



ecosystem restoration
camps

HANDBOOK

**CAMP EMBERCOMBE
DEVON, ENGLAND**



Dear Camper,

We live in interesting times. We can see the many ways in which vast numbers of people are suffering in many parts of the world.

We can see materialism, waste, pollution, and war. We can also understand that every person and every living thing is endangered by human induced climate change. It has become impossible for us to ignore what is happening. We have been called to act for the benefit of all who are alive and future generations.

As individuals, no matter how hard we work, it is not possible to consider restoring the Earth ... but together we are an amazing force and if we so choose we can restore all degraded landscapes wherever they are on the Earth. Restoration needs to be at the centre of human intention. When we collaboratively study how to restore the Earth our lives have real meaning. When we live our lives restoring the Earth, we know we are doing what we can to redress many of the mistakes of the past and ensure that future generations will enjoy a fully functional Earth.

You are at the heart of this initiative. Congratulations and thank you for choosing to become a camper with Ecosystem Restoration Camps to help restore paradise on earth. We want you to have the best experience restoring with us. We created this handbook to answer most of your questions. Of course, if you need any more information, contact one of our staff and they will be more than happy to assist you.



Let's go camping and restore the earth!

John D. Liu



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THE HISTORY OF EMBERCOMBE

Embercombe is a 20-year-old education and retreat centre nestled in a wooded valley on the edge of wild Dartmoor, in the South West of England. We deliver inspiring and innovative residential programmes on leadership, youth mentoring, nature connection and environmental education and we have a long history of hosting camps and events that inspire and support people to make changes in their lives and the world. It is a place to make and foster connections with nature, each other and our own purpose.

And now, Embercombe is embarking on a new and exciting trajectory: We are exploring how to rewild and regenerate our 50-acre site whilst continuing to use it as a centre for personal and social regeneration and reaching out to other landowners around us to do the same. What does this look like? How will it work? How can land be rewilded with people interwoven, rather than removed? And how can we use this experiment to teach people how to do rewilding themselves?

INTRODUCTION TO THE CAMP

The Vision

Our aim is to become a UK-leading centre for exploring the rewilding and regeneration of people and places. Our camps are a wonderful way to become involved at an early stage in the practical and philosophical evolution of a landscape and we hope that our campers will leave inspired and empowered to work and advocate for rewilding and restoration in their own places.

How we will make it happen

Embercombe will be hosting this new and very special series of Rewilding Camps to explore the link between human and ecological communities and how best to contribute to a new regenerative culture together, one which benefits both people and planet. The purpose of this collaboration is to rewild the Embercombe valley and become a pioneering site of inspiration in the South West of the UK and for people to be involved in the transformation of the land through a series of practical

learning camps to match the seasons, weaving together the strands of how to go about rewilding the land as well as rewilding the self.



CAMP ACTIVITIES

This is a rare opportunity to get involved in the early stage of exploring rewilding the 50-acre Embercombe site, in a mosaic habitat of woodland, orchards, meadow, whilst we share, explore and experience the role of people, of ourselves, in rewilding and restoration activities.

Each camp experience will offer opportunities to learn and share old and new ideas about how to rewild our land, our society and ourselves. They combine practical work and citizen science on the land, with teaching, discussion, and planning sessions with rewilding experts. Alongside practical rewilding work, the week will also include ample opportunity for inner work, nature connection, bushcraft and foraging activities, ceremony, story, and sharing around the fire.

Each camp will give you the chance to get your hands in the soil and get to grips with what is needed to make a rewilding project happen. Together we will think about and implement the practical elements of land rewilding – from baseline survey to planning and design, to conservation practices, species introductions, tree planting, to wild food growing and harvesting and eating. This is also an opportunity to sit together around the fire or spend time alone in a beautiful spot in our 50-acre wooded valley, to reflect on what ‘wilding’ means to you, and to society at this time – to consider, remember and restore your relationship with the rest of nature.

In our downtime you can enjoy staying in a simple, ‘back-to-nature’ yurt village or camp site, eating delicious plant-based organic food cooked by our on-site chefs, this is a chance to work, connect and relax. There will be time to sit around the fire, take wild swims in the lake, walk in the woods, and spend time, both together and alone, in reflection and rest.

Refer to the schedules for each camp experience for a detailed run down of the activities.



