

# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

WILTON WILDLIFE  
PRESERVE & PARK



The mission of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park is to conserve ecological systems and natural settings, while providing opportunities for environmental education and outdoor recreation working in partnership with the Town of Wilton, Saratoga County, The Nature Conservancy, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



Blue Lupine by Carolina Wierzbowski

## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE PRESERVE & PARK

2014 was a wonderful year for Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park. We saw so many of our programs and projects flourish! Our Moonlight Ski and Snowshoe event was held for the first time after several years of cancellation due to poor snow conditions. It is such a wonderful community event and such a unique and magical way to get out and enjoy the outdoors at the Preserve & Park. Our annual Wildlife Festival also took place on a beautiful day, with many hundreds of people getting a chance to explore our varied habitats. Participants could go from the lupine and Karner blue butterfly-filled meadows to the shore of Delegan Pond all the way up to the canopy of the forest by visiting the Historic Cornell Hill Fire Tower!

We saw the completion of our grant-funded waterfront project. We were delighted to win one of the 50 States of Good grants from Tom's of Maine and all of you helped by voting for us on-line. Speaking of our wonderful supporters, we could only do a fraction of what we do if it were not for our extraordinary supporters: our members and donors and volunteers who have such a hand in our success. We are also deeply indebted to our partners; the Town of Wilton, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, and Saratoga County. Again, without their incredible support we would not be able to accomplish as much as we do. Our mission-driven work in conservation, environmental education, and outdoor recreation gets an immeasurable boost from the knowledge and expertise of our partner organizations.

We are very proud to work day-in and day-out to bring awareness to the community about the unique and fragile ecosystem of the Saratoga Sandplains, and to be a part of its preservation. Having places in our community where people can get outdoors and connect with nature is so important and we are honored to be working with so many good people to protect these places for now and for the future.

**LINDA BAKER, BOARD CHAIR**

**MARGO OLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Best Under 13 by Kolby Himelrick; *Misty Morning*





Interns and volunteers working with DEC collecting data

## CONSERVATION

**Blanding’s Turtle:** For a third year, volunteers and interns helped SUNY Potsdam researchers survey turtle habitat and collect data about these threatened turtles. This is one of only three locations in New York State where they are found! Another unique resident of the Saratoga Sandplains.

### Woodcock and Early Successional Bird

**Surveys:** Volunteers took part for a third year, collecting data to identify habitat inhabited by American woodcock, a species of special concern. Volunteers also surveyed birds that use the Karner blue butterfly habitat. This is valuable information as it documents the value of the butterfly habitat conservation work to other important species that the State is working to protect.

**Karner Blue Butterfly Monitoring:** We support the work of NYS DEC’s student interns to insure that we have the best information about the population.

**Native Plants Seed Collecting:** Our volunteers hand-picked and cleaned wild blue lupine, New Jersey tea, and butterfly milkweed seeds that are stored at the Saratoga Tree Nursery to be planted to create more habitat. Some seeds are used in our school programs.

**Snowpack Study:** Does a snowy winter help the Karner blue butterflies? Volunteers collected snow depth data which will help us understand the relationship of snowpack and population size.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**School and Group Programs:** We have a long-running program with Dorothy Nolan and Ballard Road Elementary Schools providing in-school programs during the fall and winter and a visit to the Preserve & Park in the spring. We also work with many other local schools including Schuylerville and Lake Avenue Schools. In the summer, we visit Gavin Park with lessons and activities for the summer recreation program participants and work with other camp programs who come for field trips.

**Public Programs:** We have year-round nature walks and talks, pond explorations, and nature-craft programs. We bring our exhibits and hands-on activities to many community events and festivals.

### Environmental Education and Conservation

**Interns:** If you have attended a program at the Preserve & Park, then you know how important our interns are! They do the vast majority of the planning and presentation of our programs. We are pleased to be able to continue to offer this opportunity to two college graduates in the field of environmental studies.

**Collaborative Programs:** We work with many organizations including the Saratoga Springs Public Library, BOCES, and Skidmore College Environmental Studies students.



At Wilton’s Annual ParkFest



Larry Gordon working with Navy volunteers at Delegan Pond

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

**Waterfront Project:** With a grant from Tom’s of Maine 50 States for Good program we were able to improve the accessibility of the waterfront at Delegan Pond. Volunteers from the Navy base put in two long days to help with the project.

**Winter Trail Grooming:** With some good snow we were able to continue our long-time commitment to winter outdoor recreation by grooming over four miles of trails at Camp Saratoga and Opdahl farm. Our interns and volunteer groomers kept the trails in tip-top shape in keeping with our Volunteer Stewardship agreement with NYS DEC.

**Saratoga Stryders Club Collaboration:** A great year of 5k fun runs and their 8k snowshoe race took place at Camp Saratoga. We are always grateful that a part of the registration fees are donated to the Preserve & Park to support our trail maintenance efforts.

**Cornell Hill Fire Tower:** One of the unique features at Camp Saratoga is the refurbished and relocated fire tower. People can learn about the rich history of fire fighting in New York State.

