

# FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## Winter 2026 Program Schedule

Welcome to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. 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 on New York State holidays. On New Year's Eve, the visitor center will close at 3:00 PM.

Programs listed below are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Please dress for the weather. 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 accommodate you. We have a battery-powered scooter and a Freedom Chair all-terrain wheelchair available at the visitor center that you can use for free while you're here.*

**Emails from Five Rivers:** Sign up for email notifications about upcoming programs at Five Rivers at [dec.ny.gov](http://dec.ny.gov). Look for the green *Subscribe to "DEC Delivers" Newsletters* box and follow the instructions.



**Friends of Five Rivers** is the community support group for Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases over \$20 at the Friends' store, discounts on various education programs, complimentary guided member walks, special member-only correspondence, complimentary use of snowshoes, and more. Membership levels and volunteer information are available at [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://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**. Trained 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 6 inches of snow on the ground.

Are you 18 or younger? Participate in the "**Get Offline, Get Outside**" (GOGO) Challenge while you explore Five Rivers' trails. How many of the 50 activities can you complete while visiting Five Rivers? Challenge details are at [dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/get-offline-get-outside](http://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/get-offline-get-outside).

Look for **GOGO** on the program descriptions below for activities that are on the Challenge. Check off GOGO #39, "Visit an environmental education center," when you're here. Stop in at the visitor center and pick up a copy of our activity-based scavenger hunt (GOGO #19) before heading out on the trails.



## 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.*

A training will be held on Monday, December 22 from 3:30 to 4:30 PM, followed by an outdoor survey from approximately 4:30 to 5:00 PM. Registration is required. Call **518-475-0291** or email **5Rivers@dec.ny.gov** for more information or to register. Study dates are subject to change due to weather conditions. Tentative outdoor survey dates are January 13 and 27, February 10 and 24, and March 10 and 24. Meet-up time will be provided upon registration. Dress warmly!

### JANUARY

Thursday, January 1, 9:00 AM–Noon

#### **Community Science: New Year's Bird Count**

Join local bird experts from the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club for our 45th annual New Year's Day survey. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress warmly. Call **518-475-0291** by Monday, December 29, to register. If severe weather is forecast, call on Wednesday, December 31, to confirm the event will be held. (GOGO #50)

Thursday, January 1, 2026, 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM

#### **Adventure NY: First Day Hikes**

Start the year 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 .75 miles, while the afternoon walk will cover about 1.5 miles. Dress for the weather. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Monday, December 29, to register. In the event of severe weather, these programs will be canceled. (GOGO #1 and #7)

Friday, January 2, 4:30 PM

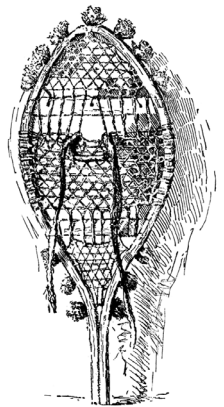
#### **Family Fun: Meet Argo, Then Take an Owl Prowl!**

First we'll meet Argo, our visitor center's Barred Owl, and learn about some of the many adaptations that allow owls to live in our area. Then we'll take a walk outside to find out which owls are active. You might be surprised to discover that winter is an active 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. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register by Tuesday, December 30. In the event of severe weather, these programs will be canceled. (GOGO #12 and #37)

Saturday, January 3, 10:00 AM

#### **Adventure NY: Snowshoe Into the New Year**

New to snowshoeing? This program will give you some of the fascinating history of snowshoes and introduce you to the tips and tricks to wearing them as you venture out at Five Rivers. Geared toward participants 10 years and older. Snowshoe rental fees will be waived. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, December 31, to register. In the event of severe weather, this program will be canceled. (GOGO #47)



Saturday, January 3, 2:00 PM

#### **Family Fun: Animal Tracks and Signs**

We'll talk about local wildlife in winter, make tracking guides, and then bundle up for an outdoor adventure to find signs of animals at Five Rivers. Snowshoes will be part of this program if snow conditions allow. Snowshoe fees will be waived. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, December 31, to register. In the event of severe weather, this program will be canceled. (GOGO #4)

### NATURE STORY TIME

Thursdays, January 8–March 26  
10:00–11:00 AM

Join us in the visitor center for story time on Thursday mornings. After the story, we'll take a walk and use our senses to connect with nature. For ages 2–6, accompanied by an adult. Drop in; registration not required.

## FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS BEAUTIFUL DAYS TOGETHER

Families with children ages 2–5 are invited to gather for the reading of a nature-themed story and then take part in theme-related activities. Each day ends with a nature walk. Each session includes four program days, with the activity running 10:00–11:30 AM.

