

## **Welcome to Rites of Spring!**

We hope that this Community Guide will serve as a good introduction to who we are and what we do when we come together. Rites of Spring is designed to encourage interdependence among those attending. Our living, extended and inclusive community takes shape in physical form each spring. This community holds together because of a few simple expectations based on personal responsibility, some shared basic values and a personal spiritual connection with the sacred Earth. These expectations grow from a sensitivity and respect for other people regardless of spiritual tradition, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or other differences, along with a willingness to engage in the daily practice of living in a community.

We are happy to return this year to our beloved mountaintop site. Every year a few things change since we were last here, and it is important to be flexible as we learn about new blessings and new limits. Let's make an effort to be patient with each other as we learn, and "flow" — even if things need to change midway through the week.

## **Connecting with the Sacred, with Nature, and with Each Other**

The sacred is the bridge between us and the great mystery. A stone, a friend, a symbol, a ritual, a song... any of these can be experienced as sacred when one is open to that kind of awareness. This year at Rites of Spring we encourage you to find new ways to experience the sacred for yourself — or even just open to the possibility of that kind of experience. As you choose how to spend your time here, we hope that you allow space for sitting still... space for making connections — with people and with nature — and space to experience something new.

## **Sparks of Inspiration, Ripples of Action: Exploring how we walk in the world**

We come to the EarthSpirit Community from different places and paths, but we all share the belief that the Earth is sacred. How do we live that belief in our day-to-day lives? Whether our individual ways are large and dramatic, or small and simple, public and visible, or private and subtle, together we make a vibrant mosaic, a beautiful pattern of spirited and spiritual engagement with the world. We encourage you to attend some of the programs that are part of the Sparks and Ripples track as indicated in the program book.

## **Sparks and Ripples Programs**

These presentations and events explore how our community's spirituality manifests in the world — actions that ripple out from the center of our spiritual work far beyond the bounds of Rites of Spring. These programs range from alternative medicines to sustainable agriculture to activism. Look for this symbol next to offerings on the main program board.



## Service

### — for our living Community

Working together is an important part of building community. We are blessed to have a community that understands that not only is each volunteer shift integral to the operation of Rites as a whole, but it also can be a fun way to get to know people. At Rites of Spring, if we didn't work together, food wouldn't get cooked, there would be no Healers Hall, no Kids Club, no set-up for concerts etc. Although many of us contribute to the culture by teaching, performing, or dancing at the fire, if those contributions are not joined by helping in the more "mundane" levels of life, the community will cease to function.

The staff who plan and make Rites happen each year are volunteers. Just like you, we come to the mountain to be in community and in shared spiritual space. The ethos of volunteerism runs through all of what EarthSpirit does, and when you come to the mountain for Rites of Spring, your community service shift is how you "plug-in" and become a part of that shared spirit. If you wish to get more involved in the volunteer activity that supports EarthSpirit in future years, feel free to reach out to an [EarthSpirit board member](#). We are so happy when our community grows in its capacity to get involved and co-create.

**Your community service shift during the week is important.** If you don't show up, you make it harder on everyone, creating confusion and ill will. If you have a conflict with the work shift you chose at Registration, it's your responsibility to trade shifts with someone else and see to it that your original choice is covered. Our Community Service Coordinator will be available near the door at the beginning of lunchtime every day so you may swap your shift. Of course, if you have the energy or simply want to connect, we can always use more volunteer help. Just talk to them, they will know where help might be needed.

### — for the Mountain

Every year we make an effort to give back to the mountain that we call home for the week. We **compost and recycle**, we are conscious of leaving the site better than we found it, and each year we hold an **Invasive Species Pull** to help the Nature Conservancy eradicate some of the invasive plants that have taken up residence here. Please join in and make a gift of time to this beautiful place. Check the Program Book for timing.

## Community Ritual and Special Events

Every moment of our lives is sacred — if only we could keep that in our consciousness. The rituals and symbols at Rites of Spring are structured to help us remember — from simple ceremonies in the woods, to the Maypole we dance on Thursday, to the giant web-weaving on Saturday, to the various shrines that will emerge all over the site. We strive to make each breath and each step intentionally connected to spirit and community. Please plan to be a part of our community rituals and bring a small ball of natural yarn or twine to add your wishes and your color to the web on Saturday.

