

# FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## January–March 2024 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–4:30 PM, except state holidays.

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. If you call ahead to let us know your needs, we will be happy to serve you. We have a battery-powered scooter and a Freedom Chair all-terrain wheelchair available for free at the visitor center.*

**Email notifications from Five Rivers through DEC Delivers:** Sign up for email notifications about upcoming programs at Five Rivers at [dec.ny.gov/news/dec-delivers](https://dec.ny.gov/news/dec-delivers).

**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](https://FriendsofFiveRivers.org). Questions? Email [info@FriendsofFiveRivers.org](mailto: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. Service animals are welcome when they are helping their companion. Emotional support animals are not permitted.

### 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.

"Learn to snowshoe" programs are scheduled for January 6 and 13. See the program descriptions for details and registration information.

### COMMUNITY SCIENCE: WINTER RAPTOR SURVEY

The Winter Raptor Survey is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy Five Rivers and the wildlife that live here while helping biologists save these inspiring birds. Outdoor surveys occur every other week (weather permitting) throughout the winter. They start 30 minutes before sunset and end 30 minutes after. Volunteers meet at the visitor center and walk in teams to monitoring sites at Five Rivers. Volunteers do not need experience or to make a winter-long commitment. Study dates are subject to change due to weather conditions.

**Tentative Survey Dates:** January 9 and 23, February 6 and 20, March 5 and 19

Note that survey dates are weather dependent and subject to change at the last minute. Participants will be provided the meet-up and start times for each day when they register. Preregistration is required. Call **518-475-0291** or email [5Rivers@dec.ny.gov](mailto:5Rivers@dec.ny.gov) for more information or to register.

## Winter Birdseed Sale

Friends of Five Rivers is offering a limited birdseed sale to help feed our feathered friends through the remaining winter months. Please consider supporting Friends in this fundraising endeavor by purchasing seed through their website at [www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org) under the "Events and Activities" tab. Please call Friends of Five Rivers at **518-475-0295** if you have questions.



**Order Deadline:** February 1

**Order Pickup:** Friday, February 9, 3:00–5:00 PM  
and Saturday, February 10, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM  
Note: We cannot store birdseed for later pickup.

## Adopt a Bluebird Nest Box

March is when we start thinking about the bluebirds returning to Five Rivers. Consider supporting our Bluebird Monitoring Program by sponsoring a bluebird nest box. Your assistance will help Five Rivers staff and community science volunteers to better monitor and maintain the integrity of our bluebird population. Learn more at [www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org) under the "Support" tab.

## FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS BEAUTIFUL DAYS TOGETHER

This winter, families with young children (ages 2–5) are invited to gather for the reading of a nature-themed story, then take part in theme-related activities. Take-home projects will be included. Each session includes three program days, with the activity running 10:00–11:30 AM.

### Dates:

January sessions:

Tuesdays, January 9, 16, and 23 (rain date  
January 30)

or

Wednesdays, January 10, 17, and 24 (rain date  
January 31)

February sessions:

Tuesdays, February 6, 13, and 20 (rain date  
February 27)

or

Wednesdays, February 7, 14, and 21 (rain date  
February 28)

### Registration and Fees:

Visit [www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and look under the "Education Programs" tab for further information or to register.

Saturday, January 6, 10:00 AM

## **/ BIRD NY: 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!

Saturday, January 6, 2:00 PM

## **How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE**

Learn the basics of snowshoeing: how to put snowshoes on (and take them off), walk, and turn. Then 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 3 to register. The trail walk will be conducted without snowshoes if there is insufficient snow.

Monday, January 8, 11:00 AM–12:00 PM

Repeated February 5 and March 4

## **MINDFULNESS MONDAY**

You are invited to slow down and engage with nature, experiencing it through all your senses during a guided walk inspired by the Japanese practice of Forest Bathing. The goal of this walk is to tune in to the present moment while immersing our senses in the sights and sounds of the forest. Appropriate for teens and adults. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register.

## 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. Preregistration is required. Visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and look under the "Education Programs" tab for more information or to register.

**For:** Individuals, families, friends (six people maximum per session)

**When:** Mondays, January 22, 29 or February 5 at 12:00 PM or 2:00 PM; or Thursdays, January 25 or February 1 at 10:00 AM or 12:00 PM

**Where:** Meet at Five Rivers' Guided School Program Building.

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

Saturday, January 13, 10:00 AM

### **How to Do It: LEARN TO SNOWSHOE**

Learn some of the history of snowshoeing then it out yourself. 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. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 10 to register. The trail walk will be conducted without snowshoes if there is insufficient snow.

Saturday, January 13, 2:00 PM

### **Under the Snow: WHO LIVES HERE?**

The subnivean zone is a hidden habitat under the snow for wildlife in winter. Come discover who lives there in an interactive indoor presentation for families. Then we'll head outside for a short hike to look for some tracks and traces of subnivean wildlife. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 10 to register.

### **I BIRD NY: EARLY MORNING BIRD WALKS**

Thursdays, January 18, February 29, and March 21,  
8:00 AM

Join us as we monitor the birds at Five Rivers. Meet outside the visitor center. After a brief introduction, we'll head out on the trails. Beginners are always welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. We have a few to loan. In case of inclement weather, these programs will be canceled.

Saturday, January 20, 10:00 AM

### **Family Fun: 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 January and February are 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.

Saturday, January 20, 4:00 PM

### **HOWL PROWL!**

Take a walk with a Five Rivers staff member to look and 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.

