



Witchlets in the Woods Family Witchcamp Handbook

Draft 2014

Contact info: Witchlets email: info@witchletsinthewoods.org
Witchlets / Reclaiming phone: (510) 589-0897

Witchlets in the Woods was born of the desire to create a sacred space for pagan families to come together and honor the gifts that witches of all ages bring to the world.

We work to create a place where our families are surrounded by magic and, where children and adults feel safe and free to step into their magical power.

Witchlets is an opportunity for Reclaiming-friendly families of all sorts to build community and expand our resources. Reclaiming is an inclusive tradition, and welcomes families of all kinds. To read our Principles of Unity, visit Reclaiming.org/about/

Organizing, presentations, paths and workshops are offered by volunteer community members. Anything that is offered is dependent on someone being willing to do it. This camp belongs to all of us, please step forward and volunteer.

Witchlets is drug and alcohol free during the length of camp except for prescription drugs, medicinal herbs, nicotine, and caffeine. Smoking of any sort is allowed only at a Woodland-designated table. There is no smoking or fire of any sort in cabins, tents, dining hall, or elsewhere in the Woodlands.

Witchlets in the Woods is coordinated by a volunteer group known as Weavers who meet monthly throughout the year. The group is renewed each year, and anyone who has attended camp and commits to attend meetings can volunteer to be a Weaver, pending consensus of the current group. Weavers meetings are open to all who have attended camp, with decisions made by the current Weavers.

Many tasks are anchored by a second circle called Spinners. Spinners anchor a specific task and coordinate with the Weavers as needed.

Table of Contents

- Roles for Weavers and Spinners
- Organization -- **need to add Communications Agreements**
- Camp Culture
- Camp Schedule
- Timeline -- **this section seems to be missing**
- History of Witchlets: 2001-present
- Organizing a New Family Camp: Star-Up Notes from Redwood Magic

Roles for Weavers and Spinners (* = good tasks for Spinners)

– see below for details on each task

- Announcements at camp*
- Bookkeeper/Banking/Check Writing/Insurance
- Chore Coordinator/Grid*
- Costume Tent*
- Daily Point-Person (this can be a rotating role, or one person)
- Documents/Camp Booklet*
- Food/Kitchen Team/Anchor*
- Food/Kitchen liaison from Weavers
- Food - Special Needs Coordinator*
- Email / Voicemail
- Fundraising /Scholarships
- Insurance
- Raffle*
- Registration Anchor
- Rituals
- Sacred Drama*
- Story Teller*
- Swimming Anchor*
- Talent show*
- Teacher Recruitment
- Teacher Liaison
- Web Spinner
- Weavers Coordinator (main anchor for the year)
- Wheel Reps
- Woodlands/Site Liaison
- Workshops Coordinator*

Announcements

Gather announcements from people and make announcements at camp including during meals – an easy way is to have a bunch of note cards and a manila envelope in the dining hall. Invite people to write their announcements ahead of time. Announcer reads them at next meal, and then the cards are posted on a bulletin board.

This job could be done by a rotating “point person of the day,” or by the same person all camp – needs to be someone with a loud yet pleasant voice.

Bookkeeping/Banking

- Deposit funds in Reclaiming bank account.
- Keep an account ledger and submit reports to Weavers meetings.
- Liaison with Reclaiming bookkeeper and Wheel as needed.
- Liaison with registration/paypal/mailbox re reg deposits.

Chore Coordinator/Grid

- Create chore grid before camp (showing all meals with space for set-up and clean-up sign-ups; toilet-block chores; fire-tending chores)
- Work with reg-table to be sure someone is at table getting arrivals to sign up for three chores

Costume Tent

Costumes - magical, fancy, colorful, wild - are a major part of our camp! Kids change costumes many times a day. Anyone can bring costumes and clothes to loan out. One or two people help coordinate the clothes tent and keep it tidied up.

Bring/arrange a pop-up canopy and clothes hangers.

Send out email to elist, gather as many costumes ahead of time as possible.

Warn costume donors of risk that things may be lost or damaged.

Optional foam swords – get foam tubing to use as play-swords and cut into 3-foot lengths (this helps minimize kids sword-fighting with sticks). Foam pipe-insulation is cheap and comes in various diameters - 2 inches is good. Ask Weavers for a \$20 budget to buy foam tubes and cut to desired length.

Pack up and return costumes to people at end of camp.

Daily Point Person

Weavers may appoint one person per day to be the “point person” – this person wears a conspicuous hat or sash, and spends the day mainly in common space. Campers go to this person first with questions, requests, etc. Point-person is authorized to make small adjustments to camp schedule. This person might also make mealtime announcements, ring gong, etc.,

Documents

Main responsibilities include creating and distributing the following documents. Some templates may be available from past years:

- Initial Outreach Mailing/Reg Form
- June camp packet
- Camp Program
- Feedback form

Email

If you want to read the Witchlets registration email over the web, here's what you need to do. You'll be using the "Horde" on-line email program:

1. Go to <http://www.witchletsinthewoods.org:2095/horde/login.php>
2. You'll be asked for your name and password. The name is info@witchletsinthewoods.org and the password is mendocino
3. The next screen says "Welcome to Horde" and has a "Log in" button. Click the button.
4. You're now in the mail reader. The second icon down in the left is labeled "Mail" (usually in bold with the number of unread messages after it.) Click on the Mail icon.
5. You're in your inbox. Click on a message subject to read the message. You can also click the check box to the left of the message and click "delete" if you want to get rid of a message.

