



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Saratoga Springs, NY
Permit No. 32

112 Spring Street, Room 202
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
www.saratogaplan.org

You can make the difference.

We can't do it without you. Please send a generous contribution today!
I want to ensure that special places and open spaces will be conserved in Saratoga County. Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____.

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

PHONE (HOME) (CELL) (WORK)

E-MAIL ADDRESS ☐ I prefer to receive news from Saratoga P.L.A.N. by e-mail, saving trees and costs.

I care about:

- ☐ clean water
- ☐ clean air
- ☐ local food security
- ☐ nature education
- ☐ scenic landscapes
- ☐ economic prosperity
- ☐ property taxes
- ☐ recreational trails
- ☐ wildlife habitat
- ☐ fishing, hunting
- ☐ boating, swimming
- ☐ smart growth
- ☐ quality of life
- ☐ other: _____

☐ I want to volunteer. Please contact me. My special skills are:

- ☐ Graphic Design
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Nature Education
- ☐ Illustration
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Videography
- ☐ Library Organization
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Event Coordination
- ☐ Preserve Stewardship
- ☐ GIS
- ☐ Other: _____

saratogaplan.org

AUTUMN 2009

News from the Field

Saratoga P.L.A.N. 112 Spring Street, Room 202 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-587-5554 www.saratogaplan.org



Trail News

Zim Smith Trail. The Zim Smith Trail, which extends from Coons Crossing in Halfmoon to the Mourning Kill just north of Route 67 near Curtis Lumber, is growing! On which end, you ask? On both ends! In Ballston Spa, Saratoga County has committed \$550,000 in county funds and \$1.7M in federal economic stimulus funds to complete the section from the Mourning Kill to Oak Street. On the other end, Pan Am Southern Company has agreed to grant a 75' wide right-of-way to Saratoga P.L.A.N. as part of its intermodal railyard expansion project. This ROW will link the City of Mechanicville almost all the way to Coons Crossing! Once the gaps are filled in, 2 villages, 5 towns, and one city will be connected for the enjoyment of bike riders, hikers, horseback rides, rollerbladers, and snowmobilers. Congratulations and thanks to the members of our Trails Committee, the Town of Halfmoon and Saratoga County for these significant advances in creating an off-road trail along the spine of the county.

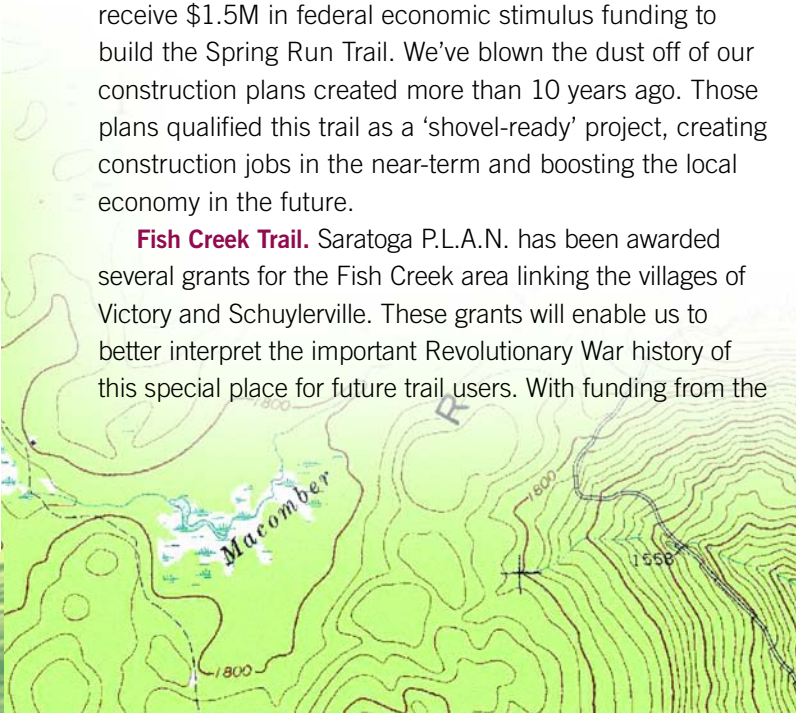
Spring Run Trail. The City of Saratoga Springs will receive \$1.5M in federal economic stimulus funding to build the Spring Run Trail. We've blown the dust off of our construction plans created more than 10 years ago. Those plans qualified this trail as a 'shovel-ready' project, creating construction jobs in the near-term and boosting the local economy in the future.

