



At Wildflowers Nature School

Summer 2019

PROGRAM & PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY

Education has come so far from the original, innate way that humans learned for thousands of years. With extended family always around in natural settings, kids used to observe, explore, imitate, question, and watch their mentors in a natural setting. They learned by discovery, experimentation and very keen awareness. At Wildflowers Nature School, we try to allow the space for that unfolding of inquisitiveness and exploration, for experiencing the wonder and the spirit in special moments in nature. For in those moments lies the heart of education that will last a lifetime.

MISSION STATEMENT

Running with the innate exuberant wonder of a child towards nature, we nurture imagination, inquisitiveness, confidence, creativity, resourcefulness and a connection to, gratitude for and understanding of the world around them. Through stewardship, nature arts, sustainable living skills, and utilization of resources available to a child in a natural setting, children develop gratitude & a love of nature. That connection to nature will be a treasure they can continually return to in their life for growth, values, compassion, wisdom and joy in their lives.

CAMP SIZE & RATIO

Our size is an expression of our belief in "mentoring". The main way that children learn is by imitation, and most people learn best by relationship. We nurture listening, caring for each other, and noticing the special gifts of each child. In each session, we have 14 kids and 2 or more "mentors" (some call teachers or camp counselors). Please check out the bios of our highly qualified staff at www.earthcamp.org.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

We will spend our days doing a variety of outdoor activities, catered to the children's ages & interests. Just some of the possible activities may be: archery, sustainability skills such as building with cob & willow, raising food & animals including apple pressing and cheese making, primitive skills and camp craft (fire, forts/ shelters, etc.), arts & crafts (nature art, flower crafts, weaving with plants, etc.), tree elements such as climbing silks or rapelled tree climbing, exploring, tracking, creating habitats, team building (problem solving, creating, games, etc.), water & mud play, animal imitations, whittling, orienteering (compass & "lostproofing" skills), photography, woodworking, & games that help with nature awareness. This is all balanced with the truly necessary nature play that kids invent.

HOURS & DAYS & AGES

All camps are M-F. During many activities we will split into age groups as appropriate. 4 weeks of day camp are for ages 5 to 12. Those weeks, camp is held from 9am – 3pm. The backpack weeks consist of a Monday from 9-3 at Wildflowers Nature School, then a backpacking trip from 9am Tuesday to between 3 and 5pm Friday. Backpack is for ages 9 (*see below) to 15.

- **Week 1:** June 24 – 28 (ALUMNI have priority for this week)
- **Week 2:** July 22 – 26
- **Week 3:** July 29 – August 2
- **Week 4:** August 5 – 9
- **Girls Backpack:** June 17-21
- **Boys Backpack:** July 15-21

Mentor in Training

Ages 12-16 are invited to join us for Day Camp or ages 16 and up for the Backpacking Camps, and to be mentored by our staff in the ways of a nature mentor. Mentors-in-Training will assist the kids in their adventures & needs, as they learn from us mentors how to be aware of both the needs of children and the environment that is full of wonder and how to share that with kids. We are great mentors for these mentors-in-training, and this work on their resume will go a long way. Regular camp rates apply to mentors in training. Please coordinate this with the Director when registering for camp. See below for “volunteers”, though, for opportunities for older teens and adults.

NEW! BACKPACKING CAMPS

This year, we are offering a camp for tweens/young teens, meeting them where they are, in between childhood and adulthood, ready for adventure and honor. We are offering the camps separated by gender-identification because it's so important for them to celebrate their pending womanhood/manhood in comradery and under mentors that honor their process. This opens them up to a different inner level as well as more “real” interpersonal skills. Historically, genders spent a lot of time together, but we don't get many opportunities anymore. Owner Bev Buswell will attend both backpacks, but other personnel on the boys backpack will most likely be men. It looks probable that we are hiring Vinnie Inzano, who was an awesome and beloved mentor here a few years ago but has gone back for an MA in Wilderness Therapy. RITES OF PASSAGE will be a major focus, assisting kids in gaining confidence in reliance on self, trust in others, and getting clear on what they stand for and how to tap into that. The week will culminate with a ceremony.