Voice Mail (for registration anchor)

Reclaiming Phone Number: (510) 589-0897

Voicemail PIN: ask George or Wheel for current PIN

Email address: info@witchletsinthewoods.org

Food/Kitchen

Fall Weavers – discuss past year, decide if kitchen anchor will be invited back plus and changes/requests. Designate a kitchen-anchor to contact them. If not available or Weavers want a new anchor, begin search ASAP.

Kitchen/food liaison needs to be someone with kitchen experience and who is sensitive to special needs, so they can explain this to cooks.

January: Solicit proposals from kitchen teams (including a proposed budget from a returning team). Proposal contents: Description of camp culture and purpose; Community's desires regarding food (e.g. organic, types of dishes, etc.); Number of people; Typical budget; Description of facilities; Typical menus (if possible)

February: Review proposals, make offer to a team

March: Solicit menus, review with organizing team including any changes (including price) over the next few months

June: Communicate number of people, final budget. Arrange transfer of food money to cooks.

July: Talk with kitchen crew to ensure we know who is buying what. Publish menu for campers to see, let them know they can bring family food.

August/Camp: Check with Special Needs coordinator and make sure they are in touch with kitchen team.

Post-Camp: Summarize feedback from evaluations and give to kitchen crew and Weavers.

Food - Special Needs Coordinator

A person who understands various special needs such as vegans, gluten-free, night shade and nut allergies, etc. Liaison with campers who indicate special needs ahead of time, and let kitchen crew know what will be needed.

Liaison with kitchen crew and campers at camp to see that needs are met, and also to shield kitchen team from constant special requests.

Fund raising/scholarship funds

Coordinate Spiral Dance bake sales (especially Samhain, Brigid, Beltane)

Coordinate one other large fund raiser each year, e.g. Fairie Ball

Donation Jars with screw-on lids

Raffle/Silent Auction at Camp (see below)

13% of vending

Scholarships: In recent years, there has been a camper-scholarship fund of about \$1000, raised from bake sales and the camp raffle. This has been allocated as equal shares to any family that requests support, and has averaged about \$50-75 discount per family.

Teacher Scholarships: In recent years we have had a separate Teacher Scholarship fund of \$1000 which has provided larger scholarships for anchor teachers of various paths, based on need and request. Teacher Recruitment team makes recommendations, Weavers have final approval.

Insurance

Bay Area Reclaiming has an insurance policy that meets the requirements of the Woodlands.

However, there is currently discussion about getting a specific "endorsement" for this event as a way to protect organizers. This costs \$300 per year (some years we can split the cost with Redwood Magic, when camps are close together).

Raffle/Silent Auction

Request donated items, including mention in Camp Packet. Give people ideas of the sorts of things they can offer, including services such as massage or guitar lessons.

Bring double-ticket rolls.

Recruit volunteers to sell – try asking scholarship recipients.

Set up Raffle with items w/cups (ideally with screw-on lids) for tickets.

Set times for Raffle pulling (lunchtime works) and a silent auction.

We recommend raffle first and silent auction second.

Registration Anchor

Set up registration process (online as of 2014).

Do a count of total spaces and hold spaces for teachers, organizers, and families. Decide how many campers can register and at what point the waiting list begins.

Arrange reg timeline with Weavers. Announce opening date for reg repeatedly ahead of time.

Be available by email and phone when reg opens to answer questions.

Set up spreadsheet for registrations (a template may be available)

Return calls and emails within 24 - 48 hours. Stay in touch with people during main reg period.

Respond to each registration confirming receipt by email.

Track registrations by date and notify Weavers when camp is full.

Ensure funds get deposited in bank account - liaison with Witchlets finance person

Set payment-due dates - send out reminders for full payment due.

Replace people who can't attend with waiting list people. Keep waiting list people notified of their status. If there is a second camp they might attend, let them know as early as possible whether they are likely to get into WITW.

Assign cabins (including special needs, teachers)

Communicate camper information to teachers (such as number in each age group) and food information to special needs coordinator.

Recruit volunteers for reg-table support - at least 2-3 people who will arrive early.

Bring reg materials/roster to camp; cabin assignment map; chore grid

Bring waivers and photo releases to camp

Coordinate with Chore Grid to be sure arrivals are signing up for three chores

At registration table – coordinate volunteers – guide people through process of signing releases, signing up for chores, getting camp program and finding their cabin

Rituals

Ritual planning is a process open to any member of the community who is interested and has attended at least one camp.

