4
- 2.3 Final open-invitation stakeholder meeting5

SECTION 3: RESULTS

- 3.1 Native species and natural communities.....6
- 3.2 Economically successful natural resource-based industries.....8
- 3.3 Intact forests and high quality streams9
- 3.4 Threats to the Sandy Creeks watershed ecosystem.....10
- 3.5 Application of ecosystem-based management to the Sandy Creeks region12
- 3.6 Stakeholder recommendations for specific ecosystem-based management projects..13

SECTION 4: DISCUSSION.....15

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS17

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Documentation of stakeholder outreach
- Appendix 2: Database of comments

Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

EcoLogic LLC was selected by the Tug Hill Commission to design and implement a stakeholder outreach program in support of the Ecosystem-based Management Strategic Plan for the Sandy Creeks Watershed. This assignment was completed between June and October, 2007, as one component of a broader effort to develop an ecosystem-based management plan for this region of eastern Lake Ontario and its watershed.

Ecosystem-based management is an adaptive, integrated approach to managing resources for a sustainable future. The goal is to manage the entire ecosystem, including humans, in a way that will ensure healthy, productive and resilient environments. Sandy Creeks is one of two demonstration areas in New York State designed to pilot ecosystem-based management by understanding the connections between ecosystems and the people who live and work in them. The other demonstration area is Great South Bay on Long Island. The project stems from the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act of 2006 that established a Council composed of nine state agencies charged with implementing ecosystem-based management at a state-wide level.

Findings from the two demonstration projects, which are located in very different natural resource and cultural environments, will inform efforts to adopt ecosystem-based management throughout New York. As implemented in other regions of the United States, ecosystem-based management has four components.

1. **Partnerships and citizen participation.** Work together with citizens, landowners, businesses, local governments, interest organizations, and other agencies to face problems, identify opportunities and find common solutions.
2. **Science-based approach.** Use the best available scientific knowledge (social, economic, and ecological) as a foundation for decision-making; understand natural resource interrelationships, and focus on sustainability of whole ecological systems.
3. **Long-term view.** Establish long-term goals for desired ecosystem conditions that maintain the capacity of the land to sustain public benefits and opportunities into the future. Identify measurable targets, and be ready to adapt to new information.
4. **Comprehensive perspective.** Find solutions that support economic prosperity, lasting livelihoods, and ecological health.

New York State in conjunction with the Tug Hill Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and consultants Biohabitats and Camoin Associates, is developing a framework for ecosystem-based management within the Sandy Creeks watershed. The ecosystem-based management planning process emphasizes stakeholder involvement and local input. The Tug Hill Commission is the regional partner ensuring that local needs and knowledge are represented in the project.

The stakeholder outreach initiative was conducted early in the overall Sandy Creeks pilot project. The EcoLogic assignment encompassed two objectives: first, to begin educating local partners

and stakeholders on the ecosystem-based management concept; and second, to solicit specific input regarding what ecosystem “services” (functions and values) are most important. Ultimately, effective watershed management requires far more than a narrow focus on water quality. A planning process that directly engages residents in a long conversation about what they value and how to restore and protect these resources is essential.

SECTION 2: METHODS

EcoLogic began this assignment with a project scoping session that included representatives of the project partners: the Tug Hill Commission, Department of State/ New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council staff, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The project team discussed the status of the ecosystem-based management initiative and identified key stakeholders. Finally, the project steering committee agreed to the following project sequence:

- initial open-invitation stakeholder meeting
- five to seven focus groups,
- final open-invitation stakeholder meeting

2.1 Initial Open-Invitation Stakeholder Meeting

The initial open-invitation stakeholder meeting was held on June 27, 2007 at Sandy Island Beach State Park. Contact lists for invitations were generated by the Tug Hill Commission. Invitations were sent electronically when possible, and included a newsletter describing the ecosystem-based management demonstration program. For invitees without email addresses, the letter and newsletter were mailed. A follow-up email was sent in advance of the meeting, and calls were made to those without email.

The agenda for the initial open-stakeholder meeting introduced the ecosystem-based management concept and described the New York State Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Council initiative. Following the introductions, staff scientists from EcoLogic facilitated an open discussion that solicited input on three interrelated topics.

- Discussion regarding the attributes of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem that were of highest value to respondents. What do we have now? What aspects of the ecosystem are most important—of greatest value—to you, with an emphasis on natural resources and social, economic sustainability?
- What are the issues and challenges facing the Sandy Creeks ecosystem over the next five to ten years?
- What are some tools (educational, scientific, regulatory, etc.) that might help stakeholders face these challenges and protect this area for future generations?

Statements from this initial stakeholder meeting were entered into a Microsoft Access database.

2.2 Focus Groups

Following the initial stakeholder meeting, EcoLogic hosted a series of focus groups. Contact lists were provided by Tug Hill Commission. Seven focus groups were held; six were limited to participants representing a defined interest and the seventh was held as an open group for those with scheduling conflicts. Several individual interviews were conducted as well, by telephone, in person, or through written correspondence.

Focus Group Name	Date	Location
Agriculture	August 6, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park
Business	August 29, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park
Conservation	July 25, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park
Foresters and Large Landowners	August 30, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park
Municipalities	July 30, 2007	Adams Center Municipal Building
Recreation and Anglers	August 8, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park
Open Invitation	August 15, 2007	Sandy Island Beach State Park

Each focus group, typically encompassing four to ten participants, lasted approximately one hour. The project team kept extensive notes and most of the sessions were recorded.

After brief introductions, the discussions were guided to address the topics of interest. One member of the EcoLogic team, Dr. Linda Wagenet, facilitated all seven focus groups to ensure continuity in how the questions were phrased. The focus group discussion was informal, and individuals were free to express their views at any time. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions.

1. What is your background and interest in the Sandy Creeks watershed? (What brought you to this meeting tonight?)
2. To start out, think back about fifteen years. How would you compare the state of this region at that time to what it is now? You can consider this in natural resource terms, recreational terms, social terms, however you'd like.

3. Now think ahead about fifteen years. Given the current trends in population, land use, economic development; will this be an area where your family wants to settle?
4. Why or why not? What factors will change the Sandy Creeks region?
5. Which of these can be controlled?
6. I'd like each of you to mention one or two priority projects that you believe can effectively improve the future of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem.

Data from the focus groups were entered into the custom database developed for this project.

2.3 Final open-invitation stakeholder meeting

A final open-invitation stakeholder meeting was held on September 20, 2007, to report on what had been heard during the focus groups. Members of the EcoLogic project team made a PowerPoint presentation (included in Appendix 1) and facilitated a discussion regarding whether the findings adequately captured the discussion and issues raised in the focus groups. Participants were also asked in what ways they would like to remain involved with and informed of the ecosystem-based management process. Statements made at the final stakeholder meeting were incorporated into the database developed for the project.

Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

SECTION 3: RESULTS

An analysis of the data collected revealed several themes concerning resident visions for the Sandy Creeks watershed as well as the practicality of implementing ecosystem-based management in this region. The focus groups responded to three overarching questions: *What elements of the Sandy Creeks watershed ecosystem(s) are important? What are the threats to the Sandy Creeks watershed ecosystem? How might ecosystem-based management work in this region?* This section of the report will discuss participant reaction to these questions as well as findings from the final stakeholder meeting.

The initial stakeholder meeting uncovered three basic areas that are important to residents of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem: a) native species and natural communities; b) economically successful natural resource-based industries (including forestry, agriculture, recreation, and fisheries); and c) intact forests and high quality streams. These three basic areas, which are components of ecosystem-based management, were echoed in the focus groups when the discussions centered on changes observed over the years.

3.1 Native species and natural communities

When considering *native species and natural communities*, much of the discussion related to invasive species, the dunes and the beaches. There was almost universal understanding of the adverse impacts of invasive species and a strong perception that invasive species have increased in both numbers and impacts in recent years. Effective solutions to ameliorate the continued waves of invasive species are not obvious, and several respondents noted that increased regulation might be at least a part of the answer.

3.1.1 Representative comments on invasive species

“The last eleven years the winters are milder. Invasives are coming in. Global warming, is this coming into play? More temperate conditions are favorable for different species.”

“There is a changing habitat and we are losing native species.”

“Invasives are not just on the dunes but all throughout the watershed, changing the ecology of the area.”

“[In terms of invasives], there are long-term impacts. Without anyone really enforcing I think we’re almost on the road to disaster.”

“We need to cooperate to control invasives. For example, my neighbor has lots of swallowwort, but she claimed it wasn’t her problem but the guy she’d granted hunting rights to.”

3.1.2 Representative comments related to the dunes

Many participants felt strongly that the dunes are quite important to the area, both from a natural and an economic standpoint. There was general agreement that the Dune Coalition has done a

good job of bringing back and guarding the dunes. However, some participants noted that additional enforcement might be needed to sustain this vital resource in an effective manner.

“[In the past] we would all walk over dunes; nobody knew any different, pure sand. Big fires on the beach at night. Then TNC came in and fenced. Now it’s wonderful, there are raised boardwalks, lush beachgrass and vegetation.”

“Black Pond is a different story. The boardwalk has been there for 6 years, now we have more use – and we see abuse. There’s too much parking.”

“Success story of the dunes. One of the ways this area has changed. Positive because of education changing the mindset. We didn’t know any different.”

“There’s no way of regulating it – somebody can tear down a dune and get away with it. DEC will come, but somebody has to turn them in.”

“The sense of local perspective is very small-scale. People around the dunes are only concerned about the dunes.”

“I think the Dune Coalition is a well-respected group in the community.”

“The Dune Coalition does a great job. But they don’t address high water. I think they try, but they run their heads into the wall and get beaten down. Nobody cares.”

“Need to keep people off the dunes. There are still fires, swimmers, people with ATVs.”

3.1.3 Representative comments related to the beaches

The stakeholder focus groups revealed a concern about loss of beach area and general erosion. They had observed a real change in access and availability of beaches. Although in most cases this related to recreational pursuits, there was also a concern expressed in one focus group regarding potential loss of habitat for wildlife.

“You can no longer walk from Salmon River to Sandy Pond inlet. I used to walk it all the time. You have to walk in people’s yards now, because there’s zero beach.”

“Last time we had a beach was in 1992. Very high water, somehow or other it never came back.”

“Property owners are interested in the state of the beach on the property that they own. Some people are diligently out there with their tractors and rakes, and they’re raking the beach out to the sea wall. We try to live with the natural ecology of the beach, whereas some owners are clearing out, planting grass, mowing the lawn and stuff like that. I don’t mow the lawn; it’s beach grass. Some property owners have cleared way back; some have kept the dunes; some have tried to re-establish the natural vegetation on the dunes. DEC would not let one property owner transplant beach grass from other sites in the area – she had to order from New Jersey and it’s not the same kind of beach grass.”

“Let’s reserve some beaches for wildlife.”

3.2 Economically successful natural resource-based industries

The discussion about an *economically successful natural resource based industry* (i.e., agriculture and recreation) revealed an understanding on the part of participants that the Sandy Creeks watershed is a valuable resource that needs to be preserved for economic viability of the region and that there needs to be cooperation among the various factions. This is especially true in loss of farmland most notably for recreation purposes. Examples of participant comments are given below.

3.2.1 Representative comments related to agriculture

There was a concern among all focus group participants that changes in the agricultural enterprises in the area would have an economic impact as well as an aesthetic one. There was an appreciation of the water resources and good land for agriculture in the area. Maintaining historical land uses, such as dairy and other agriculture, was seen to be essential to preserve the rural character of the watershed. However, there was also recognition of the potential for conflict among diverse land use interests.

“The rural quality of life is what residents cherish and tourists seek. Let’s not lose that.”

“People, when they come in, don’t understand dairy farming or other farming except what’s been fed to them in ‘ag-entertainment’.”

“[There has been a] change in attitude. A neighbor chased our manure truck down the road: ‘You can’t spread there. My dog goes in there’ and it was **our** land!”

“Agricultural lands are going to hunting/recreation; land is taken out of use for farming.”

“Conflicts exist between agriculture and new neighbors because of a lack of understanding and communication.”

“Land values are escalating because farmers want land, too. Carving out a small corner is less prevalent.”

“I went to a farm auction that divided the farm by taxing jurisdictions into six parcels. All were sold for the intended use of housing/recreation. People can build a house and watch the deer go by.”

“If enough people move in, there won’t be any farmers left. People move into the country and don’t want to smell the smells, see the dust, and deal with the noise.”

“Farmers need to find ways to communicate and prove we are doing a responsible job.”

“People have no concept of what is a large farm, until there is a big manure spill.”

