

The logo features a black circle on the left containing the text "5 RIVERS" in white. To the right of the circle, the word "TRIBUTARY" is written in a large, black, serif font. A stylized white wave graphic is positioned behind the letters "T" and "R" of "TRIBUTARY".

5 RIVERS TRIBUTARY

Summer 2007

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

518-475-0291

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1835.html>

The Winds of Change

From the strongest gust to the smallest human exhalation, wind is an essential part of our lives. These days, more and more people are beginning to see the importance of wind and to harness its abilities to create cleaner, sustainable energy. The environment's future may look bleak, but with our ability to learn, believe, and care, we can use the natural phenomenon of wind to conserve our dwindling fossil fuel reserves.

Fossil fuels not only pollute our air, but are a huge contributor to global climate change. The wonderful thing about wind energy is that it is not only clean, but also renewable. The wind will always blow!

Unlike coal, oil, or nuclear energy, wind produces no harmful pollutants such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, acid-rain-forming sulfur dioxide, or hazardous waste. Wind energy is a safe, reliable, and clean alternative. In the last 20 years, costs have gone down by 90%, making it more affordable, too. Turbine placement is also a terrific opportunity for small farmers to gain some extra income. A wind farm may take up to as little as one acre, while retaining much of the farmable land.

Here in New York State, efforts to use wind power have been in motion since 2000. To date, we have seven running wind farms and two more planned projects. In a recent study assessing wind energy potential and usage in the United States, New York was one of the top 20 states, ranking at number 15. For information on wind energy initiatives and ways you can support them, check out the American Wind Energy Association's web page at [http://www.awea.org/](http://www.awea.org) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's website at [http://www.nyserda.org/](http://www.nyserda.org) under "Power Naturally."

As of today, the United States obtains only 1% of its electricity from wind, but that number is steadily growing. The potential electricity that could be generated in this country from wind is up to three times the electricity we generate today. Wind is a strong and worthwhile alternative. For the sake of our environment, our world, wind energy must become a fundamental source of power.

*--Stephanie Dolson,
Naturalist Intern*

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center Summer Program Schedule 2007

Programs are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Participants should dress for the weather! We regret that we cannot accommodate organized youth groups at these programs. Please call to make special arrangements for a group.

We welcome those who have any type of physical challenge to all of our programs; please call ahead to let us know your needs.

For further information or for pre-registration, call Five Rivers at (518) 475-0291. In the event of severe weather, programs may be canceled. Please call the Center to confirm.

Saturday, July 7 *Family Fun:* 11th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY COUNT 2:00 PM

Join us for a closeup look at common butterflies of the Capital District as we continue our annual catch-and-release census. Nets or binoculars are welcome. Please call to pre-register by Tuesday, July 3.

Tuesday, July 10 WALK AROUND THE OLD FIELD 7:00 PM

The outer reaches of the Old Field Trail harbor some special wildlife species. The dense evergreen growth is home to deer, owls and turkeys while the far fields have bobolinks and occasionally meadowlarks. This evening walk may reveal some of their secrets. This hike is about two miles long.

Thursday, July 12 *Family Program:* STREAM WALK 10:00 AM

Come get wet and explore! We'll search for small stream wildlife, catch them, learn about them and release them back into their home. Wear footgear that can get wet—no flip-flops or bare feet, please.

Saturday, July 14 SQUIRRELS OF BACKYARD AND LEGEND 10:00 AM

Discover some of the secrets of the lives of the common gray squirrel, the seldom-seen northern flying squirrel and the three other local squirrel species.

Tuesday, July 17 CHEROKEE LEAF PRINTS 7:00 PM

After a walk to gather art supplies, we'll practice an ancient Native American skill of using the natural colors in plants as decorations. Bring white fabric (a bandana or a t-shirt) and a small hammer if you can. We have some hammers to loan, and fabric squares to decorate.

Saturday, July 21 ANIMAL SIGNS 2:00 PM

Explore Five Rivers ponds and meadows in search of the clues animals leave to tell us what they've been up to. We'll look for signs of deer, rabbit, voles, and many other animals.

Tuesday, July 24 *Watchable Wildlife:* WATERFOWL 7:00 PM

Join us on a survey of our ponds as we take a gander at common ducks and geese.

- Saturday, July 28 TREES OF SUMMER 2:00PM
 Join us for a walk through a shady forest while we discuss the importance of trees to ecosystem survival, with specific attention given to the different tree species found at Five Rivers.
- Tuesday, July 31 NATURE JOURNALING FOR EVERYONE 7:00 PM
 Experience the serenity and wonder that can come from observing and recording the natural world. Materials will be provided to start your own Nature Journal. In the event of inclement weather we will journal from the birding window.
- Tuesday, August 7 FROGWATCH 7:00 PM
 Come listen for the deep-throated calls of the grand-daddy of all the frogs, the bullfrog, as well as green frogs and other wetlands wildlife, as we monitor amphibian populations as part of the National Wildlife Federation's *Frogwatch* program.
- Saturday, August 11 INVASIVE ALIENS 2:00 PM
 The toughest invaders to get rid of are not space aliens, but plants—non-native species that are highly aggressive. We'll explore the trails as we discuss why these beautiful invaders are unwelcome here.
- Tuesday, August 14 GREEN BUILDINGS 7:00 PM
 A talk on different residential and commercial building strategies that can reduce the environmental impacts of construction and operation.
- Saturday, August 18 BEGINNING BIRDING 10:00 AM
 With just a bird book and some binoculars, anyone can start this fascinating hobby. A brief presentation on basic equipment and birding technique will be followed by an outdoor walk to identify our feathered friends.
- Friday, August 24 FAMILY CAMP-OUT
 Our annual adventure! See back page. Register early, space is limited.
- Saturday, August 25 ROGER TORY PETERSON'S BIRDS 9:00 AM
 Through his *Field Guide to the Birds*, Roger Tory Peterson launched our national preoccupation with bird watching. Join us on a commemorative field study of birds, the "environmental litmus paper," as we celebrate the late Dr. Peterson's birth 99 years ago.
- Tuesday, August 28 INSECT SAFARI 7:00 PM
 Insects, spiders and bugs galore! Come catch, learn, and release. This fun evening allows us to see, up close, some of the special noise-makers, pollinators and creepy-crawlers at Five Rivers.

FAMILY CAMP OUT

Friday, August 24, 5:00 PM to Saturday, August 25

Our annual camp-out here at the Center is a gentle and safe way to introduce your family to tent camping. You provide Friday supper and campfire snacks, we provide Saturday breakfast and lots of experiences including a night walk, a bird walk and stream exploration. When you call to register give us your e-mail address and you will be sent the itinerary and materials list.

We have a few tents and sleeping bags to loan. Please register by August 20.
FOFR Members fee \$10.00 per family. Non-members \$15.00 per family.

Last Issue!

We regret to announce that this newsletter will no longer be available in hard copy. If you would like to receive our quarterly schedule of public programs in electronic format, please let us know. The schedule will continue to be available on DEC's website. www.dec.ny.gov