



Friends of Thatcher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
May—June 2014 • Vol. 18 No. 3

The President's Corner

TV is a distraction from your life. There, I've gone and written it so let's see where I go with this.

I've recently become aware of how much talk and writing there is about what is on television and I find it a bit bothersome. It seems as though all people can talk about is what programs they watch on television and the conversations are so enthusiastic that you would think that some folks are speaking about actual events in their lives. Programs such as Game of Thrones, Girls, Mad Men and the recently ended Breaking Bad are on the tongues of friends, family and colleagues. I've seen articles in newspapers and magazines touting how wonderful these programs are and giving reasons why I should make room in my schedule for them.

"Appointment TV" is the catch phrase for many programs now. This means that we should clear our schedules during their time slots. Sit there and watch them and then discuss them around the water cooler at work in the morning. Are there still water coolers at offices anymore?

"Did you see..." is a conversation starter for many people and they're usually not referring to an item in the news or a sporting event. It's usually some TV program that they've been caught up in and want to discuss it with someone. My usual answer to this query is "No." It's not that I don't watch TV (I do). And it's not that I'm being unfriendly but I find that watching a serial drama takes away from other things in my life. If you've noticed, real life is fairly dramatic and can offer many more laughs than your average sitcom. Since I teach high school, I see my fair share of teenage drama daily and some of my students' interactions with each other are so funny that there are times I have to stop teaching

because I'm laughing so hard. Life offers more drama and hilarity than any Hollywood writer can.

So I tend to stay away from talking about TV programs but I'm happy to share what I think are exciting incidents from walking through Thatcher or my property or driving around. "I was driving to Westerlo on Saturday morning and stopped near Lake Onderdonk to watch an adult bald eagle for about fifteen minutes," was something that I said to a co-worker not long ago and we had a great talk about the amazing comeback our national symbol has made. She was very interested because she wanted her young children to see these beautiful birds. "They've been sighted on Thompsons Lake too, so get yourself and the kids up to the nature center," I added. As far as I'm concerned, watching an eagle sit in a tree is better than anything else on television. Another conversation starter wasn't long ago when I remarked that I'd followed some fox tracks in the snow on my property and tracked the animal into a brush pile where I had suspected it had carved out a den for itself. Many people enjoy hearing these things and, in my opinion, it creates more compelling conversations than last night's episode of whatever.

To conclude, I'll leave you with these thoughts. Eventually, we will all reach the end of our time on Earth. Before you shake off this mortal coil, do you want to look back on the television programs you watched or do you want to remember and relive your personal experiences with nature? Have you taken pictures of your children watching TV? Or have you photographed them outside experiencing what the planet (and life) has to offer? Spring is here. Turn off the tube. Bring the kids up to the park.

- John Kilroy



Updates from the Park

Thank You Friends of Thacher Park!!!

Finally, the long cold winter has ended and as spring arrives, we are gearing up for a very busy year. But, before we roll up our shirt sleeves and get busy again, a big thank you is in order. On behalf of all of our staff at Thacher Park, I would like to thank the Friends of Thacher Park for all you do. What a wonderful organization and a great group of people to work with! Whether it is meeting with legislators to promote the park and our interests, assisting with or hosting a program, raising money to fund school bus field trips, or volunteering at any number of events, your time and effort is very much appreciated. Thacher Park, Thompson's Lake Campground and the Nature Center could not do what we do without you.

Thacher Park's Centennial Year Is Upon Us

2014 will be a very busy and exciting time at the park. As you know, Thacher Park turns 100 years old this year and we will be highlighting our centennial year throughout the season, culminating with a grand celebration on September 13th; please mark your calendars and plan on joining us. If you are interested in volunteering to help out during the Centennial, please call the park office at 872-1237. Much more information regarding the Centennial Celebration will be in the next newsletter.

In addition to centennial events, more capital improvements will be getting underway. New comfort stations will be designed for the Pear Orchard, Horseshoe II, Glen Doone and Knowles Flat areas. The Pear Orchard comfort station will be a new addition and will eliminate the inconvenience of someone picnicking in the Pear Orchard shelter having to walk to the Indian Ladder comfort station. The existing Horseshoe II, and Glen Doone comfort stations will remain open while the new ones are being constructed. The construction is expected to start sometime in June. The existing Knowles Flat comfort station will be demolished and the new comfort station will be constructed in the same footprint; unfortunately, this makes it necessary to take the Knowles Flat Picnic shelter offline for reservations this season.

By the time this newsletter is out, we hope to be near completion on a project to do some stabilization work on the Indian Ladder Trail. There has been a significant amount of erosion in the vicinity of Outlook Falls along the trail. This stabilization project will bring in a crane to lower down heavy rock rip rap to shore up the trail edges near the falls.

Master Plan Initiatives

As you know, the Thacher Park Master Plan was completed and approved last year. Fortunately, the Governor's budget for fiscal year 2014 included 90 Million of capital money for

New York State Parks. We are optimistic that some of that money will enable us to continue the implementation of many of the master plan initiatives. Here are some updates on those initiatives:

Visitor Center – On April 22nd, Governor Cuomo announced 3.8 million in funding for a new visitor center at Thacher Park. The state funding will be supplemented by private dollars raised through a fundraising campaign. We have been working with a design consultant and are making progress on a design that we hope to finalize soon. The center is proposed to be built in the Indian Ladder area, atop Thacher Point where the celebration to officially open Thacher State Park took place on September 14, 1914. The center will incorporate history and geology exhibits throughout the building and include a multi-purpose room which could be rented out for special events. The back of the visitor's center would open up to another spectacular view off the cliff and offer convenient access to the Indian Ladder Trail. Many more details about the center will be released as they are finalized.

