

RTPI Program Helps Youths Dive Into Study Of Nature

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By TRACI LANGWORTHY

In her spare time, 12-year-old Bliss Hotchkiss likes to go to the woods by her home and sketch its changing details in her journal.

That woods in Falconer is her "spot," she explains — and, as such, her home base of discovery for the **newest educational program developed by the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History.**

The goal is similar to that of the Selborne Project, through which many local middle school children study the square kilometer surrounding their schools. The difference is "My Place," as the new program is called, centers on younger, individual children exploring an even smaller area.

"There are scientific questions that no one has answered right in your own back yard," said Mark Baldwin, RTPI education director.

So why not introduce children to the natural world around them in that closest place of wonder?

Former RTPI Education Director William Sharpe thought it a good idea and, before he died, put the wheels in motion for the new, home-based program.

Now, his successor and others at RTPI are hoping to reach thousands of children across the country while involving adults everywhere as volunteer mentors.

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