

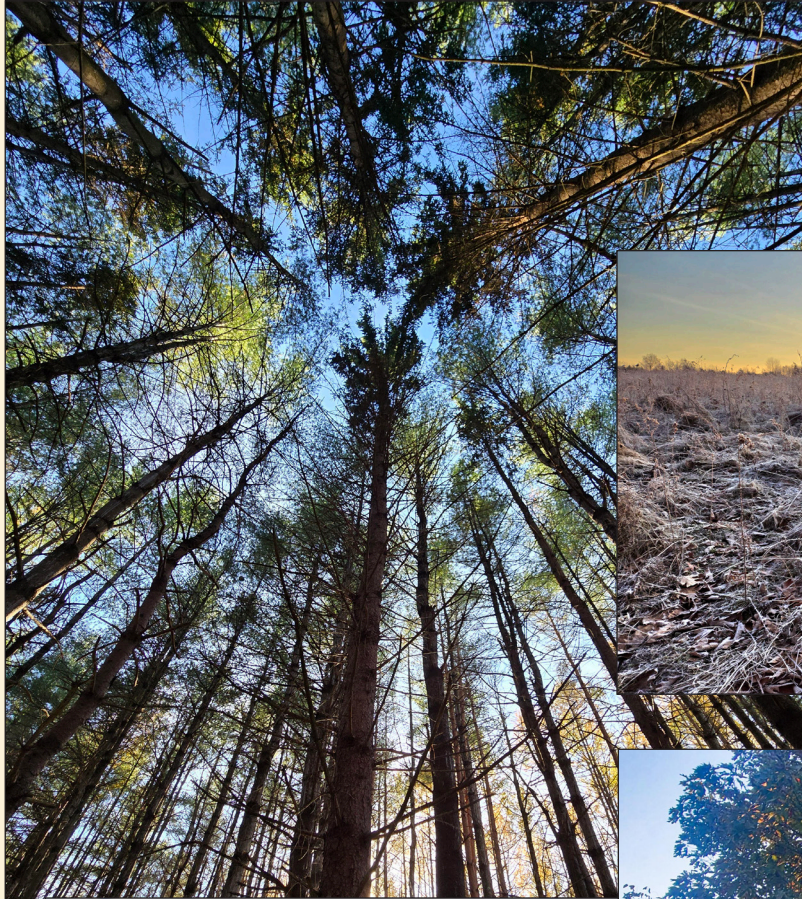


Friends of
Five Rivers

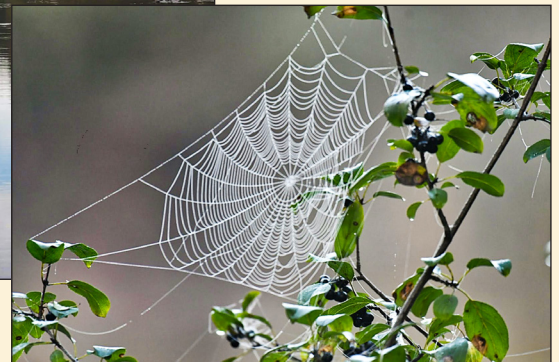
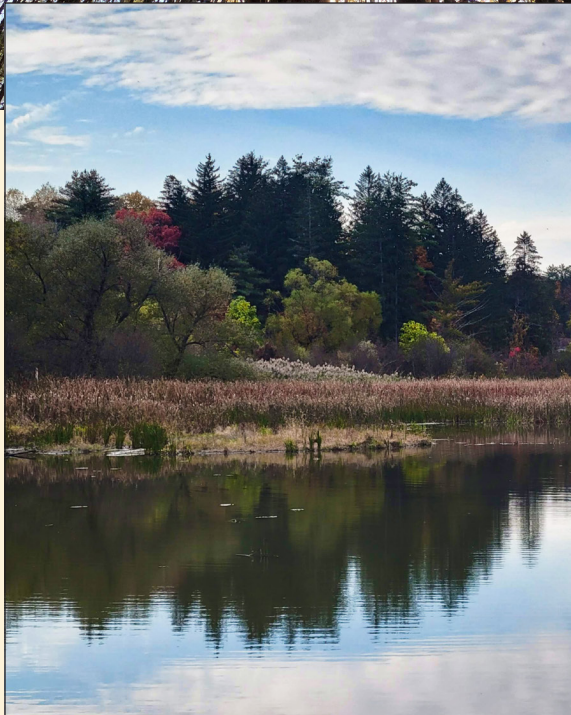
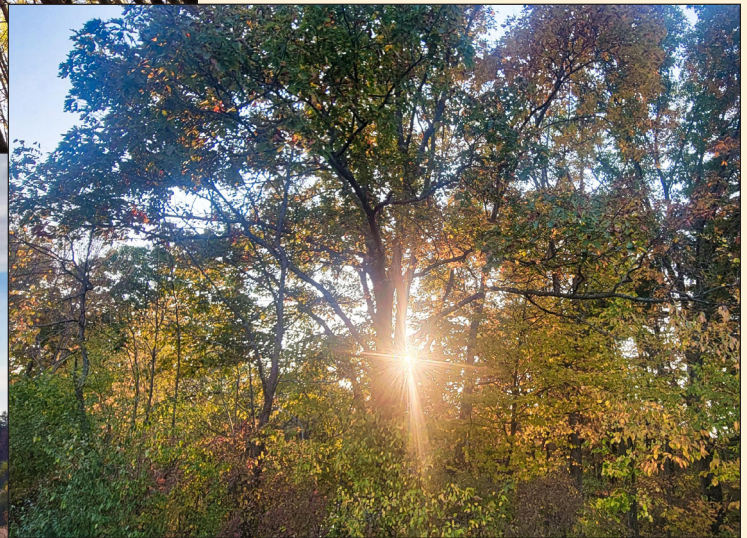
2024
ANNUAL
REPORT

Inspiring future
environmental stewards

The Beauty of Five Rivers



The beauty of the Five Rivers scenery through the lenses of Denise Hackert-Stoner (left and immediately below), and Lorraine Pena Boyd (bottom three).



