

—Slug:.....COMM-0836.will.forest\_therapy  
—Contributor.....Annie Landenberger  
—Contributor email.....verbatimvt@gmail.com  
—For section.....News  
—Format.....News - byline and dateline  
—Dateline.....Williamsville  
—Article Number:.....42420

**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

Nice piece, Annie. Your subject seems a little woo-woo, but you gently kept her just down to earth enough to make this something that made me want to go tromp around the woods. This type of article can go off the rails so easily given the jargon, but it was written just as it should have been — for those who have absolutely idea what she’s talking about, in a way that gently brings people aboard.

I understand why you would have used the first person in the lede, but it didn’t quite work for the general news feature that the rest of it was, so I nudged it back to third in a way that I hope doesn’t drain your experience and observations from the context.

(A reporter’s notebook-style piece would need to be centered around you and your interactions with the story from start to finish — it might have worked, say, if you started at the meditation and ended the piece at the end of the walk, describing your interactions with other participants along the way and interjecting the background about Kenyon along that timeline.)

I love that you got an original photo, too, though I was alarmed that she was missing a front tooth. Happily, it was a bit of debris on my screen.

**HEADLINE ELEMENTS:**

####BEGIN HED####

1 Forests bring peace of mind in a stressful world

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

With her forest therapy sessions at Manitou, Amanda  
Kenyon uses nature as a healing balm

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

Deep in the Williamsville woods, a few participants sat  
with their guide, Amanda Kenyon, to meditate before venturing to  
seek nuances of color in the forest, then to share; to dial into the  
forest's rich scents and then share again.

The 90 minutes of this uniquely refreshing Japanese  
tradition of shinrin-yoku — “forest bathing” — floated by, and the  
outcome promised on Kenyon's website ([landkindguide.com](http://landkindguide.com)) —  
to “slow down, breathe, and let the forest work its quiet magic”  
— was fulfilled.

As Kenyon's website explains, “these sessions go beyond  
relaxation.”

“Research shows that forest bathing can reduce stress  
hormones like cortisol, boost immune function, improve mood,  
lower blood pressure, and enhance focus and creativity,” she  
writes. “The sessions are designed to foster mindfulness and  
presence — practices that have been proven to reduce anxiety  
and depression, improve sleep, and boost overall emotional well-  
being.”

Quite useful in today's roiling world.

The public is welcome to get a taste of this practice at  
one of two sessions left in this round of Kenyon's Forest Bathing  
Nature Therapy Clinic on Friday, Oct. 17, and/or Monday, Oct.  
20, at 3 p.m. at Manitou Project, the 223-acre wooded sanctuary  
on Sunset Lake Road.

## A vision of forest, mindfulness, and movement

As she describes on her website, Kenyon is a “nature therapy and meditation guide, woman, voice for the land, belly dancer, accountant, cook, sister, volunteer, builder of stone walls, hiker of high peaks and a humble human learning every day from all the beings of this shared planet Earth.”

In a recent conversation with *The Commons*, she quipped, “I don’t know which version of Amanda Kenyon I’m on, but there are definitely past lives of mine. Yeah, I have two business degrees and I started out with a long career, a decade in the accounting and finance world — the corporate arena.”

She left the corporate world as that work became unfulfilling; circumstances then led her to become a band manager, music promoter, and booking agent.

“I did that for a while and then got back into accounting and finance work with an environmental nonprofit, because love of the Earth has been there for a long time for me,” she said.

Coming to Vermont, where she’d moved to be closer to the mountains than she’d been in her home state, Connecticut, she took a director’s role at HatchSpace in Brattleboro, “guiding that organization through the shutdown for the pandemic into relocation to High Street & Green and the grand reopening in a new space with full programming.”

As that project wrapped up, Kenyon started to ponder “What next?”

“I started a visioning process where I had a whiteboard and any word or phrase went onto the board with no rhyme or reason: I just spit out a bunch of things — everything from ‘events coordinator’ to ‘fire,’” she said.

“And after a month or so of that, I had this complete download from the universe, like a mandate, to create a retreat space in the forest where people could connect to nature and themselves,” through mindfulness and movement, she continued.

63 “Like, wow, that’s great,” she’d thought — but what did  
64 that mean?

65 Noting three key words on the whiteboard — “nature,”  
66 “mindfulness,” and “movement” — she soon discovered forest  
67 bathing.

