



Friends of Thacher State Park

Emma T Thacher Nature Center • 87 Nature Center Way • Voorheesville, NY 12186
July—August 2024 • Vol. 28 No. 4

Volunteer Led Native Plant Sale a Success!

This was the first volunteer led and supported native plant sale and it was a resounding success. We sold-out over 1,500 native plants in less than two hours. Clearly there is a strong interest in continuing this sale if possible. The net profit from the sale, after the costs for both organizations are paid was \$3,325.

Over a year and a half ago, Thacher Park staff notified the Friends that due to increasing demands on staff they would no longer be able to fully staff and lead the native plant sale.

After some discussion, the Board of Friends said they would meet with Wild Ones to discuss possibilities. Wild Ones is an organization dedicated to increasing the use of native plants. In addition, they had been working with the park for the last year on the sale.

After an initial meeting in February 2023, Betsey Miller and Bert Shou from the Board of Friends, Rosemary Mix and Kristi Shepler from Wild Ones, and Shannon Duerr from the Nature Center staff decided they would explore what it would take to run a volunteer led and staffed native plant sale with the support of the park.

The native plant sale committee had several major concerns. First and most important, could we find enough volunteers to do all the work necessary to do the sale. This includes potting the plants, watering the plants over 10 weeks, preparing all the publicity and information needed for the sale of these different plants, and staffing the sale itself. Our second concern was how to organize all the parts



Photo shows a line of customers, waiting for the native plant sale to open. Photo by Bert Schou.

needed to complete the sale.

The first step was to make the process easier so we could do it with volunteers. This resulted in the decision to drop the pre-sale which adds a lot of complexity and many more hours of work.

We struggled with how to organize and what we needed to do, without the ongoing support and help from the Nature Center staff, initially Shannon Duerr, who had extensive

experience in putting on the plant sale from start to finish. When she moved on to a new job, much to our chagrin, we were thrilled that Becky Schneider stepped up to the plate.

First big step was determining a theme and selecting the plants. Shannon worked with Rosemary to put together this list. This had to be completed by August. The next step was putting together an MOA, which went smoothly and has worked fine for all three organizations.

A major glitch occurred when the first plants arrived in late February and Rosemary got a call in Panama that the plants were on her doorstep in the snow. There were two problems with this; Rosemary who has the expertise in plants was out of the country, and Betsey who had no experience with potting was in charge. Thanks to the help of two experienced volunteers the initial potting party took place without any further trouble. Since we did not have waterers set to begin for several weeks the park stepped up and took care of the 47 plants until the other plants arrived.

Another glitch was the weather, which was much colder than normal and was too cold to move plants out to the greenhouse. The Nature Center staff allowed us to keep 1,000 plants in the center until the weather broke and we could move them to the greenhouse. Next step was watering which began as soon as the major potting started in mid-March.

Publicity was done primarily by Wild Ones volunteer Kristi Shepler. Kristi created an amazing poster and lots of Facebook posts.

While the 1000+ plants were being tended at Thacher, another 500 plants were started from the seeds gathered in the annual seed swap run by Wild Ones at Thacher in fall. These were raised by Wild Ones at Rosemary's home with the assistance of volunteers.

In total, 49 volunteers contributed to the success of this event, and they contributed over 250 hours of time. This did not include the time of the Sale Committee, particularly

Rosemary Mix who took on the major tasks of overseeing all the potting parties both at Thacher and her own home, and coordinated all the watering. Finally, the day of the sale required many volunteers for set up, check out, to answer questions, and do everything else that needed to be done.

We are grateful for all the volunteers who stepped forward to help our environment by adding 1,500 native plants which feed and shelter local birds and insects, and to park staff who assisted with planning, housing, watering, and transportation of plants to the sale.

To continue this sale in 2025 we need volunteers. Please contact Betsey Miller bmiller15@nycap.rr.com or 518-461-1177 (cell phone). If you were a volunteer this year, Rosemary will be reaching out to you to see if you can help us again next year.

- by Betsey Miller

I Love My Park Day 2024 – A big THANK YOU to all our volunteers!



Hard to believe that was two months ago already. Photos by Bert Schou.

Friends of Thacher Park Meeting Dates for 2024

Meeting dates are July 10, September 11, and November 13.

7:00 pm at Thacher Visitor Center. Come join us!

“Tricam Project” First Ascent Reaching new heights at Thacher



Local rock climber and route developer Jeff Moss climbs a Thacher route known as “Activate Your Almonds” rated at 5.12a. Photo by Jeff Martino.

A major milestone has been achieved for the Thacher rock climbing community. The route previously known simply as the Tricam Project was first ascended on May 24 by Ryan Almeida of Manorville (Long Island). The route difficulty is rated at 5.13 which is near the top of the 5.1-5.15 Yosemite

Decimal System scale. Routes at this rating are typically only climbed by elite and professional-level athletes.

The open project was named after a piece of tattered, old rock climbing gear known as a “tricam” that was found in a crack near the bottom of the route. While it is unknown how long the tricam was there, it was discovered by local route developer Jeff Moss, who cleaned and bolted the route back in 2016.