Board President Report

GROWTH AND FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

This past year, 2024, has been one of growth and focus on the future for the Board and the Friends of Five Rivers. We said goodbye to several Board members and welcomed six new talented people to join our Board. We wished our former seasonal educator well, and welcomed a Board member who transitioned into the seasonal educator position. We held our first Board retreat. We added a new bookkeeper/accountant and a beekeeper to our circle, and we had four wonderful Naturalist interns.

Our committees have grown with the addition of non-Board members. We now have additional volunteers coordinating activities and providing help where needed. Our Gift Shop continues to grow its revenue and variety of goods.

This past spring, we broadened our college scholarship program outreach to additional area schools. We increased our community involvement, participating in activities with the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and partnering with Wildbird Junction. Board members and other volunteers attended more tabling events, building awareness and connection in the community.

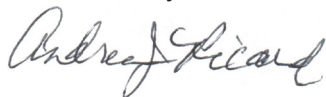
We held two very successful fundraising events this fall, including our annual Fall Festival in September and Friends Celebrating Friends appetizer & auction event in November.

We ended 2024 with a \$41,000 grant for a new 'pocket forest' that DEC will be implementing over the next several years, and we hope to receive a few more mini-grants this year to further enhance our own education programs with upgraded materials, equipment, and other supplies. The new year looks to be just as exciting as last year!

This February will be the end of my nine years on the Friends' Board and two and a half years as the Board President. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve this worthy organization. However, you'll still see me occasionally behind the Greeter desk.

I wish the new Executive Board and Friends of Five Rivers as a whole, continued growth in its mission of environmental education.

Most sincerely,



Andrea Ricard
Board President



Photo by Lorraine Pena Boyd

Snapshot of 2024 Events & Activities



September 14
10 am - 4 pm

A family day of nature fun!

*** NEW ***
Bring a gently-used Nature-related Book to Swap for another

Five Rivers FALL FESTIVAL

- Insect Safari & Bass Casting Activities
- Interactive Exhibits
- Animal Rehabilitator
- Pond Life Activity
- Nature Crafts
- Children's Games
- Live Music for all generations to enjoy!
- Smokey Bear and Ollie the Otter Character Appearances
- Penny Social Raffles
- Story Telling
- Nature Book Swap

Live Animals with UNCHARTED WILD 11 am to 2 pm

FOOD VENDORS

The FACTOR R+R

Enoch & Botsch

FALL FESTIVAL CO-HOSTS

Friends of Five Rivers

NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

FREE ADMISSION FREE PARKING RAIN OR SHINE



Friends of Five Rivers annual

2024 Fall Birdseed Sale Fundraiser

Partnering with Wildbird Junction

Friends of Five Rivers is thrilled to be partnering with Wildbird Junction – a Delmar small business – to offer quality seed products for this year's Birdseed Fundraiser. Wildbird Junction secures their seed through Lizzie Mae's, a quality brand with no unnecessary fillers.

The seed will be delivered directly to Five Rivers for pick up on either Friday, October 4 or Saturday, October 5.

Place orders at www.friendsoffiverivers.org

Order Deadline: Thursday, September 19

***** SPECIAL OFFER *****
When you pick up your order, you will also receive three coupons to continue your birdseed shopping at Wildbird Junction throughout the winter, with 10% of all sales generously given back to Friends of Five Rivers.



An Evening of...

Friends Celebrating Friends

An Appetizer and Auction Event... with other surprises

Open to All (21 years and older suggested)

Acoustic music by Applewood Duo

Glennpeter Jewelers - Glenmont
351 Southern Blvd

Thursday, November 14, 2024
5:30-7:30 pm

~ Event Sponsors ~

- Dr. Todd Shatynski
- The Bone & Joint Center
- Proffman Car Wash, Inc.
- Ann Manning
- Paul Perrean, Dean at Miller Wilkes
- Marshall & Sterling
- Glennpeter Jewelers
- The Diamond Centre

Friends of Five Rivers

Free Admission
No Purchase Necessary
RSVP by calling 518-475-0295



Executive Director Report

OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED IN 2024

This past year was one for the record books as Friends of Five Rivers reached new heights for partnerships and amazing growth opportunities.

The year started on a high note when we were awarded a New York State Parks & Trails Partnership Grant to help bolster our marketing, membership, and volunteer outreach. With that injection of funds, we produced more marketing materials and purchased professional promotional displays, participated in more community tabling events, launched a newly-designed website, and grew the overall awareness of our organization.

The year ended with 370 members strong, and more than 75 volunteers offering their time and talents in a variety of ways, from greeters to instructors to administrative and special event assistance.

We held successful events, including co-organizing the annual Five Rivers Fall Festival, and coordinated the 2nd annual Friends Celebrating Friends Appetizer & Auction fundraiser. We also supported the Five Rivers staff with their extensive educational programming and several important community activities “Get Outdoors and Get Together Day” and “Bug Fest.”

Another highlight of the year was partnering with locally-owned Wildbird Junction for our traditional bird-seed sale. We were more involved with the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, hosting a networking event and providing an educational activity at the Chamber-organized First Night.

As Executive Director, I engaged with other Friends groups, participated in PTNY coordinated advocacy and workshops, worked on strategic planning with the Executive Committee, and applied for a variety of mini-grants to help support our educational programming.

This coming year, we are embarking on a professional Development Audit and Plan with a local consulting manager to evaluate our organizational capacity for launching a comprehensive giving campaign. The purpose of this is to help sustain our good works and mission for the long-term. Please keep your eyes and ears open for more details as we work together for our end goal of supporting and enhancing environmental education and inspiring future environmental stewards.

