



VHT Pathfinder

33+ YEARS AND GROWING

Victor Hiking Trails
Summer 2024

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Your membership dollars help fund the creation, improvement, and maintenance of our 70+ miles of trails, bridges, boardwalks, benches, and signs; providing a wide variety of outdoor recreational and educational opportunities for Victor and the surrounding community.

Spring 2024 Update on Lehigh Crossing Park Project

By Barb Starr

This is our second spring working at Lehigh Crossing Park. The Pond at Lehigh is the focus of a special project of Victor Hiking Trails working closely with Victor Parks & Rec. We began last year by installing some nest boxes for birds close to the pond (a family of Tree Swallows took up residence of one within a few weeks) and adding some logs to the pond to give more basking spaces for the Painted Turtles (I counted 30 of all sizes early this spring on a sunny day) that live in and nearby the pond. We took a closer look, focused on small areas at a time, had fun and felt a sense of accomplishment. Additional work parties were scheduled to tackle the daunting task of at least creating an opening in front of the bench that was looking at a 12 foot high wall of invasive grass called Common Reed or Phragmites. We also targeted some large Autumn Olive shrubs, Multiflora Rose, and non-native Honeysuckle shrubs. We knew this would not be permanent without frequent re-visits, and the pond kept beckoning us to return.

A year later, Spring 2024, both nest boxes alongside the pond are occupied by Tree Swallows. The Phragmites in the areas of our intensive work are returning, but definitely are subdued. The native sedges have outdone themselves this spring, something I barely noticed last year under the cover of Phragmites. Shrubs that we added early last summer, mostly Button Bush and Common Ninebark, native flowering shrubs that love having wet feet, are holding their own, probably too young to bloom this year, but perhaps next year? A small patch of Common Milkweed near the pond has emerged, along with the return of Swamp Milkweed and Butterfly Weed (all essential for the charismatic Monarch Butterfly). I find the scent of the flower of the Common Milkweed to be intoxicating, a scent that is one of the ways invertebrates find their way to such plants. This is the perfect area for a waystation where Monarchs should be passing through from July into fall, if we can encourage the milkweeds to flourish.

(continued on page 6)

VHT 2024 Officers:

Dave Wright– Chairman
 Lisa Roberts– Vice Chairman
 Barb Starr– Secretary
 Ruth Rugaber– Treasurer
 Scott Reinhart– Trailmaster
 Chauncy Young– Trail Boss
 Larry Fisher– Membership
 Jeff Miller – Education
 Open— Volunteer
 Coordinator
**Open — Social Media
 Coordinator**
 Jeff Hennick— Webmaster
Open—Parks Liaison

VHT MONTHLY HIKES**2024 Hikes**

Jul 13— Naples Trails by the Creeks
 Aug 10— Chimney Bluffs
 Aug 31—Ring of Fire evening hike at Bare Hill
 Sep 14— Hometown Days and Climb Aboard Victor, Village walk
 Oct 12—TBD
 Nov 9—TBD
 Dec 14—TBD

Jun 30—Muller Field Station
 Jul 28—Geology and Historic Iron Mining
 Aug 25—Canandaigua Lake Front Tour
 Sep 29—NY Museum of Transportation, West Henrietta, NY
 Oct 27—Mushrooms and Fungi at Zurich Bog, Lyons, NY

Green are Educational walks and meet at 2:00 PM

Note: Please check the message line at 585-234-8226 for details and last minute updates. Also, if you join <https://www.meetup.com/Victor-Hiking-Trails-Meetup>, you will get notifications of hikes and other events, reminders if you are signed up for a hike, and last minute changes.

All hikes meet at Victor Town Hall rear parking lot, 85 East Main Street, at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. Most hikes are relatively easy and take 2-3 hours. Always bring a snack and something to drink. Dress for the weather. We rarely cancel due to inclement weather.

As noted in our schedule there are several educational hikes planned for 2024. These are usually on a Sunday afternoon, starting at 2:00 PM.

We usually carpool from Victor Town Hall to the trailhead. Expect to share the cost of gas with the driver. If you have any questions regarding any of the hikes, or if you have suggestions for places to hike, please leave a message at the VHT Message Line, 585-234-8226.

Again this year we have scheduled several hikes in Victor or the surrounding communities. We are also leading shorter and easier hikes to encourage families and younger hikers to join us. Wednesday morning we meet at the Victor Farmington Library at 9:00 AM for a short, easy walk.

Additional hikes with the Victor PTSA may be scheduled throughout the year.

We only hike as fast as the slowest hikers, so don't worry about not keeping up. If we need to split into more than one group, that is not a problem.
Come enjoy the fun.

NOTE: There are several hiking Meetup groups in our area that schedule hikes in Victor. If you like to hike, join those Meetup groups as well.

