

A collage of various images including a close-up of a nose, a woman's face, a cow, a landscape with a pond, a red barn, and a person in a hat, arranged in a horizontal strip across the middle of the page.





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## Learning lessons in a changing landscape

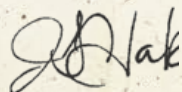
In 2016, the continuously changing landscape of Saratoga County led us to evaluate the impact of PLAN on the conservation of our critical natural resources, working farms, and the trail systems connecting these special resources. Together with key stakeholders, PLAN's Board of Directors, created a Business Blueprint outlining strategic steps to broaden and deepen our countywide conservation impact and focus our efforts where that impact might be greatest.

As a 12-year organization, PLAN is growing and changing to better meet the rising demand for conservation services in Saratoga County. The recent hiring of a Constituent Engagement Director and soon a Conservation Director will help address the needs of communities and landowners seeking our help with their conservation goals.

PLAN was very active this past year participating in events with crossover appeal, providing direct assistance that lead to the conservation of the Pitney Farm, and securing grants for 10 farmland protection projects. Our role in conserving the Ballston Creek Preserve was highlighted at the New York State (NYS) Wetlands Forum. We welcomed many colleagues to the New York Land Trust Summit in Saratoga Springs this past May. We also exhibited at the well-attended Saratoga County Planning and Zoning Conference.

Lastly, as an organization and as a Board, we continue to learn. We learn from each and every land protection project or trail project we are engaged in. We learn from conversations with landowners, communities and business leaders. We learn from each other, and this diversity of perspective leads to well thought out decisions to guide PLAN. Several Board members participated in a series of training programs provided by the Community Foundation of the Greater Capital Region and learned valuable lessons from many other local not-for-profit organizations.

As we begin a new year, all of us at PLAN are excited for the changes underway and those yet to come. We have a clear path ahead and hope you will continue to join us on this journey as we strive to strengthen and enhance our conservation impact on this beautiful region we call home.



JACLYN HAKES, CHAIR







### WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

Visitors to PLAN's preserves benefit from a talented band of merry elves who work tirelessly, and what seems like magically, to enhance the experience along the trails. You may never see them, but you surely appreciate what they do, possibly without even knowing they were there at all. Clearing fallen trees, marking boundaries, fashioning water bars to deter erosion, and building bridges to span wet spots and streams are but a few of their good deeds. Next time you are out on a trail, express a word of gratitude to the mysterious elves whose craft and attention to detail tremendously enhance your trail experience.

Changes enhance the visitors' experience.

### One special group of stewards

meets every Monday year round to work on PLAN's 10 preserves and 24 miles of trails which are open to the public for hiking, birding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, paddling, education, and artistic pursuits. As part of a project

sponsored by Skidmore College, these volunteers researched the history of the 850-acre Hennig Preserve in the Town of Providence and created interpretive displays in the field and online to describe what has happened at this site in times past. Stop by their guided tour to learn

how melting rivers formed elevated ridges called eskers rather than valleys, or how the migrant workers who tended charcoal burn piles left circular marks on the ground and made a profession out of sitting and watching. If armchair experiences are more your pace, visit our Hennig

webpage at [www.saratogaplan.org/explore/public-preserves-trails/hennig-preserve/](http://www.saratogaplan.org/explore/public-preserves-trails/hennig-preserve/) for our Hennig Story Map created by Intern Carly Dellis, to experience the Hennig Preserve's history from the comfort of your own home. Those elves have thought of everything!



Town of Ballston Eagle Scout Zachary Hall completed a community service project in the Ballston Creek Preserve, including constructing several boardwalks enhancing the trail experience for visitors to this favorite birding site.



**The Hawkwood Estate** was once the home to several wealthy families during the 1800s. The name *Hawkwood* comes from the name of the original mansion built on the property in the 1790s. Remnants of the mansion and other artifacts are still found. A sugar maple plantation, several stone walls and old farm equipment on the property suggest the estate was once used for syrup making, cultivating crops and keeping livestock. In late 2015, a conservation easement was donated to Saratoga PLAN by the Taylor family and the land was purchased by the Frank W. Schidzick Trust and donated to the Town of Ballston for a “forever wild” preserve to be called the Anchor-Diamond Park but often referred to as the Hawkwood Preserve. Over the course of 2016, improvements were made to the park, including a four-mile trail

system and a parking area at the southern end of Middleline Road where it meets Route 50. Combined with the Buckley Farm easements, and the Ballston Veterans’ Bike-Hike Trail, the Town now has a recreational-agricultural-educational-commercial complex of nearly 600 acres overlooking Ballston Lake and protecting its watershed!