“We have a treasure in the land base. It’s as much of a resource as fisheries.”

3.2.2 Representative comments related to recreation

Examples of recreational considerations were boating, hunting, fishing. Maintaining a viable recreational area was extremely important to participants. Focus group participants expressed their concern that degradation of the land and water resources could threaten recreational opportunities. Aversion to a regulatory environment akin to the Adirondack Park was clearly on the minds of several of the participants.

“Fish are out there, but not as big and not as many. This, of course, affects the whole economy: house rentals, restaurants, retail trade.”

“There is too much pressure on wild populations in streams.”

“[There has been a] huge increase in different types of recreational uses throughout the entire watershed – snowmobiles, horseback riding, ATVs, whatever.”

“I have seen a change in social needs; need more recreational opportunities for off-work hours. This has increased over 20 years.”

“In recent years big boats have left the pond, which is an economic sting; can’t get the boat in the channel any longer. Three or four years ago, Sandy Pond Channel Maintenance Association solicited funds from members for dredging the channel.”

“Land used to be worth what you could produce off it; now it’s driven by recreational use.”

3.3 Intact forests and high quality streams

A third important element for the participants is *intact forests and high quality streams*. Participants reported that water quality had improved in the watershed over the past several years and wanted to sustain that improvement. There was clear recognition of the part that humans play in maintaining healthy forest and streams. Examples of participant comments are presented below.

3.3.1 Representative comments related to forests and forestry practices

There is an understanding that forest practices can be detrimental to the natural environment. At the same time, participants realize that the forestry industry can have a positive impact on the local economy and changes in that industry affect changes in the watershed.

“Forest practices in the watershed vary. It’s OK on state land, but there are unscrupulous loggers on some private lands.”

“The state continues to buy more land, but they are not very good stewards. Funding is so bad that DEC Region Seven doesn’t have a forester to manage their own land.”

“Loggers used to drive in streams. Now this is all under permits.”

“Farmers sell off selectively logged lumber. The price of lumber has dropped and it’s not as good a cash crop.”

“Overseas demand for hardwoods has dropped. The timber market is often a good indicator of the general economy.”

“The pulp mills are gone.”

“The equipment has gotten larger – it used to be small. It’s hard to do selective thinning if you’ve got a twelve foot wide piece of equipment.”

“The state sells lumber off the property. The money goes to the general fund in Albany – not back into land stewardship.”

3.3.2 Representative comments related to healthy streams

As mentioned above, participants generally felt that stream quality had improved over the years, but increased population and housing density were seen to have an impact (current or potential) on that water quality.

“Water bodies are more pristine now. Farmers are doing better, municipalities have improved wastewater treatment plants and there is storm water management.”

“The streams are cleaner now – better enforcement and less dumping.”

“People are building homes in the uplands. Whatever happens up the hill affects downstream.”

“Many farm to the edge of the streams – there are no buffers. We see runoff to the streams.”

“The water table is low now, even with three hundred inches of snow. I have one running stream in the forest, whereas I usually have half a dozen.”

“Although the streams are pretty pure, don’t drink from them. There is not a stream that enters this end of the lake that I would put a glass in and drink: beavers, septic runoff, houses, and towns.”

3.4 Threats to the Sandy Creeks watershed ecosystem

Based on participants comments concerning what was important to them and what changes they had observed, potential threats were identified. The responses may be grouped into three overall categories: a) development pressure; b) lack of funds for infrastructure; and c) incompatible lake

level management. As mentioned above, *preservation of native species* is important to residents in the watershed and invasive species were broadly reported as a threat.

3.4.1 *Development pressure*

The overriding threat that was common to all focus groups is *development pressure*. This brings a variety of changes that were generally considered to be negative (e.g., loss of farmland and open space; rural/urban conflicts). An overarching concern was the loss of rural character. Participants understood that coordination and cooperation would be required to preserve rural character. Examples of participant comments are presented below.

“Development is going to come to this area....There will be more pressure as the rest of the country depletes their water supply.”

“The North Country is one of the best-kept secrets in the country....Pressures that were only on the lake or the river are moving inland onto Tug Hill.”

“Areas are becoming more urbanized and more consumer-oriented.”

“Not much pressure from the rich in the past. Now land is untouchable for locals but \$250,000-\$300,000 is not a lot for folks from New Jersey.”

“Increasing numbers of people – it’s staggering to me.”

“There must be a better way of allowing for housing expansion, not this hit-or-miss expansion, using so much land for house and lot. People want privacy, that’s why they are moving to the country. Got to be a better way than what has been accomplished.”

“People from away who may or may not live differently than we’re used to.”

“It depends a lot on Syracuse development (DestiNY). I see this as a hinge. If this development starts some people will come up this way. There will be overflow to this area.”

3.4.2 *Lack of funds for infrastructure*

Another threat related to development pressure centered around the *lack of funds for infrastructure* and the burden this places on local property owners in terms of increased taxes. This theme was discussed in context of wastewater treatment and the provision of quality drinking water.

“On my road there are now thirty camps. I just wonder how many are still using fifty-five gallon drums for wastewater disposal. Where is the sewage going?”

“I called the code enforcement officer about septic and expanding camps. No one is checking these things.”

“There are changes in the watershed and runoff: onsite wastewater disposal systems may be failing. There is a lack of oversight of regulators who don’t seem to want to assume the responsibility.”

“I worry about drinking water, especially in this area with highly permeable soils. It could bring contamination into drinking water.”

“Some of the folks...are on Social Security, and they just don’t have the resources for large capital projects to protect their beaches.”

“Unless some of these towns look at their land use, ‘cut and run’ land developers will come in, carve up large parcels into small ones. Pressures that were only on the lake or the river are moving inland onto Tug Hill.”

“Local communities think development is the best thing for them; they see tax dollars. In reality, development costs more if they do it wrong. No one is thinking about natural resources.”

3.4.3 Incompatible lake level management

Incompatible lake level management is a theme that was a focus of some stakeholder groups. However, this was not as prevalent a concern as others noted here.

“Landowners are not in agreement with current lake level management; we will see loss of dunes and shoreline.”

“The shippers want the lake and the waterway as full of water as possible because they can move heavier boats, and that’s contrary to the interests and concerns of many of the property owners around the lake.”

“So you have the interests of some property owners, which don’t really have a large economic impact versus the interests of shipping, which have a huge economic impact if the water level is dropped down.”

3.5 Application of ecosystem-based management to the Sandy Creeks region

In reality, the question of how ecosystem-based management might work locally is central to the success of the pilot project. Comments from the focus groups reveal several interesting insights into the issue. In general, participants were unfamiliar with the term ecosystem-based management, but their visions and suggestions were actually aligned with the concept. There was a strong feeling against top-down regulatory controls, and consensus that education should be a primary tool for any changes that might occur. The comments included below reflect a general skepticism regarding the feasibility of getting agencies to work together in a cooperative manner.

“What is it? I still do not understand it.”

“It’s going to be a challenge. We have a diversity of people who may not agree. Some are not from here.”

“Even people in agencies don’t know what ecosystem-based management is.”

“It’s not easy to change the mindset of local leaders.”

“Over the years acronyms and programs come and go. I hope ecosystem-based management is not just another.”

“Each of the three areas (upland, agriculture, wetland/ponds/Lake Ontario) has different sets of problems, therefore different needs.”

“If you educate, people will regulate themselves.”

“Broad-based education – then people will tell local leaders and county planning boards, local Zoning Board of Appeals, etc., what they want.”

“Start with education about the positive benefits of actions; we are regulated to death already.”

“The ecosystem-based management approach can only be truly successful if the human element is considered and remembered throughout the process. While planning for rare communities of plants and animals and significant areas of scenic quality, we need to not forget that people live and raise their families here. All aspects of industry and each community no matter how small need to be involved from the outset to ensure comprehensive planning ensues. Funding must follow planning.”

3.6 Stakeholder recommendations for specific ecosystem-based management projects

The focus groups closed with a discussion of potential projects that would advance the objectives of ecosystem-based management in the Sandy Creeks watershed. Among the ideas mentioned were the following.

- Integrated trails and creek walks
- Low-interest revolving loan fund for farmers to implement best management practices
- Wastewater management: invest in wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure
- Permit system for hunting on private agricultural lands
- Several participants discussed the need for and opportunity represented by alternative energy in this rural area of the state. A willow biomass plant was cited as an example.

- Construct bridges over streams in areas used for recreation, perhaps in the context of a citizen conservation corps initiative.
- The need for science-based development planning was recognized by many of the stakeholders. The Tug Hill Commission was referenced as a valuable resource of objective planning for rural communities.

Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

SECTION 4: DISCUSSION

The participants saw as the principal impediment to implementation of ecosystem-based management in Sandy Creeks a difficulty in getting people to work together toward a shared vision and for state agencies and local governments to buy in to the concept. Many people are skeptical of programs that “come and go” without the resources to implement them. They believe state agencies with the power to initiate these programs have lacked the commitment to do so and have failed to collaborate among themselves and with local people toward achieving shared goals. Furthermore, although there was wide agreement among the participants on many important elements of a shared vision for the Sandy Creeks ecosystem, participants were frustrated by communities’ inability to effectuate the visions. A number saw an influx of “outsiders” with different visions for the future of the area as an impediment to implementing a shared vision. If participants voiced optimism for ecosystem-based management, it was that ecosystem-based management begins with grass-roots input and public education and outreach, rather than top-down regulation or management by agencies.

What were the elements of a shared vision? Many, if not most, participants expressed a desire to see the rural quality of the area maintained and to control development of residential and recreational areas so as not to threaten this rural character. Many participants mentioned trails or trail systems, especially trails to run along the creeks and through the communities, although, once again, they’ve been frustrated in their attempts over the years to develop such trails. There was widespread recognition that the natural resources of the area—the water, the shoreline, the forests and the soil—were important assets to be maintained, but that some of these attributes were already threatened. Many respondents, however, were wary of “regulation”, especially if it came from afar: “Are we getting like APA?”

If ecosystem-based management is to succeed in Sandy Creeks, local people will have to see some elements of their vision implemented, and if their vision is to be implemented, local governments will need the necessary tools. Perhaps most important in this regard will be natural resource inventories, assessments of the character of the ecosystem as it exists now. In some areas, especially recognized natural areas (e.g., the Lake Ontario Dunes), such inventories exist, but in others they do not. The best such inventories will include assets—clean water, open space, and good soil—as well as liabilities—invasive species, failing septic systems, and destructive lake levels. They should also include some understanding of the processes through which elements of the system interact. An effective ecosystem-based management plan would allow local governments not only to garner support from local citizens, but also receive cooperation from state and other agencies in developing such inventories.

Local governments will need to come to rely on science-based planning for development. A viable, sustainable vision for the future of the ecosystem will be constrained by the nature of the system itself. All futures are not possible, but “the best science” can help identify the best ones achievable and point the direction to their achievement. Many of the resources necessary for good science-based planning are available to the people of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem. These resources need to be brought to bear on the local vision, and they need to be understood and initiated by local governments. When the resources for science-based planning come from state

agencies, those agencies need to work cooperatively with each other and with local governments to address the felt needs of the local people.

Local governments will also need funds for infrastructure improvements required for ecosystem-based management. For example, although there was some agreement among participants that water quality in upland streams had improved in recent years, there was great concern for the water quality in the ponds and other areas near Lake Ontario. Cottages and “camps” along the shoreline are often served by failing septic systems or by no septic system, and water pollution is a major concern. There was, not surprisingly, equal concern among participants for the quality of drinking water in these areas. Good water and wastewater management will be necessary components of successful ecosystem-based management, and local communities will need funds to build the necessary infrastructure.

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

If ecosystem-based management is to succeed, citizen stakeholders will have to stay involved and local governments will have to remain responsive to the stakeholders. At the root of this process are communication and education. The outreach effort to stakeholders in the summer of 2007 was early in the process of developing a management plan for Sandy Creeks. A core community is now informed regarding the objectives and scope of the initiative. The Tug Hill Commission and other project partners have the opportunity to build on this nascent awareness of ecosystem-based management and how it differs from watershed management.

As the ecosystem-based management plan for Sandy Creeks is developed, it will be important to incorporate the specific concerns revealed during this outreach program into the adopted measures and targets of success. Many stakeholders exhibited a wealth of understanding of ecosystem processes, and knowledge of specific locations and parameters of concern. However, there was less understanding of the overall processes for implementing ecosystem-based management in the Sandy Creeks area. Integrating the stakeholder community into the natural resource inventory stage of the plan development will help both the process and the product. The ecosystem-based management framework will be improved by incorporating site-specific data and information. Moreover, this will build the perception that the plan is “home-grown” and reflects local concerns.

