**Shinrin-Yoku and Mindful Writing Workshop/Retreat**

**Overview**: The Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku—or forest bathing—has many health benefits. It can also set us on a writing path that is enlightening, powerful, and fun! In this three-day workshop, you will learn how to tap into your creativity by spending time in nature. With new insights and inspiration, you will then transpose your thoughts/experience onto the page as poetry, prose, or short story. It’s all about being “mindful.” There also will be ample time to have a one-on-one mentoring session with Sandra Phinney, workshop leader ([www.sandraphinney.com](http://www.sandraphinney.com))—and time to explore the unique town of Shelburne.

**Structure:** Each day will consist of workshops about the art of writing in general and the art of becoming mindful (using our senses) in particular. Time will also be devoted to guided walks outside (waterfront, beach and the forest) to get in tune with our environment and listen for stories. There will be some dedicated solo time to write, as well as time allotted to have a one-on-one mentoring session with Sandra. Evening activities will include time to talk about the experience of Shinrin Yoku, the writing life, and to share stories.

**Requirements:** No writing experience necessary (although this workshop is also valuable for experienced/published writers.) Bring lots of paper to write, pens/pencils, and tuck in your sense of humour.

Day 1:

* 1. a.m.: introduction to Shinrin-Yoku

10-11 a.m. outside directed observation walk using the 5 senses

11-12 a.m. return inside to reflect and write

1-2 p.m. directed forest bathing walk

2-3:30 p.m. return, reflect, write and share

3:30-5 p.m. private mentoring sessions with Sandra

Evening: open Q& A discussion with participants

Day 2:

9-10:30 a.m. writing tips

10:30-11 a.m. outside—short, non-directed walk: observation taking notes/expanding on the senses to flesh out story telling

11-12 a.m.: write and share

1-4 forest bathing; Sandra will lead you to a forested area where you will do your own self-directed walk for an hour. Return and write. Private session booked with Sandra

Evening: Readings by participants

Day 3:

Similar to day two.

Evening: What next? Setting goals. (Shinrin-Yoku as a daily practice?) Roundup /closure + evaluation.

BIO: SANDRA PHINNEY

Sandra Phinney’s stories and photographs have been published in over 70 magazines (print and online) and newspapers including regional publications such as *Saltscapes, Atlantic Business Magazine, Your Local,* and *The Chronicle Herald,* to national publications including *AAA Living, Re-Creation World, Subaru’s Six Star, The United Church Observer, The Toronto Star,* and *National Geographic’s Parks Canada Guide*.

Phinney has written four non-fiction books: *Pierre Elliot Trudeau: the prankster who never flinched; Risk Takers and Innovators*; *and Maud Lewis and the Maudified House Project.* Her latest is a travel memoir: *Waking Up in My Own Backyard ~ Explorations in Southwest Nova Scotia,* published by Pottersfied Press in 2018.

She’s also passionate about teaching. In 2008 Phinney helped to create and deliver a diploma freelance writing program at the Nova Scotia Community College (Burridge Campus, Yarmouth NS). The following year she completed a year as Writer in Residence at the Yarmouth Regional Library. Ten years ago she hosted a 3-months Memoir Writing workshops at the Yarmouth Library (the participants formed their own memoir group and still meet!) Seven years ago she conducted story telling workshops at various locations on behalf of the Western Counties Library in Southwest Nova Scotia. This year, she will be Artist In Residence at Joggins Fossil Cliffs for two weeks each in May and September. She also continues to deliver writing workshops throughout Atlantic Canada and Ontario on topics ranging from memoir, nature writing, travel writing and photography. (During the pandemic, her workshops have been online.)

Currently, Phinney is making a business shift from writing for mainstream magazines to writing personal essays with the goal of being published in literary journals. In her spare time, she practices Tai Chi, enjoys Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing) and does wilderness canoeing.

She is a member of TMAC, CMG, WFNS, and WFNB.