Our **Opening Fire-lighting Ritual** takes place on Wednesday night at 9pm, as we welcome the Rites of Spring community from all directions and process together to light the fires across the camp. Please gather on the beach a little before 9.

On Thursday, we'll weave the ribbons together and announce the significant transitions in our lives to our community at The **Maypole Ritual**.

Friday morning before breakfast, in years when it applies, join the community at the Central Fire Circle to welcome any of our youth who are completing their **Coming of Age Ritual**. There is often a concert that evening as the weekend arrivals come in.

On Saturday afternoon, we weave the **Web of Community**, opening to our connections with all beings of the Earth and reaching out into the world. In the evening we will light it as it becomes a space for meditation and quiet reverie.

**The Feast**, on Sunday, is our final night's celebration of community, usually concluding with music and followed by the closing of the Sacred Fire. Dress in your finery, bring your goblet and your community spirit and join us by the dining hall!

Sunday night we ritually **Close the Sacred Fire** expressing our gratitude for the way it has held us through the week and opened our hearts.

## **Music and Dancing**

**The Sacred Fire** is a prime location for drumming and dancing with intention. Join our excellent percussionists (you don't have to be an expert to drum with us!) and find your ecstasy there on **Wednesday, Friday** and **Saturday** nights.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights usually feature **live music performances** and/or DJ dancing of some kind as well.

## **First time at Rites of Spring?**

Come to our "Welcome Meet Up" at 7:30 on Wednesday night, and to the "Connections Lunches" when they are scheduled. There you'll get a chance to meet some of the core members of our community and learn how to connect with the long-standing traditions of the gathering. We'll make introductions and talk a little about the culture of Rites of Spring, how it has evolved over the years and how to offer your own talents as well as learning from others. All Newcomers are asked to come to at least one of these fun social events so we can get to meet you. You do not need to be on the meal plan to attend, just bring your own food along.

## Sacred Spaces & Shrines

Sacred spaces are as diverse and distinct as the spiritual paths of our community.

Sacred Shrines are located throughout the camp; we encourage you to visit them and to teach your children how to respect their sacred nature. These spaces have been formed during the Village Builders Assembly with love and intention for the benefit of the entire community with the intention that they will be used to connect with the various aspects of nature they are dedicated to. It is respectful to check with the group who created the space before removing or significantly changing anything. If you do not know whom to talk to, see someone in Operations. At each Shrine, you may simply meditate or make use of the objects provided (as well as your own) to make offerings.

Some Shrines you are likely to find include the Stone Shrine, Ancestor Shrine, Lake Shrine, Reflection Shrine, Heart Shrine, Green Ones Shrine, and Fire Shrine. A map of locations will be posted near the schedule board in the Dining Hall.

### The Center Fire

Located at the base of the hill in front of the Dining Hall, this is at the heart of Rites of Spring. We hope that each evening this fire circle will become an informal place for stories, songs, and conversation — or some quiet drumming.

Other fire rings can be found on the beach, at Bear Rock, in the Grotto, and in the cabin areas. At certain times, special events will be scheduled at fire circles and these take priority, but when nothing is scheduled there, anyone is free to gather there as long as you respect the space as sacred, provide your own collected firewood, and ensure that there is a bucket of water present. If you're the last person at a fire circle, make sure the fire is completely put out with water. Never leave a fire attended only by children.

### The Sacred Fire Shrine at Bear Rock

The Fire Shrine, located near Bear Rock Lodge, is the home of the Rites of Spring Sacred Fire. The fire rituals held there are extended rituals that support intentional drumming and dancing, sometimes until dawn. ***Everyone is welcome and encouraged to engage in these rituals!*** As with all of the Shrines on site, please respect that this is intentional space, and refrain from social behaviors like chatting, smoking or drinking at the Sacred Fire. There are countless ways to plug in, and plenty of people who will happily show you how if you'd like direct guidance.

### We want you to play an active role in creating the Sacred Fire!

Some of the most sacred work happens hours before the sun even sets. For about an hour, between 5 pm and 6 pm, the ritual area is lovingly cared for by light cleaning and tidying, filling torches and water, and laying rangoli — beautiful cornmeal mandalas that welcome the unseen ones. The mandalas are designed by everyone present and provide a unique opportunity to help create this ritual space. You are welcome to join us on Friday at 5 or Sunday at 6pm to help us prepare this space.