When **Maryanna Milton** donated a lovely property of 74 acres in the Town of Galway, she inspired what is becoming a larger landscape of contiguous conserved lands. Maryanna donated her land to PLAN while retaining life estate rights to it. When she passed in 2013, PLAN assumed stewardship responsibilities for the property. Since then, volunteers have mapped her trail system and marked the boundaries along the stone walls. Meanwhile, nearby landowners Don and the late Linda

Carpenter were making plans to donate a conservation easement on their 60-acre property. The Carpenter Farm, with fertile fields worked by a local dairy farmer, buffers the Gloweegee Creek, a tributary to the Kayaderosseras Creek, and its gentle woodland slopes with limestone outcroppings offer a plethora of wildflower blooms in the spring. The Carpenters have generously offered to accommodate both a snowmobiling and a hiking trail on their farm as part of their easement. Only one property separates the Milton and Carpenter properties, and now the owners of that land, Dusty and Arlene Rhodes, have offered to donate 23 acres of woods to PLAN so that all three properties can be linked to form a continuous trail system. Funding from the Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Fund, the Dockstader Charitable Trust, the landowners, and private donors will be augmented by fundraising in 2017 to make these conservation linkages possible. This Milton-Rhodes-Carpenter trail segment may one day be part of the Long Path, a hiking trail which currently extends from New Jersey to the Helderbergs and is envisioned to eventually traverse western Saratoga County to connect to the Adirondacks.



Volunteers install new signs at the Hennig Preserve where the trail system takes hikers on a tour of the natural and cultural landscape, including the site of an old charcoal pit.





## Changing roles in a changing landscape

### **SOMETIMES CHANGE IS FOR THE BEST**

Saratoga PLAN played a major role in purchasing and protecting the **Pitney Farm** on West Avenue, one of the last remaining farms in the City of Saratoga Springs. The 166-acre farm is slated to become an educational center and resource hub for

new and continuing farmers. The City of Saratoga Springs purchased a conservation easement on the farm, ensuring that it will always remain available for agricultural pursuits. At one stage we stepped up to be the interim purchaser, but then it became clear that it made more sense for the group that was going to

manage the farm and run the educational programs to be the actual owner, with PLAN facilitating the real estate and easement transactions and helping to raise the money for the project. Along the way, PLAN's role changed but the land was permanently protected. The new management and ownership entity,

Pitney Meadows Community Farm, is off and running, and community gardens and educational programs for beginning farmers are being planned for this coming spring. PLAN takes pride in having helped make it all possible, while being smart and flexible enough to recognize when our job was complete.



## CONSERVING THE COUNTRYSIDE THROUGH QUALITY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**How does designing a commercial corridor along Route 4 in the town and village of Stillwater achieve**

**conservation?** And, why is Saratoga PLAN involved? As the leading voice and the only conservation organization working throughout Saratoga County, Saratoga PLAN works in partnership with communities to plan for quality communities. PLAN has always been a voice for good municipal planning, having repeatedly witnessed how communities who describe what they want, get what they want. PLAN has renewed its commitment to assisting communities with their planning efforts for protection of open spaces, trails, farmland, and natural resources. Sometimes this commitment leads to involvement in surprising ways. Over the past year, PLAN has participated in Stillwater's joint effort to rezone the Route 4 corridor to attract the types of businesses and architectural design and uses that will best serve their communities' needs. Having worked together on the Champlain Canalway Trail, farmland conservation projects, and transfer of development rights

concepts, there was a mutual recognition that commercial and conservation interests needed to be simultaneously considered in Stillwater to get the best, balanced results.

