

VHT Pathfinder

The Official Newsletter of Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.

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This coal was high grade, clean burning coal called anthracite. Its nickname became the Black Diamond. (Page 1)

We are planning our Adirondack hikes for 2008. If you are interested in joining us or need more information, give us a call. (Page 2)

A good reference book is "Snow Trails", written and published by Rich and Sue Freeman. (Page 4)

Anyone can snowshoe, from kids to adults—there's not much of a learning curve. (Page 5)

Large boulders will be placed near the trestle. (Page 6)

Lehigh Trail Trestle Decking Complete

By Dave Wright

The trestle on the Lehigh Valley Railroad was built over 100 years ago to carry steam locomotives pulling freight cars full of coal from the mines in Pennsylvania to Upstate New York. The tracks went west through Mendon and Rush, across the Genesee River and all the way to Buffalo. From there the coal was loaded onto lake freighters and shipped to western Great Lakes cities like Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago.

This coal was high grade, clean burning coal called anthracite. Its nickname became the Black Diamond.

In 1896, a new passenger train was put into service to help offset the declining use of freight train service. Known as "The Black Diamond Express", it was one of the most elegant trains ever built. Running between New York City and Buffalo, it was a 10 hour trip. One train left each city at noon, so most of the trip was during daylight hours. And it traversed some of the most beautiful countryside.

The Black Diamond last ran through Victor in May, 1959. Freight trains stopped running in 1976. Sections of the railway were sold off to other

(Continued on page 6.)

Apple Farm Bridge Dedication and Trail Addition

By Dave Wright

The new bridge on the Apple Farm property that extends the Seneca Trail farther south by crossing Great Brook was dedicated on Sunday, November 4, 2007. Approximately 20 people attended the ceremony and then enjoyed a wonderful lunch at the Bahai's home.

The trail will be extended to the south, by-passing a small pond created by some active beaver.

There is also a trail that comes from the bridge to the Apple Farm Store. It is the Yellow trail and shows on our interactive map on our website. Check out the map and the trail.



Munir Bahai and Dave Wright cut the ribbon.



Enjoying the new bridge.

Photos by Chauncy Young

HIKES FOR 2008

VHT 2008 Officers:

Dave Wright- Chairman
 Jeff Hennick- Vice Chairman
 Nat Fisher- Secretary
 Chauncy Young- Treasurer
 Carol MacInnes- Trailmaster
 Larry Fisher- Trail Boss
 David Coleman- Membership
 Ruth Nellis- Education
 Open- Historian

VHT Pathfinder

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The Victor Hiking Trails Pathfinder is published quarterly for the members of Victor Hiking Trails, Inc. We encourage submissions of letters, editorial items and advertising pertaining to trails, Victor and the environment.

To submit articles for the *VHT Pathfinder*, please contact:

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- Jan. 12- Mendon Ponds. National Winter Trails Day. Meet at 100 Acre Pond at 9:30 AM Dress for the weather. Cross Country ski or snowshoe, weather permitting.
- Feb. 9- Harriet Hollister. Cross Country ski or snowshoe. There is usually good snow because of the high elevation. Bring a bag lunch and something to drink.
- Mar. 8- Dryer Road Park. Meet there at 9:00 AM. Ski or snowshoe. If there is snow, the trails may be groomed.
- Apr. 12- Canadice Lake Trail.
- May 10- Browncroft Road / Irondequoit wetland trails.
- May 31- Victor Railroad Festival and Inaugural Train Excursion.
- Jun. 7- National Trails Day. Hike Victor Trails.
- June 14- Bike ride
- Jul. 12- Robert H. Treman State Park / Buttermilk Falls State Park
- Aug. 9- Fillmore Glen State Park
- Sep. 6- Hang Around Victor Day
- Sep. 6- Bare Hill Ring of Fire supper picnic and evening hike
- Oct. 11- Swifts Landing
- Nov. 8- Finger Lakes Trail, Bristol Section
- Dec. 13- Sherwood parcel (Penfield)

Note: Please check the message line at 585-234-8226 for details. All hikes meet at Victor Town Hall rear parking lot at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Most hikes are relatively easy and take 2-4 hours. We usually car pool to the trailhead. If you

have any questions regarding any of the hikes, or if you have suggestions for places to hike, please leave a message.

We are planning our Adirondack hikes for 2008. If you are interested in joining us or need more information, give us a call.



