



saratoga
PLAN

Preserving Land and Nature

Spring 2015

fieldnotes

Preserving the rural character, natural habitats and scenic beauty of Saratoga County.



CONSERVING
FARMLAND



PROTECTING
WOODS + WATERS



BUILDING
TRAILS



For more than 150 years, the Pitney Farm has been a steadfast landmark in Saratoga Springs. Now under agreement to be conserved, it is ensured to remain a vital agricultural resource for the City of Saratoga Springs and Saratoga County.

VISIONS OF A COMMUNITY FARM: PLAN HAS AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE PITNEY FARM

THE WELL-KNOWN AND CHERISHED FARM landscape, with its cluster of rustic gray barns and large open corn fields, is one of the last remaining, and the most valuable, active farms remaining within city of Saratoga Springs limits. The Pitney Family, who has cared for and worked this land for more than 150 years, has generously decided to conserve it for the benefit of the Saratoga Region.

PLAN will be purchasing the farm on West Avenue this autumn, and will be working with many partners and supporters to realize the Pitney Family's vision for the 166 acre farm to remain an agricultural community resource.

The community farm is envisioned as a farm hub for the region, a place where people of all ages will be encouraged to learn about, get their hands dirty, and enjoy the fruits of their labor and celebrate agriculture. As a community farm, the 'city in the country' will forever be guaranteed to contain some 'country in the city.'

A capital campaign will soon begin to build a broad coalition of partners and donors to help finance the purchase of the land, as well as to shape the community farm project.

"The Pitney Family is pleased and proud to partner with Saratoga PLAN, Michael Kilpatrick and Sandy Arnold in an effort to develop their farm property located on West Avenue as a 'Community Farm.' If this effort is successful, it will ensure that the farm that has been in our family since the late 1800s will continue to be a vital agricultural resource for the City of Saratoga Springs and Saratoga County."

Kathy Pitney, spokesperson for the family

AN 'ALTERNATIVE NORTHWAY' TAKES SHAPE

the Palmertown Conservation Area

IN JANUARY, PLAN DELIVERED A PETITION to the Governor containing over 1,000 signatures advocating for the transfer of a portion of the former McGregor Prison lands to Moreau Lake State Park.

Good news! You were heard. The land transfer is currently being worked on by the 5 state agencies involved and the outcome is likely to be favorable (no details yet).

Adding Lake Bonita and the surrounding woodlands to the park offers a tremendous addition to heritage and adventure tourism. The natural unfragmented forests will enhance Saratoga County as a desirable place to live, visit, or work. An expanded trail system resulting from expansion of the state park will serve park visitors and provide a critical link for the trail network being built as part of the planned Palmertown Trail (aka "Alternative Northway"), linking Moreau Lake State Park with Lincoln State Forest and Saratoga Spa State Park, and providing opportunities for recreation as well as transportation.



Saratoga PLAN led Braim Road neighbors on a guided hike through a section of the Palmertown Conservation Area, to explore and learn about the proposed trail network that will connect Moreau to Saratoga Springs.

EXTENDING PLAN'S REACH FAR AND WIDE

volunteers make all the difference

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME to volunteer for Saratoga PLAN! 2015 has already proven to be an exciting and jam-packed year full of great opportunities to support meaningful conservation work. Our current volunteers assist us both in the office and in the field by helping with database entry, archive filing, planning events, staffing exhibits, maintaining trails, and leading walks. Some volunteers even show their support from home by writing articles, assisting with mailings, and hosting small home gatherings to introduce their friends to PLAN.



Volunteer photographers capture nature's wonders for us to share, like the above photo taken by volunteer Linda Eastman. If you have a passion for photography, sign up online.

The Feast of the Fields Planning Committee has already begun work preparing for our largest annual fundraising event in September, but they need help. If you'd like to help us plan our Feast please let us know!

PLAN hosts exhibits at community events throughout the year. Several upcoming dates need volunteers to set up and staff displays. Other Saratoga PLAN fundraisers and workshops are coming up soon, too. Join staff in planning and implementing these exciting events over the spring & summer months.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

VISIT SAROTOGAPLAN.ORG/GET-INVOLVED FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.

April 25 Earth Day stewardship at PLAN's preserves

May 16 Clifton Park's Open Space Day

June 21 Sundae on the Farm

On-going mailings

On-going workshop assistants

On-going event coordinators and assistants

TBD Buckley Farm fundraiser breakfast

September 17 Feast of the Fields

"I decided to volunteer with PLAN on the suggestion of several of my friends who were involved with PLAN and had shared with me the important and exciting work the organization does. I have found that the time I dedicate to PLAN presents me with a renewed interest in the health of the environment, an opportunity to learn about the current and future benefits of land conservation in our community, and the chance to experience the land like never before. In addition, the staff at Saratoga PLAN makes volunteering an inviting, flexible and motivating experience." **Micah Gabelman, volunteer**



On Saturday, March 21, PLAN partnered with AUDUBON NEW YORK in leading a walk at PLAN's Galway Nature Preserve.

This year's Audubon Council of New York State spring meeting focused on the important topic of forest resiliency in a changing climate. Many of New York State's most cherished bird species are vulnerable to climate change; the good news is we can help our feathered-friends by working to create bird-friendly communities! To learn more about climate change impacts on bird species, or to get involved with your local Audubon chapter, be sure to visit ny.audubon.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEE SAROTOGAPLAN.ORG FOR DETAILS

April 25 Earth Day stewardship at PLAN's preserves

June 21 Sundae on the Farm, Smith's Orchard in Ballston Spa

June 24-26 learn planning trends, emerging issues, and preparing for what is next at the 2015 APA Northeast Planning Conference in Saratoga Springs

TBD (June, August, October) nature photography workshops

TBD (summer) fairy house building workshop

TBD breakfast fundraiser at the Buckley Farm in Ballston Lake

September 17 Feast of the Fields

TBD (fall) Peaks to Creeks hike and paddle

A **huge thank you** to all of our dedicated supporters and volunteers. Lasting conservation work requires considerable money and time, and without you, none of this is possible.

STATE FUNDING FOR FARMLAND

On March 31, a record level of farmland conservation funding was approved in the New York State FY 2015-2016 budget. The \$177 million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) budget includes: \$15 million for the Farmland Protection Program, and \$20 million to fund the purchase of permanent conservation easements on working farms in the Hudson Valley Region (including Saratoga County).

Kudos to Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature for making an unprecedented investment in the protection of NYS working farmland - securing our food supply, protecting our natural habitats, drinking water, and economic growth, and maintaining our quality of life.

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HARVESTER \$2,500-\$4,999

The Swyer Family Foundation

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Saratoga PLAN is a nonprofit land trust that helps communities make long-term decisions to sustain our region as a great place to live, work, visit, and farm. PLAN assists landowners with fulfilling their conservation goals for their land and provides stewardship for over 3,600 acres of farmland, forest, natural habitat, trail corridors, historic places, and water resources in Saratoga County.



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