

# *“Guunuwa”*



**One Year Residential Wilderness Study Program**

**Halfway Creek, NSW**

**February 2012 – February 2013**

**“Guunuwa”** is the traditional Gumbangirr word which means “to live”.

In offering this program we would like to recognise the traditional custodians of the land upon which your learning will take place – the Gumbangirr people.

The *Guunuwa* program is a unique experiential learning environment. During the year program participants learn a broad range of advanced primitive skills, live in traditional shelters and through direct contact with the natural world intimately deepen their knowledge of and connection to the earth. While there is a strong focus on community during the year there is also ample opportunity to experience solo time in nature. It is our aim for all of our participants that both of these pathways will give rise to deep personal healing & transformation.

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### ***Guunuwa* Program Information**

Participation in the *Guunuwa* program enters you into a community based, semi-primitive learning environment. The *Guunuwa* study program gives you the opportunity to develop hands-on experience with a broad range of advanced primitive skills and develop specialist areas of knowledge through both community based and solo wilderness experiences.

The following areas of study will be offered during the program. Please check our web site for a more in depth description of the workshops and our facilitators:

- Shelter construction
- Local indigenous land use
- Bird Language
- Primitive fire and its application in a primitive environment
- Plant identification, bush foods & medicinal herbs
- Basketry & cordage
- Primitive pottery
- Skinning & tanning animal hides
- Animal tracking & trapping
- Spear making & hunting skills
- Awareness & movement
- Weather systems and interpretation
- Survival, wandering and bush orienteering skills
- Vision Quest

These skills are taught through group tutorials, hands on workshops and individual mentoring. Nature Philosophy instructors and guest instructors who are specialists in their field will teach these skills mainly during the first 6-8 months of the program. However, the first step for each participant will be to consider their basic survival needs and construct a primitive shelter in which to live for the year.



Each new skill which is introduced will build upon the last and when taken as a whole will form a comprehensive naturalist knowledge base for short to long term survival in the Australian bush.

As the year progresses participants will be encouraged to apply these skills as both day-to-day activities and in survival settings. For example, making pottery bowls you then use for cooking, using primitive

fire techniques to start your camp fires, making clothes from animal hides, making and using baskets, wandering and observing bird song/animal movement, gathering bush food etc.! Also in the final 3-6 months each residential student has the opportunity to pick one area of study from the above to specialise in. This will be done through the development of an independent research project or a set of learning goals.

There will be on-going mentoring available for participant's through-out the year from the Nature Philosophy instructors, local community members and elders. As a community we will all come together each full moon to form a women's and men's circle. These circles are a place for sharing personal stories and receiving support and counsel. Our aim as facilitators will be to support and empower each participant's personal motivation and passion so they can deeply immerse into this learning experience.

While there are many communal aspects to the program there is also a strong focus on solo time spent in the bush. This could include spending long periods of time by yourself wandering and practising skills. This aspect of the program can be the most challenging and the most rewarding for participants and there will be specific support offered in this area.

At the end of the *Guunuwa* program each participant will receive a certificate of completion fully detailing your study areas and area of specialisation.



*Claire & Nikki after a day's harvest of local bush food*

### **Guunuwa Residential Dates**

February 2012 – February 2013

An orientation weekend will be held approx 2 months before the start of the program. Please check the web site for the exact dates. This weekend will be the start of connecting our year's group to the land and each other. Also, most importantly we will begin to cover shelter locations, building materials and shelter construction techniques. It is a requirement of acceptance into the program that all participants attend this weekend.

### **Residential Venue**

The *Guunuwa* program is located on a 100 acre bush property situated on the North Coast of NSW, 45 mins North on the Pacific Hwy from Coffs Harbour. The land is privately owned by Nature Philosophy. The land is surrounded by degraded old growth forest, low lying swamp land and a combination of farm land, residential blocks and agricultural businesses. The property is bounded on the eastern border by Dundoo Creek. The property is just west of Yuraygir National Park and north from Sherwood Nature Reserve. There is a 4WD dirt road which provides access to the block. There is an abundance of native fauna and flora on the property and in the surrounding areas.