## **Fire-spinners**

For safety reasons, any fire-spinning, fire-breathing, or other fire play must be done at the main waterfront or on the sand at the Bear Rock beach. Look at the schedule to find specific times and planned workshops and events. You must have a spotter and appropriate safety equipment on hand when working with fire. *All minors must have their parents or specific parent-approved adult supervision present when working with fire.*

Invitations to spin during either the fire-lighting ritual or the brief performance following the Community Feast may be offered to people who are 18 or older or who have completed their Coming of Age ritual. Let Operations know if you are interested.

## **60 Plus...**

As some members of our community move toward and into their 60s and beyond, we encourage creative conversation about what it means to age in our spiritual community and how everyone can best remain an active and contributing part of it even as our abilities change. The 60-Plus affinity group meets every day and serves as a distillery for ideas, projects, and suggestions.

## **Accessibility**

Our Mountain is on steep and uneven ground, and we spend a good deal of time outdoors. This can be quite a challenge for some of us. We offer several different services to accommodate our mobility-challenged community members, and we also expect that you will come prepared with whatever adaptive equipment you may need. Your lightweight folding chair is your friend! Please bring it to all major rituals, and it will also come in handy at workshops and other events.

If you are physically able, please be conscious of those who are most in need of the limited seating available, especially in our outdoor locations. If you are willing to be an assistant to folks who need a little extra help moving around at our major rituals, please sign up at Registration or speak to Harry.

The Ruby Slipper is your chariot. Ruby makes several regular tours of the site per day, and will also be available at Hobbit and Ann's discretion if you need a special trip. If you have a condition that qualifies you to ride Ruby, **YOU'LL NEED TO PREREGISTER**. Please read your pre-Rites information for more details.

In general, we have a wonderful, generous and friendly community here at ROS. Most of us are more than willing to help if we can. Please don't hesitate to ask for a hand if you need one.

## **The Family Program**

The goal of the Family Program is to create an experience for our young participants and their significant adults which will connect them with the spirit of Rites of Spring while also providing special age-appropriate activities and spiritual education. Our youngest kids (up to age 8) are our **Kids Club**

crew. Our **Bridges** program is for ages 9-14, those that aren't in Kids Club but haven't yet done their Coming of Age ritual. **Teens**, ages 15-20, are our emerging leaders. We hope that parents and children will read the program books together and choose activities to attend during the week. Please plan to attend the Family Meet and Greet with your Kids Club children on Thursday morning before the Maypole to review the schedule with other families and Kids Club Volunteers. The general schedule also includes information about which adult workshops young people are invited to attend.

### **Children and Ritual**

Rites of Spring includes community rituals, celebrations, and sacred spaces which connect participants to the magic and energy of the event, the spirits of the Earth, and each other. We hope that Rites of Spring provides a great opportunity for children to learn about sacred space and how to interact with it. Children are encouraged to attend rituals and to visit the shrines, and the Web, once it's made, with their parents. We ask parents to please stay with them there and help them interact in a respectful and positive way so that they can learn by doing. If during a ritual your children are playing or fussing in a way that is disruptive to others or makes it hard to hear, please temporarily move away from the main circle. Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times!

### **Kids Club for Children ages 1.5 to 8**

Please remember that Kids Club is staffed by parents and community volunteers and is a cooperative — *not* a licensed day-care facility. All parents remain responsible for all of their children at all times and each parent whose child will be visiting Kids Club is asked to sign up for at least one additional shift during the weekend. Children who are under 8 or who do not have permission to be on their own will be supervised by the volunteers until a responsible party comes to retrieve them. Family programming is available for children and parents together in the mornings. Drop off hours are provided in the afternoons. Please be on time to collect your child in consideration of the volunteers.

Children 8-10 years old may also attend Kids Club, but they may not require the same intensive supervision as younger ones, and their parents may choose to give them a little more freedom by allowing them to sign themselves in and out of Kids Club.

Kids Club is designed to be a community resource. Although you are welcome to use the space when it is not scheduled for activities, please leave the space the way you found it.

### **Bridges (9-14)**

There are a number of classes and activities offered each day which are specially geared towards older kids and teens. We recommend that parents prepare their children in advance to take advantage of the programs offered to help them connect with each other and with the intention of the gathering as a whole. Bridges will meet each morning, have breakfast, and make a day plan together, and Wednesday evening we'll all get to meet each other at a "dessert social". Look for us at the table outside the dining hall with the "Bridges" centerpiece. Bridges are also invited to sit together daily at lunch to socialize and talk about what it means to be growing up in the EarthSpirit community. We have some topics and guests to help get the conversations started. Teens in the general 14-18 age range are also welcome to join in this time.