The myth/story is chosen at a Weavers meeting around February-March (by a process that includes meditation, brainstorming, and discussion) which any camper is welcome to attend. You'll find a list of our past myths in the History section at the back of this booklet.

A small group (charette) meets to flesh out the story, work out the ritual arc (ie, figure out what part of the story will fit with each ritual during camp), set magical intentions for each day, and plan the opening and closing rituals (see outline of closing ritual in this booklet).

Camp rituals are planned by anyone interested, usually during lunch. A member of the ritual planning group anchors a lunch-table discussion each day. In practice, most rituals are planned by a few people, and then other people are invited to take various roles.

Note re including kids: We have a goal and desire for ritual-accessibility for all ages. Community members may bring feedback and ideas to the lunchtime planning table, or talk to someone on the ritual team. Those who want to see changes in rituals are encouraged to participate in planning and ritual-production. Incorporating feedback into the next ritual is often challenging and exciting. In the end, community interest and involvement create the most magical and inspiring rituals.

Note re gender inclusivity: many of the stories and myths that we want to work with include antiquated gender roles and relations. We feel free to make changes as necessary so that the stories speak to all of us. In particular, we rework stories that are “binary” (which assume everyone is either male or female, and the same all the time) or are “hetero-normative” (which assume that everyone will be romantically in love with someone of the “opposite” gender).

Sacred Drama

One or more people sometimes anchor a sacred drama, in which the annual myth/story is acted out for the camp. Many young people enjoy participating, and a rehearsal is held before the performance.

Write script or outline to improv from. Script should be based loosely on camp story for the year. Be sure to write in roles for wee ones (faeries, elves, animals, etc.) and “quiet roles” for those who want to participate but not “shine.” Write as many roles as possible (a dozen or more) that speak and keep genders fairly distributed (male, female, and other genders). Even “lead” roles should not have much more than any other. Keep it moving and humorous.

You will need: Director, writer, lights, “small child herder,” and a trunk full of costumes.

The sacred drama sometimes spins off a talent show skit which might treat the story a bit less seriously!

Story Teller

Some years, a story teller has told part of the camp myth each morning before path, as a way of launching the day’s magic.

Story Teller liaison with Ritual Team to decide how to present story, and how much each day.

Swimming Anchor

One or two people to anchor one or two trips to the swimming hole. Figure out best afternoon(s) to go, announce time, recruit drivers. When it’s time to go, ring gong and wrangle people.

Do a head-count, and ask each driver to know the riders in their car.

At swimming hole – anchor watches or arranges a watcher for the deep end/rope swing. Watcher has a long tree branch ready if needed. (This area is too far from the shallow “beach” for safety – a separate “watcher” is needed down at the deep end.)

At end – do a final head-count, and ask drivers to confirm that they have all the same riders.

Talent show

Roles: Anchor; MC; Timekeeper/ “cane”; backstage manager

Announce talent show repeatedly– encourage people to sign up in groups so more people can take part. Start announcing a couple of days ahead of time.

Have sign-up sheet posted prominently – a couple of days ahead of time.

Have basic guidelines posted next to sign up sheet – maximum length, any restrictions (such as no fire in the dining lodge).

Expect last minutes sign-ups and drop-outs.

MC: Someone who likes to shine – it's fun if they dress up as characters from the camp myth. Put smallest children first. Mix entertaining acts with painfully cute acts. Figure out an inclusive and inspiring ending like a group song.

Anchor and others: Recruit people to sign up ahead of time. Ask teachers and ritual-anchors if they can do a skit. Arrange people in performance order and post this list ahead of time.

Backstage manager – someone to gently set boundaries, prep kids, maintain quiet, etc.

Considerations: limit length of show or total number of acts.

Nice way to get people off stage: drown out with applause.

Teacher Recruitment Committee

A sub-group of Weavers who know teachers and other community leaders around Reclaiming as well as teens and young adults from past camps and the wider community.

In consensus with the Weavers – plan desired paths including ages and how many teachers and mentors (older teens and young adults) for each group. We try to include as many mentors as are available, with a goal of one or more in each youth path.

Put out call for teachers. Make sure people know that teachers are volunteers and pay for camp – some scholarship funds are available – see below.

Goals: two anchor teachers per path plus however many mentors and assistants are needed and available. At least one teacher is a CRAFT teacher or student teacher if possible. At least one returning teacher per path is ideal for continuity. Returning teachers have generally been given first option for the next year. General goal that parents not teach their own kids (exceptions have been made for younger paths).

Evaluate offers and make decisions about teachers by Beltane or so. Recruit additional teachers and mentors as needed. Path teams – one or more teachers liaison w/ planners.

Teacher Scholarships: In recent years we have had a separate Teacher Scholarship fund which has provided larger scholarships for anchor teachers of various paths, based on need and request.

Teacher Liaison

Attends Weavers meetings and is in touch with at least one anchor-teacher per path to coordinate information sharing. At camp, this person is the first resort for teacher-questions such as supplies, snacks, etc.

Schedule path-time at camp and make sure teachers know that they are responsible for pulling their path together on the first day. Witchlets in the Woods does morning paths that last about two hours or so. Some paths do evening activities as well.