Trails are not only a boon to enhanced marketability for the real estate industry; they also attract new businesses to locate here and help retain talent, especially young people who increasingly opt out of owning a car. In addition to connecting people to places, having a place to unwind, to enjoy native flowers and birds and take guests out for a walk on weekends says a lot about a place as well as the people in a community who demonstrate that they care about this place. Saratoga PLAN has taken the lead in forming collaborative partnerships to secure the land and develop trails such as the Spring Run Trail, Railroad Run Trail, the Zim Smith Trail, Bog Meadow Trail, portions of the Champlain Canalway Trail, and many others. After decades of work, it is exciting to see these segments being linked together to create extensive networks in parts of the county.

## 461 AND COUNTING

**Intern Abigail Larkin**, who recently received her doctoral degree from SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry, has been updating the countywide trails data for the past year. She hiked, mapped, and GPSed new trails and contacted towns and villages to review and augment information. The new data revealed that Saratoga County now has at least 275 miles of trails for hiking and biking and 186 miles for snowmobiling. In the spring of 2017, the data will be turned over to the County Planning Department and will be made available for downloading on the NYS GIS Clearinghouse.

Fortunately, not all trail work is done on a computer. Sometimes, we actually get out in the field. PLAN, with the help of many volunteers, is heading up an effort to scout possible trail routes in the Lincoln Mountain State Forest in the northeast corner of the Town of Greenfield. NYS DEC will be considering our proposal for a public trail system when it updates its management plan for the state forest in 2017.

Saratoga County is on its way to building a world-class trail system, thanks to recognition of the transportation, fitness, recreation and economic benefits for the public. Recent funding to build more trail connections include:

- The **Zim Smith Trail** was awarded \$6M federal, state and county grants for the Halfmoon to Mechanicville section.
- The **Saratoga Greenbelt Trail** was awarded \$1.93M in state and city funding to complete the "downtown connector" from Spring Run Trail to Congress Park.
- Saratoga Springs approved funding to acquire the right-of-way needed for the **Geyser Road Trail**, which will serve the southwest quadrant of the city.
- The proposed NYS budget has \$200M for an Empire State Trail, which includes the **Champlain Canalway Trail** along the Hudson River in eastern Saratoga County and passages along the Mohawk River in the southern part of the county.





# The changing landscape of Saratoga County

**Saratoga County is growing—  
faster than any other county in NY.**

It is a wonderful, desired and discovered place. As the county's population expands and formerly undeveloped land is converted to industrial, residential, commercial, and infrastructure uses, the concurrent demand for conservation services is exploding. There are always natural resources, community amenities, and environmental services to be considered by planning and town boards when evaluating development proposals. PLAN is called upon to help communities to make plans, assess proposals, and accomplish their conservation goals while balancing their economic development objectives.

Preserving the economic, aesthetic, environmental, and health benefits from natural lands' underappreciated services such as water cleansing, air purification, groundwater replenishment, pest control, flood control, climate mitigation, public health, and reduced tax burden is something we owe to future generations. Conservation is critical in our changing landscape.







## Ch-ch-ch-changes

### SETTING A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

**This is an exciting and opportune time in PLAN's history** to move to its next level of development and impact. There has been perhaps no other time in the County's history that the need for conservation has been as strong. PLAN's balanced, strategic, and community-centric approach make it the right organization to address the need.

Working with consultants from Conservation Impact, and with the input of more than 60 people from the community, PLAN took a look at the context within which it works and the potential it has to be more

effective, crafting a Business Plan Blueprint to guide its direction for the next few years.

PLAN's work is balanced, community-centric and science-based. To achieve sustained conservation, communities require conservation or open space plans; the policies, regulations, incentives, or other tools to implement the plans; and the on-the-ground projects that demonstrate results. To serve communities, in the context of a county-wide vision, PLAN applies a comprehensive approach of planning, policy and projects.

PLAN is perceived as a respected

and quietly effective organization. PLAN's next level is to have a more prominent public image and to promote its expertise, assistance and tools to preserve and enhance the places people love: local farms, beautiful open spaces, or trails. Our analysis demonstrated that there are many more people in Saratoga County who have the values, economic means, and/or time to support conservation efforts. PLAN will be reaching out and offering ways for people to connect and become involved in helping to conserve this wonderful place.

