

# OCTOBER 2009 MEDITATION IN THE DESERT

## Sponsored by

### SKY MIND RETREATS

#### **Professor Valley Field Camp near Moab, Utah**

Professor Valley Field Camp is located in the Colorado River basin about 40 minutes NE of Moab. It is located on BLM land below Castleton Tower, with other spires and mesas all around. It is surrounded by BLM land and the occasional ranch. There is a spectacular canyon a day hike up the creek and shorter walks in any direction. October is usually a very moderate and pleasant climate in this high desert country.

#### **The Retreat**

This retreat will be a silent meditation retreat with alternating periods of sitting, walking, and movement meditation. There will be instructions provided each day and throughout the retreat. There will be dharma talks and opportunities to ask questions, as well as individual and group meetings with the teachers. This is a Buddhist Insight meditation retreat, but will also draw from the teachers' experiences with practices in nature, Tibetan practices and practices that help support deep relaxation and presencing in the body. The retreat will predominantly be held outside (weather permitting) and will emphasize connecting with and learning from nature. The teachers, Carla and Susie, will guide you through the retreat, progressively encouraging and cultivating your direct experience of nature and mind. The beauty, quiet and expansiveness of this spectacular location, make it well suited for this form of practice. No previous experience is required.

#### **Professor Valley Field Camp Facilities**

PVFC has two yurts that will be used for cooking, eating meals, and inside practice if the weather is wet. Tipis with cots provide housing for 4-5 people each. Camping is also available if you prefer. There are a multitude of spaces for outdoor eating, sitting, and walking. There are propane heated showers -approximately three showers/person during our stay as water is trucked in; though the local creek is available anytime. There are vault toilets (latrines). There is no heating except in the meditation yurt, so retreatants will need to be prepared for the possibility of cool nights as well as cool mornings and evenings.

You will need to provide sitting stuff, sleeping bag and sleeping pad (though these can be rented), towel, and personal items. (see equipment list for complete information) If you prefer to camp, you will need to provide camping equipment.

#### **Weather**

The temperature in October ranges from the 40's at night to the 60's to 70's during the day. There a chance of afternoon thundershowers, please bring raingear.

## Food

Food will be vegetarian, organic where possible, wholesome and plentiful. There will be some protein, in the form of nuts, beans, eggs, seeds, nut butters, and cheese, available at all meals. There will be non-dairy and wheat free options available for those who are lactose or wheat intolerant. There will be tea, fruit, and snacks (rice cakes and nut butter, etc.) available at all times.

## Accommodations

Please let us know if you plan to camp. Tipis will be same sex, and you may make a roommate request. When coming with a partner, in order to give yourself to the practice and give space and time to your loved one, you will need to use separate tents if you choose to camp, or request separate tipis.

## Work Meditation

This is our opportunity to both integrate our practice and to serve the community – our sangha. Each person will be asked to participate in a daily ritual of either meal prep, clean-up, bell ringing or other shared need. Participants will sign up for these work meditations or 'yogi job 'at registration.

## Emergency Contact

There is no cell phone coverage at the site. If there is an emergency at home, family members can call 435-259-7750. This is for true emergencies, as it will require a 1½ hour round-trip drive for the message to be delivered.

## Creating the Retreat Container

### Precepts

We will undertake to follow the five traditional lay precepts of non-harming during our time together, forming a reliable basis for mutual trust in our little community:

1. To refrain from killing and from other actions that harm oneself or others.
2. To refrain from stealing, from taking anything that is not freely given.
3. To refrain from sexual activity during the retreat.
4. To refrain from lying and from harsh, abusive or damaging speech.
5. To refrain from consuming alcohol, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants.

## Noble Silence

Meditation retreats are traditionally silent. We will emphasize silence, both to deepen our practice and as a refuge. All yogis will have the opportunity for interviews both individually or as a group with the teachers. There will be a message board if you need to communicate to retreat staff or teachers at any time. To help maintain silence, please be sure all buzzers, cell-phones, watch alarms, etc. have been turned off when you arrive. If there are issues concerning a yogi job, or personal needs, these questions should be directed to Susie, Carla or Jenn.

## Retreat Cost and Teacher Offering

The Buddha asked that the teaching of the dharma be offered freely, without charge, since it is of infinite value, and beyond any price that could be put on it. The tradition of 'Dana', or mutual giving, has supported Buddhist cultures for 2500 years. In Asia, the monks and nuns offer the teaching, and the lay people support the monastery and fill the monks' begging bowls each morning as they walk through the village on alms rounds. It is a beautiful exchange, in which the hearts of both giver and receiver are opened in joy and gratitude, and love flows between them.

