



community is the heart of conservation

With deep appreciation from the Executive Director

2020, while difficult, has offered us the gift of time and space to reflect, challenging us to use our ingenuity and bring forth our best selves to create a new way of working and learning and living, of being.

What gelled for me was a deeper understanding that we really are all one interconnected being – albeit with unique manifestations. Ironically, this time of social distancing has helped me to feel more deeply connected. By slowing down enough to listen, I am able to treat others with more compassion, give others the benefit of the doubt that they are doing their best and their intentions are just, acknowledge that we all are made of the same physical, intellectual, and spiritual elements, just in differing proportions at any one time. We share and exchange our air, water, soils, foods, laughs, sorrows, talents, triumphs, and...yes, even our germs, with each other and with other creatures.

While we heal and learn from the ripple effects of the pandemic, one takeaway has crystallized: the health of the environment is a critical link to human wellbeing. We are as much a part of it as it is of us. This year, the outdoors became an option when nothing else was, and

natural spaces became havens for many. Whether to meet with a friend safely, get the kids out of the house, break a sweat, or breathe deeply and reflect, visitation to parks and trails skyrocketed.

On a local level, the Saratoga PLAN team is both proud and humbled to have played a small part in helping the Saratoga County community get outside in 2020. Though we are still grappling with this unprecedented year in history, we also wish to share and celebrate the conservation successes that have blossomed from between the cracks. This year, Saratoga PLAN opened a new trail, conserved 300 acres of fertile farmland, and made great strides in an inclusive trail plan for the Palmertown Range's Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails.

Continuing to address the unmistakable link between human and environmental health by protecting the rural character, natural habitats, and scenic beauty of Saratoga County would not have been possible this year without your help. No matter your connection to us –volunteer, partner, donor, neighbor, advocate, steward... you inspire us daily. We truly are all one and are in this together.

Maria Trabka ❤️

A close-up photograph of a yellow flower with black spots on its petals, growing from a bed of dry leaves and twigs in a forest. The background shows a dense stand of bare trees under a blue sky. The text "The health of the environment is a critical link to human wellbeing." is overlaid on the image.

The health of the environment is a critical link to human wellbeing.



“Every morning, Bear woke up
in the same green forest,
under the same blue sky.”

EXCERPT FROM CHILDREN'S BOOK "WELCOME HOME BEAR" BY IL SUNG NA

Land Protection

300 acres of farmland
protected, 2.5 miles
of new trails opened

It has been discovered that bear dens, made from rock crevices, tree outcroppings and caves, are reused by bears for centuries. Just as a bear's resources are recycled over time, so too is land that has been conserved in perpetuity. Protected farmlands will provide farmers access to fertile soils forever and woodlands and waterways will be home to flora and fauna.

Woods and Waterways



BARKERSVILLE TRAILS

Conserved in 2019, the Barkerville Trails are now open to the public. Two trails, together offering 2.5 miles of hiking on private property protected by a conservation easement, were built by volunteers from 2018-2020. Sections of today's trails are located on corridors originally developed for horseback riding and for training sled dogs, pastimes that Dolores Arste and David Hickey, owners of the property, formerly enjoyed.





Farmland



MALTA RIDGE ORCHARD AND GARDEN

In March, PLAN assisted in the conservation of a 129-acre former orchard and nursery in the Town of Malta.

After farming the land for 40 years and facing growing development pressures, property owner David Bowman couldn't imagine the land being anything but farmland. Funding for this project came from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets' Hudson Valley Agriculture Enhancement Program, a Saratoga County Farmland Protection Grant, a grant from the Town of Malta and a generous donation from Bowman.

DRUMM FARM

This historic property, located in the Town of Saratoga near the Saratoga Monument and Victory Woods, is owned by Ruth Drumm and boasts primarily fertile soils for farming as well as some forests and wetlands that provide wildlife habitat. The 170 acres, currently farmed by the Koval Brothers Dairy operation, is now permanently protected from development and will forever be accessible for agricultural use. Partial funding for the project was provided by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails





An update on the multi-use trail network in the Palmertown Range

Strength in numbers

Consultant Laura Kipper was contracted to coordinate the Palmertown Range conservation, recreation, and economic development project in the Adirondack Foothills.

