



Annual Report

2016-2017

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

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Friends Staff

Joanne Macklin
Executive Director

Nancy Conway
Program Director

Nancy Payne
Environmental Educator

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From our President: A New Beginning

The waiting is over, and along with the new Visitor Center comes a steady stream of new ideas. When we look at the DEC's Unit Management Plan for Five Rivers, we see that what was stated as intentions for the Center a decade ago has largely been accomplished. The seeds of ideas for educational programs that were waiting on the construction can now propagate on this new ground.

For the Friends, our staff and instructors have been the inspired source of continuous improvement and expansion to our programs. Because of your support, we have been able to increase the amount of staff hours available to devote to Friends programs beyond the demands of our mission-critical Guided School Program (GSP). In addition to the 3000 school children who benefitted from hands-on experience with nature through the GSP this year, we have been able to extend our programs to an expanding base - seniors, refugees, bee-lovers, preschoolers and their caregivers, high school citizen scientists - for encounters with the miracles of the natural world. This happens only with the support of generous volunteers, donors and members.

As a board, and as a family of members and supporters, we who love Five Rivers have basked in the attention of the press and the public that accompanied the grand opening. It's now time to reap the benefits of this increased visibility and good will. The Friends has new projects waiting for resources – an expanded "teaching garden", improvements to Nature's Accessible Backyard, all those "wouldn't it be great if we could..." dreams that keep instructors awake at night - demands that strain against the limitations of staff time and resources.

Baldly put, it's time for the Friends to get serious about meeting the resource needs that outstrip our current capabilities. With your help, with reaching out for corporate support, with the support of the community, we're confident that the Friends can keep pace with our expanding role at the Center.

Our thanks to all of you!

Maggie Moehringer, President

Friends of Five Rivers



From Joanne Macklin, Executive Director

This has been a very busy and exciting year for the Friends staff and volunteers.

To supply our new programs and the Guided School Program, staff wrote grants that were successful in obtaining funds to purchase new GPS units for geocaching experiences, binoculars for birding and wildlife watching, a digital microscope, and equipment for the new honey bee program. Corporate sponsors were obtained for The Amazing Earth Day Race at Five Rivers. We are so grateful to all our donors.



With the new Visitors Center came a new store, and the opportunity to stock it prudently with items that will instruct and appeal. Our greeter volunteers were trained for the new store and the new Center. We were in the limelight, with our DEC partners, in several well-attended events at the Center, including "I Love My Parks" day, the Fall Festival and the grand opening events. We had a presence at science fairs, farmers markets, and other local events throughout the year. We could not have participated in and staffed these events without the hard work and dedication of many volunteers. Thank you!

Meanwhile, back at the office, we were able to successfully transition our membership and donor data to new software from our old home-grown systems, building a solid administrative foundation for our future.

We have over 560 members, and volunteers who contributed over 1000 hours of time. I am so happy to be part of this wonderful community that supports and enjoys Five Rivers. Thanks to all of you!

Joanne Macklin

From Nancy Conway: Our Educational Programs

Program Director

During the 2016-2017 school year, the Guided School Program brought 3,112 students and 878 adult chaperones into Five Rivers' fields, forests, ponds and stream. We laughed, and wondered, and grew - a fantastic year of learning!

2016-2017 - Highlights

- Because of each volunteer instructor's dedication to environmental education, the Guided School Program has carried on successfully through the past seven years of construction.
- The Friends developed and led a water quality workshop for Bethlehem High School students, introducing eighty students to NYS's Water Assessment by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) program, and to water quality research coordinated by board member Stephanie Maes of the College of St. Rose. Nine students chose to continue on with water quality work through WAVE or through Friends' SUNY Pond Research.
- Marvelous Maples, Advanced Maples and Maple Open House Weekends were overflowing with visitors.
- Fifteen teams of all ages participated in the Amazing Earth Day Race, a fun, friendly event. Six environmentally friendly challenges were designed around the concepts of green building design, resource limitations, and birds. All RACE proceeds benefitted the Guided School Program's Scholarship Fund.
- The Friends Talk and Trek Continuing Education Series received high praise by participants who declared the series comparable to a HILL class, but with more active sessions. This year's series included Pond Histories and Health (fall), Winter Wonders (winter), and Spring into Spring (spring). Program fees benefitted GSP's Scholarship Funds.