In accordance with that tradition, Carla and Susie are, in the spirit of generosity, offering their teachings, time and service. Jenn will also be offering her services as cook. The fee just covers the retreat costs: food, retreat center rental, and other incidental expenses. After the retreat, there is the opportunity for participants to practice generosity in offering financial support to Carla, Susie and Jenn in appreciation. By offering financial support to Carla and Susie, you will support their continuing to teach the dharma. It will be warmly and gratefully received, and is in no way required. There is no 'suggested donation', please participate however will best serve your practice. For more information, please see Robert Beatty's article on dana, available as a download form the website.

# Retreat Logistics

Arrival – Friday, Oct 16th

Please arrive between 4:00 and 5:00pm, for registration, camp set-up, and yogi job sign-up. Please be settled and ready to begin the retreat with an orientation at 5pm, followed by dinner and then a talk and practice session. We will enter silence during the evening session.

Departure – Saturday, October 24th

We will be done by 3:00 PM.

This is a spectacular time of year in the desert, if your schedule allows, we encourage you to take some time at the beginning or ending of the retreat to explore the area.

## Directions to the Retreat

### TRAVEL BY AIR

Currently, there is air service to Moab from Denver, and connections beyond. The service is sometimes spotty. Grand Junction is the next closest airport and it may be possible to connect those arriving by plane with those driving through that town. Alternatively, there is a once a day shuttle from the SLC airport on the Bighorn Shuttle (888-655-RIDE). Other options include flying to SLC and renting a car (4 hrs drive each way); flying to Grand Junction, Colorado and renting a car from there (2 hrs.). (Unfortunately, there is no public transportation from Grand Junction to Moab). It is also possible to carpool, share rental cars, etc.

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS

#### From the North or West:

Take the Moab exit off I-70. After crossing the Colorado River Bridge (almost to Moab), turn east onto Highway 128. Follow Hwy. 128 until you pass mile marker 18. (This is less than two miles after the Castle Valley turnoff.) The 'Ranch Road' is the next road on the right immediately at the top of a small hill (before you reach mile marker 19). The dirt road heads toward the La Sal Mountains. The road is marked by a small "Ranch Road" sign. Follow this road till it forks (aprx. 1 mile). At the fork, bear right. The PVFC long term parking is 200 ft. further, on the left. Cars are parked here, 100 yards from the camp. Carts and a shuttle for belongings will be provided.

## **From the East:**

Take the Cisco exit off I-70. Travel 7 miles southwest to the Highway 128 turnoff to Moab. Turn south (left) and continue 25 miles the "Ranch Road" turnoff. There is a green highway sign that reads "Moab 21 miles" (between mile markers 19 and 18). The road on the left is unmarked except by a small "Ranch Road" sign. The turn is a few miles past the marked roads for Fisher Towers. Follow this road till it forks (aprx. 1 mile). At the fork, bear right. The PVFC long term parking is 200 ft. further, on the left. Cars are parked here, 100 yards from the camp. Carts and a shuttle for belongings will be provided.

## What to Bring

- sleeping bag or sheets and blankets, pad, pillow (sleeping bag and pad may be rented)
- ground cloth for putting personal items on the tipi ground (bare earth)
- sitting set-up, include usual inside set-up plus additional protection from sand and prickles
- pad and ground cloth to allow you to lie down for meditation (outside)
- a yoga strap or piece of webbing (please bring!)
- camp chair, therma-rest chair, or floor chair for outside or inside dharma talks
- warm shawls or blanket for morning and evening outdoor sitting
- comfortable shoes for walking meditation
- head net for insects
- yoga mat (optional)
- layered clothing for sitting in very mixed temperatures (from low 40's to low 80's) parka, hat, gloves, long underwear, ball cap, shorts, etc for walking and practicing outside
- raingear
- Towel
- sunglasses
- sunscreen
- two quart water bottles
- daypack
- shoes for walking in water (or a pair that can get wet)
- journal (optional)
- flashlight or headlamp
- watch (for walks, individual practice, etc. to return for scheduled sessions.)
- insect repellent
- (Optional) Camping equipment – tent, ground cloth, in addition to sleepingbag, pad, and pillow

Please bring only those products that are scent free. Some individuals are sensitive and allergic to any scents.