CAMP GOALS

As the first camp in the UK we are looking forward to welcoming people from around the world to go on a rewilding journey together. As with all ecosystem restoration camps, we have created these practical learning experiences to give everyday people the chance to get involved in a rewilding project from its very inception and learn the skills needed to create your own rewilding project yourself. Other rewilding projects and organisations tend to be inaccessible, so it is difficult to gain the learning experience necessary to implement your own rewilding project.

What also makes these camps unique is the multidisciplinary and holistic approach that looks at wilding the soil, the soul and our society. Each of these three themes will be woven into the experiences so that we can understand the full picture.

Our intention is for Embercombe's 50-acre valley to become a demonstration site for other landowners in the region. Now is your chance to be a part of this exciting development and become a key player in this transformation.

Who is needed

Anyone who is interested in rewilding and eco-restoration both of the land and of us, as people, both collectively and as individuals. We are looking for people who are interested in practical work, inspired by new ideas, willing to contribute and share in community activities and are able to contribute financially to pay the teachers and other staff members who are putting on this experience for you.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT CAMP EMBERCOMBE

THE CLIMATE

There will be a series of four camps per year, one for each season so that weather will depend on what camp you attend at what time of the year. In Devon, the summers are long, comfortable, and partly cloudy and the winters are freezing, snowy, windy, and mostly cloudy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from -2°C to 35°C in the extremes, but it is usually between 5°C and 25°C.

THE ACCOMMODATION

There are a range of accommodation options available, depending on your budget! You can stay in one of our two beautiful yurt villages, or you can bring your own camping gear and camp out under the stars. Each yurt is furnished with comfortable beds and a wood-fired stove. Accommodation will be shared or single occupancy depending on COVID policy, or camping options where you can bring your own tent. Embercombe has a policy of saving water and harvesting waste for use on the land. There are beautiful compost loos located around the site and in the yurt villages. Hot showers and flushing toilets are also available in the main Centre Fire building.

Sustainability and consumption are issues we hold close to our hearts here at Embercombe. When using the facilities onsite please be mindful of the energy you consume. This includes not having over-sized fires and using compost toilets instead of the flush toilets. We rely on solar power for some of our hot water so please try to avoid long showers and be considerate of the resources you are leaving for the next person.

THE FOOD

All our meals are prepared from scratch in our famous plant-based kitchen using many ingredients from local organic farms and small producers. Special diets are

adeptly catered for. Please indicate if you require this on your booking form. All meals are served from outside our communal dining yurt. Precautionary measures will be put in place to ensure that food is served and eaten in a sanitary and hygienic fashion.



THE PLACE

We have a large group room for when we gather for sharing, dancing, music, and have lots of outside structures and spaces with fire pits. There is even a stone circle for holding ceremonies, and our 50-acre site has a mixture of old growth woodland, pastures and gardens to explore as well as a lake to swim and relax in.

WHAT TO BRING

- Torch (Head torches are really useful)
- A towel
- A clock, preferably not on a mobile phone
- Clothing & boots suitable for the outdoors
- Thermals and thick socks for the colder times of the year
- Waterproof coat, trousers and wellies
- Ear-plugs (in case your neighbour snores)
- Hot water bottle (if you want – for colder times of the year)
- Personal toiletries (natural soaps)
- Work boots /comfortable
- Sun hat, sun-cream and sunglasses for summer/autumn camps
- Water bottle
- Mosquito repellent



THE RESTORATION/REHABILITATION WORK

Embercombe is a little different from other restoration camps in the network as it is exploring rewilding and regeneration as opposed to more conventional restoration work on highly degraded land. What Embercombe needs to kick start its regeneration is less reliant on a lot of human intervention but is more likely to spring back to life by controlling the introduction and removal of different species of fauna that act as proxies for wild animals.

There will be tasks that need lots of hands to support the regeneration of the land every now and again, such as tracking and monitoring changes to the land via data collection, laying and fixing fencing, and clearing invasive species and vegetation that is blocking the land from being able to return to its healthiest state.



HOW TO GET THERE

Embercombe is 20 minutes away from Exeter, in Devon UK. The exact address is:

Embercombe
Higher Ashton
Exeter
EX6 7QQ

By train

Exeter St David's is the closest station to us which serves most of the UK. It's approximately 7 miles from Embercombe. There is a taxi rank outside or you can walk to Exeter Central Bus Station which is approximately a 1.5 mile walk into town. Minibus pickup and drop off is available from the train station for some programmes costing £6 each way. You can reserve a seat online when booking your place.

