

# The Rogers Center Journal



## Rogers Environmental Education Center

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Public Affairs and Education  
in conjunction with the not-for-profit  
Friends of Rogers Environmental Education Center, Inc.

See Schedule of Events Inside!

Spring 2006

[www.dec.state.ny.us/website/education/rogrctr.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/education/rogrctr.html)

March - April - May

### Rogers Environmental Education Center

2721 State Highway 80  
Sherburne, NY 13460-4507  
607-674-4017  
fax: 607-674-2655  
e-mail: [rogers@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:rogers@gw.dec.state.ny.us)

#### Staff:

Marsha Guzewich, Director  
Fred von Mechow, Program Coordinator  
Laura Carey, Project WILD Coordinator  
Chris DeCesare, Educator  
Amy Smith, Water Education Specialist  
Darlene Miller, Office Manager

#### Visitor Center Hours:

Monday-Friday  
8:30 AM to 4:45 PM  
Saturday 1:00 to 4:45 PM  
Sunday (*June-August only*)  
1:00 - 4:45 PM  
Closed State Holidays

#### Grounds Open Sunrise to Sunset

#### Friends of Rogers Board of Directors:

Byron Harrington, President  
Randy Muth, Vice President  
Thurston Packer, Treasurer  
Carol Smith, Secretary  
Philip Clement  
John Novak  
Jim McDaniel  
Dan Nielsen  
Vivian Fulton  
Laurie Trotta  
Frank Lee  
Rose Cole

#### Friends of Rogers Store

*Friends of Rogers operates a bookstore in the Visitor Center. Come in and look through the many field guides and natural history books for all ages - all at 20 percent off retail prices!*

We can also special order that hard-to-find nature title!

*The Rogers Center Journal is published quarterly and produced by Darlene Miller. If you wish to subscribe, please contact Rogers Center.*

### Notes from the Director

*by Marsha Guzewich*

Wow, spring comes once again to Central New York. Hard to imagine as we are hunkered down in the cold of January! Or is it the January thaw? We had a banner year for the Winter Living Celebration this January. Snow cover, moderate temperatures, clear roads and many, many people out to enjoy the living in winter! This January, we held a winter Rogers Environmental Interpretation Institute. Two attendees experienced life at a nature center for a month, including working with school classes, participating in teacher workshops, nature study and learning as much as possible about environmental education. Progress had been made in the Stone House renovations. Heat, functioning kitchen, and comfort. It doesn't get better than that.

As I just reviewed these topics, I am struck by the importance of the various intern/mentoring programs we have at Rogers. Staff view interns as a source of insight, completed projects and fresh ideas as well as people ripe for the influence of environmental education. The number of people who have spent some time as an intern at Rogers continues to grow, but each person is important and each keeps in touch with us forever!

Planning is in the works for Earth Fest 2006, with tree seedlings to give away, maypole to dance and weave, concert with Peggy Lynn and Dan Duggan, timely information and demonstrations and a great time to be had. Earth Fest is scheduled for May 6, 2006 between noon and 4:00 PM.

### Friends of Rogers Update

*by Byron Harrington*

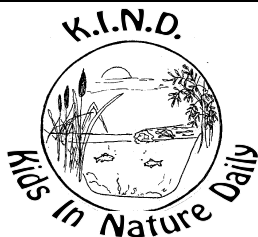


Officers terms now run from January to December. The officers for 2006 include: Byron Harrington—President, Randy Muth—Vice President, Thurston Packer—Treasurer and Carol Smith—Secretary. We have added two new board members this fall, Frank Lee of Earlville and Rose Cole from Sherburne. Jim McDaniel, a board member of many years, has resigned.

Thank you Jim for all of your participation over the years and all that you have contributed. Thank you to each board member who has been coming to meetings and sharing ideas and helping with various projects. It would not happen without each person's contribution.