Age/Gender/Condition: You can sign your child up for the gender camp that a child usually and sincerely identifies with. Though we have put the lower age as 9, this is a trip far from home with a rigorous physical challenge of hiking for miles with a backpack on. We may talk about topics that are more geared toward the cusp of or early teenhood. We recommend that children be mature enough to be ready for that and be separated from parents overnight camping. Kids should be in shape to hike up to 8 miles with a backpack on. Our goal is about 4.5 miles, but there might be one long day, too. If you join a Y program or start a regular routine now, they'll be fit for this trip. (If your child is not usually active, if you live walking distance to outside play, then just saying no to electronics until dark & getting them outside may be all that's needed ☺).

Logistics of Backpacking Camp: Kids attend Monday just 9 to 3 in order to learn how to pack a backpack, plan our route together, learn map & compass, camping skills, group bonding, ground rules and what to expect for the week. Tuesday morning we'll gather at 9am at the school and depart for park. We'll return Friday, about 3pm for the girls, and between 3 & 5 for the boys. The girls will be going to Point Reyes National Seashore and we're still deciding on the boys. If the driving times work out, we're thinking Trinity Alps (great fishing!), but we might need to do the closer Sierras if we can get permits, etc. After signing up, we'll send the gear list. No electronics will be allowed to be used on trip except that a phone could be checked in to us on the 1st day, left in the car, and child could give a call to parent when we get back to car. We can probably network around for backpacks, sleeping bags, & pads to borrow or rent if needed. We plan on sleeping under the stars unless there's rain threatening.

Food: Monday and Tuesday, kids should arrive having eaten a good breakfast and carrying a sack lunch and 2 snacks, just like described below for the day camps. We'll feed them nutritious meals starting Tuesday evening and ending Friday afternoon snack. It's important to follow the Wildflowers Food Policy at www.wildflowerkids.org.

Subject to Sign-ups / Combining Camps: If we don't have enough sign-ups to make it reasonable to hold a separate boys & girls camp, we'll combine them. Of course, these might not be dates or reason you signed up (single gender) so a full refund would be an option for you at that point if you so choose. Girls and boys will camp in separate areas and always with group and mentors. It's also possible we may change entities that we run the backpack camps under, in which case new paperwork.

Transportation: We could definitely use a parent volunteer if anyone is interested. If you want to be in charge of food, we could do a major work trade for your child or pay you. Otherwise, we'll at least pay enough to cover your gas & wear & tear on your car and you'll be fed on a fun backpacking trip and learn alot. No experience necessary (but you need to be in shape enough). If we don't have volunteers, we'll ensure 2-3 large vehicles driven by Bev and mentors, no problem.

RATES & FINANCIAL POLICIES

CAMP FEES

In our sliding scale, **choose an amount that reflects your income (& assets) and your charitable heart**, sharing the gift of nature connection camp with kids whose families might otherwise feel they couldn't do. If you need help even paying even the lowest figure below, please ask and it's possible we may be able to give you a combination of scholarship & work trade, depending on how many parents pay the higher figure. If we receive over a certain amount, we'll allocate the remainder to scholarships. Please don't turn away from Earth Camp for any guilt of not "paying enough". You have my trust and support that everyone will just do **what's right** for their family. If you want more guidelines, suggestions, or have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. It's all confidential, of course.

For Day Camp: \$375 to 500 per week BUT if you carpool everyday, you can earn **\$75 rebate!!!**
(Making camp rate for those carpooling **\$300-425**.)

For Backpack Trip: \$725 to \$975 per week

Note: this includes 3 days of food, camping, transportation, and any loaner equipment possible.

Please choose an amount that truly reflects your income/assets and your charitable heart, helping others to afford to go to camp. We usually offer a couple partial scholarships IF we get enough generosity on the sliding scale. Other ways to donate to scholarships are by donating carpool rebates. Ask family and friends even to donate (grandma could pay an extra \$100?).

