

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. The "T" in "TRIBUTARY" is partially overlaid by the circle.

5 RIVERS TRIBUTARY

Winter 2009

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center
518-475-0291

www.dec.ny.gov (search for Five Rivers)

5rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Wildlife in Winter

Have you ever wondered what happens to wild creatures when the world is covered in a blanket of snow? Tiny eastern chipmunks spend winter curled up underground. They hibernate in burrows that are linked by tunnels to food-storage areas. During fall, chipmunks gather and store seeds and nuts to replenish their energy during winter. They have periods of torpor (dormancy) but periodically wake to eat.

Under the protective cover of hemlock and spruce trees, white-tailed deer bed down in “yards.” They conserve energy by using packed down trails, or deer runs, to move around. They eat from trees, stretching as high as they can. Many Five Rivers evergreens have a “browse line” about five feet high.

Raccoons, like other mammals, grow a thick, furry coat to help them keep warm. They use dens for shelter but do not hibernate. In fall, raccoons eat extra food to accumulate an insulating layer of fat. As it diminishes, they emerge on warmer days to find food and to mate.

Eastern coyotes also spend winter awake and active. They eat squirrels, mice, rabbits and other small mammals. Coyotes hunt at night, and adults communicate with the young with

their musical, haunting howls. A “**coyote howl**” nightwalk to study these fascinating animals will be held on Friday, February 13.

To learn more about wildlife in winter, join us for a program on **skunks** on February 14. Dress warmly!

– *Sarah Conley, SCA*

Read the *Tributary* Online

Help us reduce mailing costs and conserve resources by reading the *Tributary* online! See www.dec.ny.gov/education/1841.html to view Five Rivers Environmental Education Center’s quarterly newsletter. To be notified by e-mail when the newsletter is published online, sign up for our listserv. Go to <http://lists.dec.state.ny.us/mailman/listinfo/fiverivertributary> and follow the directions. If you currently receive a paper copy in the mail, tell us to remove your name from our mailing list. Thank you for your concern for the environment.

Online Family Newsletter – DEC *Outdoor Discovery*

Visit www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html to read DEC’s biweekly, online newsletter for families. Each issue introduces readers to a seasonal, environmental or nature topic, suggests a related activity and lists family-friendly events at DEC’s environmental education centers. Subscribe for free and have the newsletter e-mailed to you.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
David A. Paterson, Governor Pete Grannis, Commissioner

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Winter Program Schedule 2009

Dress for the weather and join us for outdoor fun! 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 to register, call Five Rivers at 518-475-0291. In the event of severe weather, programs may be canceled. Please call the center to confirm.

Thursday, January 1 29th ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT 9:00 AM
Come help us ring out our old annual bird list and ring in the new as we search high and low for our fine feathered friends. Bring binoculars and dress warmly.

Saturday, January 3 ECO-EXPLORER for GIRL SCOUTS 10:00 AM
Come and explore how animals and plants live in winter. This Brownie program meets some of the requirements for the Eco-Explorer Try-its. There is a fee for this program. Please register through GSNENY at 518-489-8110 or online at www.gsneny.org and choose "Girl Development."

Saturday, January 3 WINTER TEA 2:00 PM
Learn about plants that have been used traditionally as warming winter teas, then come indoors, create your own tea bag and warm up with a cup of nature's tea.

Friday, January 9 FULL-MOON WALK 7:00 PM
Explore a winter night under the light of a full moon, and warm up afterwards with hot chocolate.

Saturday, January 10 VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING 10:00 AM
Join our assistant and student naturalists as they train for our snowshoe programs. If you've ever thought of volunteering, this is a great opportunity to find out what it's all about. We will be outdoors.

Saturday, January 10 SNOWSHOEING 2:00 PM
Whether snowy or not, we'll discuss the ancient sport of snowshoeing. Call to reserve snowshoes.

Friday, January 16 STARRY-NIGHT SKY WATCH 7:00 PM
Albany Area Amateur Astronomers will be here with telescopes. Hot chocolate available indoors.

Saturday, January 17 *Watchable Wildlife*: WOODPECKERS 9:00 AM
Join us for a field study of common "hammerheads" as we discuss woodpecker lifestyles.

Saturday, January 17 EXPLORING YOUR WATERSHED 2:00 PM
A fun family program of activities and games that will help you learn about water quality.

Saturday, January 24 GROUNDHOG DAY 10:00 AM
Discover more about this holiday and the celebrated rodent, and take a walk to look for signs of it.

Saturday, January 24 SNOWSHOEING for BROWNIES 1:30 PM
Learn how to snowshoe, then join us outdoors to look for clues about the lives of winter wildlife. There is a fee for this program. Register through GSNENY at 518 489-8110 or online at www.gsneny.org

Saturday, January 31 BIRDING by SNOWSHOE 8:30 AM
Join reps from Capital Region Audubon and the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club for birding on snowshoes. Afterwards, compile sightings while enjoying hot chocolate. Register by January 24.

Saturday, January 31 SNOWSHOE WALK 2:00 PM

volunteers in interpreting maple sugaring for the public at our maple open houses later in the month.

Saturday, March 14 PROJECT LEARNING TREE Call for time
A workshop for educators, focusing on environmental issues using trees and forests. Register by March 11. Teacher in-service credit is available through the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center.

Friday, March 20 IS IT SPRING? 7:00 PM

The voices of the season seem to come alive at dusk to proclaim the end of winter. Join us on an outdoor search for geese, peepers and woodcock to see whether spring has sprung.

Saturdays, March 21, 28 and April 4 *I Love Trees*: FAMILY FOREST FUN 10:00 AM
A series of family programs on trees with outdoor, participatory games and activities.

MAPLE SUGAR OPEN HOUSES
Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30-3:30 PM **March 21, 22, 28, 29 and April 4, 5**
Visit our maple sugar open houses. Watch sap drip from the tapped trees, and smell the syrup boiling in the evaporator. Youth groups are welcome; call the center to **register a group.**

PRSRSTTD
US POSTAGE
PAID
ALBANY, NY
PERMIT #598

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Environmental Education
FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
56 Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054-9776