Each year, we review the budget and grapple with the issue of taking in as much as we spend. Our intern expenses are one of the greater expenditures and we are exploring several avenues to increase revenue in that area, including writing a grant and soliciting for funds dedicated specifically to the intern program. The answer has not yet come as to how much this will actually bring in, but we remain optimistic.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
George E. Pataki, Governor  
Denise M. Sheehan, Commissioner



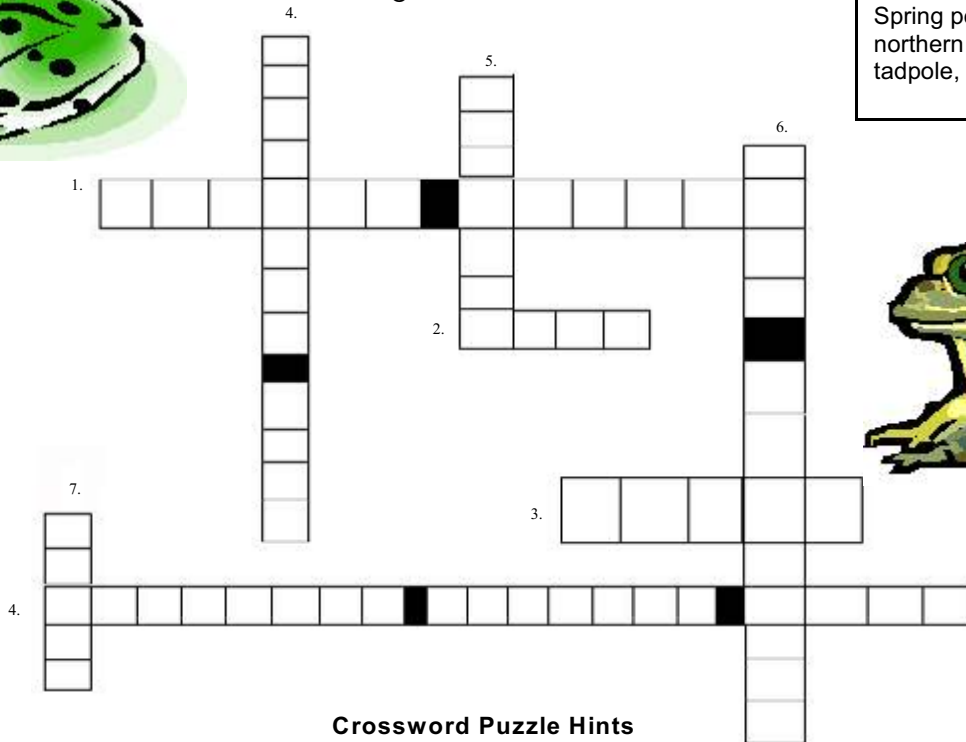
"Kids in Nature Daily"

The quarterly newsletter with fun and stimulating activities that teach about nature.



Be K.I.N.D. to your world!  
 Spring 2006  
 Issue #32  
 by naturalist intern,  
 Katie O'Gorman

Frog Crossword Puzzle



**Word Bank**  
 Spring peeper, grey treefrog, northern leopard frog, water, eggs, tadpole, American toad, lungs



Crossword Puzzle Hints

Across

1. My call signals the start of spring. You will hear me peeping for my mate.
2. Adults lay up to 80,000 of me and I generally hatch within a month.
3. Frogs like to spend time here to keep their skin moist.
4. I am marked on my back and sides with dark spots making me look very much like the animal from which I got my name.

Down

4. Most people don't consider me a frog and recognize me by the warts on my back.
5. I am a juvenile frog and must spend all of my time in the water because I have gills.
6. I am most comfortable in deciduous or mixed forests up in a tree.
7. Tadpoles breathe with gills, unlike adult frogs that breathe with \_\_\_\_\_.

Which Friend Am I?

I carry my house on my back and often use it for protection. You can find me near the edges of ponds or possibly in the water. I like to bask in the sun to increase my body temperature. This helps me to move efficiently so that I am able to escape predators and catch prey. I lay my eggs in sandy soil or lawns, usually near the edge of a pond. The gender of my young is decided according to how warm the eggs are in the hole. The warmer eggs become my female young and the cooler eggs become my male young. People consider me quite beautiful and often say my back looks like a painting. Can you guess my name?

Which Friend Am I? – Entry Form

To learn what the animal described above is, visit your local library or the library and other resources at Rogers Center. Mail your answer to Rogers Center, 2721 SH 80, Sherburne, NY 13460, by April 15, 2006. One name will be drawn from all the correct responses received, and the winner will receive a Friends of Rogers t-shirt.

Which Am I? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



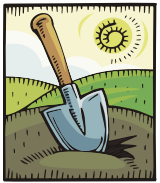
## Earth Fest 2006

by Laura Carey

Be a part of our growing Earth Fest event on Saturday, May 6, 2006 from noon to 4:00 PM.

