

Preserving 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.



CONSERVING
FARMLAND



PROTECTING
WOODS + WATERS



BUILDING
TRAILS

PLAN Moving Forward



TREE PLANTING IN HONOR OF MARIA'S CONSERVATION LEGACY

Pictured: Former Executive Director Maria Trabka and Current Executive Director Rob Davies.

Saratoga PLAN is being called on more than ever to protect diverse open spaces that offer places for wildlife to thrive, natural resources to recharge, and people of all ages and abilities to recreate here in Saratoga County. The future of conservation today is protecting our family farms and forested areas; **it's protecting green spaces in our region where we live, work, and play that form the character and quality of life of our communities that are under so much pressure today.**

Since I started as Executive Director in May, we have hired three new staff members to respond to this increased need and prepare PLAN to meet the needs of the future. We are both excited and energized to bring PLAN to new heights, working from an already strong foundation, in meeting our mission of helping landowners and municipalities to conserve surrounding lands and waters.

It's up to us to think strategically, adapt to shifting priorities, and develop creative tactics to increase the pace of conservation. We need to come together to inspire and engage the next generation of conservationists in order to meet and truly sustain our conservation successes.

I look forward to navigating this landscape with you and helping Saratoga County move forward as we plan for the future. Please read on to get a snapshot of some of the exciting accomplishments and things to come.

Thank you for this opportunity,

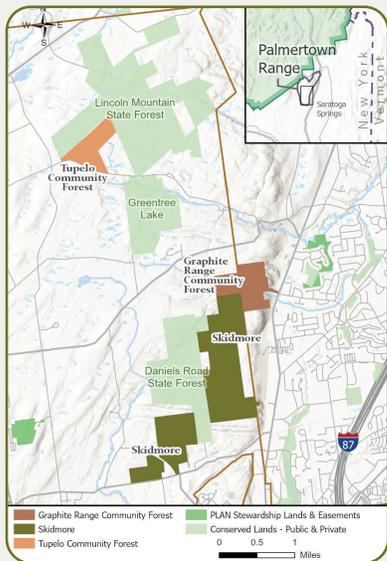
Robert Davies, *Executive Director*

Learn about the building of the new volunteer resource center at the Galway Nature Preserve:
saratogaplan.org/news-and-press/volunteerresourcecenter



Graphite Range Community Forest Update

Located within the ecologically significant Palmertown Range in the southern foothills of the Adirondacks, the Graphite Range Community Forest (GRCF) is an ecologically valuable property for its extensive natural resources, unique geological features, and connectivity to nearby open space. Permanent protection of this 202-acre property as a community forest prevents future development of the land, which would put its delicate natural resources at risk – a likely alternative outcome in a rapidly growing region with significant development pressure.



The GRCF is set to become a multi-use recreational hub for the surrounding communities, offering opportunities for hiking, environmental education, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

With your help, earlier this year Saratoga PLAN and project champions worked together to raise \$170,000 by National Trails Day! We met this goal with the support of over 100

founding donors like you, by neighbors encouraging neighbors to contribute to this conservation initiative and making donations to the fundraising campaign ranging from \$5 to over \$15,000. Thank you! We wouldn't be able to create this incredible community forest without the support from many families like yours.

These community funds will be leveraging a highly competitive grant totaling \$391,000 from the USDA Forest Service's Community Forest Program and a pledge from Saratoga County for \$120,000 to support the purchase of the property.

Since reaching this fundraising goal in June, a great deal of exciting progress has happened!

- Over 5 miles of trails for hiking and mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing have been developed.
- Trail structures including a bridge over a stream and a boardwalk over a wetland are being constructed.

- A parking area for 25 vehicles and a trailhead with an orientation kiosk has been designed.
- An Advisory Board of volunteer educators, ecologists, neighbors, and mountain bikers have drafted a management plan for the community forest and their recommendations are being reviewed by the US Forest Service and Saratoga County (two of the project funders).

The GRCF is being acquired by Saratoga County with the support of the Open Space Institute, Saratoga PLAN, the management committee, and the Winter family. Community management of public properties is a relatively new concept, however, discussions about ongoing and future stewardship of the property are in progress. We want to make sure the forest is addressing community needs and that the visitors' experiences are top notch! We expect that the County will take ownership of the property in 2023 and the trails will open later next year.

Funds are still needed to support future trail amenities such as kiosks, bridges, benches, trail markers, interpretive signage, and ongoing stewardship of the property. Please consider donating today at: saratogaplan.org/support-the-graphite-range

Stay tuned for more updates and we look forward to announcing when the property is open to the public in 2023!