Fish Creek Trail. Saratoga P.L.A.N. has been awarded several grants for the Fish Creek area linking the villages of Victory and Schuylerville. These grants will enable us to better interpret the important Revolutionary War history of this special place for future trail users. With funding from the

Historic Saratoga-Washington on the Hudson Partnership (\$9,000) and the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (\$31,500), we are able to: Purchase the Corbett property on the south side of Fish Creek; Conduct archeological studies on the Corbett property and on the proposed trailbed of the Fish Creek Trail on land owned by Brookfield Power Systems; Conduct historical research to better understand troop positions and movements during the two-week siege following the Battles of Saratoga in 1777, which led to surrender by the British troops.

County Forest Trail in Wilton. Saratoga County opened up a trail on county forest land located on Loudon Road just north of the Wilton Mall. This short loop is a multi-use trail with a

continued on next page





continued from previous page parking area large enough for horse trailers. The county is working on a new trail system for other county forestland located within the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park.

Alfred Z. Solomon Trail Days. Hundreds of volunteers joined Stewardship Coordinator Andy Fyfe this year to: open the Galway Preserve for use by school groups and the general public; Mark a trail up Spruce Mountain to the fire tower in Corinth; Help expand a vineyard at the Carver Farm in Greenfield; Open up habitat and grow and plant host species for the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly at Ushers Road in Clifton Park; Plant trailhead and construct a new trail linking to the Bog Meadow Trail in Saratoga Springs; Maintain the Lake Lonely Trail in Saratoga Springs; Clear vegetation that was shading fringed gentian in the sandplain area of the Orra Phelps Preserve in Wilton; Post boundaries and trail at the Kayaderosseras Preserve in Milton; Clear trail to woodcock habitat at Tanner Road Preserve; Collect GPS positions on preserves trails and create maps of preserves with trails, and create quality maps of 20 properties to help with monitoring easements.

Many thanks to ALL the volunteers and to the Alfred Z. Solomon Trust for underwriting many of these trail activities on Saratoga P.L.A.N. properties.

Old Champlain Canalway. Crossing the Hudson River has always been a difficult planning problem for the trail along the Old Champlain Canal that will eventually reach from Waterford to Whitehall. The Dix Bridge, spanning the Hudson from Lock 5 Island to Fort Miller, will bridge the gap for pedestrians and snowmobiles, thanks in part to a grant from the Federal Highway Administration for bridge repairs. 📍



Transitions

Lynn Schumann has joined the staff part-time as the Director of Fundraising and Communications. Many of you know Lynn through her work coordinating this year's Summer Feast for Conservation. She has worked for The Nature Conservancy, served as Executive Director for the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park and the Lake George Land Conservancy, and as Northeast Director for the Land Trust Alliance. She served on the board of the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region and on the advisory committee for Saratoga County's Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. This position was made possible by generous two-year grants from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program and the Nordlys Foundation.

Diane Metz, our former Community Planning Coordinator, has left PLAN while we re-evaluate our communities' needs, the services we provide, and resources available to us. We wish Diane well in her new endeavors. 📍



Vintner Mike Spiak described the cold-hardy wine grape varieties to PLAN volunteers helping to improve his vineyard on the farm in Greenfield where Martha Carver donated a conservation easement.

Conservation News

Blandings Turtle Habitat. Saratoga P.L.A.N. will protect 61 acres of forested and wetlands habitat in Northumberland which buffer and possibly harbor Blandings Turtles, a threatened species. Public trails are planned for this site once it is protected. Pooled to make this land acquisition possible, Saratoga County awarded \$78,032, the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation granted \$150,000 from the Environmental Protection Fund, and the Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Partnership Program with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation awarded \$10,000 for transaction costs. In order to complete this project, Saratoga P.L.A.N. must raise an additional \$40,000 in private funds to ensure that it may always provide the necessary stewardship for this special place. To make a contribution, please include a note indicating that your contribution is for "Blandings Turtle Habitat."