Coordinate with teachers to choose path-spaces. Some spaces such as Teens and Raccoons are “traditional,” some change each year.

Make sure teachers know that there are almost no supplies at camp (unless it grows on a tree) – they will need to bring whatever is needed for their path. A \$50/path fund is available if supplies are purchased.

Path-snacks for younger groups can be arranged with the kitchen – talk to the teacher-liaison, not directly to the kitchen staff.

Web Spinner

Creates and updates website as requested by Weavers. Weavers have final say on all web issues. May also hold information on Voicemail and Email access.

Weavers Coordinator - pre-camp

Tracking that roles on Weavers and at camp are filled.
Keep eye on key roles – reg, kitchen, site-liaison.
Tracking meeting schedule and sending out reminders to the main email and Weavers lists.
Creating agendas and tracking that key items on the timeline are on them.
Distributing meeting notes.
Reminding about roles at meetings including facilitator, vibes-watcher and scribe.
Create/arrange chore grid for registration table.
Create/arrange large wall schedule/calendar.
Create feedback form and bring to camp.
Recruit volunteers for parking support (at least 2-3 people).
Coordinate with registration anchor that reg-table is ready.

Weavers Coordinator - at camp

Anchor camp – address issues as they come up.
Convene an early Weavers check-in – let Weavers know what is expected of them at camp.
Help staff registration table.
Post schedules and grids.
Set up an early all-camp meeting and a later all-camp feedback meeting.

Wheel Reps

One or two Weavers who agree to attend quarterly Wheel meetings – the Wheel is Bay Area Reclaiming's coordinating group, made up of reps from active work cells.
Reps report back to Weavers about current Wheel business, especially that might affect Witchlets.

Woodlands/Site Liaison:

Be in touch with Woodlands' staff – relay questions, feedback, etc.
Ensure payments and paperwork are done in a timely way – first deposit is due around November – arrange for check to be sent and contract signed, inform Weavers when complete.
At Camp: Liaison with Woodlands re repairs etc.

Workshops

Spring: Review registration forms to see who has checked that they want to offer a workshop.
Contact them with timeline.
May-June: Email main WITW elist calling for workshops, sharing examples of workshops offered in past. Suggest a few we may want. Announce again as needed.
Email and/or phone each person asking for: title of workshop, brief description (2-3 sentences), age range, and brief bio of facilitator. Follow up as needed so that you have all info for the packet by June 30.
June 30: send all workshop titles, descriptions and bios to person in charge of documents
Help anticipate the best times slots for each workshop – mix age-ranges so that all of the faerie offerings are not at the same time.
At camp, help arrange time slots and locations for each workshop. Be aware that many people may go to the swimming hole on one or more afternoons – this is hard to plan around.
Post-camp - send thank you to workshop facilitators.

Organization of Witchlets in the Woods

Weavers – Witchlets' coordinating team

Witchlets is organized by a committed volunteer group called the Weavers that makes decisions by consensus.

All people involved in Witchlets are welcome at Weavers meetings, and may fully participate in discussions. Consensus decisions are made by the Weavers. (We usually share food at meetings, and wine is sometimes offered – as opposed to camp and community classes and rituals, which are alcohol-free).

To become a Weaver you need to:

- attend at least one year of camp
- commit to missing no more than two monthly meetings through the year
- be consensed by the existing weavers

Roles on the Weavers are rotated every few years except where the Weavers have consensed otherwise.

Spinners – anchors for special tasks

We also have Spinners who take on specific tasks and sometimes attend meetings, but are not decision-making members of the cell except for their own task. We welcome all interested people to attend our meetings.

At camp there are many ways to step into leadership and help make the magic happen. See the list of camp roles in this booklet.

Reclaiming Principles of Unity

Our camp is committed to the Reclaiming Principles of Unity. The PoU can be found on the Reclaiming web site: www.Reclaiming.org/about/

Meeting Culture

Key roles: Facilitator, Notetaker/scribe (who will promise to type and send out notes soon after the meeting); timekeeper; “vibe watcher” to keep an eye on the emotional state of the room.

Meeting process

- Agree on agenda
- Agree on ending time
- personal check ins
- create sacred space
- set/confirm next two meetings
- Order items on agenda if needed
- Work through agenda. If it's going to run over defer items to another meeting or agree to extend the meeting time.
- devoke and check-out at end.

ADD WEAVERS COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENTS HERE

Camp Fee: per person, sliding scale

The fee includes all activities, facilities, utilities and services, and organic meals. The sliding scale is a way to offer Witchlets in the Woods to families of different income levels.

Adults: \$250-up sliding scale

Youth 5-25: \$150-up sliding scale

Children 4 years old and under are free (Mendocino Woodlands does not charge for this age, and we figure they don't eat much).

In 2014, we adjusted the fees to lower the cost for young people up to age 25, and raised the adult fee. The intent was both to raise about \$1000 additional funds to increase the kitchen stipend, and to make camp more accessible for our growing number of young adults. As of 2014, these fees are the same for our sibling camp, Redwood Magic.

