



“The animals of the planet are in desperate peril and they are fully aware of this. No less than human beings are doing in all parts of the world, they are seeking sanctuary.”

– Alice Walker, Selected Writings

Guest Guidelines

There are numerous places people can go for healing, reflection and connecting with nature, but not many that focus on the depth of who the animals are, and how that awareness can help motivate us to preserve and protect them. This means that our primary focus is how people can give back to the animals – not just the animals at Earthfire, but wild animals everywhere. We work to foster the realization that if we look to heal the whole community that is our Earth, we will get healed in the process. Animals are masters at teaching us the joys and rewards of this way of seeing things. In working to build a community of people who would like to work with us to preserve the wild animals and wild places of our planet, we believe the first step is to give people the opportunity to gain a deep and heart-based understanding of who these beings are, through the opportunity to meet animal ambassadors personally.

It takes time to understand the animals in a way that gives them full respect, and you a full experience, so our primary format for visits are retreats. Since we are a very small, intimate nonprofit with limited time and resources, we can only do private visits sparingly. We ask that any private visitors be interested in substantially contributing to our mission, which is to change how humans see, and therefore treat, wildlife and nature. This could include financial support, volunteering with conservation organizations, or working to preserve and/or create habitat for wild animals.

To make it possible for us to set aside time for a private visit, and still run a sustainable organization, we request a minimum of \$1,000 for a 2 hour visit, for up to a maximum of 4 people. Additional attendees are \$250 each. We do not do informal visits.

Making the Most of Your Visit

Earthfire is a quieter place than most with the sounds of nature and our animals filling the air. This is their home, and like a guest coming to their home, we ask that you honor the space of our rescued wildlife. There are certain ways that you can conduct yourself while you are in their presence.

One activity that greatly interferes with our ability to receive is our tendency to talk a lot and ask a bunch of questions to “gather information” rather than experience the way the animals do. Talking can take us out of our sensing of animal selves and put us into a completely human head. It then takes time to settle back into the receptive, observing mode and heal the rift it caused between us and them. Meditative practices help us connect with deep non-verbal states, and it is in those that we are most receptive to connections with other living beings.

Thoughtful questions do arise from deeper wonderings within us based on direct experience. These kinds of questions are wonderful, leading to a rich understanding, which adds to everyone’s experience. In general, you will get the most out of your time here if you quietly observe. Allow time for your thoughts to sink in and remember those questions and ideas for later.

Photography Policy

Before cameras we had memories; stories. We trained our abilities to observe and retain; we developed the power of description. Cameras can easily get in the way of directly experiencing the animals and make us mentally lazy - we figure “well, we can always look at the photographs later.” But as master wildlife artist Bob Kuhn would exhort to his students, “Watch, watch like you’ll never see it again,” and that is what we recommend.

Digital cameras have made things even easier so there is now no skill or concentration, or even connection with the animals needed to take a picture. We just click, click, click, disconnecting us even further. Native peoples around the world are known to get angry at visitors who freely take photos for their own pleasure without asking permission. While it may not seem to make sense to ask an animal’s permission, the process conveys a sense of respect, and helps focus us differently, acknowledging the animal as a being (also coincidentally, resulting in a better photograph).

We ask that you limit taking photographs to times that we designate during the visit. While you are meeting each animal, we ask that you listen to and absorb the experience rather than documenting it through a camera lens. The photos that you take are for personal use only. A private visit cannot double as a professional photo shoot. Those need to be scheduled separately.

Your Safety & Earthfire’s Mission

We are responsible for the safety of all visitors. During your stay, you will be reminded that you are not permitted to roam freely about the property. Visitors are never permitted to interact with Earthfire animals without Jean or Susan’s guidance and presence.

The animals at Earthfire are sensitive to human interaction in a way that other, totally wild animals are not. However, the inhabitants at the sanctuary are still wild. When visitors do not adhere to the policies outlined above, we risk losing our licenses, and the animals. Your cooperation and respect for this policy will allow the Earthfire Institute to continue providing

transformative experiences that aid in the further understanding of wildlife that would otherwise not have a voice.

The Essence of Earthfire

Thank you for your interest in the animals of Earthfire; we are greatly appreciative. To learn more about the organization, please watch the Essence of Earthfire video on our website (www.earthfireinstitute.org). If you are interested in participating in a retreat and would like to view a list of upcoming events, or would like to sign up for our bi-monthly e-newsletter, that can also be done online at our website. We have a Facebook page, and there are various Earthfire videos posted on You Tube, as well.

We welcome suggestions. If you know a retreat leader you think would support our vision, or would like to host your own retreat, please let us know. We also post content to our website, so feel free to share your Earthfire experience in a blog or submit your favorite animal stories. You can also volunteer for us long distance.

We look forward to hearing your insights and creative thoughts.

In Community,
Susan, Jean and the Animals of Earthfire

"It's crucial to spread the word of the sacredness of animals to others, to open up the voices of wildlife as you are doing." - R. Saxon, AZ

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