



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
May - June 2015 • Vol. 19 No. 3

Visitor Center Project to Continue Thacher Park Renaissance

During the late 19th and early 20th century, Thacher and the Hilltowns were the nexus of Capital Region tourism and a summer resort, with the advent of hotels like the Lakeside, Lakeview and Thompsons Lake and other attractions. Later in the 20th century, the Thacher Park pool continued the tradition of Capital Region residents escaping the city heat to the cool embrace of the Helderbergs.

In the wake of Thacher Park's centennial celebration in fall 2014, an exciting new chapter will be written just feet from the escarpment. Early this summer, ground will be broken for a state-of-the-art, sustainable Visitor Center for Friends and more than 300,000 annual park visitors to gather to learn more about Thacher's unique history, geological features and year-round recreational opportunities.

The Center will be a focal point for the Park, and is designed to showcase its unique natural setting, situated on a trailhead for the Park's iconic Indian Ladder Trail. It will feature event space and custom exhibits focused on Park history like the Tory Cave, Helderberg Anti-Rent Wars, Native American presence on the escarpment, and establishment of the Park in 1914 by Emma Treadwell Thacher, in honor of her late husband and former Albany mayor, John Boyd Thacher. New and established visitors alike will be fascinated to learn of Thacher's pre-eminent role in American geology, and the diverse fossils that can still be viewed in the Park. Offices for Park staff will also be in the Center, and allow for staff to be on hand to greet and educate visitors.

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A rendering of the new proposed Visitor Center at Thacher Park (image provided by NYS OPRHP)

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Imagine leaving the cold winter winds after a snowy hike or ski to bask in the warmth of a wood fire in the Center's hearth. Lectures and park activities will find a natural home in one of the Center's indoor or outdoor meeting spaces. You'll be able to bring your binoculars to spot hawks and other raptors from the veranda, or just enjoy Thacher's stunning views of four states. Indoor and outdoor space at the Center will be maximized to facilitate enjoyment of the escarpment and support established and new activities: hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, mountain biking (coming soon!) rock climbing and caving.

There will be opportunities for Friends, Hilltowns residents and other Park supporters to participate in the Visitor Center's inception. Stay tuned to hear how you can participate in writing a new page in Thacher's history, including a date for the groundbreaking event this summer.

-by Laure-Jeanne Davignon

10th Annual Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 30
& Sunday, May 31

10:00am—3:00pm

At Thacher Park Overlook



Come join us! Native plants support Biodiversity. Browse among 50 different species of perennials, ferns, shrubs and small trees for sale, all native to the region. Talk to a bee keeper, or purchase books or blue bird boxes. Meet staff from the Audubon Society, NYS Bluebird Society, Landis Arboretum and Friends of Thacher Park. For smaller visitors, there will be crafts, face-painting and planting some milkweed seeds to take home to help the Monarch butterfly.



I Love My Park Day
Saturday, May 2,
9am – 1pm:

"Show your Love" for Thacher Park and come join us in our park improvement projects. Projects include painting, planting, clearing winter debris and trail-work. There will be projects for all ages and abilities, so bring the family. Meet at 9:00am at the Pear Orchard Pavilion to organize. At 12:30 the Friends of Thacher Park will provide a BBQ lunch for all volunteers. This event is co-sponsored by Parks and Trails New York; please register online at www.ptny.org. Please contact the park at 518-872-1237 with any questions.

National Trails Day

Saturday, June 6

8:30am—12:30pm



Show your appreciation for Thacher Park's wonderful trails! Come and help out with trail maintenance projects for the morning and stay for a BBQ lunch provided by the Friends of Thacher Park.

Please call 872-1237 to register or for more information.

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Officers of the Friends Board of Trustees

President:	John Kilroy	872-1501
Vice President:	Laure-Jeanne Davignon	578-4718
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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 Laure-Jeanne Davignon, Bonnie Schaller and Nancy Engel for their contributions to this newsletter, and to Rodger Fink, webmaster.

Want to contribute? Please email me at cgervasi@albany.edu
Christine Gervasi—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 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

I Love My Park Day 2015 Park Office Spruce Up



Rhododendrons are thriving around the Park Office, framing the entrance, along with several yews and photogenic Sugar Maples that blaze in the Fall. All of this provides a spot, sought out for a photo in Spring or Fall. You'll see that the yews in front are in need of some trimming and the groundcover needs some attention. A garden "facelift" for the office building, that has been serving the Park since the 1950s, has become the Garden Gang 2015 "I Love My Park" project.

After a quick check with John Lowe, Interim Park Manager, for his O.K., we got under way. We chose "I Love My Park Day" 2015 because we wanted to involve area volunteers. People who have a vested interest in and actually visit the Park will participate in a day of "giving back" and making a difference.

Our plan will be to trim back the yews, clean any winter debris and weed out anything that doesn't belong

in a Native Plant flower bed. As we did last year, we enlisted the help of Laurel Tormey Cole of the Nature Center and Joy Scism of the Park for advice on what Native Plants would do well in this setting. Already established Native Plants will be augmented with favorite perennials – Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and Maple Leaf Alum Root (*Heuchera villosa*). Quick color will be added by Petunias and Alyssum from the Park's Flower Power program.

The Park's other planters will receive their Spring cleaning too. After raking out leaves, some of the above perennials, Petunias and Alyssum will be added to the daylilies and other emerging perennials.

Since the newsletter will be going out just about the same time as May 2nd is underway, I hope you join us Saturday to work or stop by to see the planters and all of the other projects so many people will be helping with to prepare Thacher for the Summer.

As always, anyone wishing to lend a helping hand during the Summer season please contact the Nature Center 872-0800.

-by Bonnie Schaller

Garden Gang Members: Anita Wahlen, Leslie Hartnett, Jayne Maloney, Sue Fero, Cary Patak, Susan Albright, Bonnie Schaller

Friends Board Meeting Dates for 2015!

7:00 pm at the Thacher Nature Center. Come join us! This year's meetings will take place on
May 13, July 8, September 9 and November 11 (Annual meeting)

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



Wednesday, May 13, 2015
Next: Board Meeting
7:00 pm at the Thacher Nature Center

Caught on Critter Cam!

The deer carcass bait at Thacher Park has attracted some interesting visitors, and they were caught on our Trail cameras.

.....this ermine just made it into the shot.....



.....a fisher pays a day-time visit.....



...a raccoon, a fisher and what appears to be a fox behind the carcass make an unusual nightly trio!....



.....a pair of foxes are looking for an easy meal.....