

# VHT Pathfinder

The Official Newsletter of Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.

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By functioning as natural sponges that store runoff water...Page 7

## Are beavers good for the environment?

Most people only become aware of beavers when they are a nuisance, but did you know that biologists classify beavers as a Keystone species? Beaver ponds create wetlands which are among the most biologically productive ecosystems in the world<sup>1</sup>. They increase plant, bird<sup>2</sup> and wildlife variety<sup>3</sup>, improve water quality<sup>4</sup>, and raise salmon and trout populations<sup>5</sup>. This one species supports hundreds.

How is this possible? By opening the tree canopy, sunlight reaches the water and triggers an explosion of biological activity. Algae and aquatic plants grow in the sun drenched, nutrient rich water. This organic material supports microscopic organisms, which are eaten by a variety of invertebrates. These become food for fish, birds and mammals. An entire food chain is created in a beaver pond.



The beaver are active in Lehigh Crossing Park.



So we build bridges and boardwalks.

While infamous for killing trees, beaver dams actually create diverse habitats. Grasses, sedges, bushes and saplings grow on the perimeter of the pond. These plants provide food and cover for foraging animals. Beaver ponds become magnets for a rich variety of wildlife. From important game species like wood duck, mink and otter, to vulnerable anadromous fish like rainbow smelt, steelhead and salmon, biodiversity thrives due to beaver ponds. Beaver dams also protect downstream

*(Continued on page 7)*

## HIKES FOR 2016

### VHT 2016 Officers:

Dave Wright– Chairman  
 Jeff Hennick– Vice Chairman  
 Suzy Paquin– Secretary  
 Barb Cole– Treasurer  
 Carol MacInnes– Trailmaster  
 Chauncy Young– Trail Boss  
 Peter Ingalsbe– Membership  
 Ralph Weber – Education  
 Wizzy Geno— Volunteer  
 Coordinator  
 David Coleman— Camping  
 Larry Fisher—Parks Liaison

### VHT Pathfinder

Volume 20, Issue 4  
 Winter 2015  
*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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 Victor Hiking Trails, Inc.  
 85 East Main Street  
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(585) 234-8226

www.victorhikingtrails.org  
 Also on Facebook  
 and Meetup  
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- Jan. 9 ~ Mendon Ponds, hike or ski. Meet at Lookout shelter parking lot at 9:00 a.m.
- Feb. 13 ~ Fishers Park, Auburn Trail, Domine. Meet at Fishers Fire House 1 at 9:00 a.m.
- Mar. 12 ~ Dryer Road Park. Meet at the south end of the parking lot at 9:00 a.m.
- Apr. 9 ~ MaryFrances Bluebird Haven & Monkey Run. Meet at the parking lot by the house at 9:00 a.m.
- May 14 ~ Boughton Park in the Spring.
- June 4 ~ National Trails Day in Victor. Watch for details.
- June 11 ~ ADK Outdoor Expo and hike at Mendon Ponds Park
- July 9 ~ Bike Ride. Location TBD.
- Aug. 13 ~ Hike Conklin Gully. Bring water shoes.
- Sep. 10 ~ Hang Around Victor Day. Village hike
- Oct. 8 ~ Finger Lakes Trail, Bristol Hills Branch
- Nov. 12 ~ Valentown to Woodcliff and back.
- Dec. 10 ~ Lehigh Crossing Park.

Note: Please check the message line at 585-234-8226 for details and last minute updates. Also, if you join Meetup/Victor Hiking Trails, 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 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Most hikes are relatively easy and take 2-4 hours. Always bring a bag lunch or snack and something to drink. Dress for the weather. We rarely cancel due to inclement weather.

We usually carpool 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 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. Based on the success of past year we will again be adding an educational element to some of the hikes.

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.**

## Past Hikes

**October 10** ~ We completed hiking another section of the Finger Lakes Trail, Bristol Branch on a beautiful fall morning. We placed one car at each end of the section so we only had to hike one way. After the 7-mile hike the group stopped in Naples for an ice cream.



David C., Dave W. and Jeff H. taking a break.

**November 14** ~ A great turnout for our hike at Boughton Park. Most of the hikers met at Victor Town Hall and carpooled to the Boughton Road entrance. The weather was great and the scenery was beautiful.



**December 12** ~ Six hikers came to Ontario County Park to check out the new trails recently created by the Genesee Regional Off-road Cyclists (GROC) at the north end of the park. We started at Lookout and hiked along the north property line, then up the hill on the new single-track trail. We then hiked back down the hill and headed east toward the park entrance. We then traversed across the field above the reservoir to the woods at the south end of the park. We hiked the red trail, the white and yellow trails and finally the orange trail back to the parked cars.



