

# Calabogie Peaks the perfect venue for recreation professionals

*Renfrew County resort offers ideal setting for active networking*

For many recreation professionals in rural Ontario, one of the year's biggest highlights is their annual conference at Calabogie Peaks Resort, according to Jo-anne Caldwell, program developer for the Town of Renfrew Parks and Recreation Department. When she co-organized the inaugural Rural Ontario Active Recreation conference in September 2014, little did she know just how popular it would prove to be, so much so that the group is having its third annual gathering at Calabogie Peaks this year.

"There are conferences held elsewhere in Ontario but they can be very expensive to attend," explains Jo-anne. "We wanted to run something close to home and at a time of year that worked well for those of us in the recreation business. We looked at every place in Renfrew County and what drew us to Calabogie was that it's the perfect spot to stay and play."

She adds that a big plus was the absence of external distractions at Calabogie Peaks. "Having everyone staying on site really helped with the ambience of the event. Calabogie offers everything we needed and wanted, including nice hotel rooms, excellent dining and superb conference facilities. For us, the outdoor aspects really sealed the deal – we wanted lots of recreational space and Calabogie Peaks certainly provides that."

The conference's approximately 100 attendees come from a range of organizations that are all involved in recreation, including municipal staff, volunteers, school boards and health units. "Not only did we have representatives from every municipality within Renfrew County but also others from across the province. Everyone came

because they wanted to liaise with people doing the same things we are and facing the same challenges. Having a group this large is ideal; there is so much synergy and we are able to fill the resort. I think Calabogie likes our timing because it's the off season for them as well."

The recreation professionals' conferences have a clear objective, which is to forge a stronger network so they can share ideas and best practices. "We are now seeing that the relationships we're building through these events are helping us come up with better products for our communities, without reinventing the wheel," notes Jo-anne. "We're also sharing things like grant applications, which we'd never done before. Now that we have had an opportunity to connect face-to-face, we are finding that can really help each other more effectively. These conferences have truly made a difference in how we work."

A full slate of activities gave the conference attendees plenty of opportunity to take advantage of Calabogie Peaks' many recreational offerings. "We used the tennis courts, the golf course, the ski hill, the beach, the lake and the pool," says Jo-anne. "Because they have so much to offer, Calabogie delivers very good value. We programmed activities that took advantage of the resort's amenities, such as yoga on the paddleboards at the beach and Pickleball on the tennis courts. We were able to keep the price for participants as low as possible so they loved that it was affordable."

Jo-anne offers high praise for the entire Calabogie Peaks team. "They were so flexible and accommodating. They let us set up a portable climbing wall and some inflatable games and allowed us to



THE CALABOGIE PEAKS HOTEL

have a massive fireworks show. I found the staff were very professional to deal with. They run the resort as a real team effort; it's impressive to see how everyone works so well together and is willing to help during your event."

Feeding a large group is something else Calabogie does particularly well, adds Jo-anne. "The food was outstanding and the feedback from participants strongly reinforced that point. There was not a single complaint about the meals and the kitchen was fantastic at dealing with special dietary requirements – they really went above and beyond in that regard."

Enhanced culinary offerings are just one aspect of the changes implemented at Calabogie Peaks which are drawing accolades. "I am so impressed by the improvements that have been made," says Jo-anne. "It has been transformed from a local ski hill to a spot that now has real resort feel. I love the changes."

"I would definitely encourage anyone who is thinking of hosting



*"A teambuilding exercise facilitated by Rick Klatt, an Outdoor Education Coordinator with the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, encouraged participants to work together and highlighted the importance of communication and teamwork."*

a conference to look at Calabogie Peaks and speak with their staff," she adds. "It's just a fantastic spot. Everyone working there is very warm and welcoming yet also very professional; it's really the best of both worlds. Calabogie is a true gem in

Renfrew County and we are so fortunate to have this in our backyard."

To book your next corporate event at Calabogie Peaks Resort, please visit [www.calabogie.com](http://www.calabogie.com) or call 1.800.669.4861.