

Provost Susan Herbst  
Vice President Alain Kaloyeros  
Vice President Kathryn Lowery  
University at Albany  
Albany, NY 12222

April 12, 2007

Dear Provost Herbst , Vice President Kaloyeros, and Vice President Lowery,

I have spent this past week and a half talking with a variety of people about the Pine Bush Study Area and in particular the 79.6 acres of Pine Bush property currently controlled by the University. These talks have been with Chris Hawver, the Director of the Pine Bush Management Commission, Lynne Jackson, a key member of the Save the Pine Bush organization, and Don Reeb, the President of the McKownville Improvement Association.

While these different groups have different goals and priorities, there is a clear consensus among them that it is crucial for all of us to know and understand what the plans are for the 79.6 acres of Pine Bush controlled by the University at Albany. As I was reading the Pine Bush Commission's website, I came across many compelling quotes, but none more so than this: "Targeted as a site of outstanding biological significance, the Pine Bush is one of the most endangered landscapes in the Northeastern United States."

It is remarkable to me that we have been unable to protect so much of this land even after it became clear to us how unique and important it was. I can remember the horrendous struggle that went on in the neighborhood of McKownville to try to keep Crossgates from destroying so much of the Pine Bush. This was to no avail. When the Empire Commons residencies were put in, I was stunned that the University destroyed 25 acres of very high quality Pine Bush. When I pressed for an explanation, I was told we [I was a SUNYA employee at the time] needed to recruit students and that this required pretty upscale living accommodations—as if good faculty and a quality education somehow had lost their value.

I must admit I do not understand why we did not have the foresight to put the NanoTech complex somewhere else—the Harriman campus immediately comes to mind. There the land was already taken and there was room for NanoTech without further damage. I'm sure there are many explanations for this, but still, I believe, we could have done much better. We have sequentially and intentionally destroyed Pine Bush habitat.

I request that you provide me with the plans for the 79.6 acres of Pine Bush controlled by the University, including maps showing the location of current buildings, proposed buildings, parking lots, and any other supporting structures on that property.

I am very concerned that the people living off Fuller Road do not know what is coming and I believe they should know clearly what the plans are for the land next to them. How many acres will be used, where these will be, how much cutting will be done, what potential there may be for flooding due to loss of habitat, etc. I will share the information that you send me with Save the Pine Bush, the McKownville Improvement Association, and the Pine Bush Management Commission.

I walked over to NanoTech recently and saw a mockingbird and Canadian geese on the property. Around the perimeter road this morning, there was a lone female turkey near the Sculpture Building. I have not heard the pileated woodpecker since the new maintenance building went in near the pond. Please don't underestimate the value of the land you control to its resident population (the animals and plant life) and to its human neighbors, many of whom are your alumni, faculty, and emeriti. The people who care about this land should know exactly what is happening. I look forward to receiving the information from you and will appreciate your help with this effort. Also I ask you to consider donating the Pine Bush land that remains to the Pine Bush Management Commission. This would be a significant gift to the Pine Bush and to your neighbors in the community and would serve to help right some wrongs. This would allow the remaining bit of land to be protected by the Commission and enjoyed by its tenants and its neighbors.

Sincerely,  
Harriet V. Temps

cc: Chris Hawver, Pine Bush Management Commission  
Lynne Jackson, Save the Pine Bush  
Don Reeb, McKownville Improvement Association