**Moonlight Ski and Snowshoe:** In 2014, we finally had the right conditions to host this ever-popular program. Many hundreds enjoyed the bonfires, cocoa, and luminary-lit trails. It is a huge volunteer effort to put on an event of this scope and scale, but well worth it!

## FOURTH ANNUAL WILTON WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

We had a beautiful day for our fourth annual spring festival. The weekend after Memorial Day is a perfect time to highlight so much that we are proud of at the Preserve & Park! The lupine is in full bloom and the first brood of the Karner blue butterflies have emerged. The pond is teeming with spring life including lots of tadpoles!



Festival-goers enjoyed pond exploration, fish prints, lupine planting, Karner blue butterfly walks and of course, the ever popular Beth Bidwell's live animal programs. Many people enjoyed the food from the BBQ and the homemade goodies from the bake sale. As with all of our events, our volunteers made it all possible!

Thanks to Ballston Spa National Bank for their sponsorship support.



Visit us on-line for event notices, program updates, trail conditions and closures, trail maps, directions, volunteer opportunities, weather reports and more!

[www.wiltonpreserve.org](http://www.wiltonpreserve.org)

You can also visit us on facebook:

[www/facebook.com/#1/WiltonPreserve](https://www.facebook.com/#1/WiltonPreserve)

## THIRD ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

The annual Photography Show and Contest features photographs that highlight the beauty and the mission of Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park and had to have been taken somewhere at the Preserve & Park.

Prize winners were: Brian Teague - Best in Show for "*Open Karner Blue*," Carolina Wierzbowski - Best featuring Conservation for "*Milkweed Bursting*," Dr. Lisa Pleban - Best featuring Recreation for "*Pond Reflections*," Richard Leahey for Best featuring Education with "*Nature Walk*," Shari Crocker - Best Animal Shot for "*Mr. Grasshopper*," Brian Teague - Best Karner blue butterfly for "*Open Karner Blue*," Kolby Himelrick - Best under-13 for "*Misty Morning*," and Cathy Hall for best Nature in Winter with "*Ice on the Deegan*."



Best In Show by Brian Teague; *Open Karner Blue*



## WILD ABOUT BLUE

Wild about Blue, the major fundraising event for the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park took place on Sunday, October 26, 2014 at Prime at the Saratoga National Golf Club with drinks, a bountiful dinner, and a unique silent auction.

Each year at the event, we present the Metamorphosis Award which honors individuals who have helped create dramatic changes in their communities, just as the Karner blue butterfly and other species go through remarkable transformations in their life cycles.



The Metamorphosis Award in 2014 honored Kathy O'Brien, Wildlife Biologist for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Kathy O'Brien has, in fact, rescued and preserved the Karner blue butterfly in our area. Kathy's initial work in identifying key locations of existing populations of the Karner blue led to the creation of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park. Without Kathy's tireless efforts over the last twenty years, these endangered little butterflies would have disappeared from the Saratoga Sandplains. Instead, because of the work of Kathy O'Brien, the Wilton preserve now has the largest population of Karner blue butterflies in the Northeast.

### WILD ABOUT BLUE HONORARY COMMITTEE

#### VISIONARY

Prime at Saratoga National

#### STEWARD

Linda Baker \* John and Kim Pilkington \* Price Chopper Golub Foundation \* Ron and Michele Riggi  
Saratoga National Bank and Trust Co. \* Stewart's Shops \* Wilton Rotary Club

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Anonymous \* John and Christina Brueggemann \* Russell & Gail Danforth \* Mike Geppner & Peg McCarty  
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Janet Talley & Bob Walsh -The D.A. Collins Companies - Pat Tuz & Jon Weilbaker -Anne & Ethan Winter - Jeannine Woutersz

Wild About  
Blue

An Event to Benefit  
the Wilton Wildlife  
Preserve & Park

PLEASE JOIN IN  
A FESTIVE CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2014  
4:00 — 7:00 P.M. AT  
SARATOGA NATIONAL GOLF CLUB  
458 UNION AVENUE  
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK  
DRINKS AND LIGHT SEASONAL FARE

FEATURING:  
THE METAMORPHOSIS AWARD  
HONORING KATHY O'BRIEN,  
PLUS A UNIQUE SILENT AUCTION

## A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

### TO EVERYONE WHO VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE IN 2014



Navy Volunteers taking a break from working on the Waterfront

#### UP TO 20 HOURS

Alber Family  
 Beaulac Family  
 Phyllis Borel  
 Sarah Cartwright  
 Becky Christner  
 Cub Scouts  
 Nancy Ferguson  
 Dan Green  
 Sheri Grinter  
 David Hoffman  
 Nick Hoffman  
 George Hodgson  
 Julie Hotaling  
 John Lawson  
 Pieter Litchfield  
 Mary Pelchar  
 Steve Pelchar  
 Mike Prutsman  
 Jerry Robinson  
 Melissa Shae  
 Janet Talley  
 Ahren Von Schnell  
 Wendy Whittmore



