

Friends

of Thacher and Thompsons Lake State Parks

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

July-August 2013 • Vol.17 No. 4

Friends website: www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Where "X" Marks the Spot - Dotting the "I", and Crossing the "T".

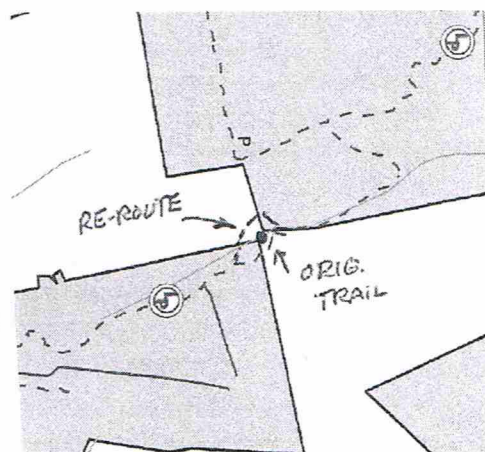
If you've taken a close look at the map of Thacher Park, you've seen that Thacher Park "North", and Thacher Park "South" come together at a "point". Depending on the angle the map is read, there's a "+", or an "X". Either way, the opposite sides are either State land, or private lands.

Old stone walls intersect there, and the "point" at which the lands meet, is marked by a steel rebar with a yellow surveyor's cap. In fact - the "point" is probably as tiny as the dot on the Letter "i" ! The Long path crosses there - and when laid out many years ago, it was inadvertently placed on private land for 15 ft., or so.

So - on "I Love My Park Day", I led a group of volunteers to reroute the trail for about 30 ft. We were told to "knock a hole" in a stone wall for the reroute.

My volunteer workers tore into the wall, and began clearing the trail with abandon. When done- they had not only "knocked" out the hole, but laid up stones to make a nicely squared-off opening.

The path was raked out, small trees and branches lopped, or cut, and the old trail "erased". The new trail was marked with "Long Path" turquoise paint, and new directional signs placed at the intersection with the old woods road beyond the wall.



The trail is now on the opposite "private" side, but an easement is officially being obtained by NYS for that "square" of land, so the trail will be legal.



So- where "X" marks the spot with a "Dotted i", the stone wall is now crossed to a "T".

Thanks to the volunteers who did a superb job on this, and other projects in Thacher Park on "I Love My Park Day". — *Jim Schaller*

Geocache Challenge

— *Chris Fallon*

For the second year in a row, Thacher Park is participating in the Saratoga regional geocache challenge. Geocaching is a popular activity that utilizes GPS devices to locate hidden containers with various contents. It is sort of a high tech treasure hunt. This year's challenge includes 50 different geocaches hidden in 16 State Park and Historic Sites throughout the Saratoga-Capital Region of New York State Parks. Thacher has 5 caches hidden as part of the chal-

lenge. In one of these caches, you will find a stamp with the official Salamander Logo of the Friends of Thacher Park. Stop by the park office and pick up your passport for the challenge. Several parks and sites are including a prize for finding all the caches within their respective sites. Participants who find at least 35 of the 50 caches will have their names entered into a drawing for an Eastern Mountain Sports back pack and other valuable prizes.

Updates

Toyota Grant Aids Board Planning

One year ago, the Friends received a \$5,000 grant from the Every Day Capacity Building project, which is funded by Toyota. Through work with consultant, Elissa Kane, we developed a mission statement and a strategic calendar which describes actions to implement our goals on a monthly basis.

Mission statement: The Friends of Thacher and Thompsons Lake State Parks support and advocate for the parks through volunteerism, education and environmental stewardship.

Elissa facilitated small group conversations in which board members decided to focus on three areas. We will increase visibility of Thacher and Thompson's Lake Parks and the Friends through publicity, advocacy, and an enhanced website. We will increase the number of school visits through a campaign to raise money for more school bus visits. We will improve governance of the Friends board using the strategic calendar to guide our actions.

As we worked on the strategic plan, board members also became aware of many Park activities that we will continue to help with. The salamander rescue, Fall Fest, I Love My Park day, Trails Day, and next year's Centennial Celebration all are highlights on our calendar.

We are grateful to the Toyota Corporation for making it possible for Board Members to gain new perspectives on what we have accomplished and to plan our direction for the next five years.

— Sigrin Newell

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

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

September 28: Fall Festival!!

Get ready for this year's end-of-September festival. This year's theme will be harvest and fall activities, so I am looking for new ideas that would be appropriate for that time of year. Any suggestions for family or fun activities would be gladly appreciated.

We'll need volunteers again this year for games, crafts, face painting, hayrides, etc.

Please let me know if you can help. Email Joy.Scism@parks.ny.gov or give me a call at 872-1237.