Saratoga PLAN is a small, successful, stable organization. It has an

impressive portfolio of accomplishments, including farmland protected for local agriculture, open space preserves for recreational enjoyment, and trail projects that enhance a community's quality of life. Research completed for the strategic planning process shows that there is an urgent need for conservation in Saratoga County; and PLAN has significant potential to increase support for its work. Thus, the board of directors agreed that PLAN move to its next level of maturity: adequate numbers of professional staff and volunteers, the financial resources for efficient operations, and a more visible, higher profile governing board.



## CHANGING FACES

In 2016, the paths of three staff persons, Devin Rigolino, Trish Foster, and Emily Oswald, scattered them elsewhere around the country. Fortunately, PLAN's steady stream of interns created a solid bench. Former intern **Greg Redling** took on the Stewardship Coordinator role.

**Ashley Keatley** transitioned from Agricultural Outreach Intern to Program Assistant. Intern **Abigail Larkin** worked tirelessly updating countywide trails data. And **Allison Hargrave**, who helped write six successful farmland conservation grants while an intern, is now helping to manage those projects as a consultant. In addition, PLAN hired **John Kettlewell** as the Constituent Engagement Director to oversee communications and to connect people with PLAN and conservation. Pending funding, we expect to be able to hire a Conservation Director in early 2017.

The Board of Directors has some new faces, too. We welcome new Board members **Phyllis Aldrich**, **Genevieve Trigg**, and **Kathleen Mannix**, and thank **Katie Petronis**, **Karl Newton** and **Alain Polynice** for their service as they transition off the Board.

Ashley Keatley



Allison Hargrave



Greg Redling



Abigail Larkin



## Securing the future of agriculture

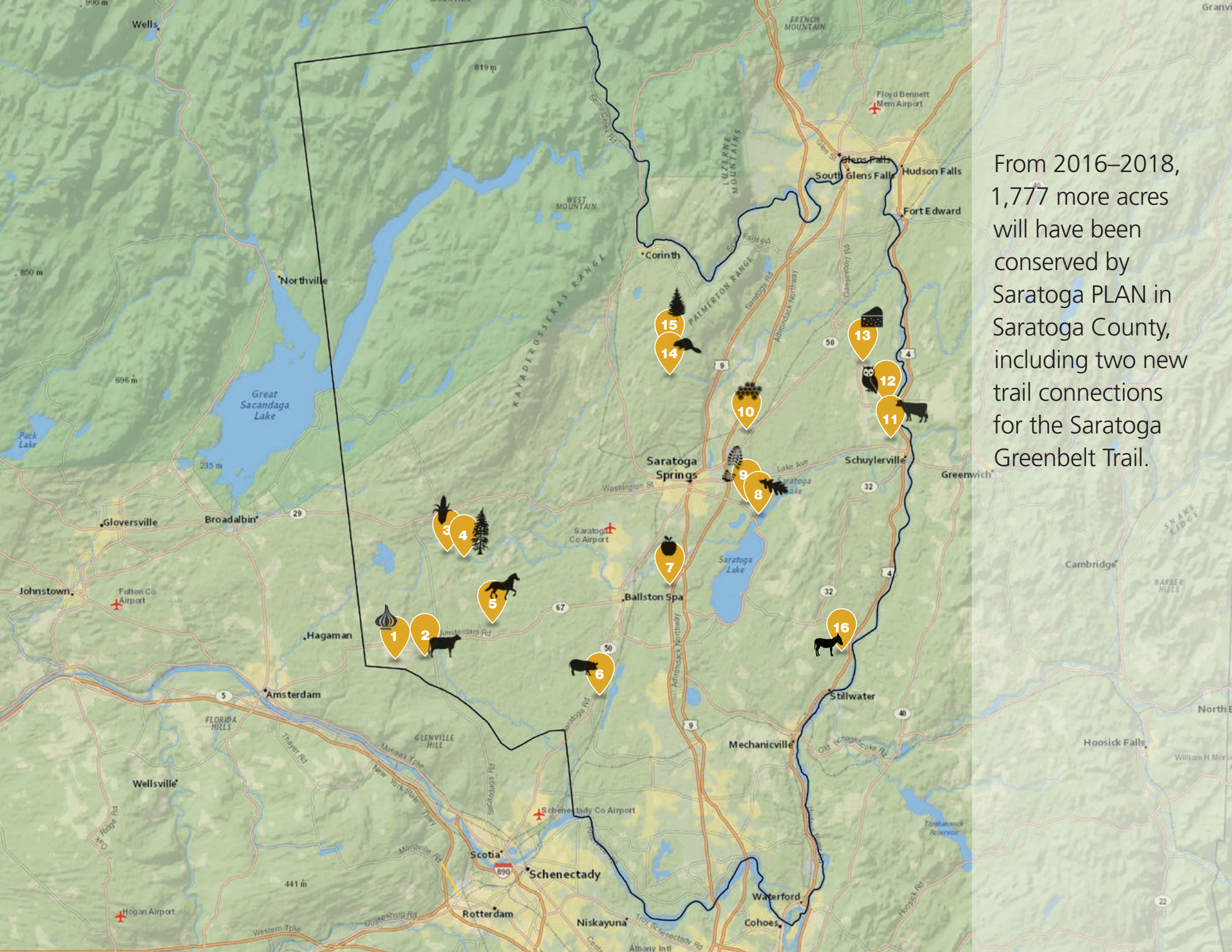
**There are a growing number of landowners who love their land and recognize its growing value for future generations.** As open land for farming, forestry, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and water resource protection becomes a scarcer commodity, its environmental importance and economic value will undoubtedly rise. A farmer's land base is one of his or her most important assets. The land determines what types of crops can be produced and what yields can be achieved. It is also a valuable financial asset.