*View up stream of Dundoo Creek*

The following on-site infrastructure will be available to the residential participants:

- Access to on-site caravan for use as communal library
- Composting toilets
- Drinking water from rain tank
- Access to communal kitchen space for initial food storage and basic cooking facilities
- Access to basic tools used for day to day activities and shelter construction
- Use of communal garden space

During the year NSW Nature Philosophy programs and Vision Quest will run on the property. The residential group are asked to act as mentors for new students during these classes, which includes positive role modelling and running shelter tours.

### **Things to think about**

- You will be entirely responsible for your own food during the year. Ideally this will be a combination of bulk store bought dry goods, dried fruits and meat, fresh food from a communal veggie garden and harvested bush foods. It will not be possible to eat only bush food during this program; however extended periods of bush food will be possible at different times of the year. Each participant will be expected to look after the communal veggie garden if they are going to eat from it.
- The Nature Philosophy residential program is at ALL times a drug & alcohol free environment. All types of hunting on the property and the use of fire arms is prohibited. Residential students who are unable to maintain these commitments will be asked to leave the program immediately.

- During your residential year you might like to consider attending a Women's Weaving or Men's Living on Country Trip with the Mapuru community in Arnhem Land, NT. These will run over 10 days in the middle of Winter and are an additional cost.

### **Your responsibilities during the year**

- Be able to commit to the program for the entire year, be comfortable living in a small community and be comfortable with a different style of contact with your family/friends.
- Be prepared to set your own learning goals and cultivate the motivation to achieve them.
- Be prepared to live communally and also spend long periods of time alone.
- Be able to financially support yourself during the entire year. It is a requirement of the program that you do not work while living on the property. Working during your holiday time is ok.
- Be prepared to work as a team to keep camp functioning. Such as cleaning up the kitchen or teaching space before workshops begin.
- Hold a current Medicare card and/or private health insurance.
- Hold a current First Aid Certificate or Wilderness First Aid Certificate
- Hold a current NSW Drivers License
- Visitors – Can visit for 6 weeks of the year and unless they are attending a workshop they must be scheduled outside of workshop times. Visitor times and activities need to be logged in the Visitor Book in the kitchen.
- Time away – 6 weeks of the year and ideally this would be taken between set teaching times.
- Cars –There is a car park for residential student's cars at the entrance to the property. Cars are not allowed to be parked in the main part of camp. We will not police how often people leave camp – however the fewer the cars, the smaller the temptation. Having at least one car in camp between students would be ideal for field trips and shopping.
- Phones – Telstra has good coverage in the area. Optus has limited coverage on the property.
- Refrigeration – a really good esky which keeps ice for 3-4 days would be highly recommended.

### **Cost of the program**

- Full payment of \$6,000 for the year – this covers the costs of private land use, access to basic tools, insurance and all mentorship/teaching expenses. All workshops that

we run during the year are included in this price, excluding any Mapuru women's and men's workshops.

- A deposit of \$1,500 is required within a month of your application being approved. Your deposit is non-refundable if you cancel your enrolment. Full payment is required before the start of the program.



*Hand-made pottery and firing pit*

Thanks for your interest in the *Guunuwa* program and for reading this information pack. This program is deeply transformational. A year long commitment will allow you to focus your entire awareness on your journey with these traditional skills and deeply connect with the movement of the land. You will give yourself the chance to be completely present in each moment, from season to season. It is possible from this place of intimate contact with the earth for your heart to then become your ultimate guide as you develop greater and greater expertise in bush survival. We are genuinely excited and honoured to take this journey with you.

If you are interested in applying for the program please email us to request an Application Form and then send it back to us via post/email. We will be in touch soon after. Applications close for the 2012 program in early October 2011. If you have any questions during this process or just feel like having a chat please be in touch:

**Kate Rydge**

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Warm regards, Kate