Much of the conversation in the focus groups reflected a concern that development would irrevocably change the environment and that a “way of life” in this rural area was slipping away. It will be essential for the Sandy Creeks ecosystem-based management plan to explicitly include objectives and measures related to the human population. This will also help address the question of how this new resource management paradigm differs from watershed management.

Discussion at the second open-invitation stakeholder meeting indicated that only about half of the participants have reliable access to the internet in this rural area of New York. Consequently, communication through a newsletter must use traditional print media in addition to electronic distribution and project web sites.

Stakeholders must remain convinced that their input is desired and that they are being listened to by local officials and by representatives of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council. Stakeholder input is probably most effectively received in public meetings, either held regularly or targeted for particular projects and particular participants, although other routes—a web site, e-mail, phone or mail contacts—should be maintained as well.

In sum, although the participants in this outreach project voiced some frustration with the direction changes in the Sandy Creeks ecosystem had taken, they seemed surprisingly well-informed regarding the processes driving this change and eager to support steps toward a more desirable future. The success of ecosystem-based management in the Sandy Creeks watershed will demand keeping stakeholders actively involved in the process. This, in turn, will demand that they see early returns from their efforts and that they see cooperation from government and other agencies meant to serve them.

Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

APPENDIX 1

Documentation of stakeholder outreach:

Invitation letter

List of participants

PowerPoint presentation, final open-invitation meeting

Totals of invited focus group participants and their affiliation:

Focus Group Affiliation	Invited Participants
Agriculture	18
Business	20
Conservation	30
Foresters/Large Landowners	19
Municipalities	30
Recreation	23
Total Invited Participants	140



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July 13, 2007

«Title» «First_Name» «Middle_Name» «Surname»
«Company_Name»
«Business_Address_Street»
«Business_Address_City», «Business_Address_State_or_Province»
«Business_Address_Postal_Code»

Dear «Title» «Surname»:

We hope you can join us for a focus group meeting to share your knowledge and ideas about the natural resources and socioeconomics of the Sandy Creeks watershed. You are being invited to share your specific perspectives regarding (insert: topic group *agriculture, conservation or recreation*)

The Sandy Creeks area of the eastern Lake Ontario basin is one of two demonstration areas in New York State designed to pilot Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) by understanding the connections between ecosystems and the people who live and work in them.

The Tug Hill Commission was asked to participate in the Sandy Creeks EBM project to make sure local needs and knowledge are represented in the project. The Commission hired EcoLogic LLC of Cazenovia, NY to help facilitate the meetings and document the community input. EcoLogic is bringing together focus group with an interest in (i.e., *agriculture, conservation or recreation*) to begin this important discussion.

We hope you will be able to participate in this important process. The meeting will focus on:

1. What aspects of the ecosystem (natural resources and socio-economics) are important to you?
2. What issues do you see facing the ecosystem over the next 5 years?
3. What goals do you have for improving the ecosystem?
4. What actions could be taken to achieve these goals?

Please consider your availability in attending one of the following two meeting dates/times:

Tuesday, July 24, 2007, 7:30pm-8:30pm

Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 7:30pm-8:30pm

The meeting date will be chosen based on the most convenient date for the greatest number of respondents. A member of the EcoLogic team will contact you to see which of these meeting dates is most convenient for you. Focus group meetings will be held at the Sandy Island Beach NYS Park in the Community Room. Please note, there is no vehicle admission fee after 7pm and refreshments will be provided.

We are excited about this new approach to resource management and the opportunity to look ahead to a sustainable future. Please join us as we discuss EBM and a new approach to managing our resources.

Sincerely,

Sandy Creeks EBM Demonstration Project Steering Committee

NYS Department of State – Greg Capobianco, Jeff Herter, Leah Akins

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation – Al Schiavone, Irene Mazzocchi, Dick McDonald

The Nature Conservancy – Gretchen Wainwright, Michelle Peach

Tug Hill Commission – John Bartow, Katie Malinowski, Jennifer Harvill

Save the Date!!

Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Initiative

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this summary meeting. Led by our consultant, EcoLogic, several focus groups have met over the last few months to provide insight in a variety of topics in the Sandy Creeks Watershed. This final meeting of the stakeholder outreach portion of the planning process will summarize the information gathered in these meetings. Light refreshments will be served!

Summary of Focus Groups Meetings

Date: September 20, 2007
Time: 7:00–9:00 pm
Place: Adams Town and Village Hall
Court Room
Address: 2 North Main St.
Adams, NY 13605

For More Information and to RSVP,
please contact Katie Malinowski at the
Tug Hill Commission:

Phone: 315-785-2380
Fax: 315-785-2574
E-mail: katie@tughill.org

Sandy Creeks Outreach Meetings – Ecosystem Based Management
Sign-in Sheets Summary

June 27, 2007 – First Stakeholder Meeting

Art Baderman	Dick McDonald
Dick Brown	Bob McNamara
Jay Chapman	Dorothy Parker
Jennifer Harvill	Chuck Parker
Bonnie Herter	Michelle Peach
Margaret Kastler	Mary Penney
Wayne Lindsey	Doug Schelmidine
Amy Mahar	Gerry Smith
Jay M. Matteson	Brian Wohnsiedler

July 25, 2007 – First Conservation Focus Group

Sandy Bonanno
Jim Jerome
Michelle Peach
Bill and Starr Rason
Nan Winters

July 30, 2007 – Municipalities Focus Group

Francis A. Adams
Art Baderman
Jennifer Harvill
Margaret Kastler
David Kellogg

August 6, 2007 – Agricultural Focus Group

Timothy and Renee Alford
Gail Millard
Doug Murray
Doug Schelmidine

August 8, 2007 – Recreational Focus Group

David R. Claridge
Ann Elyse Foltz
Chuck Parker
Robert L. Saiff
James and Barbara Shutts
Fran Verdoliva

Sandy Creeks Outreach Meetings – Ecosystem Based Management
Sign-in Sheets Summary (continued)

August 15, 2007 – Second Conservation Focus Group

John DeHollander
Irene Mazzocchi
Mary Penney
Sally Sessler
Tim Strough

August 29, 2007 – Business Focus Group

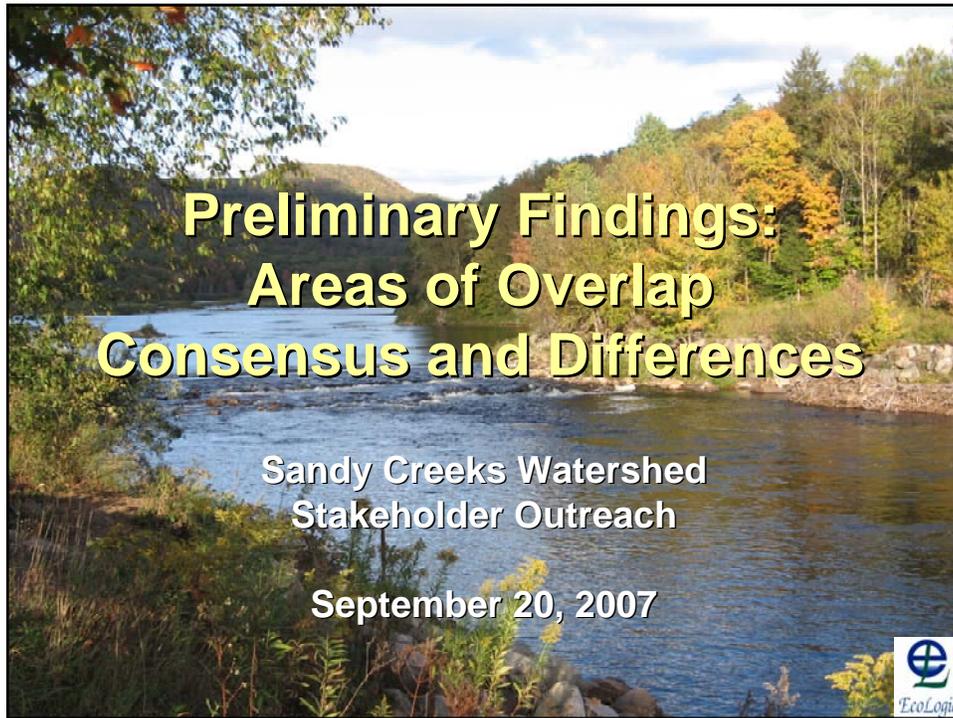
Mike Brennan

August 30, 2007 – Foresters/Large Landowners Focus Group

Janet and Fred Goodnough
Otto Joss
Fred Munk
Jerry Smith

September 20, 2007 – Second Stakeholder Meeting

Francis A. Adams	Vaughn Murdock
Jim Atkinson	Chuck Parker
David R. Claridge	Michelle Peach
Ann Elyse Foltz	John D. Peck
Fred Goodnough	Pete Pelton
Jeff Herter	Mary Penney
Amy Mahar	Bob Saiff
Jay Matteson	Doug Schelmidine
Irene Mazzocchi	Bob Smolka
Fred Munk	Dave Stone



Ecosystem-Based Management

- Face problems, identify opportunities, find common solutions
- Science-based approach
- Long-term view for sustainability
- Comprehensive perspective: economic prosperity, lasting livelihoods, ecological health

Our Assignment

- NYS Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council
 - NYSDEC (chair)
 - Transportation
 - OGS
 - DOS
 - NYSERDA
 - Ag and Markets
 - Empire State Development
 - OPRHP
 - SUNY
- Two EBM pilot projects: Sandy Creeks and Great South Bay
- Stakeholder outreach: concurrent with science and economics

Approach

- Initial stakeholder meeting (open invitation)
 - Most valued aspects of the ecosystem?
 - Issues and challenges?
 - Tools for managing?
- Seven focus groups and multiple interviews (50+ stakeholders to date)
 - Recreation
 - Agriculture
 - Conservation (2)
 - Municipal leaders
 - Business
 - Forestry and large landowners



Why this Approach?

- Qualitative: focus groups and interviews
- Effective for small groups
- Opportunity to explore in depth: human factor
- Identify areas of agreement and conflict
- Start conversation: what is EBM and how it might work in the Sandy Creeks watershed?

Kick-off meeting: What we heard

What is important?

“**Native species and natural communities** that have been lost...need to be restored.”

“Presence of **economically successful natural resource based industry**, i.e., agriculture/forestry/recreation.”

“Tug Hill features 3,000 miles of rivers and streams, a good percentage of which drain this watershed. **Keep it intact** – hydrology, keep invasive species out, healthy forests and streams.”



Kick-off meeting: What we heard

In the next five years...

- “**Conflicts between agriculture and new neighbors** because of lack of understanding and communication.”
- “The **rural quality of life** is what residents cherish and tourists seek. Let’s not lose that!”
- “**Invasive species**, which can affect large changes in the ecosystem.”

Kick-off meeting: What we heard

Potential Solutions...

- “Identify **critical natural resources** and protect them at the local level.”
- “Implement programs that **support and encourage the growth of agriculture.**”
- “**Outreach and education...** to help maintain this wonderful, diverse region.”
- “A **funding system** needs to be found. Today good stewards need to be able to afford to keep their land.”



Focus group findings: Changes

- Water quality in streams has improved
- Increased development: “people from away”
- Land values are increasing, especially lakefront
- Dunes are restored; effective education
- More camps, more trash
- Conflicts in recreational use
- Conflicts in agriculture/urbanizing communities
- Waste and wastewater management issues

Focus group comments: Changes Improved Water Quality

“Water bodies are more pristine now. Farmers are doing a better job.”

“The streams are cleaner now, there’s better enforcement and less dumping.”



Focus group comments: Changes Increased development

“Zoning large lots (maybe 5 acres) homeowners don’t use it all. The rest deteriorates into brush, lost from farming.”

“Agricultural lands are going to hunting/recreation; land is taken out of use for farming.”

“Huge demand for lakefront property. ‘Poor man’s paradise’.”

“Increasing numbers of people – it’s staggering to me.”



Focus group comments: Changes Increasing land values

“The property owners are paying taxes...and not getting any services.”

“Areas are becoming more urbanized and more consumer-oriented.”

“Land values are escalating because farmers want land, too. Carving out a small corner is less prevalent.”

“Not much pressure from the rich in the past. Now land is untouchable for locals but \$250-\$300,000 not a lot for folks from New Jersey.”

“Farmers are selling parcels. Land is cheap, compared to other areas.”



Focus group comments: Changes Dunes and Beaches

"[In the past] we would all walk over dunes; nobody knew any different. Big fires on the beach at night. Then TNC came in and fenced. Now it's wonderful."

