



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
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“A TRAIL TALE”: Signs of the Times



Fred Schroeder led many hikes for the Adirondack Mountain Club and other hiking groups which is where we first met him. But his love of Thacher Park dated back to the days of Camp Thacher. He took an “ownership” of Thacher Park North especially as the South section’s trails had been long established.

The Long Path extended through the Park and, as the Open Space Institute added parcel after parcel to the North section, it had to be re-routed, extended and marked accordingly. Fred did that with unbridled enthusiasm and professional trail building!

Fred was our “mentor”. We were with him on the Park’s trails (and on “Trail Days”) as he recounted Thacher Park’s history and his plans for the Park’s trail system.

Our only option was to continue Fred’s work – in his spirit – as best as we could. While out wandering the trails, we found few signs and few, if any, trail markers. In our minds, we made notes of how to better mark the labyrinth of trails in Thacher Park’s North for easier public use.

In 2007 the New York – New Jersey Trail Conference had some of its members cover all the trails in Thacher Park with a powerful GPS unit. They produced a new, accurate,

waterproof Trail Contour Map #200 in 2008 (**Map No. 1 of Thacher Park**). The map showed every nook and cranny of the park, all of the trails and old woods roads. This proved to be a valuable resource for us. We worked with the park’s office to be sure of the trails’ numbers and names in the North section and at Thompsons Lake. We then decided to make new trail signs for all the trail intersections in the north and the trails around the Nature Center. We referred to these as “**Generation 1**” since they only had directions to the next trail junction. The inventory of new signs numbered about 100 at over 50 trail junctions, or points, along the trails.

In 2010, the N.Y.S. Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation had some of its employees again go over the trails with GPS units. The purpose of this was to produce a new park map. We requested a detailed list of trail distances from their results. The new map (**Map No. 2**) came out in 2011, and we were provided not just with total distances but with distances for each and every trail segment! The result was “**Generation 2**” of new trail signs which featured cumulative distances given to each junction along that trail in the direction of travel.

The “Master Plan” of 2013 produced a trail map with its recommendations but that map wasn’t published. But some trail re-routes and closures needed signs and trail discs added or removed. Since then any “weathered” or missing signs or discs are replaced when needed.

In 2015 new maps appeared on the Thacher Park website (**Map No. 3**), but some trails were not identified and all trail distances were rounded off. We met in early 2016 with Parks personnel as a first step to producing a new map with all additions and corrections. Proper numbering was determined for the nine connector (white) trails in Thacher Park South. All agreed to a decision on the numbering and to which trails would be definitely abandoned. Soon after, we made all necessary changes to the trail signs and markers in the field.

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The trails in Thacher Park North and Thompsons Lake have remained unchanged since the Master Plan took effect.

In May 2017, at the dedication of the new Thacher Park Visitors Center, a new Trail Map was published (**Map No. 4**). Finally, an accurate map and up-to-date distance index reflecting the trails as they are today.



In the North there's the Long Path, Perimeter Trail, Hang Glider Road, various connector (white and blue) trails and the **Fred Schroeder Memorial Trail**. That three-mile loop trail is named for that man whose footsteps and indomitable spirit we follow through Thacher Park's woodlands and open spaces.

~ by *Jim & Bonnie Schaller*

Thanks to everyone -

Friends of Thacher, ADK-ers and general public.
13 who braved the mud and showers on
Saturday June 3, 2017 – National Trails Day.



We were able to work on three trails to clear brush, small trees
and refresh trail markers.

Thanks once again to Friends President and member John Kilroy
and Jim Kisselback—for the welcome BBQ.

- *Jim and Bonnie Schaller*

Salt of the Earth

"Let's drink to the hard-working people, Let's drink to the salt of the Earth" are two lines found throughout the Rolling Stones' "Salt of the Earth" from their 1968 album Beggar's Banquet. Although not well known, it's one of my favorites because it extols the virtues of good, solid, hard-working people that we see every day. In today's political and social climate, I think we all need to do a bit more of this – recognize those around us who quietly go about their lives while making their corner of the planet a little bit better than when they arrived on it. As president of this fine organization, I meet a lot of people like this but I'm thinking of two, in particular, right now.

Jim and Bonnie Schaller are tireless volunteers who make Thacher Park better for everyone. Jim has been one of our board members for many years and Bonnie is our membership chairperson and organizer of Thacher's Garden Gang. However, much of their work takes place on the park's trails. Thacher has over 20 miles of trails throughout nearly 2200 acres (the exact mileage escapes me). I don't think anyone

knows them better than Jim and Bonnie. We recently had a work detail up at the park for National Trails Day (June 3). Jim and Bonnie got everything organized beforehand and set to work with a stalwart group of volunteers that morning. A lot was accomplished and they didn't stop there. Recently, they were out again with Alec the intrepid park employee, and the park's brush mower clearing away more brush and debris from the trails. They do this regularly throughout the year. They do it quietly. They do it without looking for any kind of recognition. They're two of the most modest, wonderful people I've ever met. They are the salt of the Earth. Did I mention that they were volunteers? They give to the park and all of us their most valuable possession – their time. If you enjoy hiking the trails through the park you are indebted to Bonnie and Jim. If you enjoy the beautiful flowers found in planters around the park, thank Bonnie and her crew of gardeners. So, *"Raise your glass to the hard-working people,"* and join me in recognizing and thanking Jim and Bonnie Schaller for all they do for us and Thacher Park. They've made this corner of the world a better place.

– by *John Kilroy*

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 Jim and Bonnie Schaller, John Kilroy, Jenny Young, Kelli Tolleson, Laurel Tormey Cole, Sigrin Newell and Nancy Engel for their contributions to this newsletter.