This year we are starting the day with a workshop on "fairy houses" for children and their adults. The workshop will be led by the author of *Fairy Houses*, Tracy Kane, at 11:00 AM with a repeat later in the afternoon. Tracy will lead participants through everything they need to know to construct a Fairy House in the woods, then children will be able to create their own design.

We will open the event at noon with a maypole dance to the live music of Peggy Lynn and Dan Duggan who will then entertain us for the next hour. All day we will be giving away free trees and shrubs, and will have exhibitors, local artist demonstrations, fun games and activities, a pack llama demonstration, green-living scavenger hunt, hybrid cars, nature crafts, Sherburne-Earlville Art Club recycled art, door prizes and lots more!



## Winter Living Celebration Better than Ever

by Chris DeCesare

The snows of December hung around just long enough to provide the right atmosphere for the 28th Annual Winter Living Celebration. Sunny skies greeted people in the morning and the increasing clouds did nothing to chase them away. Good publicity brought visitors from near and far to experience winter-related activities, exhibits and entertainment.

It seemed that all the activities drew a lot of interest. The line for riding in a horse-drawn sleigh was steady throughout the day. People gathered in groups to watch the demonstrations. DEC Rangers demonstrated search and rescue equipment while the Environmental Conservation Officers showed what a canine can do to assist in law enforcement. We finally had some decent ice for the ice-fishing demonstration and there were always people on the ice checking out the holes. Music and storytelling performances had full audiences ready to clap or laugh right along with the entertainers. Henry Lappen used masks that he created, and mimed bird behaviors to describe birds in their habitats. About the only activity that could not be done was cross-country skiing due to crusty snow conditions. Other than that, we could not have asked for a better day.

At final count, we estimate that 1,800 people came to the Center, and our overcrowded parking lots seemed to attest to this. Many people were involved with the event to make it happen. A huge thank you to all the volunteers, exhibitors, and community organizations who provided time, energy, and much-needed donations. This is our biggest event of the year and we can't do it without you!

## Exciting Sightings

by Fred von Mechow

Highlights of this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count on December 17 included golden eagle, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, kestrel, raven, Carolina wren, eastern bluebird, and swamp sparrow. I had a spectacular day, with 38 species. Overall we saw 3 more than our average of 50 for the day.

Other notable bird sightings this winter have included goshawk in Hamilton on January 12, bald eagle in Norwich on January 15 and screech owl at Rogers Center on January 19. Cedar waxwings have been hanging around Rogers during January.

Despite the mildness of the winter (as of late January, anyway), we have seen little mammal action, other than the typical squirrels, rabbits and deer.

## A BIG “Thank You” to Facilitators!

A huge “Thank You” to Project WET and Project WILD teacher workshop facilitators who are committed to protecting our natural resources. They enable other educators to incorporate even more environmental education into their teaching and are an essential part of the program’s success:

Robin Hill	Charlie Hall
Jen Coe	Don Birdd
Mary Anna Russo	Ilene Lurie
Mary Bomba	Betsy Ukeritis
Jen Conrad	Mary Leou
Senta Korb	Georgia Gilbert

## Donations

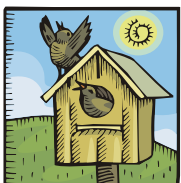
Friends of Rogers appreciates the following individuals and organizations for their generous contributions in the form of much-needed items, services and money:

John Grossmann  
Byron Harrington  
Cicero Elementary – Sunflower Club  
Raymond Gregory

## Volunteer Recognition

We are very grateful for the many hours of service contributed by the following volunteers at Rogers Center:

- Wells Horton – photography
- Jean Dewey – office receptionist
- Barbara Meeks – press release mailings, roller of quarters and library assistance
- Audrey Wakefield – library cataloging
- Community Service Helpers



## If You Care...Leave Them There!

*By Frank Benenati*

*Reprinted, with permission, from Spring 1996 Rogers Center Journal*

Spring is a time when wildlife replenish populations. Consequently, people frequently encounter baby wildlife, such as fawns lying in fields, nests full of rabbits or birds fallen from nests.

Young wildlife do not need to be rescued. Leave them where you find them. Mothers usually leave them temporarily, know where they are, and will return for them. They usually feed somewhere else. If disturbed enough, the parents abandon the young. Humans do not make good parents for wildlife. Young learn what to eat, and how to survive best from their parents. The mother’s milk also carries the correct amount of nutrition and disease-fighting compounds needed for young to thrive.

