



Camper 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, and participating, hands-on with 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. We would like everyone to enjoy it as much as possible. Therefore we offer the following informational guidelines to prepare you and set some clear expectations.

We are 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 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 501c3 non-profit environmental education center, our founder, services, and mission, please just take a peek at our website - turtleislandpreserve.org.

Living Quarters: You will camp outside out 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."

Kitchen: Meals are announced by the blowing of a large conch shell, and eaten community-style in our outdoor kitchen. Our delicious and nutritious food is exclusively cooked over wood fire and our water is heated the same way. You might have the chance to pick food from our gardens, or learn about milking goats. 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 high-quality "people-food" and put it in our compost pile. The kitchen is an area for eating, once you have eaten and cleaned and put up your utensils, please go to the playground area. Campers "hanging-out" in the kitchen will promptly be put to work. 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.*

Bathroom: 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 urine in the sawdust buckets and then add that to our compost heap. (Please do not poop in the sawdust buckets – urine only!) Our outhouses are stocked with toilet paper and receptacles for feminine needs. Hand washing stations are nearby, so you can always wash up after a trip to the outhouse.

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)

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 these things and stay 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: Staying out of restricted areas and using the buddy system are part of your Turtle Island responsibilities. Do not approach an animal without Turtle Island's Staff direction and make sure your own group 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. Be kind and sensitive to others needs. Do not try to scare anyone, 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.

If you have questions, concerns, needs or comments, please call or email the Turtle Island Office. We also have an extensive photo gallery on our website of past camping trips for you to get a behind-the-scenes look at what your trip might be like. We look forward to sharing with you!