Beginning in 2016 and carrying over into 2017–18, Saratoga PLAN is in the process of conserving an unprecedented number of properties: 10 farms and three other natural properties. When all of these projects are completed, 1,777 more acres will have been conserved in Saratoga County and two new trail connections for the Saratoga Greenbelt Trail will be made. With a total project value of \$7.4M, covered by NYS grants (2/3rds) and county, town, and private donations, these projects will secure the land base for the agricultural and tourism industries and associated jobs, as well as contribute in other ways to sustain-

ing quality communities throughout Saratoga County. Fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, horses, and many other crops will continue to be produced locally, ensuring a safe, healthy and secure food supply. A world-class trail system will offer alternative transportation, health and fitness, educational, and recreational opportunities. Saratoga County will continue to be a quality place—a place where people migrate to live, work, and play.

- 1 **SZUREK FARM**
- 2 **COTTAGE FARM**
- 3 **CARPENTER FARM**
- 4 **RHODES FOREST TRAIL**
- 5 **FEATHERBED LANE FARM**
- 6 **WM. H. BUCKLEY FARM**
- 7 **MALTA RIDGE ORCHARD & GARDENS**
- 8 **OAK RIDGE DEVELOPMENT**
- 9 **BOG MEADOW TRAIL**
- 10 **TOOKER FARM**
- 11 **WILDWOODS FARM**
- 12 **FIDDLE-I-FEE FARM**
- 13 **BARBER BROTHERS DAIRY**
- 14 **GREENTREE LAKE TRAIL**
- 15 **LINCOLN MTN STATE FOREST TRAIL**
- 16 **CHAMPLAIN CANAL TRAIL**





From 2016–2018, 1,777 more acres will have been conserved by Saratoga PLAN in Saratoga County, including two new trail connections for the Saratoga Greenbelt Trail.





A resilient  
landscape  
in a changing  
climate



### ADIRONDACK FOOTHILLS FOR THE FUTURE

**The Palmertown Range Conservation Area** in north-central Saratoga County is a 62-square mile area roughly bounded by the Hudson River and Routes 9 and 9N in Greenfield, Wilton, Moreau and Corinth. The Palmertown Conservation Area has working forestlands, headwaters to the Kayaderosseras, Snook Kill, and Loughberry Lake, extensive wetlands, and exceptional contiguous habitat that is easily accessed from multiple directions by outdoor enthusiasts for mountain biking, horseback riding, birding, and snowshoeing. Ground-breaking analyses by The Nature Conservancy and Open Space Institute have revealed that this largely intact landscape with its micro-topograph-

