

Winter 2020 Program Schedule

Come explore outdoors this winter! The grounds are open every day from sunrise to sunset. The education center is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except state holidays.

Programs listed below are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Dress for the weather! In the event of inclement weather, outdoor programs may be canceled. Please call to confirm. Organized youth/civic groups are asked to call ahead to ensure we can accommodate your group at these programs. If we cannot accommodate your group, we are happy to make alternate arrangements. Please check our online calendar at www.dec.ny.gov/education/1980.html. For further information, call us at 518-475-0291.

We welcome those who have any type of physical challenge to all of our programs. If you call ahead to let us know your needs, we will be happy to learn how we can accommodate you.

Five Rivers Listserv: Register at www.dec.ny.gov for email notifications about upcoming programs at Five Rivers. Look for the blue “DEC Delivers” box and follow the instructions.

Dogs and other pets are not permitted at Five Rivers. If you are looking for a natural area to walk with your pet, we are happy to recommend other nearby locations. Call us at 518-475-0291.



Friends of Five Rivers: The Friends of Five Rivers (FOFR) is the year-round community support group for Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Members receive a discount on select items at the FOFR store, complimentary snowshoe loans, reduced fees for some programs, and a subscription to the newsletter *River Ramblings*. Membership levels and volunteer information are available at www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org or call 518-475-0295.

WINTER FUN: SNOWSHOE RENTALS

Snowshoes are available for rent from the Friends of Five Rivers (FOFR) for \$5 per pair; free for FOFR members (must show a current member card or be on the current members list). Rental fees apply during guided programs, except for “learn to...” programs. Snowshoes may only be used on site and must be returned by 4:00 PM on the day of rental. No snowshoes will be rented after 3:00 PM. Renters must be at least 16 years old and complete the rental agreement form available at the greeter desk. To minimize damage to the equipment, there must be at least six inches of snow on the ground.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE: WINTER RAPTOR SURVEY

December through March

People with bird-watching skills or the desire to learn are needed to help discover winter feeding areas of endangered raptor species. Volunteers meet at Five Rivers once or twice a month and spend an hour, centered around sunset, scanning for and recording raptor species on Five Rivers’ grasslands. Participants do not have to attend every session but will need their own binoculars. Study dates are subject to change due to weather conditions. Pre-registration is required. Please help us save these threatened and endangered species. Call Five Rivers at 518-475-0291 or email 5Rivers@dec.ny.gov to register.

Wednesday, January 1, 9:00 AM–12:00 PM

Community Science: NEW YEAR'S BIRD COUNT

Join local bird experts for our 39th annual New Year's Day survey. Seventy-one different species have been found at Five Rivers on Albany's "First Morning," and the birds found over the decades of this long-term study show interesting range changes for many species. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress warmly. If severe weather is forecast, call on Tuesday, December 31, to confirm the event will be held.

Saturday, January 4, 10:00 AM

How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE

Never tried snowshoeing before? Now is your chance! We'll go over the basics of how to put snowshoes on (and take them off), walk, and turn. We'll go outside to put our new skills to work on a short walk. Snowshoe rental fees are waived. Please register by Thursday, January 2. The outdoor portion of this program will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow.

Saturday, January 11, 10:00 AM

Watchable Wildlife: RED FOX

From tales to trails, we'll discover the red fox, an intriguing animal whose tracks traverse the Five Rivers landscape. An indoor presentation will be followed by a short outdoor walk. Please call to register by Wednesday, January 8.

Saturday, January 11, 2:00 PM

Family Fun Guided Hike: WINTER WALK ON OLD FIELD TRAIL

Join a naturalist on this easy trail that curves through Five Rivers' old field habitat, a protective shelter for animals of all sizes in the winter months. Rambling along this half-mile loop, we'll look for signs of wildlife and other winter wonders. Participants may use snowshoes if conditions permit. Program is free but snowshoe rentals are \$5 for big kids and adults; children's snowshoes are free.

Saturday, January 18, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Family Fun Community Science: CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FOR KIDS

In late December and early January, birders across North, Central, and South America will be going afield to participate in the 120th annual Christmas Bird Count. At Five Rivers, young birders and their families are invited to participate in our Holiday Bird Count for Kids, a less rigorous version of the original. Sign up as a family or a group. We will provide the bird walk leaders. We'll begin with a "binocular boot camp," then send you out to count birds. We'll reconvene at the Visitor Center to compile our sightings, swap stories, and warm up with hot cocoa. Call Five Rivers by Monday, January 13, to register. A limited supply of binoculars will be available for those who do not have their own.

Saturday, January 18, 2:30–3:30PM

CARDINALS AND COFFEE

Do you look out at your bird feeders and wonder what the names of those winter birds are? Stop in for a casual discussion and to look out at Five Rivers' bird feeders. We'll discuss tips for identifying our hardy winter residents. Coffee and tea as well as a limited number of binoculars will be available.

Saturday, January 25, 11:00 AM

Family Fun: GRAFTON LAKES STATE PARK 35th ANNUAL WINTER FESTIVAL

Join us for games at Grafton Lakes State Park for their 35th Annual Winter Fest! The event is fun for families and outdoor enthusiasts. Stop by Five Rivers' table to see what "show" we've taken on the road.