It is tradition for the first ascensionist of a route to have naming rights after it has been climbed free. Ryan has renamed the route “Peregrine” for the fast-diving bird of prey that can sometimes be spotted within the park. Ryan has uploaded a full-length video of himself climbing the route on YouTube.

The Thacher Climbing Coalition hopes that this route will attract other elite-level athletes to the park and promote Thacher as a climbing destination in the Northeast. “It’s absolutely wild to see someone finally send this climb.” said TCC president Dan Weber. “It’s a stunning line through the most impressive section of the climbing area and it really opens up more possibilities there in the Cave Wall and throughout the park.”

Several climbing walls were temporarily closed in late spring due to the peregrine falcons nesting in the area. The early June reopening allows TCC to continue with new route development plans this season. There are other ongoing projects happening for the team as well. Most notably, the coalition is managing the installation of a staircase that will provide better access to the climbing area. The addition will eliminate the need to traverse through the narrow cavern colloquially known as the “squeeze.” Plans for the staircase were conditionally approved by the park.

Aside from the peregrine, TCC has worked closely with park staff to ensure longevity of other rare and threatened species as well. Among these species are the little brown bats that live within Hailes Cave and an evergreen cliff-loving fern known as “Smooth Cliffbrake” that grows along the walls of the Escarpment.

While the first ascent of “Peregrine” and the conditional approval of the staircase are monumental achievements, the coalition also plans to conduct several route cleaning days to clear the climbing walls of potential falling debris. The team also has a trail maintenance day planned for later this summer.

Thacher Climbing Coalition is a non-profit organization that’s entirely supported by volunteers and donations, and climbers are encouraged to get involved. For more info, visit: climbthacher.org.

Note: The full length article can be read online in the June edition of the Adirondack Sports newspaper at adksports.com.

- by Jeff Martino



Nick Meyer makes an attempt to climb the route formerly known as “Tricam project.” - Photo courtesy of Elena Perez.

Check for updates at www.friendsofthacherpark.org

Officers of the Friends Board of Trustees

Interim President:	Laure-Jeanne Davignon	(518) 578-4718
Vice President:		
Treasurer:	Betsey Miller	(518) 869-0739
Secretary:	Christine Gervasi	(518) 872-1501
	Immediate former President: John Kilroy	

Other Trustees

Jim Schaller	(518) 861-7452	John Kilroy	(518) 872 -1501
Chuck Ver Straeten	(518) 872-2223	Jill Harbeck	
Bert Schou	(518) 221-8693	Margaret Naughton	(518) 391-0261

As always, call (518) 872-0800 or (518) 872-1237 to verify activity times and dates.

Please feel free to call board members with questions or suggestions.

Many thanks to Betsey Miller, Bert Schou, Jeff Martino and Victoria Gellatly for their contributions to this newsletter.

— Christine Gervasi (Editor)

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



<https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/>

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Next:

Board Meeting

7:00 pm at Thacher Visitor Center

Ephemeral Beauty

The Cecropia Moth (*Hyalophora cecropia*) is a member of the Saturniidae family, and North America's largest species of moth. These moths have fuzzy, reddish-brown bodies, feathery antennae, and dark brown or black wings with an eyespot and white, red, and brown bands. Females are typically larger than males and can have a wingspan of up to seven inches!

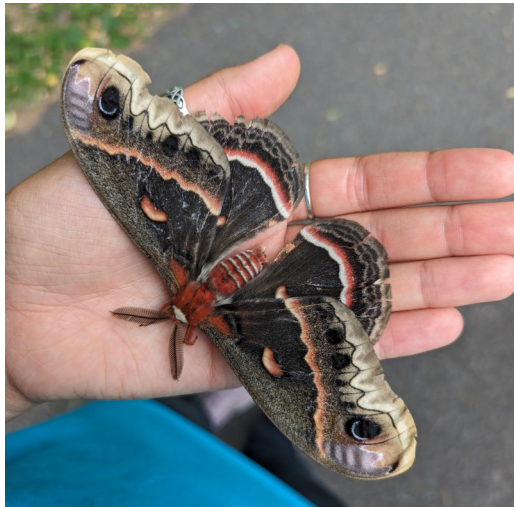


Photo by Victoria Gellatly.

Despite their large size and striking coloration, they are rarely seen, as they are nocturnal and spend daylight hours hiding in vegetation. Cecropia Moths are a univoltine species, meaning they produce only one brood in a year. Females lay groups of up to one hundred eggs on the leaves of host plants, which hatch into caterpillars in 10-14 days. The caterpillars go through five larval instar stages, feasting on many common trees and shrubs, evidently with a preference for birch and maple, before

spinning a cocoon. The adult moths emerge in the late spring to early summer, at which point their only remaining goal is finding a mate, which may involve long distance flights. Like other giant silk moth species, Cecropia Moths emerge from the chrysalis with vestigial mouthparts and no digestive tract. As such, adults are sustained by the energy reserves they built up as caterpillars and only survive for about two weeks.

So if the population is considered stable, they are rarely seen, and they don't directly impact humans, why do we care? For starters, we should care because they are really cool and absolutely gorgeous! But more importantly, we should care because they contribute to biodiversity, which is essential for maintaining balance in the environment and supporting all life on earth. And that, I think, is really cool too.

- by Victoria Gellatly

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