## **Teens (15-20ish)**

Teens are our emerging teachers, ritualists, and leaders. Many of the folks in this group have done their Coming of Age ritual with our community and most programming at Rites of Spring is open to them. They are encouraged to take leadership roles within Kids Club and Bridges, and to seek mentoring and guidance from EarthSpirit leadership.

## **Community Compact**

All young people 8-17 and their parents or guardians are asked to sign a Community Compact form. The agreement distills for kids and parents the boundaries and expectations and how we work together to make Rites of Spring a safe place for all of us. Please be sure to turn in yours at Registration when you arrive.

Specifics about all youth-focused activities are listed in the program book, as well as the “Young People’s Guide to Rites of Spring.” There are also many workshops for general audience that are appropriate for younger people too; check age recommendations in the descriptions.

## **Meals**

All meals will be served only at specified times. Please arrive on time and do not ask for exceptions. We generally allow small children (up to about age 5) with a responsible adult and anyone with mobility issues to be admitted to the dining hall first. We appreciate your patience.

Be sure you’re wearing your Rites of Spring bracelet when you arrive for each meal and use only the marked entrance door. Only those who are on a meal plan will be admitted to the dining hall during meal times. Volunteers will watch for bracelets and make sure that the dining hall is cleared of people about one hour before each meal to make it easier to set up and keep track. Please help make their job easier by cooperating happily. Each person is responsible for clearing their own dishes and wiping down their table promptly after each meal, so the volunteers doing dishes can finish and get out of the kitchen.

Menus will be posted each day. If you have special dietary needs or concerns, or absolutely need a list of ingredients, please wait until the kitchen is not busy (such as mid-afternoon or just after a meal) to try to talk to one of our kitchen team.. Vegetarian and gluten-free food will be available and marked at meals. Omnivores, please be aware that this food is for those who will not be eating meat courses, and respect their needs by not taking those dishes.

At each, meal volunteers will be behind the serving line offering a selection of delicious food cooked by other generous members of our community. Mealtime lasts an hour and a half. We will offer first servings for the first hour of mealtime and seconds after everyone has been through the line, during the final half hour. Please do your part to assure plenty of food for all by waiting until that last half hour to go up for seconds and by ensuring that your children do the same.

## **A Few Words about Drugs & Alcohol**

If you choose to smoke cannabis or drink alcohol at Rites of Spring, please be moderate and responsible about your consumption and considerate of the community around you. Cannabis is legal for personal use in Massachusetts, but not in public spaces. The legal drinking and smoking age in Massachusetts is 21. Rites of Spring is in Massachusetts so... Do not put yourself or any of us in legal jeopardy by providing alcohol or cannabis to minors or by smoking or drinking if you are under age. Be aware that the sale of alcoholic beverages without a license is also against the law.

Illegal substances are not permitted at Rites of Spring. While we do not presume to pass judgment on those who choose to use such substances, their presence would create a legal threat for everyone here. If their use is part of your spiritual practices, please respect this community by saving that for when you are at home.

## **Listeners**

The Listeners are a group of Rites of Spring veterans who are really good at listening with strict confidentiality, at grounding, at answering program questions, and directing you to resources on site.. You will know a Listener by the big “L” they will be wearing.

## **About Sex and Sexuality**

We want to ensure both a safe and joyful Rites of Spring for everyone. Our community includes and welcomes people with a wide variety of sexualities, gender identities, and relationship structures. In this sex-positive community we are clear that anything other than an enthusiastic “yes” means “no,” that minors are underage and off limits to adults, and that just because someone is dressing in a particular way, does not mean that they are asking for sexual attention. Rituals and ecstatic dance can raise lots of energy that can sometimes feel sexual even when it’s not. Please pay attention to boundaries — both your own and those of others.

## **Addressing Conflict or Harassment**

In any community, especially a diverse one, conflicts occasionally arise. Sometimes rituals or workshops can be provocative, sometimes personal interactions can include behaviors that make someone feel uncomfortable or even unsafe. We believe it is most healthy and constructive to make time to process this on site, immediately if possible.

