



Annual Report

2015-2016

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

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Nancy Conway
*Guided School Program
Coordinator*

Nancy Payne
*Summer Family Program
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From our President: A Time to Build...

As one who “angsts” about a leadership position as something akin to a trip to the dentist, I can honestly say that this year has been a very pleasant surprise. It’s been ... well ... enlightening, uplifting, fun! Since many of you will think of your home construction projects with a bit of traumatic stress, you can imagine the potential of construction at the Center to negatively affect whole bunches of plans and dispositions. But no!

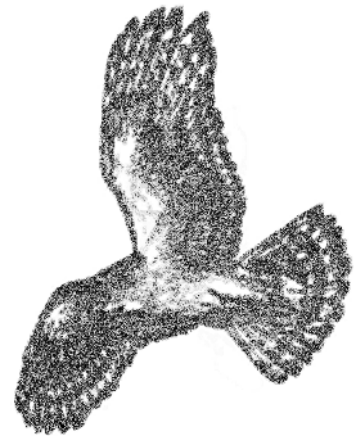
It’s been a mess out there, and we can imagine that the conditions have scared a number of you away from walks and programs. I must tell you, however, that the teamwork and can-do attitude on the part of the staff of the Friends and of the DEC, their ability to re-think and work-around, their good nature and mutual trust, and their ability to see the work and get it done together has been inspiring. It has given all of us a renewed faith in this partnership.

You can be very proud of our award-winning staff. They are not just running a small, tacked-on program to the Center’s offerings. They are essential to the programming at the Center, core members of the collective staff; without them and their programming, Five Rivers would have difficulty, particularly in a year such as this, in effectively fulfilling its educational mission.

In addition to our Guided School Program for elementary grades, this year, as you’ll see in Nancy Conway’s report, our staff has expanded our programs, planned and in place, to include more adult education classes, a new program for families with preschoolers, a “citizen science” project on water quality for high school students, and lessons on bees. Joanne’s hard work on grant writing, as you’ll see in her report, has borne fruit in the form of equipment purchases for our educational efforts and in support of our new Instructional Garden project.

So please, be not dismayed at our exterior appearance. Be assured that we are more active and excited than ever about the work that we – all of us Friends – are doing, and about the potential of the future. We hope to make you very proud, even prouder, of the work that our organization does. Without you, none of it happens. Thank you!

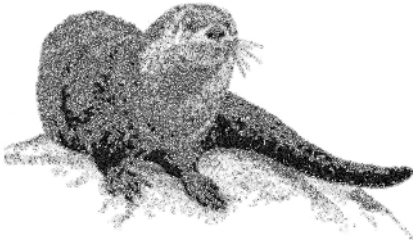
Maggie Moehring, President



From Joanne Macklin, Executive Director

Grants! For me, that's been one of the major efforts for this year. Our staff has wonderful ideas, and they need financial support. We don't always get a grant we apply for – no not-for-profit does – but in the process of applying for grants and getting letters of support from other organizations, we put ourselves on the radar screen. It's starting to pay off. Our recent grant applications have gotten more attention, and we have funding for new binoculars, a digital microscope, a new projector for the Guided School Program, hope for funding for a bee program and for the new "instructional" garden.

The garden project will renovate the existing Wildlife Garden, move the pond to the garden area, and expand the garden beyond its current borders to provide an area devoted to botanical education. Demonstration beds, a composting demo area, native plants, accessible beds – we are so excited about this project! We are seeking funding for expert design help. Through a very generous donation from the family of Mary LoGuidice, we will have a great start to the funding we need to implement the design.



Through the generous support of the Suozzo family, we made it possible for inner-city families to participate in our summer programs with transportation and other support... evidently, not possible or enticing enough. This project is very important to us; we will try again to make it work next year.

Hannaford and Honest Weight made the Friends the beneficiary of in-store programs – unasked! We participate in the State and Federal Employees Appeal – tell your friends! Our corporate support for the "Amazing Earth Day Race" event put us over budget for this wonderful evening. Our Guided School Program and Summer Program saw increases in participation over last year. And our Fall Instructor Training was very well attended with many new participants. We desperately need instructors and volunteers of all sorts, and are working to get better at engaging and enticing all of you who want to help.

I love being the Executive Director at Five Rivers! Thanks for making everything possible.

From Nancy Conway: Educational Programs

Each Guided School Program lesson is driven by the excitement of discovery. What will we find in Five Rivers' fields, forests, ponds or stream? How does this discovery play into the health of the ecosystem? Does it matter?

These questions and so many others were asked by 2,880 students in 210 groups visiting for Guided School Program lessons this year. For each discovery, a volunteer instructor was on hand to help participants respectfully uncover nature's wonders, and to guide a thoughtful discussion on adaptation, habitat, and human impact. Personal connections were made through hands-on interaction with nature. We know this happens because each year adult chaperones depart the buses smiling broadly as they recount their childhood memories of Five Rivers. Indeed, it does matter.

2015-2016 Highlights

- Volunteer instructors skillfully met the challenges of instructing near a construction zone.
- GSP lessons were reviewed and updated to stay current with NYS' curriculum. The scientific method was used, new activities were added, and new equipment was incorporated.



Educational Programs (continued)

- A third beehive was donated by a Friends' member who wishes to remain anonymous, and I became a beekeeper!
- The 2nd Annual Amazing Earth Day RACE at Five Rivers was a night of fun and education to benefit our scholarship fund.
- Friends' new Talk and Trek Continuing Education Series grew in scope this year. The series included Winter Preparations (fall), Geocaching (winter), and Habitats (spring). Program fees benefitted GSP's Scholarship Funds.

