

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands holding a large, dense bunch of dark purple grapes. The grapes are glistening with water droplets. The hands are positioned on either side of the bunch, with fingers visible. The background is a soft-focus blue, suggesting a sky or water.

a bountiful harvest

SARATOGA PLAN 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



saratoga
PLAN

Preserving Land and Nature

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2015 will be a difficult year to top because it has taken a decade of greasing gears, tuning the tractor, and cultivating the community for the seeds to ripen for this year's conservation harvest. Our efforts were joined with those of landowners, local municipalities, businesses, other nonprofit organizations, county government, and volunteers. Together we filled the silo with an additional 1,471 acres of land, one new public nature preserve, and two new trails for the well-being of current and future generations.

Through PLAN's long-term dedication to community conservation, 2015's harvest included:

THE OPENING OF THE ROUND LAKE PRESERVE, THE SARATOGA SIEGE TRAIL, AND THE SPRUCE MOUNTAIN TRAIL AND FIRE TOWER

THE CONSERVATION OF THE WM. H. BUCKLEY FARM, THE COCOZZO FARM, THE ANCHOR-DIAMOND PARK AT THE HAWKWOOD ESTATE, AND THE HAIZLIP FAMILY TRUST PROPERTY

THE ADDITION OF LAND FOR CHAMPLAIN CANALWAY TRAIL CONNECTIONS

THE EXPANSION OF MOREAU LAKE STATE PARK THROUGH THE TRANSFER OF FORMER MCGREGOR PRISON LANDS TO THE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As a Board of Directors, we are humbled and thrilled to be leading this dynamic organization to build a vibrant community for current and future generations; a community full of healthy and sustainable natural resources and long-term economic well-being for the highest quality of life. It is with your support that we're able to achieve this, support that I know we can count on for even greater successes in 2016. —JOHN MUNTER, CHAIR



“We’ve had a great response from the community. THEY FOUGHT HARD TO MAKE SURE THIS FARM DIDN’T GET DEVELOPED. SARATOGA PLAN IS A HUGE PARTNER... AND THEIR ROLE IN THE PROCESS TO KEEP THESE FARMS AS FARMS IS VITAL. They do what the average farmer can’t do, which is to put the whole plan together to preserve farms... THEY HELP THE FARMERS SELL THEIR FARM’S DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS, ENABLING FARM BUSINESSES TO USE THAT CAPITAL TO REINVEST IN THE FARM.”— *Mark Sacco, Owner of Wm. H. Buckley Farm*



In March, PLAN shared the exciting news that we had reached an agreement with the Pitney family to purchase their scenic 166-acre farm and, in partnership with the City of Saratoga Springs, ensuring their land would remain an agricultural asset for our community for generations to come. **The Community Farm at Pitney Meadows** presents a unique opportunity to connect the people of Saratoga County with the land that sustains us. We envision an agricultural hub that will provide local residents access to fresh produce and opportunities to enjoy the land through community gardening and educational programs, while simultaneously supporting critical small-scale and regional agri-business in a variety of ways. Follow the Community Farm at Pitney Meadows on Facebook for more about this exciting project!



planting seeds

PLANNING TODAY
FOR LIFE TOMORROW

Saratoga PLAN is honored to have been given the opportunity to help Mark and Beth Sacco, Joe and Amanda Cocozzo, Claire Haizlip and family, New York State Corrections and Parks departments, and the Schidzick Trust, Town of Ballston, and Taylor family with accomplishing their conservation goals this year, resulting in the permanent conservation of 1,471 acres of Saratoga County's best land.

The Wm. H. Buckley Farm, owned by the Saccos, is a dynamic emerging business on Route 50 in the Town of Ballston overlooking Ballston Lake. The farm raises beef, heritage pigs, chickens, eggs, and turkeys. The public is welcomed onto the farm where they can see firsthand the animals and fields, meet their farmers, purchase items from the butcher shop, and enjoy breakfast or lunch in the café. They can even schedule a "farm stay" in the restored farmhouses or a wedding in a large barn. The former Capiello and Lakeridge dairy farms have re-emerged as the cherished places in the hearts of the community.

As a result of their efforts, the community is assured that these beautiful views and 252 acres of productive soils will always be there to feed them. A major grant from NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, combined with a "bargain sale" donation by the Saccos, funded this transaction.