By bus

There is a 360 Dartline bus service from the Central Bus Station in Exeter which stops 1.3 miles from Embercombe. Look for route name Exeter-Dunchideock-Bridford and get off the bus at the Belvedere Castle stop. On leaving the bus, continue along the top road. After 400 yards you'll reach the Belvedere Castle entrance on your left. Opposite, there is a little road going down to the right, signposted Trusham and Ashton. Follow this road for approximately 20 minutes until you reach Embercombe's main gate on the right.

By bicycle

From Exeter St. Davids:

- * Come out of the station and turn right onto Bonhay Rd (A377)
- * Turn right onto Alphington St (still A377) following signs to Okehampton (A30)
- * Landmarks: B&Q on left then Sainsbury's on right

- * Take 2nd exit at roundabout following signs to Ide and Okehampton (A30)
- * Go straight through the village of Ide and up the hill
- * Continue straight for 3.5 miles – through Dunchideock and past the Post Office
- * Take the next sharp right turn after the Holden Bellevedere (a tall white tower on the left) – the turning is called Holden Gate and marked towards Ashton and Trusham
- * Follow road for 1.5 miles – there is a yellow AA sign on the left, Embercombe is on the right

By taxi

Taxis are plentiful at Exeter St David's and Newton Abbott and do not need to be pre-ordered. Taxis cost approximately £20 – £25. Eco-Cars run a service from Exeter St David's with a hybrid electric vehicle (01392 259880).



ON ARRIVAL

When you arrive and see the breath-taking view please don't forget to close the gate. The car park is down the drive away and is the first turning on the right. Please keep your speed to 5 mph as there may be children and animals crossing.

Leave the car park at the furthestmost end and the first building you pass is the Dining Yurt on your right. Our man offices are situated in the timber clad building after this. Please sign in at the office and familiarise yourself with the emergency information and safety guides displayed in the lobby. All visitors have a personal responsibility to use the site safely.

If you are staying for an event, please be aware our site is wild in places and appropriate clothing is essential. We encourage you to bring a torch, walking boots/wellies/waterproof footwear and a waterproof jacket to ensure your safety and comfort whilst you are here.

Due to the muddy nature of our site, in each of our meeting spaces we ask people to remove their shoes, so if you suffer from circulatory problems or cold feet, we advise you bring warm socks or slippers!

Embercombe is a busy site enjoyed by many different groups, on occasion more than one group will be present. Please be sensitive to this by using the site in a respectful way that does not spoil the experience for others.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to welcoming you onsite!



ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Ecosystem Restoration Camps

Ecosystem Restoration Camps is a global movement of people creating an abundant earth, that was founded by John D Liu and team in 2017. The ERC is a movement that empowers local people to repair broken ecosystems together and, in doing so, provide humanity with hope and a better future. There are now 39 camps around the world that are all working together like a mycelial network of mutual support.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND INSURANCE

When you apply to attend a programme at Camp Embercombe you acknowledge that you and you alone are responsible for your personal well-being and safety. This means if an activity is causing discomfort or pain it is up to you to do what you need to care for yourself. All Campers are strongly encouraged to have personal health/accident insurance or travel insurance valid for our region. We adhere to the highest level of safety protocols and employ proper personal protection equipment for all activities. A safety briefing will be given at the 1st day orientation. Medical services if required are a 20-minute drive from the site, in Exeter.

We encourage all campers to read through the Campers Agreement, which is a contract between the Camp and the Camper as to how your relationship will work and the agreements that you will uphold for one another during your stay. You can find the campers agreement on our website. You will be asked to sign the agreement upon arrival at the camp. If you choose to leave the camp for a walk or trip to town we request you notify one of the Camp Staff members.

We recommend having a mobile phone with our contact numbers with you while offsite in the event you require assistance. We encourage all campers to arrive in a state of wellness! If for some reason you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, cold,

flu, or any potentially communicable illness immediately prior to arriving at Camp Embercombe, we ask that you postpone your experience until you are well.

Your tuition will be credited to a future event or can be donated to Embercombe.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any further questions about the facilities at Camp Embercombe, please email cindy@embercombe.org

If you have questions about the learning programme, please email ashleigh@ecosystemrestorationcamps.org

