



Friends

of Thacher and Thompsons Lake State Parks

Emma T Thacher Nature Center, 87 Nature Center Way, Voorheesville, NY 12186

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Friends website: www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Thacher Park Garden Club

Over the 2012 summer, the "Thacher Garden Club" coaxed several planters along Rte. 157 not only to survive, but to thrive. The heat and dryness posed a nearly insurmountable problem, but Park Maintenance came to the rescue using their Water Tanker.

Thanks to their effort, the plants managed to bloom and grow in what turned out to be a very dry season. Our thanks to the Park staff.

While working in the plantings beneath the North and South Park entrance signs, two gardeners casually mentioned that the mural paintings could use a little refreshing. Jelane Kennedy and Eileen McFerran didn't stop there. "Can we repaint them?" they asked. I suggested they approach Chris Fallon with the idea. Before I knew it, the murals were down and the ladies were asking Olsen's Hardware what paint would withstand the Helderberg weather.

When Maintenance staff dismantled the murals, they discovered that the wood had rotted and the panels were beyond repair!

Rather than a minor repainting job, major reconstruction would be needed. It's funny how a simple project can spiral into something much bigger. Fortunately, Eileen and Jelane didn't realize the enormity of the task ahead and signed-up for the adventure. Chris was open to their suggestion of creating a new design that incorporated a waterfall, a prominent and familiar feature of Thacher Park. Maintenance Manager, Bill VonAtzinger, (former carpenter for historic preservation) jig-sawed

cuts from the highest quality board available for longevity in extreme weather conditions. His staff primed and sealed the boards, cleared a "studio" space in their heated workshop and offered leftover board pieces for the artists to practice their techniques and sample colors before selecting them for the murals.

The project began with a hike along the Indian Ladder Trail. Several photographs were taken of the falls, cliffs, and park landscape. Using the photos, Jelane sketched and pastelled a workable draft. Focusing on symmetry, the boards were placed on sawhorses, side-by-side. Working back and forth, the ladies duplicated one section at a time. Although tedious, this method proved effective and was used again for the paintings.



The most challenging part of the project was to lift and maneuver the 9 foot high, 50 lb. boards through a 7 foot high door to check colors outdoors in the natural light.

Research to develop the final stages of the panels continues as the project nears completion. There have been many helpful hands in this shared effort, and much learned. One lesson learned early was that standing over the murals for extended periods of

time with backs bent had painful consequences. Taking lots of breaks and bringing snacks helped the process.

How better to celebrate the Centennial of Thacher than with these great gifts of stewardship? We look forward to seeing the result of this artistic endeavor. — Bonnie Schaller and Eileen McFarren

Updates

Garden T-shirts

The Garden Club creativity didn't stop with making new signs. Gardener Anita Wahlen had suggested that wearing a bright t-shirt would make gardening

along Rte. 157 safer and identify members of our group. Gardener Jayne Maloney offered to contact her business resources and oversee the project. Jelane and Eileen drew the design on the back of the t-shirt, our "mascot" salamander provided the front one. I guess we are official now!



Bright Yellow!

Garden Members include: Anita Wahlen, Leslie Hartnett, Jayne Maloney, Linda Hodges, Jelane Kennedy, Eileen McFerran, Bonnie Schaller.

Feel free to honk or wave when you drive by and see us working to beautify the flowerbeds of the Park. We'd love to have you join us. Just contact the Nature Center to let us know.



Bonnie Schaller and Eileen McFerran Friends of Thacher and Thompson Lake State Parks

Hawk Watch 2012

The 2012 Helderberg Escarpment fall hawk watch and festival at the Thacher Park Overlook this year was a soaring success. Record numbers of Broad-winged hawks were spotted making this our best year in our eleven years of viewing from this site. A record number of visitors helped with our spotting and certainly contributed to our increased numbers.

Our numbers were: 13 Black Vultures, 17 Turkey Vultures, 23 Osprey, 21 Bald Eagles, 3 Northern Harriers, 24 Sharp-shinned, 3 Coopers hawk, 1 Northern Goshawk, 4 Red Shouldered hawk, a record

setting 2981 Broad-winged hawks, (previous record of 1743 in 2008), 9 Red tailed hawks, no Golden Eagles were spotted this year, 14 American kestrels, 7 Merlins, 7 Peregrine falcons, and about 43 unidentified raptors. Our total for the 100 hour hawk watch was 3170 birds- again a record, surpassing our previous high of 1946 in 2008. 443 Monarch butterflies were also spotted during our watch. We also set a record with our 4656 visitors. What a thrill to see so many returning raptor enthusiasts and to meet so many new ones. Remember, until next year, 'Keep looking up'.

