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Discovering in nature with new with woman-only SHE Adventures

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Have you ever wanted to go backcountry hiking, but found yourself held back due to lack of confidence or not wanting to go solo?

Shelburne-native Lauri Corlett has launched a women-only backcountry adventure business called SHE Adventures with the goal of fostering opportunities to build confidence, resilience and community through outdoor adventure.

?This is really a platform for women who don't have experience in the back country, to have the opportunity to get out and learn how to do these things. I think one of the major barriers for women going into the backcountry is they're scared of doing it alone, especially if it's for the first time. SHE Adventures gives women a group of people to go out with for safety purposes, and then also give them give guidance and instruction while out there,? explained Corlett.

Corlett's love for backcountry hiking began at the age of 13, when she completed a four-day trek in the Adirondack Mountains. Since then, she has hiked thousands of kilometers on long-distance trails, including a thru-hike of New Zealand's South Island on the Te Araroa Trail.

Her first backcountry canoe trip was in 2009 in Killarney Provincial Park, and over the last 16 years, she has completed over 20 multi-day trips across Ontario.

?I really grew to live it, especially in this day and age where we're always logged in and technology is such a huge part of our life,? said Corlett. ?It's really nice to be able to reset and disconnect from everything for a couple of days and reconnect with yourself or with family and friends.?

For two years, she lived and travelled in her 2001 Dodge Ram 3500 Leisure Way camper van, touring through dozens of Canada's provincial and national parks. To date, she has visited more than 25 countries.

Corlett has extensive outdoor training including having completed a two-day Wilderness Survival Skills Course and an 80-hour Wilderness First Responder Course through Get Outdoors Training, as well as a tow-day Whitewater Tandem Canoe Course through Paddler Co-op.

She will be completing her Basic Lake Tandem Canoe Instructor course through Naturally Superior Adventures by the end of August.

In addition to extensive outdoor training, Corlett also holds a degree in environmental science and is currently completing a master's in environment and geography.

Speaking with the Free Press, Corlett said she was inspired to create SHE Adventures as the result of her own hesitation to solo backcountry hike due to safety concerns while also hearing about other women's interests on her social media posts.

She realized that she must not be the only woman feeling this way ? where being single can act as a barrier to adventure.

?I thought there's definitely an interest out there because people are reaching out to me about it and there must people other people that are in the same position as me,? said Corlett. ?It was a really good opportunity to teach the people expressing interest, and to give myself and others a group to do it with.

Corlett noted the lack of women-only hiking trip programs in Ontario and the importance of providing this service.

?As far as I'm aware, I'm the only one in Ontario who is offering women-only backcountry hiking trips. It's needed because it doesn't exist and there's interest there.?

Corlett has planned a number of upcoming adventures including tackling the 35 km Highland Backpacking Trail in Algonquin Provincial Park over three days and two nights from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1. She will be hosting a full-day trip to Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Canada's smallest National Park that is only accessible by boat, on Sept. 7.

Corlett will also be hosting a Wellness in the Wild workshop at Vicki Tree Wellness in Horseshoe Valley on Nov. 8.

To learn more about the upcoming trips and to stay in the loop with future programming, visit www.sheventuresoutdoors.com or follow SHE Ventures on Instagram @sheventuresoutdoors.