Round Lake Phase II. We continue to work through the process of acquiring a conservation easement on 92 acres of farmland and floodplain forest that is contiguous with the 92 acres of land which PLAN and the Town of Malta acquired with frontage on both Round Lake and the Anthony Kill two years ago. We hope to close this complicated project in 2010.

Battleview Fund Feasibility Study. One of the recommendations in our Battles of Saratoga Preservation and Viewshed Protection Plan is to determine whether it is advisable and/or feasible to create a pool of funds intended to expedite conservation of properties with historic landscape significance along the Hudson River in Saratoga and Washington counties. Consultant Peter Szabo of Bloomingdale Advisors, along with a small steering committee from three land trusts as well as the National Park Service, are exploring the idea. The fund concept contains two components: funds to acquire properties and easements, and funds to loan on a revolving basis while awaiting reimbursement from other funding sources. The study, which will be completed by mid-December, is being funded by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation through a generous grant from the Popplestone Foundation.

Saratoga County Farmland Open Space Awards. Using \$750,000 in funds designated for land conservation, Saratoga County is helping to protect four properties this year: 70 acres of farmland in Northumberland, 78 acres of forestland adjacent to a public park in partnership with the Town of Clifton Park, 5 acres of riverside property which will provide public access to the Kayaderosseras Creek in partnership with the City of Saratoga Springs, and 409 acres of farmland in the Town of Saratoga in partnership with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. 📍

Wish List

4-drawer legal-sized file cabinets

Small conference table and chairs

Office desk

Functional office chairs

Volunteer Land Stewards for Round Lake Preserve, Dwaas Kill Natural Area, and Tanner Road Preserve

Picnic tables for the Galway Preserve Education Building

Librarian for our Resource Library

Volunteer to document the history of Preserved Properties

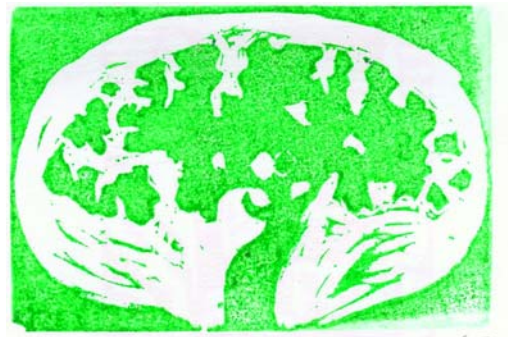
High resolution scans of ink illustrations drawn by a student volunteer

Like treasure hunts? Try letterboxing!



Following the clues to find a hidden box has made exploration of two of PLAN's preserves more fun. Derek Stork, Skidmore Intern, has hidden "letterboxes" on two preserves. By following clues posted on our website, you can seek out the hidden letterboxes and learn something about preserves at the same time. Letterboxing is an ancient hobby that began in England in 1854, and made its way into the United States in the 1998. Saratoga P.L.A.N has put its own spin on an ancient tradition. There are currently two letterboxes hidden: one is located in the Dr. Orra Phelps Preserve in Greenfield and the other is hidden at the Galway Preserve. Clues for each letterbox are located at: www.saratogaplan.org/np_ orraphelps.html or at www.saratogaplan.org/GalwayNaturePreserveRC. To find other letterboxes scattered around the community, visit www.letterboxing.org (Click on the tab "search for boxes"). When you find the letterbox, you can log your discovery in our notepad in the box, leave us a note about your experience on the preserve, or send us a postcard with your comments. Letterboxing is a fun family activity for all ages – start you own notepad and record the rubber stamps from places you've been and bring your personal rubber stamp to record your find in each letterbox!

If you want to make up the clues to hide a letterbox at another preserve, contact our office and we'll get you started. We encourage you to visit all of PLAN's public properties and get a feel for the wilderness that is right in your own backyard.



A Short History of Letterboxing on Dartmoor by Derek Stork

"According to legend, letterboxing began in south-western England in 1854 when a Victorian gentleman named James Perrott hid his calling card in a jar in a remote area by Cranmere Pool on the moors of Dartmoor. Perrot was a guide on the moor, and he encouraged his clients to leave their cards in the jar, as well".

"Eventually, visitors began leaving a self-addressed post card or note in the jar, hoping for them to be returned by mail by the next visitor (thus the origin of the term "letterboxing;" "letterbox" is a British term for what we in the U.S. know as a mailbox). This practice ended in time, however, and

the current custom of using rubber stamps and visitor's log books came into use".

