

## **Sand of Ancient Lake Albany on Display**

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Folks driving on West Campbell Avenue near the intersection of Burdeck Street in Rotterdam are in for a geological treat. On the east side of the road a local company is mining the top of a thick deposit of pure coarse sand that was left by the glacier. The sand, in places up to 350 feet thick covered most of the area between Schenectady and Albany -- The Pine Bush Preserve has saved a wide natural area with sand dunes.

10,000 years ago the sand was actually the shore of Ancient lake Albany. The lake covered the entire Hudson Valley with melt waters of the Great Continental Glacier. It was formed by a natural dam of ice<sub>1</sub> boulders and glacial debris in the vicinity of Staten Island and NYC far to the south.

The bluff above Via Port Mall just west of the sand mining operation and current curve of bluffs on the Rotterdam and Bellevue side of the Mohawk Valley, are the result of the erosion caused when most of Ancient Lake Albany water emptied as the Staten Island dam broke. Some 300 feet of sand washed away leaving the present level of the Mohawk River. In the process Great Flats remained with 60-80 feet of sand, gravel, cobblestones and boulders to bedrock below that makes up the Schenectady Aquifer from which we get our drinking water.

The area where the sand mining is underway over time was witness to temporary encampments of Native American Indians, a thoroughbred exercising track of David Campbell and now is the site of several Rotterdam businesses.

The sand is a feast for the eyes and has an interesting history behind it.

Sand Mining on West Campbell Road at Burdeck St. – Rotterdam

