

From the community:

Award-winning Author Florence Williams will Deliver Keynote Address at Brushwood Center's 34th Annual Smith Nature Symposium

Brushwood Center announces Florence Williams as Keynote Speaker at Smith Nature Symposium. (Posted by Laura Fruhauff, Community Contributor)

Community Contributor Laura Fruhauff

RIVERWOODS, IL - On Saturday, May 20th, editor, journalist, and award-winning author, Florence Williams, will deliver the keynote address at Brushwood Center at Ryerson Wood's 34th annual Smith Nature Symposium. Intrigued by our storied renewal in the natural world, Williams draws from her findings and experiences through assignments for National Geographic and Outside magazines-as well as many other publications-to uncover the

science behind nature's positive effects on the brain. In her new book, *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes us Happier, Healthier and More Creative*, she delves into completely new research gathered from forest trails in Korea, islands in Finland, and groves of eucalyptus in California to reveal the science at the confluence of environment, mood, health, and creativity. Through this multifaceted research and extensive fieldwork, Williams uncovers the powers of the natural world to improve health, promote reflection and innovation, and ultimately, strengthen our relationships. She uses this research to further the discussion of how spending time in nature has profound mental and physical benefits and why some doctors have begun prescribing nature to patients instead of pills. As our modern lives shift dramatically indoors, these ideas-and the answers they yield-are more urgent than ever.

A visiting scholar at George Washington University and a fellow at the Center for Humans and Nature, Williams' research focuses on the environment, health, and science. She regularly features in numerous publications including: *Outside Magazine*, *New York Times*, *New York Times Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Slate*, *Mother Jones*, *High Country News*, *O-Oprah, W.*, and *Bicycling*, among many others. Her work frequently receive awards including six magazine awards from the American Society of Journalists and Authors as well as Yale's John Hersey Prize.

ADVERTISING

2017 Brushwood Center Award for Distinguished Leadership in Nature to be awarded to Deborah Lahey, President and Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Academy of Sciences and Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

Each year Brushwood Center recognizes an outstanding leader in the area of conservation to honor during the Smith Nature Symposium. The 2017 honor goes to Deborah Lahey for her extensive work as President and CEO of the Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, as well as her involvement and dedication serving on numerous boards and

committees. Since 2010, Deb's leadership has reshaped the Nature Museum, setting attendance records and introducing art exhibitions. During her tenure she has overseen the Museum's successful efforts to restore endangered and threatened butterflies, Blanding's turtles, and snake species. Deb is responsible for the Chicago Academy of Sciences' 160-year-old collection—a definitive gathering of local natural history—ensuring its accessibility to researchers and museum guests. Notably, Deb's passion for developing environmental education and hands-on learning for children has provided more hours of hands-on science learning for students than any other museum in Chicago.

The Symposium in a Garden

This year Brushwood Center is unveiling a new "Garden Party" format with live music by the Carl Noble Trio and a casual farm-to-table menu in their award-winning native garden. Guests will be able to chat with friends as they drink in the beauty of the sun setting over Ryerson Woods. Inside Brushwood will be a featured art exhibition, *Endangered Beauty: An Exhibit of Illinois' Endangered Species* by Carol Freeman.

The Smith Nature Symposium is an annual benefit for Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods. For over 30 years, the symposium has been an occasion to celebrate and spend the evening with luminaries who have made a meaningful contribution to the science of conservation and deepened our understanding of the natural world.

Registration

To register, call 224-633-2426 or visit Brushwoodcenter.org/Programs/Discovery/SmithNatureSymposium.html

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