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Nature Bus Returns to Albany for 3rd Season

Service to Run Every Saturday, May 27 through October 14

ALBANY, NY (May 17, 2023) Back by popular demand, Albany's Nature Bus will return for a third run! The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and local partners have made changes to the 2023 service. The 2023 all-electric Nature Bus begins Saturday, May 27, and runs through Saturday, October 14, which is two weeks longer than last year, giving riders the chance to experience the changes of the season.

Customers have been unanimous in their support of the service, with one rider noting, "I appreciate CDTA and everything to enable and encourage car-less living." Another added, "It thrills me to see these buses and stops as instilling a tangible relationship with nature in more kids and adults."

The Nature Bus routes will be easily identified with warbler and beaver icons, differentiating the two schedules of the alternating service for ease of navigating their nature trip. Customers can also provide live feedback using QR codes to complete surveys during service this season.

Nature Bus service will once again alternate service to locations on a two-week rotating schedule. Location partners will offer free programming most Saturdays, including guided trail walks, educational programs for families, and self-guided activities. All locations offer easy-to-navigate maps and well-marked trails to make the user experience is fun and easy. All locations are free and open to the public from dawn to dusk. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult when visiting Five Rivers.

2023 Partner Locations:

Beaver Line - Starting May 27 and every other Saturday through October 7

- Albany Pine Bush and City of Albany Water Department Six Mile Water Works
- Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm
- MHLC's Fisher Trail in partnership with DEC's Five Rivers
- DEC's Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Warbler Line - Starting June 3 and every other Saturday through October 14

- Albany County Rail Trail Veterans Memorial Park
- Albany County Rail Trail Slingerlands Trailhead
- Thacher Park Visitor Center

MHLC Associate Director Sarah Walsh said, “This year features a new trail – MHLC's Fisher Trail in partnership with DEC’s Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. Part of Fisher Trail is ADA accessible and has a viewing platform for birding and enjoyment of nature. By providing free Saturday service, accessible transportation, and trails, we are ensuring everyone can connect to nature.”

“We are excited to see the return of the Nature Bus and for its run to be extending into fall,” said **CDTA CEO Carm Basile**. “The overwhelming support and enthusiasm for the service has been wonderful to see. Providing accessibility and opportunity to our local communities remains a top priority. The Nature Bus is an innovative program that will provide an experience for community members who may not have access to these beautiful, nature sites.”

State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid said, “It’s great to see the return and expansion of Nature Bus which ensures better access to the outdoors. As we approach the centennial anniversary of the New York State Park system, we are grateful to CDTA and MHLC for a service connecting people to so many outdoor spots including Thacher State Park. It offers spectacular views, a world class nature education facility and plenty of trails for all to experience.”

State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos said, “The Nature Bus is back this year to connect even more New Yorkers with nature. DEC is a proud partner in the Nature Bus program, now in its third year, offering Capital Region residents the opportunity to experience and enjoy the State’s Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. At Five Rivers, visitors can access public lands and trails, view an array of thriving wildlife species in their natural habitat, and check out interactive displays and exhibits. DEC looks forward to continuing to work with our State, local, and not-for-profit partners to ensure New York’s public lands are open and accessible to all.”

Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Executive Director Christopher Hawver said, “We’re pleased to again support the Nature Bus and provide the opportunity for folks to access and enjoy the Pine Bush Preserve and so many other beautiful open space areas in our region. This is a great example of partners making a wonderful idea into a true success story.”

Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy said, “What a wonderful, free service for everyone to enjoy through our partnership. The Nature Bus allows people to experience the beauty that we have to offer while highlighting Albany County’s Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail and other assets. Our physical and mental health benefit by jumping on the bus and letting us explore nature. Thank you to Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy and CDTA for our continued partnership!”

The Nature Bus will be offering service during this year’s [‘Get Outdoors & Get Together Day’](#) event on Saturday, June 10, where those of all backgrounds and abilities are encouraged to participate and come together for fun outdoor activities.

Funding for this project was provided by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the NYS Environmental Protection Fund through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Bureau of Environmental Education.

To learn more about the Nature Bus route, including pick-up locations and drop off times, visit the CDTA website at <http://www.cdta.org>.

To learn more about programming at Nature Bus stops and to find a helpful list of FAQs, visit MHLC's Nature Bus web page: www.mohawkhudson.org/nature-bus

Additional information about Nature Bus partner organizations:

*The 3,400+ - acre **Albany Pine Bush Preserve** protects one of the best remaining inland pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in the world. This fire-dependent ecosystem provides habitat for many plants and animals, including more than 20 percent of New York State's wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The preserve is a National Natural Landmark, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Site, National Recreation Trail site, a New York State Unique Area and Bird Conservation Area, and a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area. With over 20 miles of trails, recreational opportunities include hiking, bird watching, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing and canoeing. The future goal is a preserve of 5,380 protected acres. AlbanyPineBush.org*

*The **Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy** (MHLC) is a nonprofit conservation organization conserving and stewarding the lands and waters of the Mohawk and Hudson River Valleys for the benefit of people and the environment. Since 1992, the Conservancy has protected more than 14,000 acres of land in Albany, Schenectady and Montgomery counties. Our conservation work protects natural resources to ensure clean water, clean air, and working landscapes for farming and forestry for a healthier Capital Region for current residents and for future generations. To learn more, visit www.mohawkhudson.org.*

***The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)** manages nearly five million acres of public lands, including three million acres in the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves, 55 campgrounds and day-use areas, more than 5,000 miles of formal trails, and hundreds of trailheads, boat launches, and fishing piers. DEC operates four [Environmental Education Centers \(EECs\)](#) offering classes and programs on environmental awareness around New York State. **DEC's Five Rivers Environmental Education Center** draws visitors from the Capital District for family-friendly programs and school-based lessons. They also come to experience the wide variety of natural habitats, flora, and fauna found among the site's 450+ acres and 10 miles of trails. The Visitor Center is open Monday through Saturday from 9 AM to 4:30 PM, except for state holidays. The grounds and trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Public restrooms are available daily from 8 AM to sunset at the Guided School Program building. Five Rivers offers several accessible facilities and services. All amenities of the Visitor Center, Comfort Station, picnic area, Woodlot Trail and Nature's Backyard Trail are wheelchair accessible, as are several hard-surfaced interior routes. Wheelchairs, walkers and a battery-powered mobility scooter are available upon request. A charging station is available at the Visitor Center for mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1835.html>*

[Plan your next outdoor adventure](#) and connect with DEC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) and [Instagram](#).

*The **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation** oversees more than 250 parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches, and more, which saw a record 79.5 million visits in 2022. For more information on any of these recreation areas, visit www.parks.ny.gov, download the [free NY State Parks Explorer](#) mobile app or call 518.474.0456. Also, connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).*

***Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm** (TLPF) is a community space and 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for environmental education and justice situated at Tivoli Lake Preserve which is located in the Arbor Hill and West Hill neighborhoods of Albany, NY. Tivoli Lake Preserve (TLP) encompasses 83 acres and is the second-largest urban wildlife preserve in New York State (after Central Park).*

Our Mission: Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm, Inc. as a steward of the Preserve, facilitates

conservation, environmental education, and outdoor recreation. Our activities empower individuals and families to enjoy the natural world, promoting healthier and more peaceful communities.

Our work includes trail clean ups, livestock grazing services and a host of hands-on environmental education activities including gardening, composting, art activities, guided walks, yoga, and more. Check out our calendar to sign up for programs: <https://friendsoftivoli.org/#sec-calendar-section>

www.friendsoftivoli.org @friendsoftivoli