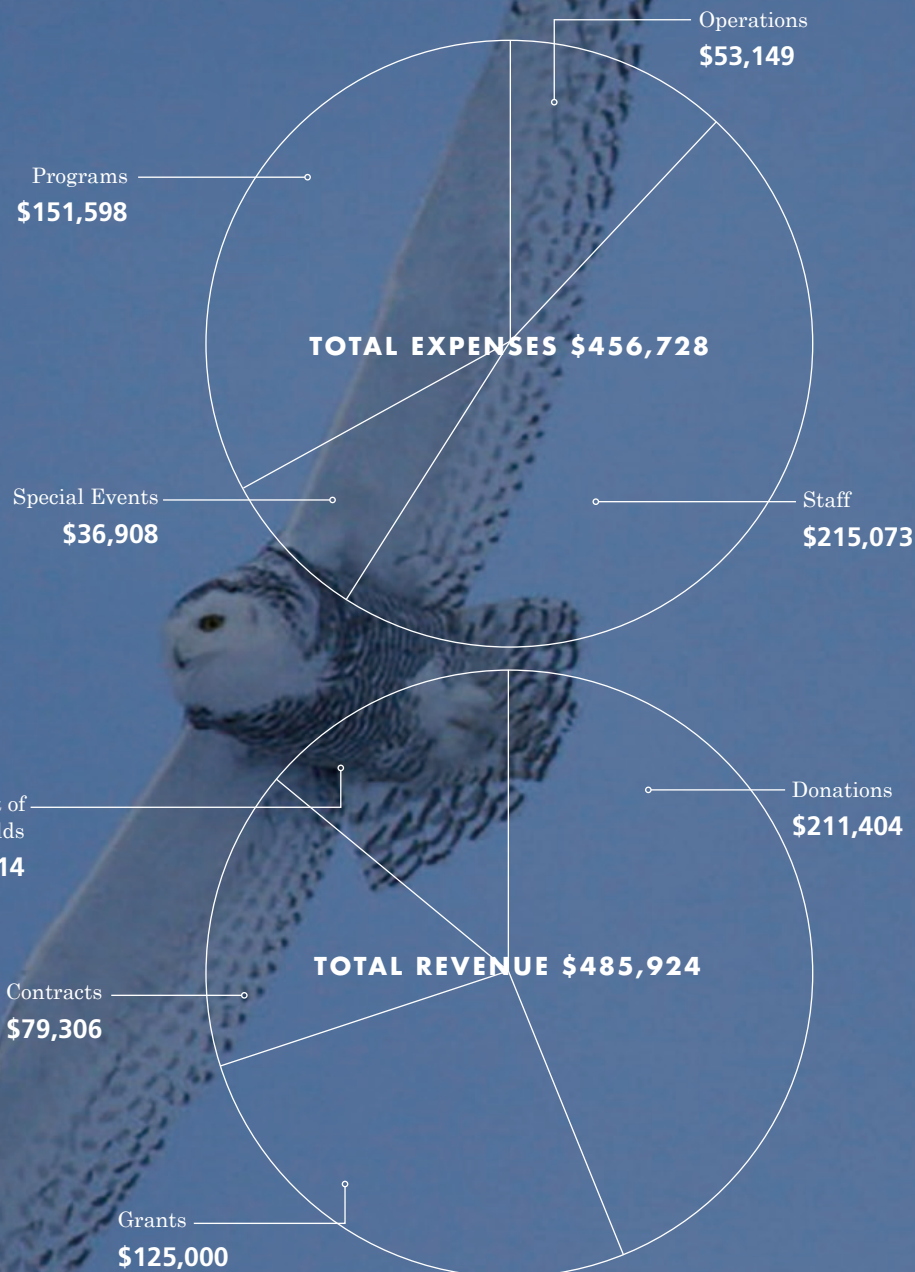
ical relief, ecological integrity, and lack of fragmentation may be an area where species will be able to adapt to a changing climate.

