



Friends of Thatcher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
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Caught on Camera! *by Simon Litten*

Friends of Thatcher Park bought two Reconyx trail cameras. These are weatherproof and camouflaged digital cameras equipped with a motion detector and a thermometer. They can be left outside for a few weeks. When deployed the cameras begin capturing images every second for ten seconds after sensing motion. Photos taken in daylight are in color and those taken at night are in black and white. We have very good images made under very dark conditions. The cameras are silent and do not disturb wildlife. In January, the Park will take on interns who will devise scientific studies using this equipment to census animals and to investigate their behavior. However, rather than just letting the cameras sit in a box, Jim Kisselback and I have been meeting every other week to place the camera at various sites within the Park and to examine the stored images.

Over the course of two weeks each camera makes hundreds to thousands of time, date, and temperature stamped pictures. I bring the SD cards home to review them. For each set of ten images I make a note of the location, date, time, and temperature and the kinds of animals present as well as what they appear to be doing. These go onto a spread sheet that I email to Nancy Engel at the Nature Center. Occasionally I save a few images but I can't retain them all.



Jim Kisselback placing a Trail Camera

Since we began this project in September we have had intimate looks at deer, raccoons, opossums, and one coyote. Rarely the cameras record squirrels, chipmunks, people, and once a bird in flight.



Raccoons



Acrobatic deer

As a person not experienced in wildlife biology, I find this project fascinating. In the few weeks that we've been doing this I have learned that raccoons are social animals and deer can stand on their hind legs. These cameras have the potential for being valuable tools for both science and citizen engagement.



Coyote on a nightly visit

Updates

News and Notes from the Park

Final Park Master Plan Released

After several months of planning, many meetings and widespread input and feedback, the final master plan for Thacher Park was officially adopted by Rose Harvey, Commissioner of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The plan will guide our stewardship of the park for several years and sets the stage for Thacher to become a premier destination for future generations to enjoy. A press release went out from the Governor's office on November 19th to announce the plan. Just about all of the local media picked up the story and quotes from many of our partner organizations and local representatives indicate that there is a lot of excitement and support for this plan. We look forward to collaborating with our partners and working hard to implement the many components of the plan. For more details on the plan, please go to

<http://www.nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.

Geocache Challenge

The second annual regional geocache challenge ended on Veteran's Day, November 11th. The region hosted a wrap up meeting at Peebles Island State Park on November 16th with several geocachers who took part in the challenge. Prizes were drawn and lots of very good information was exchanged. The challenge was very successful and will definitely be done again next year. This year more than 400 people logged geocache finds in our parks; up 58% from last year. In total, 55 people completed the challenge, meaning that they found at least 35 of the 50 total caches placed in our parks and sites for the challenge.

Regional Friend's Meeting

On Saturday, November 2nd, members of Friends groups from parks and historic sites throughout the Saratoga-Capital region got together for a day of recognition, sharing and brainstorming. The session was hosted by our regional administration in Saratoga and was a way to thank the Friends groups for all they do to support our parks and sites in so many ways. The Friends of Thacher were well represented; with 7 board members and trustees attending. A presentation by New York Council on Nonprofits (NYCON) highlighted the many resources they can provide to our Friends groups. This was especially interesting for the Thacher Board members as they undertake the process of reviewing and revamping the current Friends of Thacher bylaws. A power point presentation put together by Bob Kuhn, our Assistant Regional Director showed picture highlights of Friends in action throughout the region. The presentation included some great slides of many of our Thacher Friends members in action and was one of the highlights of the day.

Indian Ladder Trail Closed

After a very busy season and particularly busy October, the Indian Ladder Trail has been closed for the season. The relatively mild weather allowed us to keep the trail open until November 21st but with the arrival of cold weather and many icy spots on the trail, it was time to close for the season. In 2014, our Centennial year, we look forward to some improvements on the trail including new interpretive panels and possibly some stabilization of the trail in certain areas.

- Chris Fallon

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Officers of the Friends Board of Trustees

President:	John Kilroy	872-1501
Vice President:	Laure-Jeanne Davignon	872-2723
Treasurer:	Betsey Miller	869-0739
Secretary:	Christine Gervasi	872-1501
	Former President Barbara Flindt	

Other Trustees

Jim Schaller	861-7452	Sigrin Newell	439-6705
Chuck Ver Straeten	872-2223	Bert Schou	221-8693
Dan Driscoll	872-0602	Linda Hodges	872-0940

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 Simon Litten, Bonnie Schaller, Dan Driscoll and Chris Fallon for their contributions to this newsletter, and to Rodger Fink, webmaster.



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 Park. 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 Park** and send to Bonnie Schaller, 6324 Hawes Rd, Altamont, NY 12009. For more info: bonsgreta@yahoo.co.

Proposed Changes to the Friends' By-Laws

The Board of Trustees recommends that the following changes be made to the by-laws; a copy of the by-laws with the recommended changes can be found on the Friends website (www.friendsofthacherpark.org). The Board plans to vote on the amendments at its March meeting.

1. The general membership will no longer elect board members and officers or approve bylaws changes. Because so few non-board Friends attend meetings, those who do may not be representative of the general membership (currently, a quorum is only eight), however, non-board Friends will be encouraged to serve on committees, including the Nominating Committee. Any amendments to the bylaws will continue to be submitted to the Friends membership for comment 21 days before a vote.
2. Trustees will continue to be elected at the Annual Meeting but by the Board of Trustees; the number of Trustees shall be not less than seven nor more than fifteen, as set by the Board. Approximately one-third of the Trustees will be elected each year for three-year terms. The officers will be elected at the meeting following the Annual Meeting by the Board of Trustees from its own members; currently, anyone can be elected an officer. Trustees (including officers) will be required to be members of the Friends; at the time of taking office a newly elected president must have served on the Board for at least one year.
3. Standing committees such as the Nominating Committee will be described in the bylaws.
4. A Mission Statement will be added: "The Friends of Thacher State Park support and advocate for the Park through volunteerism, education and environmental stewardship."
5. Consistent with Thacher Park's Strategic Plan, the name will be changed to Friends of Thacher State Park.
6. Trustees may participate in a meeting by videoconferencing or conference call.
7. Authority of the Executive Committee will be restricted. Currently the Executive Committee (the Board's officers) has the full authority of the Board, including suspending the bylaws, reversing Board decisions, adopting the budget, filling Board vacancies, etc.

- Dan Driscoll

Friends of Thacher Park
c/o Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
87 Nature Center Way
Voorheesville, New York 12186-2601



Next: **Wednesday, January 15, 2014**
Board Meeting
7:00 pm at the Thacher Nature Center



Friends of Thacher Park
"Thacher Park Express – Bus Fund" Drive Say
THANK YOU

The "Friends of Thacher" really opened their hearts and wallets for the area School Children.
Since November 13, we have been able to secure enough donations to fill FOUR (4) buses!

ALL proceeds go to the operations of the bus!!!!

It's through your support of the transportation of our children to Thacher that the Park's future is assured.
Learning not only of the Natural world, but of the Park's History, our children's horizons broaden with knowledge
to keep not only Thacher but all Parks and Historic sites viable for future generations.

If you missed your chance to help us – please take a minute and click on our website

www.friendsofthacherpark.org

– Or – drop off a check at the Nature Center.

Thank you
Bonnie Schaller,
Friends of Thacher Park



Save the Date!
In 2014 John Boyd Thacher State Park celebrates its 100th Anniversary!
Join us for the Centennial Celebration on September 13, 2014.