



Dear Family Camp Participant(s),

As the time draws near for us to gather for Farm & Wilderness Family Camp, we want to share with you a few thoughts and some information on the systems that help us quickly build a thriving community. We've found that having a chance to mull this over ahead of time gives Family Campers a better understanding of how Family Camp functions. The key is that **everyone needs to take a few minutes to read (or be read relevant parts of) this letter.**

Whether over a meal, in a hammock, or as a bedtime story, read it with a sense of merry delight, highlighter in hand, "leaving no part untouched." We count on folks to come to camp mostly knowing what's on these pages so that together we can get Family Camp off to a great start. Please bring this letter with you to camp as a resource. It will help us keep announcements shorter and sweeter and may help with some of the questions you may have during camp.

There are bound to be questions about Family Camp that this handy packet of information cannot answer for you, particularly for those of you that are new to Family Camp. Please don't hesitate to ask questions and to ask a lot. If you have questions before camp about the program, you can address them to John Porcino and Marcos Levy, Family Camp's co-directors (contact information at the end of this letter). They will both be available on and off until the day before camp, at which time they will be on site at (802) 422-7584. Returning Family Campers can also help with questions during the week. Most times the spirited, kind-hearted folks that come to Family Camp are delighted to help.

If your plans change and you choose not to attend Family Camp, please alert the admissions office as soon as possible so that families on the waitlist can be admitted into Family Camp. (see REFUND POLICY at the end of this letter)

THE NITTY GRITTY

Family Camp takes place at beautiful **Firefly Song (FS)** *formerly known as IB*.

- **Arrival time:** It is essential that all families arrive between 2pm and 4:30pm on **SATURDAY, August 16th**. There will be a 1st of two welcome stations set up before you enter FS to hand in any other forms needed. New families are strongly encouraged to arrive at 2PM for orientation. Our first meal and opening circle will be at 5pm.
- **Departure:** After breakfast, Clean-O-Rama and last Silent Meeting on **FRIDAY, August 22nd**. (About 11:30 am).
- **Where:** Follow the directions to Farm & Wilderness in Plymouth VT. Enter Farm & Wilderness Rd from route 100 at the main entrance. The entrance will be signed "Family Camp, Enter Here". Trundle slowly along that road.

There will be the 1st of two welcome stations. After that station, continue checking out the sights and sounds along the F&W road, 'til you reach the "Cracker Barrel" (a little building near the road at the center of FS Camp). Once there, Family Camp staff will greet you and orient you to your cabin, so you can settle in. Long term parking is near the main Farm & Wilderness entrance.

You can find driving directions to the FS camps at this link
<https://www.farmandwilderness.org/families/information#directions>

Or Google Maps <https://goo.gl/maps/n8Uoqiuj61u>

Please share these directions with other adults in your group if you are travelling separately.

- **Unloading:** When you arrive, we'll direct you as close to your cabin as possible. We ask that instead of making multiple trips from your car, you unload the car all at once, and then drive your car back down to the main road. This will allow others to use the few spaces close to the cabins.
- **Parking:** Once you are settled into your cabin, we ask that you park your car at the Long-Term parking area called "the Gravel Pit," about a mile away, at the other end of the camps. It's a great quiet-dirt-road-ramble back past The Barn, Timberlake, and Tamarack Farm camps. You may also catch a ride back with the camp van at 4pm and 5:30pm Saturday, and again at 7:30am Friday morning. We request that you park your car at the Gravel Pit by Sunday breakfast. If you drive over before those times and start to walk back, we'll pick you up along the road. It's been wonderful for most of us to go the week without getting into our cars!
- **How cabins are assigned:** Depending on enrollment, our larger cabins (which sleep approximately 12) may be shared between 2 families if numbers and space allow. What a great way to get to know new folks or spend time catching up with old friends!

