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Saratoga PLAN Earns National Recognition
Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

Saratoga Springs, NY – Saratoga PLAN has achieved land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

“Saratoga PLAN’s accreditation status demonstrates our commitment to permanently conserving the woods, waters and trails of Saratoga County for the entire community,” says John Munter, Saratoga PLAN’s Board Chair. “We have been working for years to bring our policies and practices to the highest levels required for accreditation. PLAN’s staff and board learned so much through the rigorous program, and are now a stronger, more efficient and productive organization.”

Saratoga PLAN is a non-profit land trust that works 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. PLAN helps landowners conserve their farmland, woodlands and natural habitats. With the help of 250+ volunteers, Saratoga PLAN actively manages a portfolio of over 3,600 acres of conserved lands. PLAN connects people to nature and promotes good health by working with partners to develop and maintain over 23 miles of trails and over 1,200 acres of nature preserves, and also by providing outdoor events, recreational opportunities, and programming that encourage the exploration of Saratoga County’s natural areas.

Saratoga PLAN was awarded accreditation this December and is one of only 285 of the 1,700 land trusts from across the country that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008. Accredited land trusts are authorized to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

“This round of accreditation decisions represents another significant milestone for the accreditation program; the 285 accredited land trusts account for three quarters of the 20,645,165 acres currently owned in fee or protected by a conservation easement held by a land trust,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. “Accreditation provides the public with an assurance that, at the time of accreditation, land trusts meet high standards for quality and that the results of their conservation work are permanent.”

Each accredited land trust submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review. “Through accreditation land trusts conduct important planning and make their operations more efficient and strategic,” said Van Ryn. “Accredited organizations have engaged and trained citizen conservation leaders and improved systems for ensuring that their conservation work is permanent.”

According to the Land Trust Alliance, conserving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water; safe, healthy food; scenic landscapes and views; recreational places; and habitat for the diversity of life on earth. In addition to health and food benefits, conserving land increases property values near greenbelts, saves tax dollars by encouraging more efficient development, and reduces the need for expensive water filtration facilities. Community leaders in 1,700 land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.

“Saratoga PLAN is proud to have earned this status and to now display the accreditation seal. More important than the seal is what it represents. We take great comfort in knowing that we’ve established a solid foundation for land stewards of the future,” says Maria Trabka, PLAN’s Executive Director.

About the Saratoga PLAN

Saratoga PLAN, which stands for preserving land and nature, is a nonprofit land trust that works to preserve 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. For more information, visit www.saratogaplan.org or call 518-587-5554.

About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a national organization, awards the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. See a complete list of all recently accredited land trusts online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/newsroom/press-releases>. More information on the accreditation program is available on the Commission’s website, www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

About The Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance, of which Saratoga PLAN is a member, is a national conservation group that works to save the places people love by strengthening conservation throughout America. It works to increase the pace and quality of conservation by advocating favorable tax policies, training land trusts in best practices and working to ensure the permanence of conservation in the face of continuing threats.

The Alliance publishes *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and provides financial and administrative support to the Accreditation Commission. More information can be found at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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