Sincerely,



Paulette Doudoukjian
Executive Director



Paulette meeting new DEC “Friends” group leaders during the 2024 NYS Parks & Trails Advocacy Day.

Environmental Education Year-Round



Top photo clockwise: Field groups ready to head afield for a GSP lesson, Introduction to Honeybees family program, GSP instructor spring critique, instructor picnic, and snowshoe training for adults.



Director of Education Report

HELLO, SCIENTISTS!

Children see everything. They see tiny insects, hidden berries, and scary shadows. They see beauty in each fallen leaf, joy in each shallow puddle, and adventure at each trailhead. They are capable, but do they see themselves that way? Perhaps not until a visit to Five Rivers when a skilled instructor addresses them as scientists.


Guided School Program (GSP) instructors know full well the impact the title scientist has on a child. A scientist is smart. A scientist is respected. A scientist is worthy of being heard. The title conveys a trust in each child's ability to use equipment, to respectfully interact with living creatures, to conduct research, to participate in meaningful conversations, and to arrive at data driven conclusions.

Each young, earnest scientist throws themselves wholeheartedly into the job of exploring, observing, discovering, and wondering about the world around them while on a GSP lesson. They think. They share. They grow. In just two hours, the quiet scientist finds their voice, the follower leads, and the outsider shines.

Children do indeed see everything. They see instructors who treat them with respect. They see value in each plant and animal. And, after a visit to Five Rivers, they hopefully see themselves as capable scientists for life.

Be well, Scientists.

Sincerely,



Nancy A. Conway
Director of Education

*Animal track cards used
for the Winter Talk & Trek
session.*



2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Guided School Program instructors led 193 groups containing 2,214 students and 663 adult chaperones. A decline of 24 groups occurred this year for reasons beyond Friends' control including an unscheduled school closing, power outages, and the pausing of a widely used external funding source for school field trips in New York State. Friends is hopeful this funding source will return by the fall of 2025.

The April 8, 2024 Total Eclipse provided Friends the opportunity to explore the positions of the sun, moon, and earth with patrons before learning how to safely view a total eclipse. Fifty-two participants took home hand-made, movable clay models and a pair of eclipse glasses just in time for the big event.

An additional one hundred sixty-five people took part in other programs offered by Friends including Earth Day Membership Walks, Talk and Trek Continuing Education Series, Introduction to Honey Bees, Honey Tasting, and Sugar Mapling at Home.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025 - MORE VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

Friends of Five Rivers has one overarching need – Volunteer Instructors. If you have a love of the outdoors and a desire to mold a future environmental steward/scientist, please consider becoming a volunteer instructor. Training is provided and ongoing support is always available.

If you would like to learn more about the Guided School Program and/or register for the February 13th Introduction to Guiding meeting, please contact Friends Director of Education, Nancy Conway, at education@friendsoffiverivers.org

Education Report continued

GUIDED SCHOOL PROGRAM FEEDBACK:

“This was an amazing field trip. I had a group of students with special needs and the instructors were positive, encouraging, patient...and the lesson was perfect for all.”

~ 3rd Grade Teacher, Stream Life Lesson

“It was amazing! Kids loved the movement and interactive components. They also loved the honey and beeswax activity.”

~ 1st Grade Teacher, Exploring the Outdoors Lesson

“The lesson was great and complete – an appropriate amount of time and information. The children connected most with exploring, looking, and inspecting bugs on the tablecloth and in the bug boxes. Awesome! A lesson well done!”

~ 1st Grade Teacher, Exploring the Outdoors

“This is an amazing lesson. The instructor was passionate and wonderful with the kids. They connected most with nature by exploring in the stream. Very hands-on!”

~ 4th Grade Teacher, Stream Life

“The instructor was enthusiastic, engaging and spoke at the children’s level. Wonderful!”

~ Preschool teacher, Marvelous Maples Lesson

“Our instructors were great! This program is just so wonderful – every station is hands-on. Probably the children’s favorite part is tasting both the sap and syrup – using all of their senses.”

~ Preschool Teacher, Marvelous Maples

The lesson “was very engaging for the children. It was informative, interactive, and exciting. A few kids stepped out of their comfort zone getting in and interacting with the organisms. I think there wasn’t anything that could have made it any better.”

~ 5th Grade Teacher, Stream Life Lesson

“The lesson was incredibly interactive and there were several fun activities for the kids to participate in! Kids enjoyed seeing the tubes and sap in the aloe, celery, and spider plant roots!” They also enjoyed experimenting “with the water and looking through the magnifying glasses.”

~ 3rd Grade Teacher, Advanced Maples

The Animal Signs Lesson “was great, very interesting and at their level. Hands-on activities – collecting bugs – looking for footprints and holes.” Back at the classroom we will use our experiences “for discussion before journal writing.”

~ 2nd Grade Teacher, Animal Signs Lesson

“The kids were happy, excited, and engaged from beginning to end! They enjoyed the hands-on activities: feeling the different textures of the feathers and “catching plants” with the beak tongs. I honestly can’t think of anything that could make the lesson more interesting. Thank you to our instructor for her passion, knowledge and enthusiasm!”