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.
 Ask about our rates. To submit articles for the *VHT Pathfinder*, please contact:

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www.VictorHikingTrails.org

Also on Facebook,
 Instagram, YouTube
 and Meetup
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Past Hikes

Apr 13— Ganondagan State Historic Site. We are a special breed that hikes in all kinds of weather, be it hot and humid, cold and rainy, frozen and windy, or pleasant with a cool breeze. But apparently, not everyone wants to hike in a downpour. So when the two hike leaders were the only ones who showed up, they decided to go to breakfast. No photos were taken.

May 11— Mertensia Park, Bluebells. This was an early Spring and an easy winter, so we almost missed the bluebells. There were still plenty along the creek, but they were definitely past their peak. Most of the group hiked about 2.5 miles while two went about 6 miles.



Jun 1— National Trails Day. Attendance was lower than past years because many groups like us in our region were also celebrating trails. We had more volunteers than people who signed up to hike. So most of the volunteers went on one of three hikes. Barb Starr led a bird watching hike around the fields between the Lehigh Valley Trail and Fishers park. Dave Wright led a group on the Lehigh Valley Trail, through Fishers Park, on a short section of the Auburn Trail, through the Domine property and back on the Lehigh Valley Trail for 3.4 miles. Chauncy led the fast-paced, longer hike covering about 5 miles in 90 minutes. Everyone enjoyed the pizza and drinks for lunch and then a few hiked or drove to Lehigh Crossing Park to see the work that Barb Starr and volunteers have accomplished.



Jun 8—ADK Outdoor Expo. Another great day meeting people who like to hike and telling them about the trails in Victor. The wind was blowing all day, but that didn't deter the hikers that followed Chauncy up and down the hills at Mendon Ponds Park.

Educational Hikes

Mar 24— Oxbow and Harts Woods, Perinton Thank you to Perinton town historian, Bill Poray for leading the group on a very interesting hike, learning the history of the Oxbow community that spent their summers in cabins on the canal in Fairport. We also learned about the history of hart's Woods and hiked on the trails.



Apr 27—Invasive Species (Naples)

A small group of folks interested in learning how to identify invasive plants and why they are harmful to our region listened to retired FLCC professor Dr. Bruce Gilman as they walked along Naples Creek. Thank you Bruce for sharing your knowledge with VHT members.



May 26—Bird Watching at Washington Grove The guide, Patti Pirz – co-owner of "The Bird House" (Monroe Ave.), talked about, and helped identify wild birds, and more. It was prime nesting season, so many members brought their binoculars to help identify the birds.



Photos by Jeff Miller

Trail Maintenance and Projects

Our regular trail maintenance is in full swing with mowing, hedge trimming, painting the blazes and getting the lower weeds with the string trimmer.

One major project recently was a temporary reroute of the section of the Seneca Trail south of County Road 41. A colony of beavers decided that Great Brook would make a wonderful pond, just north of our truss bridge. They flooded the trail on the west side of the creek, making it impossible to follow the trail with a good pair of hip boots.



Current situation

A call to action was made and in less than two days a new trail was cut and a temporary bridge was built upstream so hikers and bikers can enjoy the trail and maybe see a beaver at work. Thank you to volunteers from GROC, TrailsRoc and VHT.



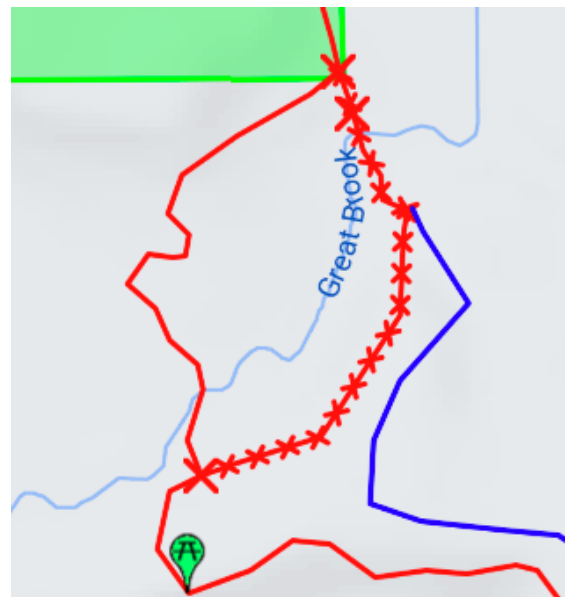
New temporary bridge.

The long range solution is an elevated boardwalk from the bridge to higher ground. Life Scout Logan Springer and Troop 61 will take on the project as soon as all of the paperwork is signed. The 120 foot long boardwalk will cost \$4500 for lumber and hardware. **Please consider making a donation to help with this worthy project.**

You can do it online here.

victorhikingtrails.org/vhtform.php?for=Springer

When Logan is ready to start construction, look for a call for help on our Meetup Page.



