

The Windhorse Retreat Center @ High Winds

Welcome to the Windhorse Retreat Center! Please read this entire document – it will help keep you comfortable, it will help keep expenses down, and it will help keep the place safe. This is not a contract or guarantee -- change is unfathomable and endless, to boot.

What to expect:

Your space.

You have been assigned a retreat space in either the west or the east side of the building. Hopefully, you have been informed as to whether or not there is more than one retreat going on during your stay. If both sides of the building are occupied, it is very important that you are considerate of the other person's expectations of quiet and privacy. If you are in the east side of the building, please avoid using the basement since it provides access to the west side where the west side shower is located.

Both sides have a kitchen, dining space, sleeping spaces and practice space. The east side has a bathtub and shower. To shower on the west side will require you to use the bathroom in the basement. Both sides are heated by gas space heaters, although when the sun is out, there will be a sizable heat gain from the south windows. There are also electric fans and space heaters. Whatever temperature adjustments you employ, please be mindful to conserve to the best of your ability.

The west side has two double beds, 2-3 single beds, and a double futon couch for sleeping. The east side has two double beds, three single beds, and a double futon couch for sleeping. Each side also has a good deal of floor space. Although beds, pillows, and blankets are provided, you must bring your own towels and linens.

Our land also includes the ridge to the Northeast of the building. It's a lovely place for outdoor practice. The quietest times are around dawn and dusk.

Absolutely no smoking is allowed in the building. If you smoke outdoors, carefully extinguish all flames and embers and do not discard your butts into anything outside of a proper receptacle.

If it's winter and snow has fallen, there is the chance that you might have to shovel the path into the building. The shovel is just inside the (Bioshelter) west entrance.

The Indoor Climate

Because the house is super-insulated and it is passive-solar-heated it maintains a fairly moderate temperature. (On sunny winter days the heaters will hardly run!) Both sides are designed so that the heat rises into the bedrooms.

- ◆ *To heat the west side:* A thermostat for the heater is in the basement. Electric baseboard heaters are in each bedroom.
- ◆ *To heat the east side:* The gas furnace in the living room is the only heat source. Setting the control (thermostat) at 4 should be adequate for all but the coldest weather. (Turn it down to 2 at night, and leave bedroom doors open). The bedrooms will be the warmest spots on the east side. Adjust the heat differently for day and night.

Please be comfortable, but be ecological and conserve fuel.

Please turn down the gas heater thermostats and turn off the electric heaters when you leave.

Food Preparation.

There are refrigerators, stoves, toasters and pots and pans, utensils, bowls, plates, glasses and a microwave oven in both kitchens. You must bring your own food with you. It is quite likely that you will find salt, pepper, sugar, tea, herbs and oils -- but it is not guaranteed, so it is recommended that you bring the basic staples with you as well. Kitchen towels, dish detergent, sponges, and garbage bags will be provided. Recycling bins are located just inside the outside door on the east side (recyclables have to go into clear recycling bags). ***Until we get a regular garbage situation worked out, we need you to pack your own garbage out.***

The water -- although very hard and smelling of iron and iron sulfide -- has been recently tested and is perfectly fine. The drinking water is on the left and has been purified through a reverse-osmosis system.

Also, keep solid waste from going down the kitchen drain.

Chives, oregano and sage grow outside the front (red) door. There are also apple, cherry and mulberry trees behind the building and asparagus at the crest of the hill in front of the building. If you happen to be there during the right time of the year, please indulge yourself.

Peter and Bernadette Seely are very nice people who run Springdale Farm -- the organic farm you see in the valley, northeast of WRC. They can sell you some produce or eggs if you are interested.

The Shrine

The Shrine box will be provided along with 10 zabutons, 10 gomdens, bowls and (votive) candleholders. Above each shrine is a Sakyamuni. Bring your own candles, incense, practice materials and photos. Until puja tables are built, bring yours along or be prepared to improvise.

Cleaning Up and Moving Out

Our basic approach is simple -- ***Leave It Cleaner Than You Found It!*** How you leave the retreat is the way that the next retreatant will find it. A cleaning service will be used as necessary throughout the year, but basically, the cleaning responsibility is yours. I guarantee you that packing up and properly cleaning up will take no less than 2 hours, so please factor that into your departure time.

