

Friends of Rogers (F.O.R) is a non-profit organization composed of dedicated supporters of Rogers Environmental Education Center. Rogers was a fully funded state operated education center for approximately fifty years; from the late 1960's-2010. The Center was closed on December 31, 2010 after a reduction in New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) staffing and budgets. In April of 2011 after statewide budget cuts were implemented, the Friends of Rogers signed a Use and Occupancy Agreement with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. This agreement authorizes the Friends of Rogers to continue their environmental and educational mission by continuing annual community events such as Earth Fest, Winter Living Celebration and Animals of Halloween. The agreement allows Rogers to stay open to the public and gives Friends of Rogers the ability to continue to offer environmental and educational public programs, display a rich collection of NYS birds, provide interpretive exhibits, and maintain the many trails and trout ponds without state funds. The Rogers Environmental Education Center encompasses 600 acres of New York State owned property.



Be sure to check out the History Exhibit at the Rogers Visitors Center for more information about our historical facility!

**FRIENDS OF ROGERS
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
CENTER, INC.**

**P.O. BOX 932
2721 STATE HWY 80
SHERBURNE, NY 13460**

607-674-4733

INFO@FRIENDSOFROGERS.ORG

WWW.FRIENDSOFROGERS.ORG

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THE HISTORY OF ROGERS



From Pheasant Game Farm to non-profit organization, now run and operated by the Friends of Rogers.



ROGERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER TIMELINE

1788 The land was purchased by pioneers from the Native Americans.

1793 The first permanent European Settlers in Sherburne changed the land by turning forests into farmland. To this day the main industry of the area consists of dairy farming.

1833-7 The Chenango Canal was constructed between Utica and Binghamton. This canal was heavily used by farmers and had a big influence in the development of Sherburne.

1835 The Stone House was built by Henry Gardiner and his son, very likely with stones from the Canal bed. This building was refurbished in 2005 and now serves as living quarters for the interns at Rogers.

1909 James S. Whipple the New York State Forest, Fish and Game Commissioner, decided to build a bird farm at Sherburne despite much ridicule and opposition. The Sherburne Pheasant farm was the first game farm established in New York and the longest continuously operating game far in the US. It was run by the New York State Conservation Department. Its purpose was to raise pheasants and other game birds for release, primarily for hunting. The Conservation Dept. was looking for a supervisor of this farm and Harry and Gertrude Rogers, who at the time raised pheasants on a game farm in Illinois, heard about the opportunity and wanted to get involved.



1909 148 acres of land along the Chenango River was purchased for the original game farm from William and Almedia Lyman. The Lyman farmhouse is now the Forestry and Operations headquarters building.

1929 The Lathrop property was acquired. Three years later, the Addams farm was purchased.

1932 Harry Rogers was appointed Superintendent for all the NY State Game Farms. His wife Gertrude was Sherburne Game Farm Manager. Over 280,000 pheasants and other game birds were raised here annually. Fish were also raised in trout ponds. The pheasant rearing facility no longer exists.

1933 The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed flood barriers, ponds, roads, and trails on the property. They also planted pine and spruce trees. Their camp was located on the Adams Farm parcel.

1947 Cush Hill parcel, including the Stone House, was purchased by Pauline Smith.

1948 The Farm was renamed from Sherburne Pheasant Farm to Rogers State Game farm to recognize the efforts of Harry and Gertrude Rogers.

1963 Officials of the former New York Forest, Fish and Game Commission (now NY Conservation Dept.), decided to phase out the game farm. John Borst, president of the Sherburne Rotary Club conceived the idea of a Nature Center by reading an announcement in "The Conservationist" on how to plan a nature center. Knowing the game farm was slated to be shut down, the club and concerned citizens were worried about job loss and were seeking a new project to benefit the community. The Rotary Club funded a feasibility study conducted by the Audubon Society. The game farm property then became a logical choice for the location of the Interpretive Center.

1966 The Audubon Society's proposal was approved by the State. The Conservation Dept. requested and received \$100,000 to develop the Center and hire the Center's first Director, John A. Weeks.

1967 The Boice Pond parcel was purchased

1968 A Citizens Advisory Committee was formed to assist John Weeks, in evaluating programs and establishing community relations. This Mid-York Conservation fund later became the Friends of Rogers (FOR). The NYSDEC and FOR cosponsor the Naturalist Intern Program. This fund also purchased the George Lesser mounted bird collection now on display in the bird cabin as well as the indoor classroom.

1968 NYS opens its first Interpretive Center to the public, then called Rogers Conservation Education Center. The Center's objective was to interpret department policies, to provide information and relater to environmental concerns to the public.

1970 The NYS Conservation Dept. becomes the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Rogers Conservation Education Center was renamed Rogers Environmental Education Center.

2010 On December 31, the State in its fiscal crisis decided to shut down the Center.



2011 In spring of 2011,, the Friends of Rogers had worked out an agreement with the state to take over operating the Center. In the fall the Rogers Center was opened back up and hours of operation and programs were restored.