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

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As always, call 872-0800 or 872-1237 to verify activity times and dates.

Please feel free to call any board member with questions or suggestions.

Many thanks to Nancy Engel, Bonnie Schaller and Eileen McFerran, Joy Scism, Chris Fallon, and Rodger Fink, webmaster.

Want to contribute? Please email barbvoor1@verizon.net or call me at 765-4997.

— Barbara Flindt, Editor



Friends of Thacher Park Member Form

Member benefits: Newsletter, Scheduled Events Calendar & 10% Discount at the Nature Center Gift Shop. Renewal date follows name on address label.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

I'd like to become a member of the Friends of Thacher/Thompsons Lake State Parks. Enclosed is my check for \$_____. I am renewing my membership, enclosed is my check for \$_____.

Individual \$20

Supporter \$40

Donation \$_____

Family \$25

Corporate \$100

Senior (62) \$5

Student \$5

Benefactor \$100

Please make checks payable to the **Friends of Thacher/Thompsons Lake State Parks** and send to Bonnie Schaller, 6324 Hawes Rd, Altamont, NY 12009. For more info: bonsgreta@yahoo.com

PROGRESS ON PARK IMPROVEMENTS

In the last issue of the Friend's newsletter, several future park improvements and enhancements were announced. At this time, we are happy to say that significant progress has already been made.

The Pear Orchard playground structure has been installed. Only some minimal surfacing work remains before the equipment and installation is inspected and opened. It has been three years since we have had playground equipment in this area of the park and we are very excited to be able to offer this amenity again.

With regard to other playground news, new surfacing material was added to the Saturn playground and in the spring, a slide and a plastic bubble will be replaced to give the playground a fresh new look.

Additionally, an area has been cleared in the Horseshoe II section of the park for installation of another children's playground featuring zip lines and a climbing boulders. Installation will be completed in the spring.

In addition to the playground improvements, we were able to take advantage of the fall weather and get some much needed paving done. The Lagrange Bush parking lot and the Knowles Flat roadway and parking lot were repaved and striped. As part of this project, paving repairs were also made on the roadway leading to the Horseshoe area as well as to a section of the Indian Ladder parking lot.

Finally, new roofs were installed on the pavilions at Paint Mine, Pear Orchard, Horseshoe II, and Hailes Cave picnic areas.

Together with our ongoing Master Planning process, these improvements give us cause to be very excited about the future of the park.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars! Thacher Park will once again host an I Love My Park volunteer work day in 2013. The date is set for **Saturday, May 4th**. This will be an opportunity for volunteers to support the park by helping out with a variety of projects. Last year, for the first ever I Love My Park Day, we had about 100 volunteers turn out for an awesome day and a tremendous amount of work was done.



Friends of Thacher/Thompsons Lake State Parks
c/o Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
87 Nature Center Way
Voorheesville, New York 12186-2601



Next:

Wednesday, January 9, 2013
Friends Meeting
7pm Thacher Nature Center



Winter Lecture Series



We have a great series of presentations lined up for our winter lecture series on Sundays in January and Saturdays in February. The series opens on **January 13** with a presentation by Mike Tarbell about Iroquois History from a native perspective. Mike is a Mohawk descendent and was the lead educator at the Iroquois Museum for many years. He currently teaches classes at SUNY Cobleskill. On

January 20, Kelly Stang of NYSDEC will follow with a presentation about the feral pig invasion in New York. DEC is working to get control of these invasive hogs, which are extremely destructive in the environment.

The next week Scott Van Arsdale will share his knowledge and talk about his experiences working with Bald Eagles since the mid 1990's. Scott worked closely with Peter Nye (the Eagle Guy), who headed up the eagle reintroduction in New York back in the 70's.

Then we shift gears and go to Outer Space with Dr. John Delano on **February 2**. Dr. Delano will talk about his exciting work with NASA's programs searching for life on other planets.

Next up will be Dr. Bill Stein, paleobotanist, who will talk about his research on the fossil trees of the ancient Gilboa Forest. You may remember the news stories earlier this year about the exciting new findings published in the journal 'Nature', the results of research by Dr. Stein and his team of geologists from the NYS Museum.

Then we will hear from Paul and Mary Liz Stewart, whose historical research led to the identification of Albany's Underground Railroad site, the Stephen and Harriet Myers residence.

We wrap up the series with Dr. Robert Titus, geologist and author, with a presentation about how the great scenic landscape of the Hudson Valley was created by glaciation. Dr. Titus and his wife Johanna will sign copies of their recently released book, *The Hudson Valley in the Ice Age*.

With such a variety of topics, we hope you all find something of interest to inspire you to get out of the house and come up for a visit. The mental stimulation and the beautiful scenery are great remedies for cabin fever.