



EMMA TREADWELL THACHER
NATURE CENTER

Come to the Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center and let the scenic beauty of the Helderbergs inspire you! The center and its grounds offer countless opportunities to discover the wonders of nature through hands-on activities and intergenerational programs.

History

In 1914, Emma Treadwell Thacher donated 350 acres along the Helderberg Escarpment in memory of her husband. Her gift became John Boyd Thacher State Park. Six years later, she donated an additional 50 acres on the western shore of Thompson's Lake to New York State. As a condition of her gift, she requested that ten of the 50 acres be set aside for the Albany Boys' Club to use as its summer camp, Camp Thacher. The club continued to acquire property and use the camp, eventually selling its holdings to New York State in 1987.

In 1999, Fred and Martha Schroeder honored Emma Treadwell Thacher's generosity with their own remarkable gift. They funded the construction of a nature center on the site of the former Camp Thacher and established an endowment to ensure that generations of visitors would continue to experience the wonders of nature. The Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center opened on July 17, 2001. The Fred Schroeder Memorial Trail was dedicated in memory of Fred on the tenth anniversary of the Nature Center.



The Friends of Thacher Park

The Friends of Thacher Park is a non-profit group dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the parklands. The Friends sponsor cleanups, programs, and special events throughout the year.

For information about membership go to:
www.FriendsofThacherPark.org.



The spotted salamander is the Friends' official mascot. On the first warm, rainy nights of spring, hundreds of salamanders cross Thacher Park Road on their way to breed in the vernal pool where they were born. The Friends of Thacher Park first came together as a group to help the salamanders safely cross the road.

Hours: Open year-round, 9AM-5PM, Tuesday through Sunday, closed Mondays and major holidays.

Directions: The Nature Center is located on the shore of Thompson's Lake, in western Albany County. From I-90 take exit 4 and drive west on Route 85 about 12 miles. Bear right onto Route 157 and continue driving through Thacher Park, past the park office. Turn right on Ketcham Road (Rte 256), drive one mile and turn left on Nature Center Way.

Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
87 Nature Center Way
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(518) 872-0800



State of New York
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
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Printed on recycled paper

2012

Trails

Several miles of trails are available for hiking, cross-county skiing, and snowshoeing. The Lake Trail leads to the lakeshore and is accessible for strollers and wheelchairs. The Schoolhouse Trail winds through woodlands and over fractured limestone bedrock before reaching a historic, one-room schoolhouse. The Meadow Loop Trail winds through woods and meadows and provides access to the Salisbury Trail, which connects to the Long Path and the Thacher Park trail system.



Thompson's Lake

Thompson's Lake is an ancient sinkhole that is 65 feet deep at its southern end. The nature center is located near the northern end of the lake, where the shallow wetlands offer habitat for a variety of wildlife. There, beaver-gnawed stumps and muskrat holes line the shore, shorebirds hunt fish and frogs, water birds find refuge in the shadows, and turtles bask on logs.

Thompson's Lake State Park & John Boyd Thacher State Park

The Nature Center is a short walk from the campground at Thompson's Lake State Park, which is open for camping from Memorial Day until early October. Scenic John Boyd Thacher State Park on the Helderberg Escarpment is about a mile from the Nature Center and offers panoramic views of the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys, miles of hiking trails, picnic pavilions, and recreation areas.

Native Plant Gardens

Gardens on the grounds feature labeled native plants and include a butterfly garden, shrub border, bee garden, and a bog replica. The Annual Native Plant Sale offers a variety of native plants, trees, and shrubs.



Historic Schoolhouse

Knox School #5 was restored by the Helderberg Kiwanis Club and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Interpretive information and authentic furnishings transport visitors to the early 1900s, when the one-room schoolhouse was in use. The building is opened for special programs and pre-arranged group visits.



- *Rent snowshoes*
- *Discover the geology of the Helderberg Escarpment with our landscape model*
- *Observe honeybees at work inside their hive*
- *Learn about our reptiles and amphibians*
- *View birds at our feeders*
- *Examine feathers, furs, fossils, and more at our touch tables*
- *Sign up for one of our guided hikes or explore a self-guided trail*
- *Investigate nature books, videos, games, and puzzles in our children's area*
- *Explore the native plant gardens and discover native perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees*

Programs & Special Events

Join us year-round for a hike or snowshoe walk, a natural history program, or an art workshop. Our annual special events include Nature's Thanksgiving, a Nature Art Show, a Native Plant Sale, and a Winter Presentation Series.

For a current calendar of events go to:
www.nysparks.com

On-site and outreach programs are available for school and youth groups. For detailed information about programs and scheduling call (518) 872-0800.