

## Enjoy the beauty of Grand River at the Rainbow Ridge Resort

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

One of four LGBTQ+ friendly campgrounds in Ontario ? Rainbow Ridge Resort ? is located right here in Dufferin County.

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted and camping again permitted, there's no better time to get out and enjoy all of the nature that the Ridge has to offer, especially during Pride month.

?We're a fabulous little campground nestled into the ridge of the Grand River and we provide a safe space. People here are so happy that they can walk around hand in hand,? said Peter Cirelli, part owner of the Ridge.

Originally founded by four women in 1997, it was since purchased by Cirelli and his partner in 2000 and massively expanded to the 72-acre, 350-person capacity campground it is today.

The vision for the campgrounds has always been to provide a non-judgemental and comfortable space for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, so they can truly enjoy the outdoors.

?It was created to create a safe space for the LGBT community because there wasn't really much in the ways of campgrounds or outdoor activities for the gay community,? Cirelli explained.

While they see a lot of locals from Dufferin County, people also travel to the Ridge from Barrie, Windsor and other parts of Ontario.

The Ridge is an adult community but they also host family weekends where people can bring their kids for a picnic or day at the pool.

Apart from fantastic hiking trails, one of the things that keeps people coming back is the community at the campgrounds, according to Cirelli. He says it's very welcoming and people quickly feel at ease.

While COVID-19 has put a strain on the Ridge, Cirelli noted that they're still doing some Pride celebrations. On the weekends they've had campers decorate their campsite or room rental in a Pride theme. There's also a socially distanced walk about for Pride month where people get out and enjoy nature.

?Normally there's a big pool party and dance party afterwards, and a barbecue,? said Cirelli. ?We're always a part of Celebrate You're Awesome as well. We always have a booth for that celebration, but due to COVID, we've kind of had to scale back a lot and make sure that everyone is kept safe at this time.?

Cirelli told the Citizen, he would encourage anyone who's never been to the Ridge to book a stay and enjoy everything it has to offer.

?Our pool is wonderful and people really enjoy that. We also have a pond here that people like to waterboard or kayak or go fishing on as well,? he said. ?It's just really about enjoying an outdoor space where it is safe and comfortable.?