"Success story of the dunes. Positive because of education; change in mindset."

"Last time we had a beach was in 1992. Very high water; somehow or other it never came back."

Focus group comments: Changes Rural/urban conflicts

"People when they come in don't understand dairy farming or other farming except what's been fed to them in 'ag-entertainment'."

"The only people who really care, take care of this environment, are us property owners. The other people are just weekend boarders."

"[There has been a] change in attitude. A neighbor chased our manure truck down the road: 'You can't spread there. My dog goes in there'."



Focus group comments: Changes Waste and wastewater management

“Municipalities have improved wastewater treatment plants and storm water management.”

“On my road there are now 30 camps. I just wonder how many are still using 55 gallon drums for wastewater disposal. Where is the sewage going?”

“I called the code enforcement officer about septic...no one is checking these things.”



Focus group comments: Future

Impacts of increased population

- Development pressure
- Impact of Fort Drum
- Change in agriculture
- Conflicting uses
- Wastewater management
- Conservation



Focus group comments: Future Development Pressure

“If enough people move in, there won’t be any farmers left. People move into the country don’t want to smell the smells, see the dust, deal with the noise...”

“Development is going to come to this area...There will be more pressure as the rest of the country depletes their water supply.”

“The North Country is one of the best-kept secrets in the country...Pressures that were only on the lake or the river are moving inland onto Tug Hill.”



Focus group comments: Future Change in agriculture

“Farmers are getting older. Farms need to get bigger to survive.”

“Farmers need to find ways to communicate and prove we are doing a responsible job.”

“People have no concept of what is a large farm, until there is a big manure spill.”



Focus group comments: Future Conflicting uses

"I went to a farm auction that divided the farm by taxing jurisdictions into 6 parcels. All were sold for the intended use of housing/recreation. People can build a house and watch the deer go by."

"Landowners are not in agreement with current lake level management; we will see loss of dunes and shoreline."

"There are different mindsets of people for how they want to manage the space that they own."



Focus group comments: Future Conservation issues

"We have a treasure in the land base. It's as much of a resource as fisheries."

"We try to live with the natural ecology of the beach, some owners are clearing out, planting grass, mowing the lawn and stuff like that."

"To save what rural character you can, you have to work together with TNC, Land Trusts, etc. to preserve long-term open space."

"Beavers are natural." "Beavers are pests."



Focus group comments: Future Physical and Biological Changes

- Continued beach erosion without lake level management
- More deer
- Continued threat from invasive species



Focus group findings: EBM *How might EBM Work?*

- Lack of understanding of the concept
- Importance of education
- Skepticism about agency commitment and ability to effectively collaborate
- Positive example – Dune Coalition
- Lack of comprehensive land use planning

Focus group comments: EBM
How might EBM Work?

“What is it? I still do not understand it.”

“It’s going to be a challenge. We have a diversity of people who may not agree. Some are not from here.”

“Even people in agencies don’t know what EBM is.”

“Over the years acronyms and programs come and go. I hope EBM is not just another.”

Focus group comments: EBM
Importance of education

“If you educate, people will regulate themselves.”

“Broad-based education – then people will tell local leaders and county planning board, local Zoning Board of Appeals, etc. what they want.”

“Start with education about the positive benefits of actions; we are regulated to death already.”

“You can’t fix stupid.”



Focus group comments: EBM Skepticism

“Not one town will come to consensus about the trails system.”

“There are people in our agencies that don’t have buy-in to EBM.”

“Not easy to change the mindset of local leaders.”

“I don’t think anyone cares. Everyone has his/her own ‘pet peeve.’ Other than that, no one cares.”



Focus group findings: EBM Challenges

- Increase understanding of EBM and how it relates to local governance and existing watershed management. What is the regulatory framework around EBM?
- Provide continued funding for efforts like the Dune Coalition, wastewater management, drinkable water supplies, maintenance of rural atmosphere, habitat preservation.
- Think of this area in terms of three regions: upland, agriculture, wetland/ponds/Lake Ontario. Each has a different set of problems, therefore different needs.

Focus group findings: Projects

- Integrated trails & creek walks
- Low-interest revolving loan fund for farmers BMPs
- Wastewater management
- Permit system for hunting on private agricultural lands
- Willow biomass plant
- Bridges over water: citizen conservation
- Need for science-based development planning

Putting the Parts Together

“The EBM can only be truly successful if the **human element** is considered and remembered throughout the process. While planning for rare communities of plants and animals and significant areas of scenic quality, we need to not forget that people live and raise their families here. All aspects of industry and each community no matter how small need to be involved from the outset to ensure comprehensive planning ensues. Funding must follow planning.”

Discussion

- Did we capture what you heard in your focus group?
- Given these findings, how might the EBM partners take effective actions?
- How would you like to stay involved?



Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management Stakeholder Outreach
Final Report

APPENDIX 2

Database of comments and response:
Metadata file (“read-me” file on database CD)
Summary of themes
Reports of participant statements from meetings and focus groups

Sandy Creeks Stakeholder Outreach

Microsoft Access 2003 Database *SandyCreeks_OutreachData.mdb*

This metadata file contains information about the database (*SandyCreeks_OutreachData.mdb*) for the Sandy Creeks Stakeholder Outreach Program conducted in 2007:

1. Project Description
2. Contents of the Database

1. Project Description:

EcoLogic LLC was selected by the Tug Hill Commission to design and implement a stakeholder outreach program in support of the Ecosystem-based Management Strategic Plan for the Sandy Creeks Watershed. This assignment was completed between June and October, 2007, as one component of a broader effort to develop an ecosystem-based management plan for this region of eastern Lake Ontario and its watershed.

EcoLogic began this assignment with a project scoping session that included representatives of the project partners: the Tug Hill Commission, Department of State/ New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council staff, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The project team discussed the status of the ecosystem-based management initiative and identified key stakeholders. Finally, the project steering committee agreed to the following project sequence:

- initial open-invitation stakeholder meeting
- five to seven focus groups,
- final open-invitation stakeholder meeting

The initial open-invitation stakeholder meeting was held on June 27, 2007 at Sandy Island Beach State Park. The agenda for the initial open-stakeholder meeting introduced the ecosystem-based management concept and described the New York State Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Council initiative. Input was solicited from the stakeholders on three interrelated topics.

- Discussion regarding the attributes of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem that were of highest value to respondents. What do we have now? What aspects of the ecosystem are most important—of greatest value—to you, with an emphasis on natural resources and social, economic sustainability?
- What are the issues and challenges facing the Sandy Creeks ecosystem over the next five to ten years?
- What are some tools (educational, scientific, regulatory, etc.) that might help stakeholders face these challenges and protect this area for future generations?

Following the initial stakeholder meeting, EcoLogic hosted a series of focus groups. Seven focus groups were held; six were limited to participants representing a defined interest and the seventh was held as an open group for those with scheduling conflicts. Participants were asked to respond to these questions:

1. What is your background and interest in the Sandy Creeks watershed? (What brought you to this meeting tonight?)
2. To start out, think back about fifteen years. How would you compare the state of this region at that time to what it is now? You can consider this in natural resource terms, recreational terms, social terms, however you'd like.

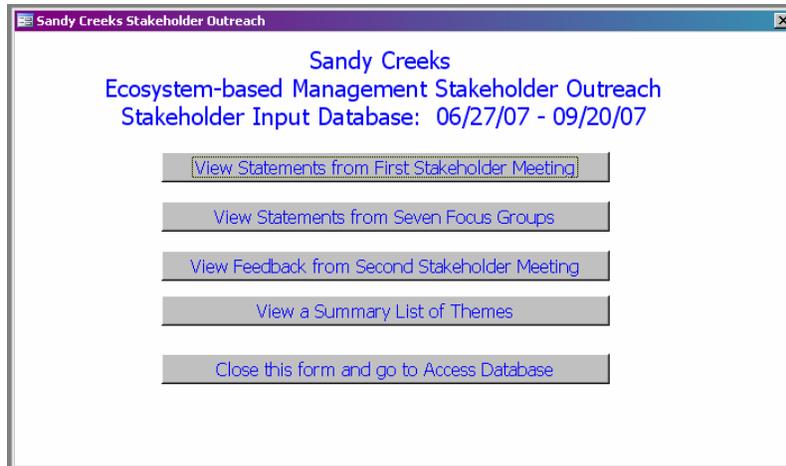
3. Now think ahead about fifteen years. Given the current trends in population, land use, economic development; will this be an area where your family wants to settle?
4. Why or why not? What factors will change the Sandy Creeks region?
5. Which of these can be controlled?
6. I'd like each of you to mention one or two priority projects that you believe can effectively improve the future of the Sandy Creeks ecosystem.

A final open invitation stakeholder meeting was held on September 20, 2007, to report on what had been heard during the focus groups. EcoLogic made a PowerPoint presentation and facilitated a discussion regarding whether the findings adequately captured the discussion and issues raised in the focus groups. Participants were also asked in what ways they would like to remain involved with and informed of the ecosystem-based management process.

Statements made during the initial and final stakeholder meetings and the focus groups were incorporated into the Microsoft Access 2003 database *SandyCreeks_OutreachData.mdb*. Each statement was assigned standardized theme(s) to aid in grouping the responses.

2. Contents of the Access Database *SandyCreeks_OutreachData.mdb*:

Upon opening the database, a user interface appears. This interface consists of five buttons. Four of the buttons will open the designated formatted report of statements from the initial meeting, the focus groups, the final meeting or the summary list of themes. The user may view and print these reports. The fifth button closes the form and allows the user to access the database tables, queries and reports, should the user want to create alternate queries or data presentations.



Below is a summary of the tables, queries and reports in the Access database.

DataType	Name	Description
Tables	Ref_GuideQuestions	Reference list of questions defined for the focus group guide.
	T_Questions	Questions coded (short-hand) for data entry.
	T_Sessions	List of Sessions conducted - stakeholder meetings and focus groups.
	T_Statements	Statements collected during sessions; coded to link with <i>T_Session</i> and <i>T_Questions</i> .

Sandy Creeks Stakeholder Outreach
Microsoft Access 2003 Database *SandyCreeks_OutreachData.mdb*

Data Type	Name	Description
Queries	Rpt02_Statements_FirstMtg	Queries <i>T_Statements</i> for statements collected during the initial stakeholder meeting.
	Rpt03_Statements_FocusGrps	Queries <i>T_Statements</i> for statements collected during the seven focus groups.
	Rpt04_Statements_SecondMtg	Queries <i>T_Statements</i> for statements collected during the final stakeholder meeting.
	Rpt05_ThemeList	Summary list of themes assigned to statements.
Reports	Rpt02_Statements_FirstMtg	Formatted report of the statements from the initial stakeholder meeting (from query of same name).
	Rpt03_Statements_FocusGrps	Formatted report of the statements from the seven focus groups (from query of same name).
	Rpt04_Statements_SecondMtg	Formatted report of the statements from the final stakeholder meeting (from query of same name).
	Rpt05_ThemeList	Formatted report summary of the Themes assigned to statements (from the query of the same name).

List of Themes Assigned to Statements

Theme

Agriculture
Agriculture, development
Agriculture, economic development
Agriculture, outreach
Agriculture, recreation
Agriculture, regulation
Beach
Beach, dunes
Change
Change - climate, invasive species
Change - economic
Change - ecosystem
Change - ecosystem, economic
Change - ecosystem, recreation
Climate
Community contact
Conflict, agriculture vs non-ag
Consensus building
Conservation
Conservation, economic development
Development
Development, economic
Development, water quality
Dredging
Dunes
Dunes, habitat
Economic
Ecosystem
Education
Education, consensus building
Education, outreach
Education, regulation
Energy planning
Erosion
Flooding

Theme

Focus
Forestry practices
Fragmentation
Funding
Funding, education
Funding, government
Habitat
Habitat, climate
Habitat, wildlife
Human concerns
Invasive species
Inventory, analysis
Management, channel
Management, development, agriculture, population
Management, dunes, lake level
Management, forestry
Management, lake level
Management, land use
Management, recreation
Management, resources
Management, solid waste
Management, state lands
Management, wastewater
Management, wastewater, enforcement
Management, water resources
Management, wildlife
Outreach
Perception
Planning
Population
Process
Process (Focus Groups)
Recreation
Recreation, economic
Recreation, hunting
Recreation, multiple use trails

Theme

Recreation, population

Recreation, stream protection

Regulation

Regulation, voluntary measures

Regulation, wastewater

Sensitive areas

Solid waste

Solid waste, water quality

Streams

Water quality

Water quality, fisheries

Water quality, wildlife

Wildlife

First Stakeholder Meeting 6/27/07 - Summary of Statements

Question Theme Statement

What do we have now? What aspects of the ecosystem are most important—of greatest value—to you/ emphasize natural resources and social, economic sustainability

Agriculture, economic development

The culture of the area allowing the blending of agriculture and recreation.