Saturday, January 25, 10:00 AM

Family Fun: WINTER HOMES

Have you ever wondered where animals live to survive the winter? Come learn about the different kinds of winter homes and who uses them. Join us for fun presentations, activities, and a walk around the grounds. This program is open to all ages, families are encouraged. Please call to register by Wednesday, January 22.

Saturday, January 25, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: WINTER WALK ON THE SERVICE LOOP

The Service Loop has lots of interesting things happening along the trail, even in winter. The walk is a flat 1.5 miles that passes ponds, wetlands, mature forest, and grassland. See who is out and about with a Five Rivers educator. Bring your curiosity, questions, and warm footwear!

Saturday, February 1, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM

Educator Workshop: PROJECT WET

Educators attending this exciting workshop will learn about, use, and go home with the National Science Teacher Association-endorsed Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) Guide. Project WET explores water's physical characteristics, how it connects all of Earth's systems, and how this natural resource is managed within social constructs. WET does this through hands-on simulations and modeling. This interdisciplinary K–12 resource is provided free of charge by the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. Certified teachers will receive 4 CTLE hours. Participants must pre-register by calling the center by Wednesday, January 29.

Saturday, February 8, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: ANIMAL TRACKS

What animals are enjoying the winter at Five Rivers? We can use animal tracks to find out! Join us to learn about animal signs, cast your own track to take home, and enjoy an outside walk searching for footprints. All ages are welcome. Please call to register by Wednesday, February 5.

Thursday, February 13, 7:00 PM

How to Do It: Gardening with Native Plants

Albany County Master Gardener, Martie Teumim, will discuss what constitutes a "native" plant and the benefits of using native plants in your garden. She will also speak about what plants are considered non-native and invasive in New York State. She will walk you through what to plant and how to gradually change your yard to native species, providing lists of native and invasive plants for you to take home.

Saturday, February 15, 9:30 AM

Community Science: GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

This weekend, birders all across North America will tally birds in their yard or local parks for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Join us as we count the birds at our feeding station, then venture outdoors for a short field count. Complete information will be provided on how you, too, can help the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology track the mid-winter distribution and abundance of birds from your own yard.

Saturday, February 15, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: SQUIRRELS FOR KIDS

Bring the whole family for a brief presentation, walk, craft project, and game that will teach us all about the squirrels in our area. Some squirrels are common in our backyards and some you may never have seen. Explore the winter world of these entertaining acrobats through the tracks, food piles and nests they leave behind. Create your own flying squirrel and see if it can fly as far as a real flying squirrel. This program is geared toward children ages 5–10. Please call to register by Wednesday, February 12, as space is limited.

Wednesday, February 19, 2:00 PM

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve: THE POWER OF GLACIERS

Glacier Bay National Park has a dynamic glacial history. The area and its people have experienced and observed the tidewater glacier cycle of advance and retreat. Today, Glacier Bay is a place of scientific research where scientists conduct studies to understand how glaciers function and what their future may be. In this interactive lesson, a National Park Ranger will guide students through a history of glaciers in Glacier Bay. Students will create a model and engage in discussion with the Ranger. There will be time for questions. This program is designed for children in grades 5–8, but all are welcome.

Thursday, February 20, 10:00 AM

Family Fun: ANIMAL INTERVIEWS

Have you ever wondered about the non-releasable animals we have living inside the center? In this indoor presentation, we will talk about the animals we have, what their life in the wild would be like, and what their life is like here. Live animals will be shown, but handling is not permitted. All ages welcome.

Friday, February 21, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: WINTER WILDLIFE

Some animals migrate, some animals hibernate, but what about animals like the blue jays and grey squirrels we see all winter? Join us at Five Rivers to learn about animal adaptations that allow some critters to survive the chilliest time of year. After an indoor presentation, we will take a walk outside to look for signs of animals. All ages welcome.

Wednesday, February 26, 9:30 AM

Community Science: Bluebird Box Monitoring

If you have an interest in helping Five Rivers monitor its bluebird boxes, want to monitor your own or just want to learn more about bluebirds, join us for this informational session. We will start with a presentation on the lives of bluebirds and the environmental challenges they face. Then we will learn about the things we can do to help bluebirds including where to put the nest boxes and how to monitor them. Call or email for more information. Please call to register by Friday, February 21.

Saturday, February 29, 10:00 AM

Family Fun: DR. SEUSS READ-A-THON

It's time for our annual celebration of all creatures strange and silly! Join us as we mark Read Across America Day with selections of favorite books by Dr. Seuss. Create a Seuss-themed craft and watch for an appearance by The Cat in the Hat himself.



ENJOY THE SWEETER SIDE OF FIVE RIVERS

MAPLE SUGAR OPEN HOUSES

Saturdays, March 7, 14, 21 & 28

1:30 to 3:30 PM

Join us for an introduction to maple sugaring, from tap and sap to syrup. You'll get to twirl a brace and bit, pound a spile, inspect the sap flow, enjoy the aroma of sap boiling in our evaporator, and take the maple syrup taste test challenge. A local maple producer will be on site to answer questions and offer a variety of maple products for sale. Organized groups, please call to register.