Right across Route 50, the **Town of Ballston** inherited 246 acres of woodlands. The Taylor family has placed a conservation easement on the land, which will be held and enforced by Saratoga PLAN, while selling the property formerly known as Hawkwood to the Frank

W. Schidzick, Jr. Trust, which has donated the land to the Town of Ballston as a "forever wild" preserve for the public.

On the other side of the county, in the **Town of Stillwater**, Joe and Amanda Cocozzo completed conservation of their farmland bordering the Saratoga National Historical Park. They added 264 acres to the 70 acres they had previously protected in 2012. Welcome Stock Dairy Farm and Koval Family Dairy Farm utilize the Cocozzo fields which overlook the Hudson River and the hills to the east. As part of their project, the Cocozzos also donated a strip of land



along their eastern boundary to the Town of Stillwater. This property lies between the Battlefield and former Champlain Canalway lands owned by Saratoga PLAN. This land provides a critical link for the (eventual) 71-mile long Champlain Canalway Trail that will extend between Waterford and Whitehall. Neighbor Claire Haizlip and family joined in the effort, conveying a portion of their land to the town, too, creating a better route for the trail along a steep streambank. Many partners worked together to make this multi-faceted project come together: NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, Open Space Institute, Town of Stillwater, National Park Service, Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group, Saratoga County Planning

Department, the Haizlip family, and the Cocozzo family. We appreciate every single person who played a role in this farm and trail project.

Saratoga County received a tremendous gift in its northern reaches when New York State made the decision to transfer 709 acres of the 1,600 acres shuttered McGregor Prison property to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as an addition to Moreau Lake State Park. Saratoga PLAN, NY Audubon, Open Space Institute, and local and state officials banded together to encourage the Governor's office and the four state agencies involved to transfer the land to the park. The property, located in the Palmertown Range Conservation Area, includes

the Grant's Cottage Historic site and Lake Bonita and is a critical link for the trail planned from Moreau to Saratoga Springs.

The tremendous conservation accomplishments of 2015 are a testament to the conservation efforts that Saratoga PLAN and its partners have invested in over the past several years. Critical to these accomplishments have been the community relationships that PLAN maintains, the expertise of staff and Board and volunteers, the generosity of PLAN supporters, and the leadership of town, county, and state representatives. Saratoga PLAN is grateful for these relationships, for the community support we receive, and for the many wonderful

landscape features of Saratoga County worthy of conservation. The seeds for the harvest of 2015 were planted many years ago and tenderly cultivated as they blossomed and ripened for the harvest.



A wide-angle photograph of a lush green field, likely a soybean field, stretching towards a distant treeline. The sky is a deep blue, filled with large, fluffy white clouds. In the background, a line of trees separates the field from a small cluster of buildings, including a red barn and a white house.

**"IT'S LIKE THE SEED PUT IN THE SOIL—
THE MORE ONE SOWS, THE GREATER THE HARVEST."** *ORISON SWETT MARDEN*



from heart to harvest

SEEDS OF PASSION YIELD
NEW GROWTH

It starts with a rather big decision; should this land be protected?

From this beginning comes a lasting commitment. When Saratoga PLAN acquires a new property or easement, we are making a promise that this

land will remain conserved forever. This is what stewardship is all about. So what does it take to conserve the land that sustains us?
It takes a PLAN.

Each and every conservation project begins with an idea, and from this small seed, roots spread, a plan grows, and work begins. Just as the apple tree takes many years to mature, so do our trails and preserves. We are proud to say that after many years of hard work and investment, we successfully opened three new preserves & trails to the public in 2015.

Round Lake Preserve. After nearly a decade of planning, Saratoga PLAN and the Town of Malta opened the Round Lake Preserve, located on Route 67 in Malta, this past September. This land, bursting with a diverse ecosystem of wetlands and farm fields, has been drawing people for thousands of years. It is our hope that this new preserve will continue to draw people to this site, to fish and paddle, to view wildlife and study the natural world, and to get lost in the beauty that this special place still offers us, now more than 6,000 years after its first discovery.

Saratoga Siege Trail. The completion of this historic trail is another example of how community improvement projects such as trail building don't happen overnight and take persistent support and effort. Saratoga PLAN brings different groups together for community projects, and we are proud to have been able to hold the role of facilitator for this project. Support for the creation of this trail came in many forms from the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust, the American Battlefield Protection Program, the Bender Family Foundation, Brookfield Power, the Community Foundation



2 Partners,
9 years of planning,
90 acres of protected land,
¼ mile boardwalk
and launch.

ROUND LAKE PRESERVE



4 Partners, 8 years
of planning, ½ mile
historic trail, 9 funding
sources, 238 years of
history honored.

SARATOGA SIEGE TRAIL



4 Partners, 12 years of
planning, 1.2 mile trail,
360° views.

SPRUCE MOUNTAIN TRAIL

for the Greater Capital Region, Greenman-Pederson, Inc., NYSO-PRHP, Saratoga National Historical Park, Siena College, Saratoga County, the Town of Saratoga, the Village of Victory, and the RBC Foundation.

