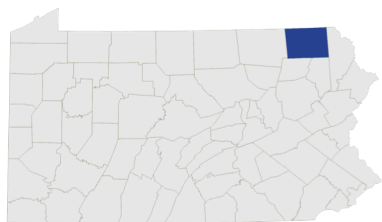


# My Story



## Preserving a Historic Home

Wheaton House at Salt Springs S.P.

By Debra Adleman, Friends of Salt Springs

*"By the 1990s it needed significant structural work to become a usable public space, and the Keystone Fund grant allowed us to begin the work."*



A major goal of the Friends of Salt Springs Park, Inc. (the nonprofit organization that funds and operates Salt Springs State Park) when it formed in 1994 was to renovate the historic buildings in the park. The 405-acre park had been the Wheaton family farm from the late 1830s until it was sold to the state in the early 1970s. One of the remaining farm

buildings is the Wheaton House, the family home built in the early 1840s. By the 1990s it needed significant structural work to become a usable public space, and the Keystone Fund grant allowed us to begin the work.

As the family home is the focal point of any farm, the Wheaton House is likewise the focal point of our activities. The downstairs functions as a Welcome Center, with spaces devoted to park information, a donation box and sign-in book, and T-shirts and other mementos for sale. The rooms also feature revolving environmental



**Keystone Fund Investment:** \$20,000

**Total Public/Private Investment:** \$40,000

and historical displays showcasing the local wildlife and geography and 19th and 20th century social and cultural themes. Two of the rooms can be transformed into classrooms as needed for programs requiring tables and chairs.

On weekends during the spring and summer months volunteers keep the house open. They greet visitors, answer questions, give directions, sell T-shirts and bottled water, and rent out tent sites. Programs and special events are held in the lawn surrounding the house or use the house as a staging area for hikes and other forays into the park.

The downstairs can also be rented for special occasions. These have included a birthday party honoring the Girl Scouts of America's 100th

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year, a high school graduation party, and a wedding. Most couples want the location of their wedding to be special, and for many that place is Salt Springs Park. Emily Novitski had been living in Brooklyn for many years, but she wanted to get married at Salt Springs, a favorite childhood place. When the date is in late November, however, there's only one heated option—the Wheaton House. She was joined in marriage to Gregory Steinberg on November 19, 2014, in the Fireplace Room.