



Annual Report

2018-2019

Friends of Five Rivers • 56 Game Farm Rd • Delmar, NY 12054

www.FriendsofFiveRivers.org • (518) 475-0295 • FriendsFiveRivers@outlook.com

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Program Director

Nancy Payne
Environmental Educator

Carolyn Dunn
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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Last November, I attended the Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. It is a gathering of the Guided School Program (GSP) Volunteer Instructors, Volunteer Center Greeters, Friends staff, Five Rivers Environmental Education Center staff and guests. Photos from the past had shown me that it was likely to be a festive event, full of good cheer. But it was much more than a holiday party at the workplace. It was exceptional, not simply for the sharing of food and conversation but for what came after the meal.

A program had been planned. The theme was "sharing something very important to you." The moving presentations included tales of a family history project, works of art, an oral memoir and a musical remembrance of a marriage proposal made decades ago.

As I observed, it was clear to me that this group of volunteers are very much like a family -- so close that they willingly and proudly shared their unique traits that our staff has fostered. I witnessed ease and trust along with a collaboration of working and learning together - and it all began with an interest in advancing the mission of environmental education at Five Rivers.

The spirit of trust and cooperation is not unique to the volunteers gathered on that gloomy November day. The Friends' partnerships with the staff of the Environmental Education Center is another example of accomplishing the mission together. Sometimes it's difficult to distinguish "who's doing what?" while producing successful educational programs. Trust and cooperation is what makes special events like the Maple Saturdays or the Fall Festival or the Amazing Race happen, too.

You, members and donors, are the foundation of this community. Your membership provides the financial building blocks for making our work of advancing environmental education possible. With your support, we have reached out further to welcome new members. We've added new volunteer Greeters to support initiatives by the Center staff. And you'll discover by reading on, that with your support we've strengthened and added to our programs. Please accept our sincerest thanks!



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOANNE MACKLIN

2019 has flown by so quickly. The Friends of Five Rivers have had a very successful year. The tremendous support from our members and the community has provided over 5,000 students of all ages the opportunity to participate in our environmental education adventures.

We are so grateful to our local funders for sharing our vision that helped us expand our Guided School Program and administrative staff. Thanks to Parks & Trails NY for the grant funding to hire our new Outreach and Development Coordinator, Carolyn Dunn. We also welcomed an additional staff member, Alex Garrigan-Piela, as an Environmental Educator.

The Family Fun Program, a seasonal program for children and their guardians brought over 300 children and adults to Five Rivers this past year. The children and adults had an opportunity to explore our ecosystems and identify insects and more. These outdoor adventures will leave lasting impressions on every participant. Our goal has been, and will continue to be, to provide those lasting memories.

We are very thankful for the hard work that our volunteers that helped to provide a wonderful experience for visitors of Five Rivers. **Our annual volunteer awardees this year are Maggie Moehringer, Community Volunteer; Mike Medvesky, Environmental Educator; and Henry Bievenue, Young Environmentalist.** We are seeking additional volunteers who are interested in Board & Committee Service, Greeters for the Visitors' Center and Guided School Program Instructors. **All those roles are critical to our mission. Please reach out to us if you are looking to make an impact.**



Members & Volunteers

Current Members: 525

New Members: 57

Volunteer Hours: 9,500

To express our appreciation for the committed group of donors who have remembered Friends of Five Rivers in their estate plan, we have established Friends of Five Rivers Legacy Society. Members of this special group share the common bond of philanthropy and vision to provide for the future of environmental education at Five Rivers. We invite you to join with others who share your passion for learning in nature. For more information, visit our website, www.FriendsOfFiveRivers.org.

Please consider sharing your stories and photos of your visits to Five Rivers with us via email or Facebook. Be sure to follow us on Instagram too! (@FriendsofFiveRivers) We would love to hear from you. Thank you for your generous support, which makes our programming possible.

FROM OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR, NANCY CONWAY

Guided School Program (GSP)

A Guided School Program lesson begins as a group of individuals who may or may not know why they are here and ends as a buzzing community of learners who do not want to leave. This magical transformation occurs when nature calls to us and we respond. When a butterfly alights on a flower, we are compelled to take a closer look. When a cicada trills from the woods, we give ourselves the gift of time to search out its location. When an acorn peaks out of a hole in the path, we collect clues and imagine how the acorn ended up there. We spend time together in nature, bonding with the environment and with one another.

During a spring lesson this year, two boys found not only tracks but also their voices in the orchard. The boys, both English Language Learners (ELL), spoke rapidly in broken English while pointing at the tracks and bounding about like fawns. They led the group in discovering the deer's path and left their teacher speechless. She had never seen them so animated, engaged, and vocal. The boys had been nearly silent all school year, but today nature called to them and they were compelled to answer.

