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## SARATOGA COUNTY

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITY GUIDE

Visitors to Saratoga Springs, New York can discover a diverse ecosystem in the open-air, through a number of nature trails and multi-use trails, miles of road biking, and lakes and rivers for water activities.



**Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail** is in Saratoga Springs and is 2 miles long, following an abandoned passenger railway that once connected downtown Saratoga Springs to Saratoga Lake. The trail consists of open marsh, wet meadow and forest wetlands, with a boardwalk and viewing platform in the wetlands, which is a great spot for birding. Flora and fauna abound with interpretive signs for identification and historic education. Level terrain and benches along the way make this a great leisurely walk with the whole family. The trailhead is east of downtown and located on Route 29, a few hundred yards after passing under I-87. For more information, visit [www.saratogaplan.org](http://www.saratogaplan.org).

**Woods Hollow Nature Preserve** in Ballston Spa has 130 acres with several well-maintained trails of former logging roads and rolling terrain. Visitors will be able to take in the plant and animal life, following well-marked trails through wetland and woods, while reading interpretive

and identification signs with ecology and history information. There is a centrally located pond, with a platform for bird watching, relaxing or fishing. The main entrance is off Route 50 on Northline Road, about 5 miles south of downtown Ballston Spa. Maps of the preserve are located in a trailhead kiosk or can be found online at [www.townofmiltonny.org](http://www.townofmiltonny.org).

**The Ballston Veterans Bike Path** begins in Ballston Spa about 9.5 miles south on Route 50 to Outlet Road and follows a flat, paved 3 ½ mile path to Route 146A in Ballston Lake. It is a converted section of an old trolley line that once connected Saratoga to Schenectady. The scenery includes the great outdoors, Ballston Lake, working railroad tracks with an occasional train and interpretive signs with history information from the 1700s. With level, paved terrain, this trail is excellent for families of all ages and abilities. For more information, go online to [www.johnnymilleradventures.com](http://www.johnnymilleradventures.com).

Visitors can enjoy a number of activities on Saratoga County's **Zim Smith Trail**. This 6-mile trail travels along the D&H Railroad bed from Malta to Mechanicville. The terrain is relatively flat and is paved or hard packed dirt, which allows access for a variety of "passengers" including strollers, wheelchairs, walkers, joggers, bikers and dogs. The wetland areas are excellent for birding and with a number of playgrounds along the trail, it is great for families. The Malta trailhead is in Shenantaha Creek Park on Eastline Road, just off Route 67 west of Northway Exit 12. To find out more information and a map of the trail, log onto [www.saratogaplan.org](http://www.saratogaplan.org).

**Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park** was established to protect the Karner Blue Butterfly and preserve its habitat. It covers hundreds of acres and is divided into parcels, including an old farm and former Boy Scout Camp, with miles of nature trails. Old Gick Farm has one main trail of 1.6 miles over sandy, rolling terrain, views pine and oak trees, and three off-shoot trails. It is a nice strolling walk for the whole family. Camp Saratoga has 310 acres with five miles of trails consisting of woodlands, wetlands, open areas and streams. The preserve also has the Opdahl Farm, Neilmann Parcel and Fox Parcel with more trails and wildlife, including the Karner Blue Butterfly, Eastern Spadefoot Toad, red fox, deer, pileated woodpecker, prairie grass, Blue Lupine and Horsemint. The preserve is located north of Saratoga in the Town of Wilton, with trailheads off Route 50, Scout Road, Ruggles Road and Ballard Road. Maps can be picked up trailhead kiosks or can be found on [www.wiltonpreserve.org](http://www.wiltonpreserve.org).

**Vischer Ferry Nature Preserve** is a 600-acre preserve in the Town of Clifton Park. It has 10 miles of trails and is designated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as a Bird Conservation Area, as well as an Audubon Important Bird Area. The wetlands provide habitat for marsh birds and waterfowl, plus its forested and shrubland area is an important stopover for migratory upland birds. Breeding marsh and wading birds that can be spotted include, Green Heron, Virginia Rail and American Bittern. Migratory birds, including blackbirds, swallows and many species of warblers and flycatchers,



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are also common. This path is crushed stone and is incorporated into the Old Erie Canal and Towpath. There are educational and historical markers along the trail. The scenery includes a footbridge, the Erie Canal Lock 7, the site of an old ferry and the Mohawk River with access for launching a canoe or kayak. The trailhead is on Riverview Road in Southern Saratoga County, west off Northway Exit 8. For a trail map, go online to [www.johnnymilleradventures.com](http://www.johnnymilleradventures.com).

**Moreau Lake State Park** has over 4,000 acres on both sides of the Hudson and miles of hiking and mountain biking trails throughout hardwood forests and rocky edges. Visitors will find easy to moderate routes with some steep sections, Mud Pond, Vernal pools with Wood Frogs, Mole Salamanders and Fairy Shrimp, and fabulous views of the Hudson River. Another great spot for birding, the Moreau Lake State Park contains the Moreau Lake Bird Conservation Area and is designated as Audubon's Moreau Lake Forest Important Bird Area. It is known as a stopover for migratory song birds, an area with a variety of birds associated with upland forest, supporting the Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pied-Billed Grebe and Northern Harrier, and as a significant wintering site for the Bald Eagle. Moreau Lake is within the park and is a no-motor lake that is open to the public for swimming and fishing from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, with beach gear and boat rentals available. The park has a beach and shaded picnic area, plus quiet and secluded campsites for tents and trailers. All of which make it a great way

for visitors to spend the day or weekend. The park entrance is located 10 miles north of Saratoga on Old Saratoga Road, off Exit 17S of the Northway. For more information on organized hikes, ecology events, camping and trail map, go online to <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp?parkID=119> or call 518-793-0511.