CARPOOL REBATE

For day camp, we are offering \$15/day (or \$7.50 each way) rebates for every enrolled camper that arrives in or is picked up with another enrolled camper. So if you carpool, our fees are greatly reduced this year. We'll email a roster of everyone opting in on registration form for giving contact info to help organize carpools. Networking on the 1st day is also encouraged. Rebate procedure: Fill in box on sign-in form each day if you carpooled. On Friday, Vanessa will issue rebate form you can fill out and turn in. Buzz will issue rebates by check sent to mailing address on registration form, by September 1st.

Though we're on almost 5 acres, our small camp is located at our home on a small narrow lane that we share with 2 other households. So carpooling is very, very important here to respect the neighbors and in keeping with our philosophy of contributing to a sustainable society. We hope, in addition to the economic incentive, you will carpool out of: **1) duty to the planet, 2) compassion for our neighbors (and therefore us), 3) wanting to contribute to safety of our parking lot, 4) helping dropoff & pickup to flow smoothly and safely, 5) building community, 6) helping our kids learn to be brave, friendly, and open to new situations, and 7) making new friends.**

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Complete registration form. Be sure to indicate week(s) selected. If more than one child is enrolled, we will assume each child will attend each week selected. Please indicate on the form if otherwise.
2. For each week you are enrolling for, please choose the amount you will pay from the sliding scale. Make check, for full amount, payable to "Wildflowers Nature School".
3. Mail registration form and payment to:

Earth Camp
c/o Vanessa Eyen
435 Sequoia Lane
Sebastopol, CA 95472

SUBJECT TO SIGN-UP

In the rare case that there not enough children are signed up for a particular week, we reserve the right to cancel that week (with appropriate refund) or offer it at a higher rate or combine it with another camp week. If new dates do not work for you, you can cancel for full refund within 3 days of announcement of change of date. If there are less than 8 kids signed up for a session or day, we may drop to one mentor.

REFUNDS

All refunds (regardless of reason) will only be given on the following schedule:

More than 60 days notice: full refund.

30-60 days notice: 50% refund.

Less than 30 days notice: no refunds.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

There is no after camp care. All campers need to be picked up by 3:00. Late fees will be assessed for late pick-ups. If parents pick up their child more than 15 minutes late without previous arrangement, they may be billed \$10 every 10 minutes they are late. If it is not paid by Thursday of camp week, child cannot return on Friday until paid.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

This arrangement can be terminated or modified by the director if the safety or well-being of the other children or mentors are at risk from the child's behavior or if the parents do not uphold the responsibilities contained herein. In these cases, a refund of tuition will be given on a pro-rated basis.

DETAILS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

MENTORS (counselors/teachers)

Our Earth Camp Director for most years here, Jamie Malone is hiking the Appalachian Trail with her husband & 4 daughters under age 14 this year. (Wow!) We are soooooo excited to say that **Vanessa Eyen**, the founder of Earth Camp, many years ago, will be our Director for Weeks 2, 3, & 4 this year and our registrar for all weeks. Back on Laguna Farm, Vanessa ran a large vibrant very popular sustainability camp. She had an MA in Outdoor Education and has since attained her MFCC and is now the counselor at Credo. But alas, her sweet son is camp age and she is ready for a fun summer sharing nature again. There will be at least 2 and often 3 mentors working with the kids at all times. Owner Bev will be directing and leading the Alumni and Backpacking Weeks along with other mentors. Please see our website or facebook page for updates as we hire our mentors.

HOW TO SIGN UP

Please check the website to make sure there is space in the week you wish your children to attend. Call the camp director if you want to be sure. Then print out the registration form from the website, fill it out & mail it in with the fee (see above on "sliding scale") payable to "Wildflowers Nature School" to the address on the form. That's all it takes to reserve a spot for your child. If you can take care of all of the paperwork all at once, that's always best. But if not, you can mail it in later, up to 2 weeks before camp starts (then we'll start hounding you for the forms). There's a link on the website for all the forms. Please also submit a photocopy of the child's immunization records.

