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Explore, learn, and connect: Bruce Trail Day coming to Riverside Woods Nature Reserve

By Riley Murphy, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club is hosting a free event at Riverside Woods Nature Reserve to celebrate Bruce Trail Day on Oct. 5, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The day will feature guided hikes and various family activities.

This includes family nature hunts, where you can search together for items in the forest, as well as the "Birds of Prey Show".

Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club President Sandra Green shared that Bruce Trail Day is the largest outreach event of the year and marks the time when they truly celebrate the Bruce Trail with everyone.

Elizabeth Staite, Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Day Coordinator, said this day is essential as it is the time when they gather those from both the Caledon and Mono areas who want to hear about the Bruce Trail.

Green said the Bruce Trail motto is "preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone forever," and that it exists for all.

"Getting out into nature and meditating, connecting to nature is so important," says Green.

"And for all of us to learn about our surroundings and the nature that is around us," added Staite.

The Bruce Trail encompasses a multitude of elements, as explained by the two, from the wildlife on the trail, such as butterflies and foxes, to the flora and fauna throughout the trail.

"We want people to come out, participate and learn about what's out there in that forest. Not just walking, but learning both for children as well as for adults," says Staite.

The birds of prey show will feature birds that you may see naturally in the wild, educating you on their characteristics, habitats, diets, natural predators, and more.

"We're excited about being able to not only share the day, but educate people around Orangeville and Caledon."

The two shared that the free event and day is about sharing, and they want to ensure everyone has a chance to experience the Bruce Trail.

"It's all about connecting not only with nature, but with ourselves," says Staite.

Scouters will also be in attendance that day, as the location is an old Scout camp.

They will attempt to have a campfire, complete with good old-fashioned marshmallow roasting and campfire songs.

At the event, volunteers will also build bird boxes to be placed along the trail, and those in attendance are welcome to join and help with the construction.

Staite shared that the day is not just about connecting with others in the Bruce Trail group, but with the whole community.

Green noted this is a conservancy, and it's all about caring for the land and restoring it to a healthy habitat for animals and plants, which, she said, is a large part of the education aspect of the day.

Part of the nature hikes and hunts will identify invasive species.

"Everyone should feel safe participating in these activities and everyone is welcome," says Green. Even furry friends!

Dogs are allowed, as long as they are well-behaved, on a leash, and maintain a safe distance from the birds of prey.

The event will take place rain or shine, so please come prepared.

Staite encourages everyone to join the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club, whether through volunteering or becoming a member.

"We would like to inspire others to care for nature just as much as we do. I think we all have a responsibility to care for our wonderful environment and this gives people the opportunity, a way of making the world a bit more beautiful by volunteering to care for the land and habitats and so on and helping with restoration projects," added Green.