Scholarship Fund – year-round and at-camp fundraising projects (bake sale, silent auction) provide around \$2000 in fee-reductions for campers and teachers. As of 2014, our allotment is \$1000 for teachers (to be negotiated among teachers and Weavers) and \$1000 to be apportioned equally among all families who request scholarships.

Camp Culture and Agreements (an ever-evolving list)

This is an outline of our agreements which, as all relationships do, evolve and change over time.

Some agreements are mandated by the rules of the Mendocino Woodlands, whose goodwill we value and rely upon.

Our aim is to create a safe and sacred space for pagan families to come together and honor the gifts that witches of all ages bring to the world. Witchlets in the Woods is drug and alcohol free during the length of camp except for prescription drugs, medicinal herbs, nicotine and caffeine.

Families: We hold that anyone who calls themselves family, is family. We welcome and expect diverse and extended families and tribal members including queer families, heterosexual two-parent families, single parent families, no child families and polyamorous families, temporary families created specially for Witchlets, as well as other forms that we have not mentioned here. This is in alignment with Reclaiming's Principles of Unity - read them here: Reclaiming.org/about/

Cabins: Your entire family will be assigned a cabin to yourselves. There is no need to share with another family. You are welcome to trade around with other families. You can also bring a tent and camp out, or put it up next to your cabin for extra room. The cabins are rustic. They have no electricity, the lower half and the roof is wood, and instead of windows they have bug screens, so it can get quite cold at night. Some people bring plastic to put up at the windows, or fabric and pushpins work well, if you require more privacy. *We cannot use any sort of heaters, candles, or gas lanterns in the cabins*, as mandated by the Woodlands staff. The dining hall and showers have electricity.

Food: We serve omnivore, vegetarian, and vegan meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We also will work with you around gluten-free diets and other special needs. If you indicated food sensitivities on your registration, every effort will be made to make sure there is something

you can eat. If your needs are highly individual, you may want to bring along extra food for yourself and family. There are always snacks out for hungry stomachs. Our meals are cooked with love and intent and served with a blessing, to acknowledge the bounty of our mother earth and of each other, eating it in community. Please help us minimize waste.

Substances: Witchlets in the woods is drug and alcohol free during the length of camp except for prescription drugs, medicinal herbs, nicotine, and caffeine. Smoking of any sort is allowed only at the Woodlands-designated smoking table. Please – no exceptions.

Workshops: Anyone can offer a workshop! Please let us know by July 1 if you want to offer one. Workshops should avoid using highly scented or volatile materials (like pot-pourri's, nail polish, etc.) We have kids' and teens' paths offered in the morning for all ages, and also an adult path. More details on paths will be available at camp.

Work: All campers (over age 8 or so) are expected to sign up for three work shifts which include helping with meal prep or clean up, cleaning bathrooms or helping with childcare for others who are working in that shift. We also expect everyone to help with a clean-up shift on the final morning of camp.

Showers: There is only one shower block, to be shared by all adults and children. The gang shower is for all campers. There are also a few private showers for those wishing privacy.

Smoking: There is one designated smoking table, located between the plaza and the creek. Please do not smoke anywhere else, this is a Mendocino Woodlands Rule due to high fire danger.

Candles/fires: Please do not bring candles to camp unless you check with us. There are no candles, heaters, or gas lanterns allowed in the cabins, the woods, or along the creek bed. There are two designated fire pit areas. Fires are tended by designated fire-tenders. If you want to help, talk to someone who is tending fire. NOTE – the Woodlands are a high fire danger area – particularly in late Summer. Please be sure your whole family understands the danger of fire, candles, lighters, etc.

Pets: Mendocino Woodlands allows no pets except licensed companion animals. Please provide a copy of your companion-animal's license when you register, so we can inform the Woodlands ahead of time. There is a list of local kennels on the Woodlands' website – google Mendocino Woodlands. Please don't bring any other animals to camp.

Bugs: Please do not use commercial bug sprays or citronella at camp. There will be odorless insect repellent available to share at camp. If you have concerns about DEET, have everyone in your family eat garlic, brewers yeast and vitamin B for one week before camp and bring long sleeve, loose fitting clothes and bug nets for head especially for baby. Bugs are worst at sunrise and sundown. Check your family carefully for ticks daily. West Nile disease is present in Mendocino County - for more information go to <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>

Fragrances and Glitter: in support of those who are chemically sensitive, please do not wear fragrances, perfumes, oils, etc at camp. Please bring unscented shampoo and skin cream. Due to fire danger, no incense-burning is allowed at the Woodlands.

Glitter – please leave glitter at home – it is generally not biodegradable, and eventually winds up in the stomachs of small animals.

Physical Needs: All of the camp is rustic dirt paths and wooden bridges. The campsite is not rated as wheelchair accessible, although people have done it in the past with assistance. People have also gotten around with walking sticks and crutches at previous camps. Toilet and shower blocks are up 15ft slopes, which can be difficult if you have mobility problems. We do have one accessible porta-toilet available near the dining hall. Please talk with us in advance, and we will do our best to support your needs.