Here's what to expect:

- ✓ Cabins may be shared with 1 other family if numbers and space allow. If you are registering with another family and would like to share a cabin with them, please let us know.
- ✓ Families with children aged three and younger will be placed, if possible, in one of the cabins that have 4 walls (some will require that you bring "stair gate" for the door).
- ✓ Whenever possible, families with children aged up to eight years of age will be placed in cabins closer to the FS main lodge.
- ✓ Some of the long-time Family Camp families request and, when possible, remain in a cabin they've enjoyed for years.
- ✓ Cabins are rustic and unplugged (no electricity) in nature and typically have one side open to the beautiful outdoors! Be sure to bring a flashlight.

It can be quite a juggling act to find everyone the perfect place. To the extent possible we will do our very best to honor requests. We can guarantee that each family will enjoy a lovely, rustic cabin on a stunning Vermont hillside, no more than 500 meters from a beautiful mountain lake.

THE PROGRAM

The real magic of Family Camp comes as we creatively unfold the community together. Together we will be building the joy and sharing the bounties. Together we will be taking care of life's daily tasks. Camp is at its best, like a beautiful tapestry of hands - hands that are full of spirit and energy, hands that are kind, working, playful, dancing hands.

- **Community Chores (we call these “asanas” at Family Camp).** Asanas are a wonderful way to show your love of the community. They include helping our cooks prepare meals, cleaning the lodge, washing pots and more. We ask that each person aged 15 and older sign up for approximately 4 to 5(1 a day) asanas and 1 "social" asana during the week of Family Camp. Many younger campers have shown great spirit by taking full or partial shares in the asanas. Campers under age 15 are asked to sign up for asanas labeled "youth." Part of the spirit we strive to build counts on each person taking full responsibility for these tasks. **The whole community benefits from your willing and reliable participation.** In bringing positive, joyful attitudes to this work we weave a wonderful tapestry of wholeness throughout the camp.

There will be an asana sign-up sheet in the lodge. Please sign up by the end of breakfast Tuesday morning. Once you are all signed up, it helps to create a reminder for yourself, so you are sure to show up for all your asanas!!

- **The Daily Schedule** (without the delicious specifics). We try to stay close to these times, but the schedule acts more as a guide.

8:00am Breakfast	2:30pm Afternoon Activity
9:15 Silent Meeting	5:45 Dinner
9:45 Morning Activity	7:15 All Camp Evening Activity
12:15pm Lunch	8:30 Good Night for Young People
1:30 Cabin/Quiet Hour	9:00 Organized activities and/or hang out for older kids & adults.

- **Daily Activities:** Family Camp is intentionally set up so that participants in combination with staff plan the days' activities and adventures together. To make this work well, we count on campers to scheme up and/or lead a new or favorite activity. Trying out things you've never done before is encouraged...some of our greatest successes have been the flops! In the past few years, there has been such an abundance of energy and ideas that we often don't have time to do all the wonderful activities that are offered. Remember to pack any "stuff" you need if you plan on leading an activity. We have a very limited supply budget but may be able to reimburse you for your materials if you check with Marcos and John ahead of time and

save your receipts. A town run can be made early in the week for supplies we don't already have. Just to get your mind churning, here's a sample of just a few activity possibilities:

- Crafts: Puppet-making, quilt-making, beading, woodworking, tie-dye, bookmaking, silk-screening, bubbles, kite making, weaving....
- Relaxation: Sunning, rocking on the porch, napping, reading...
- Farm and Garden: Harvest fresh veggies, pick berries, apples, milk cows...
- Gastronomy: Make pesto, pies, homemade fresh ice cream, bring a favorite recipe...
- Health and Wellness: Yoga, Tai Chi, massage, meditation, resting, hiking, long swims.
- Performing Arts: Singing, dancing, storytelling, skits, making music, reading aloud (Bring your instruments and favorite books!) ...
- Games: Ultimate Frisbee, soccer, New Games, magic, board games, adventure course...
- And more: feeding and caring for the farm animals, exploring on foot, canoeing, swimming, discussion topics, resource-sharing, evening slide shows...