Saratoga P.L.A.N has taken this ancient hobby and put it to work for them. Letterboxes on P.L.A.N properties offer a new and unique element on two of their natural holdings. Individuals and families alike will enjoy the feelings of a treasure hunt, right in their own community. The letterboxes offer a range of difficulty, so there is a letterbox for each type of adventurer. The first letterbox was placed in the Orra Phelps preserve in the town of Wilton. The Dr. Orra Phelps Letterbox

offers hunters a fairly easy search along the stream, but a tricky hiding place may result in some confusion. The second letterbox is located in the Galway preserve and offers a much more difficult adventure. The hunt is rather long, but gives boxers the chance to experience many of the wonderful attributes of the Galway preserve. The clues for

each letterbox are located on the Saratoga P.L.A.N website and we hope that you take advantage of them. Good luck boxing! For more information about letterboxing visit www.letterboxing.org.



Legislative Update

Conserving land bestows a wealth of public benefits - environmental, economic, health. The public benefits of land conservation are recognized by public policies that provide funding to compensate landowners for conserving their lands or tax incentives for landowners who donate all or a portion of their land or development rights.

Currently, these legislative initiatives supporting land conservation are under consideration at the federal level:

>> In House of Representatives bill H.R.1831 and Senate bill S.812, Congress is considering making the enhanced incentive for charitable donations of conservation easements permanent. This income tax incentive, set to expire in 2009, enables donors to claim a charitable deduction for the value of a conservation easement of up to 50% of their adjusted gross income and to claim it for up to 16 years or until the value of the donation has been claimed.

>> Estate tax revisions are expected by 2010. Congress is considering proposals to raise the estate tax exclusion for donated conservation easements from 40% to 50% and to raise the cap from \$500,000 to \$5M of the land's value. Deferring estate taxes on lands that are in agriculture or protected by an easement is also being considered.

>> Senator Schumer has introduced Senate bill S.1168 as a sister bill to H.R.1694. The bill will make battlefield sites from the Revolutionary War eligible for land acquisition funds.

In New York State, legislative actions being considered include:

>> Governor Paterson has proposed cutting \$10M from the Environmental Protection Fund. The dedicated fund supports environmental and conservation programs including open space acquisitions and land trusts. There is currently a backlog of approved projects and proposed projects that need EPF funding and the state keeps "borrowing" from the fund for other purposes.

>> In the farmland protection program, NYS pays up to 75% of the cost of purchasing development rights. Assembly bill A.6686 and Senate bill S.5414 would increase the state contribution to 87.5%, if the farmer is the one providing the match.

>> Land trusts, like towns and counties, will be eligible to apply for state grants to purchase development rights on farmland if Assembly bill A.6687 and Senate bill S.4476 are passed. Landowners will have the option of dealing directly with a not-for-profit land trust which has expertise in efficiently managing conservation projects and stewarding easements.

With its current farmland resources, New York can only feed 20% its population. One farm every three days is lost, totaling 26,000 acres per year. NYS needs a food and farmland security plan.

In Saratoga County, the following budget proposals are being considered:

>> The 2010 budget proposal lops off a full third of the former appropriation for the Farmland and Open Space Program, cutting it from \$750,000 to \$500,000. This can only protect a small number of acres at today's prices. We need to balance development with land conservation, which also contributes to a strong local economy.

Please let your county, state and federal representatives know that these bills and initiatives are important to you and your community. Saratoga County is the fastest growing county in NYS. The pace of development is expected to accelerate in the coming years. Decisions are being made that will shape its future for generations. Make conservation of natural resources a part of those decisions. We need to conserve land NOW, while we still have a chance. Our lives depend on it.

For more information, contact the Land Trust Alliance at www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/taxincentives/tax-policy or the American Farmland Trust at www.farmland.org/programs/federal/policy-food-farms-environment.asp.





Wild Winter Weekends

Don't let the winter keep you and your family indoors. Find ways to stay warm while having fun learning about nature's winter secrets while exploring natural areas.

Nature Scavenger Hunt at Galway Preserve

Saturday January 16, 10am-1pm

All ages welcome

FREE. Contributions to Saratoga P.L.A.N. appreciated.

