Spiritual Ecology: 
Listening to the Living World

Otways Retreat with Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee
20 - 23 February, 2020

This retreat and workshop offers younger generations, and others who are drawn to work for the future, the tools and resources to respond to ecological crisis from a place of respect, rooted in a deep listening to the living world.

Together let’s consider what a spiritual response to our ecological crisis would look like.

Retreat Information Booklet
About

**Spiritual Ecology is a spiritual response to our present ecological crisis.** As a developing field that joins ecology and environmentalism with the awareness of the sacred within creation, it calls for responses to environmental issues that include spiritual awareness and/or practice. The principles of spiritual ecology are simple: In order to respond to climate break down, species extinction, and over-consumption, humanity must examine and reassess our underlying attitudes and beliefs about the earth, and our spiritual as well as physical responsibilities toward the planet.

Over the coming decades much of the work needed to support ecological renewal will increasingly rely on individual and grassroots efforts, especially amongst millennials and younger generations. Spiritual Ecology can help build resilience and inspire people who recognize the need to create a future that is not driven by materialism and greed, but rooted in the spiritual values of reverence for nature, interconnectedness, stewardship, compassion, and service.

This four day workshop will introduce participants to the field of spiritual ecology and offer ways of cultivating personal, ecological, and social resilience through deep listening and respect for the living world. Over the course of the retreat, participants will learn simple and practical techniques for integrating spiritual values into their lives and work. Through nature connection practices, deep inquiry, and storytelling participants will journey into the nexus of the human and non-human worlds, building relationships that can nourish both personal and ecological renewal.

*This retreat is a partnership between CERES and Emergence Magazine.*

**CERES,** located in Melbourne Australia, has a commitment to exploring ways of being in the world that are environmentally beneficial, economically satisfying, socially just, culturally enriching and spiritually nurturing for people and the Earth. Through its education programs, social enterprises, community events and place-making, CERES aims to help people fall in love with the Earth again. [www.ceres.org.au](http://www.ceres.org.au)

**Emergence Magazine** is an award-winning quarterly online publication with an annual printed edition. It has always been a radical act to share stories during dark times. They are a regenerative space of creation and renewal. As we experience the desecration of our lands and waters, the extinguishing of species, and a loss of sacred connection to the earth, we look to emerging stories. In them we find the timeless connections between ecology, culture, and spirituality. [www.emergencemagazine.org](http://www.emergencemagazine.org)
Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee is an award-winning filmmaker and a Naqshbandi Sufi teacher.

He has directed and produced numerous films including: *Earthrise*, *Sanctuaries of Silence*, *Atomic Tree*, *Marie’s Dictionary*, *Isle de Jean Charles Yukon Kings*, *Elemental*, *What Would It Look Like*, and *Barrio de Paz*.

Emmanuel is also the founder and executive editor of Emergence Magazine, a publication exploring the threads connecting ecology, culture and spirituality. He lives and teaches in Point Reyes with his wife and two children.
Location

The retreat will be held at the King Parrot Retreat Centre, located 2 hours from Melbourne amongst 200 acres of rainforest in the Otway Ranges. Nestled on the north-facing hillside of the spectacular Pennyroyal Valley, the centre consists of several architecturally designed cottages, and a campground surrounded by rainforest.

Getting there and away

Participants are responsible for organising their own transport to and from the retreat centre:

195 Dunse Track
Pennyroyal
VIC 3235, Australia
https://goo.gl/maps/wfgpb11Qbb62

Public transport (train and bus) is available as far as Lorne and we can arrange collection from, and drop off to there (about 30 minutes drive from the retreat centre). Allow 2hrs 45min from Southern Cross to Lorne, including a change at Geelong.

We will do our best to help arrange carpooling and lifts from Melbourne where possible.

Accommodation

Accommodation is spread across the north side of the hill in 5 cottages and a campground. All accommodation is shared, with the exception of BYO campers.