~ Homeschool Group, Birds! Lesson

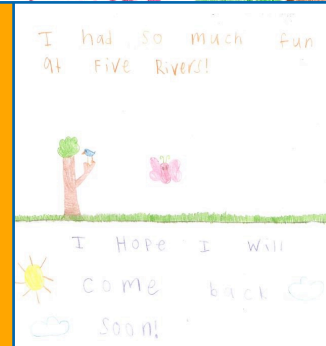
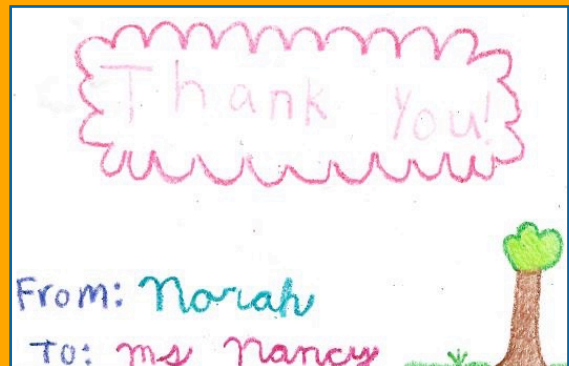
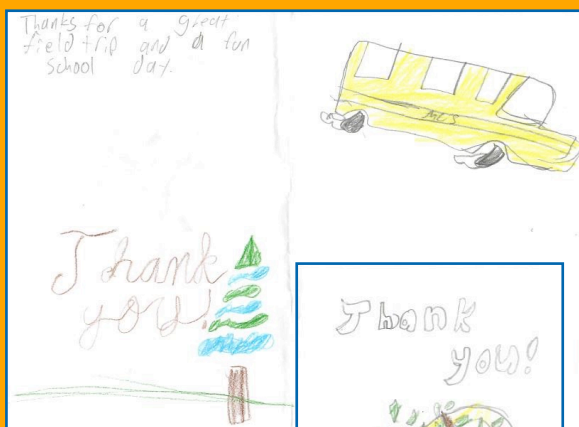
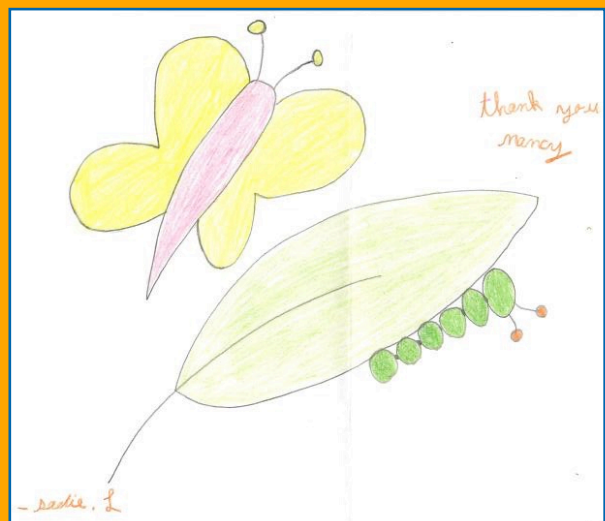
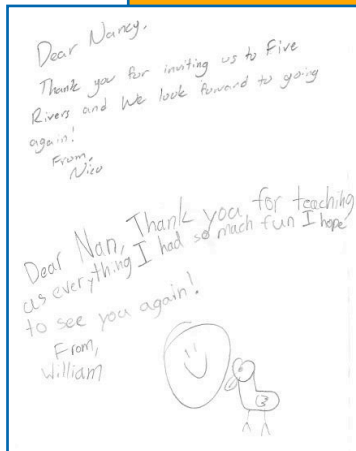
Education Report continued

"This has become my favorite field trip to take the students on. The kids had a wonderful time. I was impressed with their (the students') vocabulary and conceptual knowledge because I didn't observe this as much in the classroom as I did at Five Rivers."

~ 5th Grade Teacher, World of Pond

"The lesson was a great use of the beautiful resources right here in our community to align with the curriculum 4th and 5th graders are currently participating in. Our guide was exceptional. She provided a great balance of firm and fun, engaging and informational. A big Thank You to Five Rivers to offer this valuable experience in our community and share your wealth of knowledge with our learners!"

~ 4th-5th Grade Teacher, Stream Life Lesson Modified



Young students express appreciation through creative cards following their GSP lessons.

Beautiful Days with Children & Families



Here's my feedback having now done it with three kids in various ages (7, 4 & 2). Overall I love the layout of the program each day (welcome, story, walk, investigation/craft). Your volunteers and interns were great. Thanks for all that you do. ~ Emily



My boys had a blast! Thank you all for a great week! ~ Jessica



Thank you so much for a wonderful week. Mary and Jack had such a wonderful time and so did we!!! We look forward to Bug Day and the Fall Festival and any chance we have getting to Five Rivers. ~ Ian & Hannah



Thank you so much for another wonderful Five Rivers program. (My 3 children) had a great time...especially loved the last day with the animal exhibits. The staff were very knowledgeable and seemed great with keeping young children engaged. ~ Nicole

Beautiful Day Family Programming

INSPIRING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

The 2024 January and February Winter sessions of the Beautiful Day programming followed on the heels of the late fall sessions of 2023, and were just as well attended. Beautiful Day was again full to capacity with 10 families each month. DEC and Friends Interns all came to the trainings and took turns assisting at the programs.

The Summer Nature Week program for 2-5 year olds and their adult guardian, was discovered by four teens from Bethlehem High School who sought us out and asked if they could volunteer. One of the boys had volunteered with us the previous summer and was influential in bringing his friends. For three of them, these were totally new experiences; being in nature, being role models for younger children, and interacting with children and their parents. Each of them went away with an appreciation for what they had to offer and an awakening awareness of the natural world.

We also had a young woman volunteer who was accompanied by her seeing-eye dog. This volunteer had a great love and understanding for the natural world and was a wonderful role model for the participating families. Her willingness to learn was boundless and she was very popular with staff and families alike. There were three other young people who had aged out of the program, though offered to volunteer. Having been through the program, they were very helpful and learned new things about themselves and what they had to offer.

For me, these scenarios highlight the fact that our policy of inclusivity and our belief that nature is for everyone, go well beyond environmental education.

The staff interns, both DEC and Friends, all played major roles in training, encouraging and assisting the teen volunteers. We all benefited from their choosing to spend their time at Five Rivers. The Beautiful Day Summer Nature Weeks was full to capacity and ran for four, one week sessions.