Working with a multitude of partners, we've been able to make great headway in conserving this area:

- PLAN led the charge which resulted in NYS transferring 705 (of 1,600+) acres of former McGregor Prison land to Moreau Lake State Park.
- PLAN facilitated the transfer of 250 acres of woodland and wetland needed to the Open Space Institute.
- PLAN is mapping out a trail network for Lincoln Mountain State Forest for NYS DEC.
- DEC purchased 936 acres of former Finch Pruyn timber land from The Nature Conservancy.
- Skidmore received a gift of property adjacent to other lands the college owns in the Palmertown Conservation Area.
- A class of UAlbany graduate students is getting real-world experience working with PLAN and OSI on a conservation planning project for the Palmertown Conservation Area for the spring 2017 semester.



# 2016 financial report



## Notes

Saratoga PLAN's audited financial statement for fiscal year 2016 should be completed by mid-summer 2017. Until then, we anticipate that the basic financial picture for the organization (minus investment data) is accurately reflected in these charts. Some of the revenue received in 2016 is restricted for project expenses in 2017. Saratoga PLAN is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization, a registered NYS charity, and a nationally accredited land trust, meeting the highest standards for nonprofit management, land conservation transactions, and land stewardship. Complete audited financial statements are available from the NYS Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.



## thank you!

Farms, waters, trails, wildlife habitats, historic places, scenic views—the places that nourish us and sustain our lives, the places we love—could not be conserved without the generosity of those who care that they'll always be there. Thank you for being a part of PLAN, for sharing your resources and making it possible to conserve 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. **YOU make it happen!**

We would like to especially express our gratitude to many donors who allowed PLAN to keep their gifts made to the Pitney Farm project. We were able to cover a good portion of the costs incurred while leading that initiative. We greatly appreciate the faith you demonstrated when things did not happen in the order we anticipated.

## LEGACY CIRCLE (planned bequests)\*

Tim Barnett  
Ray David  
Barbara Faraone  
Barbara L. Glaser  
Barbara Hennig  
Richard Higgins  
Field Horne  
Merry Huber  
Barbara Jefts  
Gina Johnson  
Robin Kaska  
Carolyn Malstrom  
Chuck Martin  
Susan Miller  
Phyllis Miuski  
Edith Pilcher  
Martha Strohl  
Shane Williams-Ness  
Larry Woolbright  
Meg Woolbright

## FOUNDATIONS

American Farmland Trust  
Bernice B. Godine Family Foundation  
Community Foundation of the Greater Capital Region  
Dockstader Charitable Trust  
GE Foundation  
Hamill Family Foundation  
Jane N. Mooty Foundation  
Land Trust Alliance  
Network for Good  
Nordlys Foundation  
PCLB Foundation  
Pitney Bowes Foundation  
RSF Social Finance  
United Way/SEFA  
Verizon Matching Gifts  
Walter S. Borisenok Family Foundation



## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

NYS Conservation Partnership Program  
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

## CONSERVATIONISTS (\$10,000+)

Barbara L. Glaser and Paul Zachos  
James and Cheryl Gold  
Richard Higgins  
Munter Enterprises  
Tom Newkirk  
Julia and Bob Stokes

## BARNRAISERS (\$5000+)

Advanced Manufacturing Techniques, Inc.  
Phyllis and Sam Aldrich  
Brad Oswald  
Buckley Gent MacDonald & Cary, PC

## HARVESTERS (\$2500+)

Alysa and Jay Arnold  
Brookfield Renewable Power  
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Tim and Kathy Jaques  
Bill and Joanna Lasher  
Ed Miller  
Will and Tabitha Orthwein  
Prime at Saratoga National Inc.  
James and Robin Sevinsky  
Martha Strohl and Thomas O'Connor  
Larry and Meg Woolbright

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Explore Saratoga

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Jenn Hunt Dempsey and Steve Dempsey  
Farm-Credit East  
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Linell Lands  
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Welcome Stock Farm

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Cynthia and John Behan  
Renee and Eliot Birnbaum  
Byrne Orthodontics  
Milda Carroll  
Laura and Gary Ghilds  
David and Mary Clark  
Nancy Conant  
Seth Dunc  
John and Pam Eberle  
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Barbara Faraone  
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Glenville Hills Garden Club of Saratoga County  
Philip and Marie Glotzbach  
Bruce and Pat Goodale  
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