When you find a baby bird out of its nest, place it back in its nest. Since birds lack a good sense of smell, they will not detect your scent and will continue to feed the nestling. If the young is covered with feathers, leave it alone. The fledgling has probably left the nest to try to fly. The best thing we can do is to keep our domestic pets away while it learns this necessary skill to survive.

To humans, baby animals bring out feelings of awe for their cuteness and pity for their seeming helplessness. At this stage, humans want to keep them as pets. Though they may be harmless now, baby wildlife quickly grow to be mature wild animals and become a menace by injuring owners and belongings, and potentially carrying diseases. Baby animals soon lose their natural fear of humans and may fall prey to domestic pets.

An injured animal, especially young, evokes pity in most people, but remember that nature provides more young than can possibly survive. If all survived, they would starve to death. It is tough watching a suffering animal, but this is part of nature’s cycle of life and death. If you find an injured animal, place the animal in a warm, dark place to keep it calm. Call Rogers Center or the nearest DEC office to get the name and phone number of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, trained in caring for wild animals. Do not attempt to care for it yourself.

Spring is a season of new life, death and intrigue as we watch the natural world increase its populations. All around you, animals and plants interest all of us through their various methods of mating, home-building and caring for young. A little caution on our part benefits both ourselves and the wildlife with which we share this world.

*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 best serve you. Call 607-674-4017 to register. In the event of severe weather, modified programs will still be held. Please call the center for more information.*

## MARCH

- March 4  
Saturday  
9:00 AM to  
Noon**      **FINGER LAKES TRAIL HIKE/SNOWSHOE**  
Come out and snowshoe the Ratville Road section of the Finger Lakes Trail. This great system of trails runs across the state, through varied terrain, and is equally good for long or short hikes. **Please call to register.**
- March 11  
Saturday  
11:00 AM**      **BLUEBIRD NEST BOX BUILDING**  
Help provide an important basic need for a bluebird family by building a nest box. Soon, male bluebirds will be back to select nest sites and you can be ready to welcome them. **Bring a hammer and \$8.00 for every box you wish to take home.**
- March 18  
Saturday  
11:00 AM**      **SPIDERS!**  
Spiders are engineers of great skill and versatility, and there are an estimated 100,000 species of them! We will learn about the fascinating lives and habits of these eight – legged arachnids.
- March 25  
Saturday  
10:00 AM**      **SIGNS OF SPRING AT ADAMS FARM**  
Learn to recognize some changes that occur around us when the seasons change from the cold of winter to the warmth of spring. We'll search for skunk cabbage and signs of deer and many other amazing animal wonders. **Dress for the outdoors and possibly muddy conditions.**

## APRIL

- April 1  
Saturday  
11:00 AM**      **BATS AND BAT HOUSES**  
Learn fun and fascinating facts about bats and how to encourage them to take up residence near you. If you'd like fewer mosquitoes and the chance for some fun evening wildlife viewing, this is the program for you. **Bring a hammer and \$8.00 for each box you wish to take home.**
- April 8  
Saturday  
10:00 AM**      **NATURE REFLECTIONS**  
Spend a little time in nature absorbing the relaxing beauty of the natural world. We will visit a few special spots to reflect, write, draw, or just enjoy, using quotes and artwork from other nature enthusiasts as inspiration.
- April 15  
Saturday  
1:30 PM**      **For Children: EGG COLORING**  
Egg coloring is popular at this time of year. Use nature and wild birds as your inspiration to color wooden eggs for camouflage in many different habitats. All materials provided. **Please call to register; supplies are limited.** (Ages 4 to 12)

**ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND MEET AT VISITOR CENTER UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.**

**April 20  
Thursday  
7:30 PM**

### WOODCOCK WALK

Witness the beautiful sky dance of the male woodcock as he woos a mate. We will travel to a nearby field known to have woodcocks for a chance to see this fascinating spring ritual. Dress for the weather.

**April 22  
Saturday  
10:00 AM to  
1:00 PM**

### EARTH DAY CELEBRATION CREATIONS

Celebrate Earth Day at Rogers Center. You can make your own garden stones out of cement, bird feeders out of recycled materials, and a poster for the New York Recycles Poster Contest. You will also receive a sunflower seedling to bring home to plant in your own yard. Earth flags and Earth Day t-shirts will be available for sale in the Rogers Center store.