It is our hope that the new Saratoga Siege Trail will draw and educate visitors for years to come.

Spruce Mountain Trail. We are thrilled to report that this past October the Spruce Mountain Trail and its fire tower were officially reopened to the public thanks to the hard work and dedication of many partners over many years. This ~1.2 mile trail crosses properties owned by NYS, Saratoga PLAN, and Lyme Timber. PLAN acquired its 100 acre tract in 2004 because we knew back then that the property was going to be a critical piece of the puzzle in maintaining public access up the mountain. The views of the county from atop this fire tower just can't be beat, so for PLAN this project was especially significant; it was more than just about opening land up to the public, it was also an opportunity to save one of the only places where people can see the greater landscape and take in just how beautiful and special our county truly is. We want to thank everyone at NYS, the Adirondack Mountain

Club, the Friends of Spruce Mountain group, Saratoga County, Lyme Timber, and countless other supporters who helped work on this rewarding project!

stacking wood

SECURING PROVISIONS
FOR THE LONG-HAUL

This past year Saratoga PLAN was awarded a multi-year grant of \$125,000 for the stewardship of conserved lands within the Galway Central School District from the Dockstader Charitable Trust. The Galway Central School District covers a large portion of Saratoga County, and includes 41% of PLAN's protected lands. This support will be critical in ensuring that Saratoga PLAN has the proper resources to care for our conserved lands in perpetuity. We are humbled by the trust's generosity and belief in our work and credibility, and proud to have a mission that benefits the greater Galway community and all Saratoga County communities.

a co-op for conservation

LENDING A HAND TO
YOUR NEIGHBOR DOWN THE ROAD

Each year, PLAN's preserves see

several improvements thanks to donations of time, energy, and resources from local community groups and volunteers:

Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge #161 and Wilton Cub Scout Pack #16 partnered on a project to build and install bat houses and two large kiosks at the Hennig Preserve in the Town of Providence.

Girl Scout Troop #3086 cleared trails at the Coldbrook Preserve in Northumberland.

Eagle Scout candidate Jake Hurtt from Ballston Spa Troop #2 built walkways, filled in wet areas on trails, and repaired a wildlife blind at the Galway Nature Preserve in the Town of Galway.

Eagle Scout candidate Tyler Gileski from Galway Troop #4005 planned, built, and installed information boxes at each of our public preserves. These boxes contain maps, letterbox clues, nature preserve passports, newsletters, and brochures.

A big 'thank you' to the many groups & individuals that help us "farm the fields and forage the forests."

Seasons come,
and seasons go, but with
each passing year PLAN
remains prudent in its
responsibilities as a land
trust and community
partner.



fruitful abundance

HARNESSING COMMUNITY
CONSERVATION

2015 was a banner year for Saratoga

PLAN. We completed many projects that have been in the works for years and took on bigger initiatives than ever. As we harvest the bounty and fill the barn and root cellar, the cleared fields beckon us to prepare for next year's plantings. We plan to keep the momentum going in the coming year, while recognizing the added stewardship, communications and fundraising capacity necessary to tackle bigger projects and to responsibly care for our growing portfolio of lands and easements.

Farmland. Engaging the community to help us envision a future for the Community Farm at Pitney Meadows will be a top priority in 2016. Working with partner nonprofit The Saratoga

Institute, we will formulate a program for the 166-acre farm that serves the agricultural and educational needs of the region while honoring the land and crafting a viable business plan for the farm that will support its educational programs.

With the restoration of state and county funding for farmland conservation, more landowners are seeking our assistance in conserving their fertile fields and working lands. Aging farmers are requesting retirement and estate planning assistance. New farmers are seeking experience and access to affordable land. We will be addressing these community needs related to farmland conservation and owner transitions through individual consultations, workshops, funding applications and management of easement transactions, publications, surveys, farmland matching service, partnerships, and designing transfer of development rights programs in the towns of Stillwater and Ballston. The additional capacity to supply these services is possible due to the support of the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network, coordinated by the American Farmland Trust with primary funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Trust.

Citizen Bio-science. PLAN is launching a series of biological surveys to learn more about the Palmettown Range Conservation Area, a geographic priority in northern Saratoga County. Ornithologists, botanists, herpetologists, and ecologists will be training and leading interested citizens in canvassing the former McGregor Prison lands which NYS recently transferred to Moreau Lake State Park and in our own preserves, the fun, educational treasure hunts are being upgraded with preserve passports and t-shirt prizes (for kids of all ages).