The Palmertown Guidance Committee, composed of representatives from the Towns of Moreau, Corinth, Greenfield, Wilton, Saratoga Springs, Saratoga County, Skidmore, NYSDC, OPRHP, OSI, and PLAN, has been actively engaged with monthly virtual meetings to help guide the progress for both the Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails and the overall progress of land conservation, education and compatible economic development within the Palmertown Range.

Trail work progress

The Sarah B. Foulke Charitable Fund awarded a \$500,000 grant for trail consultants to design the Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails, a network of trails in the region between Saratoga Spa State Park and Moreau Lake State Park. The Master Plan, being conducted by a team from Penn Trails, Wilderness

Property Management, Tahawus Trails, and Barton & LoGuidice Engineering, is well underway and will be released in March 2021.

The Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust awarded Saratoga PLAN a grant to create a parking area, trailhead kiosk and two small foot bridges on OSI's Greentree Lake Property, a key protected property in the range and linkage in the Friendship Trails.

A 75-acre park parcel in the Town of Moreau was conserved by the Town and will be incorporated into the Friendship Trails system.

Community forest funding is being sought by Saratoga County, with the help of PLAN and OSI, from the U.S. Forest Service to acquire a private property as a community-managed gateway into the Palmertown Range and Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails.

Community engagement

The Sarah B. Foulke Charitable Fund's generous gift also made it possible for community engagement consultants Strong Outcomes and Community Consultants to

gather extensive community input as to what types of trails they would like to see in the Palmertown Range. Personal interviews with 27 organizations and 1009 individual surveys were also completed to pinpoint barriers to trail access and create solutions to ensure the Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails are welcoming for all.

Historic research is being compiled on the use of the Palmertown Range by the Mohican, Mohawk, and Abenaki native people.

Artisanal Brew Works created the Palmertown Pale Ale, which was released in January 2021. Purchases of this beer will help support conservation efforts in the Palmertown Range.

The Palmertown Range official logo was designed through a contest by graphic art students in teacher Sallie Way's class at Shenendehowa High School.



To learn more about the Palmertown Range, visit www.saratogaplan.org



“A tree’s most important means of staying connected to other trees is a ‘wood wide web’ of soil fungi that connects vegetation in an intimate network that allows the sharing of an enormous amount of information and goods.”

TIM FLANNERY, FOREWORD FROM
THE SECRET LIFE OF TREES BY PETER WOHLLEBEN

Community Connections

It’s difficult to express in words how much we value our community connections, but comparing it to the interconnectedness of a forest ecosystem comes close. From local businesses like Artisanal Brew Works to nationally recognized pharmaceutical companies like Regeneron, the “forest” that makes up the conservation community boasts a caring and compassionate ecosystem. This year, support and friendship sprouted in rich and creative ways; we share a few of those relationships here.

LEAP OF KINDNESS DAY

PLAN staff, along with volunteer liaison Don Washburn, spent an afternoon singing and dancing with individuals from Wildwood Programs, a treasured community partner, as a thank you for their years of volunteering with PLAN out on the trail. PLAN was named as one of Wildwood’s Best Partners of 2020.

WORLD WATER DAY IPA

Famed local brewery Artisanal Brew Works released a limited-edition beer in honor of March’s World Water Day to raise awareness about water conservation and PLAN’s related mission and its essential relationship to the quality and terroir for their brews.

DAY FOR DOING GOOD

Over 50 Regeneron Pharmaceuticals employees painted inspirational sayings and hid 100+ rocks on Saratoga PLAN trails. We are grateful for Regeneron’s partnership in helping us carry out an artistic, playful way to enjoy the trails, particularly as we expand the ways in which we invite the community to safely engage with trails.



COCK 'N' BULL RESTAURANT

Thanks to the hard work of employees from Galway's Cock 'n' Bull Restaurant, the Next Gen Committee, and stewardship volunteers, a new bridge now spans a large crossing at the Galway Preserve.