## Upcoming Hikes

**January 9 ~ Mendon Ponds Park.** We will meet at the Lookout shelter parking lot on Park Road at 9:00 a.m. Bring your cross-country skis or snowshoes if we have snow. There are some nice trails around Quaker Pond for skiing. Not too hilly, but some easy hills to make it interesting. If you don't ski, come anyway. There will be hikers too. Bring the kids so they can see the nature trails that are close to where we live. Bring something to drink and a snack to replenish the calories you burn.

**February 13 ~ Fishers Park, Auburn Trail and Domine Trails.** Meet in back of the Fishers Fire Station #1 on Main Street Fishers at 9:00 a.m.

We will hike the Auburn Trail, the Lehigh Trail, The Domine Trail and Fishers Park for about 6 miles of easy hiking. Wear good hiking boots, dress in layers, bring something to drink and a snack. This will be another good hike to bring the family.

**March 12 ~ Dryer Road Park.** Meet at the south end of the parking lot. With over 10 miles of single-track trails, it's easy to spend 2 hours hiking throughout the park. And there is also Fort Hill, a part of Ganondagan State Historic Site, with more trails to see. Great opportunity to get the family out for some exercise and education.

### VHT is now a Meetup Group

Now you can find VHT on Meetup. No cost to join.

This is another means of communicating our monthly hikes, weekly trail maintenance sched-

ule, scout projects and special events.

To join, search for Victor Hiking Trails Meetup or go to this:

<http://www.meetup.com/Victor-Hiking-Trails-Meetup/>

## Another Scout Project Completed

Life Scout Kaleb Harp has finished his Eagle project in Lehigh Crossing Park. He designed and supervised the construction of a raised boardwalk through a wet area near the pond. And he cleared a section of thicket to allow the Yellow Trail to go directly into the woods.



Photos by Chauncy Young.

## Chateau Mt. St. Anne

Mont-Sainte-Anne \* Quebec, Canada

February 6-13, 2016

Leader: Carol MacInnes

8037 Main Street Fishers

Victor, NY 14564

585-924-4077

ccarolmac@aol.com

This is a repeat trip because Mont-Sainte-Anne is simply the best: The best snow, the best trails, the best lodging and the best food.

There are over 200 kms. of immaculately groomed xcountry trails for every ability in beautiful wooden terrain. Heated warming huts make stopping for lunch enjoyable. There is also a chalet with a cafeteria. It is possible to access the xcountry trails from our hotel.

The nearby downhill mountain offers a 2,000-foot vertical drop, 50 trails, a gondola, and 4 quad chairlifts.

We will be staying at the Chateau Mt. St. Anne at the foot of the downhill mountain. Our rooms will have two queen size beds and a private bath. Included are a vast buffet breakfast and gourmet dinner served in the dining room. The hotel also has an indoor swimming pool, hot tub and exercise room.

The group will carpool the nine-hour drive to Mont-Sainte-Anne. The road goes around Quebec City, a walled city and birthplace of French civilization in America. Sightseeing and/or shopping in this quaint city is a highlight of the trip. For that reason the group will have dinner on Wednesday night at the Hotel Clarendon, the oldest hotel in Quebec (refurbished in '92), and the center of the historical district.

**Group is limited to 20 participants.**

### Price includes:

- ⊗ Seven nights lodging in room for two with bath
- ⊗ Seven breakfasts
- ⊗ Seven dinners including one dinner in Old Quebec City at the Hotel Clarendon
- ⊗ Taxes and Gratuities

**\$790**

per person  
double occupancy

### Payment Schedules

Deposit: \$50 Due December 14th, \$100 due thereafter

Balance due January 3rd

\* Price may vary according to Canadian Exchange Rate

**Make check payable to Rochester Nordic Ski Club, and send to Carol at the above address.**

**Please include in the Mont-Sainte-Anne trip:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ deposit

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check one:  I would be willing to drive  
 I would prefer to be a passenger

### **No Canopy? No problem!**

As we watch the leaves fall from the tree's there can be the feeling that we need to wait out the winter before we can once again enjoy all that nature has to offer. As we hike and bike throughout the spring and summer we can't help but observe the bounty before us such as flowering plants, tree's full with leaves, and shrubs blooming. Throughout this period the tree's that cover a forest are growing or have grown their leaves. These leaves collectively are what's called the forest canopy. This canopy consists of a variety of tree species all competing for precious solar resources. This creates a "shroud" over the forest limiting the sunlight reaching the forest floor. Once fall reaches its peak and the "shroud" of leaves has fallen from the trees a new perspective of the forest comes to light. Literally! This lack of a tree canopy exposes many things that were well hidden.

Now with the forest in full daylight it's easy to spot things that previously went unnoticed. Look for a variety nests in trees. This includes birds and mammals, such as squirrels. Squirrel nests can be seen as a large clump of leaves but are constructed with grasses, trigs, leaves and other materials. Also now in full daylight the forest reveals the history of the landscape. As much of this area was at some time farmed there are signs of this on many of local trails. Stopping along a trail and surveying the forest can reveal signs of its past such as aged fence posts, remnants of wire fencing, and metal legal boundary markers. Also evidence of a different era can be found in scattered debris such as metal water buckets, mason jars, pieces of farm equipment, and foundations of what were man-made structures. The influence of man can likewise be seen in the forest by observing row planted trees. These are trees that at one time were planted in large rows to either grow the forest or to enhance its overall health and longevity.



