



saratoga
PLAN
Preserving Land and Nature

FALL 2024

fieldnotes

Preserving the rural character, natural habitats and scenic beauty of Saratoga County so that these irreplaceable assets are accessible to all and survive for future generations. PLAN acknowledges that the lands it conserves are ancestral homelands of Mohican, Mohawk and Abenaki people.



CONSERVING
FARMLAND



PROTECTING
WOODS + WATERS



BUILDING
TRAILS

As we near the end of 2024, I've been reflecting on the connections that Saratoga PLAN has made this past year. This time last year, we were negotiating the acquisition of the largest unprotected shoreline property on Saratoga Lake, locally known as Snake Hill. Today, I'm thrilled to say this iconic landmark is now *protected forever*. That's the 25th property to be fully owned and stewarded by PLAN because of your support!

"At the heart of Saratoga PLAN is a network of partnerships built on patience, communication, collaboration, and TRUST."

Conservation is a team effort, and PLAN is only able to make the impact we do because of our partners. From the landowners we partner with to permanently conserve their land, to our critical



crew of volunteers, municipal partners, and all of you—our work is only possible because each of you plays an essential role in achieving our mission.

As you flip through the pages of this edition of Fieldnotes, my hope is that you see the amplified impact we do and can make together, because of your trust in PLAN and dedication to local conservation.

Happy Holidays to you and yours,

Rob Davies
Executive Director

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Thanks to your support, PLAN's staff is growing!

*Magnolia transitioned from part-time to full-time
Tori has stepped into her new role as Conservation Director
Sam & Masen have joined as Conservation Assistants*

PLAN Staff L to R: Anna Gomez Domenech (Communications Manager), Amy Pressly (Community Engagement Program Assistant), Becky Christner (Programs Operations Manager), Maria Trabka (Special Projects Manager), Sam Haas (Conservation Assistant), Masen Webster (Conservation Assistant), Magnolia Roosa (Stewardship Coordinator), Tori Roberts (Conservation Director), Michelle Culbert (Associate Director), Rob Davies (Executive Director)

Saratoga PLAN's Leadership Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Olmsted, Chair
Jessica Schwartzman, Vice Chair
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William Herman
Bruce Klion

John Lefner
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David Roecker
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Richard Wissler
Larry Woolbright

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Ray Seymour*
Libby Smith-Holmes
Julia S. Stokes*

*Emeritus Board Member

Scan here for bios!



Welcome new 2024 board members!

Leslie Brennan, William Herman, Bruce Klion, John Lefner, Emily O'Halloran, Larry Woolbright

SARATOGA PLAN IS YOUR LOCAL LAND TRUST

BUT WHAT IS A LAND TRUST?



A land trust is a nonprofit organization that protects land with natural, recreational, scenic, historical, or agricultural value.

Land trusts work within their communities to ensure benefits from these lands last for future generations by acquiring land outright or holding conservation easements (permanent agreements that limit land use to protect its resources).

Land trusts can help:

- Protect air and water quality
- Conserve habitats for wildlife and plants
- Connect people to nature through free public access to local trails and preserves
- Protect family farms and ensure agricultural land remains accessible for future farmers
- Make communities more resilient to the effects of climate change
- And so much more!

Land trusts are flexible and community-driven, working with landowners, local municipalities, non-profits, trail user groups and other partners. There are over 460 accredited* land trusts across the U.S.

Saratoga PLAN is the only land trust focused on protecting land in communities in and around Saratoga County.



**Accredited land trusts have demonstrated fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions and lasting stewardship of the lands they conserve.*



Learn More



SNAKE HILL

Saratoga PLAN acquired Snake Hill in December of '23, ensuring the iconic landmark would never be developed. Since then, we have been working to protect the highly cherished and valued hemlock trees and heard from over 170 community members who shared their thoughts on the future of Snake Hill.

We are so thankful for your interest in this planning effort, and for taking time to share your ideas!

Here's what we heard from you:

You care deeply about Saratoga Lake.

Many of you have spent decades on or around Saratoga Lake, and you have extensive knowledge about who spends time at the lake and what they do there. You recognize the importance of Snake Hill and its role as a visual, historic, and natural resource in your community.

You care about the environment.

Many of you appreciate the unique environment of Snake Hill, and you care about preserving it and learning about it. Most community members who shared their thoughts advocated for limited or no public access. Some of you are learning about Snake Hill and why its preservation is important.