Questions about Graphite Range Community Forest or interest in supporting the project should be directed to Robert Davies, Saratoga PLAN Executive Director at RobertD@saratogaplan.org or by phone at (518) 587-5554 ext. 104.

Saratoga PLAN, the Open Space Institute, Wilton Partners LLC, and the Towns of Wilton and Greenfield are working with Saratoga County to purchase the Graphite Range Community Forest, ensuring it is permanently protected as a public preserve.

"I'm excited to know so many people are supporting Graphite Range Community Forest. Our family really wants this to become a special place that everyone can enjoy. It's been a lot of work but we're getting closer! I helped my Dad to design the new mountain bike trails - they are so fun. Thank you to all the donors and partners for helping to make this vision a reality."

– Owen Winter

Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails Update

The Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails are envisioned as a network of trails in Saratoga County, linking the City of Saratoga Springs to Moreau Lake State Park including the Graphite Range Community Forest, which will provide quality outdoor experiences for people of all ages, abilities, and interests. While the entire trail network will take years to complete, parts are already under design or construction, including six different trailheads.

A heartfelt thank you to Fingerpaint Marketing for donating their professional design services to create a logo and signage guidelines for the Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails.



Meet Our Staff



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT

WAYNE TERWILLIGER *Conservation Project Manager*
ANNA GÓMEZ DOMENECH *Communications Manager*
TORI ROBERTS *Conservation Project Manager*
MICHELLE CULBERT *Associate Director*
MARIA TRABKA *Special Projects Manager*
AMY PRESSLY *Community Engagement Program Assistant*
BONNIE NIGHTINGALE *Stewardship Manager*
BECKY CHRISTNER *Programs Operations Manager*
ROBERT DAVIES *Executive Director*

Meet Our Interns



ANGEL SAWICKI
*Wilton Wildlife Preserve
& Saratoga PLAN
Partnership Intern*



JOEY SCHILL
*Wilton Wildlife Preserve
& Saratoga PLAN
Partnership Intern*



DRAKE MCDONOUGH
Palmertown Geological Intern
Drake has been researching the diverse geology found in the Palmertown Range including an old graphite mine, tectonic faults and gemstones.
Drake's work is funded through the Open Space Institute's Barnabas McHenry Award Fund.

Inaugural PLAN for the Future Event Raised Over \$100,000



On Thursday, October 20th, over 150 guests attended our PLAN for the Future event. The inaugural event took place at the beautiful Juniper Springs Event Barn in Corinth, showcasing the southern Palmertown Range with peak foliage as the sun set over the southern foothills

of the Adirondack Mountains. Thanks to generous support from donors like you, over \$100,000 was raised, supporting Saratoga PLAN's ongoing land conservation and stewardship efforts across Saratoga County. Thank you!

Volunteer Highlight: Meet Stewart Galloway



Stew used to work right here in Saratoga Springs for The LA Group. He was working on a job when he first came across the Land Trust of the Saratoga Region before it merged with the Saratoga Springs Open Space Project to become Saratoga PLAN. Stew assists with GIS in land conservation. He's currently digitizing all of PLAN's survey data and organizing it into one comprehensive data file.

Thank you Stew for all of your hard work here at Saratoga PLAN!

Stay tuned for other happenings, like trail openings and weekend stewardship!
Subscribe to our e-news at www.saratoaplan.org

Water Chestnut Pulls



Saratoga PLAN held two water chestnut pulls this past summer at Fish Creek outlet on Saratoga Lake. This invasive species is an aquatic plant native to Eurasia and Africa. It was brought to the US for ornamental use in the mid-1800s. After some training by the PRISM team, crews set out in kayaks to hand pull the plants. In total there were over 50 people who helped remove 2,200 pounds of water chestnut and European frog-bit plant material. Stay tuned for another chestnut pull being planned for next year.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR COORDINATING AND MAKING THIS HAPPEN:

Capital Region PRISM
Kayak Shak
Saratoga Rowing Association
Skidmore College
Wilton Wildlife interns
Saratoga PLAN NextGen Committee



NEXT GENERATION COMMITTEE

Thank you 2022 Business Partners!

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Questions about becoming a business partner?
Want to see your live logo on our site?
To learn more, contact Michelle Culbert
by calling 518.587.5554 x 102
or email michellec@saratogaplan.org



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.SARATOGAPLAN.ORG
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info@saratogaplan.org



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