WAITLIST

Children will be enrolled on a first come, first served basis, with priority assigned to returning campers and alumni of Wildflowers Nature School, as well as balancing a camp week with ages and genders so everyone has a potential buddy. A waiting list will be kept for additional enrollment, following same priority. We will hold non-alumni applications for our Alumni Week for 2 weeks to give alumni priority. Alumni will be in priority of: 1) school-year programs (1.preschool, 2.homeschool, 3.scouts), then 2) previous camp attendance. The reason we value alumni so much is because of our strong value of long-term mentoring.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURE

Drop-off is at 9am. See above for pick-up times. Please NEVER drop off or pick up a child without signing in or out. Please remind anyone else who is driving to sign in & out. **Visual or verbal acknowledgement by a staff member is required upon delivery of children.** Process: Sign child in on the sign-in sheet, read wipe-off board for important messages for the day, put daypack with lunch & water in it on tarp, and deliver children to us. **NOTE:** Children can only go home with people who are listed on the "Identification and Emergency Information" form. In the event of an emergency, people will be contacted in the order in which you list them on the form. If your child is being picked up by someone other than parent or carpool parent, please let us know that he/she is to be picked up by one of these authorized people for that specific day. Appropriate car seats are required by everyone driving a child that still legally requires one.

READINESS

All children must be able to hike up a steep hill on a hot day without assistance. All children must be able to use toilet by themselves. If you believe your child may experience separation anxiety or have toileting accidents or other stress behaviors, please call the Director to discuss a plan. Please do this at least 30 days before camp if possible, so that if we decide together that your child is not ready for camp, we can offer the space to someone else. Also, that way we can include the information at a staff mtg (confidential of course), so that all mentors are able to assist your child as best as possible.

ABSENCES

All parents must let us know if your child will be absent on that day. Please send a text to Director (see # below).

PARKING

Wildflowers is located on a private drive that is shared with 2 other households. PLEASE, for this program to continue, it is imperative that everyone give the neighbors the utmost respect by driving slowly and only parking in the driveway area of the school. Please pull as far in as possible to allow for the other cars to park in our driveway. Please don't park along the shared driveway. Carpooling is strongly encouraged and financially rewarded. Apples, grapes, prickly pear & raspberries on driveway belong to neighbors. Most importantly, be VERY CAREFUL pulling in & out, as children are hard to see. Keep children close to you when walking so that they are safe at pick-up & drop-off times. IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF EARTH CAMP THAT YOU DRIVE SLOWLY & RESPECTFULLY DOWN THE DRIVEWAY! If there are repeated infractions of this rule, we may not allow your child to register for Earth Camp in the future.

COMMUNICATION

If you need to get hold of us during the day, text is best. See bottom of handbook for phone #'s of directors and owner. If you don't have text capabilities then do call, but you may have to call a few of us, as we don't usually answer phone when we're with kids. Personal info that might be needed on some days, such as whether a child didn't eat breakfast, had a "melt-down", stayed up very late the night before, etc. is best communicated verbally with us. If anything major occurs (such as divorce, death in the family, etc.), please try to contact us the day before. It can be hard to pay full attention when parents are coming & going at drop-off time. If you have a child with a specific concern, let's make a plan together ahead. Every child is different. Together, we can make a plan that works for you and your child. On the backpack, we'll assign someone not on the backpack to be our point person for info. (For girls backpack, probably Farmer Buzz (Mark Buswell) 707-481-2710.

FOOD & WATER PROVIDED BY FAMILIES

Each child should have, in their daypack, a **quart** water bottle, that will not drip when on its side, and have their name on the bottom AND top in permanent marker. Your child should be able to open it and close it easily. We'll have a large thermos of water for refills, but sometimes we'll be out on the land, so please send your child with a large enough bottle (quart). Please send your child with a snack and a nutritious lunch each day. With all the activities we do, your child's body will need all the energy it can get, so please **pack more food** than you would guess he or she would need. Items with sugar are not appropriate for sustained energy as they cause blood sugar to spike & dip (& socially, sugar becomes a distractive issue here). Campers should bring their lunches in non-disposable containers that are re-usable and have no advertisements or licensed characters or intense graphics on them (baskets, boxes, cloth bags, zip-arounds, etc.). On occasion, if it's part of the curriculum, we may serve food to the kids. Commonly, they try the goat milk and produce they harvest. There's a fair amount of grazing on foods growing here, wild and cultivated. We teach them which foods they can graze on here and what to be careful to avoid. If your child has food sensitivities, please note that on form. For severe sensitivities, please also speak live to the director.

