



# TRIBUTARY

Summer 2004

---

## Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

---

[www.dec.state.ny.us/website/education/5river.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/education/5river.html)  
[5rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:5rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us)

### *Visit the Nature Place*

A trip to Five Rivers is always special, but this summer it can be even more so. With the help of our student naturalists, there will be a special sharing place on the lawn, called *The Nature Place*. Visitors can see and handle all sorts of nature specimens from Five Rivers' collections: hold the skull of a black bear, see a butterfly up close and personal, and smell honey direct from the bee hive.

During the months of July and August, our student naturalists will be staffing *The Nature Place* on the lawn under a canopy, and will be eager to share their knowledge with you. The summer schedule is varied, so we can't give you exact dates and times; just look for the lawn canopy each time you come. Spending some time at *The Nature Place* will be a great way to start your visit to Five Rivers.

### *Bat-watching*

If you walk the trails at Five Rivers in the evening, be sure to do a little bat-watching! As dusk falls, bats emerge from their roosting places, and generally head for a pond or stream, skimming low over the water to scoop up a drink. Then they begin

their night hunt, often picking off the insects that hover over the water as a first course. The bats appear to dive erratically, but each swoop is carefully planned; they pick insects out of the air, using echolocation to determine their precise location. And of course bats are very important in keeping insect populations under control, being particularly good at catching mosquitoes.

The most common bats seen at Five Rivers are little brown creatures, about the size of a mouse, and appropriately named little brown bats. They're also known (if you want to sound more scientific) as the little brown *Myotis*. Bigger bats, with a wingspread of about ten inches, are occasionally seen, and are called—you guessed it—big brown bats.



New York State  
Department of Environmental Conservation  
George E. Pataki, Governor  
Erin M. Crotty, Commissioner

## Five Rivers Environmental Education Center Summer Program Schedule 2004

*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. If you call ahead to let us know your needs, we will be happy to learn how we can best serve you.***

*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 3                      7th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY COUNT                      2:00 p.m.

What's red, white and blue and flutters in the wind? Dang, there goes another one! Whatever it is, they're flying all over the grounds. Join us for a close-up 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 Wednesday, June 30.

Tuesday, July 6                      TURTLES IN THE POND                      7:00 p.m.

See some live turtles and then join us for a walk around a Five Rivers pond as we look for these fascinating creatures in their natural habitat. We'll hope to observe painted and snapping turtles. Bring binoculars, if you have them; we have some to loan.

Tuesday, July 13                      FLOWER WALK                      7:00 p.m.

Do you know which clover was brought to America in large quantities by Lafayette? Which plant can you hang in your window to repel flies? Great natural history trivia plus sweet smells and beauty. Ah, the flowers of summer!

Tuesday, July 20                      BATS IN FLIGHT                      7:00 p.m.

Join us for a walk to look for evening wildlife, including bats emerging from the "bat barn." Bats are beautiful to watch as they twist and turn in mid-air on their evening flights—and it's nice to think they're capturing mosquitoes!

Tuesday, July 27                      *Creature Feature:* BEAVER                      7:00 p.m.

In summer, there's no such thing as an eager beaver. There are no seasonal floods to require dam repair, the kits are being weaned, and there's plenty of succulent new growth to enjoy. Join us on an outdoor foray to monitor summer activity of beaver and other pond inhabitants.

Saturday, July 31                      FAMILY PROGRAM - GARDEN & WOODLOT WALK                      10:00 a.m.

A hands-on, interactive sharing program for parents and their young children. Touch, smell, look and listen in the garden and the forest. Please call to pre-register by July 29. There is a materials fee of \$3.00/family for Friends of Five Rivers members; \$5.00/family for non-members.

Tuesday, August 3                      FLOWERS OF LAWN AND MEADOW                      7:00 p.m.

Summer is the time for colorful flowers. On this walk we'll identify some common wildflowers and discuss their natural history as well as the many ways people have used these

beautiful plants.

Saturday, August 7 SMOKEY BEAR'S BIRTHDAY EXTRAVAGANZA 10:00 a.m.

What better way to commemorate Smokey Bear's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday than to try your hand at "Forest Rangering"? You'll extinguish flames with an Indian pump, get to see how antique and modern Forest Ranger trucks work, and learn fire prevention skills from a real DEC Forest Ranger. Plus, have some birthday refreshments and get to meet a "special guest." Bring a Polaroid if you'd like pictures of Smokey!

Tuesday, August 10 OWL LIFE 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an indoor/outdoor program on owls. Meet our resident barred owl, Aries, and find out more about his behavior, habits and lifestyle.

Saturday, August 14 FAMILY PROGRAM - STREAM EXPLORATION 10:00 a.m.

Wading in the cool stream, searching for critters, sharing the morning with the family; it's a program for parents and their young children. Please call to pre-register by August 12. There is a materials fee of \$3.00/family for Friends of Five Rivers members; \$5.00/family for non-members.

Tuesday, August 24 GARDEN OPEN HOUSE 7:00 p.m.

The Wildlife Garden is one of the most beautiful spots at Five Rivers. Have you found it yet? Join us for refreshments in the garden, and learn more about the spectacular flowers that attract butterflies, hummingbirds and humans.

Friday to Saturday, August 27-28 FAMILY CAMP-OUT

Gather Friday evening, hike to campsite, take a night walk to look for bats, call owls and listen for coyotes. Snacks and stories around the camp fire, sleep in a tent, a dawn walk and breakfast by the fire. Sound good? Call the Center for details and to sign up your family. There is a fee of \$5.00/family for Friends of Five Rivers members; \$10.00/family for non-members.

Saturday, August 28 ROGER TORY PETERSON'S BIRDS 10:00 a.m.

Though he always considered himself a painter, Jamestown, NY's Roger Tory Peterson was one of our most important environmental educators. Through his *field mark* system, he launched our national preoccupation with birds and bird conservation. Celebrate the late Dr. Peterson's 96<sup>th</sup> birthday with us on a commemorative field study of birds, the "environmental litmus paper."

Tuesday, August 31 FAMILY PROGRAM - INSECTS 7:00 p.m.

An exciting venture into the meadow to capture insects, observe them up close, and identify them where possible. After careful observation, we'll release them unharmed.

## FALL FESTIVAL

**Saturday, September 18 — 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

Come and join us for our annual Fall Festival! It's a multitude of activities and hands-on crafts, games and nature explorations. Walk the trails and enjoy migrating birds, fall wildflowers, and brilliant foliage. Environmental exhibits and hands-on activities make the Festival fun for the whole family.

Popcorn and Cider  
Silent Auction  
Reptiles and Amphibians  
Music

Insect Safari  
Nature Activities  
Nature Crafts  
Birds of Prey

Admission and parking are **free!**

**Staff: Nancy Payne, Anita Sanchez, Dee Strnisa, Craig E. Thompson, Lori Whiting,  
Alli Corbett (SCA), Lauren Pidot (SCA)**