**Saratoga National Historical Park's** Wilkinson Trail wanders through farmland, wooded areas and across the battlefields where the turning point of the American Revolution took place. Visitors can retrace history, encounter abundant protected wildlife and go birding for a selection of warblers, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Brown Thrasher, all along this 4.2 mile path of dirt and grass. The park also has a 9-mile tour road with more extensive historical information, with an access fee of \$3.00 for hikers and bikes or \$5.00 for cars. Entrance to the park is on Route 32 in Stillwater, about 15 miles southeast of Saratoga. For more information and trail map, go online to [www.nps.gov/sara](http://www.nps.gov/sara) or pick one up at the trailhead.

**The Saratoga Spa State Park** is steps from Broadway and with over 2,000 acres it is a recreational park with endless activities. Visitors can join walkers, bikers, rollerbladers and runners enjoying the miles of paved and dirt paths along the park roads and through the wooded areas. There are open lawns for throwing frisbie, playing catch, blanket picnics or relaxing, as well as reservable pavilions, playgrounds, natural springs, public swimming pools, creeks for fishing, two golf courses

and tennis courts. The park is located in Saratoga Springs on The Avenue of Pines, about 2 miles south of downtown, with entrances on Route 50 and Route 9. Schedule of events and map of the park can be found at [www.saratogaspastatepark.org](http://www.saratogaspastatepark.org).

**The Old Champlain Canal Towpath** is part of the 260-mile network of multi-use, recreational trails that make up the New York State Canalway Trail System. As part of the first waterway in the country, this section connects the Hudson River to Lake Champlain and continues further North into Quebec, Canada. Visitors can travel through American history by bike, boat, or car and follow the route that played a vital role in America's commerce growth and the revolutionary path that British General Burgoyne took only to be defeated in the Battles of Saratoga. The trail is made up of US Route 4 and a



3-mile bike path with informational signs, on a restored section of the original towpath in the town of Waterford in Southern Saratoga County. Along the way, visitors will see a number of historic buildings and places listed in the National Register of Historic Areas, including former locks and operating locks, as well as views of Ver-



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mont. The start of the bike path is located in a park on Fulton Avenue off Route 32 in Waterford. For more information, visit [www.lakestolocks.com](http://www.lakestolocks.com)



Visitors can enjoy a nice hike up **Hadley Mountain**, outside the Town of Hadley in the Wilcox Wilderness Area of the Adirondack State Park. It is a steady, moderate, 1.8 mile climb, with breathtaking views of the High Peaks to the North, the Great Sacandaga River to the South and Lake Champlain to the East. The summit houses a restored fire tower, built in the mid-1900s and one of only 34 left in the Adirondack Park, which allows hikers to get a birds-eye view in all directions. In the summer, a summit steward will greet visitors, provide area information and answer questions. The trailhead is off Tower Road and approximately one hour north of Saratoga by way of Route 9N. For more information go online to [www.saratoga.org](http://www.saratoga.org).

Road bikers will love the selection of easy to challenging rides, with miles of off-the-beaten-path roads through farmland, over rolling hills or around **Saratoga Lake**. Visitors can enjoy the serenity of the countryside as they bike to historic

landmarks from downtown Saratoga, such as the moderate 25- to 30-mile round trip to **Saratoga National Historical Park** or the 20 plus mile round trip to Saratoga Monument, which was constructed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of defeating the British at the Battles of Saratoga. A nice 20-mile loop around Saratoga Lake is for those that want to admire lakeside homes, nice water views and amazing sunsets. A ride up Grant Mountain is about 8 miles north on Route 9 to Corinth Mountain Road, with parking at the intersection of Mount McGregor Road. This is for visitors who really want to get a good leg workout, climbing the steep inclines on the 14 ½ mile route. For more information visit [www.johnnymilleradventures.com](http://www.johnnymilleradventures.com).

Mountain bikers are welcome, in Saratoga too. For a more advanced challenging ride, **Lake Desolation State Park**, about 15 miles northwest of Saratoga in Middle Grove, has 10 plus miles of a network of trails along several mountain fire roads. The trek is rough and can be very steep and rocky at times. Parking is on Lake Desolation Road, County Route 12, near Tinny's Tavern. **The Stables of Skidmore College** is a 538-acre parcel located off Daniels Road northwest of campus and has 20 miles of beginner to advanced levels of trails. There is some need for technical skill with numerous roots and rocks to navigate, along with steep climbs and quick descents. There is a membership fee for these trails, but visitors to the area can enter as a guest. Go online to [www.saratogamtb.org](http://www.saratogamtb.org) for trail map and more information. **Skidmore North Woods**

located at the end of North Broadway has 8 miles of trails and are great for all skill levels. There are some technical areas, but this is an easier ride than The Stables and no membership is needed.

Visitors can enjoy water sports on Saratoga's creeks, rivers and lakes. Miles of relatively flatwater adventures can be found on the Kayaderosseras Creek, Fish Creek, Champlain Canal, Hudson River, Sacandaga River, Saratoga Lake, Ballston Lake, Lake Lonely, Round Lake and the Great Sacandaga Lake while kayaking, canoeing, swimming or fishing. The scenery varies from homes and cottages on the lakes, to wetlands, marsh, woods and bayou on the creeks with abounding wildlife and great birding. The lakes are excellent for kayak touring and beginners, with rentals available at Saratoga Lake and Lake Lonely. Spring run off can cause a little more current on the creeks and rivers, so visitors need to be aware of direction and individual ability. For more information, visit [www.johnnymilleradventures.com](http://www.johnnymilleradventures.com) or [www.saratoga.org](http://www.saratoga.org).