Join Saratoga P.L.A.N. staff and the Friends of Galway Preserve at a family-oriented outdoor scavenger hunt. The game will begin in the open area around the Galway Education Building. At 11am, staff will lead a short hike along which "bonus points" may be collected. Dress for the weather (layers) and bring a bag lunch. If it's snowy, participants must provide their own snowshoes. Snowshoe rental is available at Eastern Mountain Sports (Wilton) and The Alpine Shop (Saratoga Springs). **RSVP REQUIRED: 587-5554 x 4**

Nature Scavenger Hunt at the Bog

Meadow Trail—Meadowbrook Manor Entrance

Saturday February 6, 10am-1pm

All ages welcome

FREE. Contributions to Saratoga P.L.A.N. appreciated.

Join Saratoga P.L.A.N. staff at a family oriented outdoor scavenger hunt. The game will begin at the trailhead to our recently completed Bog Meadow Spur Trail. At 11am, staff will lead a short hike along which "bonus points" may be collected. Dress for the weather (layers) and bring a bag lunch. If it's snowy, participants must provide their own snowshoes. Snowshoe rental is available at Eastern Mountain Sports (Wilton) and The Alpine Shop (Saratoga Springs).

RSVP REQUIRED: 587-5554 x 4

Watch our website www.saratogaplan.org for more listings of outdoor programs.

Board of Directors

Julia S. Stokes, *Chair*
Katharine Stone, *Vice Chair*
Keith Giles, *Treasurer*
Marsha Boelio, *Secretary*
Timothy Barnett
Cynthia Behan
Peter Brooks
John Colley

Mary Elizabeth Coreno
Camille A. Daniels
Jennifer DeWeese
George Ehinger
Jennifer Hunt Dempsey
Edgar King
Charles Martin
John Munter Sr.
Lisa Nagle

Bradford Oswald
Nelson Ronsvalle
Raymond Seymour
Shane Williams-Ness
Ethan Winter

Emeritus Board

Joseph Berger
Barbara L. Glaser

Staff


Maria Trabka, *Executive Director*
Andy Fyfe, *Stewardship & Education Coordinator*
Lynn Schumann, *Director of Fundraising & Communications*
Debbi Hess, *Office & Finance Manager*



Saratoga P.L.A.N. (Preserving Land and Nature)

is a not-for-profit land conservation organization that protects open spaces and special places throughout Saratoga County for present and future generations. Services include land protection, stewardship, community planning, and education. To date, Saratoga P.L.A.N. has protected 3,115 acres and over 50 miles of trails.

Workshop about Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Programs for Farmland

On November 17, 2009, owners of farmland are invited to learn about selling their development rights. Saratoga P.L.A.N. and the Saratoga County Planning Department will jointly present a session on state, county and federal programs that offer compensation for permanently retiring development rights. These competitive grant programs are best suited to commercial farms with a viable business and excellent soil resources. They may also apply to owners of rental lands when the leaseholder is applying to sell development rights on the "home farm." The workshop will be held at Saratoga County Building #5 Auditorium, located at 50 West High Street in Ballston Spa, from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Please call Maria at 587-5554 x1 for more information. 



Eat Well for Saratoga P.L.A.N.

You can dine well at area restaurants and know that you're supporting land conservation at the same time! On specially designated evenings, restaurants will donate 10% of their receipts to PLAN.

November 8, My Way Café,
Route 9 and 67E, Malta

November 16, Fifty South,
2128 Route 50 Ballston Spa

Date TBD, Jonesville Store,
989 Main Street,
Clifton Park

Date TBD (March), Lake Ridge Restaurant,
35 Burlington Ave.,
Round Lake

Date TBD, Whistling Kettle,
24 Front Street,
Ballston Spa

Check our website where we're posting more opportunities to eat well for PLAN!

Staying Connected

E-Mail. Back in the summer, we lost our entire e-mail list when a hard drive croaked and couldn't be resuscitated. We only send out paper newsletters twice a year but all year round we send out news and opportunities electronically. Please help us re-create this vital communications connection by sending an e-mail with your contact information to maria@saratogaplan.org.

Facebook. Find out about the latest happenings at Saratoga P.L.A.N. by visiting us on Facebook. If you're a Facebook member, you can visit our Facebook page through the homepage on our website, www.saratogaplan.org. Become our "friend"!