



# VHT Pathfinder

**33+ YEARS AND GROWING**

Victor Hiking Trails  
Winter 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.*

## **2025 Goals and a Focus on the Birds at Lehigh Crossing Pond**

*By Barb Starr, Native Plant Enthusiast and VHT Secretary*

The ultimate goal at Lehigh Crossing Pond is to revitalize the area in and around the pond to enhance habitat for wildlife. This is a special project of VHT working closely with Victor Parks and Recreation. This in turn is enjoyed by families, individuals, scouts, students, hikers, bikers, anglers and others. These are opportunities to observe and explore, primarily passively, that bring surprises and revelations, as well as peace and release from the stresses we all experience in our rush through busy days.

As we look forward to 2025, our activities will continue, perhaps attracting more volunteers for a few hours or more. Our efforts will help keep the invasive phragmites, autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, and multiflora rose at bay, in targeted areas. For 2024, work parties commenced 3/1/24. Our last party this year was 11/21/24. Parties averaged about 4 volunteers per event, (2 to 10 participants) with a total of at least 33 work events between March and November. For 2023, the number was 25. The total number of individuals that have attended parties over the past 2 years is 34. These work details occurred once per week, most often on Thursday mornings, with a number of participants coming multiple weeks, and a few coming once or twice. They are posted on the VHT MeetUp app. Sessions usually last about 2 hours, short enough to fit in the schedules of most volunteers. Any amount of time given is greatly appreciated!

Initially, simple interventions included adding logs to the pond, mostly for the benefit of turtles. Thanks to Chauncy Young, several more were introduced to the pond edges this year as well. The next day turtles were using some of the additional logs.



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**VHT 2025 Officers:**

Lisa Roberts– Chair

Nancy Fisher– Vice-Chair

Barb Starr– Secretary

Ruth Rugaber– Treasurer

Scott Reinhart– Trail Blazer

Chauncy Young– Trail Boss

Larry Fisher– Membership

Jeff Miller – Education

**Open— Community  
Engagement Director**Jeff Hennick— Information  
DirectorDave Wright– Business Opera-  
tions Director**VHT MONTHLY HIKES****2025 Hikes****Jan 1– First Day Hike. Meet at Fishers Fire Station #1, 9 AM.****Jan 11– Hike at Ganondagan State Historic Site, 9 AM.****Feb 8– Hike at Boughton Park starting at Boughton Road, 9 AM.****Mar 8– Hike at Mendon Ponds starting at Hundred Acre Pond, 9 AM****Apr 12– Hike at Powder Mills Park starting at Fish Hatchery, 9 AM****Jan 26– Communication Technologies Museum , Bloomfield, NY****Feb 23– Wizard of Clay, Bloomfield, NY****Mar 15– Hoffman Clock Museum, Newark, NY****Apr 27– Rush Oak Openings Unique Area, Rush, NY****May 24– Historic Palmyra Museums, Palmyra, NY****Green are Educational walks and meet at 2:00 PM**

Note: Please check the MeetUp app 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 send a message to [Webmaster@VictorHikingTrails.org](mailto:Webmaster@VictorHikingTrails.org).

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.

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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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### Past Hikes

#### Oct 12—Lehigh Crossing Park and More.

This was a 4.4 mile loop hike that started and ended at Lehigh Crossing Park. Five hikers covered a section of the trolley Trail, the Omnitech Trail and a section of the Seneca Trail. It was a great fall morning for a hike.

*Photo by Dave Wright*



#### Nov 9—Fishers Park.

Another beautiful fall day for a morning hike in the park. The group of about 12 hiked on almost every trail, seeing all the artwork and natural beauty.

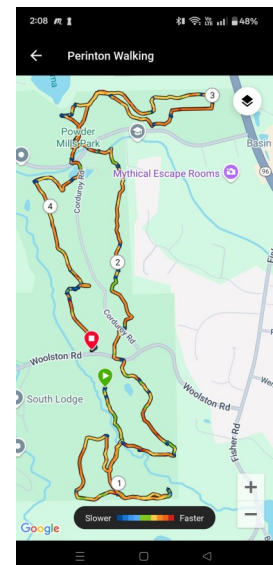


*Photos by Alicia A.*

#### Dec 14—Powder Mills Park.

It was a chilly start, but the sun was shining and made a big difference. The group hiked between 4 and 5 miles and got to see some of the TrailsRoc runners who were doing a race on the trails in the park. We are fortunate to have this Monroe County park so close to Victor.

*Screenshot by Chauncy Young*





## Educational Hikes

### Sep 29—NY Museum of Transportation, West Henrietta, NY

Twenty members enjoyed a tour of this remarkable museum. They have steam engines, passenger railroad cars, old buses, classic cars, an original streetcar that you can ride on, a model HO train display and a gift shop. The tour guide told about the history of the articles and the museum.