If you experience abuse, harassment, theft, or anything else that makes you uncomfortable at Rites of Spring, we strongly encourage you to let the event organizers know by going to Operations and ask the volunteer there to call someone from the Resolution Team. We want to do everything possible to sustain a safe and respectful environment at Rites of Spring, and to do that, we need to know when issues arise. Reports can be made confidentially, and except in cases where we believe there to be a direct and immediate safety risk, we will leave it to you whether to take further action. Potential options include the use of trained restorative practice mediators, direct action by event organizers, or calling legal authorities.



The organizers of the gathering are ultimately responsible for dealing with cases of disruptive behavior. If such a situation comes up, in order to protect all the participants at the gathering, the Rites of Spring staff will decide on any action that needs to be taken, up to and including expulsion from the site without refund.

## **Photography at Rites of Spring**

We discourage the use of cameras at Rites of Spring and encourage you to be fully present here, in this moment.

- **Please do not take photographs during ritual:**

It disrupts the energy and focus of rituals when photographs or video are taken during them. It also distracts others.

- Ask before taking social pictures:

Some photography for personal use is fine if you have the permission of each of the people being photographed. Please ask first. If there is a candid photo that cannot wait for permission... after you take it, immediately check with the subject and ask them then — being ready to delete the shot if it is not OK.

- Posting photographs on the web:

Whether it is on Facebook or a special personal site, it is fine as long as you have the permission of the identifiable people in the photograph, or the parents of any visible children. Posting photographs without permission can endanger jobs or children's custody in ways that are dangerous and unfair. This is a private event and we want everyone to feel as safe as possible. Please respect our community and only post those photos of you and your friends for which you have clear permission.

- Let people know what this is but not where it is:

Once you have permission to post, it is great to say that pictures are from EarthSpirit's Rites of Spring — even that it is in western MA, just *please do not post our physical location or the name of the camp* so that we can maintain some level of privacy in years to come.

- There are "official" photographers:

As a part of EarthSpirit's effort to document Rites of Spring's history we have 2 or 3 identified staff members shooting archival photography and video during the event. If you do not want to be included in these photographs, please let us know when you arrive and we will connect you with the photographers so that they will know to avoid you. If you are uncomfortable, feel free to ask a photographer to delete a picture that you are in once the ritual or other event is over so as not to disturb the energy in the space.

- Send us copies!

We are always happy to receive copies of any photographs or video you have of Rites of Spring — from any year. If you are willing to share, please leave your contact information with the people at Operations or at the EarthSpirit Tent.

## Communication

### Telephones

At Rites of Spring we try to hold a separate space for each other, apart from our everyday lives and many people use it as a time to go off-line. In this spirit, ***please limit your use of cell phones — whether for calls or email — to the parking areas*** and **do not use cell phones or computers in shared cabin spaces**. There is a land line telephone available just inside the door to New Horizons (where Operations is located). Incoming phone messages from calls that come to the camp phone will be posted outside the Hi-Rock staff office, the small building next to New Horizons.

### Walkie-Talkies

While we understand that it is important for parents and children to stay connected at Rites of Spring and that walkie-talkies are useful for this purpose, please restrict their use to urgent communication so it does not disturb others. ***IMPORTANT: Use family band channels 1-14 ONLY***, to reserve higher channels for staff emergency communication.

### Master Schedule

The Master Schedule is posted at the Dining Hall, the EarthSpirit Tent, and at Bear Rock and Parker Seeley Lodges. All times, locations, and changes are there!

### Daily Bulletins

Announcements about ritual details, last-minute schedule changes, daily menus, and other items of interest will be posted in several locations around camp — near the Master Schedules inside and outside the Dining Hall and the Lodges, and at the EarthSpirit Tent.

### Announcements

We try to keep announcements to a minimum. They may be made at the dining hall prior to mealtime or around the camp by the staff if necessary, but most info will also be given out via the Daily Bulletin which will be posted on each end of camp.

### Lost and Found

“Finders-Keepers” does not work at Rites of Spring. If you find an object, please return it to the Operations office. Lost and found items will be collected and may be retrieved there. Please be sure to write in the lost-and-found log book anything you put in, take out, or have lost. Anything not claimed at the gathering will be kept for a short period, but not forever! If you find you are missing something when you get home, contact our office right away with a complete description of the item in case it was turned in.