2016-2017 Looking Ahead

- A new sugar shack is being designed for our Maples programs, completion set for mid-February.
- As GSP grows, so does the need for volunteer instructors. We need to recruit instructors and increase the visibility of the lessons and scholarship funding.
- The 3rd Annual Amazing Earth Day RACE is planned for April 28, 2016. Save the date! Volunteer or participate on team.
- Water Quality Assessment Workshops were held this fall for Bethlehem High School students looking for hands-on research opportunities. Their research of local streams will begin in the spring.



Long Term

- "World of Pond" is a very popular lesson for all age groups. Five Rivers' ponds are maturing, and we need to work to keep the teaching sites/docks accessible.
- The creation of a short video outlining how to prepare for a visit to Five Rivers (attire, nametags, pre-visit materials, etc.) would benefit teachers and students.



This has been an active year of learning for all those involved with the Guided School Program. The opening of the new Visitors Center next year will surely bring even more opportunities for growth. Be sure to stop by and discover what all of the excitement is about!

By the Numbers, 2015-2016:

Guided School Program: 2,889 students, 210 groups
 Summer Family Program: 97 participants
 Adult Ed "Talk and Trek": 15 participant
 Supported by 577 Members and over 1000 Volunteer Hours



Teacher Comments 2015-2016 school year

"The hands-on collecting of samples/creatures was exciting, engaging and independent." Materials will be used "for future projects." Shaker Junior High

"The hands-on nature of the lesson was engaging. The guide had a great way of helping kids understand how trees make their own food." Greenville Elementary

The guide's "passion was evident. The children enjoyed looking for things in nature and being able to touch them." Ichabod Crane Elementary

"Looking at things with a magnifying glass is something we have used in class and it was great to take it outdoors." Troy Prep

Instructor "did an outstanding job with our group...was able to keep their attention. Thanks for having such great instructors there!" Rosendale Elementary

Our guide "did a fabulous job connecting with the students, giving a task, and having them use inquiry method, connecting with weather, water cycle, science and nature. There are not enough good things to say!" Orenda Elementary

The children "were interested in every aspect of the lesson. A great balance – listening, talking and hands-on doing." Poestenkill Elementary

"Wonderful! They loved exploring the stream. Many had not experienced something like this before." OKTE Elementary

The children loved "the song about trees and their parts, drilling into the tree to place the spout, the a taste of the sap, the maple syrup afterwards!" Berne Knox Westerlo

"Collecting all of the insects was really fun for them!" Keane Elementary Chaperone

"We are always pleased with our visit to Five Rivers. I always enjoy the supplemental information...seed dispersal, migration, evidence of life surrounding the pond..." Birchwood Elementary
 Birchwood Elementary Teacher

The children loved "really seeing the animals and the signs, tracks or footprints they had learned about." Latham Ridge Teacher

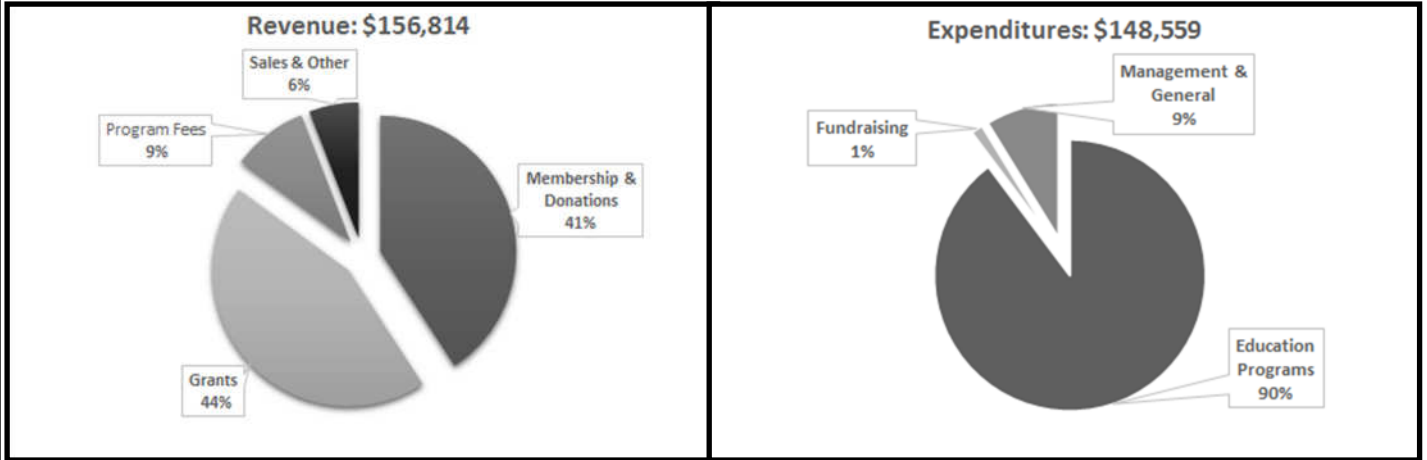
Financial Position for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2016

The Friends of Five Rivers is a charitable not-for-profit corporation formed in 1972 by a group of concerned citizens. Our mission is to support environmental education at the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar, NY, which is a facility of the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation. The corporation's independent accountant review report for FY 2015-2016 is available upon request. The Friends conducts the following activities:

Guided School Program • Summer Family Programs • Continuing Education • Internships • Scholarships

Accessible Trails • Wildlife Garden • Center Greeters • Fall Festival • Birdseed Sale • Land Protection

Net Assets for FY 2015-2016: \$268,382 (2014-2015: \$261,820)



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56 Game Farm Rd.
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