Trail modifications – now that the snow has melted, we are starting on some of our trail modifications which include eliminating some connector trails in an effort to create a more cohesive, simpler loop system. This will include new and/or improved marking and signage, bringing some sections of trail onto higher ground and adding some switchbacks to address erosion and sustainability issues.

Mountain Bike Skills Park – we have begun talks with members of the Saratoga Mountain Bike Association (SMBA) in an effort to design and build an appropriate skills park in the Hailes Cave section of the park. It is hoped that we can establish some mountain bike loop trails connecting the skills park to the existing trails used by many mountain bikers now.

Rock Climbing – another initiative in the master plan was to open up some areas of the park to rock climbing. We are working with the Thacher Climbing Coalition to formulate a climbing management plan and determine where the first climbing routes may be opened.

Other master plan proposals that we intend to move forward with in the near future include the start of a new bicycle path that will eventually link Thacher Park and Thompson's Lake Campground, a re-design and rehabilitation of the Glen Doone picnic area, extension of the escarpment trail from Glen Doone to the Greenhouse and Yellow Rocks areas, Tory Cave trail with a ladder up to the tory cave, expansion and improvements to Thompson's Lake Campground, and more. Please stay tuned.

- Chris Fallon



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: bschaller@nycap.rr.com



**Saturday,
May 3**

Come join Thacher State Park in celebrating the third annual I Love My Park Day. I Love My Park Day is an exciting statewide event to improve and enhance New York's parks and historic sites and bring visibility to the entire park system and its needs.

Please meet at 9:00 am at the Pear Orchard Pavilion. From 9:00 am to 12:30 am, you can get involved with a variety of projects, including planting flowers, performing general trail maintenance, raking, weeding, litter removal and installing benches. There will be projects for all ages, so bring the family. At 12:30 the Friends of Thacher Park will provide a BBQ lunch for all volunteers at Pear Orchard.

This event is co-sponsored by Parks and Trails New York. Please register at the www.ptny.org website

<https://ptny.wufoo.com/forms/i-love-my-park-day-volunteer-registration/>.

Call 518-872-1237 for more information.



I Love My Park Day means big digs for Thacher's Garden Gang.

Over 20 planters need to be spruced up for not only the summer but for the 100th Anniversary of Thacher celebration. Our goal is to leave no planter untouched!

Join us on May 3 as we help clean, tidy and prepare the Park for the celebration of its first century of providing a place for fun, recreation and rest for the capital district.

If gardening is not for you, there will be loads of other ways to help all of us share in the spring-cleaning of Thacher.



Check out this terrific article on "100 years of beauty at Thacher State Park" by Paul Grondahl, from the March 5, 2014 Times Union edition.

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/100-years-of-beauty-at-Thacher-State-Park-5289180.php#photo-5975350>

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 Sigrin Newell, John Kilroy, Bonnie Schaller and Chris Fallon for their contributions to this newsletter, and to Rodger Fink, webmaster.

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



Saturday, May 3

Next:

Wednesday, May 14, 2014
Board Meeting
7:00 pm at the Thacher Nature Center

Come to Thacher: See a Bee



Visitors come to Thacher Park for all sorts of reasons: Birdwatching, fossil hunting, enjoying wildflowers, hiking, and more.

Citizen scientists collect data on frogs and other species. Now there's a new goal for explorers visiting Thacher: bumblebees and their kin.

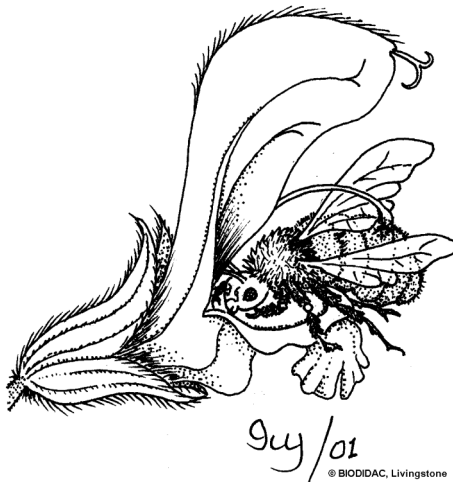
It is known that bumblebees and other native bees are in decline, but there is no map of which species live where. Environmentalists need this information to tar-

get conservation efforts. You can help. Bring your smartphone or camera on your next Thacher hike. Wherever you see flowers, look for bees. Snap a photo and go to bumblebeewatch.org, sponsored by the Xerces society.

Create a free account, upload your photo, and click on the map to locate your sighting. The web-site will lead you through a series of questions to help you identify your bee.

Data is the backbone of citizen scientist conservation efforts. Add bumblebees to your list of ways to enjoy Thacher. Together we can all make a difference.

- Sigrin Newell



Images from Biodidac: <http://biodidac.bio.uottawa.ca/index.htm> and Clip Art Etc.: <http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/>

As always, you can find a color version of the newsletter at www.friendsofthacherpark.org/pages/news.html