



Friends of Five Rivers Guided School Program

Here Comes Winter Lesson



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Dear Teacher,

We are happy to welcome you and your students to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center for an exciting, hands-on **Here Comes Winter Lesson**. This 90-minute lesson begins indoors with activities on the winter lives of animals in the northeast before moving outdoors for an exploratory walk. To prepare for a successful visit, please read this letter thoroughly and let us know if there's anything we can do to make your visit go more smoothly.

We can accommodate a wide range of student needs from mobility to learning to language. Contact the Guided School Program Coordinator via email at gsp5rivers@outlook.com in advance of your visit so that we may plan accordingly.

Program Overview:

Objective:

To discover how animals survive in the winter.

Concepts:

1. Animals adapt or change to survive in the winter.
2. People use their five senses to explore.

Preparations:

Dress for the outdoors. Students will be outside for a large portion of the program. A "Dressing for the Weather" guide is included in this packet. Please review this guide with your students before sending a copy home. Print the "Dressing for the Weather" and "Dear Parent/Guardian" back to back for the students to take home.

Dressing for the weather is essential this time of year, for students as well as for chaperones. Warm, waterproof boots are a necessity. Two pairs of socks may be worn for extra warmth, but toes should still be able to wiggle inside the boots. (Cramped feet become cold feet.) Wool socks are best; avoid cotton. A warm hat is a must, as are well insulated mittens. (Typically, mittens are warmer than gloves.) Layered clothing allows for maximum flexibility as students can add or remove layers before becoming chilled or overheated.

In the event of severely cold temperatures, the instructor may decide to come back early and conclude the program with an indoor activity.

Prepare parents/guardians by sending home the “Dear Parent/Guardian” letter and the “Dressing for the Weather” guide included in this packet.

Complete the Pre-Visit Classroom Activities prior to your visit. These activities provide background information for your students, presetting them for a successful visit.

Assign at least two adult chaperones to each group of 10 students. All chaperones must be prepared to assist the instructor and participate in the class, as well as administer any medications needed by the students. Chaperones are responsible for discipline, though this is not usually needed. Chaperone guidelines are listed in the “Dear Parent/Guardian” letter.

Plan to bring a snack for each child to be eaten immediately before or during the class. This is especially important if the students’ normal snack or lunchtime will be delayed.

The Guided School Program is provided by Friends of Five Rivers in partnership with DEC. Should you have any questions regarding your upcoming visit, please call or email Friends of Five Rivers. We look forward to your visit and to sharing a unique environmental experience with your students.

Sincerely,

Friends of Five Rivers

Guided School Program

Phone: 518-475-0291

E-mail: gsp5Rivers@outlook.com

Pre-Visit Activities for Here Comes Winter Lesson

Classroom Preparation Activities

Your forthcoming visit to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center will be much more enjoyable if you prepare your students with these insightful pre-visit activities.

Let's be scientists!

Students get the most out of an outdoor lesson when they understand what is expected of them. Please remind your class that when we are in the field we behave as the scientists we are, collecting data, making observations, and doing so in a manner that is serious and focused on the task. Of course, we have lots of fun along the way, too. Please talk with your students and encourage them to come up with a list of expected behaviors while at Five Rivers. Remind them that if we are loud and rambunctious, we are unlikely to see many animals.

Since we will be learning about wildlife in winter, we suggest you take part in one or more of the following:

Warm up to Winter – Discuss the different ways animals stay warm in winter and relate this to how to dress for your visit to Five Rivers.

What is a Habitat? – Talk with your students about what an animal finds in its habitat by comparing it to their own homes. If you have a dollhouse, point out where a family might find food, water and shelter. Where might a wild animal find food, water and shelter within its habitat?

The Thicket Game – The Thicket Game, from *Project WILD*, demonstrates the value of camouflage in a modified game of hide-and-seek. In a setting with plenty of places to hide, select one student to be "it." Blindfold this player and have him/her count to 20. While they count, have the remaining students hide. All hidiers must be able to see "it" from their hiding place. At the end of the count, "it" removes his/her blindfold. (S)He may only turn around and move up or down; they may not step to the side, forward or backward. "It" looks for hidiers. When they see someone, (s)he calls that person's name or describes what they are wearing. Once caught, the hider comes to join "it" and waits quietly for the next round. When "it" can no longer see any hidiers, (s)he covers his/her eyes again and counts to 10. Any remaining hidiers who have not been caught must move to new hiding places, closer to and from which they can see "it." "It" repeats the search for hidiers. The rounds continue in this format until only one student remains in hiding. That student is declared the winner.