Craft/harvest vendors, please notify me as soon as possible. Thanks so much! — Joy



Native Plant Sale at the Park Overlook June 1 and 2 a resounding success! Thanks to all who came, learned about native plants and bought.

Last newsletter: Laure-Jeanne Davignon wrote the "**Top 10 Things You Can Do To Support the Park**"

Thank you Laure-Jeanne, my mistake was a good learning experience. Check everything! — Barb

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
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Other Trustees

Jim Schaller	861-7452	Christine Gervasi	872-1501
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 Jim Schaller for story & photos, Edna Litten, Bonnie Schaller (color insert), Chris Fallon, Sigrin Newell, Nancy Engel, Joy Scism, 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

Master Plan To Be Released Soon *by Chris Fallon*

The final draft of the Thacher and Thompson's Lake State Park master plan is currently being reviewed by NYS Parks' the executive staff. It is anticipated that the draft will be made public in early July and that a formal public hearing will be scheduled shortly thereafter; presumably in late July or early August.

The master plan includes several exciting new proposals to help guide the direction of the park for several years to come. The centerpiece of the plan is a new visitor center. The visitor center would serve as an orientation point for visitors coming to the to the park. It would include historical and geological exhibits both in the building as well as incorporated into some of construction design features. The center would be located in the Indian Ladder picnic area and oriented so that it opens up to spectacular views and convenient access to the Indian Ladder Trail. A year-round meeting and event space would be included and available to rent out for special occasions.

Another exciting proposal is a trail and ladder access to the Tory Cave; part of Thacher Park's rich history. This trail may also be extended along the base of the cliff out to just below the Horseshoe 1 picnic area, essentially providing an extension of the Indian Ladder Trail.

Other proposals in the master plan include a plan to open the park to rock climbing. Parks is working with a local climbing group to develop this plan. Additional proposals include new comfort stations throughout Thacher Park. Funds have already been earmarked for four new comfort stations in the Pear Orchard, Horseshoe, Knowles Flat and Glen Doone picnic areas.

Other highlights of the plan include:

- Rehabilitation of the Glen Doone area, the most popular area in the park for weddings.
- Development of a mountain bike skills course and loop trail network with some technical features
- Allow rock climbing by permit and establish an MOU with a local rock climbing group to help manage this activity
- Trail improvements including better designation of trail uses
- Expansion of Thompsons's Lake Campground including new tent campsites, new contact station, expanding the beach and adding a camp store.
- Development of a ropes challenge course in the former pool area of the park
- Improvements to the infrastructure including modifications to the wastewater system, elimination of excess parking lots and traffic patterns
- Map caves in the park, install a gate at Hailes cave and possibly establish a permit system to allow to select caves.

Details regarding these proposals and much more will be part of the soon to be released plan. Please keep an eye out for the release of this exciting new plan and come out to the public hearing to share your thoughts. (Time, date and location of public hearing to be determined).

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



Wild Parsnip in bloom
*July 7 - Parsnip and
Popsicles!*

Next:

**Wednesday July 10, 2013
Friends Meeting
7pm Thacher Nature Center**

Help!

by Edna Litten

We need help to protect Thacher Park from invaders that can destroy the wildflowers, woods, and meadows we enjoy so much. These invaders are exotic plants from Europe and/or Asia that can proliferate wildly, crowding out native plants and creating a monoculture inhospitable to native wildlife. Since they have no natural enemies here, we need to take action to keep them from taking over our park.

I joined the Invasive Species Removal Team at Thacher Park years ago, and gradually the other members retired, so I am the Invasive Species Team. I can't do it all myself. We need volunteers to help control these nasty plants.

Garlic mustard, a flowering plant of the mustard family, can become the dominant plant in forest understory. I have seen woods outside the park where the forest floor is a thick mass of garlic mustard. In its native habitat, insects and caterpillars feed on garlic mustard, but none do here. Garlic mustard can be controlled by hand-pulling the plants when they are in flower or before the seed pods have matured. We have experienced huge success in various areas of the park, such as the Indian Ladder Trail. Since the seeds of garlic mustard remain viable in the soil for five years, a long-term commitment to control is essential. The seeds

spread very easily, carried on animal fur and feet and on human clothing and shoes. Yearly follow-up is needed to watch for new infestation. Pulling out garlic mustard is not hard, and you do it in beautiful places.

Buckthorn is an invasive shrub that can take over both woodlands and open fields. In forests it forms an impenetrable understory layer that destroys wildlife habitat. Buckthorn seedlings can be removed by hand pulling or by using tools like the weed wrench. It is satisfying work!