Transportation: Due to the limited amount of parking spaces available, cars will get to unload in the closest lot and then will be required to park further along the road. See the map and directions at the end of this packet. Also, teachers and mentors often need a ride to camp - please let us know if you can help out!

Pagan Market: We invite all crafts people and anyone who has a service to share to participate in our flea market. You need to provide your own table and everything you will need. We ask that you donate 13% of your proceeds to next year's scholarship fund.

Raffle: Each year we hold a raffle and/or silent auction to raise money for the scholarship fund. Please bring items to donate and money to spend on tickets!

Skyclad: As witches, we hold our bodies as sacred and a gift from the Goddess. Some children and adults celebrate this by being naked, especially while swimming or in the sunshine. If you or your children are unfamiliar with being around people without clothes, you might want to discuss this before camp to get used to the idea. (We do not ask that everyone take off their clothes - in fact, most of us think it's a little chilly for that! - just to be open to others who wish to go skyclad.)

WITCHLETS IN THE WOODS – a typical grid

Saturday	Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Wake up!	8-9am 8:30	Breakfast Clean-Up Starts	Breakfast Clean-Up Starts	Breakfast Clean-Up Starts	Breakfast - ends 8:30
	9-10	Story-Telling Archery	Story-Telling Archery	Story-Telling Archery	Personal packup - complete by 9:30
Travel to Camp...	10- 12:30	Age-Based Paths	Age-Based Paths	Age-Based Paths	9:30 - Camp Cleanup
	12:30- 1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	10:15 - final ritual 11am - farewell!
	1:00	Clean-Up Starts	Clean-Up Starts	Clean-Up Starts	
	1:30	Family/Free Time	Family/Free Time	Family/Free Time	
2-4pm – Arrive at Camp and Register	3-5pm	Optional Workshops / Swimming	Optional Workshops / Swimming	Optional Workshops / Swimming	
Welcome Circle! Camp Orientation	5pm	Pre-dinner circle / personal time	Pre-dinner circle / personal time	Pre-dinner circle / personal time	
Dinner	6-7pm	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
Clean-Up Starts	6:30	Clean-Up Starts	Clean-Up Starts	Clean-Up Starts	
Evening ritual / activities	8pm	Evening ritual / activities	Evening ritual / activities	Evening ritual / activities	
All Quiet	12:00	All Quiet	All Quiet	All Quiet	

Witchlets in the Woods: A Brief History

Reclaiming was founded around 1980, mainly by people in their 20s and early 30s. Although a few had kids, the only regular kid-oriented activity in the early years was the annual Ostara Egg Hunt at San Francisco Spring Equinox (still a tradition!).

In 1998, Diane Baker, Anne Hill, and Starhawk co-authored a book on family magic called *Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions*, which continues to be popular. Many kids who come to Witchlets and related camps were raised with *Circle Round*.

California Witchcamp, originally a teacher-training retreat, became a regular annual event in the mid-1990s, establishing its home at Mendocino Woodlands Camp Two in 1996. The camp includes ages 18-up.

Meanwhile, more Reclaiming folks were having kids, and several formed a childcare collective in the later 1990s called *Wiggle Waggle*, based in the SF Mission District.

In 2001, a dozen Reclaiming families – many old friends, and several from the *Wiggle Waggle* group, decided to do a family-magic retreat at the smaller Camp Three (current site of Redwood Magic Family Camp). Someone came up with the name *Witchlets in the Woods*, and it stuck.

About 35 people attended the first year, mainly younger kids and their parents. The camp included craft workshops, short kid-focused rituals, and other kids' activities.

After the first year, some folks faded out, but others decided to keep the retreat going. They spread the word (this was pre-yahogroups, so it was mainly word-of-mouth and Reclaiming Quarterly). The second year drew about 50 people.

After the second year, the retreat seemed on solid footing. Organizers noted that older kids were not taking part in the workshops as much, and invited a few teachers along to do a special "Older Kids Path" for ages 10-up.

The third year maxed out the small campsite, as we reached about 75 people. Fifteen older kids helped launch Older Kids Path – hardly a smash success the first year, but it laid the basis for Teens Path in later years. For several more years, this was the only path (ie, age-based morning workshop).

In 2004, the camp relocated to the larger Camp Two, site of California Witchcamp. (In retrospect, this was a lucky break – ten years later, *Witchlets* is still the most recent group to get a reservation at Camp Two.) About 100 people attended (the site holds 130) – since this time, the camp has done no publicity, relying on a single announcement each Spring to fill the camp. In 2013, Redwood Magic spun off, providing space for 50 more campers.

Around this time, the ad hoc organizers' group formed a coordinating cell called the Weavers. This group has typically been about 10-15 people including parents, teachers, and teens. Weavers meet monthly through the year to deal with organizing, camp theme, etc. Other people called Spinners take on specific tasks such as brochure production, kitchen liaison, etc. 2004 saw more turnover, with only a few of the original families remaining. Several families who joined in 2004 or so stayed involved for the next decade, giving the camp its long-term stability.