(continued from page 1)

I am seeing some other butterflies that I did not see last year. We protected an area where a plant called Pussytoes, a host plant for the American Lady Butterfly, ekes out its existence in a sunbaked, rocky, thin substrate where little else will grow but those tenacious plants that have adapted to the terrain. They will continue to return each year if we don't mow them down on a weekly basis. A few weeks ago, I was able to capture a photo of one of the American Lady Butterflies who was visiting the Pussytoes. My hope is that they were attaching some eggs to the silvery, velvety leaves. Last week, I photographed a Little Wood Satyr Butterfly in the open field. Multiple species of Dragonflies and Damselflies are back patrolling the pond. Northern Leopard Frogs called out for a few weeks in early spring, followed by Bullfrogs (they are native to our area), and Green Frogs. That distinctive "plop-splash" you hear is one of the many frogs jumping into the water just before you get a chance to take a good look. And if you stand at the edge of the pond, you can clearly see Bluegills (fish) come to see what you might offer to them. A great place to bring budding young girls and boys to learn to fish.



The view of the pond.

Our most ambitious work party this year took place 4/27/24. Much preparation went into this project of adding 28 1-2 year old native shrubs purchased by Parks & Rec from Ontario County Soil & Water, a very cost effective way of purchasing plants. Starting with small plants is recommended as preferable to getting larger specimens that require more care and input, not to mention a much higher price tag. Having volunteers to plant is an additional bonus. We were fortunate to have 6 very capable VHS Key Club members with 6 very capable adults, to dig the holes, and plant our shrubs. Sites on either side of the blue picnic table were chosen for half the plants, and another 14 were planted above the pond in a small wooded area that we had cleared earlier this spring. The clearing revealed a stand of Gray Dogwood, Nannyberry, Black Cherry, various violets, American Tree Moss, Sensitive Fern and several other native plants valuable to wildlife. Adding Elderberry, Flowering White Dogwood, American Hazelnut, Red Osier Dogwood and a few others should help make an area suitable for demonstration of how these natives enhance the surroundings and are perhaps even suitable to landscapes around our homes.

Small triumphs, but so worth the effort. VHT volunteers and nearby neighbors have attended work parties since spring 2023. Most months have had at least 3 parties, sometimes with only 2 volunteers, but often with 4 or 5. The parties generally last less than 2 hours on weekday mornings or afternoons. Several volunteers have returned multiple times. Few things in life are more valuable than our hands-on time spent in a worthwhile endeavor, and I believe few things are more rewarding. Come join us as we continue to work on keeping Phragmites in check, enhancing the area for the growth of wonderful native plants that the lives of all the wildlife at Lehigh Crossing Park depend upon. Ultimately, we all depend on this web of life, but that is another long story. The rewards for such work, the peace one feels in the quiet (we primarily work with hand tools), the wonder of all you see with a close-up look (we take time to stop to see a fluttering butterfly or a gliding Heron), the camaraderie you experience with others who care (we do carry on some conversations, especially when we are done), are incalculable.

Wednesday Library Walkers

This group continues to grow. There are some regulars that attend every week and there are some new faces that heard that we are a fun, friendly, easy going group.

If you like short (2-3 miles), easy paced (25 to 30 minutes per mile) easy (mostly flat with a few slopes occasionally) hikes, this is for you.

Come to the Victor Farmington Library (VFL) at 9:00 AM on Wednesday and join the group. If it's raining or cold, dress for the weather.



After the hike you can have a beverage or some nourishment at a local restaurant and get to know the other hikers.

Trail Maintenance Volunteers at Work and Relaxing



Just finished a section of the Seneca Trail.



Just relaxing after working hard.

Check the meetup page for the next work session.

VHT Dues

The VHT Board of Directors have struggled with the minimum dues for members for quite a while. After much research and deliberation, the Board decided to raise the minimum annual dues from \$10 to \$20.

Most of the members are families or couples with a few individuals.

Most members donate at the \$20 or above level.

Most of our costs such as gasoline, lumber, fasteners, paint, and tools have risen recently.

We have kept the dues at \$10 since before 2004.

We also revamped the higher levels and added a lifetime membership level.

- \$20 Trail Explorer
- \$100 Trail Blazer
- \$250 Trail Builder
- \$500 Trail Benefactor
- \$1000 Lifetime Member

And of course, we are a 501(c)3 corporation, depending greatly on dues and donations.

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All VHT newsletters are now available on our website.
View it and download it in full color.

Annual membership is for 12 months, beginning when you first join. Please send your renewal check, or renew online using PayPal, promptly so we can continue to create new and improved shared-use trails.

Making Connections in Victor

Check out our website at
www.victorhikingtrails.org

Join us on Facebook!

And Meetup!

Post your photos on Instagram

See VHT videos on YouTube



VHT Map Link

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

Name _____ **Date** _____

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Please note that we need your e-mail address to notify you when the latest edition of our newsletter is available on our website.

I can help with: Trail Acquisition _____ Trail Maintenance _____ Trail hikes _____
 Newsletter _____ Fund Raising _____ Special Events _____ History / Education _____

Amount submitted \$20 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ \$1000 _____ other \$ _____

Sustaining Monthly Donation of \$ _____

Corporate membership at \$1000 per year allows all employees to be members.

Victor Hiking Trails, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization.

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 And mail to: 85 EAST MAIN STREET
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