

The Art of Pilgrimage: Walking the Wild Path

Vallecitos Mountain Ranch
Carson National Forest

*With Steven Harper
and Don Usner*

July 16-21, 2011



Vallecitos is an inspirational retreat setting.

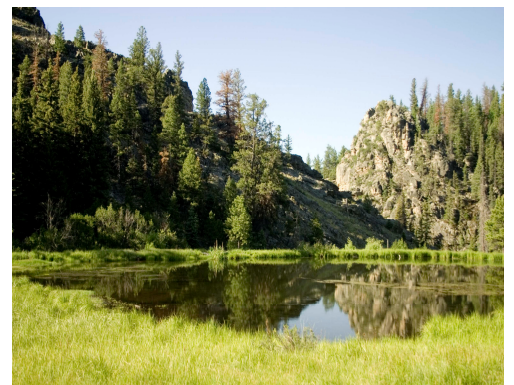
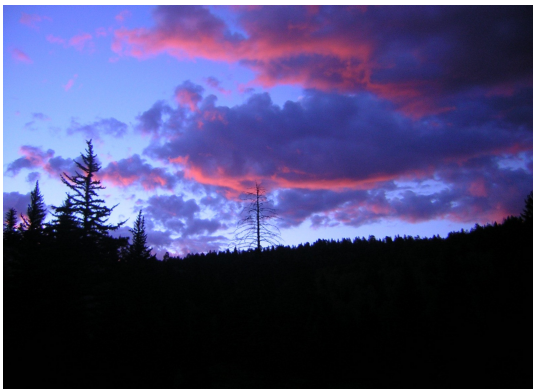
"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

--Henry David Thoreau

In this retreat at the remote Vallecitos Mountain ranch in northern New Mexico we will explore the ancient art of walking in nature as a kind of contemporary pilgrimage. Most of the world's wisdom traditions, including those of the indigenous people of northern New Mexico, use some form of pilgrimage as part of spiritual practice, but contemporary western culture rarely integrates walking into contemplative life. We will take advantage of the wild landscape of Vallecitos to launch a dynamic inquiry into inner and outer nature while celebrating the sacred aspect of the journey itself, where meaning lies in each new moment of simply walking and simply being.

Our time at Vallecitos will begin with a discussion of the concept of pilgrimage in local cultures and in others around the globe. We will introduce basic principles of meditation, walking and movement awareness, and will take time each day to practice these in the meditation hall at the main lodge. As we journey forth on a mindful day hikes these ancient practices will inform our exploration of the wild beauty around Vallecitos and the wild nature of the internal landscape. We will focus on the place itself as a teacher, noting and discussing aspects of natural and cultural history in the rugged mountains, long an important spiritual homeland to Jicarilla, Pueblo and Hispanic people. On the wilderness trails around Vallecitos, among groves of old-growth pines, out in stunning mountain meadows, and along the banks of the sparkling and pristine Vallecitos river, we will integrate an eclectic mix of natural history interpretation, meditation practice, silence and instruction.

On this contemplative journey through the wilds of northern New Mexico, each step will be the goal as we discover inner gems to bring back from pilgrimage as gift to our greater community. We will have the ranch to ourselves for our five-day sojourn, and single occupancy rooms will allow personal time in the evenings for integrating the experience. Be prepared for invigorating activity and the opportunity to simply sit still in quiet reflection at the ranch and out on the trails.



Registration and Cost

Cost: \$875.00. Fees include meals, accommodation and tuition.

Deposit: A 50% deposit is due when registering. Your balance is due by June 15, 2011.

Registration: go to www.vallecitos.org to register online (and see more images) or contact Leigh Lauck at refuge@vallecitos.org or call our office to reserve your space: (575) 751-9613.

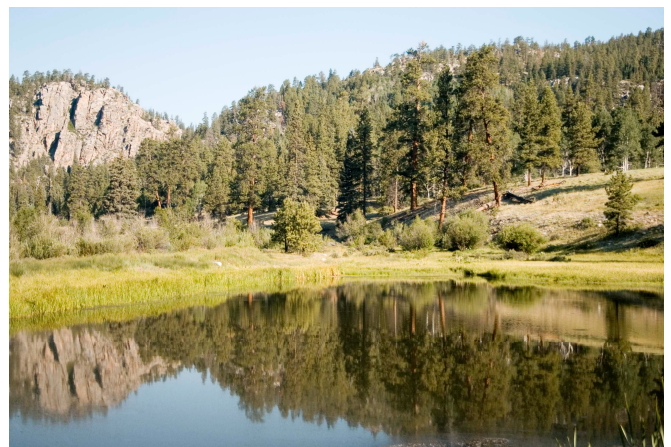
About the Teachers

Steven Harper is a wilderness guide, author, consultant, and artist. He has led both traditional and experimental wilderness expeditions and workshops internationally for over 30 years. A frequent long-time leader at Esalen Institute he has an MA in psychology and his work focuses on wild nature as a vehicle for awakening. Visit www.stevenkharper.com.

Don Usner is a writer, photographer and New Mexico native who focuses on natural and cultural history. His books include *The Natural History of Big Sur*, *Sabino's Map: Life in Chimayo's Old Plaza*, and *Valles Caldera: A Vision for New Mexico's Newest National Preserve*.
www.donusner.com.

About Vallecitos: Homesteaded in 1898, the ranch is a spectacular 135 acre private "in-holding" deep inside the Carson National Forest, 11 miles from paved road. The ranch is completely surrounded by 300,000 acres of the Carson Forest, including some of the most majestic old growth forest in the Rocky Mountains. Preserved and protected as a wildlife refuge, the Vallecitos high country ranch showcases lush alpine meadows, beautiful mountain lakes and wetlands, towering stands of ponderosa timber, sweeping groves of aspen, and bountiful game and wildlife. Our network of trails, including a stunning section of the national Continental Divide Trail, offers extraordinary opportunities to re-connect with nature. The exquisite Vallecitos River, designated wild and scenic, runs through the ranch. There is no place like it in the West.

Rustic, comfortable accommodations, single occupancy, are in our individual solar lighted and heated cabins, yurts and walled cabin tents. Gourmet meals are served in the dining room by outstanding chefs. Visit Vallecitos online at www.vallecitos.org.



Vallecitos Mountain Ranch
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