



# TURTLE ISLAND PRESERVE

2683 Little Laurel Road • Boone, NC 28607 • (828) 265-2267

## Family Camp Orientation:

We are looking forward to sharing this special place with you. It will most likely be a new and unusual contrast to your regular, daily life. Your time here will be spent experiencing the outdoors, learning antiquated methods of survival, with hands-on involvement on our farm and nature preserve. You may have the opportunity to strike hot iron at our blacksmith shop, eat wild plants, or take a buggy ride with Eustace Conway. We would like everyone to enjoy it as much as possible. Therefore we offer the following information to prepare you and set some clear expectations.

Turtle Island Preserve is a 501c3 non-profit education center and a fully-operational, year-round, non-electrical, Appalachian Farmstead founded in 1987 by renowned naturalist Eustace Conway. We live and work as many folks in this region did 100 years ago – hunting and growing food, raising livestock, and using an outhouse instead of a modern bathroom. We host summer youth camps, school field trips, college work-service learning projects, adult workshops, scout excursions, and numerous other events dealing with traditional living and a close relationship to the natural world. To learn more about our unique nature preserve and environmental education center, our founder, services, and mission please explore our website - [turtleislandpreserve.org](http://turtleislandpreserve.org).

Living Quarters: You will camp outside as a group, in one of our Adirondack-style cabins/shelters or possibly a tipi. You will fall asleep listening to the rushing waters of our streams and feel the breeze on your cheeks. Pay close attention to the "What to Bring" list; a great guide for your comfort and needs while staying at "your home away from home."

**\*\*Please label everything you pack so it is easily identifiable to you, your child & our staff.\*\***

Kitchen: Meals are announced by the blowing of a large conch shell, and eaten community-style in our outdoor kitchen "Nacho-Mamma's Cafe." Turtle Island is renowned for its excellent meals! Campers and staff alike often brag about how delicious the food is. We serve well-balanced meals of tasty heath food fare. We use fresh, healthy ingredients and stay away from processed foods. All you can eat, nutritious, well-balanced meals are a tradition at Turtle Island Preserve. There should be no additional food brought to camp. Please indicate dietary restrictions/needs and or food allergies on your medical form. Our delicious and nutritious food is cooked exclusively over wood fire and our water is heated the same way. You might have the chance to pick food from our gardens, or learn how to milk a goat. Since we are actively engaged in acquiring and growing our own food we consider it sacred, so we try very hard not to waste it. Please try to take only what you can eat, you can always come back for an extra helping, but uneaten food on your plate means we'll have to take good people-food and put it in our compost pile. Our delicious water comes from deep inside our Mountain well. Please keep your water bottle full of it, and drink often. Staying hydrated is very important. There are designated water fill up stations in camp. *DO NOT drink water directly from the streams – EVER!* The dining area is for eating, once you have finished eating, cleaned up and stowed your utensils, please go to the playground area. Campers "hanging-out" in the kitchen will promptly be put to work.

Restrooms: We have two types of outhouses at the Preserve, sitting & squatting. You can choose where to go. You may also notice an outhouse with a sawdust bucket. Most humans pass about 7 lbs of nitrogen each year through their urine, and nitrogen really helps crops grow. We collect the urinate in sawdust buckets and then add that to our compost heap. (Please do not poop in the sawdust buckets.) Our outhouses are stocked with toilet paper and receptacles for feminine needs. Hand washing stations are set up throughout camp so you can always wash up after a trip to the outhouse and before entering the kitchen.

Cleanliness: Keeping clean helps us stay comfortable and safe. A messy floor leads to nasty tripping hazards in the night and edible items in cabins attract marauding wild animals from the forest. Keeping your sleeping area neat and rolled up each morning will keep your bed dry and cozy. Do not litter! We will also make sure that everyone has the opportunity and skills to practice good hygiene without having a negative impact on the forest. Each meal is preceded by a thorough hand washing with soap and water. Each night ends with a good tooth washing – mountain style.

(OVER)

...Orientation Continued

Danger: Imagine that the forest is a friend you can get to know – a good, peaceful place. There are some dangers like snakes, poison ivy, yellow jackets, etc. but our staff will teach you how to learn about and deal with them. Leaving them alone and running away if you encounter them are good first measures. Ignorance and fear are the most dangerous things humans encounter. So we'd like to empower you and teach you how to be safe. Fire and sharp tools are examples of dangerous things we rely on here. With respect and caution you will be able to learn to use these tools while staying out of harm's way. Your TIP leaders will cover fire, knife & blade safety when you arrive. All sharp implements will not be taken out before that time. Knives out at inappropriate times will be confiscated.

Safety: is always top priority at camp. Most of our staff have been trained in first aid. There will be a first aid kit at each campsite and activity area, as well as the "mother first aid kit" in the kitchen. The Watauga County Hospital, in nearby Boone, serves as our professional medical service should a serious accident occur. Turtle Island will carry no health or accident insurance for you so, you will need to give us your insurance policy number and permission to seek professional medical attention in the event of injury. Staying out of restricted areas and using the buddy system are part of your Turtle Island responsibilities. Do not approach an animal without a Turtle Island senior staff member's direction and make sure your own leaders know where you are at all times. Listening to and following instructions will keep everyone happy and safe. Remember to carry your small flashlight, raincoat & water bottle in your day pack at all times. Rain showers show up out of nowhere around here, so it's good to be prepared. Keeping dry is crucial, not only for comfort but for safety from problems such as hypothermia. Keep shoes and clothes dry, if they do get wet, hang them and put dry clothes on.

Appropriate Behavior: Trust and Respect are absolutely necessary. This means, no raids of any kind or "getting into" people's stuff – it will not be tolerated. Do not enter any building or residence without the invitation of a Staff member. Be kind and sensitive to others needs. NEVER try to scare someone, or react negatively to a new experience. Be polite. It is very different to be outside without walls and personal space. You must learn to understand the "tribal community" – ideas our Indian ancestors knew well.

Make the Most of it: You will get to do things at Turtle Island that you won't be able to experience anywhere else. Challenging yourself will be a daily opportunity. Please try to keep an open mind and a positive attitude to get the very most out of your time here. Good attitudes, role modeling and discipline are the entrusted responsibility of the adults in your group.

If you have questions, concerns, needs or comments, please call or email the Turtle Island Office.  
We look forward to sharing with you!



**Turtle Island Preserve is a Sequoyah family tradition founded in 1924**  
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