Fall Beautiful Day ran for two months, November and December, and were filled to capacity. Though a very unusual age distribution occurred. On Tuesdays, families with 3, 4 and 5 year olds registered. On Wednesday, all the registrants had 2 year olds. This was not planned on our part; we are used to having all ages in our sessions. In our traditional groups, the younger children copy the older children, and we encourage the older children to share with the younger ones. This year, the 2 year olds ruled the day on Wednesdays. I applaud our staff, DEC and Friends, who rose to the occasion and adapted each day to the particular needs of 2 year olds; exploring the natural world in their individual ways.

Sincerely,

Nancy Payne

Nancy (Nan) Payne
Environmental Educator and Beautiful Day
Program Coordinator



Coordinator Reports

VOLUNTEER FAMILY GROWING STRONG

We welcome and appreciate all volunteers at Friends of Five Rivers. They are the heart of our organization. Volunteers do everything from assisting with administration, organizing and helping at special events, greeting visitors with a friendly smile at the Visitor Center, managing the Gift Shop with varied merchandise, and instructing our children in all aspects of the environment and wildlife. They are out in the community sharing the knowledge of what Five Rivers offers to both adults and children. They devote their time, skills and energy to our small non-profit.

In 2024, more than 30 people signed up to assist Friends of Five Rivers in some capacity as mentioned above. We have 90 volunteers on our list in total. This is simply amazing. Though we always have a need to grow and welcome more eager and enthusiastic members to our volunteer family. The time you spend volunteering is flexible and always on your schedule.

Keep in mind, studies have shown that volunteering improves mental and physical health, can increase self-confidence, and opens the door to new friends and contacts. If you wish to volunteer with us, visit our website or contact volunteer@friendsoffiverivers.org. Let's surpass 100 volunteers in 2025, all in support of Five Rivers!



Sincerely,

Josie Brooks
Volunteer Coordinator

TABLING EVENTS RAISE AWARENESS

This year, Friends of Five Rivers ramped up our community presence through more tabling events to help raise awareness of the organization and Five Rivers as a whole.

Friends members participated in ten tabling events in 2024. We set up our table at events in Albany, Colonie, Niskayuna, Bethlehem, Altamont, and Westerlo, and our volunteers spoke with approximately 600 people. We shared the wonderful recreational and educational opportunities at Five Rivers, and also raised awareness of our organization and mission.

Looking forward to 2025, we are working on booking new venues such as area YMCAs and libraries, as well as doing repeat appearances at many of the events we tabled at in 2024.

Special thanks to our 2024 tabling volunteers: Debra Carson, John Carson, Paulette Doudoukjian, Linda Doyle, Dory Fisk, Nadine Hahne, Alan Lewis, Meg Maurer, Andrea Ricard, Pratihtha Sharma, Kathryn Simpson, Bonnie Smith, Christine Waite, and William Wolfgang. Interested in helping us spread awareness? Contact outreach@friendsoffiverivers.org.

Submitted by,

John Carson
Tabling Coordinator

Friends' Gift Shop

ECO-FRIENDLY MERCHANDISE ADDS TO RECORD-BREAKING SALES

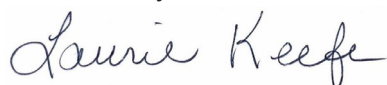
We are pleased to announce that our Gift Shop has had an exceptional year! This success can be attributed to our dedicated volunteers, expanded range of environmentally friendly merchandise, and ability to allow for credit sales. Looking ahead, we are excited to streamline our sales process by implementing Square for Retail, along with a new register to help us efficiently manage our inventory. This new solution will not only make it easier for our dedicated Greeters who process the sales, but also ensure quicker transactions for our customers. This will also save volunteer time used to enter sales data and manage inventory.

In 2024, the Gift Shop made a welcome return to the Delmar Farmers Market, connecting with numerous new individuals who had yet to discover the wonders of Five Rivers. This presence not only raised awareness about the diverse range of programming and events offered but also sparked engaging conversations among “Friends”, sharing wildlife sightings and exchanging tips on favorite trails. It’s through such interactions that the community bonds over the Five Rivers experience and fosters a deeper appreciation for nature and environmental education.

For the upcoming year, the invaluable support from volunteers in various areas such as market assistance, event coordination, and inventory management will be instrumental in the Gift Shop’s continued success. We will continue the commitment to offer eco-friendly merchandise and work to expand our outreach at Markets and Five Rivers’ events.

After your hike, make sure to visit the Center to meet Argo, our beloved resident barred owl, and explore the interactive hands-on exhibits. Don’t miss the opportunity to stop by our Gift Shop and talk with our friendly greeter and enhance your visit with memorable souvenirs. We offer a variety of merchandise for every age and occasion.

Submitted by,



Laurie Keefe
Gift Shop Coordinator



Financial Report

2023-2024 FISCAL OVERVIEW

Friends is happy to now be working with a new bookkeeper and accountant, Donald Rowland, CPA. The Friends' Financial Reports, including the IRS 2023 Return (Form 990) and the NYS Annual Financial Report for Charitable Organizations (CHAR500), are being prepared by Don and will be available to the public when completed. The following is a draft summary of the Friends' financial performance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, based on the preliminary figures provided by the accountant.

OVERALL PICTURE

Operational revenue increased and spending increased compared to the previous fiscal year. The overall performance for the year was positive as revenues outpaced expenses by \$3,660. Overall, total revenue as will be reported in the IRS 990 increased from \$208,249 to \$249,567, while total spending increased from \$222,117 to \$245,907.

BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING REVENUE

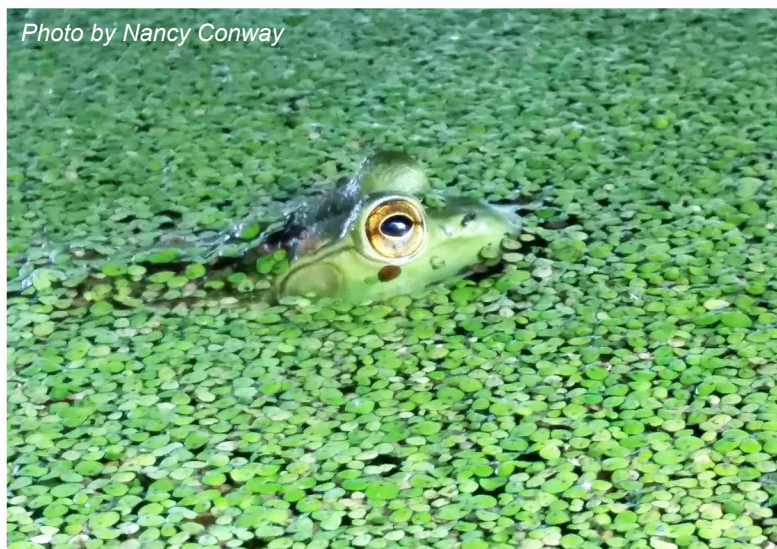
The largest sources of operating revenue came from government grants of \$119,172 (48%). It was followed by non-government grants and contributions (including fundraising) of \$65,862 (26%), membership dues of \$23,212 (9%), program fees of \$30,105 (12%) and gift shop sales and other ancillary sources \$5,597 (2%) of revenue. Additionally, investment income provided \$5,619 (3%) of revenue.

BREAKDOWN OF SPENDING

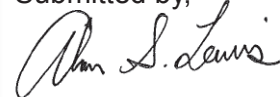
Program expenses of \$150,024 accounting for nearly 61% of total spending, was the largest area of spending and a \$9,652 increase from the prior year. Fundraising expenses at 17% accounted for the second largest area of spending at \$41,304, a minor decrease over the \$44,016 (17%) spent on fund raising in the previous year. Management and administration of \$54,579 accounted for the remaining spending at nearly 22%.

END OF YEAR ACCOUNT BALANCES

Cash account balances on June 30, 2024, totaled \$288,079 compared to \$194,908 at the beginning of the year. Of the total assets, \$117,292 was restricted to a specific purpose either by the donor or by Board action and \$182,791 was unrestricted. Total net assets for the year increased to \$300,083 from \$279,948 in the prior year.



Submitted by,

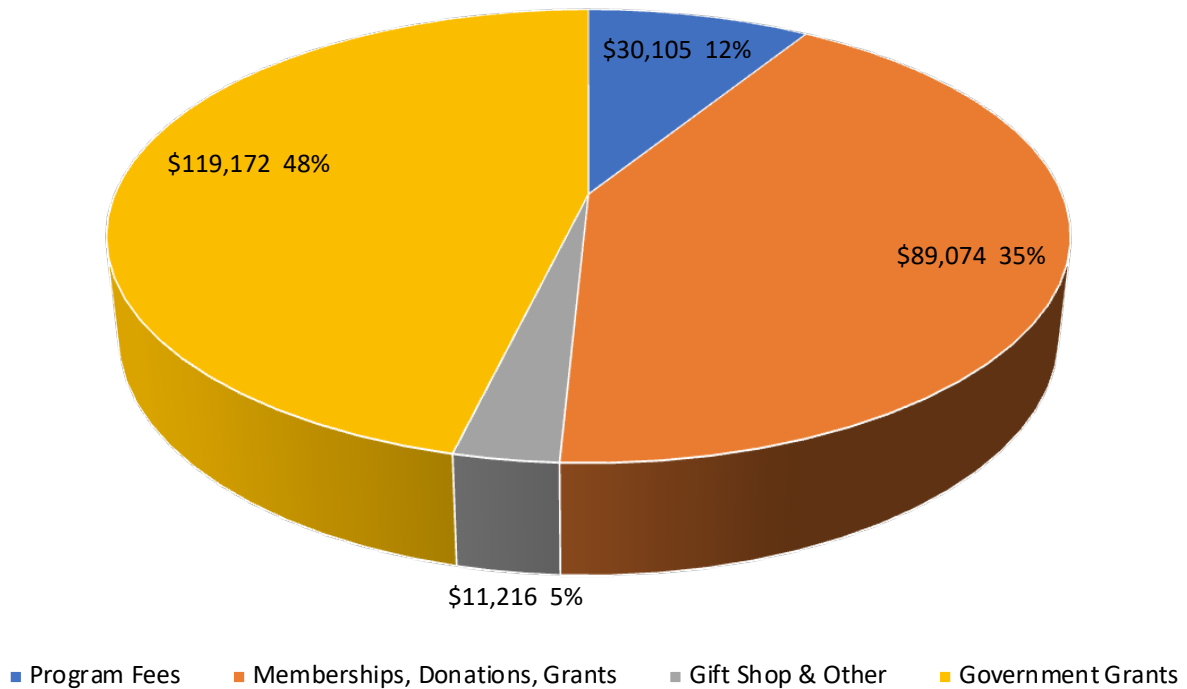
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan S. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALAN LEWIS

