

Welcome to the Selkie Clan

In Celtic legend, the Selkies were creatures who could hold both human and seal form. In the water, they acted as seals, responding to their world through instinctual, non-verbal ways. On land, they could slough off their seal-skins and behave as humans, bringing the song of the sea with them. Although many Selkie legends speak of the pain and challenge of trying to live in two worlds, there is much we can learn from these magical beings.

In this Clan we will delve into the deeps of instinctual, non-verbal, mystical realms. Allowing our animal bodies to move freely and instinctually, we will follow our inner impulses to open those primal, deeply connected places within. By bringing our bodies back into connection with source, with land and tree and stone and water, we will move in concert with the landscape. Our work will then allow us to bring out the voice of the earth through our human language, thus connecting our humanity with our primal source.

We will use several embodied, movement practices to support this work, especially Authentic Movement. Authentic Movement is a technique developed by Mary Whitehouse, wherein an individual moves from inner impulses with mind quieted and eyes closed, while a witness holds a safe container within which the mover can freely explore. Many of our sessions will be held outdoors, so we can explore our connection with the land and the elements. Therefore it is important to be prepared to move in all kinds of weather. Our movement sessions will be followed by a harvest period in which each person will transform his or her embodied experience into written language. The written word will then be used to re-enter the embodied place, making a full circle from the depths to the surface, from the surface to the depths.

Your Clan Leader is **Juniper Talbot**. I have 27 years of training and experience in ritual and magic, having received initiation in a Celtic based witchcraft coven in 1982. I am a professional dancer and have developed and taught spiritual dance and movement practices in the US and abroad, including at the Parliament of World's religions held in Barcelona in 2004. I currently teach a weekly sacred dance class in my hometown of Cummington, MA, and have received a grant to create and perform an evening length performance, *Spirit of the Trees*, with musician Michael Dunning.

I am happy to have **Maggie Shollenberger (Magnolia)** working with me this year as a Clan Leader-in-training. Maggie and I have danced together and practiced Authentic Movement together for many years. Her experience with movement practices, especially Authentic Movement, will be a great asset to our Clan this year.

What to Wear: Please bring good rain gear and rain boots, as well as warm layers, warm footwear, hats and gloves for outside movement work in any weather. Try to choose outerwear in which you can move as easily as possible, while also staying warm and dry. For indoor sessions, bring extra warm socks, as shoes and boots will not be used for indoor movement. Long, flowy clothing will not be appropriate for the kind of movement we will be doing – either indoors or out.

For Our Clan Meeting Space: Bring something comfortable to sit on, such as back-jack or cushions. Bring an extra blanket, or warm shawl to wrap up in when not moving. Bring a water bottle and snacks in critter-proof containers for grounding.

For Our Clan Table: Bring a candle or any special object in keeping with our Selkie theme, water and earth.

For Our Work: Please bring a notebook and a pen

Preparation: Many writers/poets have successfully brought the mystical language of the natural world out into human language. Over the course of the weekend, I will be sharing some of these writings with you. For our first session on Friday night, I would like each of you to find and bring with you a written piece (original work is fine, too!) that seems to capture some essence of deep connection to and understanding of the natural world. We will share these aloud on Friday night.

Schedule: I will give a detailed schedule upon arrival. Some of our Clan times will be longer than the general schedule. We will also be responsible for a kitchen shift and for two attunements during the weekend. These will be on your schedule when you arrive at our Selkie table.

“When you walk across the fields with your mind open and holy, then from all the stones and all the growing things, and all animals, the sparks of their soul come out and cling to you, and then they... become a holy fire in you.”

Unknown Jewish Mystic

I look forward to seeing you there!

Blessings!

Juniper Talbot