**April 29  
Saturday  
7:30 PM**

### PEEPS, SNORTS AND QUACKS

Learn about our local frogs, the sounds they make, and where they live. After a brief slide and audiotape program, we will venture out into the marsh to catch and observe our tiniest and loudest frogs - spring peepers. **Wear boots and bring flashlights.**

## MAY

**May 6  
Saturday  
11:00 AM to  
Noon**

### FAIRY HOUSES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTHOR TRACY KANE

Before Earth Fest, Tracy Kane will read her book, *Fairy Houses*, and guide children in building fairy houses. **Please call to register and for details.**

**May 6  
Saturday  
Noon to  
4:00 PM**

### EARTH FEST

Join us for a fun-filled Earth Fest. Enjoy music, games, maypole dancing, exhibits, and demonstrations. Take home a tree or shrub to landscape your yard. Door prizes, too! Help us usher in spring!

**May 13  
Saturday  
10:00 AM**

### WILDFLOWERS AT CUSH HILL

With April showers come May flowers! Join us as we wander the forest hillside of Cush Hill admiring nature's paintings. Don't miss this short-lived display of wildflowers, from adder's tongue to yellow violets.

**May 20  
Saturday  
10:00 AM**

### SALAMANDERS AT CUSH HILL

Explore the rocks, logs, and crevices of Cush Hill while searching for salamanders of all kinds. Discover the secrets of these sly creatures, including where to find them and how they survive.

**May 27  
Saturday  
8:30 AM to  
Noon**

### CANOE OR KAYAK NINEMILE SWAMP

Paddle leisurely through Ninemile Swamp while observing the wetland wildlife and plants. Enjoy stories of the local, infamous Loomis Gang as we search for turtles, herons, signs of beaver and more. **Registration is required. There is a \$5.00 fee per paddler. Meet in the Rogers Center main parking lot.**

## Places to Paddle - Beaver Creek, Brookfield

by Fred von Mechow

I fell in love with Beaver Creek when my wife and I first canoed there several years ago amidst the middle of 30 to 40 American toads engaged in a courtship ritual. Since then, we've seen wood duck families, deer, hawks, big dead snapping turtles, and lots of good birdwatching.

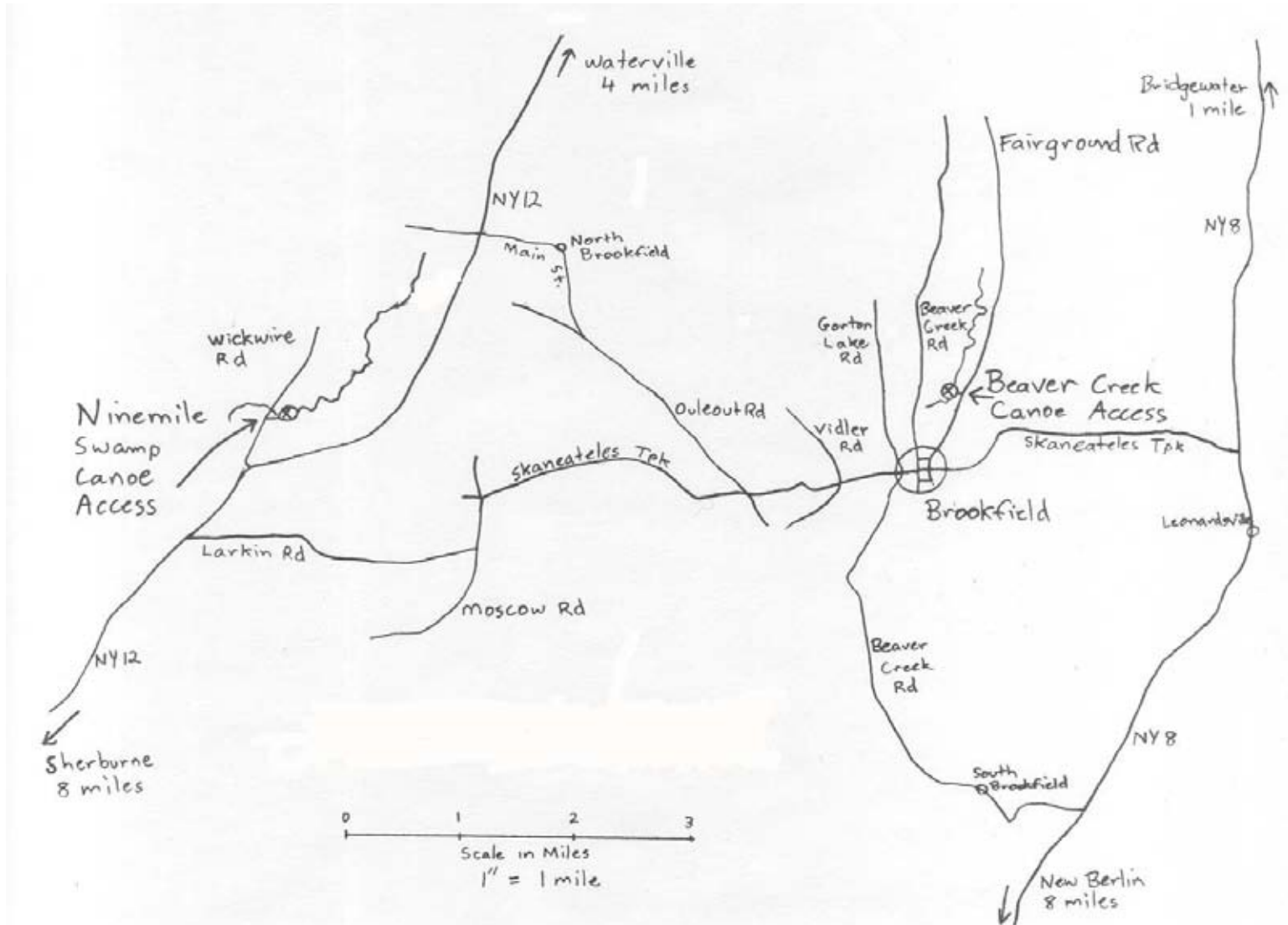
Beaver Creek is rivaled only by Ninemile Swamp among paddling spots within a half-hour drive of Rogers Center. Both provide the wilderness feel of an Adirondack stream, as you can barely see evidence of humans once you leave their launches.