Past Hikes

Oct. 13- Finger Lakes Trail- On a chilly morning six hikers and one dog drove to Prattsburg, New York, after stopping briefly at Bob & Ruth's in Naples, New York to meet any additional hikers (there were none). After placing a car at the north end of the proposed route, they hiked a 4.77 mile section of the Bristol Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail. Those hiking were: Bob Kelly, Nan and Woody Woodring, Rebecca Jones, Jim Heliotis, David Coleman and "Mountain" (all members of Victor Hiking Trails). Temperatures stayed cool, even at the lunch time break a fleece was still required. Fall colors were partially on display. They returned to Victor about 3:00 PM.

Nov. 10- Webster Trails- Approximately 20 Cub Scouts from Greece, along with their parents or adult supervisors, joined us for a hike on some of the newest trails in the Town of Webster. We were fortunate to have Don Baird, the designer and leader for the blazing and clearing of these trails, guide us and explain the history of the property and the importance of the land to our region. The hike was about 4 miles long and covered old growth woods and open fields. We did not realize that Webster had such great hills and woods. It was a great day for a great hike on some wonderful trails.

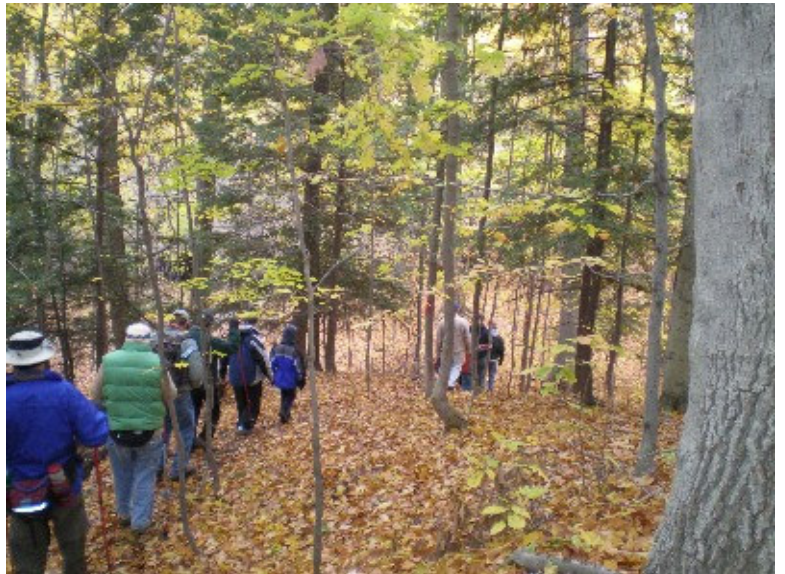


Photo by Dave Wright

Dec. 8- Seabreeze and Durand Eastman Park- Eight hikers braved the cold winds and frozen lake shore to hike one of the newest trails in our region. The hike began in Durand Eastman Park and traversed the trails out to Lakeshore Blvd. The new trail follows along Lake Ontario, east across Tamarack Swamp on a new bridge and then through some wooded area, coming out onto Culver Road at Sea Breeze. The group followed the road to the bridge where Irondequoit Creek empties into Lake Ontario. Some ventured out on the pier to the lighthouse. Then it was back



Photo by Chauncy Young

Winter Hiking, Skiing and Snowshoeing

Are you looking for some winter fun? When the ground is covered in white, grab some cross country skis or snowshoes and head out for a trail.

Don't know where to go? There are hundreds of places open to recreational skiers and snowshoers in our region. All of the parks that have trails for hiking during the other three seasons can be accessed in the winter. Some of the parks, like Mendon Ponds and Harriet Hollister Spencer Memorial Recreation Area, have groomed trails. If we get enough snow, the trails in our own Dryer Road Park will have some groomed trails.

A good reference book is "*Snow Trails*", written and published by Rich and Sue Freeman. This book, available at EMS, Borders Bookstore, Barnes & Noble as well as other stores, has information on nearly 80 locations in Central and Western New York.

Here is what they say about a few that are close to our area:

Durand Eastman Park-

- 5.5 miles of trails & unplowed roads
- Novice to intermediate
- Moderate hills
- Open picnic shelters
- Long, steep, curving downhill runs and open meadow trails. Some wooded trails.

Seneca Park-

- 3 miles of trails
- Novice
- Rolling hills
- Visit the zoo while you are there.