Of great value to me in the Sandy Creeks ecosystem is the rural character that provides the setting for where I want to raise my family.

The connection to Lake Ontario is very important to me.

Continuing forest management activities as part of the economic activity in the area.

The wise and sustainable use of the natural resources in the watershed are of most significance.

Sustainable basin. Is there a realization of how we got where we are today over the last 40 years with the Tug Hill Commission, local input, Tug Hill Tomorrow, and how it appears to me that we are doing rather well when compared to the Adirondacks.

Presence of economically successful natural resource based industry i.e. agriculture/forestry/recreation.

Viewsheds and rural community character.

Of great value to me in the Sandy Creeks ecosystem is the open productive land base supported by the agricultural industry.

Adequacy of infrastructure to support future growth and treat waste.

The quality of the land and environmental resource is important to me, as that is the basis of my livelihood.

The economic viability of local communities.

Beach, dunes

The freshwater beaches and dunes are a resource of global significance biologically.

Question Theme Statement

Conservation

All native species and natural communities currently present must be maintained and enhanced at viable and [illegible] population levels.

It is in pretty good shape. Let's keep it that way! Concerns: parking lots, golf courses, malls, influx of people that need services.

The beach/dune system shelters a diverse and extensive wetland system with dozens of rare plants and animals, including federal threatened bog turtle and state endangered bog buckmoth. Maintain hydrology and water quality that sustains them.

Native species and natural communities that have been lost or severely damaged need to be restored (i.e. piping plover).

Significant portion of the watershed in natural cover or undeveloped. Very important from Lake Ontario perspective.

Importance of Sandy Creek Basin - The upper watershed (Tug Hill area) of the basin has long been a sustainable wildlife habitat which has included sustainable and renewable logging and the associated habitat providing quality hunting and fishing and clean water.

Dunes, habitat

The barrier dune system with its marshes and ponds abound with wildlife and opportunities for paddling and exploring.

Ecosystem

Regionally rare and/or high quality examples of important ecosystems - dunes and unfragmented forests and wetlands and headwater streams.

Habitat

Intact and connected habitat is important.

Habitat, climate

The seasons, different weather of all kinds.

Habitat, wildlife

It's high value: wildlife habitat.

Of great value to me in the Sandy Creeks ecosystem are the diverse habitats that support a variety of wildlife.

Question Theme Statement

Recreation

Its scenic beauty.

There is abundant public forest land receiving lots of snowfall making for limitless opportunities to explore, especially off trail.

Fresh water supply in Sandy Pond for boating, fishing and swimming.

Good fisheries for commerce and sport fishing. Also diverse habitats, wetlands.

Maintaining the watershed as a place to experience quality outdoor-based recreation.

I'm interested in having an area of recreation for my grandchildren and others to enjoy in the future.

Well-developed recreational infrastructure and information.

The diverse recreational opportunities are important to me.

While the area is of great value for recreation, uses must be carefully integrated and controlled to prevent natural resource damage (motorized recreation).

The streams flowing west off of Tug Hill are shallow, on flat rock, making for wonderful walking routes.

Usable land for recreation, hiking, cross-country skiing etc. Beaches and dunes.

Water quality

Fresh water supply which appears to be a larger supply for drinking and recreation and fishing.

What elements of the ecosystem are most important to me? Clean water for consumption of our citizens.[sic]

The source or "headwaters" are undeveloped and low or [illegible].

To ensure the quality of the beaches and water for my grandchildren.

Tug Hill features 3000 miles of rivers and streams, a good percentage of which drain this watershed. Keep it intact - hydrology, keep invasive species out, healthy forests and streams.

Quality and trends in surface water quality.

The multitudes [sic] of high quality streams are very important to me.

What are the issues and challenges facing the SC ecosystem over 5 year period?

Climate

Global warming may be a factor in creating a shift in the composition of the natural resources in this area. This should be studied.

Question Theme Statement

Conflict, agriculture vs non-ag

Farmers not following proper KAFO regulations and allowing runoff into our streams.

Overlooking best management practices and conservation practices of agriculture in the interest of perceived conflicts with natural conservation.

Conflicts between agriculture and new neighbors because of lack of understanding and communication, i.e. non-acceptance accepted [sic] agricultural practices; trespass and damage of crops for recreation.

Conservation

We don't know what we have, i.e. rare fish species in South Pond.

Development

As awareness of the area grows, development pressure will increase and fragmentation will tend to occur.

The rural quality of life is what residents cherish and tourists seek. Let's not lose that! Balance between development and protection.

Good thing - housing, planning, sidewalks and trails.

Poorly controlled cut-and-run second home development needs to be stopped.

Unplanned development.

Newest issues - wind farms, water bottling plant. Need careful assessment re: ecological and quality of life as well as economic value.

We need more information on sensitive natural resources in order to protect and manage them from a myriad of threats, i.e. ATVs, poorly planned development, invasives.

Unplanned development and invasive species are my concerns for the watershed.

Rapid turnover of forest lands and other factors driving short-term land management decision making.

1. Filling in wetlands for building
 2. Dredging of channel between Sandy Pond and Lake Ontario for boaters' use.
 3. Need more constructive planning.
-

Increasing demand for land both nearshore / agricultural / recreational displaces those individuals with competing desires or differing economic means.

Poorly planned and sited industrial energy developments including alternative types (i.e. wind farms).

Residential development, poorly planned, random, poorly regulated.

Rapid fragmentation and development pressure on open space resources, which increases potential for resource degradation.

Question	Theme	Statement
	<i>Education, outreach</i>	Continuing education of youth in maintaining healthy habitat.
	<i>Invasive species</i>	Invasive species
		Invasive species
		Invasive species, which can affect large changes in the ecosystem, especially the part connected to Lake Ontario.
		The importation of invasive species is having an economic and environmental impact to this area.
	<i>Management, channel</i>	Local cost of maintaining channel to Sandy Pond.
	<i>Management, dunes, lake level</i>	Dunes - sand starvations [sic] - need to keep sand OUT of ponds and wetlands, IN the nearshore littoral system. At what point does love of the beaches and dunes begin to degrade them. Channel management. Water level regulation.
	<i>Management, forestry</i>	Forest fragmentation and unsustainable forest practices.
	<i>Management, recreation</i>	The New York State sportsman has a 2.1 billion dollar per year economic impact on the New York State economy and they contribute more than any other single group toward conservation issues. I don't want to see them shut out of the process.
	<i>Management, solid waste</i>	People not following proper garbage management / recycling. Also you take it in / take it out.
	<i>Management, state lands</i>	Poor management of state lands by state agencies.
	<i>Management, water resources</i>	Large quantities of ground water removed from Tug Hill aquifer impacting stream flow volumes, wetlands, water table.
	<i>Management, wildlife</i>	Impediments to fish migration upstream for spawning.
		Protection of the cormorants, biggest disaster in 50 years, OVER regulation. True identification of wetlands not mud holes in the middle of a crop field

Question	Theme	Statement
	<i>Process</i>	Home rule and implementing regional policies at the local level.
		I am concerned about reports like these being based on opinion instead of facts.
		Importance - open meeting for people to voice their concern, of maintaining the area, sportsman to naturalist.
	<i>Recreation</i>	There is not a strong pedestrian / human-powered culture locally, making it difficult to justify developing and maintaining trails and rights-of-way.
		Improper usage of all-terrain vehicles on public and private lands.
		Recreational stresses to the natural resources from visitors (those not living in the area) are increasing.
		Local health problems include high diabetes and heart disease rates. Exercise potential needs to be developed (if you build facilities it has been proven that better health follows!).
	<i>Water quality</i>	Atmospheric deposition - N2
		Failing septic systems, poor systems degrade water quality
What are ways to achieve or overcome impediments - tools can be regulatory, educational, voluntary, etc.?		
	<i>Agriculture, economic development</i>	Develop local markets for low quality wood products. Double-edged sword because may create demand that intensifies pressure for those projects.
		Implement programs that support and encourage the growth of agriculture through farmland preservation, right to farm, agricultural development incentives, and public education.
	<i>Conservation</i>	Continue to work to help maintain a healthy diversity of fish and wildlife habitat, through the use of best management practices.
		Identify critical natural resources and protect at the local level.

Question	Theme	Statement
	<i>Education, outreach</i>	Posting important information at all of the boat launches i.e. the notices at the dune crossover.
		Get local environmental education ingrained in local schools. Kids will grow to love and protect only what they know and education in local species and ecosystems is lacking.
		Education, communication. Expansion of the State AEM programs to identify areas of potential environmental risk and increased economical incentive and professional advice to deal with these.
		Education - all sectors need to understand the issues that affect other interests. Get your message out to other interests and work cooperatively to develop strategies that work for everyone. Conservationists / farmers / boaters / ATVs / snowmobiles / hunters / fishermen / hikers (etc.)
		Outreach and education is an important tool for providing information to all to help maintain this wonderful, diverse region. Communication is key to establishing cooperation for planning, funding and project implementation.
		Education and interpretation worked into places where a lot of recreational users congregate - boat launches, trail heads, parking lots - regarding invasive species and ecology.
	<i>Funding</i>	
		Funding
		A funding system needs to be found. Today good stewards need to be able to afford to keep their land - lower land taxes and incentives.
		Increased funding for existing soil and water programs and the Federal Farm Bill will aid in the delivery of the conservation needs identified in the EBM process and ensure that services are not being duplicated.
	<i>Invasive species</i>	
		More funding to support invasive species identification and monitoring, in addition to treatment.
		Enforce current regulations on ballast water for the shipping industry to minimize the rate of introduced aquatic invasive species.
	<i>Management, land use</i>	
		Land management:
		- sustainable agriculture
		- sustainable forestry (public and private)
		- prevention and early detection/rapid removal of invasives
		- management of state and private conservation lands to sustain the values for which the land was put aside.

Question	Theme	Statement
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Planning

The EBM can only be truly successful if the human element is considered and remembered throughout the process. While planning for rare communities of plants and animals and significant areas of scenic quality we need to not forget that people live and raise their families here. All aspects of industry and each community no matter how small needs to be involved from the outset to ensure comprehensive planning ensues. Funding must follow planning.

Question Theme Statement

Process

Greater coordination between various government agencies and the public involved with planning / construction activities.

Required septic system inspection upon sale, every 5 years.

Brownfields redevelopment programs

Main Street programs

Evaluate Federal, state local, school district policies to apply cost of sprawl (i.e. busing, US rural development subsidizes housing purchases, infrastructure priorities).

Build on what is already working well locally - sportsmen's clubs; dune coalition; farming next to high quality streams (which remain high quality - a tribute to their practices!). Tug Hill Commission, Tug Hill Tomorrow, Dune Steward Program, Winona Forest Recreation Association, Friends of SI Beach.

How do we achieve resiliency of our ecosystem?

1. Education

2. Funding

3. Careful planning - farmland preservation

Work with local municipalities to better plan and regulate residential development that takes into account the needs of agriculture and natural ecosystems.

Make the Tug Hill Commission's expertise available to all local governments in the watershed.

Education and enforcement regulation. Recognize that humans are part of the system and that not the rose on the dung heap [sic]. Through education and enforcement based on good science recognize that certain human desires (i.e. to ride ATVs [illegible]) to utilize state lands for inappropriate recreation must be subjugated to resource protection, i.e. beach area carry capacity.

Education of public on consequences of actions. Demonstration of successful practices. Legislation as a last resort.

Local farmland protection plans with prioritization of important parcels / farms that can be sustainable over the years. Funding.

Keep public water districts in areas where density supports cost, where comprehensive plans are in place, zoning is adopted.

1. Constructive planning

2. Financial aid from agencies and state and federal government

3. Professional advice to local government.

Stronger support for regional land use planning by county and state government. Stronger land use controls at local levels. Education about benefits of comprehensive planning.

Question	Theme	Statement
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Recreation

Regional recreation planning to direct all types of recreational users to appropriate locations.

Encourage (fund?) communities to develop pedestrian and bicycle plans.

Develop trail systems for recreational vehicles to keep them away from everywhere else. Improve regulation and enforcement.

Water quality

Study algae blooms in barrier ponds (e.g. South Pond) and identify sources of nutrient pollution along with possible mitigation strategies.

Summary of Statements from Seven Focus Groups, 07/25 through 8/30, 2007

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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1. How would you compare the state of this region 15 years ago to what it is now?