Cottages
5 well-designed cottages sleep 6-11 people each, with bathrooms, kitchens and all linen provided. The cottages are all located a couple of minutes’ walk from the meditation hall and kitchen/dining area.

Camping
The campground is in a natural clearing on the floor of the valley alongside Aquila Creek, surrounded by forest. Campers are invited to either bring their own tent and equipment, or make use of one of the cabin-tents. The cabin-tents are timber-floored structures with canvas walls, doors and windows with beds for 3-4 people, gas stove and lighting. There is a toilet and shower block with a hot water system, shared by all campers.

Please note it is a 20 minute forest walk from the campground to the meditation hall and kitchen/dining area.
Food

All meals are provided from Thursday dinner through to Sunday breakfast and will be lovingly prepared from organic, local produce where possible by caterer Nikki Blanch with support from retreat participants. All meals are vegetarian and will cater for most dietary requirements.

Please feel free to bring your own snacks - there are kitchen facilities available in all cottages.

Itinerary

The schedule may change depending on the needs of the group. Please use this as a guide.

Day 1 - Thursday 20th February

- 4pm - Arrival, set up camp or find your cottage
- 6pm - Dinner in the Lodge
- 7pm - Opening talk and retreat introduction

Days 2 + 3 - Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd February

- 7am - morning meditation
- 8am - breakfast
- 9am - morning talk, followed by morning practices for listening and connecting to the living world.
- 1pm - lunch
- 2pm - reading, facilitated group discussion, group exercises and walking meditation
- 6pm - dinner
- Evening: Storytelling / free time

Day 4 - Sunday 23rd February

- 7am - Morning meditation
- 8am - Breakfast
- 9am - Walking meditation
- 10am - final talk
- Departures
What to bring

Even in summer, the weather in the Otways can be changeable. Please be prepared for hot days, cool nights, rain, sun and insects.

- Hiking shoes or boots
- Warm polar fleece jacket or woollen jumper
- Long pants
- Light jumper
- Beanie
- Shorts and/or light walking trousers
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Socks and underwear
- Lightweight indoor footwear (thongs/sports sandals; for the lodge)
- Sun hat & sunscreen
- Raincoat
- Bathers and beachtowel
- Head torch or small torch
- Earplugs
- Water bottle(s)
- Personal toiletries such as toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, moisturiser. Please bring biodegradable / eco friendly soap and shampoo.
- Personal medication or EpiPens
- Insect repellent
- Pen and paper for journal writing and activities
- Meditation cushion or low meditation chair
- Meditation blanket/wrap
- Watch or some way of keeping time
- **If camping with own tent:** Tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, pillow, towel
- **If sharing a cabin-tent:** Sleeping bag, pillow, towel

Extra gear to consider:
- Camera
- Spare batteries and chargers
- Day pack (small day pack for day hikes to fit lunchbox, water, raincoat, etc)

Mobile reception in the retreat area is limited with no access to wifi. We encourage participants to use this retreat as an opportunity to unplug and disconnect from the digital world. As such we suggest you tend to personal and work matters prior to the retreat so you can be fully present during our time together.
Walking times

This retreat will involve some physical activity, including walks of up to 2 hours across uneven terrain, and sitting in meditation for 45 minutes. The campground is situated 20 minutes’ steep walk from the meditation hall and dining area. We will do our best to accommodate all abilities and adapt activities where possible - please contact us if you wish to discuss further.

Insurance

We highly recommend that you take out travelers insurance and/or ambulance insurance. The latter will cover you in case of an emergency evacuation.

Participation

This retreat is an opportunity to integrate Spiritual Ecology practices through participating in practical retreat needs. There will be a roster that will request volunteer support in cooking, cleaning and other tasks throughout the retreat.

Suggested Reading

*Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth*
A Collection of Essays edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

*Emergence Magazine*
Edited by Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee
www.emergencemagazine.org

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