




Spring/Summer 2017 

# Ryerson Almanac

A Newsletter from Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods

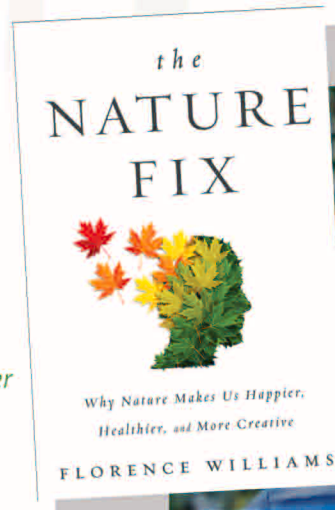
**“It has long been believed that walking in restorative settings could lead not only to physical vigor, but to mental clarity and even bursts of genius”**

*Florence Williams, 2017 Smith Nature Symposium speaker*

Whether hiking along a trail or pausing to enjoy a scented summer breeze, we can feel both calm and energized when we spend time in nature. Our face relaxes, our breathing deepens and we feel happy and healthy – forgetting for a moment the stress and busyness of life. We know spending time in nature feels good, but there is growing research that shows that it can have a concrete positive effect on our health as well.

Author Florence Williams was fascinated by our storied renewal in the natural world. “For centuries, poets and philosophers have extolled the benefits of a walk in the woods: Beethoven drew inspiration from rocks and trees; Wordsworth composed while tromping over the heath; Nikola Tesla conceived the electric motor while visiting a park,” she said. Williams decided to set out to uncover the science behind nature’s positive effects on the brain. Partly drawing from past assignments for *National Geographic* and *Outside* magazines, Williams’ new book: *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*, explores how spending time in nature has profound mental and physical benefits and why some doctors have begun prescribing nature to patients instead of pills.

On May 20th, Williams will deliver the keynote address at Brushwood Center’s annual Smith Nature Symposium. Looking at the science behind why access to nature and green space is essential for human health, she will share elegant stories of lives being changed, health being restored, and the conquering of debilitating mental health disorders through mindfulness in nature. Delving into completely new research gathered from forest trails in Korea, islands in Finland, and groves of eucalyptus in California, she will share with the audience the science at the confluence of environment, mood, health, and creativity, and uncover the powers of the natural world to improve health, promote reflection and innovation, and ultimately strengthen our relationships. As our modern lives shift dramatically indoors, these ideas—and the answers they yield—are more urgent than ever.



*photo by Sue Barr*



SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017

34th Annual

## SMITH NATURE SYMPOSIUM

**NEW YEAR - NEW SMITH!**

### JOIN US FOR THE GARDEN PARTY

Enjoy a new format this year with live music by the Carl Noble Trio and a more casual farm-to-table menu in Brushwood Center’s award-winning native garden. Chat with friends as you drink in the beauty of the sun setting over Ryerson Woods. The Smith Nature Symposium is an annual benefit for Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, and is 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. We look forward to your joining us for this landmark year!