Agricultural Group

Agriculture

Most farmers do a good job and want to continue
Agriculture should be protected as the best use of the land resource.

I am apprehensive at times about people who plan on doing well without
guidance, they get off on a track that is not advantageous

Our biggest concern is more people causing more problems. Neighbors are
screaming and hollering or suing. We produce the best food in world
Now we're dealing with people on 4 wheelers looking for cheap land and
food.

Farmers need to do things right, shouldn't get over scrutinized

People when they come in don't understand dairy farming or other farming
except what's been fed to them in "ag-entertainment"

Get them to sign a paper that they understand farming

Agriculture, development

Especially in Jefferson County land values are escalating because farmers
want land too. Carving out a small corner is less prevalent. People want
privacy, a horse or two, raise berries, they have small farming ideas.
Can't regulate land transfers when there is a willing seller and buyer

More pressure for housing

Zoning large lots (maybe 5 acres) homeowners don't use it all. The rest
deteriorates into brush, lost from farming steady encroachment. There must
be a better way of allowing for housing expansion not this hit or miss
expansion, using so much land for house and lot. People want privacy,
that's why they are moving to the country. Got to be a better way than what
has been accomplished

Agriculture, recreation

Southern Jefferson County, agricultural lands are going for hunting/
recreation out of state land available taken out of use for farming.

Change

I have a small vegetable farm and interact 100 times more with the public
than the dairy farmers do. I see this area is changing.

Development

I was on the planning board in Watertown. saw areas develop: mixed
agriculture and high end residential begin to see houses in country (like
Adams, Adams Center) areas are becoming more urbanized and more
consumer- oriented.

Solid waste

Everyone used to dump, now we don't

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Water quality</u>	I graduated in 1974, water bodies are more pristine now. Farmers doing better, municipalities have improved wastewater treatment plants and storm water management
		<i>Alternate Conservation Group</i>	
		<u>Agriculture</u>	Decrease in agriculture operations, smaller farms going out, remaining are increasing in size, may be in watershed but headquarters may be outside, more renting lands, absentee owners
		<u>Beach, dunes</u>	Black Pond is a different story. The boardwalk is in 6 years, now have more use. See abuse. Too much parking; there are problems on the roads I can remember my grandparents had a cabin on north sandy pond prior to State Park and TNC buying natural area. The beach was primarily accessible by boat. It was multigenerational: lots of families. We would all walk over dunes nobody knew any different, pure sand. Big fires on the beach at night. Then TNC came in and fenced. Now it's wonderful, there are raised boardwalks, lush beachgrass and vegetation.
		<u>Change - climate, invasive species</u>	Last 11 years winters milder Still have snow, but winters are getting milder Invasives coming in Global warming, is this coming into play? Less water More temperate more favorable for different species Open lake More snow at the end of winter
		<u>Conservation</u>	Changing habitat, losing native species not nesting Lakeshore marshes filling in, not being flushed out
		<u>Development</u>	Decent increase in recreation, snowmobiles, 4 wheelers, ski, orienteering, horses etc more camps More trash Seeing development encroaching because of Fort Drum expanding
		<u>Dunes</u>	Success story of the dunes. One of the ways this area has changed. (photos). Positive because of education change in mindset. We didn't know any different.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Invasive species</u>	Invasives not just on dunes but all throughout watershed changing the ecology of the area
		<u>Management, wastewater</u>	Changes in watershed and runoff, on-site wastewater disposal systems (septics) may be failing, lack of oversight of regulators who don't seem to want to assume the responsibility On my road there are now 30 camps, just wonder how many are still using 55 gallon drums for wastewater disposal where is the sewage going? campsites are another issue. 5000 sites Rainbow Shores.
		<u>Management, wastewater, enforcement</u>	In my area, called codes enforcement officer about septics, expanding camps but they size systems based on how many bedrooms, no one is checking these things
		<u>Recreation</u>	huge increase in different types of recreational uses throughout entire watershed, snowmobiles, horseback riding, atv, whatever Seeing a change in social needs, need more recreational opportunities for off work hours, this has increased over 20 years. More boats. Population increased.
		<u>Water quality, wildlife</u>	Lot more geese
	<i>Business Group</i>	<u>Change - ecosystem, economic</u>	Economic heyday was late 80s or early 90s. Salmon fishing going strong. Fishing dropped off. Lake fishing vs river fishing. Not much cross-over. As fish migrate up river, anglers follow. Alewives eaten up by the salmon. Food chain screwed up by zebra mussels, etc., and too many salmon. Fish are out there, but not as big and not as many. This, of course, affects the whole economy: house rentals, restaurants, retail trade.
		<u>Development</u>	Huge demand for lakefront property. "Poor-man's Paradise". Not much pressure from rich in the past. Now untouchable for locals, but \$250-300K not a lot for folks from NJ etc.
		<u>Management, lake level</u>	Water drops during summer. Boats can't get out of the Pond. Efforts to get dredging, but can't get state to do it. Now a local volunteer Sandy Pond Channel Maintenance Association dredges the channel. This was a dry year, so low water started early. Boaters couldn't get out without dredging. Money was raised locally, boat owners through marina owners supported the dredging.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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Conservation Focus Group

Beach

There's still sand where we are - Black Pond. [unclear] huge study on how sand was transported. There's sand from Black Pond to Salmon River. It's not sand on the beach, all that distance, but in the water and off-shore a little bit. We learned sand moves south and north through ridges around Sandy Pond channel, and when west wind blows, it shoves water up into the pond. When west wind drops, it goes rushing back out. When the water comes in, it brings sand with it and when it rushes out, it isn't under as high an energy [unclear]. At an order of magnitude, back of the envelope level, the amount of shallowing of Sandy Pond over the last hundred years is roughly equivalent to the amount of sand lost off the beaches. One of our major questions in that study was where does the sand go? It's in the pond. There's quantitative data [unclear]. There's a permanent channel between North Pond and the lake. Channels age, and when the channel fills with sand and closes, the sand doesn't go anywhere. [individual continues on about history of sand and channels and Corps of engineers surveys and changes in depth of water due to sand, etc].

We had a beach. There was a sandy beach with birches, lost to erosion over time.

You can no longer walk from Salmon River to Sandy Pond inlet. I use to walk it all the time. You have to walk in people's yards now, because there's zero beach.

Last time we had a beach was in 1992. Very high water, somehow or other it never came back.

Economic

It's been good for the marina - seasonal people.

The property owners are paying taxes - school taxes in particular which are quite high - and not getting any services. There are no [unclear] services, other than that we see the DEC once in a while or a policeman coming to Black Pond.

Erosion

Loss of structures, houses/cottages due to erosion. Last time around 1972; since then there's been a lot more erosion [unclear] more buildings have fallen in over the past 15-20 years.

Population

Increasing numbers of people - it's staggering to me.

The only people who really care, take care of this environment, are us property owners. The other people are just weekend boarders.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Recreation</u>	<p>In last 50 years there's been intense degree of [unclear] on Long Pond - spits and more cottages. Size of the boats increases probably a foot every year. In recent years, the big boats have left the pond, which is an economic sting, can't get the boat in the channel any longer. Three or four years ago, Sandy Pond Channel Maintenance Association solicited funds from member for dredging the channel.</p> <hr/> <p>Installation of the boardwalk in Black Pond. Resulted in a huge influx of activity, made it more accessible for bird watching, etc. Wheel-chair accessible. But it became an unsupervised party spot, not respectful of the sensitive ecology. One time there was in excess of 300 people on that beach, with volleyball nets set up in the dunes, trash, underage drinking, and glass bottles everywhere. The idea was good - I don't think the boardwalk should not be there, but our main concern is that the state should be managing that, guide the intent. Sea Grant program, Dune Stewards. Contacted Nature Conservancy, state police and DEC, who've taken a little more ownership of the problem that was created. One of the most difficult challenges is that there's too many people around. It comes down to what the Dune Stewards do, and their role is to educate the people who come down there as to what it is and what it is intended for.</p>
		<i>Foresters and Large Land Owners Group</i>	
		<u>Agriculture, development</u>	<p>Change in attitude. Neighbor chased our manure truck down the road, "You can't spread there. My dog goes in there."</p> <hr/>
		<u>Change - economic</u>	<p>Land used to be worth what you could produce off it; now it's driven by recreation use.</p> <hr/>
		<u>Change - ecosystem, recreation</u>	<p>There used to be lot of waterskiing and boating on Sandy Pond. Sanding in of the ponds has stopped that. Dunes are decreasing.</p> <hr/>
		<u>Development</u>	<p>lakeshore and other waterfront is being developed.</p> <hr/>
		<u>Forestry practices</u>	<p>Farmers sell off selectively logged lumber. Price of lumber has dropped and it's not as good a cash crop. Overseas demand for hardwoods has dropped. Timber market is often a good indicator of the general economy.</p> <hr/> <p>Pulp mills gone. Equip. has got larger. Used to be small. Hard to do selective thinning if you've got a 12 ft wide piece of equip.</p> <hr/> <p>Forestry practices in the watershed vary. OK on State land, but there are unscrupulous loggers on some private lands.</p> <hr/>
		<u>Wildlife</u>	<p>More turkeys, geese and deer. They do eat some crops</p> <hr/>

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
			<i>Local/Elected Municipalities Focus Group</i>
		<u>Agriculture</u>	Fewer farmers
		<u>Change - ecosystem</u>	Biggest agent of change is the beaver. Now there is giardia everywhere
		<u>Development</u>	People are building homes in uplands. Whatever happens up the hill affects downstream. People are expanding away from Fort Drum Farmers are selling parcels. Land is cheap, compared to other areas
		<u>Flooding</u>	More flooding
		<u>Forestry practices</u>	Loggers used to drive in streams. Now this is all under permits.
		<u>Management, wastewater</u>	Better wastewater treatment
		<u>Population</u>	Increased population: hunters, snowmobilers, anglers, military. People from away who may or may not live differently than we're used to
		<u>Recreation</u>	People now want walking paths- there are access issues we never had before The creek surrounds are not kept up, too much vegetation. It's good fishing but there is an access problem
		<u>Regulation, wastewater</u>	better regulations, like dye tests for septics
		<u>Water quality</u>	The streams are cleaner now, better enforcement and less dumping.
			<i>Phone interview results</i>
		<u>Recreation, population</u>	There is increased recreation, four-wheelers. I've lived here 11 years and there's more traffic now.
			<i>Recreational Group</i>
		<u>Change - ecosystem</u>	more deer Rodman/Barnes Corners back in 60s and 70s was active hunting now no rabbits, coyotes coming in, change in habitat, trees planted by Civilian Conservation Corps depression years are too big

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Conservation</u>	Tug Hill losing its forever wild, fast
		<u>Development</u>	When I started hunting, I could walk for hours and see no one, now wherever you go there are roads
		<u>Economic</u>	depression, lack of work, vast majority of people around here are looking for work
		<u>Forestry practices</u>	On our land we have a forester and a program but we have trouble deciding how to handle the logging. Want balance our property borders big state preserve, last year we spent over 21K to spray our property infestation of the forest caterpillars State continues to buy more land, but they are not very good stewards. Funding is so bad DEC region 7 doesn't have forester to manage their own land. State sells lumber off the property, \$goes to general funds in Albany, not back into land stewardship. Private landowners responsible managers; Not going to put themselves out of business Bought land want to be able to come back and harvest
		<u>Recreation</u>	snowmobiling now groomed trails, bring in \$ mostly pretty responsible
		<u>Solid waste, water quality</u>	Big thing in Rodman-landfill, road repaved, more tractor trailers, more pollution from trucks, smell from landfill, concern about leaching

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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2. Think ahead about fifteen years (to 2020). Given the current trends in population, land use, economic development, will this be an area where your family wants to settle?

Agricultural Group

Agriculture

Where do you think you're going? If enough people move in, there won't be any farmers left. People move into the country don't want to smell the smells, see the dust, deal with the noise. Beat on the fringe and the farmers will leave.

People don't have the understanding of a large farm, if something goes wrong it's a factory farm.

We have a treasure in the land base. It's as much of a resource as fisheries. Better than land in the Finger Lakes. We get more snow, so we have better soil moisture.

If you don't have good dirt, you don't have much of a farm

In this region there is never a bad corn crop. If you do a decent job you can get a good crop

More people are trying little projects. There are more consumers nearby, this is a tremendous opportunity.

Farmers are getting older. Farms need to get bigger to survive. Young guys want easy jobs. No matter how big you are there is someone working off the farm. If this is the trend, there is going to be a problem with keeping farms.

