

Rocky Mountain Ecodharma Retreat Center Orientation Guidelines

**The following are designed to keep everyone safe and happy, and costs low.
RMERC is simple and rustic; please be happy with what is.**

The retreat center is on 180 acres of conservation easement land, bordered by Forest Service and other private conservation easement land. We are at 8500 feet elevation, with forest, meadow, and the South St. Vrain Creek.

Drinking Water. Please enjoy our mountain water. It is essential to drink more than you are used to at this elevation. There is a dedicated spigot for filling bottles in the dining room. Please use your own covered water bottle for water, and keep one with you all the time. Though we try not to waste water, do not skimp on hydration.

Bathrooms. We are on a septic system with a pump: do not put anything other than body waste and toilet paper in the toilet, as the septic system cannot handle it. Tissues, paper towels, sanitary products, etc. must go in the trash. Please keep showers short, and limit them to once every other day.

Please do not Use Scented Products. Some people are chemically sensitive. Bulk dispensers of unscented soap, shampoo and conditioner are in the bathrooms. Please only spray bug repellent or sunscreen outside, and keep distance and down wind from others.

Linens. Two sheets, pillow, pillowcase, blanket, comforter, and a bath towel are supplied for each lodge guest. Campers get the towel; and no items may leave the lodge. If you need a washcloth or change in towel or sheets, please ask our manager. For retreats longer than 9 nights, a change of linens and towels will be provided half way through.

Noise. The lodge transmits sound. Please limit showers and other activity before the morning bell, or after bedtime, as you may be disturbing others. Walk slowly and softly, close doors gently, etc.

Tea and Coffee. Hot water is always available for tea or coffee. Carafes of coffee will be made in the morning by your group or cook. Please do not make a carafe at other times unless there are several people wanting it, just make your own using a pour over filter. There are sweeteners and creamers and related items in the small fridge next to it. You can also put small personal items in that fridge.

Meals. Your retreat has arranged for meals separately; RMERC does not provide them. Please do not use kitchen equipment unless you have been shown how by someone who knows. After eating please scrape or wipe your plates before putting them in the bus tub.

Hiking. There are a variety of trails on the land, some extending past the boundary. Trails protect the surrounding area from compaction, trampling, and erosion, and you from getting lost. Please stay on the trails; hiking off trail is not allowed. Groups may only sit in designated named sitting areas. If you want to sit somewhere by yourself, feel free to go off the trail a short distance to find a spot, but be clear on finding your way back to the trail,

and try to walk on sand, rocks, duff or grass; not on flowering plants. If you do go hiking alone, please write a note as to what trail you are taking and your expected time of return. A trail map is available; most of our trails are marked with colored ribbons, and are easy to follow. If you lose the trail, turn around immediately and carefully find it.

Fires and Campfires. Wild fire or fire in the lodge are real dangers. We do not allow any matches, candles, incense, or open flame anywhere in the lodge or on the property, except **one** incense stick can be in the meditation room on a plate that has a radius larger than the height of the stick, and **only** when people are present. There are LED candles in the meditation room as well. There are fire extinguishers around the lodge, and also two green hoses inside that can be used on a fire.

Smoking is only allowed on the gravel guest parking lot. Please crush butts and then put them in the trash in the lodge. Do not throw them on the ground.

The one place for a campfire is the fire ring near the barn. There are two buckets at the fire ring that must be filled in the small creek that runs under the path to the barn, before lighting a fire. Campfires must be doused before the last person leaves, and never left unattended. Fires are not allowed anywhere else, including the National Forest.

Shoes. Please do not wear shoes in the lodge, take them off in the entry and put them on the shelves. Shoes should be worn while working in the kitchen.

Wild Life. We have many animals making this land home. Two need special caution, black bears (there are no grizzlies) and moose. Bears are becoming conditioned to buildings and human sources of food all over Colorado. This is not good for them, or us. (Rodents are attracted to food as well.)