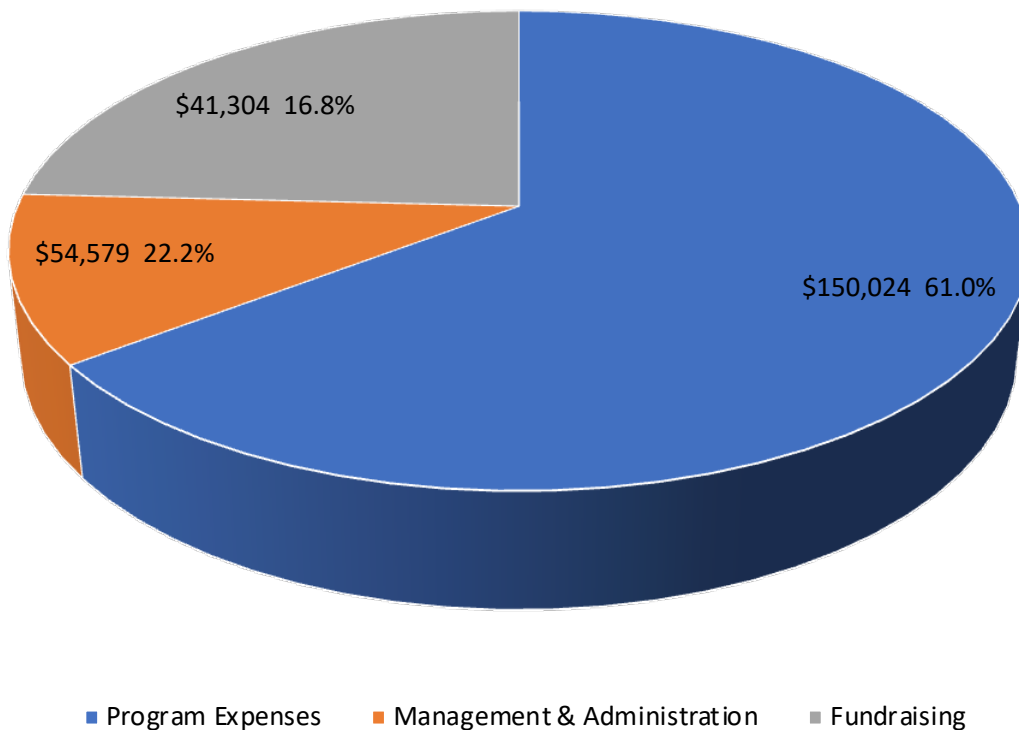
Finance Committee Chair

Financial Report

Breakdown of Revenue



Breakdown of Expenses



Sponsors, Grants, and Special Donations

COMMUNITY SUPPORT APPRECIATION

We thank the following local businesses who supported Friends of Five Rivers with monetary or in-kind contributions for our 2024 events & activities. We also acknowledge, with appreciation, special grants.

EVENT SPONSORS

- Ann Manning - Peak Partners Team at Keller Williams
- Bausback & McGarry Family Dental Care
- Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP)
- Corner Gateway Printing
- Dr. Todd Shatynski, The Bone & Joint Center
- Four Corners Frame Shop
- Glennpeter Jewelers - The Diamond Centre
- Hoffman Car Wash
- Marshall & Sterling Insurance
- The Animal Hospital, Slingerlands
- The Book House, Stuyvesant Plaza

GRANTS

- Bender Scientific Fund
- Bethlehem Garden Club
- NYS Parks & Trails Partnership Grant
- Peckham Family Foundation
- Price Chopper Golub Foundation
- Stewarts Foundation
- Target Corporation

Special Thanks to
the Smith Family Fund
honoring the memory of
Thomas H. Smith.

This very generous contribution assisted the operating fund and environmental education programs.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAFFLES & AUCTION ITEMS

- Arts Stars! Children's Studio
- Adriano's Pizza
- Alan Lewis
- Ando Salon
- Bountiful Bread
- Brea Barthal
- Breathe Massage Therapy
- Chili's Restaurant
- Choices Hair Salon
- Crumbl
- Delmar Custom Tailor
- Delmar Farmer's Market Vendors
- Delmar Marketplace
- Denise Hackert-Stoner
- Dory Ellen's Delightful Pies
- Dr. Miguel A. Corona
- Dwight Cheu
- FoCo Taco, Delmar
- Emack & Bolios
- Emma Cleary's
- Fifth Corner Gifts, Delmar
- Frank Smith Signs
- Garden Bistro, Delmar
- Glennpeter Jewelers, Glenmont
- Hannaford, Voorheesville
- Hewitt's Garden Center
- Joyelle Jewelers
- Hoffman's Development Corp.
- Honest Weight Food CoOp
- I Love Books, Delmar
- Jai Yoga
- Kleinke's Farm
- Las Margaritas Cantina
- Laurie Keefe

- Liz Ricci
- Lorraine Pena Boyd
- Mad Dog Bicycles
- Mark Levi
- Marty Bannan
- Merriman & Pfister Marketplace
- Monica Sharp
- Mosaics by Christine
- Nine Pin Cider Works
- Normanside Country Club
- O'Slattery's, Delmar
- Orchard Tavern West
- Phillip's Hardware
- Proctors of Schenectady
- Rooted + Rind
- Sams Club, Latham
- Silver Parrot
- Scott Stoner, Naturelogues
- Shining Rainbow
- Shogun, Delmar
- Steiner's Sports
- Susan Novotny
- Swifty's, Delmar
- The Arts Center of the Capital Region
- The Pottery Place
- The Silver Parrot
- The Book House of Stuyvesant
- The Cheese Traveler
- Troy City Music Hall
- Upstate Wine & Spirits
- Warbler Brewery
- Wine & Spirits of Slingerlands
- Wini Eisan

Friends of Five Rivers Giving Opportunities



General Donations
TAX-DEDUCTIBLE
CONTRIBUTION

[LEARN MORE →](#)



Giving Tree
LEAF CONTRIBUTIONS

[LEARN MORE →](#)



Sponsorship
Opportunities
FROM \$500 – \$15,000

[LEARN MORE →](#)



Forever Friends
MEMORIAL POLES

[LEARN MORE →](#)



Bluebird Nest Box
SPONSOR A NEST BOX

[LEARN MORE →](#)



Legacy Giving
PART OF YOUR LONG-TERM
PLAN

[LEARN MORE →](#)

“Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.” – Gary Snyder

Help Advance our Mission

SUPPORTING FRIENDS OF FIVE RIVERS

The mission of Friends of Five Rivers is to support environmental education with the vision to cultivate and inspire lifelong environmental stewards through outdoor, hands-on, science-based programs. The Guided School Program (GSP), which is the cornerstone of the Friends’ programming, reaches more than 2,500 elementary, middle, and high-school students annually. We also offer programs for young children ages 2-8, families, and life-long adult learners through many other engaging environmental education opportunities.