Paths – in 2004, teens path (about 15 young people and four teachers) took solid hold, with morning workshops and evening campfire rituals and activities at a separate teens' campfire – a *Witchlets* tradition that has been taken up at Redwood Magic, Loreley, and perhaps other

camp.

With Teens Path going strong (it grew to about two dozen people as the camp filled up in the next few years), other age-groups asked for morning paths as well. By 2010, all ages had paths:

Adults (one or two paths which often follow the camp story closely)

Teen Path - which in 2008 gave birth to Teen Earth Magic as a separate camp for ages 13-25

Raccoons – ages approx 8-12

Newts – ages approx 4-8

Fairies – ages 0-4 with parents

In early years, paths were taught by a combination of parents (usually teaching paths that their kids were not in) and young adults recruited from CA Witchcamp and local classes. In recent years, some of our “Teens Path graduates” have begun to help teach paths, bringing our work full cycle.

2013 saw the birth of “Witchlets II” – Redwood Magic Family Camp, held at the original site of Witchlets. Granted seed money by Witchlets as well as including a dozen campers who had been to the older camp, we drew in about 40 new people to launch our second camp. Following camp, about 10 people including two teens stepped forward to form the Weavers group for the new camp, and began meeting separately from Witchlets Weavers.

The two camps are seen as separate projects, but are working together on several projects including a new CD of Reclaiming chants featuring a kids’ chorus.

As Witchlets and Teen Earth Magic have evolved a large and active group of young people, teens and young adults have taken strong roles in community events such as the Faerie Ball and the Spiral Dance. Seasonal rituals in San Francisco, once almost entirely adults, now include young adults, teens and kids.

Magical Themes from Witchlets in the Woods

WITW 2001-03	Probably no “theme” for first few years?
WITW 2004	Thomas the Rhymer
WITW 2005	Quest for the Grail
WITW 2006	Rowan Hood
WITW 2007	Sleeping Beauty / The Thirteenth Faerie
WITW 2008	Amaterasu
WITW 2009	The Baba Yaga
WITW 2010	Sir Gawain & the Green knight
WITW 2011	Demeter & Persephone
WITW 2012	Ariadne, Theseus, and the Minotaur
WITW 2013	Twelve Wild Swans
WITW 2014	Burd Jan and Tam Lin

ORGANIZING A NEW FAMILY CAMP

Start-up lessons from Redwood Magic Family Camp (RMFC) – first year notes by GF

Getting Started

- initial organizers – it was really important to have a few “veterans” of Witchlets committed to the new camp – one person might be the anchor, but it helps a lot to have multiple points of view from the start
 - see below re recruiting a few teens/young adults as well
- Witchlets Weavers provided key support during the first year of organizing – feedback, models, cautionary tales...
- seed money was provided by Witchlets – about \$1000 to pay the initial deposit for the first year. This was a gift, and rolled over to provide the deposit for the following year as well. Without this gift, a new camp would need to raise and set aside about \$1000 (depending on the cost of your site) that would in effect remain with the site as an ongoing deposit.
- recruitment – even though Witchlets had an overflow, every single family had to be “recruited” to the new camp. Anchor organizer called and emailed consistently to keep people in the loop and eventually get commitments.
 - this will probably be true for any new camp – however much interest there is, you will still need to “recruit” families one at a time the first year.
 - by comparison – of the 50 first-year campers at RMFC, almost 40 returned the second year without any further “recruiting” – recruitment served to build a larger camp the second year. This was true for Witchlets in the early years as well – any attrition was more than balanced by new families.

Organizing model – paid vs volunteers

- Witchlets has always been organized by a volunteer team (except kitchen – see below). Each year one or two people dedicate a large amount of time and energy to anchoring the camp, while others take on specific tasks. This has worked well for many years, although there has been some discussion of whether this is sustainable.
- Redwood Magic – when Witchlets Weavers launched the new camp, we decided to pay an anchor organizer for a couple of years, to focus on logistics and outreach – to be paid from camp fees and donations, not by Witchlets – organizer was paid \$1500 for the first year and \$1000 for the second – no decision yet as to whether RMFC will continue to pay a person (on a rotating basis), or move to a full-volunteer team.
- kitchen – since the third year, Witchlets has paid a stipend to the kitchen crew. For 2014, stipend was \$1500 (above cost of food and rental truck). Redwood Magic adopted a similar budget.

Participatory Tone

- invite participation in any announcements and promo: “This is a Witchlets-style, do-it-ourselves camp. Each of us can make offerings...”
- ask commitment from the outset: “This is not a festival or drop-in event. Please plan to attend the entire retreat (unless advance arrangements are made), and to help create camp culture.”
- are there are early registrants who could help organize camp? Help with outreach and promo?
 - if possible – have an in-person camper meeting prior to camp – bringing people together beforehand is a plus – balance this with concerns about excluding more distant people.