January 27, 10:00–11:30 AM

### **Family Fun: NATURE PLAYDATE**

Let's enjoy winter with new friends at Five Rivers! We'll start indoors with a story and a get-to-know-you game, and then head outdoors to explore the winter world around us. For ages 3–7 with an adult. Older and younger siblings are welcome. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 24 to register.

### **FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS ADULT EDUCATION – TALK AND TREK**

Learn about the natural world with a Friends naturalist. Preregistration is required. For detailed information, including fees or to register, visit [FriendsOfFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsOfFiveRivers.org) and look under the "Education Programs" tab for "Talk and Trek."

**Growths Called Galls:** Search for galls to learn where and how they form, and what treasures they hold. Wednesdays, January 31, February 7 and 14 (rain date Feb. 21), from 1:00–2:30 PM

**Exploring Winter:** Head outdoors to discover life under, in, and above the snow, with Donald Stokes's book, *Guide to Nature in Winter*, to prompt us. Fridays, January 12, 19, and 26 (rain date Feb. 2), from 10:00–11:30 AM

**Tree ID by Buds and Scars:** Learn the basics of tree identification in winter. Mondays, March 4, 11, and 18 (rain date March 25)

Saturday, February 3, 2:00–4:00 PM

### **Friends of Five Rivers ANNUAL MEETING**

The annual meeting of Friends of Five Rivers will take place at the visitor center. The program will include a light reception followed by a short meeting and a guest speaker (to be announced). All are welcome to attend, though only Friends members in good standing are eligible to vote. More information about the annual meeting may be found at [www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org](http://www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org) under the "About" tab, "Our Members" link.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Friends of Five Rivers and showing your support for environmental education, go to [www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org](http://www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org) and look under the "Support" tab for "Membership."



Monday, February 5, 11:00 AM–12:00 PM

Repeated March 4

### **MINDFULNESS MONDAY**

You are invited to slow down and engage with nature, experiencing it through all your senses during a guided walk inspired by the Japanese practice of Forest Bathing. The goal of this walk is to tune in to the present moment while immersing our senses in the sights and sounds of the forest. Appropriate for teens and adults. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register.

Saturday, February 17, 10:00 AM

**I BIRD NY: GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

Join us as we watch and count wild birds at our birdfeeders at Five Rivers. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a national event, with more than 300,000 birdwatchers nationwide observing the busy bustle at their backyard feeders. Novices are welcome, and you can continue the fun at home if you want to tally your own wild bird neighbors. Bring your own binoculars or we have some to share. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 14 to register.

Saturday, February 17, 2:00 PM

**SNOWSHOE THE OLD FIELD TRAIL**

An old field may seem like a jumble of plants and vines, but that wild look makes for an amazing wildlife habitat. We'll observe animal tracks and trails while making our own on this half-mile snowshoe outing. Program will be offered as a hike if no snow. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 14 to register. Snowshoe rental is \$5/pair.

Tuesday, February 13, 11:00 AM–12:30 PM

**LET'S GET GROWING!**

You don't need a greenhouse or a large yard to garden with a green thumb! In this hands-on workshop, learn how to inexpensively start your annual flower and vegetable garden from seeds using energy- and space-efficient grow lights. We'll cover the basics of making a DIY grow-light shelf and growing plants sustainably from seeds using organic and reused materials. For adults and older teens. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** to register.

February 24, 10:00–11:00 AM

**Family Fun: WINTER WILDLIFE TALES**

Join us for story time and meet an animal that lives at the Five Rivers Visitor Center. We'll take a walk on the

trails and look for signs of wildlife. For ages 2–6 with an adult. Older siblings are welcome. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 21 to register.

February 24, 2:00–3:30 PM

**Family Fun: JUNIOR NATURALIST TURTLE TIME**

Get to know Crane and Marty, two of our resident Ambassador Turtles! Through games and hands-on activities, we'll discover what makes these beautiful, long-lived reptiles so fascinating. We will be indoors and outdoors for this program. For ages 8 and up with an adult. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 21 to register.

Monday, March 4, 11:00 AM–12:00 PM

**MINDFULNESS MONDAY**

You are invited to slow down and engage with nature, experiencing it through all your senses during a guided walk inspired by the Japanese practice of Forest Bathing. The goal of this walk is to tune in to the present moment while immersing our senses in the sights and sounds of the forest. Appropriate for teens and adults. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register.

Monday, March 25, 6:30–8:00 PM

repeated Monday, April 1, 6:30–8:00 PM

**I BIRD NY: WOODCOCK WALK**

American woodcocks are among the first of the spring migrants to arrive in our area. Five Rivers is a perfect place to observe and learn about these delightful and quirky birds. Come see them perform flight displays followed by their show-stopping dance moves. Please bring a flashlight or headlamp. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register by Friday, March 22 for the March 25 program, and Friday, March 29 for the April 1 program.

## FEBRUARY SCHOOL BREAK PROGRAMS

Tuesday and Thursday, February 20 and 22, 2:00 PM – **WINTER TREASURE HUNT**

Pirates aren't the only ones who like a good treasure hunt! We can learn a lot from birds and other animals about hiding and finding tasty treasures in winter. Ages 7 and up with an adult. Younger siblings welcome. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Saturday, February 17 to register.

Wednesday and Friday, February 21 and 23, 10:00 AM – **CRAFTY CRITTERS**

Make a craft inspired by a native animal, then take a guided walk on one of our trails. Suitable for all ages. Space is limited. Please call **518-475-0291** by Saturday, February 17 to register.

## THE SWEETER SIDE OF FIVE RIVERS

Saturdays, March 9, 16, and 23, 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.