To continue meeting this mission, the organization employs a full-time Executive Director and a full-time Director of Education, as well as two part time environmental educators. We are also grateful for a team of numerous dedicated volunteers. However, to operate and enhance our programs, we do rely on tax-deductible donations, sponsorships, and grants to operate. We are also membership-driven. It should be noted that we are not state funded.

With that said, we offer a variety of Giving Opportunities, sponsorships, and events to help bolster our operating fund. Please consider looking at our options online. In addition, please help us grow our membership! Consider talking to a friend or neighbor, encouraging them to join the collective voice of a community that recognizes the importance of this local environmental treasure and its contributions to their quality of life.

Friends of Five Rivers Contributors

Below are the names of those individuals and organizations who generously gave to Friends of Five Rivers in 2024. Thank you for your ongoing support through membership and/or tax-deductible contributions!

- A -

Abolafia, Mitch
Adams, Jill
Aiello, Nanette
Akey, Mary Anne
Albright, Skip & Betty
Alderman, Catherine
Amodeo, Catherine
Andersen, Deborah & David
Andreson, Brian
Applegate, Mary
Architzel, Reba
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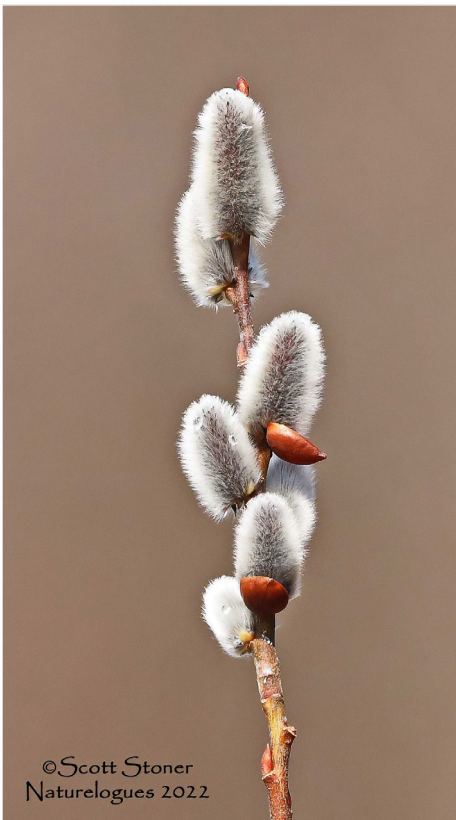
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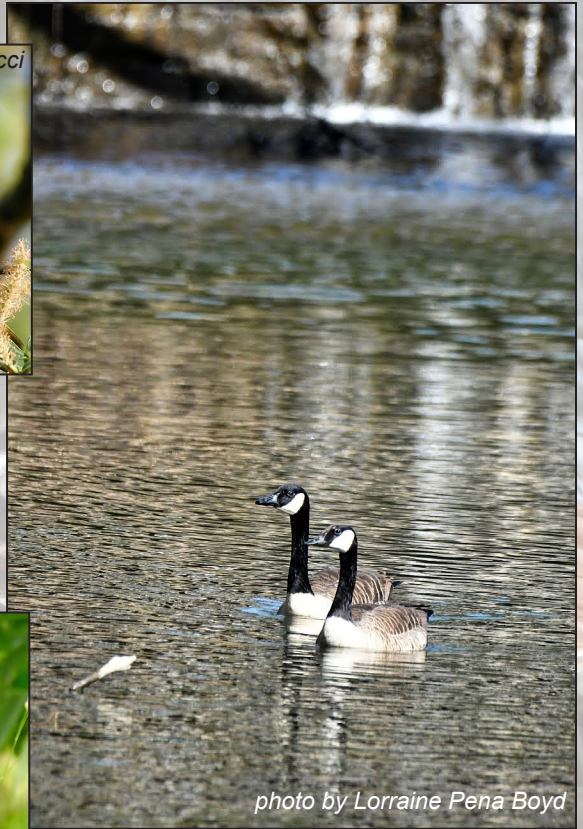


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It is about making a difference.”
– Kathy Calvin

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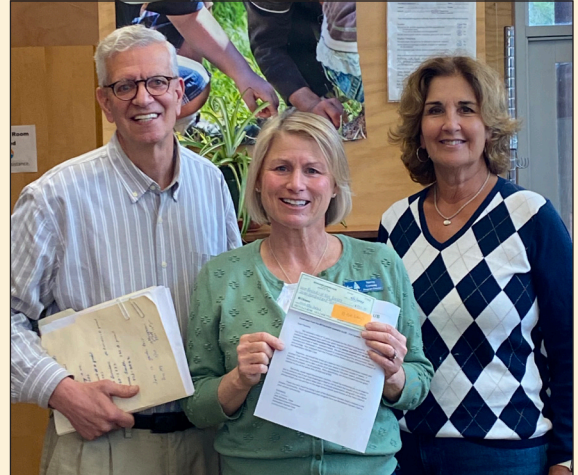
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Five Rivers Wildlife...



Friends of Friends...

We thank our partners who helped us make 2024 a memorable and successful year for all who came to visit and explore Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.



From top left clockwise: Partnering with Wildbird Junction, the Bethlehem Garden Club presenting us with a grant check, hosting the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce Women's Networking group, our Maintenance Crew enjoying a little downtime during the Fall Festival, and the Parks & Trails New York check presentation for the partnership grant award.

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Nancy Payne and Nancy Conway have worked together for 18 years developing and implementing Friends of Five Rivers education programs

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“Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”

- Henry Ford



photo by Matt

“Another sunrise, another new beginning.”
– Jonathan Lockwood Huie

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