NEXT GENERATION COMMITTEE

Meeting virtually didn't stop the Next Generation Committee, a group of like-minded individuals from forging new friendships, creating the identity of a new committee, and organizing projects like a trash clean up on the Saratoga Siege Trail, a PLAN partner trail. With a full year now under its belt, the next generation committee of 20-somethings are like kits, ready to leave the beaver lodge and build something great on their own. Stay tuned to see what they accomplish next!

A special shout out to local artisans who elected to send proceeds from their work to Saratoga PLAN, like potter Julie Stokes and woodworker Neil Roberts.



left: A young trail goer finds one of the Regenron Pharmaceuticals inspirational rocks hidden on a PLAN trail

bottom left: Leap of Kindness Day participants

bottom middle: Next Generation Committee organized a trash clean up on the Saratoga Siege Trail

below: Proceeds donated from Julie Stokes' pottery

bottom right: Artisanal Brew Works created a limited edition beer to raise awareness about water conservation

right: Tugg inspects the new Galway Preserve bridge



Updated Mission Statement

The Executive Committee approved this small but first and long overdue step in recognizing the people and relationship to history of place that is so central to our work.

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



Wildlife expert Skip Lisle installs a beaver baffle at the Galway Preserve. The underwater piping diverts water, preventing flooding of trails, roads and adjacent properties and allowing beavers and humans to harmoniously coexist.



The Monday Stewards replace a bridge at the Coldbrook Preserve. Special thanks to King Dairy for providing field access and tractors for the project.

Rotting bog bridging is replaced with sturdy new planks by stewards at the Ballston Creek Preserve.



“Beavers seldom
allow a night to pass...
without making a
tour or inspection
and building up and
strengthening any part
[of the dam] that shows
signs of weakness.”

THE ROMANCE OF THE BEAVER,
ARTHUR RADCLYFFE DUGMORE,
PIONEERING WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER (1913)

Stewardship & Volunteers

Saratoga PLAN's stewardship volunteers work on trails with a level of dedication that exceeds that of beavers – nature's engineers. When Covid-19 interrupted weekly trail work days, stewards continued to tour and inspect preserves on their own and managed to complete 13 projects in just 3 months once they reconvened in smaller, socially-distanced groups. The outstanding condition of Saratoga PLAN preserves is the result of volunteer stewards planning, sawing, clearing, building, and maintaining the trails' every twist and turn. With more visitors than ever this year, PLAN's stalwart volunteers kept the trails safe and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the many wonderful places we steward and seek respite from the stresses and isolation of the pandemic.

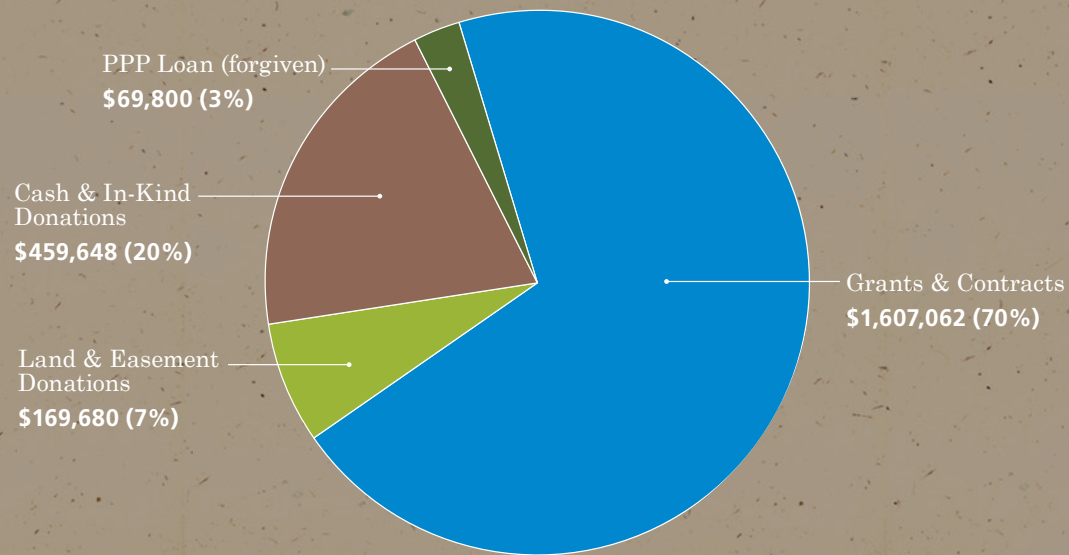
This was also our first year working virtually with a number of volunteers. From database management to graphic design to student interns, thank you for working with us behind the scenes; your time and talents are so appreciated. Special shout out to Community Engagement interns Katie Maffet (Skidmore 2020) and Elisabeth Schanz (RPI 2021) who helped fill the void of not being able to gather in person by sharing insightful and engaging content on PLAN's blog and social media channels.



