

“Rewilding the Heart”

From the Buddha to the Dzogchen yogis of Tibet, ancient masters have long relied on the power of the natural world to nurture peace and awaken insight. Following their example, we too can learn to commune with and receive teachings from the natural world. Join Lama Willa as we explore the power of trees, streams, pond, open skies, leaves, birds, animals and winding paths to open us to the meaning of meditation.

Rewilding the Heart is inner work that helps us attune to the wisdom and love that are always flowing around and through us, the non-conceptual voices of the natural world that seek to draw us home to our deepest being, our core of authentic compassion, kindness, and availability to extend ourselves to each other and the wider world.

Rewilding work takes us through three phases:

- (1) **Preparing the Ground:** Preparing the ground involves slowing down and learning to listen deeply. This is a mode of deep receptivity to the wisdom of the wild, and the wisdom of our own body, our emotions and our true nature.
- (2) **Walking the Path:** The path of Rewilding is one of cultivating sacred relationship, a deep, rich sense of intimacy with ancestral lineage, plant beings, animal beings, wild spaces and one’s own wild nature within. Path work includes developing skills for accessing inner stillness, insight and self-compassion.
- (3) **Extending Care Beyond Self:** Extending is not a cultivation in a conventional sense. It is the result of the work of rewilding the heart...extending happens spontaneously when we discover that we have never been separate from what we wish to protect, nor from what threatens it. This truth of non-separation is not a cultivation, but rather a reality that emerges with practice.

On this retreat, participants will develop a repertoire of practices and approaches that allow us to embark on a pilgrimage to rewild the heart. We will learn how communing with the elemental forces of fire, water, earth, air, and space can heal the body, transform the heart and liberate the mind. During this retreat, our “meditation hall” will migrate from the forest to the shores of a pond, from open fields to winding trails.

Following a communal dinner, we will open the retreat Friday evening with a fire puja. We will ground in practice and teaching in Bridge Between the Worlds’ beautiful meditation hall and as weather permits, our days will be spent meditating in the temple of the verdant spring of rural Keswick, VA. We will learn how to take the principles of meditation into walking, hiking, and other forms of mindful movement.

Through rekindling our innate interconnectedness with the natural world, we simultaneously discover the spacious, luminous, and awake qualities of our own being. Within this web of interconnectedness, we discover that liberation from suffering and the freedom to realize our aspirations are not about transcending the human condition, but about finding the inherent freedom within it.

All levels of meditation practice are welcome.
We will observe noble silence during this retreat.