

## Hermitage Program Report CCA General Meeting January 18, 2025

*Sojourner Reflection: October, 2024*

*"I sit in the remaining hours of my first sojourn here at the CCA Corbett Center hermitage. The time has gone by quickly as I have been enjoying it so deeply. My soul has been yearning for this.*

*This retreat comes after a hectic last couple of months in which I was working long hours and disconnected from the natural world. First, I am very grateful to the many who have made this hermitage possible; thank you for your time and dedication. Thank you to the many who have preserved and protected this land. It is a magical place, like all wild lands.*

*During my time here I had the opportunity to leave my phone and tune in to natural rhythms: getting up with the sun, sitting in meditation, moving through the day knowing all I needed to do was stay present. Many moments dedicated to watching our more than human kin living...observing their patterns, the lesson of patience ... dedication ... curiosity ... being slow.*

*This time has been a practice of how to bring peace into the busy man-made world. Thank you deeply to the land, the people who have stewarded it, and the creator. This was my first sojourn, but will not be my last."*

### **Sojourners:**

Since our last meeting, it's been the busiest fall and winter during my tenure: Both the Corbett Center cottage hermitage and the Caravan hermitage received 15 visitors totaling 66 days. The average length of stay has been 5 to 8 days, and the majority of the sojourners have been young and new to our program, and their reflections continue the over 30-year history theme of **gratefulness for stewarding this land and making it available for solitude and reflection.**

Upcoming will be Proctor Academy students next week: January 23-28, 2025. We could use a few more trucks to help shuttle their camping equipment into the canyon. Please contact Susan.

### **Sabbatical Gatherings:**

These gatherings are a time to walk the land as a community of people to be present to each other and the diversity of life that surrounds us. We hold these twice during the sojourning season. The next Sabbatical Gathering will be held in April.

### **Sojourning News:**

We are now publishing this email newsletter about Hermitage Program events 3 times a year. The next issue will come out March 2025.

***Workshops:***

We hope to host another "Community Coexistence: Living Peacefully with the Maligned Rattlesnake" workshop at the Corbett Center in late March with our own Cascabel herpetologist, Lexi Boudreaux and her husband Gene.

***Hermitage Program Transition: Lynn Thorsell, Co-Chair***

Susan will be retiring from Hermitage program leadership and sojourner accompaniment at the end of this season. We are proud of and grateful for her legacy. The Hermitage program continues to thrive and be of benefit to many people each year. In November, we extended an invitation for expressions of interest for the position of Hermitage Program Coordinator and received multiple responses. We will begin meeting with interested parties later this month. Two or more people will likely share the position.

***Housing for New Program Coordinators: Karen McKelvey, Committee Member***

The Committee has considered multiple options and recommends that CCA purchase Susan's property. (The case for this course of action was made using the criteria listed in the letter to the Board.) We are submitting this proposal for your consideration. We invite any questions or concerns you have so that those can be addressed and discussed at the spring CCA meeting. Our hope is that a decision on whether or not to purchase could be made at the spring meeting.

***Funding for Property: Katie Talbott, Committee Member***

People have already come forward to offer significant funds toward the property purchase. Between now and the spring meeting, we would like to send a fundraising letter asking for and gathering pledges (not actual money yet). This would give people who have benefitted from and support the mission of the CCA Hermitage Program the opportunity to participate in creating its future. It would also give us a good sense of how much of the property price we could raise from new donations and whether additional funds would be needed. Given the pledges we already have, it seems likely that we could raise 80-100% of the cost by April. We welcome additional questions and concerns by email after this meeting.

***Interested in participating with us on the Hermitage Committee? Please contact Susan Tollefson. All are welcome!***