SUSTAINABLE EATING

From the most local of our environments (our bodies) to the most global, the most sustainable food system thrives on fresh, locally produced foods. Please try to send zero waste lunches. Any waste coming to camp with child will go home with child. Feel free to ask for or consult the “Wildflowers Food Policy” for additional program philosophies (can be found at www.wildflowerkids.org).

CLOTHING

This is an outdoor program. It is absolutely imperative that you provide the proper clothing, as we will be sure your child is protected from the elements. We spend all of our time outside every day, rain or shine, freezing or blazing. We are outside the whole day. Sometimes we have mud play or messy art. Please have your child either wear or bring in his/her backpack: 1) 2 warm layers (like a long sleeve shirt & a sweatshirt for instance), 2) if there’s fog arrive in boots and rainpants are recommended, 3) if chance of rain, waterproof raincoat and rainpants and boots are mandatory, 3) shorts & t-shirt or summer dress, 5) swimsuit, 6) sunhat, and 7) one full change of clothes. Yes, EVERY day they need clothes for both cool & hot weather. We recommend closed toe shoes. On hot days, you could put sandals in the backpack for later. Bare feet are allowed here, but be sure they have some shoes in case we go crawling in berry bushes, etc. Layering clothing is great, as temperatures can range greatly from the 50’s to the 90’s. We will assume that if you want sunscreen on your child, you will do so before dropping him/her off, as we are not allowed to apply it. Please label everything they bring to camp and check the lost & found at least on Friday!

FORMS

The following forms must be kept on file and parent is responsible for updating when necessary: 1. Registration Form, 2. Contract & Waiver (which references Calendar & this document), 3. Identification and Emergency Information, 4. Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment, 5. Health & Safety Information, 6. Immunization Record (blue card) – we fill out so just submit immunization records. 7. Acknowledgement of receipt of: “Notification of Parents’ Rights”, “Caregiver Background Check Process,” and “Consumer Awareness Information.” We’re also including an optional form for Medication Permission. It would be a good idea in an extreme possible life or death reaction to have permission to give a child’s dose of Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) if they go into an anaphylactic reaction to something. We’ll only administer what is authorized by parents. I suggest on the state form for Medication Permission that you write in “Children’s Acetaminophen”; “Arnica” (homeopathic – calms owies); “Diphenhydramine”; “Bactine” & “sunscreen”. Especially on the backpacks!

ILLNESS

If a child has had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours before a camp morning, please don’t bring them to camp: fever, vomiting, upset stomach, stomach ache, sore throat, diarrhea, skin problems, body aches, sneezing, coughing, eye/ nose drainage or any symptom that might indicate they are coming down with something. For your children & other’s, please allow them having a **full day of wellness before returning**. If child shows signs of illness here, we will call his/her parents to come pick up their child. If there has been anything contagious recently in your house, please inform us (flu, lice, etc.). **DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATION WITH YOUR CHILD, INCLUDING VITAMINS, HERBS, HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES, & for kids under 7, sunscreen.** If medication is necessary for your child, there is a state form to fill out before we are allowed to administer it. See “Forms” above.

TICKS

Of course, a camp with a focus on nature is going to spend time in wild natural areas. Please check your child EVERY SINGLE DAY when your child returns home. Long pants with tick repellent on them add protection. Deer ticks are extremely small. Ask us for a “tick card” if you aren’t positive how to ID them. If you find a tick, take it to Sonoma County Health Dept for test and let us know results, please. If it bit your child (or you), see a Dr. versed in Lyme Disease, as most family practitioners do not understand the disease.

TOYS FROM HOME

To avoid conflicts, we ask that ALL toys and electronics stay home. Items from the natural world can be donated or loaned to our Nature Shelves/Table at any time and/or shared in circle. Earth Camp is not responsible for any lost or broken items and may temporarily confiscate any items that become an issue.

CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The greatest block to today's children connecting to nature are electronic devices. None are allowed here at any time, whether off & in the backpack or not. If there is an extenuating circumstance where you need your child to keep a cell phone (change in pickup, etc.), or they have belongings that include a device going with them somewhere else after camp, please make arrangements with one of the mentors.

TV & VIDEO/COMPUTER GAMES

We request families to be careful about selecting quality & quantity of media for children in the days prior to & during camp. Children DO act out what they see in the media, which *does affect other children*. Shows of real animals are the exception, as that's often the only way to see many of the animals we discuss and track.

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR

We expect all children to treat staff and other children with respect, honesty and courtesy. Any behavior which endangers any child will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to the following: fighting or hitting or harming, teasing, threatening, the use of inappropriate language or frequent disruption. First offense receives a verbal warning. Second offense receives a discussion with the director and a phone call to parents. If we feel a child is creating a situation where he/she or other children are not safe (physically or emotionally), we'll institute a strict policy of sending the child home immediately after each infraction. Parents need to be available to pick up in these situations. If the behavior continues, a child may be dismissed from our program with the fee pro-rated.

VOLUNTEERING

Offers to volunteer, whether during camp to help with the children, or during non-camp hours to assist with projects here, are greatly appreciated. Kids NEED adults in their community to share the diversity of their experience. We love "Special guests" to lead a project or an elder to come share stories with the kids during "Elder Storytime". This is a great opportunity for someone in your child's (or your) life to come share with kids. The garden and nature space are a very important part of your child's program here and volunteers are most welcome. Parents are welcome also to attend community work days throughout the year, both to help create a flourishing environment for your child and to create a sense of community and stewardship of land for them.

LOCAL OR NATIONAL EMERGENCIES

We reserve the right to close camp for a period of time if the administration believes that it is necessary for the safety of the children or adherence to law. Since camp is in summer, most likely this would be for smoke. There have been 4 occasions in the past that we've needed to do that (all during schoolyear programs): 1) an outbreak of (possibly) swine flu, 2) local flooding & power outages, 3) unhealthy air quality due to smoke. These are considered circumstances beyond our control and we have no obligation in such emergency to stay open. But in such case we close, we would give refunds by the day. If we deem it's not necessary to close, but parent feels child should not come to camp for such emergency, no reimbursement will be given. Note: The Health Dept. has hinted that if there's a local outbreak of a disease that kids are vaccinated for, kids without that vaccine may not be allowed to attend our licensed program for a while. In that case, no reimbursement will be given, so take that into consideration in regards to your child's immunizations.

FOUND OBJECTS AT CAMP

Anything found on the property belongs to the school & owners, including but not limited to arrowheads and other historical artifacts, special rocks, etc. We do encourage nature collections by children so there will be plenty of natural objects they're allowed to take.

WORKING FARMS

Wildflowers is a working farm. We have gardens and chickens, and may have goats or turkeys or sheep. We also get to explore the wild land behind us due to generosity of a neighbor. Choosing to attend here is an acknowledgement and **acceptance of the inherent risk** of that and farm and wild land. Farm kids get used to the life cycle of animals. They may witness births or deaths. They may find dead animals if we find gophers in the traps or a chicken killed by a racoon. We also have a nature museum of pelts & frozen animals we show a few times. Kids also will know that *when they aren't here* we do sometimes kill our animals to eat them. Seeing where food comes from (both animal & plant) is so important. We'll touch on the benefits of eating food you know the origin of and eating meat that's raised humanely with love. If you're vegetarian, note that on Health form so we can verbally honor that with your child. We've accommodated (more like embraced!) raw foodists, vegans, paleos, and many other diets here beautifully.

CONTACT INFO

Please direct all email inquiries to: info@earthcamp.org

OR CALL:

- Earth Camp Director, Vanessa Eyen for registration questions for all 5 camps & info on July & August camps: (707) 888-3239.
- Earth Camp and Wildflowers Nature School Owner, "Farmer Buzz" (Mark Buswell) for questions on payment and carpool rebates: (707) 481-2710.
- Earth Camp and Wildflowers Nature School Owner, Bev Buswell for questions on Alumni Week 1 and backpacks: (707) 479-1052.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Rev. 3-17-19