

Deertrails Naturalist Program Clearwater 2021

“If this is your land, where are your stories?” Gitksan elder

This week-long workshop invites deep immersion in the practice of place-based living. Set in the beautiful Upper Clearwater Valley near Wells Gray Provincial Park, it's designed for students, teachers, artists, scientists, novelists, poets, philosophers, political activists – people seeking to walk themselves back from our culture's deepening disconnect from the living world, people seeking to build resilience into their lives and lifestyle choices.

Connection to place arises from the stories we tell, not least about place itself. Whether we're peering in at the edge of wilderness or putzing about in our back yards, place-based narratives draw sustenance from the contemplation of living form and biologic process. Bird study, plant lore, fungal foray, geologic pondering, ecological discovery: these are all forms of apprenticeship that, taken together, can lead us home.

The Clearwater session of the Deertrails Naturalist Program is hosted by The Land Conservancy of B.C. and the Wells Gray Wilderness Society. Instructors this year are **Briony Penn** (author and artist), **Lyn Baldwin** (ecologist and artist), **Maleea Acker** (poet and teacher) and **Trevor Goward** (lichenologist and place-based naturalist), with special guest instructor **Nancy Turner** (ethnobiologist and botanist). **Nancy Flood** (ornithologist and ecologist) will make a cameo appearance.

Throughout the workshop, naturalist-led hikes will carry us ever deeper into a valley transitioning to autumn. We'll attend to the small uprisings of mushrooms, the blushing of leaves, the cool exhalations of blue forest shadow. We'll follow the paths of the deer, pausing awhile in their places of sanctuary and places of power. We'll also speak of indigenous ways: the relationships of utility and respect forged by the first peoples with the trees, shrubs, and flowers that inhabit this valley.

Above all, this workshop is designed to help participants *learn how to learn* about place. We'll harness direct experience of the natural world as a means of reimagining our

place within it. Availing ourselves of the scientific and artistic tools of natural history and the deep insights of ecocriticism, we'll give voice to our experiences through guided readings, memory maps, field journal entries and drawings, as well as through contemplative writing pieces and oral presentations.

Evenings, we'll share meals, take in a lecture, huddle around the campfire, share music, poetry, readings, and talk, allowing our conversations to run far and deep. We'll also attend to the night sky with its stars and lights and small peepings of birds winging by overhead.

On the final evening of our workshop, Nancy Turner will preside over a lichen-cake pit cook – an indigenous practice endemic to southern inland British Columbia and adjacent portions of the Pacific Northwest.

As a special offering, Trevor will introduce participants to his “Naturalist of the Middle Way” teachings.

Dates: August 30 to September 6, 2021

Program Fee: \$695 (includes meals and accommodation)

Accommodation: Included in the Program Fee is the cost for shared accommodation in field station cabins at Thompson Rivers University Wells Gray Wilderness Centre. For other accommodations in the Upper Clearwater Valley, please see www.wellsgraypark.info and www.wellsgray.ca. Tent and vehicle camping is available at no additional cost.

Application Deadline: 11:59 p.m. on Monday, May 3, 2021. Applicants will be informed regarding the success of their applications in mid-May.

For more information please contact:

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