Agriculture, development

Fort Drum will keep on expanding, not just housing for soldiers but it will bring businesses, malls, hotels, etc. Towns will need to provide service. There will be more residential pressure. As far as recreation is concerned there will be more of that too. I went to a farm auction that divided the farm by taxing jurisdictions into 6 parcels. All were sold for the intended use of housing/recreation. People can build a house and watch the deer go by

Accountants etc can afford to buy land

Agriculture, outreach

The organic folks are doing better at communicating

Farmers need to find ways to communicate and prove we are doing a responsible job

People have no concept of what is a large farm, until the big manure spill. Not getting message across that this is a serious business.

we are doing what we've always done why do we have to explain it

No dairy farmers will show up at the farmers market to public relations

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
			<i>Alternate Conservation Group</i>
		<u>Development</u>	Development is going to come to this area. Population increases, demand for view scape. There will be more pressure as the rest of country depletes their water supply
		<u>Invasive species</u>	Long-term impacts: without anyone really enforcing I think we're almost on the road to disaster. Concern is invasives. State trying to stop, ballast water. Every day I have something new in front of me that I have to handle and just don't know what to do anymore. Get message out there and hopefully we can slow things down
		<u>Management, lake level</u>	Landowners not in agreement with lake level management, will see loss of dunes and shoreline
		<u>Water quality</u>	I worry about drinking water, especially in this area with highly permeable soils, could bring contamination into drinking water.
			<i>Business Group</i>
		<u>Development</u>	Depends a lot on Syracuse development (DestiNY) "I see this as a hinge." If this development starts some people will come up this way. Congel's ultimate dream (ecological park, research ctr.: more folks with more money will come in) there will be overflow to this area.
		<u>Management, wastewater</u>	With development, more municipal sewage control. This will help pollution of creeks and lake.
			<i>Conservation Focus Group</i>
		<u>Beach</u>	Property owners are interested in the state of the beach on the property that they own. Some people who are diligently out there with their tractors and rakes and they're raking the beach out to the sea wall. We try to live with the natural ecology of the beach, whereas some owners are clearing out, planting grass, mowing the lawn and stuff like that. I don't mow the lawn, it's beach grass. Some property owners have cleared way back, some have kept the dunes, some have tried to re-establish the natural vegetation on the dune. DEC would not let property owner transplant beach grass from other sites in the area - she had to order from New Jersey and it's not the same kind of beach grass. There are different mindsets of people for how they want to manage the space that they own.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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Economic

Cottages - what we're seeing - lots bought in 1960's for \$150 - dairy farmer, a little place to go to get away... There are still legacy owners, or sons and daughters of original owners, so there's the salt-of-the-earth element who bought into that before the property values became what it is today. Now we're seeing cottages starting at \$300,000... I'm thinking of a similar situation on Nantucket, [unclear] taking a lot of the beach away... they're spending millions and millions of dollars to try to replenish what erosion has done. I'm wondering if that might be something down the road we might see... people come up here and spend three, four, five hundred thousand dollars for a summer home are likely to be people that may have the resources to do things as opposed to some of the legacy owners - some of the folks up there are on Social Security, and they just don't have the resources for large capital projects to protect their beaches.

Headwaters area, changing ownership patterns up there because of aging population and changing timber markets, all those sorts of things that are making it harder for landowners to [unclear] hold their properties.

Erosion

[unclear] change [unclear] just going to be gone. [unclear] so much erosion protection [unclear] much to early, south of the bay [unclear] open water [unclear] January, February [unclear] we don't have the luxury [unclear] down here they lost a whole beach [unclear] millions of dollars in a state program and more than a mile of riprap [unclear].

[unclear] sand-starved [unclear] the ecosystem in this situation [takes a nasty hit?]. Further north, if the wind comes down this year it comes back next year when the water goes down. [unclear] beach [unclear] natural area as well. Rainbow shores are doomed.

Where I live, they're mostly legacy owners, many are knocking down or improving the houses that were there. I have to think they're going to be very interested to save their own land (much of which is probably sitting in the middle of a dune, where it shouldn't be in the first place) but other than that I don't think they care, they don't live here.

Regulation

There's no way of regulating it - somebody can tear down a dune and get away with it. DEC will come, but somebody has to turn them in.

Foresters and Large Land Owners Group

Agriculture

The Amish don't participate in the community (Where will the volunteer fire department come from?) Farm practices aren't environmentally sound. Enforcement often looks the other way (lots of farm accidents, etc.)

Conservation

To save what rural character you can, you'll have to work together with TNC, Land Trusts, etc. to preserve long-term open space.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Development</u>	North Country is one of the best-kept secrets in the country. Unless some of these towns look at their land use, "cut and run" land developers will come in, carve up large parcels into small ones. Pressures that were only on the lake or the river are moving inland onto Tug Hill.
		<i>Phone interview results</i>	
		<u>Conservation, economic development</u>	I would like to see more open area. I would like to see logging in the woods; we should use this forest resource more effectively.
		<u>Management, wildlife</u>	I'm very concerned about tent caterpillars in the maple trees. No one is addressing this problem.
		<i>Recreational Group</i>	
		<u>Agriculture</u>	Farming will increase and be more intense. It's not bad if they use BMPs. Many farm to the edge of the streams, there are no buffers. See runoff to streams. I can smell manure in the fall of the year. I don't want to live near a (expletive deleted) slurry from a dairy
		<u>Change - economic</u>	Land prices are going up. What used to be \$5,000 is now \$20,000. We get those letters: sell your land to us A couple from CA is buying property next to me.
		<u>Change - ecosystem</u>	Beaver is natural, make ponds, water warmer Intensified, not a lot of control In natural state have controls There are ways to take care of beavers, get permit Beaver are a pest. We did a program, 150 acres now under water. Can do what you want to do to get rid of them (nuisance permit) Everybody doesn't want to wear fur hats Not enough trappers So much snow it's hard work for trappers Adjust the season Water table is low now, even with 300 inches of snow. I have one running stream in the forest, usually a half dozen.
		<u>Conservation</u>	Our property wont change, 8 of us, we will pass it on to our kids and the kids will hunt. I don't know if it will ever be the same, but we don't plan to get rid of it

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Development</u>	<p>Development threats will continue. People from PA, VT, wherever are buying chunks.</p> <p>You can say what you want about the state but if they had not purchased 5000 acres land in Salmon River corridor would have been subdivided.</p>
		<u>Development, water quality</u>	<p>Streams degrade if population increases Communities don't have zoning septic, relatively close together</p>
		<u>Recreation</u>	<p>Recreational use will increase. Fly fishermen go up on Tug Hill. More people will want to utilize this resource, as gas prices increases</p>
		<u>Regulation</u>	<p>I would never want to see Tug Hill be turned into Adirondacks, with APA, You can't do anything. To build is just prohibited, land is forever wild. I used to hunt there in 1960 – 1965. Couldn't leave anything (tent, stove) back in there. DEC wants you in to kill the deer, APA wants you out.</p>
		<u>Water quality</u>	<p>All the streams are pretty pure, don't drink . There is not a stream that enters this end of the lake I would put a glass in and drink: beavers, septic, runoff houses and towns</p>
		<u>Water quality, fisheries</u>	<p>Tributaries in Sandy Creek watershed are the highest quality tributaries to Lake Ontario, still producing native salmonids. There is more pressure on these streams, sport fishing pressure. Now literally tens of thousands of people are there, we see impact on streams, bank erosion. There is too much pressure on wild populations in stream the state does not stock these streams.</p>

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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3. *On a local level, in this area, do you think there's a place for ecosystem based management that maybe watershed management isn't able to capture?*

Agricultural Group

Education

Huge opportunity for education, hunters 4-wheelers etc

Forestry practices

The County owns 5000 acres, was mismanaged still not ok. Not managed for forest products. Have to skid a long road to get them out.

Recreation

Need to organize some ways to provide for the recreational needs. The dump road to dunes in Adams Center is an example. Lots of Fort Drum guys ride. talk to them what's the idea? Other military installations have places for them to ride

18 – 22 year olds need to blow off some steam

Recreation, hunting

Focus on deer herd management. When enough of the population wants to hunt, get some kind of a permit program. It's the farmers who have to track down trespassers. In Montana, the public can hunt on private land. Farmers get paid, and there is a regulated "sign in sign out". Then you can't exclude people, like a ease to 6 guys to hunt 2000 acres every year.

Recreation, multiple use trails

Posted signs are a waste of time. They drive over crops. Not one town will come to consensus about the trails system. What if the state develops trails for horses and 4-wheelers. Need something like Otter Creek for horse people.

Alternate Conservation Group

Consensus building

One of the things we really need to look at in this watershed is that we have a huge component of people who are here for the summer—weekend—then they are gone. Do they care?

It's going to be a challenge. We have a diversity of people who may not agree. Some are not from here.

Not easy to change the mindset of local leaders

Development

Local communities think development is best thing for them, they see tax dollars. In reality, development costs more if they do it wrong. More outlay. No one is thinking about natural resources

Planning and development should be guided by soils. Other places do better we are so far behind

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Education</u>	<p>There are people in our agencies that don't have buy in to EBM. Even people in agencies don't know what EBM is.</p> <p>It take a lot of education about EBM what is it? I still do not understand it.</p>
		<u>Education, outreach</u>	<p>This is the second year, there's a lot of money going to developing an EBM strategy. Last year there were lots of really good projects. Skid crossings and Swallowwort. We need to do education to get the word out</p>
		<u>Management, resources</u>	<p>I disagree that we have been managing by watershed. We have been managing by units, like towns.</p>
		<u>Outreach</u>	<p>Over the years acronyms and programs come and go. I hope EBM is not just another.</p>
	<i>Business Group</i>	<u>outreach</u>	<p>I don't think anyone cares. Everyone has his/her own "pet peeve". Other than that, no one cares.</p>
	<i>Conservation Focus Group</i>	<u>Funding</u>	<p>[unclear] pumping [unclear] all night long, put sand and everything everywhere, and everyone reaches into their own pockets for everything.</p> <p>Money - frankly, I don't think the Dune Coalition is known beyond the few people who are involved... it's a wonderful organization... but there's money behind that... it's educational, but more than that. Potential for the Dune Coalition... it's a superentity [unclear] to garner and spend money for projects of interest in the dune area.</p>
		<u>Invasive species</u>	<p>Invasive species [unclear] fishing industry [unclear] little round goby. We have water chestnut washing up on the beach now.</p>
		<u>Perception</u>	<p>The sense of local perspective is very small-scale. People around the dunes are only concerned about the dunes.</p>

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Process</u>	<p>Dune Coalition was formed in 1985 around that very idea [EBM]. Today it's a group of 29 entities, including federal, state, county, and local agencies and municipalities, it includes 8 or 9 cottage-owners associations, it includes non-profits, Nature Conservancy, Audubon, Sea Grant. This is a group that comes together around the concept of we love the beach, we want it to remain here, we're looking for optimum enjoyment and use with respect to private property. All activities are voluntary, cooperative action projects, involve money contributed by various entities [unclear] Army Corps, Fish and Wildlife Service, EPA.</p> <hr/> <p>From what I understand, a lot of that [high water] revolves around the St. Lawrence Seaway, the water levels in the Seaway, the shippers want the lake and the waterway as full of water as possible because they can move heavier boats, and that's contrary to the interests and concerns of many of the property owners around the lake. A small reduction in the level of the lake results in a large, horizontal distance exposing more beach, also helping to reduce the impact of storm and high water from wind and waves washing way up onto the beach and the dunes. Rainbow Shores you can see the edge down there, 15 ft of gravel and you can see effects of erosion on the embankment. So you have the interests of some property owners which don't really have a large economic impact versus the interests of shipping interests which have a huge economic impact if the water level is dropped down.</p> <hr/> <p>I think the Dune Coalition is a well-respected group in the community. I think the Dune Coalition does a great job. But they don't address high water. I think they try, but they run their heads into the wall and get beaten down [unclear]. Nobody cares.</p> <hr/>
		<i>Foresters and Large Land Owners Group</i>	
		<u>Invasive species</u>	<p>We need to cooperate to control invasives. (E.g., neighbor with lots of swallowwort, but claimed it wasn't her problem, but the guy she'd granted hunting rights to.)</p> <hr/>
		<u>Management, wildlife</u>	<p>Primary impact on environment is human recreation in the Hill and in the Ponds area. Ponds area is critical habitat for lots of species. Dune lands should have a human carrying capacity study done. Human access has trashed the dunes. E.g., Lakeview: drowning along this stretch; swimming in unguarded areas like wildlife mgmt area. Wildlife areas aren't managed for wildlife. Overrun with human activities, esp. in summer months. Wildlife needs to get more consideration in this planning. Birds on the beach: always play "second fiddles ATVs "on the hill" disrupt nesting raptors, and other wildlife. We have lots of beaches for people. Let's reserve some beaches for wildlife.</p> <hr/>
		<i>Local/Elected Municipalities Focus Group</i>	
		<u>process</u>	<p>You are trying to fix something that's not broke.</p>

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<i>Recreational Group</i>	
		<u>Economic</u>	You cant make whatever your doing in life work up here
		<u>Recreation</u>	<p>Jefferson County is working on getting a county-wide trail system that will connect small towns in one trail</p> <p>I hate when a snowmobile crosses my cross-county ski trail. I've never been in physical danger but it's awfully annoying. All that work to break trail and have a snowmobile cross.</p> <p>Trails are big. Lots of -wheelers and ATV. Conflicts with snowmobilers and cross-county skiers. Time of year helps minimize conflicts. DEC wont decide what to do with ATVs.</p> <p>Ground terrain can be affected, in some cases it's very severe If recreational use increases will have impact on actual environment Our biggest damage on woodland trails is 4x4 trucks</p>
		<u>Regulation</u>	The state sold us a bill of goods. They pushed to keep the Adirondacks forever wild, saying it would stop big housing development. But it stopped little people from going up there. People used to have camps, then hunting went downhill as access was removed, and people came down here.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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4. *Where does regulation fit into this picture?*

Agricultural Group

Development

Regulation is not the answer. Capital will flow, profit motive will always win out. Restricting housing on agricultural land will be individual farmer decision, everything is economic.