You care about your neighbors and community.

Many of you want to make sure that you, your neighbors, and your community have safe means of access, parking, and enjoying Snake Hill. Many of you have a strong desire to visit Snake Hill or hope that others can visit to share in what makes this place so special.

What's next for Snake Hill?

- PLAN team members are reviewing your comments carefully, and **your feedback is guiding revisions to our management approach.**
- Our staff continues to learn about Snake Hill history, resources, and values through research and on-site activities. **We will continue to share what we learn with you.**
- We are **sharing feedback with local community & municipal leaders**, and asking them for ideas as well.
- **At the end of 2024 Saratoga PLAN will finalize the management plan for Snake Hill.**
- Informed by your feedback, **we will host an online public meeting in early 2025 to share more details about our management approach and answer your questions.**

"Protect Snake Hill Forever" Fundraising Campaign

Your support is needed today to help Saratoga PLAN steward this \$1 million community gem forever!

Our goal is to raise \$250,000 for the immediate and long-term stewardship needs of this property, and support Saratoga PLAN's ongoing conservation efforts that benefit the community today and for future generations.

Thanks to a generous matching gift from Walt and Michelle Borisenok, all donations received by December 31st up to \$50,000 will be matched 1:1! Any amount that you can give today will be matched dollar for dollar, doubling the impact of your support.

Help us take advantage of this amazing challenge gift for our community by donating today.



Donate today to make 2X the impact! Scan here:



Questions? Contact Michelle Culbert at 518-587-5554 x102 or by emailing MichelleC@saratogaplan.org.

LOCAL CONSERVATION PROJECTS MOVE FORWARD PLAN AWARDED CRUCIAL FUNDING



WE ARE THRILLED to share that PLAN has been awarded funding for two farmland protection projects from NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets as part of New York's Farmland Protection Implementation Grants program!

The local farms that will benefit from this funding include Egan Farm and Stem & Stone Farm in the Town of Ballston.

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that PLAN has also been awarded funding for three conservation projects from the Saratoga County Farmland Protection and Open Space Grant program!

Projects include a 47-acre horse farm, 75 acres of agricultural land, and 81 acres of land with high upland habitat within the Southern Palmertown Range.





INAUGURAL 2024 SARATOGA FARM SHOWCASE

SELF-GUIDED FARM TOUR CELEBRATING LOCAL FARMS



Photo: Dawn Szurek

“

It is amazing to see how intertwined agriculture is with life and scenery in Saratoga County. Our hardworking, innovative farmers are a treasure in Saratoga County and the Farm Showcase was an opportunity to meet many of them as they shared their talents with us all.”

Dawn Szurek
Saratoga PLAN Board Member



Engaging the Next Generation of Conservationists



Saratoga PLAN's Next Generation Committee is a group of young adults (20s-30s) who share a love of the environment & community service.

The group usually meets on the third Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm to discuss local land conservation, plan volunteer opportunities, meet like-minded people, and have fun!

Interested in joining?

Email Anna at annag@saratogaplan.org.

Join us on Wednesday, November 20th!

Spring Street Gallery

5:30pm-7pm

110 Spring St. Saratoga Springs

THANK YOU 2024 BUSINESS PARTNERS!

BARNRAISERS

The Towne Law Firm, P.C.

HARVESTERS

Boulder Brook Farm
Young/Sommer LLC

CULTIVATORS

C.T. Male Associates
Harris-Pero Law Firm, PLLC
Saratoga National Bank & Trust Company
Stewart's Shops

TRAILBLAZERS

Cantina
deJonghe Original Jewelry
Saratoga Associates
Saratoga Lake Association
Teakwood Builders
The Alpine Sport Shop
Witt Construction

“

As a family business rooted in this community, we're committed to safeguarding our environment. Supporting Saratoga PLAN is our way of ensuring that future generations can enjoy the beauty of Saratoga County.”

Dennis deJonghe
Owner, deJonghe Original Jewelry



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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 587-5554
www.saratogaplan.org



*Stay updated on conservation projects,
volunteer opportunities & more!*



LeVine Nature Preserve

Town of Providence
177 acres
3 miles of trails

*This preserve features two bustling creeks,
historic stone walls, and several old cellar holes.*