



Hello. I was up at the Yellow Dog Ranch this past Saturday afternoon for a preliminary set-up party. As I hope everyone knows it is the Yellow Dog Ranch that is to be the site for 2010 European/American YMT summer gathering. As I had never been to the ranch before ideas that I had about what one might be in for at this workshop became a lot less vague after my visit. So, I figured that I might share a few things.

Well for starters I will say that it is a very beautiful place. It is located several miles up a steep dirt road and nestled snug within acres of thick and lush woodlands. I got to meet the very nice family who owns the land and this family does include one rather friendly yellow dog. In fact it will be their front yard--their very rustic several acre front yard--where we will be staying. They have held other large gatherings on their land and have been able to tune us in to some set-up strategies, although I think that the giant tarp suspended between two tall redwood trees was a new one for them.

We were fortunate to arrive during the first heat wave of the season. This gave us a chance to experience what could be a reality for mid-July in California. Dealing with the heat is something for all who are attending to consider. The giant tarp over the open meadow, a blimp hanger-sized barn, and multiple fairy forts(ringed clusters of redwood trees)should provide us with plenty of reprieve from the afternoon sun. The dry California heat can be a bit abrasive to skin unaccustomed. I would suggest to bring sunscreen lotion, a wide-brimmed hat, and thin light clothes that protect as much surface area as possible. And, having just pointed out about the heat I must also bring your attention to the other reality about this unique micro-climate that the redwood trees love so much.



When packing you should also include some kind of long pants and a sweatshirt or light jacket as we may get a visit from some ocean fog. This dip down in temperature is usually only in the early morning or early evening but, I wouldn't want to spend the first part of the day wishing for it to be the temperature that I will be wishing would go away later in the day. In brief, pack mostly for heat and a little for cool.

Another nice thing about being at someone's home is that there are certain amenities that we will get that we would not have if it we were truly "roughing it" . There are private showers, plenty of bathrooms, and a giant outdoor hot tub. The meals will be camp style but, with the addition of indoor refrigeration they will be substantially upgraded from only things that wont wilt.

This place can be regarded in many ways as the quintessential No. California coastal mountain experience. So I would also suggest to bring good shoes as "level" ground is pretty much nowhere to found and opportunities to explore around may come up. Hmm...let me just think for a second if there is anything that I did not mention...well. there's the lizards, scorpions, rattlesnakes, and various large mammals whom just the thought of makes me never want to stray to far from camp...but hey, isn't it the Daoist way to commune with nature?



All in all I think we are very fortunate to be able to have a European/ American YMT gathering in such a spectacular location. I hope that these few points were helpful to those who are already planning to attend and enticing to folks who have not yet decided to attend. I doubt anything like this will happen again anytime in the near future.

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