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

Thacher Nature Center Native Plant Sale

The annual Thacher Nature Center Native Plant Sale took place this year on Saturday & Sunday, May 20 & 21, at the Overlook. The weather held for the weekend and the plants looked great. Staff sold less than we had for both days compared to last year, but the post-weekend sales have continued and we have exceeded last year's sales total.

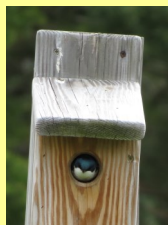
If you missed the pre-order or the on-site sale at the Overlook, or if you are finding some areas that still need plants.....there are still many species remaining that you can add to your garden. We have some very hard to find species, such as American Ipecac and native cactus as well as species that are better known: Helen's Flower, Wild Bleeding Heart, Ferns, Prairie Smoke and much more.

Stop by the Nature Center Tuesday through Sunday, 9-5, to pick out some gorgeous native roses or perennials. Quarts are \$6.00 and the larger gallon pots are \$12.00 unless otherwise marked.

We'll send you home with instructions for each species that you purchase to ensure your success! Native plants are gorgeous, easy to grow and very beneficial to bees, birds, and many types of pollinators. If you ever have any questions about your native plants please feel free to call and ask the staff.

So come on by and....fill in that bare spot, plant that rain garden, or begin your love affair with hummingbirds by planting native perennials!

-Laurel Tormey Cole



Nature Center Nest Box Update

With the dreary weather behind us (hopefully) we are in the heart of nesting season for the cavity nesting songbirds that occupy our nest boxes. The Nature Center currently monitors a total of 27 boxes in the fields around the Nature Center and on Ketcham Road. We participate in the Citizen Science project NestWatch where we enter our observations throughout the nesting season. Right now we have a total of 4 eggs (4 tree swallows) a total of 14 nestlings at different stages (10 tree swallows, 4 bluebirds) and we have already had 7 bluebirds fledge.

Throughout the week of 6/24-6/30 we're hoping that a total of 57 nestlings will fledge (14 house wrens, 33 tree swallows.) When a bird fledges it means that it is capable of flight and can leave the nest. If you are interested in entering your nest observations please visit www.nestwatch.org. This website describes the process of observing your nest throughout the season. The data collected from around the country can then be accessed by researchers and other scientists who are studying bird species.

Feel free to stop by the Nature Center and get an update on how the birds are progressing.

-by Jenny Young, Environmental Education Intern

Meet Thacher's wonderful new interns, Kelli Tolleson and Jenny Young!

Kelli Tolleson, Geology Educator and SCA Intern

I earned my B.S. in Geology from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL in 2015. I enjoy the whole spectrum of geological sub disciplines from Volcanology to Geomorphology to Paleontology! During 2016 I completed a summer internship at Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument in Idaho, working in the fossil lab and collections. However, it was my hometown interest in invertebrate paleontology (shells) that landed me this exciting internship here in Thacher Park. Come see me at the Visitor Center to discover Thacher's rich cache of invertebrate fossils, or join me on a guided Indian Ladder walk most weekends. I'll also have a kids' activity table set up most afternoons during the summer.

Hi Everyone, I'm **Jenny Young**, the Environmental Education Intern. I'll be working in the Nature Center full time so stop over and say hi. I'm originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota. I went to college at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville majoring in Reclamation, Environment and Conservation and with a minor in Environmental Science. Before this I interned at a Fish and Wildlife Service refuge in Indiana studying Crawfish Frogs. I also interned at the Chincoteague Wildlife refuge in Virginia conducting vegetation management surveys and shorebird surveys. One species of focus that we were monitoring was the Piping Plover, which is an endangered shorebird that spends the summer on the refuge beaches.

Friends of Thacher Park Meeting Dates for 2017

July 12, September 13, and November 8, at 7:00 pm at Thacher Visitor Center. Come join us!

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



Next:

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

Board Meeting

7:00 pm at the new Thacher Visitor Center !

Carnivorous Plants at the Nature Center

Plants that catch and eat insects are fascinating. They run counter to our expectations about how the world works. Such plants live in acid bogs and other places where they can't get enough nitrogen, a key ingredient needed to make proteins and DNA. Carnivorous plants supplement by catching insects.



Purple Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*)
- photo by Geoff Gallice

of digestive juices that act like a plant version of a stomach to dissolve the insects into components that nourish the plant.

Sundews use a different strategy to catch insects to provide the nitrogen they need. Their leaves are covered with sticky glandular hairs that capture unwary insects. Once the insect is thoroughly stuck, the leaf slowly rolls up and glands on the leaf secrete digestive enzymes to dissolve the insect.

The Pitcher Plant has leaves that are modified into a funnel shape. Beneath a lid that keeps out rainwater is a slippery rim. Insects on the rim of the pitcher slide into the funnel where the surface is waxy and the bugs can't crawl out. At the base of the pitcher is a collection

Darwin was fascinated by sundews. He grew them in order to study them. He found the plants that were fed insects had more flowers and seeds than plants denied their prey. (In 1978 a scientist in England counted insects trapped in a sampling of plants in England and estimated that about six million insects were trapped in a bog of about two acres.)



Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*)—photo by Rost'a Kracik

Bogs are common throughout the Adirondacks, but do not occur naturally in Thacher Park. In order that visitors might observe carnivorous plants in a bog ecosystem, a bog display tank, designed by Ed Miller and built by Ryan Cole as an eagle scout project, was constructed outside the Nature Center. The rubber-lined tank contains a floating raft for the plants, which were donated by Ed Miller and Nan Williams. The tank is filled with water from Thompson's Lake and supplemented by rain water. When you are at the Nature Center, find the tank outside to observe Pitcher Plants and Sundews, as well as other bog dwellers: Cranberries, Sphagnum moss and Blue Flag Iris.

-by Sigrin Newell