

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY AT POLCUM SPRINGS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY AT POLCUM SPRINGS

OUR BELIEFS

We perceive that we live in a culture wherein most people are disconnected from the web of life, from Spirit, and from one another. We also recognize serious degradation of the Earth and her ecosystems. We believe the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response; we aim to connect with others of like values as **one** form of our activism.

Thus we have combined resources to purchase 203 acres of rugged, rural lands to steward, to live on, and to share with others. We hold this land as sacred, drawing inspiration from its natural beauty, and so we strive to create beauty and inspiration in all human activities here.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to create and sustain a residential community focused on ecological responsibility, self-awareness, loving relationships, and connection to spirit, which will be shared with others for retreat, renewal and learning.

OUR VALUES

We seek to base our daily interactions and decisions on the following principles and values, and to support each other in this intention.

Connection

The quality of our interaction matters greatly to us. Our intention is to live authentic lives and to create conscious relationships that are open, honest, caring, respectful, and clear. Communication and interaction are tools for personal and spiritual growth as well as for strengthening our relationships with others. We seek and offer learning and input to build self-awareness and interpersonal skills.

Our group process is intended to promote intimacy, authenticity, growth, and group synergy. We consider all viewpoints to be valid, and we create safety so that all may represent their true thoughts and feelings. We see diversity as a resource. We are committed to respectfully working through issues and differences.

Responsibility and respect in community life.

We accept responsibility for our experience, and accountability for our actions.

We manage our own emotions and take responsibility for our “own stuff.”

We joyfully embrace the work ethic and actively participate in community projects. We honor the need for privacy and have respect for one another’s boundaries.

Enjoyment, playfulness and balance

Spontaneity and playfulness are important parts of our lives. Celebration, joyful self-expression, and learning together are vital for our spirits to flourish and bloom. We especially love preparing meals and eating together, and this is one focal point of our community gatherings. We strive for a healthy balance between work and play, privacy and conviviality, thinking and feeling, task and process, our chosen alternative life style and connection to the larger society.

Care of the Earth

We share residence with other members of the community of life who also call this land their home. While we are caretakers of this land, we intend to learn, demonstrate, and pass on principles of sustainable design and deep awareness of human interconnection with our entire environment – the web of life. We do this by engaging in ethical and frugal use of resources, land restoration activities, utilizing principles of sustainable design, and looking to spirit for guidance as we make decisions.

Inspiration and beauty

We value creative and artistic expression as part of spirituality and worship. The natural beauty of this land is sacred to us. We intend that anything we add to it meet high standards of beauty, quality and longevity, and produce inspiring experiences among ourselves and for others who come to Polcum Springs. This value is also reflected in the way we care for and maintain our common areas, our tools, and our shared possessions.

Service to humanity

Our future and the future of following generations are of paramount importance in our thinking, designing, and decision-making. We envision our endeavor as a seed for contribution and service. We strive to be a living example of a healthy community living in harmony with our natural surroundings. We will extend our focus outward to help create networks that support similar values.

OWNERSHIP

The land, common buildings and infrastructure are owned by Polcum, LLC. Members own interest in the Company. Purchasing a Membership Interest in Polcum Springs is an investment in a way of life and a vision for the future, not in California real estate. *No profit upon sale of a Membership interest should be expected.*

Our buy in and buy out prices are designed to meet four goals:
Support the financial well being of the Company over the individual;
Provide value for the cost of membership;
Encourage long term involvement and residency; and
Allow an exit without financial penalty to the departing member.

For more information on our buy-in and buy-out prices, ask to see our Operating Agreement.

Active Members are entitled to a small site to build a personal cabin as a residence or rental; Members may choose from a selection of available building sites. Personal homes may be rented out in part or in full, but any renter must be **evaluated and approved** by the community and abide by all policies.