Webster Park-

- 6 miles of marked trails with numbers
- Novice to intermediate
- Moderate hills
- Picnic shelters
- Extensive trails with many loops

Powder Mills Park-

- 8 miles of trails
- Novice, intermediate and advanced
- Hilly and wooded
- Picnic shelters. Heated ones can be reserved for the day.
- Small downhill ski hill for beginners
- Visit the fish hatchery while you are there.

Mendon Ponds Park-

- 20 miles of ski trails
- 2 miles of snowshoe trails
- Novice, intermediate and advanced
- Flat areas and hills. Open and wooded.
- Many trail intersections are numbered
- Some trails are groomed
- Warming hut and bathrooms at the Nature Center, Hopkins Point and beach area.
- Open picnic shelters
- Local high schools use the race course for practice and meets.

Cumming Nature Center-

- 15 miles of ski trails
- 2 miles of snowshoe trails
- Novice, intermediate and advanced
- Flat areas and hills. Open and wooded.
- Some trails are groomed, some are tracked
- Warming hut and bathrooms at Visitor's Center
- There is a charge to use the trails and they have rental equipment available

Harriet Hollister Spencer-

- 16 miles of trails, some groomed
- Novice, intermediate and advanced
- Rolling side hills, wooded and open
- Numbered signs at trail intersections, trail markers and degree of difficulty
- Picnic shelter, bathrooms

Dryer Road Park and Fishers Park have multi-use trails ideal for skiing and snowshoeing. The Auburn and Lehigh Trails are flat, but good exercise on a nice winter day.

This is just a small sample of the variety of winter trails that are less than an hours drive from your home. The cost is minimal, the time can be whatever you want and the health benefits, both physically and mentally, are immeasurable.

Join us on one of our upcoming scheduled monthly winter hikes (see schedule on page 2) or take advantage of the snow when it is fresh.

For more information about Rich and Sue Freeman's books, visit their website at www.footprintpress.com.

Get Started Snowshoeing

by Ellen Moran

1. Go anywhere

Too icy to go for a run? Get running snowshoes. Snow too deep? Get recreational snowshoes and go on a day hike. Want to cross the Presidential Range in January? Get really warm boots and some burly snowshoes. Skiers and riders: do you covet that line in the backcountry? Snowshoes are a great way to ascend steep slopes and are compact enough to strap on your pack for a quick descent. Snowshoes are the SUVs of winter sports and can tackle all kinds of terrain.

2. Involve the entire family

Anyone can snowshoe, from kids to adults—there's not much of a learning curve. Take the whole family out of the stuffy house or hermetically-sealed office. Grab an animal track book and have the kids figure out what critters are bounding around the woods. Avoid cabin fever and start exploring the winter wonderland by snowshoe.

3. Choose the right size

There are two major factors that influence your snowshoe choice: your weight and snow depth. The more you weigh, the bigger the snowshoe needed. And the deeper the snow, the larger the snowshoe needed. To find the best size, consult snowshoe size charts online or in a store that sells them.

4. Choose the right style

A snowshoe style/model is generally affected by your activity/sport as well as snow conditions. Eastern Mountain Sports sells several types of shoes by activity.

Recreational: If you're planning to get out in the yard, on the road, or hike a flat trail, recreational models are the best value and require no maintenance.

Backpacking/Mountaineering: Access the backcountry, or tackle steep and icy summits and unmarked trails. These snowshoes have aggressive crampons and are ultra tough.

Fitness/Racing: Get an aerobic low-impact workout that burns fat and builds strength. Runners, give pavement-pounding a rest. Cyclists, develop biking-specific muscles on hill workouts.

Also check out the product features, especially the bindings, which secure your boot to the snowshoe. A fixed binding excels at crossing steep terrain or backing up yet can kick snow on the back of your legs. A pivot binding sheds snow more easily and reduces leg fatigue when walking but can be awkward when climbing or backing up.

5. Dress to match your activity

Match your clothing to your activity, be it hiking, backpacking, or running. Dress in layers. Start with wicking long underwear to stay dry. Wear wind-resistant outerwear, and bring insulating layers as needed. If you are running or hiking steep hills, bring a day pack so you can bring an extra base layer and add or remove layers as needed.

6. Match boots to your activity

Wear boots that match your activity, whether it's waterproof hiking boots or trail-running shoes. A mountaineer can use plastic boots like Koflach® or Scarpa®. If you're telemarking or snowboarding, you may be able to wear your boots, but it depends on the binding design. Get wool or synthetic socks with wicking liners to avoid sweat and blisters, plus gaiters to keep snow out of your boots.