You may want to bring some white cotton clothing or cloth if tie-dying activities are offered.

- **Evening Activities:** Each night there will be an all-camp activity for campers of all ages. After that activity, there will be about a ½ hour to allow parents to put their kids to bed or organize the evening's child-care arrangements. This short break will often be followed by additional organized or spontaneous activities for adults and older kids. With no laundry or homework to do, this also can be a wonderfully sweet time to simply hang out and unwind. Out of respect for those who are sleeping, we ask that half an hour after the all-camp activity ends that folks take noise louder than a whisper into the lodge. When walking around or between camps at night, please let the dominant noises be the crickets and barred owls!
- **Silent Meeting:** Over the years Silent Meeting has become one of the richest and most beloved traditions at Farm & Wilderness. It is a time for quiet reflection that helps set the pace for the day and builds a sense of community.

We strongly encourage people of all ages to join Meeting, even if at first it seems unfamiliar. It is most rewarding and powerful when FS rings out in a beautiful peal of quiet and calm during these 20-30 minutes each day. There is something magical in that breath of stillness that can only be felt. If you've never participated in silent meeting before, here's what to expect:

- Following tradition, meeting begins when the first people sit down in silence, so please enter and be seated quietly. Our meeting closes with greetings, comfort and caring check ins, and a song.
- Much of the meeting is passed in silence. When someone is moved to speak, they speak to the group. We try not to dialogue, though there might be a connection between one reflection and another.
- Some children, even very young ones, find that they love the silence of these meetings, while others will prefer to leave with a few pre-designated adults who will

stand up 5-15 minutes into Meeting and lead the children to the Cracker Barrel and facilitate them in a "Talking Meeting." At this meeting, you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and feelings when you hold the "talking stick," and listen to others as the stick gets passed around. The talking meeting will last until the Silent Meeting is over.

- There will be child-care in the Main Lodge for little ones who can't join the other meetings.
- If anyone young or old decides not to take part in this gift of silence, we respectfully ask that you go to the FS apple orchard during Meeting.
- **Farm Visits and Barn Chores:** Everyone is encouraged to visit the FS Barn for Barn Chores. The animals will love it, and so will you. The Farm staff need lots of help with barn chores every day at 6:15 am and 4:15 pm.

Farm Rules:

- 1) Children must be accompanied by an adult (One adult for every two children.)
- 2) There is a 6-child limit at a time.
- 3) Wear covered/closed toe shoes (no sandals).
- 4) Please do not enter an animal pen/enclosure without a Farm staff present.
- 5) Close all gates and doors behind you.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FAMILY CAMP

- **How to reach participants at Family Camp**

There is NO cell reception at FS. Participants can be reached at the main lodge, (802) 487-0399, or for urgent matters, the Farm & Wilderness answering service can be used to page "Family Camp". 1888-622-3276.

- **Cell reception, Laptops, cell phones and other internet connected devices:**

There is NO cell reception at FS. In the spirit of Farm & Wilderness being "unplugged" we strongly recommend that participants leave their laptops and other internet connected devices at home or store them in your car for the week.

- **Announcements:** After each meal there are Announcements, Announcements,

Announcements! We'll sing a song or two, maybe tell a quick joke, and communicate what, where, and when of upcoming activities and events. The blowing of the conch shell signals the beginning of announcements. When you hear it, please stop whatever you're doing (clearing,

cleaning, and working in the kitchen, outdoor play) and come listen. We will continue to try to keep announcement time playful and short...your good humor, patience, and focus (and support with the younger, antsy set) will help the whole thing flow along.