OUR GOALS

We strive to make our purpose and values manifest in the life of our community and in the management of our Company. To that end, we establish and track goals, including physical goals for the care and development of the property, financial goals for the health of the Company, and interpersonal goals for the health of our community culture. We review and revise our goals each year.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DESIGN

Before any community or personal project is started on the property, a written proposal is submitted to the Membership for approval. As we undertake to implement our site plan, engineer systems, and design and build structures, we desire to leave the vast majority of the land in its wild and natural state. In addition, our intentions are to:

- Allow the carrying capacity of the land to dictate the extent and nature of its use;
- Blend and harmonize with our surroundings;
- Focus on minimizing construction and maintenance of our infrastructure;
- Choose designs, building techniques and materials that promise longevity and sustainability;
- Minimize roadways and disturbance of the land;
- Promote pedestrian-scale design and minimize the visual impact of vehicles; and
- Focus on clustered development with shared infrastructure and resources (water, power, paths, agriculture); concentrate human energy, buildings and dwellings at the Village Center.

For community projects, our hope is to perform as much of the work as possible ourselves and with friends, using experts judiciously and paying for labor when necessary to move along at a reasonable rate.

For additional information about design and construction at Polcum Springs, ask to see our site plan and Pattern Language.

DECISION MAKING AND MANAGEMENT

Our business is managed by the Active Members of Polcum, LLC. Most major policy decisions are made at quarterly Membership meetings. These meeting times typically extend over three days, and are important events in the life of our community, as they may be the only times in the year that all members meet on the land. We establish our meeting schedule annually, along with work party dates. These are scheduled over long weekends so that non-resident members can attend. In addition to transacting business, we use these

times for celebrating, playing, hiking, working, and dreaming together. We may schedule additional meetings during the year as needed, or choose to hold phone meetings to minimize long-distance travel.

We make most decisions by consensus. We believe every member holds a portion of the truth and no one person holds all the truth; each person's contribution is valuable to the decision making process. When time is of the essence and consensus is not forthcoming, we may agree to decide some issues by Super-majority (consensus minus one) or by majority, but unless clearly agreed otherwise, consensus is the rule. When we make decisions, we strive to balance community interest with individual interest, but when these conflict, we protect community interest over self-interest. We record all major decisions in an Agreement Book as well as in our Meeting Minutes, to have an easily accessible record of all our decisions.

For more information on how we conduct Membership meetings, ask to see our Membership Meeting Guidelines.

PARTICIPATION: VALUING OUR TIME, SKILLS AND ENERGY

We enjoy and value participation and contribution to the community. Our intention is to contribute our time and skills in a balanced fashion.

Outside of time spent on general membership duties, we keep track of community projects and our time spent on them. When balance among members is not feasible, we may assign monetary value to our time and add that value to our percent of interest in the company. Under some circumstances we may choose to compensate members for services rendered.

COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We acknowledge that conflict is inevitable. When it arises we choose to employ non-violent ways of resolving differences. We value skill building in this area and utilize a variety of processes as we need them, including Non-Violent Communication.

We have a few basic guidelines that support our relationships:

- Listening is as central to communication as speaking;
- Sharing feelings, needs, and making requests is strongly encouraged;
- We welcome constructive criticism as individuals and a community. Gossip and judgments are not part of a culture we support;
- We address conflict directly, not allowing it to fester; and
- If we interpret an ongoing problem between others that does not reach resolution, we state our observation and request resolution for the health of the community as a whole.

GENERAL AGREEMENTS

We care about who and what comes onto this property, how people and animals behave and how materials are used and stored. We also care about all interactions on this land. To that end we maintain these general agreements:

Guest Policies

In our start up phase, we want to maximize our productivity on the land, so we are not available for drop-in visitors. At specified times, we invite friends to participate in work parties, to celebrate and play, or for contemplative time. At all other times visitors and guests are asked to call ahead before arriving to discern availability. We ask that pets be left home, unless by prior arrangement.

Except by prior agreement, visitors are asked to contribute in some way toward community chores and projects. We ask a small daily monetary contribution to cover expenses for utilities and supplies.

Visitors assume full responsibility for their own safety and for any damages they may cause or incur.

Drugs and alcohol: Generally speaking, we are a clean and sober community. Some may enjoy minimal and responsible use of alcohol but this is not a major element of our lifestyle.

Smoking: For both health and fire danger reasons, we are a non-smoking community. Exceptions may be made for short-term visitors, who may be permitted to smoke in the designated smoking area at the fire circle.

Domestic animals: Although we do have some working farm animals, we are committed to minimizing the impact of domestic animals, as well as the human impact, on the natural land and its flora and fauna. The common structures are kept animal-free due to allergies, hair, dirt, ticks and fleas. Companion animals may visit or live in individual housing by agreement of the Membership.