

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, Region 5**

232 Golf Course Road – P. O. Box 220, Warrensburg, New York 12885-0220

Phone: (518) 623-1240 • **FAX:** (518) 623-3603

Website: www.dec.ny.gov



Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

1/12/2010

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is developing a plan to manage the 570- Saratoga Sand Plains Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which includes a number of parcels of State lands in the Towns of Wilton and Northumberland in Saratoga County. This comprehensive plan will ensure that DEC protects unique habitat and wildlife, while providing a variety of recreational opportunities for the public.

A public meeting on the Saratoga Sand Plains WMA will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m. at the Wilton Town Court, which is located at 20 Traver Road in Wilton and is wheelchair accessible. Please provide any requests for specific accommodation to 518-897-1248 at least two weeks in advance. Directions to Wilton Town Court - Take exit 16 of the Northway (I-87) and then:

- From the north, turn right onto Ballard Road and, at the first traffic light take a left onto Traver Road.
- From the south: turn left onto Ballard Road and, at the second traffic light, take a left onto Traver Road.

The Town Court is the tan building on the right.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for you and others to meet with DEC staff and share ideas and suggestions regarding the management and use of the state lands within the WMA. This will be the first of many opportunities for the public to be involved in the planning process

The Saratoga Sand Plains WMA is comprised mainly of parcels of land associated with the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park. These parcels generally are bounded by Edie Road to the west, Ruggles Road to the east and Ballard Road to the north. Two of these parcels are often referred to as Camp Saratoga and the Old Glick Farm. There are two additional parcels located east of the main area, off Colebrook Road, in Northumberland. The state parcels of land are adjacent to, or near, parcels owned by partner organizations and municipalities - the Nature Conservancy, the Town of Wilton, Town of Northumberland and Saratoga County.

The WMA is located within a state-designated Priority Conservation Area and the state and federally-designated Karner blue butterfly recovery areas. Saratoga County contains the most intact populations of this federal and state endangered species in New York State. The sandy soils found in this area are essential to blue lupine – the only plant that the larvae of the butterfly feed on. DEC has worked cooperatively with The Nature Conservancy to restore habitat for the Karner blue by creating blue lupine meadows.

The Saratoga Sand Plains WMA provides opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational activities, including hunting, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, skiing, trapping, bird watching, and snowshoeing. Environmental education is an important function of the WMA. Opportunities abound for people to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the biology and ecology of plant and animal species; the functioning of natural communities and ecosystems; and human interaction with, and use of, nature.

The management planning process includes an analysis of the natural features of an area, the ability of the land to accommodate public use and current policy and regulation. The management plan is being developed by an interdisciplinary team of DEC staff, in consultation with the other partners of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park and with input from the public. The planning process will culminate in a series of management actions to be implemented over a five-year period. Possible impacts from the management plan may include modifications to current recreational practices and minor noise, erosion and visual impacts from tree cutting for habitat improvement.

Public involvement in the development of the management plan is essential to constructing a sound, viable plan, and DEC looks forward to the valuable input from all concerned parties. There will be ample opportunities to provide comments during the process, and individuals can also contact the Wildlife Unit in the DEC Warrensburg Office with suggestions.

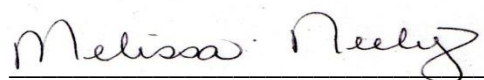
You may review documents related to the Saratoga Sand Plains WMA and the management planning process at the DEC Warrensburg Office at 232 Golf Course Road or the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park Office at 80 Scout Road in Wilton.

If you wish to submit comments on the management of the Saratoga Sand Plains WMA please send them to Wildlife Biologist Melissa Neely by mail at NYSDEC, PO Box 220, Warrensburg, New York 12885; by fax at 518-623-3603; or by the preferred method, e-mail comments to r5info@gw.dec.state.ny.us

We will be developing an e-mail address book to use to distribute future communications electronically. Please send comments and/or a notification of your desire to be included in the address book to the e-mail address above. Please include "Saratoga Sand Plains" in the subject line.

Thank you for your interest in the Saratoga Sand Plains Wildlife Management Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Neely". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sr. Wildlife Biologist