What is Forest Bathing?

Forest bathing is based on the Japanese practice of *Shinrin-yoku*. There is no exact definition of *Shinrin-yoku* in English, but it can be interpreted as taking in the forest atmosphere or luxuriating in the forest.

The Cowling Arboretum

Carleton owns approximately 800 acres of land adjacent to the College, formally known as the Cowling Arboretum, but most people just call it the “arb.” The arb is home to a number of different wildlife and plant species, and is full of running, biking, and skiing trails. The arb is a great place to immerse oneself in nature and be active year-round!
Physical Health Benefits

Studies show that forest bathing, even for short periods of time, can decrease cortisol (stress hormone) levels in the blood, sympathetic nervous system activation (fight or flight), blood pressure, and heart rate compared to walking around in an urban environment. Studies found that that walking in an urban environment can actually increase all of these physiological measures of stress. Being active in the forest will also help promote good physical health.

Mental Health Benefits

Forest bathing can yield mental and emotional health benefits. For example, forest bathing decreases feelings of tension (T-A), depression (D), anger (A-H), fatigue (F), and confusion (C). Forest bathing also increases feelings of psychological vigor (V).

Check out the graph below!