Chitting Pond on the north side of US Route 20 (and subject of a future "Places to Paddle" article) is the origin of Beaver Creek. As it slowly flows south through the Brookfield State Forest, it meanders widely in its valley, greatly lengthening the distance you can paddle. Beaver activity downstream determines the water level. When it is high, you can paddle several miles. The lowest I've seen it prevented me from venturing more than a mile and a half, but that distance still presented some interesting geological observations, so it was well worthwhile.

Get to Beaver Creek from New York State Route 12 in East Hamilton by going east on Larkin Road. At the T-intersection, turn left on Moscow Road. Bear right at the next intersection on Skaneateles Turnpike. Go straight through the next two intersections into the Village of Brookfield. Once in Brookfield, take the third left on Fairground Road. The parking area is one mile on the left.

From New York State Route 8 just north of Leonardsville, take Skaneateles Turnpike west into Brookfield. Take the first right in Brookfield Village on Fairground Road. The parking area is one mile on the left.

Once you park, you'll need to carry the boat and gear about 125 yards across a foot bridge. Put in on the far side, to the left as you approach. The launch is unimproved, so be cautious.



## Volunteer Spotlight – Thurston Packer –

*By Amy Smith*

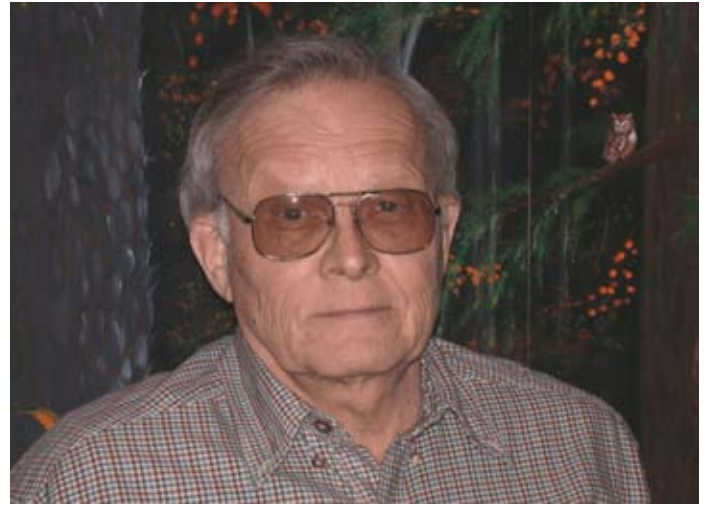
It was back in 1991 when Thurston Packer first joined the Friends of Rogers Board and started volunteering at Rogers Center. Today, his smile is well-known around here. You can find him snowshoeing, cross country skiing, stationing the Friends of Rogers booth at every Winter Living Celebration, or look for him as a station master at our annual Animals of Halloween event. He thinks of Rogers Center as a beautiful, local, natural resource, and is happy to be a part of it. For the past 15 years, Thurston has been the Treasurer for the Friends of Rogers (FOR). It is our not-for-profit corporation composed of dedicated supporters of Rogers Center. This group currently consists of four officers, who also serve as directors, and eight additional directors, all of whom serve without compensation. FOR directors provide valuable input, grass roots support and help to promote Rogers Center programs.