- ◆ Cleaning products and implements can be found in the kitchen and bathrooms and there is a vacuum cleaner in the basement. Please clean sinks, bowls, and toilets.
- ◆ Make sure that all of your dishes are done and sweep, scrub, or vacuum the floors as is appropriate.
- ◆ Close the windows all the way unless it is summertime in which case, leave them open a crack. (If it is winter, turn the heat down to the minimum).
- ◆ Please remove ***all*** your stuff from the refrigerator: things that are left behind will generally be left unused and will spoil. Also, do not leave anything behind that will decompose, mold or rot (flowers in water in vases, milk, etc.)
- ◆ Turn the refrigerator and its freezer down to the lowest settings.
- ◆ Place rinsed items in the recycling bins (#'s 1 and 2 only).

Bonus Merit

If you see any work that you could accomplish, it will be of great benefit to all of us if you could do so. Try to do a half-hour per day. If everything looks rather perfect, extra shoveling in winter or weeding the garden in summer will undoubtedly guarantee you a fine rebirth.

Trips to Town

The closest town for food and other supplies is Plymouth. To get there, head back east on Highway U until you get back to Highway 57. Turn left and travel north for a few miles until you get to business Highway 23. Turn left and you are in Plymouth. Voila!
Another option is the town of Cascade. Head east on U until you get to Highway E, turn right and head south for a few miles until you hit Cascade.

Emergencies and Our Neighbors

Belden and Lisa Paulson lives three houses north of us. David and Louise Lagerman live two houses north of us. They will honor your privacy or happily converse with you as you so indicate, but please don't bother them to help you out unless it is an emergency (or you're at your wit's end). David Lagerman is particularly helpful and knowledgeable where it comes to the structural and mechanical aspects of our retreat house.

Kettle Moraine State Park

Stickers are required when using the parking lots.

Country Life

Yup, you will be in the country! Insects, poison ivy, heavy weather and dairy farming affect the environment. **Ants are smart! They will find your garbage and your sugar and honey if you don't keep everything clean and closed-up. Mice are smart too! They will eat through plastic bags to get to your food. Don't leave bread, cheese, cereals, nuts, or dried fruit out or a mouse may visit quietly as you sleep.** (After moving cold items from my cooler to the refrigerator, I use the cooler as a storage bin for my dry goods, thus thwarting the cleverest ant or mouse.)

Also, bring along what you need for your comfort and well-being (insect repellent...??).

Poison Ivy

Watch out for it in mixed areas of shade and sun. I am personally highly susceptible to it, and I attest to the fact that it grows in the area, (although the High Winds folks do attempt to keep it eradicated). Keep your eye on children and dogs who can deliver it directly to you if they make contact with it.

High Winds

We are allowed to use the land encompassing High Winds for walks and for practice. (Be advised that the fire circle down the driveway to the left is a sacred space and no alcohol should be consumed there. If you want to have a fire outdoors, you must first talk to the above-mentioned neighbors.) You may use the trail bike (in basement) if you want to get deeper into the woods.

Contributions, both material and financial are greatly appreciated. There's so much that we need, and we're trying to keep your costs down -- so please contribute to the future of this Dharma center by offering whatever is needed including additional funds beyond the modest cost of your retreat.

Great Lakes Dragway

On six weekends during the year there are auto or cycle races at this racecourse. Highway traffic will be a bit more congested on these weekends. We will try to keep track of the race dates. Even though it is 20 miles north of us, you will hear the hum the engines when you venture outside the building. No, it is not the sound of millions of Vajrasattvas.

Final Checkout

What's the worst thing that could happen in this non-caretaker scenario? Leaving things open or on that should be closed or off. Please do a final check before you vacate. If we are low on some supplies when you leave, or if there was a problem of any kind, please call or write upon your return

Meditation in Action

Weed the garden; tend the paths; clean windows; clean cupboards; dust and vacuum nooks and crannies; sweep/clean behind/under things; wash kitchen floor; clean baseboards; clean basement; de-spider web the house; clean refrigerator, microwave, and oven.