## **The Flow of the Day**

### **Intensives**

These are ongoing, in-depth workshops or a series of related workshops, which meet for an hour and a half Friday - Sunday. Check the program book for topics.

### **Affinity Groups**

Affinity groups are an opportunity for people to meet and connect with others with common interests: including Queering the Circle, 60+, BIPOC and more. Most Affinity Groups also meet in the morning three times during the week.

### **EarthSpirit Voices**

These community discussions are a way to deepen our understanding and creation of pagan culture within the EarthSpirit Community. On the years when we have them, you can find details in the Program Book and Schedule.

### **At the End of the Day**

We need to respect each other's need for sleep, rest, and grounding after long and intense days. Although we don't have a comprehensive noise curfew as such, all cabins and living areas should be quiet between midnight and 8:00 am. Please don't socialize in sleeping areas late at night, but look for new friends at campfires, one of the Lodges, at the Center Fire or in the Dining Hall. The Dining Hall is also a good place for early birds, or parents of early birds, to socialize without disturbing neighbors.

## **About Our Site**

### **Mapping the Territory**

Get your map of the camp at Registration. Maps will be posted at Operations and the Dining Hall, as well as in the center of the printed version of this Guide. Taking time to familiarize yourself with it will help you feel oriented and at home.

### **The Cabins**

Sharing a cabin is a great way to make new friends! There will be a sign on the door of each cabin letting you know how many beds will be occupied. Please be aware, and take up only the appropriate amount of space. Keep in mind that these are shared spaces and do not plan any social or ritual activities in your cabin unless each person living there agrees to it beforehand. All buildings at the site have a NO SMOKING/NO PETS policy (the chipmunks assume they are exempt). All cabins have electricity but don't always have a plug next to each bunk. If you require electricity for a medical device please consider bringing a properly rated extension cord for your device. A multi-plug (splitter) is also a good idea since more than one person might need to use the same outlet. Please work with your cabin mates to ensure that you are not overloading the fuses. If you bring a space heater, use only one at a time in any building and make sure it is turned OFF when you leave the building! There are centralized bathrooms and showers in each living area. More than one hairdryer will trip the circuit-breaker.

## **Camping**

Tent camping at this site is beautiful and varied. Bathrooms or porta-johns are available nearby, and campers use the showers in the closest cabin area. Please set up your tent only in the areas designated on your map or approved at Registration. If in doubt, ask first! In the past we have had to ask people to move their tents after they were all set up and that's not much fun for us or for the campers involved.

## **Bear Rock and Parker Seeley Lodges**

The large first floor spaces and downstairs bathrooms in the heated Lodges are warm and open to all gathering participants, not just Lodge residents, when they are not being used for a scheduled activity (scheduled times will be posted). These buildings are not quiet living areas as programs take place on the first floor most nights. Once the programs are over though we ask people to remember that people may be trying to sleep upstairs, and keep the noise level reasonably low after midnight.

## **The Bathrooms**

It is easy for these spaces to get messy really quickly since they are used by many people every day. No one is "on duty" to clean them, though the camp staff does make a circuit through every day. Please pay attention to cleaning up after yourself, and also clean up after others if there is a mess. If the bathroom needs more soap or toilet paper, please let Operations know. We are a community and are jointly responsible for the conditions at Rites of Spring.

## **The Waterfront**

Swimming and boating are allowed only in the afternoons when the lifeguards are on duty 2-6pm. (2-4 on Saturday) Bathing suits are required and life jackets are required in the boats. Children under 10 must be supervised by a responsible adult in addition to the lifeguards. There are the camp rules, with which we must comply.

## **Floating Bridges**

These bridges are located past the boathouse. Children under the age of 10 are not allowed on the floating bridges without a responsible adult present.

## **Appalachian Trail**

A section of the Appalachian Trail runs by the camp near Bear Rock, so don't be surprised if you see a hiker or two if you go way out in the woods, especially over the weekend. Be pleasant, but don't encourage anyone to stay — let them know politely that this is a private event.

## **Use of Fire**

Please do not use open fires of any kind in the cabins or other buildings, including candles or incense. If there is a "red flag" warning in effect, no fires will be permitted anywhere. Campfires and open cooking fires are permitted only in designated fire rings in the cabin and camping areas. Please be certain they are fully extinguished with water before leaving them and refill the water bucket for the next person. Never leave a fire attended only by children.