### Oct 27—Mushrooms and Fungi at Zurich Bog, Lyons, NY

We had about 15 in our group, but the Canandaigua Botanical Society joined us, so there were about 40 that walked through the woods out to the bog. The interwoven grass roots create a surface above the water that allows you to walk on it. We saw a variety of plants and fungi that you won't see in many other locations.



### Nov 23—Tom's Pro Bike Shop in Victor

It's amazing how the world of bicycles has grown in the last 20 years. There is a bike for every type and style desired. Road, trail, mountain, gravel, racing, fat tire, hybrid and even exercise. At Tom's, they determine what kind of bike you want and fit you to a bike. Is your old bike uncomfortable? Make an appointment and they will adjust it to fit you.



### Dec 15—Lamberton Conservatory

It was another delightful tour of this amazing conservatory, located in Highland Park. Approximately 15 people enjoyed listening to new tour guide Nancy Mastin, who is very knowledgeable about all of the plants.



*Photos by Jeff Miller*

*(Continued from page 1)*

One of the other species that have benefited from the efforts of our volunteers are birds. Each of the 2 nest boxes that were placed alongside the pond were occupied by Tree Swallows this year. One had 6 eggs when checked. Although I was not present when the birds fledged, I believe it was a successful “coming out” affair.

It would be ideal to have one volunteer willing to do more formal monitoring. Volunteers can take the simple training session to monitor the boxes that is available online at no cost through Cornell Ornithology Lab. The monitoring usually requires a once per week visit, taking care that the birds experience minimal disturbance. This is a great learning experience, and the data is used by Cornell to add to their knowledge for conservation of our native birds in their natural environment. But beware, you might get pulled in by the allure of these fascinating creatures, and maybe end up working well into your 70's and beyond on their behalf! If anyone is interested please let me know.



Another “event” that I had the pleasure of observing was on April 15, 2024, when the pond was the rest stop for a pair of Buffleheads. These handsome ducks migrate to breeding grounds in Canada every year, passing through NY on their journey. I was a little dismayed when I gleefully expressed my excitement about seeing these waterfowl, and nearly every person I spoke to gave me a blank look and responded “What’s a Bufflehead?” The ducks stayed most of the day, seeming to be quite pleased with their surroundings. Surely, they were expressing appreciation for the work that has been done around the pond. Unfortunately, my photos are a bit blurry. Definitely a bird to check out on your Merlin app.\*



The pair of Brown Thrashers returned this year, and if you visit in the spring, you can often spot the adults hunting along the edge of a well mowed field (that would attract so much more if it were at least partially an open meadow). It appeared there was a nest in a wooded patch above the pond. Sitting on the nearby wooden bench, you can hear the melodic song of the Wood Thrush on a daily basis in the spring and summer. Best heard in the morning, it often coincides with the time of our morning work parties. A pair of Belted Kingfishers also nest nearby. If you quietly listen and observe, most days you will hear the distinctive rattle of the Kingfishers while they are looking for a meal. I never tire of watching their brief fluttering hover, then dive into the water to capture fish that live in the pond. Of course, Green Heron and Great Blue Heron are regular visitors, along with Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Northern Rough Winged Swallows, each swooping and showing off their individual skills of aerial acrobatics that I find mesmerizing. Pileated, Hairy, Downy, Red Bellied woodpeckers along with Northern Flickers are always close-by. Flickers are a species you should be seeing in your own yard.

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They commonly will be found on the ground in grassy areas, slurping up their favorite meal: ants. Lehigh provides the grassy areas without insecticides so flickers have a better chance of thriving and reproducing. Summer visitors, Willow and Alder flycatchers, may be hard to see, but their distinctive calls are easily picked up if you have your Merlin app along on your phone. Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow and Gray Catbird, are among the spring migrants you can rely on to be along the service road as you approach the pond, beginning some time in April.

One bird you clearly should have binoculars for, is the Cedar Waxwing. They are in our vicinity all year, usually in small groups of maybe 6 to twelve individuals. Even if you don't see them right away, they usually announce their presence with short high pitched whistles. This year, one of our observant young volunteers spotted the nest of the Cedar Waxwing in a pine tree in the parking lot at Lehigh. Their plumage is striking, truly looking like the tips of their wings (bright red) and tails (yellow) have been dipped in a colored wax. Unfortunately, many of our birds and other wild creatures that Mother Nature has provided for our pleasure for free, are in perilous decline. Small places like Lehigh Crossings are an oasis in a sea of plants that have seeds and berries from another land, giving little or no nutrition to our birds, and which are unpalatable to our essential insect world. Entomologist Doug Tallamy is credited with calculating that it takes 6 to 9 thousand caterpillars to feed a single brood of chickadees. The food you put in feeders bring the birds to a place where you can view them, but the most critical nutrients are the fat and protein from insects overwintering in the cracks and crevices of our trees, or in the stems of plants in your garden that you are pressured to remove for the sake of appearance. Isn't the appearance of the chickadee or nuthatch or white-throated sparrow worth far more than a garden that is flat and devoid of life?



