



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

Recess at Knox School #5

Thacher Park owns an old one-room schoolhouse, Knox School #5; it is on Ketcham Road, just west of Nature Center Road. When Parks acquired the school, it was in bad repair, so the Helderberg Kiwanis Club offered to restore it. Around 2003 when Kiwanis began restoring the school, we interviewed several former students. Three of them talked about things they did at recess.

Bill Salisbury started school there in 1932 when he was five years old. He graduated from the school in 1939, the last year the school was used. Bill was the school custodian in 1937; he was paid \$10 for the year. He carried drinking water to the school in the morning, started the stove and swept out the mudroom. Bill recalls that during recess, some of the students built a little village out in the woods behind the school. They built it out of sticks; the buildings were small, not even the size of a big birdhouse. Another thing they did during recess was visit something like a little cave about a quarter-mile back in the woods behind the school. It was open on both ends, and there was always ice inside.

Bill recalled that old Dr. Brenenstuhl use to visit the school to examine the students. He told the kids how bad it was for them to eat candy, and then he gave them a candy bar as he left.

Isabelle (Quay) Baker went to the school beginning in about 1920. She remembers two games they played at recess: Ducky-on-the-Rock (a small stone was placed on a larger stone; they tried to knock the

small stone off by throwing other stones at it); and Anti-Over (they stood on both sides of the schoolhouse and threw stones over the roof; if they caught a stone they ran to the other side to tag the person).

There was a pond near the school. They would walk to the pond to try to find frogs, which they would put in a jar with holes in the lid and take back to the school.

Suzie (Secor) Livingston started at "the little school"

at the corner of Old Stage and Thompson's Lake roads. She transferred to Knox School #5 in about 1935. She recalled that at recess, the children would play Ducky-on-the-Rock (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4PCIGM5S_M) in which kids had to jump on rocks to be "safe." She recalled Anti-Over in which the kids threw a ball over the schoolhouse roof; if a person did not catch the

ball, they were "out." They also played Fox-and-Geese (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veFbCLrpDv0>) when there was snow on the ground; they would make a large circle in the snow with lines; they were "safe" in the center. They also played Hopscotch and Jump-Rope. There was also a pond near the school where they would ice skate after school. It wasn't much of a pond; in summer the pond would dry up.

What do you remember about the games you played at recess in grade school?

<http://www.oneroomschoolhouses.ca/the-games-they-played.html> – Daniel A. Driscoll



Updates

Park News –

After a winter with cold temperatures that seemed to never end, spring is finally here and the parks are coming alive with activity. Thompson's Lake Campground opens for the season on May 3rd and we are looking forward to another busy season. As of this writing we have just about got all the ice cleared from the Indian Ladder Trail and will have the trail open a few days earlier than our unofficial opening date of May 1st.

If you come up to the park this year, be sure to take a hike along the escarpment trail. There are several sections of the trail where the viewshed has been restored and now there are several more vantage points to take in the breathtaking views offered from the park.

Audubon Project (*see facing page*)

Playgrounds

With the exception of some planting and a couple of signs that need to be installed, our Pear Orchard playground is finally open.

We have also updated some of the equipment on our Saturn playground.

Finally, work has started on the new playground being installed near the Horseshoe II area. This is the playground that will include children's zip lines and climbing boulders. We anticipate that this playground will be open this summer.

Thompson's Lake

In recent years, the swimming beach at Thompson's Lake has only been open 5 days a week from late June through Labor Day. This was due to the economic crisis and resulting budget cuts. We are very happy to announce that swimming will return to a 7 day operation for 2013. Our 7 day schedule will begin June 22nd – **Chris Fallon**

Walks in the Woods – Joy Scism

They're Back! Walks in the Woods! We really missed them last year. We'll start out with 2 walks in June, and probably 2 in July, August, September and hopefully October. Here is a description of the first 2. Hope to see all of our old friends and meet new ones.

Thursday, June 6. Meet at Thacher Park's Paint Mine Picnic Shelter at 9am. Enjoy the view (and the waterfalls, too)! Walk the Indian Ladder Trail, then Escarpment Trail to Hailes Cave. Circle back along the Long Path. Easy to moderate. Approximate walk length: 1 ½ hr. Call 872-1237 if inclement weather.

Thursday, June 27. Meet at Paint Mine Picnic Shelter in Thacher Park at 9am. Red, and Yellow and Orange and Blue! Start at Paint Mine's Red Trail and explore the portion of the Long Path that connects to Blue trails along Beaver Dam Rd. Then join up with Orange/Yellow trails through Hop Field and circle back to Paint Mine. Approximate walk length: 1 ½ hr. Call 872-1237 if inclement weather.

****Board Meeting Dates 2013****

July 10, Sept 11, **Annual Meeting:** November 13

NOTE: *The Fall Festival* will be September 28th this year. We'll need lots of volunteers, so keep a note of this later-than-usual date!

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:	Sigrin Newell	439-6705

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Jim Schaller	861-7452	Christine Gervasi	872-1501
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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 Dan Driscoll for story & photos, Laure-Jeanne Davignon, Nancy Engel, Laurel Tormey Cole, 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



Native Plant Sale

June 1 & 2, 10am – 3pm

Thacher Park Overlook!

Hardy Native Perennials and Shrubs for your tough garden challenges- wet or dry, sand or clay, shade or sun, deer resistant or salt tolerant, find hardy natives for every garden!

Call 872-0800 for more information

Audubon Project – *Buckthorn* removal

The viewshed clearing efforts were enhanced by a project to remove the invasive buckthorn that has sprouted up in many areas of the park. On April 20th, a volunteer project coordinated by our regional biologist, Casey Holzworth, together with the Audubon society of the Capital District, helped us chip up almost three dumptruck loads of buckthorn woodchips.

Casey worked with Audubon to secure a *Together Green* grant through the Toyota Corporation. The grant funded T shirts and food and water for the volunteers as well as a contracted pesticide applicator to treat stumps that were cut along the cliff edge.

Volunteers from Audubon as well as volunteers from SUNY Albany Alpha Phi Omega worked with Casey, Thacher Park staff and some Parks employees from Minnewaska State Park Preserve on this very productive project.



Volunteers moving a buckthorn tree to the truck

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

I LOVE
MY PARK
days
May 4th!

Next:

Wednesday May 8, 2013
Friends Meeting
7pm Thacher Nature Center

The Top Ten Things You Can Do to Support the Park

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead

There is a lot you can do to support the Park, keep it beautiful, and ensure this local treasure will always be here. We hope you can find something that excites you on this 'Top Ten' list to help 'change the world' or make things just that much better!

10. Attend a hike, event or workshop at the Park or Nature Center.
9. Encourage others to join the Friends.
8. Make a donation to support the Friends. From busing school children to the Park to trail maintenance to controlling invasive species, the Friends make great things happen for the Park that wouldn't otherwise be.
7. Work on a park improvement project. During an "I Love My Park Day" or a Friends highway cleanup day you can help keep the Park beautiful. Kids can participate too! They help salamanders cross the road in early spring.
6. Attend a Friends meeting. Find out what is going on and how you can contribute.
5. Communicate with your state legislators. Encourage them to maintain or increase funding for NYS Parks. Your letters and emails do make a difference.
4. Visit the Park often. Bring your friends.
3. Let us know if you want to be included in emails about volunteering at Park events. It is a good way to help out and meet like-minded neighbors.
2. Post your Park pics on social media every chance you get. A picture is worth a thousand words.
1. **Tell a friend!** We are always amazed at how many Capital District folks have never been to the Park. Please tell your friends and neighbors about this treasure in their back yards.

– Laure-Jeanne Davignon