Words to Discuss:

Adaptation – a change in an animal or plant that helps it live in a particular environment

Camouflage – protective coloration or shape that helps hide an animal from its predators or prey

Hibernate – to pass the winter in a state of inactivity that is similar to sleep

Migrate – seasonal movement from one region to another

Pre-Visit Activities for Here Comes Winter Lesson Continued

Books about Wildlife in Winter:

Burton, Robert. *National Audubon Society North American Birdfeeder Handbook* (Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc., New York, 1995)

Books about Wildlife in Winter continued:

Cvancara, Alan M. *Exploring Nature in Winter* (Walker and Company, New York, 1992)

Dendy, Leslie. *Tracks, Scats and Signs* (Take Along Guides Series, NorthWord Books for Young Readers, Minnetonka, MN 1995)

Murie, Olaus J. and Mark Elbroch. *A Field Guide to Animal Tracks* (3rd edition) (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 2005)

Sanchez, Anita. "A Long Winter Nap" in *New York State Conservationist*, December 2006, pp 22-23.

Stokes, Donald. *A Guide to Nature in Winter* (Little, Brown & Company, New York, 1976)

Stokes, Donald and Lillian. *Animal Tracking and Behavior* (Little, Brown & Company, New York, 1986)

Picture Books and Poetry about Wildlife in Winter:

George, Jean Craighead. *Dear Rebecca, Winter is Here* (Harper Collins, New York, 1995)

Brett, Jan. *The Mitten* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1989)

Sidman, Joyce. *Winter Bees and Other Poems of the Cold* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers, Boston, 2014)

Websites:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/c4k0712.pdf New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's *Conservationist for Kids* magazine. Winter 2007: Winter Wildlife Detective

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/c4kw10issue.pdf New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's *Conservationist for Kids* magazine. Winter 2010: Cold-blooded in the Cold—Hibernation

www.exploratorium.edu/frogs/woodfrog/index.html The Exploratorium, San Francisco, CA "Cold-blooded Solutions to Warm-blooded Problems"

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/satoyama/hibernation.html "Bear Essentials of Hibernation" by Peter Tyson (PBS, Nova Online, 2000) (focus is on bears)

www.si.edu/encyclopedia/Sl/nmnh/buginfo/winter.htm Smithsonian Institution "Where do Insects Go in the Winter?"

Resources for Teachers from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:

Workshops for Educators—Free workshops are regularly offered to introduce educators to curriculum and activity manuals, including Project WILD, Project WET, Project Learning Tree (PLT), Growing Up WILD and PLT's Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood. For more information, including a list of upcoming workshops, go to www.dec.ny.gov/education/1913.html.

Tails by Mail—Study kits on a variety of themes may be borrowed for up to two weeks. The kits are available for free if you pick them up from us and return them yourself. If we must ship them to you, you must cover the cost of postage. Go to www.dec.ny.gov/education/38095.html for complete information.



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child will soon be visiting Five Rivers Environmental Education Center to learn about the natural environment. We are delighted to welcome you and share these ideas to ensure an enjoyable visit.

Help your child dress for success. (See “Dressing for the Weather” diagram on reverse side.)

- Trails may be snowy, so students should wear appropriate footwear.
- Long pants are recommended throughout the year. Dress in layers.
- Bring rain gear if there may be rain. The lesson is geared for the out-of-doors!
- Bring a water bottle.
- In cold weather, hats, mittens, coats and warm boots are a must.

Chaperones are an important part of this program.

- Encourage all students to participate in class activities and be part of them yourself.
- Your help with discipline and safety is vital for a successful visit.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. Follow the guidelines provided for the students noted in “Dressing for the Weather.”
- Remain attentive to the lesson. Please save personal conversations for later.
- Do not use cell phones except in an emergency. Picture taking is at the guide's discretion.
- Above all, enjoy this experience along with the students.

Reminder

After all outdoor activities—whether at home, school or Five Rivers—a thorough tick check should be performed on children and adults.

The Guided School Program is provided by Friends of Five Rivers in partnership with DEC. We look forward to seeing you and/or your child at Five Rivers and hope it will be a fun-filled and exciting experience. Please contact us if you have any questions, or if you or your child have special needs. We will be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Friends of Five Rivers
Guided School Program
Phone: 518-475-0291
E-mail: gsp5Rivers@outlook.com



Dressing for the Weather

DRESSING FOR THE WEATHER