**Tuesdays:** January 13, 20, 27, and February 3  
(snow date February 10)

**or Wednesdays:** January 14, 21, 28, and  
February 4  
(snow date February 11)

**Registration/Information:** For more information, including fees, or to register, visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and look under the “Education Programs–Beautiful Day” tab.

Thursday, January 15, 7:30–9:30 AM

### ***I BIRD NY: Early Morning Bird Walk***

Join a Five Rivers educator to explore for avian visitors and residents. We'll meet outside the visitor center and, after a brief introduction, we'll head out on the trails. Beginners are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. In case of inclement weather, this program will be canceled. Registration not required. (GOGO #12)

## FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS TALK AND TREK: ADULT EDUCATION—NATURE IN WINTER

Winter is a wonderful time of year to explore the lives of insects, mammals, trees, and non-woody plants. We'll head outdoors with Donald Stokes's book, *A Guide to Nature in Winter*, to prompt us. Registration limited to eight adults.

**3-day Series:** Thursdays, January 15, 22, and  
29, 10:00–11:30 AM (snow date February 5)

**Registration/Information:** For more information, including fees, or to register, visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and look under the “Education Programs–Special Programs” tab.

Saturday, January 17, 2:30–3:30 PM

### ***Family Fun: S'more Fun***

Campfires aren't just for summertime! Join us as we build a campfire and enjoy s'mores at the

amphitheater, located off Nature's Accessible Trail. Bring your own hot chocolate in a thermos; we'll provide the s'mores. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 14, to register. (GOGO #11 and #21)

## FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS MAPLE SUGARING AT HOME

Learn how to make maple syrup at home in time for the sap run in the spring. Spend an hour with a Friends naturalist and learn 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. Registration is required. Maximum 8 people per session. (Families may register but must list all attending by name and age, please.)

**When:** Wednesdays, January 21, 28, or  
February 4, 11 at 11:00 AM or 1:00 PM  
(choose one day and time)

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

**Registration/Information:** For more information, including fees, or to register, visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and look under the “Education Programs–Special Programs” tab. Fee includes spile and reference booklet.

Saturday, January 24, 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 get-to-know-you game, then we'll head outdoors to explore the winter world around us. Geared toward ages 3–7. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 21, to register. In the event of severe weather, this program will be canceled. (GOGO #4 and #7)

Saturday, January 24, 2:00–3:30 PM

### ***Junior Naturalists: Calling all Trail Detectives***

Wondering who left that line of tracks in your backyard last night? Let's untangle the mystery together! We'll follow tracks, investigate scat, and use our senses to explore mini-mysteries on the trails. For ages 8 and up, but younger siblings can tag along. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 21, to register. In the event of severe weather, this program will be canceled. (GOGO #4)

Saturday, January 31, 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 business portion of the meeting will take place from 2:00–3:00 PM, followed by a keynote presentation from Nancy Conway, Director of Education for Friends of Five Rivers, and her education team colleagues. All are welcome to attend, though only Friends' members in good standing are eligible to vote on business matters. Prior to the meeting, at 1:30 PM, join us for a light reception to meet Board members and nominees.

Visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) to learn more and RSVP. Look under the "Events" tab on the top menu. There will be a Zoom option for the business portion of the meeting. The keynote presentation will be in person only.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Friends of Five Rivers, visit [FriendsofFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsofFiveRivers.org) and click on the "Become a Friend" button at the top of the page.

**FEBRUARY**

Monday, February 2, 11:00 AM–Noon

**Mindfulness Monday**

Winter invites us to slow down and notice the quiet beauty of the natural world. We will begin indoors observing some of nature's treasures, with the option of drawing or writing what we notice. No artistic skills necessary. If weather allows, we will continue our observations outdoors during a short walk. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, January 28, to register.

Saturday, February 14, 10:00 AM

**How to Do It: Learn to Snowshoe**

Learn some of the history of snowshoeing and then have some fun trying them out yourself. We'll imagine what it might have been like to use these ancient tools to aid in survival, like many of our ancestors did. You'll come away with a sense of accomplishment and perhaps a new interest. Snowshoe rental fees are waived. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 11, to register. The walk will be conducted on foot if there is insufficient snow for snowshoes. (GOGO #47)

Saturday, February 14, 4:00 PM

**Who Loves You? A Valentine's Day Owl Prowl**

Meet our center's Barred Owl, Argo, and learn about some of the amazing adaptations owls have. Then take a walk outside to find out which owls are active. You might be surprised to discover that February is a very active 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. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 11, to register. (GOGO #12 and #37)

**SCHOOL BREAK WEEK (FEB. 17–20)**

Take the **GOGO Challenge** while you explore the trails. Challenge details are at [dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/get-offline-get-outside](http://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/get-offline-get-outside).