7. Bring the right accessories

Trekking poles are handy for balance, negotiating steep terrain, or adding an extra element to your workout by using your upper body. Bring the usual suspects: hat, gloves, extra pair of gloves, sunglasses, plenty of water, and energy snacks (Pop Tarts® sort of count), animal track book, day pack. Don't forget heat packs for the cold-blooded folks in your party. And bring headlamps if it's early or late in the day. Check your stuff before you go. Are the snowshoes in good repair and bindings OK? Are your favorite hiking boots still waterproof?

8. Pick your trail—or create one

Snowshoeing isn't confined to established trails. Try the local golf course. Snowmobile trails are great, but do not assume the snowmobile drivers can see you—especially at night. If you want to try racing, visit some snowshoe company websites, such as Tubbs or Atlas. If you see cross-country ski tracks, do not walk over them. Unfamiliar with the area you want to snowshoe in? Find a local outdoor shop and ask the staff.

9. Take your first steps

To snowshoe, just step in and go! It can help to stretch out your hips and hamstrings once you've warmed up a bit, as you use a wider stance on snowshoes and long steps—which may cause sore muscles at first. Your poles also give you support and help you stay balanced.

As you start ascending hills, you'll want to use the toe of your boots to dig into the snow. Your snowshoe has crampons underneath your bindings that will grip the hill. When you descend, plant your feet firmly and avoid leaning back, so your toe crampons get traction (unless you have mountaineering snowshoes which also have heel crampons).

(Continued on page 7.)

Lehigh Trail Trestle

(Continued from page 1.)

railroad companies, local municipalities or adjoining landowners. In the case of the section in Victor from the Mendon town line to just short of Route 251, the Town of Victor purchased the property. Some members of the Town Board thought it would be best to have the trestle torn down and sold for the value of its scrap steel. Fortunately, some people with vision prevailed and the trestle remained intact.

The Town Parks Dept, the Town Highway Dept. and Victor Hiking Trails combined forces and resources, along with a grant from The Genesee Region Trails Coalition, and help from Fishers Associates to redeck the trestle for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Three weekends and many man and woman-hours of labor were required to complete the task. Special thanks to Chauncy Young, Brian Emelson and their crews for their hard work.

Some finishing touches remain to be done. There will be wooden approaches on each side at each end for safety. Large boulders will be placed near the trestle. And there will be interruptative signs that explain the history of the railroad.

Here are some pictures of the work involved in making the old trestle safe for hikers and bikers.



Before the start of the project.



Joe Logan, our civil engineer, gave a hand too.



Anchoring the stringers and posts.



Supporting the posts at the bottom.



Almost done.

Photos by Dave Wright and Chauncy Young

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Your investment will be used to offset the cost of this newsletter and put more money into trail improvements.

If you are interested, call 585-234-8226 and leave your name and phone number.

(Continued from page 5.)

10. Stay safe, hydrated, energized Bring plenty of high-energy food and water because snowshoeing burns through both quickly. Instead of stopping for a half hour to eat and getting cold, try stopping several times for shorter periods. Bring along a small thermos with hot liquid.

If the snow is deep, take turns breaking trail, kind of like drafting on a bike. If you're in the backcountry, get avalanche training—people usually trigger avalanches themselves. Tell someone where you are, and always know the weather. Bring a small emergency kit with duct tape for patching

holes, and wire or tie-wraps for securing broken straps. If you're using poles, just duct tape your little kit to the bottom.

Now go have fun! Or as we say in snowshoeing, float on!

Ellen Moran selects, tests, and sells snowshoes at Eastern Mountain Sports.



Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.
85 East Main Street
Victor, NY 14564



Filling the gaps in Victor

Check out our website at
www.victorhikingtrails.org

Message line:
585-234-8226

**Want to save a tree, get this newsletter sooner and in color?
Send an e-mail to David Coleman at dcoleman@victorhikingtrails.org and
ask to be added to the Newsletter Electronic Mailing List.**

Time to renew your membership?

Please look at the mailing label.

The first line contains the month and year that your membership expires.

If you are past due, please send a check today.

Yes, I want to join / renew membership in VHT!

Name _____ Date _____

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I can help with: Trail Acquisition _____ Trail Maintenance _____ Trail hikes _____
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Make check payable to: VICTOR HIKING TRAILS, INC.

And mail to: 85 EAST MAIN STREET, VICTOR, NY 14564