



# TRIBUTARY

Winter 2004

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## Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

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### School Program Volunteer Training

Five Rivers is offering training sessions for people who are interested in teaching guided nature classes for school children here at the Center.

Training for indoor/outdoor classes on *Snowshoeing* and *Winter Challenges* classes will be held on January 5 and 6, from 9:30 to 12 noon. Training for our *Maple Sugaring* classes will be on March 4, from 9:30 to 12 noon.

In spring we offer a full range of classes, including: wildlife tracking; stream and pond ecology; insect safaris; and fun, hands-on explorations of the outdoors for our littlest visitors from preschool and kindergarten. Training sessions for spring classes are held in the month of April.

No experience is necessary; we provide training. All you need is a love of the outdoors, an interest in working with children, and enthusiasm! The amount of time you wish to commit is up to you; classes are held weekday mornings and some afternoons throughout the school year. There is absolutely no obligation, so why not come and see what it's all about? Please call the Center at (518) 475-0291 for more information.

### Discover Snowshoeing

Try a hot new sport! Friends of Five Rivers, our citizen's not-for-profit group, rents snowshoes for use on the grounds at \$3.00 a pair. And if you're a member of FFR, you can use snowshoes for free!

We also have a limited supply of plastic children's snowshoes available for use free-of-charge. These snowshoes can fit children as young as five or so, depending on their foot size. Snowshoes are available at the Visitor Center anytime there's sufficient snow cover.

If you can walk, you can snowshoe! If you'd like some instruction on the art and science of using snowshoes, join us for one of our guided snowshoe walks.

When trail conditions are icy, stop by the Visitor Center and borrow a pair of easy-to-use Ice Creepers. These are crampons, which are sharp spikes that strap onto your shoes or boots. All are welcome to borrow our Ice Creepers, at no charge, for use on Five Rivers' grounds.

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

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center  
Winter 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; 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 cancelled. Please call the Center to confirm.

Thursday, January 1 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. In the 23 years of this annual survey, more than 66 different species have been recorded. Bring binoculars and dress warmly.

Saturday, January 10 SNOWSHOE WALK 2:00 pm

A good blanket of snow is a very healthy thing for the environment. It is also a canvas of animal signs and a ready-laid highway for snowshoers. **Pre-register if you wish to use our snowshoes; we have some snowshoes for small children.**

Saturday, January 17 SNOWSHOE MAKING PROGRAM 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Participants will make Ojibway-style snowshoes from a kit. Participants will purchase wooden frames and webbing. We supply the instruction, you supply the labor. **Pre-register by January 1; call the Center for information.**

Friday, January 23 WINTER CONSTELLATIONS 7:30 pm

Join the Albany Area Amateur Astronomers for an evening of outdoor sky watching and star lore. Club members will focus on seasonal deep sky objects and common constellations with telescopes and naked eye observation. In case of cloudy weather, this program will be cancelled.

Saturday, January 24 INSECTS OF WINTER 2:00 pm

The insects are hidden out there: sleeping, or as yet unhatched, waiting. Join us in this search for hidden insects. We will use snowshoes if conditions warrant. **Pre-register if you wish to use our snowshoes.**

Sunday, January 25                      SNOWSHOE WALK                      2:00 pm

A repeat of the January 10 program.

Saturday January 31                      THEY WENT THAT'A WAY                      2:00 pm

What has four paws and walks in a straight line? Lots of things! Join us for an "in-depth" look at animal tracks and traces on this outdoor field study of winter ecology.

Saturday, February 7      *Watchable Wildlife:* WINTER FINCHES      9:00 am

For Capital Region bird enthusiasts, winter finches are gifts that deliver themselves. And when food is short up north, our feeders can be busy with grosbeaks, siskins, redpolls, crossbills and purple finches. Join us on an outdoor search for finches and other seasonal specialties as we celebrate the Audubon Society's 118<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Friday, February 13                      NIGHT SKI AND SNOWSHOE                      7:00 pm

Nothing beats a vigorous expedition on a winter's night. Perhaps a fox or owl will grace us with a winter song. We'll end the evening inside with hot cocoa. If snow conditions are not good for skiing or snowshoeing, we will have a night walk. Please call to **pre-register**.

Saturday, February 14      LICHENS ALL AROUND                      2:00 pm

What are these strange plants that look like spatters of paint? Are they even plants? We'll explore the miniature world of the lichens that flourish in winter on rocks and trees.

Tuesday, February 17                      SNOWSHOE WALK                      10:00 am

A repeat of the January 10 program.

Tuesday, February 17      NATURALISTS AS READING PARTNERS 7:00 pm

This is a special edition of our daytime program for parents and their children. We begin with the reading of a story book then go outdoors on an adventure. If there is snow on the ground, the light of the stars will give us a magical brightness. We end the evening inside with hot cocoa. **Please call to pre-register by Feb. 15.**

February 19/20 **HOLIDAY MINI WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES**

Thursday/Friday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

These two days are for children ages 9 to 12 and their parents. Lots of

outdoor activities are planned, and will be done on snowshoes if conditions permit. Animal tracking, map and compass, scavenger hunt, journal writing and indoor and outdoor games. Members \$12.00/family. Non-members \$18.00/family. **Pre-register** by February 13.

Saturday, February 21                      SNOWSHOE WALK                      2:00 pm  
A repeat of January 10's program.

Saturday, February 28                      GEOLOGY LAB                      1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
A workshop for teachers and youth leaders on geology. Outdoor walks and hands-on classroom activities will offer a range of ways to teach students about this fascinating subject. **Call to pre-register by February 25**; there is a \$10.00 materials fee.

Sunday, February 29                      SNOWSHOE WALK                      2:00 pm  
A repeat of the January 10 program.

Saturday, March 6                      PROJECT WET WORKSHOP                      12:00- 4:00 pm  
This workshop will introduce "Project WET" (Water Education for Teachers). Teacher in-service credit can be coordinated through the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center.

Sunday, March 7                      DR. SEUSS' CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 1:00-4:00 pm  
In honor of Dr. Seuss's Centennial, we read from his writings that are "environmental:" *The Lorax*, *McElligot*, *Horton*, and more - you'll hear about here, about 1:00 until 4:00! Whether sister or brother, or father or mother, parent and child must accompany each other. On top of all that, meet the Cat in the Hat and win nifty prizes for the Seuss-iest noses, shoeses and eyeses.

Friday, March 19                      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, woodcock and other sounds of a spring evening.

***MAPLE SUGAR OPEN HOUSES***

**Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30-3:30 pm  
20, 21, 27, 28**

**March 13, 14,**

At our Maple Sugar Open Houses, watch sap drip from the tapped trees and smell the syrup boiling in the evaporator. You'll learn to twirl a drill and pound a spile, and use your taste buds to sample maple syrup. The Maple Sugar Open Houses are open to the public. Scout and other youth groups are welcome; call the Center to **pre-register a group.**

**HELP US SAVE PAPER!**

PLEASE SEND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO US AT  
5rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us  
SO WE CAN SEND YOU THE *TRIBUTARY* ELECTRONICALLY.

**Staff: Nancy Payne, Anita Sanchez, Dee Strnisa, Craig D. Thompson, Lori Whiting**