These are some of the benefits of our work at Lehigh. More birds, more frogs, more turtles, more dragonflies, and more pollinators. And the glue for all those magnificent creatures are the native plants that are re-emerging from their forced absence due to the rampant growth of invasive non-native plants. The Joe Pye weed, Boneset, many varieties of GoldenRod, Butterfly weed, Swamp and Common milkweed, Golden Ragwort, New England Aster and so many more native plants, released from the grip of phragmites, are now filling the riparian buffer\*\* between our pond and mowed areas. There are

lessons we can learn at Lehigh. We can take the lessons home with us, add natives to our own gardens, leave the leaves, stop spraying poisons, and watch life come back to our yards. The rewards can fill our lives with hope. Join us in discovering the astonishing potential that our local park in Victor holds.



*(Continued on page 7)*

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Photos: From Top: Painted Turtle on log 8/10/24; Tree Swallow 7/10/24; Bufflehead 4/27/24; Northern Leopard Frog 8/27/24; New England Aster 9/5/24; All taken by Barb Starr at Lehigh Crossing Park; Lehigh Crossing Pond 12/6/24 now resting for the winter taken by Lisa Roberts

\*Merlin: App available free from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Great bird guide for your phone, best of all can ID birds when their calls and songs are recorded through this app (not guaranteed to be 100% accurate).

\*\* Riparian refers to the banks of water bodies, rivers and streams. From the NYDEC: Riparian buffers are strips of vegetation (trees, shrubs or grass) planted next to streams or other water bodies. My referral to a riparian buffer is that area between the shore of the pond and the mowed area around the pond. The less this area is disturbed by mowing, allowing more vegetation, the better it will function to protect the pond from erosion, run off from the surrounding area, keep the area cooler and more moist, and thus provide better habitat for wildlife.

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## **Elections for 2025**

The annual elections were held at the November meeting. A slate of officers consisting of a Chairperson, a Vice-chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer, was presented by the Nominating Committee.

Congratulations to Lisa Roberts, Chair; Nancy Fisher, Vice-chair, Barb Starr, Secretary; and Ruth Rugaber, Treasurer.

Lisa appointed Dave Wright to the new position of Business Operations Director, Chauncy Young to Trail Boss, Scott Reinhart to Trail Blazer, Larry Fisher to Membership, Jeff Miller to Education and Jeff Hennick to Information Director.

**The Community Engagement Director position is still open.**



## Victor Turkey Trot 2024

What a fantastic turnout on the morning of Thanksgiving Day! And the weather was not nice. It was cold and misty. No sunshine. But runners and walkers of all ages came anyway.

The total number of participants was 1895. Plus there was a large number of volunteers, including a few from Victor Hiking Trails. When we were told that VHT had been selected to be a recipient of some of the money raised from this event, we knew we had to help in any way possible.

As road marshals, we got to see all of the folks happily moving along the 3-mile course. Starting at the Victor Town Hall, they ran/walked west on Main Street, up High Street to the school campus, through some neighborhoods, down Church Street and back to the town hall.

I believe everyone enjoyed the event and I am sure they all had an extra helping of turkey later in the day.

On Tuesday, December 17th, the organizers of the Victor Turkey Trot 2024 presented checks to eight local non-profits totaling \$41,600 at the Victor Town Hall.

We will use our share of the funds to create and improve more trails for all in Victor.



*Photos by Dave Wright*



## New Bike Repair Stand

When you are on the Auburn Trail by the Fishers Fire Station #1 on Main Street Fishers, look for the new bike repair stand. It was donated by Tom's Pro Bike Shop located at 300 High Street by the New York Beer Project. Installation was performed by the Victor Parks and Recreation Department.

That's Lisa Roberts, VHT's new Board Chair, approving the new addition.

Lift your bike up onto the two arms and use the tools to tighten that loose seat or handlebars.

And then you can make a small donation in the green metal box behind Lisa.



## Wednesday Library Walkers

We will continue to meet every Wednesday at 9:00 AM at the Victor Farmington Library for an easy 2-3 mile walk. Don't let the cold or snow keep you from enjoying the outdoors. Just dress in layers and wear good boots.



### Grants

We were not successful in getting the NYS grant to build a storage facility unit for our trail maintenance equipment, but we are not giving up. We are currently having discussions with RG&E and the Fishers Fire District to see if we can lease some land and then build a pole barn that will be large enough for our current and future needs.

### Did you get your Neck Gaiters yet?

Victor Hiking Trails is selling colorful and functional neck gaiters. These are useful in the winter to keep you warm. You can bring them around your mouth and nose to stay extra warm. In the summer it can be used as a bandana or headband. Priced at \$7.00 or two for \$10.00, they make great stocking stuffers. Get one for yourself, the kids, grandkids and other relatives. You could even give one to your mailman! Call (585-752-8313) or email Dave Wright (DaveWright6746@yahoo.com) to get them before they are gone.



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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*

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VHT Map Link

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

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