To avoid attracting bears and rodents, do not store or drop trash, or keep food, cosmetics, medicine, or backpacks, outside. Food, trash, or cosmetics, in a car, backpack, tent, or on the porch, will attract animals: keep them in the lodge. Make sure the doors and ground floor windows in the lodge are securely closed at night or when everyone is outside. If you are the last one out, or close to it, close the doors and windows.

If you see a bear, do not run, this will provoke chase, and bears are faster than you. Talk to it, yell and make noise, and back away slowly. Make yourself look tall and large using clothes, pack, spreading arms, etc. In the very unlikely event a bear becomes aggressive, yell, throw something at it, and if necessary, fight.

It will help keep bears (and rodents) away from the lodge if people urinate outside around the lodge as much as possible. Men especially, please try and do this, in all directions about 10' or 20' away from the lodge. It is also good for the plants.

Moose are large, irritable, and unpredictable. A mother moose with a calf is especially dangerous. If you see a moose, try and spot the baby (or mother) and go in the opposite direction of both. 50' is a minimum safe distance. Several moose live around our land, and like to hang out near wetlands along the creek. If a moose is cornered or feels its baby is

threatened it will attack, trying to stomp you with its legs. Stay away, run away (they won't chase far), or get behind a tree or rock (they don't see that well). Climb up if you can. Once you get distance or behind something a moose will usually calm down.

Seeing a mountain lion is unlikely, but if you do, make yourself large and noisy, back away, and don't run or look it in the eye. It is basically a similar response as to a bear.

Mice. We occasionally have mice in or around the lodge, let us know if you see one. They are not deer mice so while they can carry disease, it is not hantavirus. Please do not bring food upstairs; all food should be stored and eaten in the dining room or on the porch.

Ticks. There are ticks in the Rockies. They are usually 1/8"-1/4", and do not carry Lyme, but they can carry other diseases. Check yourself carefully when you have been out hiking. Wearing white or light colored clothing makes them easier to spot. They usually take a day or so to affix, so checking yourself each night is also a good idea.

Snakes. While we do have some small snakes, rattlesnakes don't usually live this high up, and we have never seen them. If you do hear a rattle, move away.

First Aid and Safety. There are first aid supplies in the cabinet by the entry. The nearest hospital and urgent care are in Boulder. 911 emergency responders for fire or medical are much closer by in Jamestown and Ward. We have a landline phone for emergencies. Your retreat may have other resources.

Questions and Issues. Your retreat teacher sets communication parameters, not RMERC. Our on site manager is here for your safety and comfort, but you may be directed to not communicate with them except through your retreat manager.

Dana (donations) for the Center. The center exists due to the generosity of hundreds of people. The money paid to RMERC for your retreat only covers operating costs: insurance, maintenance, stipend for the on site manager, utilities, web site, etc. None of it goes towards our purchase, mortgage or ongoing renovations, which means your retreat was subsidized. We are over half way through raising \$940,000 to cover the purchase of the property and substantial renovations. At the end of your retreat, if you have the means to donate to our capital campaign, please do; whether it is \$100, \$500, \$5,000 or \$50,000, it all helps. We rely on the incredible generosity of those who can afford to donate, but we are happy you came to practice with us whether you donate or not. RMERC is a non-profit charity and all donations are tax deductible.

What to Bring. Your retreat may have other specifics. Clothing, raingear, warm layers and footwear that are appropriate for the time of year (mountain weather is varied, unpredictable, and can be severe at times). Two water bottles, daypack, headlamp, slippers (for the lodge), personal items and toiletries. We provide a towel, pillow and case, two blankets, and two sheets, and there are chairs, zafus, and zabutons to sit on. If you sleep very cold you may want to bring a sleeping bag. If you are camping bring a tent, sleeping bag, pad, and all bedding; we do not allow any bedding to leave the lodge. Do not bring a cell phone or computer; there is no signal or wifi.