



“Roughly 70% of all individuals of vertebrate species have disappeared ... since 1970.”

World Wildlife Fund, *Living planet report 2018*

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

Alice Walker, *Selected Writings*

Earthfire’s mission is to reawaken our deep connection to wildlife and nature through Reconnection Ecology, expanding our sense of community to include all living beings and moving us to protect thriving habitats for all Life.

There are numerous places people can go for healing, reflection, and connecting with nature, but few that focus on reawakening our deep bond with animals and how that visceral awareness motivates us to protect them and their habitats. At Earthfire Institute, our primary focus is how visitors 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 be healed in the process.

Animals are masters at showing us the joys and rewards of this way of seeing things. To build a community dedicated to preserving 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 life-changing personal encounters.



It takes time to understand the animals in a way that gives them proper respect and still provides our visitors with a full experience, so our primary format for visits are retreats. Since we are a very small nonprofit with limited resources and want to ensure that our resident animals benefit from a quiet, peaceful sanctuary, we only offer limited custom visits. We ask that any visitors be willing to contribute to our mission. Contributions could include charitable financial support, volunteering with conservation organizations, or working to preserve and/or create habitat for wild animals.

Financial Commitment

Earthfire Institute relies on private contributions to meet basic operational expenses of approximately \$865,000 per year / \$66,600 month / \$2,200 per day. To make desired habitat improvements in addition to meeting expenses, we must raise an additional \$400,000 on top of the operating figure.

We offer three tiers of visits with costs based on covering staff time. Fees for visits aren’t tax deductible because you’re receiving goods and services at cost. Please keep in mind that all aspects of your visit are subject to change depending on weather, the needs of the animals, and staff availability. To enhance the intimacy and depth of your experience, we prefer groups of 4 or fewer.

Tier 1: \$1,000

- Groups of up to 4 people
- 2 hour site visit led by our founder, Dr. Susan Eirich
- Animal handlers may personally shows wolves and bears in their gardens
- Spend time in the small animal garden with foxes
- Meet all of the animals



Tier 2: \$400

- Groups of up to 4 people
- 1.5 hour site visit led by an employee
- View wolves and a cougar in their gardens
- See bears either within their enclosures or in their gardens
- Spend time within the small animal garden with foxes
- Meet all of the animals

Tier 3: \$200

- Groups of up to 4 people
- 45 minutes site visit led by a staff member on the main thoroughfare and side paths
- View animals in their enclosures or gardens, depending on whether or not the caretakers have opened the gardens
- Briefly meet some of the animals

Additional attendees beyond a group size of 4 are \$200 per person. Retreats are also available and can accommodate more participants. For more information on retreats, please visit www.earthfireinstitute.org/retreats or contact us at office@earthfireinstitute.org.

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, please honor the space of our rescued wildlife. For the best experience possible, please follow a few simple rules.

Quiet Observation

One activity that interferes with our ability to receive is our human tendency to talk and ask questions to gather information rather than experiencing life the way the animals do. Talking can take us out of our sensing animal selves and put us into human mode. It then takes time to settle back into the receptive, observing mode and heal the interruption talking causes between us and them. Meditative practices help us connect with non-verbal states, and it is in those states 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 and lead 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.

Dress Policy

Most of your visit will take place outdoors on grass, dirt, and uneven ground. For your safety and the wellbeing of the animals, we ask that you follow our dress policy.

- No open-toed footwear, or heels over 2".
- Clothing should not have dangling material such as strings, pom-poms, or long scarves.
- Avoid sparkling earrings, rings, necklaces, hat bands, bracelets, fabric, watches, etc.
- No shorts, skirts, or dresses. Make sure your legs are covered.
- No clothing embellished with items such as rhinestones, flowers, sequins, feathers, fur, etc.

Photography Policy

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

While it may not be standard practice to ask an animal’s permission to take photos, doing so conveys a sense of respect and helps focus our minds differently, acknowledging the animal as a being (also, coincidentally, resulting in a better photograph).

We ask that you limit taking photographs to designated times during your visit. While you meet 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, which needs to be scheduled separately.

Your Safety & Earthfire’s Mission

We are responsible for the safety of all visitors as well as our animals. Your group will be reminded to stay with your guide. Visitors may not 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. To learn more about the organization, please watch the Essence of Earthfire video on our website (www.earthfireinstitute.org). You can also sign up for our monthly newsletter or connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Vimeo.

We welcome suggestions. If you know a retreat leader who 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 at www.earthfireinstitute.org/category/your-stories. You can also volunteer for us long distance.

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

“I think that we are conditioned to believe that animals are other, removed. That they are wild, that we need to keep our distance and that they need nothing from us. I felt that the most important thing I could do for animals was to leave them alone. But upon coming to Earthfire, I found the most moving experience for me was their desire to connect – their insistence that they be met. That has changed everything for me. I can no longer see a deer or a bison, or a bear, or a wolf or a lynx without acknowledging that we are here together.”

Terry Tempest Williams, author and Earthfire retreat leader



**EARTHFIRE
INSTITUTE**

WILDLIFE SANCTUARY & RETREAT CENTER
RECONNECTING WITH WILDLIFE AND NATURE



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