

FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Winter 2021–22 Program Schedule

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center is your gateway to the outdoors. The grounds are open every day from sunrise to sunset. The visitor center is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except state holidays.

For the safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers:

- For those who are unvaccinated, masks must be worn throughout all programs. For those who are vaccinated, social distancing practices and mask wearing are strongly encouraged.
- Masks must be worn by everyone when inside the visitor center and restrooms, and on the trails whenever a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained between individuals or households.

Programs listed below are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Please dress for the weather. At this time, we cannot accommodate organized groups during our public programs. We are happy to make alternate arrangements for your organization. For further information, call us at 518-475-0291.

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

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

Friends of Five Rivers: Friends of Five Rivers is the year-round community support group for Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Members receive a discount on select items at the Friends’ store, complimentary snowshoe loans, and reduced fees for some programs. Membership levels and volunteer information are available at FriendsofFiveRivers.org. Questions? Email info@FriendsofFiveRivers.org or call 518-475-0295.

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.

WINTER FUN: SNOWSHOE RENTALS

Snowshoes are available for rent from the Friends of Five Rivers for \$5 per pair; free for Friends 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

January 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 518-475-0291 or email 5Rivers@dec.ny.gov for dates and to register.

FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS SNOW SNAKE CREATION AND RACING

Snow snake is a traditional Haudenosaunee game played during the winter. The object of the game is to throw your snow snake (a straight tree branch) the farthest along a smooth trough made in the snow. Snow snakes come in various lengths. Five Rivers' snow snake sessions will demonstrate how to prepare the branch for racing by removing twigs, sanding rough spots, decorating, and waxing. You will head home with a branch, sandpaper, and wax to use for the creation of your own unique snow snake by race day.

Race day is February 24, 2022 (snow date February 25), with heats at 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM.

For: All ages; Children under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult

One-hour Instructional Sessions: December 28–30 and February 22 at 10:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM, or 2:30 PM; registration limit of 6 people per session

Race Heats: February 24, 2022 at 10:00 AM or 1:00 PM (snow date February 25)

Where: In person at Five Rivers' amphitheater

Fee: Friends Members = \$15/individual or \$20/family; Non-members = \$20/individual plus \$5 for each additional participant; fees include materials

Organized groups (Scouts, schools, etc.), please email for rates.

Contact gsp5rivers@outlook.com with questions. Pre-registration is required. For detailed information including fees, or to register, visit FriendsofFiveRivers.org. (Look under the "New Winter Programs" tab.)

Saturday, January 1, 2022, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Community Science: NEW YEAR'S BIRD COUNT

Join local bird experts from the Hudson Mohawk Bird Club for our 41st annual New Year's Day bird count. Over the decades, more than 70 different species have been found at Five Rivers on this day, and the birds found during this long-term study show interesting range changes for many species. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress warmly. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, December 29, to register. If severe weather is forecast, call on Friday, December 31, to confirm the event will be held.

Saturday, January 1, 2022, 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM

Adventure NY: FIRST DAY HIKES

Happy New Year! Start the year on the right foot with some outdoor fun. We'll stretch our legs and clear our heads on two easy-paced guided walks for all ages. The morning walk will cover about three-quarters of a mile, while the afternoon walk will cover about one and a half miles. Dress for the weather. Space is limited for both guided walks. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, December 29, to register. In the event of severe weather, these programs will be canceled.

Saturday, January 8, 10:00 AM

How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE for Families

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. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 5, to register. The outdoor portion of this program will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow.

Saturday, January 8, 2:00 PM

How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE for Ages 10 & up

Learn some of the history of snowshoeing and then try them out yourself for a walk along the Old Field trail. We'll imagine what it might have been like to use these ancient tools to aid survival, like many of our ancestors did. You'll come away with a newfound appreciation for snowshoeing, which is far more than an outdoor sport. Snowshoe rental fees are waived. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 5. The outdoor portion of this program will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow.

FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS WINTER FAMILY FUN PROGRAM

Families with young children (pre-school) will gather for the reading of a nature-themed story, then create a project related to the story. Families will then accompany a naturalist on a discovery walk around Five Rivers. Pre-registration is required. Visit FriendsofFiveRivers.org for further information or to register. (Look under the “New Winter Programs” tab.)

Who: Pre-school children and parents/adult caregivers; older siblings welcome on school vacation days

Maximum Group Size: 3 families per naturalist

When: 3 sessions – January, February, and March – 9:30 to 11:00 AM *or* 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM on Tuesdays *or* Wednesdays each session

Where: meet at Five Rivers’ Guided School Program Building

Fee: \$8 for Friends members; \$10 for non-members; \$5 materials fee per child

FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS ADULT EDUCATION – TALK & TREK

Learn about the natural world with a Friends naturalist. Pre-registration is required. For detailed information, including fees, or to register, visit FriendsofFiveRivers.org. (Look under the “New Winter Programs” tab.)