Do you see the squirrel's nest?

There are also plants that went virtually unnoticed earlier in the year but now stand out in the forest.



These plants don't die or go dormant but are alive and green throughout the winter. Garlic Mustard, considered a non-native invasive plant, is a biennial plant meaning it has a two year life cycle. This plant is seen along trails as having large heart shaped leaves with rounded toothed edges. At this time of year this plant would be entering its second year of growth and remains alive and green throughout the winter gathering solar resources in preparation to mature to its full height in the early spring. Often simply brushing away some leaves along the trailside will reveal patches of this plant. Like Garlic Mustard, Wintergreen (hence its name), Partridge Berry, and Chives are alive and green throughout the winter and often go unnoticed throughout the spring and summer. These are just a few plants that are easily spotted this time of year.

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Wintergreen



Garlic Mustard

All photos by Robert Lasher.

So, while you're out on the trails during this time of year take advantage of the opportunity the forest gives us without its thick leaf canopy. Take a rest along the trail and observe the fully exposed forest and you may be surprised at what you didn't know was there!

There are a variety of great resources on this topic. Some good online resources are the US Department of Agriculture, Cornell University, and the University of Minnesota. Also the Peterson Field Guides to Medicinal Plants and Wild Flowers, along with A Guide to Nature in Winter by Donald W. Stokes are good resources found at your local library.



Wild Chives

Robert Lasher, Master Naturalist

(Continued from page 1)

spawning areas from sedimentation, and create cool, deep pools which increase salmon and trout populations.

How do dams affect water quality? They actually *improve* flow and quality<sup>1</sup>. By functioning as natural sponges that store runoff water and slowly release it, they reduce downstream flooding and erosion. The algae and plants in the pond improve water quality by absorbing dissolved nutrients, processing organic wastes, and detoxifying runoff toxins (e.g. heavy metals, pesticides and fertilizers). These wetlands serve as the "Earth's Kidneys".

Beaver ponds also recharge our drinking water aquifers, stabilize the water table, and better maintain

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stream flows during droughts. Beavers are even being reintroduced around the country to improve arid lands.

Beavers are sometimes regarded as pests, but in truth there isn't a single species that will better benefit your watershed. Although they can present a challenge, by using flow devices you can control problematic flooding and reap countless environmental rewards. Beavers really are "Worth A Dam".

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Functions and Values of Wetlands, EPA 843-F-01-002c, September 2001.*

*Baker, B. W., and E. P. Hill. 2003. Beaver (Castor canadensis). Pages 288-310 in G. A. Feldhamer, B. C. Thompson, and J. A. Chapman, editors. Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Management, and Conservation. Second Edition. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.*

*Cooke, H., Zack, S. (2008) Influence of beaver dam density on riparian areas and riparian birds in shrubsteppe of Wyoming. Western North American Naturalist Vol (6) No 3. 3 P. Collen & R.J. Gibson (2001) The General Ecology of beavers. Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries vol. (10) 439-461*

*Langcore, T., Rich, C. & Müller-Schwarze, D. (2006) Management by Assertion: Beavers and Songbirds at Lake Skinner (Riverside County, California) Environmental Management Vol 39 (4).*

*Pollock, M., Pess, G. & Beechie, T. (2004) The Importance of Beaver Ponds to Coho Salmon Production in the Stillaguamish River Basin, Washington, USA, North American Journal of Fisheries Management 24:749-760.00*

*Terry, N & Bañuelos, G.S. (2000) Phytoremediation of contaminated soil and water. CRC Press LLC*

## Bridge gets an extension

The footbridge built by Boy Scout Jack Napalitano several years ago needed an extension boardwalk due to the activities of the beavers in Lehigh Crossing Park. So Chauncy Young took some measurements, make some calculations



Chauncy driving re-rod into the ground.

and ordered some lumber from Victor Coal and Lumber. On December 6th, he and Dave Wright spent about 2 hours constructing the 24-foot long boardwalk, so hikers can now keep their feet dry. It's on the Trolley Trail (blue blazes). Check it out sometime.



The finished boardwalk.

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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 promptly so we don't have to come after you. We will use your dues and donations for new and improved trails.

*Filling the gaps in Victor*

Check out our website at  
[www.victorhikingtrails.org](http://www.victorhikingtrails.org)

Join us on Facebook!

And Meetup!



VHT Map Link

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

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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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 \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate membership at \$100 per year allows all employees to be members.

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

Make check payable to: VICTOR HIKING TRAILS, INC.  
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