

FRIENDS OF SARATOGA SPA STATE PARK

Mission and 5-Year Strategic Plan (2026-2030)

The Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park is committed to supporting the Park through volunteerism, stewardship, partnerships, and community engagement. This mission and five-year strategic plan provide the overarching direction for the organization and will guide future annual planning efforts.

PURPOSE

Turn Your Love for the Park into Action.

MISSION

Engaging and inspiring people to support, preserve, and enhance Saratoga Spa State Park.

VISION

A vibrant Saratoga Spa State Park where unique and diverse resources are preserved, appreciated, and enjoyed by current and future generations.

VALUES

Stewardship – We are committed to preserving, enhancing, and caring for Saratoga Spa State Park and its natural, historic, and recreational resources while honoring those whose dedication and stewardship have helped shape and sustain the Park over time.

Community – We bring people together through a shared love of Saratoga Spa State Park.

Collaboration – We believe lasting impact is achieved through partnership and shared purpose.

Inclusion – We welcome and encourage participation from all who wish to support and enjoy the park.

Sustainability – We invest in the long-term vitality of both the park and our organization.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – 5 YEAR PLAN

1. Community Engagement & Membership

Goal: Build a vibrant and engaged community of people who support and care about Saratoga Spa State Park.

Focus Areas:

- **Membership growth**
- **Volunteer recruitment and retention**
- **Community events**
- **Public awareness**
- **Outreach**
- **Ambassador Program**

2. Stewardship & Resource Preservation

Goal: Support the preservation, enhancement, and responsible stewardship of the park's natural, historic, and recreational resources.

Focus Areas:

- **Gardens & Beautification** (flower planting, landscape enhancements, seasonal displays, holiday tree/decorations, bench restorations, signage improvements, aesthetic improvements to public spaces, volunteer cleanups)
- **Invasive Species Management**
- **Trail Improvements**
- **Environmental Stewardship Initiatives** (Invasive Species Task Force, tree planting, habitat restoration, pollinator gardens, sustainability initiatives, volunteer conservation efforts, and natural resource protection)
- **Support for Historic Preservation** (historic structures, springs)

3. Recreation, Education, & Park Experiences

Goal: Support opportunities that connect people to Saratoga Spa State Park through recreation, education, wellness, and shared experiences.

Focus Areas:

- **Tennis** (World-class clay courts)
- **Golf** (Par29 short course, and 18-hole championship course)
- **Educational programs**
- **Guided hikes and walks**
- **History programs** (History tours, Museum collaborations, Lincoln Bathhouse tours)
- **Wellness initiatives**
- **Community Experiences & Friends Programs** (member events, volunteer appreciation, farmers market participation, story walks, family programs, community tours)
- **Support for Park programs and Events** (First Day Hike, Fish Stocking, ILMP Day, Candlelight Stroll)

4. Partnerships & Awareness

Goal: Strengthen relationships and serve as a voice for Saratoga Spa State Park by increasing awareness, appreciation, and support for its unique and diverse resources.

Focus Areas:

- **NYS Parks partnership**
- **Parks & Trails NY (PTNY)**
- **Park partners**
- **Educational Institutions**
- **Community organizations**
- **Businesses and sponsors**

5. Organizational Sustainability

Goal: Ensure the long-term strength, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Friends organization.

Focus Areas:

- **Fundraising**
- **Grants**
- **Board development**
- **Succession planning**
- **Technology & Administrative Systems** (Zeffy, Google Workspace, financial processes)
- **Organizational Infrastructure** (bylaws, governance improvements, membership management, document management, policies and procedures, recordkeeping, and board operations)