Growths Called Galls: Search for galls to learn where and how they form, and what treasures they hold. Wednesdays, January 5, 12, and 19, from 1:30–3:00 PM

Exploring Winter: Head outdoors to discover life under, in, and above the snow. Thursdays, January 6, 13, 20, 27 and February 3, from 10:00–11:30 AM

Laughing Winter Blues Away: Sample some winter sports and games. Wednesdays, February 2, 9, and 16, from 1:30–3:00 PM

Tree ID by Buds and Scars: Learn the basics of tree identification in winter. Wednesdays, March 9, 16, and 23 from 1:30–3:00 PM *or* Thursdays, March 10, 17, and 24, from 1:30–3:00 PM

Tuesday, January 11, 8:00 PM

Online Training: INTRODUCTION TO THE WINTER RAPTOR SURVEY

For the past six years, Five Rivers has participated in the state and regional monitoring of winter raptors, assisting biologists in their conservation efforts to help these threatened and endangered species. If you are interested in learning about the survey itself, raptors we survey for, how it is done, and past results please join us for this online introduction to the survey. This program is open to all. If you are interested in joining our team of community scientists, this is a great way learn how the survey is conducted. No experience is needed. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Monday, January 10. You will receive a link to join the training online.

Saturday, January 22, 10:00 AM

I Bird NY: WHO GIVES A HOOT?

Our local owls, that’s who! Learn which owls live in our area and what they are doing right now. You’ll be surprised to find out why February is a very important time for many of them. As a bonus, we’ll learn to recognize owl calls, so next time you hear one, you’ll know WHOOO is calling. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 19.

FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS MAPLE SUGARING AT HOME

Learn how to make maple syrup at home in time for the sap run. Spend an hour with a Friends naturalist learning how to identify a maple tree, tap a spile, and collect sap. View one method for evaporating sap to syrup at home and ask questions before leaving with a spile and a smile. Pre-registration is required. Visit FriendsofFiveRivers.org for further information or to register. (Look under the “New Winter Programs” tab.)

For: Individuals, families, friend pods (6 people maximum)

When: February 7, 14 or 23 at 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, or 3:00 PM

Where: Meet at Five Rivers’ Guided School Program Building

Fee: Friends members = \$15/individual or \$20/family; Non-members = \$20 + \$5/each additional participant in pod (fee includes spile and reference booklet)

Saturday, January 22, 2:00 PM

Guided Walk: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Treat yourself! Chase away those winter blues by immersing yourself in the beauty of nature. Bring out the “sense of wonder” and delight we find by going outdoors. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 19.

Saturday, January 29, 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. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 28 to register. The outdoor portion of this program will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow.

Saturday, February 12, 10:00 AM

COTTONTAIL RABBITS!

Five Rivers is famous for its rabbits. They are here, there, and everywhere. Where are they coming from and where do they go? Are they common everywhere? Learn for yourself some of how they survive, and how many important roles they play in the environment. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 9.

Saturday, February 12, 2:00 PM

How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE

See January 29 listing for full program description. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 9, to register. The outdoor portion of this program will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow.

Saturday, February 12, 4:00 PM

Five Rivers After Dark: HOWL PROWL!

Take a walk with a Five Rivers staff member to look/listen for our resident coyotes. Since we humans are usually indoors after dark, we miss the best time to observe them. Winter provides a light, frosty background where they become easier to see. There is a good chance we might hear an owl as well. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 9.

Saturday, February 19, 9:30–11:00 AM

Community Science: GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

This weekend, birders 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. 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. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 16, to register.

Saturday, February 19, 2:00 PM

MAKING A GREAT BACKYARD BIRD HABITAT

Drop in to see an informational display and talk with an educator about transforming your yard into a bird paradise. (There's more to it than birdfeeders!) We'll have tips for the rest of winter and some inspirations for spring. Make your yard a home to wildlife all year round.

Saturday, February 26, 11:00 AM

THE GALAPAGOS, THE AMAZON, AND FIVE RIVERS

Do you know where birds that raise their young at Five Rivers live during the winter? We know many migrate south in the fall, but to where? Where do they come from in the spring? Learn about these beautiful summer residents and their winter homes, and the fantastic migrations they take to get there. You will leave with a whole new appreciation for our birdlife and our connection with other parts of the world. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 23.

Saturday, February 26, 2:00 PM

Guided Walk: TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Get outside on the beautiful Turkey Trail, part of the North Loop Trail, and visit the lesser-known Larch Lane trail with a naturalist. This is a 2-mile hike over some of the more secretive trails at Five Rivers. The Friends of Five Rivers rent snowshoes for \$5 a pair in the exciting event of deep snow. To register, call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 23.

THE SWEETER SIDE OF FIVE RIVERS

Saturdays, March 12, 19 and 26, 1:30–3:30 PM

Drop in and 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, and enjoy the aroma of sap boiling in our evaporator. A local maple producer will be on site to answer questions and offer a variety of maple products for sale. Organized groups (such as Scout troops), please call 518-475-0291 to register.