## **Smoking**

Cigarette smoking is not permitted inside any of the buildings or tents on camp or within 25 feet of the entryways. An area outside the Dining Hall and away from the doors and tents will be designated for smokers by the cans which are placed there for butt collection and which should be emptied regularly by smokers. In any other location, please field strip your butts and leave no trace on the ground.

## **Practical Locations to Know About**

### **Operations**

This is the place to go when you have a question concerning the nuts-and-bolts functioning of Rites of Spring (for example, if you need to move your car, if there is a problem with one of the bathrooms, or if your cabin light goes out). This is also the place to go if all other sources of information fail to answer your question. Operations is responsible for communications in the event of any emergencies. If someone may need to contact you from home, make sure Operations knows how to find you. The Operations Office is at New Horizons, down the hill across from the Dining Hall. It will be open from 9:00am to 9:00pm. After hours, someone will be on call for emergencies.

### **First Aid and medical emergencies — New information! Please read!**

When you are packing for Rites of Spring, please bring any over-the-counter medications you may anticipate needing during the week, as well as band-aids, antibiotic ointment, bug spray, sunblock, etc.

If you find you are in need of basic first-aid supplies, over-the-counter medications, or tick kits, you can go to Operations located in the front of New Horizons between the hours of 9am and 9pm and someone will be happy to assist you. We will have limited supplies onsite and will be able to give you enough of what you need to hold you over until the next town-run where you can place an order for the rest of the gathering.

If you are feeling poorly and have COVID-like symptoms, we will have home tests available. Please make use of these and do not stay on site if you are sick. Sharing is not caring in this case.

Children and teens must have their parent or legal guardian with them if they are seeking any oral medicine.

If you have a medical emergency between the hours of 9am and 9pm, please go to Operations, explain the situation, and the camp staff will be alerted. If an emergency occurs after 9pm please go in through the front doors of New Horizons to the Operations room located on your left. Instructions on how to contact someone will be on the counter to your right.

We do not have a doctor on duty at Rites of Spring, so if you believe that you need medical attention, the nearest facility is Fairview **Hospital** 29 Lewis Avenue **Great Barrington, MA** 01230 ; Telephone Number: (413) 528-0790

Thank you for helping us create a safe, healthy, and healing gathering this year!

## **The EarthSpirit Tent**

Located in the Merchants' Circle, this is a great place to ask questions, find out what is going on, or satisfy that chocolate fix you've been needing. Here you will find books and CD recordings by several of our featured presenters, as well as EarthSpirit T-shirts, mugs and a variety of drinks and snacks. Other specialty products made by EarthSpirit members can also be found here, as well as literature about the EarthSpirit community and its events. This is also where the Clothing Swap happens! The EarthSpirit tent is a great place to come hang out!

Nearby you will find **The EarthSpirit Pavillion**, a location created to offer everyone, including our older or less mobile community members, a comfortable place to hang out in the midst of all the "action." The Pavillion will host several workshops and social events during the weekend, as well as the EarthSpirit Silent Auction on Sunday. Drop by to "set a spell" and chat or look through the photo albums and books.

## **The Town Run**

As a service to attendees, we organize a daily town run to one local shopping plaza, with a drug store, a grocery store, a hardware store, and a liquor store. We want to keep these trips short for the volunteers who do them, so the town run is limited to only these four stores. If you need something from town, **come to Operations before 12:00 noon**. Talk to the volunteer there and they will help you place your order. Then put enough cash (small bills are best!) in the envelope to cover the item. (Any change will be rounded down to the nearest dollar. Any excess will go toward the Scholarship Fund.) You can pick up your order, usually ready between 5:00 and 6:30 that day, on the porch outside Operations.

## **Healthy Advice on Wildlife**

While we are enjoying such a beautiful setting rich in wildlife, there are two things to be cautious about: animals carrying rabies, and deer ticks. It is very important to be aware of deer ticks. These ticks are tiny, about the size of a pinhead, and can carry Lyme Disease. They are especially plentiful this year. To protect yourself and your children, wear shoes and socks in the woods, and check all over your body for ticks regularly.

In addition, any animal that acts sick or strange, or is abnormally unafraid of humans, might be rabid. Give any animal acting this way a wide berth and report the animal to the Operations Staff immediately.

Thank you for reading this Guide!

Much more information about the specifics of this year's Rites of Spring and, in particular, the schedule can be found in the Program Book you receive upon arrival.