Key Task-Anchors to Recruit Before Camp

- kitchen anchor is the most important person to recruit early – a trusted person who can (A) cook for varied needs/palates, and (B) has good boundaries/people skills. Understanding of Reclaiming process helps – but most important is cooking for a variety of needs and having good boundaries.
 - kitchen anchor is a paid position at most camps – cooking team gets \$1000-\$2000 as a stipend, depending on size and length of camp – they may also need to rent a truck
 - Free Camp and Teen Earth Magic have done this as volunteer, rotated work – Witchlets began this way as well, but quickly shifted to a paid-anchor model. TEM has been able to maintain a volunteer model thanks to incredibly generous volunteer cooks – it has not proven a sustainable model at Witchlets and other camps.
- fire-tender/wood-gatherer – find one/two experienced people to anchor this task – lots of people think they know how to build and tend fires, and that they are reliable. You'll need to figure out who actually can and will reliably do it. Community fire-tending is a mess, and not safe with young ones around. Let Tenders know that they will be responsible for gathering and chopping wood, or finding volunteers.
- workshops – one or two calm, diplomatic people who will coordinate optional offerings, and who are empowered to set up a grid for afternoons – this includes swimming, workshops, and any other optional offerings – their task is to arrange things so people feel their offerings are honored – this can be challenging at a new camp where timelines may shift.
- recruit people ahead of time to help at camp:
 - a few people to arrive early and help with camp set-up and welcoming – see Witchlets booklet for roles on first day
 - 2-3 Reclaiming teachers to anchor paths and daily rituals – they will be very visible, so it needs to be people who enjoy being in the midst of things
 - 2-3 older teens/young adults (ideally from past camps) – people who are cooperative, who will model participation and respect
 - it is worth giving scholarships to a few older teens and young adults – they will provide important “stitching” between the generations – and they model participation for younger ones.
 - lesson from past camps – be sure that you or a guardian you trust has a personal relation with any older teens and young adults attending camp without their families – that they understand their roles at camp, and the legal and ethical boundaries between them and campers under age 18.
 - Redwood Magic and Teen Earth Magic have an Ethics Agreement that we ask people over 18 who are not with their families to sign.
 - 2-3 “independent adults” – non-parents or people whose kids are not at camp – people without kid-responsibilities, who are ready to pitch in and help where needed (including extra kitchen duty, etc)
 - path anchors – experienced, outgoing people to anchor the morning path for each age group
 - see path details
 - see if older teens/young adults want to be “mentors” (assistants) in the younger paths
 - Witchlets has had a general approach that teachers not be parents of kids in older age groups – this might or might not be practicable in a new camp

- arrange one person to be the “point person” each day – ideally, a different person each day
 - they are the go-to person for questions
 - empowered to make small changes in daily grid/timing
 - make announcements at meals (or – this might be one person for the whole camp?)
 - they wear a hat or colorful sash – at Redwood Magic they were known as The Sash

Notes re Participation (and Non-Participation)

- all-camp rituals – it’s hard to find a ritual style that works for all ages – aiming at younger kids means that many teens and some adults will skip – aim at adults and many kids are bored – we try to mix it up, and generally aim workings at adults and older teens, with bits that appeal to younger ones (theatrics, moving around, plenty of singing)
 - a few volunteers anchor a ritual planning table at lunchtime – anyone can take part – this is the place to bring inspirations about how to be more inclusive, how to weave more magic, how to meet special needs, etc
- teens and rituals – at Witchlets and Redwood Magic, only a few of the teens take part in all-camp rituals – most hang out in the dining hall
 - yet we know from teens’ morning path and Teen Earth Magic that some of the same teens will take part in rituals if it is mostly their peers – and that a lot of these teens would never miss the big SF Spiral Dance (where they get to see their friends and be part of a “spectacular” ritual).
 - it’s especially hard to find a ritual style that works for teens and parents in a circle this size – new ideas and inspirations are always welcome – planners can invite people with ideas to help plan camp rituals
 - invite but don’t pressure teens to participate in planning – perhaps they’ll do an invocation (but don’t be surprised if after they’re done, many disappear – like magic!)
- talent show and dance – these turned out to be the most inclusive activities in camp
 - Redwood Magic did a “dining hall disco” on the final night – virtually everyone attended, including the teens – the teens and young adults mainly danced in their own circles and hung out in their own corner, and increasingly monopolized the music – but they were part of the event, not bystanders
- late-night – at Witchlets and Redwood Magic, the dining hall tends to be teens’ and young adults’ space in the evening – while adults and younger kids congregate around the campfire
 - neither camp has a lights-out time (unlike Teen Earth Magic, where we negotiate an all-quiet time on the first night) – teens tend to stay up later, with a request to keep the noise down – this has mostly worked well – having a couple of trusted young adults involved makes a difference – as does reminding ourselves that teens will be teens...
 - setting boundaries around the kitchen has been an issue – setting out plenty of late-night snacks helps
 - at Witchlets there has occasionally been talk of having a designated adult do a low-key “walk through” every hour or so, but in practice no one wants to lose sleep unless there’s already been a problem.