Tuesday, February 17, 2:00–3:30 PM

**The Call of the Wild**

What are the animals doing? Join Five Rivers educators for an afternoon of outdoor fun to find out! We'll hike a Five Rivers trail and identify tracks and signs of wildlife in winter. We'll use snowshoes if we have at least six inches of snow or walk on foot if insufficient snow. Afterwards, we'll warm up indoors and practice some animal calls together. For ages 7–11 with an adult. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Saturday, February 14, to register. (GOGO #4, #7, #37, and #47)

Thursday, February 19, 2:00–4:00 PM

**Bird Scientists**

Discover birds who winter at Five Rivers. We'll begin by our birding window, keeping a list of the birds we see throughout the afternoon. Participants will use binoculars, field guides, and notebooks to identify birds and their behavior. We'll continue to hone our skills outdoors while looking at birds in various habitats on the property. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Saturday, February 14, to register. (GOGO #7, #10, and #12)

Thursday, February 19, 7:30–9:30 AM

**I BIRD NY: Early Morning Bird Walk**

Join a Five Rivers educator to explore for avian visitors and residents. We'll meet outside the visitor center and, after a brief introduction, we'll head out on the trails. Beginners are welcome. Bring

binoculars if you have them. In case of inclement weather, this program will be canceled. Registration not required. (GOGO #12)

Saturday, February 21, 10:00–11:00 AM  
**Sleepy Bear Storytime**

Come out of hibernation and enjoy a story about animals in winter. After the story, we'll spend time with Crane, our box turtle. (GOGO #39)

Saturday, February 21, 1:00–3:30 PM  
**Meet a Worm/Worm Bin Composting**

Drop in anytime from 1:00–3:30 PM to meet a red wiggler worm up close and learn how to turn food scraps into garden gold with an indoor worm composting bin. Registration not required. (GOGO #8)

## MARCH

Monday, March 2, 7:00–9:00 PM

### **Full Moon Walk**

Enjoy an after-hours guided walk along the Service Road Loop Trail. We'll leave our flashlights in our pockets as we walk by the light of the full moon. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, February 25, to register. (GOGO #25)

### **FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS TALK AND TREK: ADULT EDUCATION—HI, BUD! TREE ID BY BUD**

Winter offers an unobscured view of tree buds and scars, two identifying features of trees. Each week we'll head outdoors to investigate a tree or two lining our path. Could the same species be lining your street? Wear sturdy shoes and dress in layers to stay comfortable no matter the weather.

**3-day Series:** Wednesdays, March 4, 11, and 18, 1:00–2:30 PM (rain date March 25)

**Registration/Information:** For more information, including fees, or to register, visit [FriendsOfFiveRivers.org](http://FriendsOfFiveRivers.org) and look under the "Education Programs—Special Programs" tab.

Saturdays, March 7, 14, and 21, 1:30–3:30 PM

### **The Sweeter Side of Five Rivers**

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. (GOGO #39)

Thursday, March 12, 7:30–9:30 AM

### **I BIRD NY: Early Morning Bird Walk**

Join a Five Rivers educator to explore for avian visitors and residents. We'll meet outside the visitor center and, after a brief introduction, we'll head out on the trails. Beginners are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. In case of inclement weather, this program will be canceled. Registration not required. (GOGO #12)

Wednesday, March 18, 6:00 PM,  
and Monday, March 30, 6:00 PM

### **Watchable Wildlife: Woodcock Walks**

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. Binoculars are helpful. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** to register by Saturday, March 14, and Wednesday, March 25. (GOGO #12)

Saturday, March 28, 10:00 AM

### **Family Fun: The Real Groundhog Day**

The warmer spring temperatures have our woodchuck neighbors waking up for real. Learn about these industrious neighbors through the observation of skulls and pelts. We'll take a short walk around the visitors center to see where they live and what they have been up to. Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, March 25, to register. (GOGO #39)

Saturday, March 28, 2:00 PM

### **Family Fun: Marsh Madness**

There is more going on in the world than college basketball. Spring is here too, with the earliest wildflowers blooming and the birds returning. Buds are busting and shoots are shooting skyward. Come out and see, smell, hear, and touch the wonders that abound outside. This walk is sure to be a slam dunk! Space is limited. Call **518-475-0291** by Wednesday, March 25, to register. (GOGO #39)