Regulation

Continue to work hand-in-hand with education. Coming and growing population better get used to it.

Alternate Conservation Group

Consensus building

Pass zoning, regulations, people get angry about top-down controls. Local leaders feel this will solve the ills. Broad-based education, people tell local leaders and county planning board, local zba etc what they want

Has to be ground up

You can regulate all you want but if people don't buy in it's useless

Education, regulation

If you educate, people will regulate themselves

Conservation Focus Group

Funding

Another thing that's been banging around for quite a few years is somehow developing a special resource designation. What if we were a NERR [National Estuarine Research Reserve] that would allow federal money to be funneled in, to get recognition beyond the local level to attract money.

Recreation

We have some other seasons where you got a couple of the fishing seasons, in spring and fall, tournaments.

Local/Elected Municipalities Focus Group

Education

Start with education about the positive benefits of actions, we are regulated to death already

You can't fix stupid

Regulation

We are already well-regulated by the state

Recreational Group

Agriculture, regulation

More regulation regarding stream bank erosion, planting buffers, fencing to keep cattle away

I would like to see more regulation on agriculture.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Regulation</u>	Tug Hill commission is non-regulatory, strictly advisory, 180 degrees different from APA. Local rule much better, local decisions. Adirondacks may be beautiful but if you cant get access.
		<u>Regulation, voluntary measures</u>	There are lots of responsible people up here

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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5. *Are there specific projects or needs that you see can help address some of these issues?*

Agricultural Group

Agriculture

Here's a specific idea, set up a fund for low-interest loans (grants are getting hard to get) for farmers who want to improve before getting problem

If there were funding for specific projects to improve the Sandy Creeks area, we'd have to create a problem. It's like the Equip program, to get money you have to first create a problem.

Improvements in practices have been financed with state and federal dollars. In order to keep prime land in agriculture the only way to afford that is to provide money to set aside PDR grants

If our society decides to preserve this there will be a cost. They want to preserve little farms like 40 years ago not the big farms, don't understand the economics of the industry.

If we went all organic we'd all starve to death. Row of organic soy looked like pigweed. It's a niche thing. Consumers want it, they don't really understand. Milk companies first, then consumers went to it. Activists started it, like BST free milk

Dealing with water runoff, need nutrient management plan and a row crop management plan, CAFO on large farms, always need more money for best management practices. Soon we're going to be limited as to how close to water we can cultivate.

Want vegetable farms but they won't add to county income the way the dairy does. 90M agricultural economy, 70 M is dairy. Can't grow without land. We need to change the paradigm if we are going to grow more milk in southern Jefferson County. Food is too cheap. Subsidized just enough to keep in business. We don't have cheap food if you look at energy expenditures. .

Bigger farms are more regulated; the small ones can have poor practices. Few dairies are organic or certified for organic

Recreation, hunting

We'd let hunters on the farm if they would shoot each other.

Alternate Conservation Group

Beach

people want access to the beach, build it and they will come

Development

looking for communities at local level to have comprehensive planning. Need for science-based development planning

Dunes

Need to patrol and keep people off the dunes. There are still fires, swimmers, people with atv, education is the key.

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>Education, consensus building</u>	has to be an educational campaign, that's a project in itself if you want to get buy in
		<u>Energy planning</u>	Energy usage wave of the future Need to consider where we are putting them (windmills) Willow biomass plantations
		<u>Habitat, wildlife</u>	Construct stream habitat improvement projects on state land. PA wildlife club has done this.
		<u>Management, wastewater</u>	septic system test, dye test
		<u>Recreation</u>	As for recreational use up in the watershed, people who are unfamiliar think recreational trails can be used by atv, snowmobilers, horses, all these groups with no problems, but they can't be. There might be an opportunity for a recreational usage survey of some sort to see if there are problems.
		<u>Recreation, stream protection</u>	Another project: build bridges over water instead of having vehicles go through streams. Main ones fist
		<u>Water quality</u>	There are good high quality streams these are excellent areas to set up monitoring, get school groups involved, set up water quality monitoring and stuff like that.
	<i>Business Group</i>	<u>Dredging</u>	Dredging. Town of Sandy Creek donates \$10K /yr to help with the dredging. Could use more help. Problem with permits from different agencies. Wanted to put sand on beach to rebuild dunes, but permitting agencies limit dredge-spoils to 1000 ft N and 1000 ft S. More coordination and knowing what the rules are would make this management easier.
		<u>Water quality</u>	Drinkable water supply

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
			<i>Conservation Focus Group</i>
		<u>Process</u>	<p>There is some kind of zoning regulation in place to prohibit too many cottages on a site.</p> <hr/> <p>Zoning is only as good as the rules that are made. You could have 5-acre zoning or 100-acre zoning laws. I don't think zoning by itself is a solution - it has to be well thought out with ecological priorities in mind when you create zoning. You can do zoning for promoting economic growth at the cost of ecological priorities.</p> <hr/> <p>There's been more problems with zoning along the lake, but not throughout the watershed.</p> <hr/> <p>Right now, parallel planning exercises are going on, and Sandy Creek is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan with Central New York Regional Planning Board. Also Pulaski and Richmond are doing the same thing.</p>
		<u>Process (Focus Groups)</u>	<p>Maybe some advertising, to bring attention to these meetings, that this is going on. If I hadn't gotten a call from the young lady...</p> <hr/> <p>But if you talk about those upland areas [in the watershed] with conservation people, you're going to get a really different perspective. If you just talk about the uplands to foresters, you're going to miss a totally different perspective on it, which we didn't get to today. Maybe it will come up in the August 15th meeting, but it is interesting in terms of conservation in the watershed if all you get is shore and lake interaction. And there are a lot of other conservation values in the watershed.</p>
		<u>Recreation, economic</u>	<p>There are areas [in the watershed] not heavily populated that require services, more of an economic need... where there's just a couple of farms it doesn't make a lot of economic sense, but we're seeing a lot of activity in terms of recreational activities. Camps, fishing, hunting, that sort of thing.</p>
		<u>Water quality</u>	<p>I've always wondered what's going into the water...surely all that water that's coming down through the watershed is affecting it.</p>
			<i>Foresters and Large Land Owners Group</i>
		<u>Agriculture</u>	<p>Getting done the plan for manure management. The agencies just can't seem to get it done.</p>
		<u>Change</u>	<p>"Not in favor of big changes. Never was."</p>
		<u>Fragmentation</u>	<p>Each of the 3 areas (upland, wetland/ponds, Lake Ontario) have different sets of problems, therefore different needs.</p>

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
		<u>funding</u>	Agencies of all kinds need resources to get their jobs done.
		<u>Inventory, analysis</u>	Need background information for management
		<u>Management, wastewater</u>	sewage treatment
		<i>Local/Elected Municipalities Focus Group</i>	
		<u>Flooding</u>	We need a flood control or drainage district
		<u>Recreation</u>	Clean up creek banks for access. Like San Antonio the river walk.
		<u>Water quality, fisheries</u>	The water here is pretty clean. The state stocks trout
		<i>Recreational Group</i>	
		<u>Agriculture</u>	Educate farmers, can't have manure in streams can't have cattle crossing streams Small and high gradient streams are already susceptible What about big culverts? We need to find a functional way to move cattle. The technology exists, it just takes money.
		<u>Conservation</u>	Buy conservation easements get buffers on streams Make roads and trail crossings above or away from water
		<u>Development, economic</u>	tourism business has to be developed properly this will resolve tax base issue
		<u>Economic</u>	Need tax base up there where people can afford to hold onto their land Only part-time local government cannot afford more Tax rate high
		<u>Funding, government</u>	There is money available if they would take renewable resources forests, send money back to stewardship of tug hill not to general fund in Albany. Kick your legislators in the but to make it happen

Question	Session	Theme	Statement
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Invitation to participate in the EBM pilot program.

Letter response to invitation to participate

Management, development, agriculture, population

Please be advised that at this time we have no interest in participating in your pilot program. To answer your questions regarding Sandy Creek, in the last 10 to 15 years there has been poor decisions made regarding expansion and management in the area regarding their watershed. The development of sub-divisions, increased timber harvesting and agricultural waste in the area along with a school expansion without significant increase in the population have all contributed to the issues they are now facing regarding their watershed. Given current conditions, we see an increase in the problems that are developing in this area over the next decade. At this junction we are maintaining the areas watershed and are not looking for your type of services. Should an issue arise in the future we will contact you regarding your programs.

Second Stakeholder Meeting 09/20/07 - Summary of Comments and Feedback

Question	Theme	Statement
Feedback		
	<i>Consensus building</i>	Will never get agreement
	<i>Dunes</i>	Did not agree with citing dune management as a success: state not managing the dunes adequately, needs more enforcement
	<i>Focus</i>	How to keep place-based focus?
	<i>Funding, education</i>	Have regulation but no funding for enforcement—schools?
	<i>Human concerns</i>	People (human concerns) have always been dominant in natural resources management –e.g. human use and access
	<i>Invasive species</i>	At the kickoff meeting, there was a lot of concern expressed regarding invasive species. Summary did not give this issue enough emphasis. Noted the partnerships and programs (PRISM and SLELO)
	<i>Process</i>	"I'm a skeptic about your program here." How would Adirondacks answer these comments? Are we getting like APA? It's the beginning of the process comment from council staff: ebm is the polar opposite, APA was top-down legislation EBM needs to be adaptive EBM is driven by science: needs to be broad-uplands to lake, need variety of agencies and skills- no one system is applicable Example of discussion on beaver- good conversations
	<i>Regulation</i>	EBM not all about regulation; that's just one of the tools. Questioned statement that EBM is not about creating more regulations

Question	Theme	Statement
	<i>Sensitive areas</i>	There may be sensitive areas that cannot support the desired level of use: humans may have to get out
	<i>Water quality</i>	Water quality was focus of watershed management
	<i>Wildlife</i>	Summary did not address wildlife issues
How do you see partners working together?		
	<i>Consensus building</i>	Will they [the people] be heard? Stay involved.
		It can work. Agency representatives need to check their hats at the door.
		I work with four of the EBM partners, they will never work together. They don't know how to get along.
		Disagree with statement that EBM partners can't work together. Can bring them together. EBM involves more people. Get them in the decision.
	<i>Education</i>	Need to understand interactions of land use decisions and habitat: cluster development example.
		Town boards need better information on natural resources inventory
	<i>Funding</i>	Loss of targeted fees is a problem for natural resources management: state directs money to general fund
	<i>Process</i>	Need to get the government to act
		Yesterday's meeting: Secretary of State committed to breaking down stovepipes. Web: www.nyoglecc.org can see webcast
		Can local agencies do better?
		Findings will go to Council in December
		Lead or be led by crisis: respond with regulations is a reaction, not for here
		Landowners' voices need to be heard.

Question	Theme	Statement
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How do you want to stay involved?		
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<i>Community contact</i>		
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Articles in local newspapers		
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Email? More than half use regularly		
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Technology-free community: snail mail		
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Meetings when necessary		
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Brief the town boards?		
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Tug Hill Councils of Government		
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