- **Noise:** Family Camp is often a joyful place, but with over 100 people for three meals a day, it is not often a quiet place. If you are a person that needs quiet, there are many ways to find it. Mostly you yourself will have to seek and find those quiet moments and places. Quiet walks along the dirt road, early morning stillness on the lake, and long stretches of lakeside peace, beautiful gardens, and thousands of acres of forest. (If you go for a wander, let someone know where you're heading). If you're finding a meal just a little too noisy, feel free to take a plate of food off and find that just right place.
- **Cabin Hour:** After lunchtime announcements, as is the tradition in all the F&W camps, everybody returns to their cabin for Cabin Hour. This is a quiet time, a time for touching base with our families, quiet conversations, quiet games, napping, etc. This rest hour is a peaceful, slower-paced gift we seldom get in our high-speed society, and a practice which summer camps and many countries still wisely observe.
- **Napkins:** A long-time family camp quirk that some folks appreciate, and others can't stand is that there are generally no napkins available at camp. The best way of insuring that you have one if you want one is to pack a reusable cloth napkin or two for each camper in your group and store it in your cubby in the lodge between meals. (Similar measures are advised if a big ceramic mug makes a difference in how you start your day!)
- **Outhouses:** Though the subject may make campers who are new to F&W want to flush, the outhouses (kybos) near each cabin, (complete with cold water handwashing spigot and soap,) have become one of the adventures the camps bring to the lives of people in modern, indoor-plumbing society. These kybos have helped to preserve the fragile eco and septic systems at the camps. *Using the Kybos:* Each Kybo should be supplied with toilet paper and a can of sawdust. The sawdust is a "dry flush" to be thrown down after each use. We encourage the use of Kybos.

Kybo comfort and etiquette: Many of the Kybos are at least two-seaters. To help people who need privacy feel more comfortable, we ask that when you approach a kybo, you call out from a respectful distance, "Red light or Green light?" The occupant may then respond, "Green light" (come on in) or "Red light" (please wait at a distance.)

Handwashing: Please keep yourself and other campers healthy-- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after each Kybo use, before meals, and throughout the day.

- **Showers:** There are rustic shower houses with hot water and great views. The shower system (where/when to shower to accommodate varying needs for privacy) will be explained and posted at camp.

- **General Safety and Behavioral guidelines:** When you registered for Family Camp you and your family agreed to follow our general safety and behavioral guidelines to assist in creating a physically and emotionally safe, inclusive community. In the spirit of keeping everyone safe and comfortable, here they are again, just so that you aren't surprised by anything when you arrive. Please be sure to share them with the other members of your family.

- 1) Be responsible for yourselves; Parents and guardians carry full responsibility for supervising and caring for their children and their guests, even when they have temporarily delegated this responsibility to another person at camp.
- 2) Children under 18 must come with their own parents/guardian or a chaperone over the age of 21. Chaperones may be responsible for no more than 2 children.
- 3) No tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or firearms/weapons allowed.
- 4) No open flames inside any of the buildings (except established fireplaces).
- 5) Outdoor fires are only permitted in established firepits.
- 6) You agree to participate in the community tasks associated with this event including meal preparation and cleanup.

7) You agree to leave your pets at home.

- 8) Please leave your electronic devices (I-pods, I-phone, electronic games, etc.) in your car.
- 9) You understand that Family Camp takes place in rocky, mountainous, and forested terrain on and around Farm & Wilderness lands and those waterfront activities may be a part of the experience. The following potentially hazardous activities, as well as others not mentioned, may be undertaken; rustic living, hiking, swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, cooking, and doing barn chores. These activities can cause personal injury, property damage, illness, or death. You realize that Farm & Wilderness does not provide childcare or adult supervision for children under the age of 18. Childcare and adult supervision is the responsibility of the parents and chaperones

10) You agree to abide by the waterfront rules.

Complete waterfront, boating, and distance-swim rules will be posted at the waterfront and must be read prior to getting in or on the water. For now, please know that:

- A lifeguard must be on duty to swim at any time at the waterfront.
- No child should be at the waterfront without a parent or parent-designated adult.
- A certified lifeguard must be present when people are using watercraft/boating.
- Safety vests (PFDs, life jackets) must be WORN by each person in a canoe or boat.