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Educational Programs (continued)

2017-2018 - Looking Ahead

- Bee programs for children and adults have been developed, thanks to a grant from Stewarts. Programs were offered in August and will be reoffered come early summer 2018.
- MVP Health Care has partnered with the Friends to offer five healthy walks for seniors throughout the coming year.
- The 4th Annual Amazing Earth Day RACE is planned for April 20, 2018.
- We need to do a better job on public relations to recruit instructors and to increase the visibility of the lesson offerings and scholarship funding.

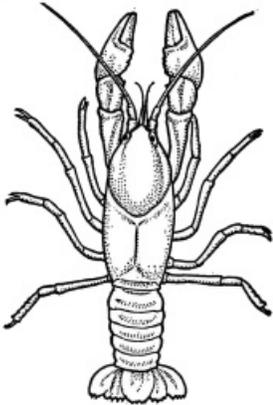


Long Term

- The high-use area configuration of the Center has changed, and opportunities abound. Let's start planning for a next generation Maple Grove, large public pavilion and teaching garden!
- Increased visitation calls for the development of a drop-in art/activity program. Summer visitors could use a map to find that week's activity on a given trail. Visitors could return each week to find new activities and become familiar with more trails. Participants who walk all trails and complete all activities would receive a recognition of some kind.

Family Programs

With the vision and skill of our master environmental educator, Nancy Payne, families with young children now enjoy year-round adventures at Five Rivers in growing numbers. Previously conducted just during the summer, our Family Programs now occur not just in July and August, when we hosted over 150 participants, but October through March. While the summer programs are for adults with children 2-8, the Family Fun Program offers the riches of Five Rivers to preschoolers and their caregivers. Both programs start with a story, then a guided walk, then a take-home craft activity.



"We had an absolutely wonderful time participating in all of the Family Fun sessions last season with our two boys, ages 2 and 4. Nancy is outstanding with the children, as are the other staff and volunteers. The Five Rivers team has brilliantly tailored content for specific age groups, making each session a great new experience. They also provide plenty of ideas for continued learning, exploration, and nature appreciation at home so that parents and families can incorporate environmental and outdoor education and play into their daily lives." Sara Brenner, 9/27/2017

"The Family Fun programs have been an incredible learning opportunity for our family. I am continually impressed with the thought, energy, and creativity that is evident in the curriculum, content, and instruction. After our first session, I couldn't stop thinking 'Wow, this team really has it together in every way!' The structure is beautifully developmentally appropriate, and Nancy is so adept at assessing & addressing each child's readiness, that every participant is entirely engaged throughout. Activities are designed so children can be independent, so in addition to content knowledge they gain tremendous confidence, responsibility, and the accompanying pride. The program really does reach beyond the child enrolled; our family has learned new ways to approach nature, learning, exploration, and respect for the environment." Sarah Read, 9/28/2017

Teacher Comments

*The **Stream Life** lesson was "100% connected to our 4th grade ecosystem curriculum. The students LOVED being hands-on and exploring the stream..." ~ The **Bird lesson** was "awesome! The children were engaged throughout the entire lesson. They responded well to the praise and recognition of their interests." ~ The **Animal Signs** lesson was "great! The students enjoyed doing the plaster casting, being unplugged for a little while and just being outside and learning about their surroundings." ~ During the **Insects lesson**, "the kids loved the hand-on experience of categorizing the insects and collecting them with nets. They had so much fun!"*

Friends of Five Rivers
56 Game Farm Rd.
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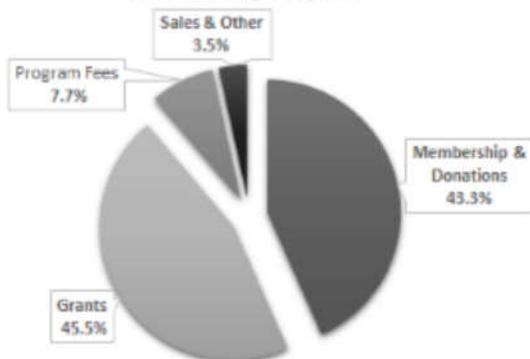
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Financial Position for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017

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 2016-2017 is available upon request. The Friends conducts the following activities:

Guided School Program • Family Programs • Adult Education • Internships • Scholarships
Accessible Trails • Wildlife Garden • Center Greeters • Fall Festival • Birdseed Sale • Land Protection
Net Assets for FY 2016-2017: \$270,081 (2015-2016: \$268,382)

Revenue: \$168,112



Expenditures: \$167,283