68 Kenyon welcomed forest bathing’s fit with her love of  
69 hiking, meditating, being in the mountains, exploring the woods.

70 She soon found and worked with different guides and  
71 collected “an array of experiences to evaluate.”

72 The first was with Nadine Mazzola, a Boston-based  
73 [author and certified forest therapist](#).

74 “It kind of blew me away,” Kenyon said. “It was definitely  
75 different. It wasn’t just a walk in the woods. And it felt profound  
76 to me.”

77 Thus inspired, Kenyon pursued certification as a forest  
78 therapy guide in 2022 through [The Forest Therapy School](#), which  
79 involved in-person training in Maryville, Tennessee.

80 Needing a place to fulfill her plan, Kenyon did research  
81 that led her to Mike Mayer, vice president of the Manitou Project.  
82 After participating on a guided forest walk with him, she shared  
83 her interest and needs.

84 “And he listened and said, ‘Oh, do you want a place to  
85 do that?’ So the universe kind of opened up all the doors, and  
86 Manitou became my first partnership, the first place that I’ve  
87 guided at,” Kenyon said.

88 As Kenyon continues to lead at Manitou, she’s added  
89 more locations, more partnerships, more offerings, but “Manitou  
90 is still very special to me. It’s very magical land.”

## 91 De-stressing the world

92 Kenyon described the need for programs like the one she  
93 offers.

94 “It hurts my heart to hear when people are stressed about  
95 what may happen in their country, in the world,” she said. People  
96 who can benefit from forest bathing might have “personal

97 concerns about being able to maintain their job, health care, and  
98 all the many things that are sort of trickling down from how the  
99 political environment has been progressing and how our culture  
100 is being shaped by that.”

101 “I think the weight of the world is a lot heavier for a lot  
102 of people these days, and we get caught up trying to make ends  
103 meet and trying to do all the things we need to do,” Kenyon said.  
104 “And it can be hard to really take a break and really do  
105 something to help with your stressor level or your depression or  
106 your anxiety.”

107 When she guides people into this peaceful support of  
108 nature, Kenyon said that “people might just cry at how much  
109 tension they’ve been carrying.”

110 “So I see the relief that it gives people, or the joy, or  
111 maybe they are rediscovering a love of nature that they had  
112 earlier in life,” she said.

113 In forest bathing, “we get to also live those parts of us  
114 that get suppressed when we’re in an environment of a stressful  
115 life,” Kenyon also noted.

## 116 **‘Peace and harmony and joy** 117 **with nature’**

118 According to her website, Kenyon “guides mindfulness  
119 and sensory-based nature experiences that promote holistic well-  
120 being and strengthen our relationship with nature, ourselves, and  
121 other humans.”

122 She’s offered programs through [Sētu Vermont](#), an  
123 Ayurvedic healing center, and she has been a guest presenter at  
124 [Vermont Insight Meditation Center](#) and at [Bonnyvale](#)  
125 [Environmental Education Center](#) (BEEC). All three organizations  
126 are in Brattleboro.

127 She also continues to fine tune her own offerings for the  
128 public. She also privately books individual and small groups

129 sessions locally and to area visitors through national travel and  
130 hospitality sites.

131 In addition to her Forest Therapy certification, Kenyon is  
132 certified in wilderness first aid through Stonehearth Open  
133 Learning Opportunities, and she is a trained Sierra Club Outings  
134 hike leader. While she still keeps a foot in the accounting world,  
135 she's also become certified building dry stone walls through the  
136 Stone Trust in Dummerston.

137 Beyond the Oct. 17 and 20 forest bathing sessions,  
138 which is "pay as you can" and for which a donation of \$15 to  
139 \$45 is welcomed, Kenyon will offer full moon events on  
140 Wednesday, Nov. 5 and Thursday, Dec. 4 at BEEC.

141 She also offers an annual Grateful Forest immersion there  
142 the day after Thanksgiving.

143 "It's an alternative to 'Black Friday,' where we find peace  
144 and harmony and joy with nature and be grateful for what we've  
145 got," she said.

146 For information about all of Kenyon's offerings and to  
147 book, visit [landkindguide.com](http://landkindguide.com).

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

148

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

149

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

150

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

151

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

152

####END LOGLINE####