Volunteers training at Delegan

#### 20 – 50 HOURS

4H- Himelrick  
 John Borel  
 Sean Cartwright  
 Larry Dana  
 Martha Devaney  
 Rick Fenton  
 Lori McCarron  
 Matthew Miczek  
 Richard Rosen  
 Bob Rice  
 Ryan Riper  
 Rachel Sams  
 Brenda Sanchez  
 Malina Stawarz  
 Caroline Stem

#### 50 – 100 HOURS

Bridget Alber  
 Howard Blake  
 Gail Danforth  
 Linda Hovious  
 Jill Litchfield  
 Peg McCanty  
 Marci Revette

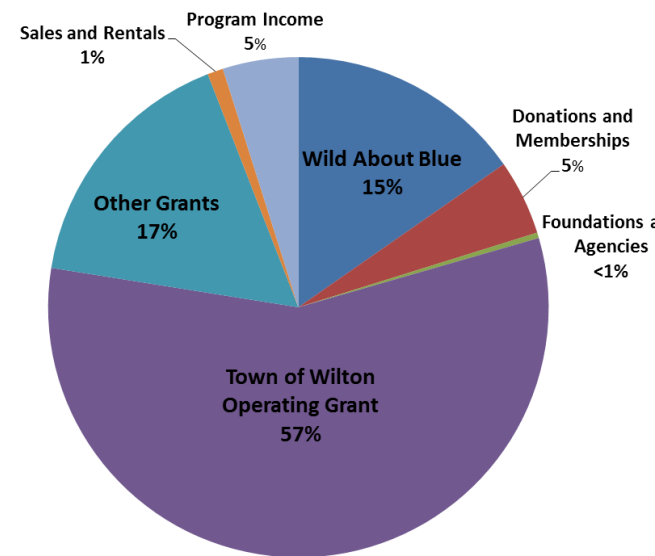
#### MORE THAN 125 HOURS

Linda Baker  
 Girl Scouts Give Back Week  
 Larry Gordon\*  
 Andrea Marcuccio  
 Navy Students  
 Skidmore Environmental Studies Students  
 \*more than 200 hours

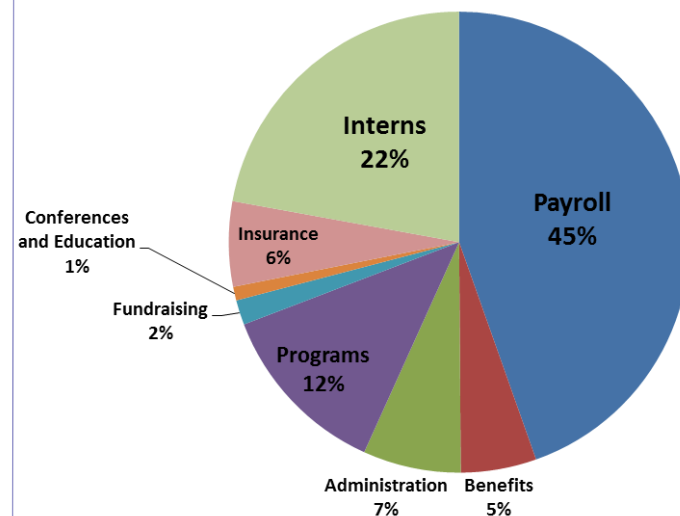


Hundreds of Girl Scouts from the area volunteered at Old Gick Farm as part of the Girl Scouts Give Back Week. They helped by removing small white pine trees which grow and eventually shade out the wild blue lupine in the meadow habitats.

#### 2014 Income



#### 2014 Expenses



Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park, Inc. is a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)3 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and a registered NYS charity. All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. A copy of our audited financial statements may be obtained by writing to us at 80 Scout Road, Gansevoort, NY 12831 or from the NYS Dept. of Law Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.



# 2014 MEMBERS & DONORS

Thanks to all who made financial contributions to the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park in 2014. The following list identifies those who have granted permission for their names to be included. We apologize for any errors and ask that they be brought to our attention.

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Mr. Jerome Cartwright	Liz and Alan Gee	Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Kritz, III	Redbud Development	<u>In Honor of Peg McCarty and Mike Geppner's Birthdays</u>	Battenkill Valley Creamery	The Georgian Resort
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Mr. Grasshopper by Shari Crocker



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## INITIATIVES IN 2015

### **RECREATION:**

- Accessible trail upgrades along Delegan Pond
- New accessible parking area at Camp Saratoga South using funds from the Tom's of Maine 50 States of Good Grant

### **CONSERVATION:**

- Woodcock Survey and Early Successional Bird Survey to Take Place for a Third Year

### **EDUCATION**

- Visitor Information Cabin at Camp Saratoga
- Wilton Wildlife Festival on June 1st, 2014 at Camp Saratoga sponsored by Ballston Spa National Bank
- Secure Funding for Continuing with a Second Intern