- Children under the age of 18 who can swim may only go boating with their parent or parent-designated adult.
- No diving off docks.
- You may swim past the raft(s) **only with** a lifeguard's permission.
- The Family Camp waterfront is suits-only swimming. There is no skinny dipping at Family Camp or anywhere on Farm & Wilderness property.
- Family Camp swimming and any aquatic activities is "suits only." Please pack your bathing suit. Families who have been with F&W for a long time may remember a time when skinny dipping was permitted. That is no longer the case at Family Camp or organizational wide at Farm & Wilderness. If you are unable to follow the waterfront rules or safety instructions from our certified waterfront staff, you may be asked to leave Family Camp.

CLEAN-O-RAMA!

The last morning of camp will start with breakfast at the regular time, followed by an all-camp "Clean-O-Rama". This helps to prepare FS grounds and facilities for the fall retreat season. There will be a sign-up sheet for Clean-O-Rama. Willing hands and hearts will make this last community chore light work and leave us feeling great! A few families might be needed (if they are interested)to help with the final cleaning details after the "to-go lunch". Please sign up on the clean-o-rama sheet.

LAST SILENT MEETING AND DEPARTURE:

After Clean-O-Rama, we will have our last silent meeting and a closing good-bye circle. We should be finished by around 11:30am. Yummy leftovers will be available for you to pack to go for your trip home. Last morning's program is an integral part of Family Camp. Please allow for it when making your departure and travel plans.

The "What to Let John or Marcos Know Before Camp" Checklist:

- ☐ It is essential this year that all families leave enough time to arrive between 2 and 4:30pm. If something happens that causes your delay, be sure to call the camp number as soon as possible.
- ☐ If you have any diet restriction that was not mentioned on your registration forms.
- ☐ If you have an activity you would like to lead that involves supplies reimbursement.
- ☐ Any housing needs or wants that are not mentioned on your registration forms.
- ☐ If you have any questions, concerns, wants, worries, thoughts, ideas, about camp or if there's anything you'd like to discuss based on your experience in previous summers.

Getting in touch with the Camp Directors:

Both Co Directors are available on-and-off before the start of camp. If you leave a message, please include your name, phone number, and a good time to reach you. They will return your call as soon as they can: Marcos Levy 802-772-5581 or thenewlearningproject@gmail.com
John Porcino 413-687-2602 or john.porcino.storyteller@gmail.com

With the dynamic combination of campers and a natural, rural setting, we've got the makings for a glorious Family Camp! Soon we'll share in the joy of splashing into clean, cool, Woodward Reservoir, breathing mountain air, preparing, and tasting the magnificent bounty of eight months of lovingly cared-for gardens, building amazing creations with our own hands, giggling and rolling in the grass, boisterously singing a good morning song, sharing the silences and the wisdom of our lives, dipping paddles gently into silent waters, listening to magical stories by firelight, and much more. We're excited to meet and see each one of you and look forward to celebrating summer's fullness.

REFUND POLICY:

The complete refund policy can be found on our website.

A \$100.00 non-refundable deposit per participant 5 years and older must be paid to ensure your registration. For children 4 years and younger the nonrefundable deposit is \$50.00.

Unpaid balances for all family members must be reconciled for a camper to be registered. Tuition must be paid in full by June 1st. For applicants who register later than June 1st, full tuition payment must accompany the registration. If the registration for a prospective camper is withdrawn prior to March 1st, all tuition payments will be refunded less the non-refundable deposit. After March 1st, Farm & Wilderness expects families to be responsible for the full tuition, except in cases of serious illness including a positive covid test, injury, or family emergency, where a refund will be issued, minus the non-refundable deposit. There will be no refund if a camper is asked to leave during the session for an infraction of a camp rule, for disruptive behavior, or if a camper is voluntarily withdrawn, except for withdrawal because of serious illness occurred while at Farm & Wilderness (including covid).

PS: Please remember to store this letter in a safe place until camp. Be sure to bring it with you to camp and refer to it as needed.

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www.farmandwilderness.org