Having lived in Sherburne since the age of five, he is very well-known in the community. He started his career at the local NBT Bank and then moved to the Norwich branch where he served many years. While officially retiring in 1997, he stills works once a week at the bank to stay active and perform needed tasks. Thurston also volunteers his time as the treasurer for the Sherburne Quarter Cemetery Association, on the Executive Committee of the West Hill Cemetery Association, and President of the Library Board. What energy and dedication! While attending high school in Sherburne, he started working as the local weather observer for the National Weather Service. Every day at 7:00 AM, he reported both the high and low temperatures, new snow and rainfall and twice a week he calculated the water equivalence of the new snowfall. He also recorded the river depth readings from the river gauging station. After 41 years of this dedicated monitoring, he decided to pass on the role to another.

Thurston enjoys camping in Vermont, spending lots of time in his large garden at home, and working on carpentry skills, or, as he says, "fixing things." He also enjoys spending time with his wife, three children and his six grandchildren.

We are very grateful for the countless hours that Thurston has donated to Rogers Center.

The time, effort and support given to us by all of our volunteers is a crucial part of the continuous success of Rogers Center. Volunteering is a way of putting a smile on your face and making you feel good. Call Rogers Center for more volunteer information.



*Thurston Packer, Treasurer - Friends of Rogers, Inc.*



### Green Alternative

#### The Tao of Lawn Care

*By Laura Carey*

Do less, accomplish more...

Mow less area of your lawn, improve habitat.

Mow less often; greener grass, cleaner air.

Cut less of the blade, healthier lawn.

Leave weeds, diversity flourishes.

Meditate and hear the grass grow.



**New York State  
Outdoor Education Association**  
*39th Annual Conference  
October 19-22, 2006*

***Tradition With A Future: Vision, Focus, Dreams***

Be a part of the NYSOEA's biggest event of the year. This year's conference will be at Beaver Hollow Conference Center in Java Center (45 minutes southeast of Buffalo). The conference is for teachers, outdoor educators and anyone interested in the outdoors and environmental education.

Workshop topics span a wide range including insects, trees, storytelling, photography, orienteering, climate change, sustainability, watersheds, puppetry, diversity and burn barrels. There will be speakers, entertainment, great food, and the best group of people you'd ever want to meet.

To learn more about NYSOEA and this year's conference, go to: [www.nysoea.org](http://www.nysoea.org)

To check out the facility where this year's conference will be held, go to: [www.beaverhollow.com](http://www.beaverhollow.com)

**Summer Teacher Institute  
on the Environment**

*by Amy Smith*

We invite you to join us for our 4th Annual Summer Teacher Institute on the Environment. The institute will be held July 31 to August 4, 2006, from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM daily. This week of field trips and activities is designed to provide teachers with background knowledge in basic natural history and ecology through visits to several habitat types of New York. At each site, participants will be guided through exploration and experience supporting activities designed to address NYS Math Science and Technology (MST) Learning Standards 4, 6 and 7.

Site visits include a quaking bog, woodland stream, gorge, lake, and field with discussion of geology, soils, climate, topography and micro-climate to help teachers understand why plant and animal species occur where they do. The last day will be spent at Summer Hill Retreat Center with a tour of the off-the-grid facility, a delicious lunch and an opportunity to reflect on the week and walk the stone labyrinth. Fee: \$35.00. For more information, please contact Laura Carey [lacarey@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:lacarey@gw.dec.state.ny.us) or Amy Smith [aesmith@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:aesmith@gw.dec.state.ny.us) at Rogers Center or call 607-674-4017. We look forward to learning and having fun with you this summer!