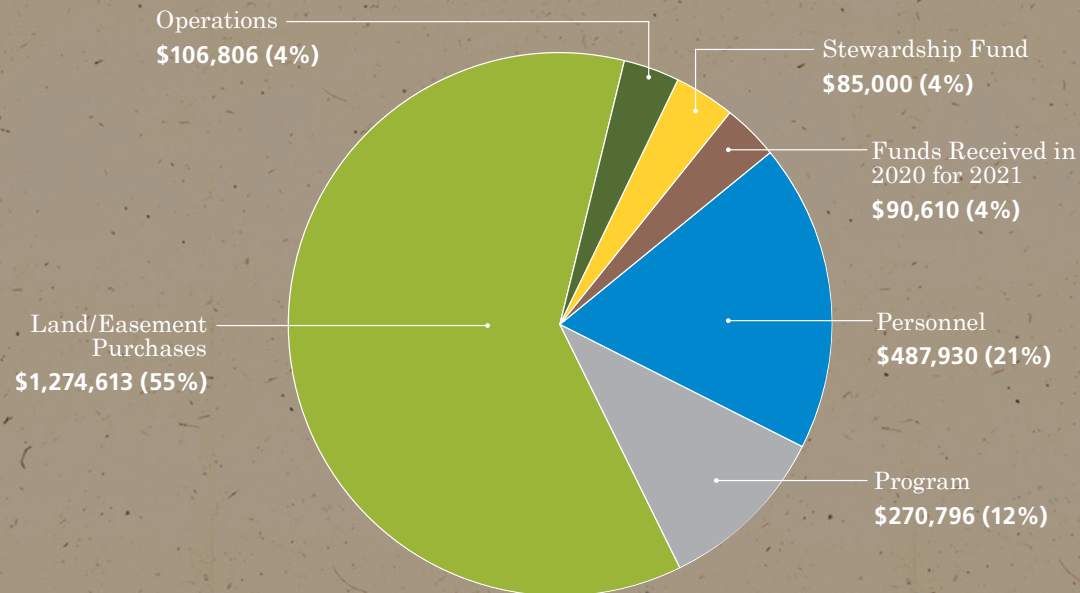
2,793 total volunteer hours
120+ volunteers
44 stewardship projects completed in 2020

2020 Financial Report

TOTAL REVENUE
\$2,306,190



TOTAL EXPENSES
\$2,315,755



Notes

The preliminary, unaudited numbers in these charts are accurate reflections of the basic financial picture of Saratoga PLAN for 2020. Some of the revenue received in 2020 is restricted for project expenses in 2021. Investment earnings are not reflected in these results. Saratoga PLAN's audited financial statement for fiscal year 2020 will be completed by mid-summer 2021. 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 for prior years are available from the NYS Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.



Our truly remarkable community is the heart-beat of Saratoga PLAN. Without it, we couldn't make the lasting impact that preserves land and nature for all of us.



LEGACY CIRCLE

(planned bequests)

Tim Barnett
Allen David
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Miller Family Charitable Trust
Jane N. Moity Foundation Trust
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Nordlys Foundation
River Farm America Foundation
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Tyler Family Fund

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New York State Conservation Partnership Program
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
Saratoga County
Town of Ballston
Town of Malta
Village of Corinth

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Ruth Drumm
David Bowman

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Sarah B. Foulke Charitable Fund
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 are accessible to all and
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 YOU have conserved over
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 was just here to help.

We make mistakes no
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 We sincerely apologize if
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112 Spring St., Room 202
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-587-5554 phone
info@saratogaplan.org
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