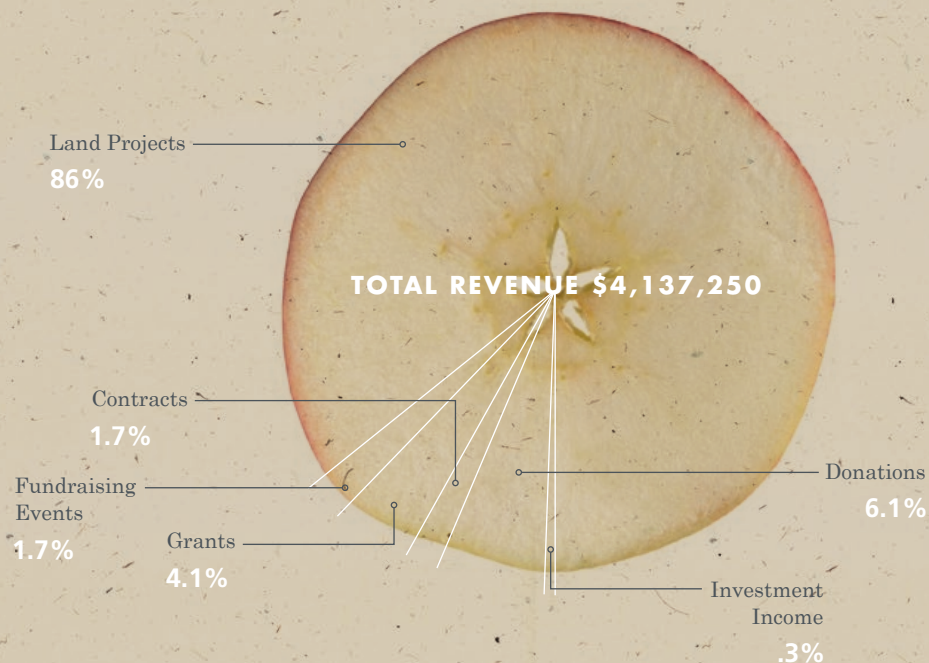
Trails. As more trails are built and linked together, we are working to keep up with all the advances and publish a new trails map, including boat launches and blue trails this time. We will continue working on segments of the Champlain Canalway Trail, Palmertown Trail, Saratoga Greenbelt Trail, and Zim Smith Trail.

Human Resources. The pace of conservation in Saratoga County is only possible because so many people contribute their time and talent. Volunteers, interns, and consultants more than triple the efforts of our small staff of four.



Planning the Feast of the Fields, stewardship of preserves, trail planning and building, videography, photography, writing, leading outdoor programs, and serving as an ambassador are some of the countless ways people assist PLAN with conserving the landscape and natural resources of Saratoga County. Over the course of the year, Saratoga PLAN's dedicated and diverse Board of Directors will be leading a strategic decision-making process, looking down the road toward the years ahead and gathering the best ideas our community has for maintaining the exceptional quality of life we enjoy for generations to come.

2015 financial report



Notes

This financial summary is derived from unaudited 2015 books. 2015 Revenues include restricted pledges and receivable grants of approximately \$555,000 for projects in other years, as well as borrowed loans of \$78,750. Saratoga PLAN's fiscal year runs from January 1 through December 31. The number and scale of land projects varies wildly from year to year, with closings in 2015 being exceptionally high. Saratoga PLAN is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and a registered NYS charity. Complete audited statements are available from the NYS Department of Law Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

thank you!

LEGACY CIRCLE

We appreciate the long-term commitment of donors who have made planned gifts through their wills and life insurance policies to Saratoga PLAN. These supporters ensure that funds will always be available to conserve farms, woods, waters and trails for the benefit of current and future generations:

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Dockstader Charitable Trust
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
GE Foundation
Hamill Family Foundation
Jane N. Mooty Foundation Trust
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This past year saw new growth in many areas, but also saw the loss of several beloved community members who were steadfast in their dedication to the conservation of Saratoga County's resources:

Amy Stock, *community advocate*

Martha Carver, *protected Carver Farm in Greenfield, 2002*

Howard Reilly, *protected Reilly Ridge Farm in Halfmoon, 2005*

Shirley Van Arnum, *protected Van Arnum Farm in Saratoga, 2012*



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"TO PLANT A GARDEN IS TO BELIEVE IN TOMORROW." *AUDREY HEPBURN*



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