



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
January—February 2017 • Vol. 21 No. 1



GO FISH!



Ice Fishing Clinic

If the summer fishing season seems too short and you've looked longingly at those folks fishing all winter on the frozen lake, take heart! You too can be an angler on the ice. Our expert fishing friends at NYSDEC and the Albany County Conservation Alliance will be offering a free ice fishing clinic on February 25 here at the Nature Center. They will have fishing gear and bait, and will teach you everything you need to know, including how to fillet a fish. The first part will be instruction and demonstration, and then participants will head out on Thompson's Lake and try catching some fish. There will be staff and volunteers available to help out and refreshments back at the warm Nature Center for break time. Dress in warm layers and bring along your fishing gear if you have it. Fishing licenses will not be required to participate in this program. Rain date for the program is Sunday, February 26. Call the Nature Center at 872-0800 for more information.



Ice Safety

Clear blue or black ice that is at least four inches thick is usually safe for accessing on foot, double that thickness for traveling on white ice, which is weaker. Ice thickness can vary on every body of water or even within the same body of water. Be particularly wary of areas of moving water and around boat docks and houses where bubblers may be installed to reduce ice buildup. The presence of snowmobile tracks or footprints on the ice should not be taken as evidence of safe ice conditions. Individuals are strongly encouraged to check ice conditions and avoid situations that appear to present even a remote risk. The thickness of ice can easily be tested with an auger or ice spud at various spots.

- by Nancy Engel



Photos courtesy of New York State Parks

Updates from the Park



If you have been up to the Park recently, you will have noticed that the construction on the new Visitor Center is coming along quite well.

Currently, the final finishing touches are going in the interior space. There were some

concerns about the amount of light coming from the building as the electric was completed. One reason for this is the window order for the entire building was delayed but construction continues. The contractor placed large white sheets over the openings illuminating the entire interior like a lantern. The windows are going in and the light coming from the building is much more subdued. Also to ensure that the exterior remains less illuminated, with the exception of the sidewalks for safety reasons, the exterior lighting will be "hooded", directing the light toward the building.

The building is slated for a February completion.

-by Maureen Curry

Hummers in January

Thinking of Hummingbirds in January may get you a few questioning looks; but, I am. WHY?

Because of a Christmas gift.



Let me back up a bit, say six months or so. Last summer we needed to re-establish a portion of our lawn because it was dug up. If you recall, last summer was rather Hot and **DRY**; but, we gave it a try. There's nothing like looking at dirt where your lawn was to make you try anything to get that green back.

Twice a day (mind you we're on a well), I would water a section at a time to get the seed to germinate and grow. We did this for most of the summer, then on one August afternoon, as I was misting the grass, ZIP! About 6 – 7 inches from the hose nozzle, a female Hummer was enjoying the mist. After she flew up to a tree limb, I slowly moved the mist

to her. She sat there, fluttering her wings and enjoyed her bird bath.

I had read that Hummers will do just this sort of thing and I felt so fortunate to enjoy her enjoyment. The next day I asked Jim to try for a photo ... well we got a nice picture of the oak limb.

This brings me to Christmas. I saw, in one of the zillion catalogues you get at this time of year, a device to put on a window, a small plastic red flower with a small tube to hold sugar water. This had my name ALL over it, so, I asked Santa for it.

Now all I need is Summer, light mist from our garden hose and a friendly Hummer willing to take a bath and make this humble human happy.

So...Happy Birding and a Very Happy New Year!

-by Bonnie Schaller

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

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Chuck Ver Straeten	872-2223	Bert Schou	221-8693

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 Nancy Engel, Maureen Currie, Bonnie Schaller, Betsey Miller, Megan Mansfield and Sigrin Newell for their contributions to this newsletter.

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
- Family \$25
- Student \$5
- Supporter \$40
- Corporate \$100
- Benefactor \$100
- Donation \$ _____
- Senior (62) \$5

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



Bus Fund Drive!

The Friends of Thacher Bus Fund Drive is well on its way to filling more buses for more Children. As the Holidays slide away, the Fund has edged past the \$2,000 mark!

Your generosity is what keeps the light shining for so many children of the tri-city area.

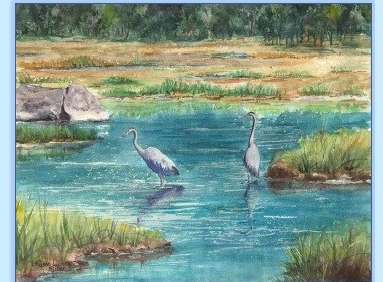
This year will be a special treat as the Visitor Center will offer fresh, new and innovative learning possibilities.

It's never too late to add just \$5.00 for a child to join in on all the fun and, for some, the challenge of a new experience here in Thacher Park. Just make checks payable to "Friends of Thacher Park, note "Bus Fund" and mail to 87 Nature Center Way, Voorheesville NY, 12186.

Thank you all so very much for your generosity!

-Bonnie Schaller and Betsey Miller

Inspired by Nature



"Marsh Prospectors" by Susan Ann Zanow

For the past 13 years during the month of March Thacher Nature Center has undergone a transformation, from Nature Center to art gallery, and 2017 will be no different! From March 11th through the 31st, you can view hundreds of pieces of fine art on display throughout the building. Local artists create beautiful works in a wide array of media, including oils, watercolor, sculpture, and photography. The Exhibit showcases the talent and creativity of our local artists with the sole condition that the theme of their piece is 'nature.' Be sure to catch the Nature Art Exhibit while it's on display to show support for our local artisans and their nature-inspired artwork! Opening reception will be held on Saturday, March 11 from 1-4pm. To participate in the exhibit, please call 872-0800 for information.

-by Megan Mansfield

A happy and healthy new year to all!

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



Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Next:

Board Meeting

7:00 pm at Thacher Nature Center



Winter Explorations

Winter is a good time to see Thacher Park from a different perspective. Hiking, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing will bring you in contact with a world never seen in the summer. An excellent guide for what you might discover is "Stokes' Guide to Nature in Winter" by Donald W. Stokes. This book, written in 1974 is so useful that it is still in print.

Stokes has organized his book so that each chapter starts an overview, then an identification key that you can quickly use outdoors. This is followed by natural history descriptions to be perused when you are back in the cozy indoors. These descriptions are fascinating.

For example, he says that Raccoons, Opossums, and Skunks use a number of good dens over the course of a year and know the best dens over an area of 100 acres. Skunks use ground dens, Opossums use tree dens and

Raccoons use both. After a night's ramblings, these animals tend to switch dens. A given den may be inhabited by a Skunk one night and a Raccoon the next. While exploring Thacher you may be able to follow tracks to find a den.

Stokes' Guide covers just about anything you might see on a Thacher ramble: weeds, mushrooms, evidence of insects, snow crystals, winter birds, tracks and evergreen plants. Outdoors and then back inside, this Guide is an invaluable companion for a trip to Thacher.



- by Sigrin Newell

Raccoon tracks
<http://www.sandhillnature.com/>

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