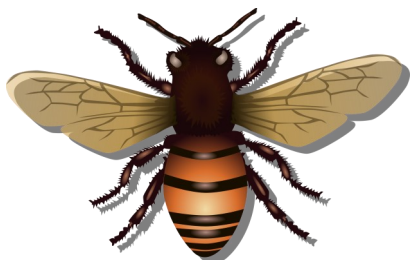
This year **3,402 children and 960 adult chaperones** spent time bonding in nature while on Guided School Program lessons. For over forty years, GSP has connected children and adults with nature. If you haven't yet had the chance to take part in a lesson, be sure to give us a call. We would be happy to head afield with you!



2018-2019 Highlights of Educational Programs

The new **Advanced Maples** lesson designed for 3rd through 5th graders could barely keep up with the sap flow this year! Over **240 students and 55 chaperones** took part in this two-hour in-depth study of sap creation and syrup production. Hands-on investigation of living roots, stalks, and leaves unlocks the mystery of photosynthesis while time in the Woodlot and Sugar Shack exposes the sap to syrup process. Yum!

Talk n' Trek continues to gain speed with our adult learners. Comparable to a H.I.L.L. class without the classroom, Talk and Trek participants go afield to study a wide variety of topics. This fall's five-week session spent time on wildflowers, mushrooms, grasses and leaves and their uses to the homesteaders.



Honeybee programming continues to grow with one day classes offered in both July and August. We become acquainted with *Apis mellifera* through specimen observation and activities before suiting up to inspect one of our three hives. The day concludes with the sampling of honey and the sharing of our experience.

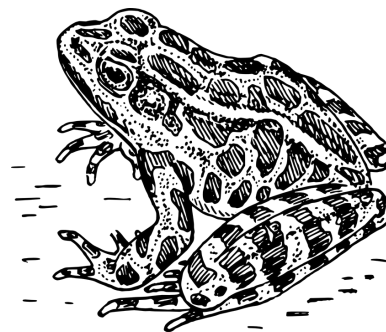
New Comers School brought 86 children living in the United States for less than a year to GSP lessons over the summer. This experience broadened the children's knowledge of their new home and lessening their fears of the outdoors. The days also provided instructors the opportunity to enhance their teaching skills and to know that what they are doing is extremely valuable in our ever-changing world.

Program Needs

YOU! No resume needed. If you or someone you know enjoys the outdoors and would like to share your enthusiasm with children, please contact the Director of Environmental Education Programs, Nancy Conway at gsp5rivers@outlook.com. All are welcome. If you have an idea for a program or for a lesson you'd like to see offered, please stop in for a chat. While things are literally hopping in our neck of the woods, you are always welcome!

Volunteer Experience

"My kids are all grown-up and grandchildren still very young. Keeping in touch with children of multiple ages and seeing nature through their eyes is inspiring. They hold nothing back and it always makes me look again to see what I have missed. This is also a place that I find that I always learn something new each time I come to training or teach a lesson. They say we are never too old to learn something new, instructing these classes does that for me." – Barb



Friends of Five Rivers, 56 Game Farm Rd., Delmar, NY 12054

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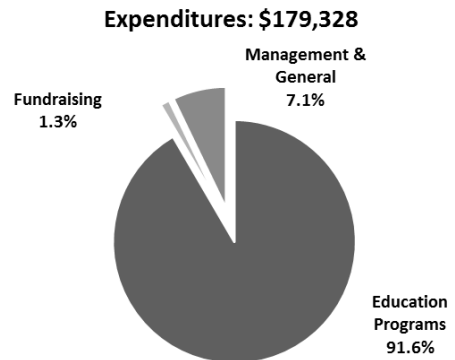
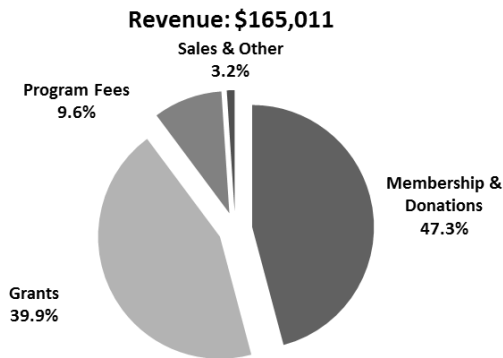
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Financial Position for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019

Guided School Program • Family Fun Programs • Talk n'Trek • Honeybees & Beekeeping March Maples Earth Day Fall Festival • Birdseed Fundraiser • Center Greeters • Volunteer Instructors • Land Protection Advocates • Internships
The corporation's independent accountant review report for FY 2018-2019 is available upon request.

Net Assets for FY 2018-2019: \$277,701 (2017-2018: \$278,267)

Financial Data from Federal 990 Tax Return



THANK YOU! Our mission is supported by the generosity of our funders, donors, volunteers and partners. We are appreciative of your ongoing support of environmental education.

Our 650+ friends listed below have made financial contributions above \$10 from October 2018-October 2019.
Many more contributed their time. We are truly grateful!

\$1,000+

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James Suozzo

\$500+

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