Wild parsnip grows about four feet tall and has yellow flowers that resemble very large Queen Anne's Lace. It has a phyto-toxic sap so gloves, long sleeves and long pants are needed while handling it. It can take over open meadows, displacing native plants and making the area unsuitable as a nesting site for ground-nesting migratory birds. I have worked cutting wild parsnip for the last seven years with no mishaps, but we need more help with this one too. (See Calendar for July 7th "Parsnip and Popsicles")

Working on invasive removal is a way to get fresh air and exercise in a beautiful place while accomplishing something worthwhile. The results of your efforts will be clearly visible, with the satisfaction of seeing natural habitats flourishing. Call the Nature Center 872-0800 to volunteer or to get more information.

FLOWER POWER 2013

Our Garden Gang has really outdone itself this past year. Since May 5, 2012 the first I Love My Park Day, the Gang has given new life to the many planters in Thacher Park, lovingly redone the two Park Entrance Murals and created our distinctive Yellow T-Shirts. In our own words, here are our thoughts from this "I Love My Park Day" May 4, 2013.



The Garden Gang Left to Right back :

Leslie Hartnett, Jelane Kennedy, Linda Hodges
Bonnie Schaller, Jayne Maloney

Left to right front:

Sue Fero, Anita Wahlen, Eileen McFerran



Mural BEFORE: Eileen, Jelane and Jayne



Mural AFTER: Chris Fallon Park Mgr. ,Eileen & Jelane

For me giving back to Nature is what I Love My Park Day is all about. Through Thacher and the Nature Center we have a chance to do what we enjoy, helping others appreciate the Parks by our example. Whether it is weeding a garden or shoveling shale for a trail, we improve the appearance of Parks and maybe touch one or more individuals to help out in their neighborhood or here in Thacher.
Bonnie Schaller

As a visitor to Thacher Park in my grade school and high school years I enjoyed the Park's picnic areas and pool. Now after an absence of many years from the NY area I am a proud member of the Thacher Garden Gang. It is so nice to work in the flower boxes with the beauty of nature surrounding us. It is a great opportunity to contribute to this great park.
Leslie Hartnett

When Bonnie and I started this project, there were only the two of us and now we have grown into a gang of eight! There is so much joy in being on our knees and getting our hands dirty in the flower beds. We have transformed areas of dirt and rocks into beautiful flower beds for the community to enjoy. Not only do we plant flowers but we grow friendships!
Anita Wahlen

"Any day that I am out of the city in the woods is a good day. What makes "I love my Park day" special is the chance to be with like minded people who value our State Parks and see the Park as a wonderful natural resource that needs our care. I feel blessed to live so close to a State Park and that I have this refuge nearby. Being part of the Garden Gang has been a great way to play a role in the stewardship of Thacher Park and contributing our artistic talents to the new paintings on the entrance signs was part of this for me".

Jelane A. Kennedy

All too often my "view" of the Park happens from inside my car...as I drive through on my way home . So gardening in the Park provides an "up close and personal" experience I might not normally take the time for! On ' I LOVE MY PARK DAY ' I worked with two volunteers who had never been to Thacher Park before(they are new to the area). As I told them what I knew about it's history, geology, trails, and sent them to the Visitors Center for better information, I was reminded of how lucky we are to have this spectacular place and what an honor it is to help to care for it.

Sue Fero

It's fun to play in the dirt and the planters look so nice afterwards.

Linda Hodges

I have made many wonderful memories at Thacher Park through the years and all four seasons with my family; snowshoeing, hiking, star gazing, falcon watching, Fourth of July fireworks, picnicking...I am a proud member of the Thacher Garden Gang and am happy to give back to a place that has enriched my life.

Jayne Maloney

My ears stung from the cold at our 7:30 a.m. meeting outside. Eight women huddled in a circle and received instructions from our leader, Bonnie Schaller. The twenty one flats of pansies, alyssums, and jumping jacks looked pretty packed tightly in their trays before transport to their nineteen sites. Would we really plant over a thousand flowers in less than three hours?

"We're expecting volunteers," Bonnie said. "Besides, we'll help each other."

The knot in my stomach grew. I knew the photo shoot for the mural Jelane and I had painted would impact our gardening time and might take longer than planned. How would we get it all done?

When the Garden Gang gathered for lunch, my back ached and I could barely swing my leg over the bench. I told the group that Jelane and I had two more beds to plant. That's when my favorite moment of the day came.

"Many hands make light work," Anita, my sister gardener, said. The others agreed even though their faces told me that they were as tired as I. We finished the job in ten minutes.

I learned that my goal of completing the job was not as important as working together. Cooperation provides the link to connection and community. With a community of support, is there anything we can't do?

Eileen McFerran



Park Office Front Door by Sue