



**CLAIRE**  
**VANDERPLANK**  
Partnering with Nature

# **Nature Quest**

Sacha Boodja September 7 - 15 2024

## **Participant Registration Pack**

Thank you for investing this time for yourself and cultivating connection with nature. In this pack you will find preparation instructions, travel information, suggested packing list, safety information and medical and participant details form that needs to be completed and signed prior to the retreat.

## About the Quest

I run the Nature Quest in the Way of Nature lineage, with influences from the Stalking Wolf/Tom Brown lineage (as well as from what my own time in Nature has taught me, of course). The Way of Nature system is a result of John P Milton's observations of decades of vision questing, taking others into nature, his professional life as an ecologist and most of, an incredible spiritual life with time spent with many great teachers from a variety of different spiritual traditions.

The core principles of Way of Nature are based on John's understanding of the common principles of spiritual cultivation, which are then applied in Nature. We consider Nature to be the greatest church, temple or teacher we will ever need.

You can learn more about Way of Nature and John P Milton at <https://www.wayofnature.com/>

## Schedule Overview

Please arrive between 2 and 3pm on Saturday September 7.

Saturday 7th	Arrival Setting up camp Opening circle Introductions	
Sunday 8th and Monday 9th	Preparation training and visiting potential solo sites	These are full days beginning with qi gong first thing and ending with after dinner discussion, however with spacious breaks in between.
Tuesday 10th - Saturday 14th	Solo Quest	Leaving Tuesday morning following a send-off ceremony and returning Saturday morning (4 nights/4 days)
Saturday 14th	Integration day and preparation for returning home	
Sunday 15th	Departure between 11am and midday	

## Suitability

Spending 4 days and night alone, engaging in extended meditation practices and fasting is not suitable for everyone. If you are suffering from PTSD, psychosis or substance dependency, this process is not suitable for you at this time.

## Preparation

All participants must have a conversation with me no less than one month out from the program. We can do that when you register or whenever that is convenient for you. I want to make sure you understand the nature of this program and that it is suitable for what you are looking for.

### *General*

There are no prerequisites for attending. The main thing is turn up willing to surrender to whatever nature has to teach you. If you can have a meditation practice in the lead up that is great, but nature will meet you wherever you are at. You will also have an easier time of fasting if you have a clean diet beforehand, at least try to eat green leafy vegetables daily for the preceding couple of weeks and cut back or cut out cigarettes, alcohol and caffeine and other drugs.

While there are no prerequisites, it doesn't mean that it is necessarily easy. For some people life immediately flows with more ease and grace after a Quest, for others there is more of an adjustment period as your development is accelerated. This can be bumpy and can involve an entire reshuffling of how you make sense of, and relate to, the world. In my mind this a positive thing, a forward step even if it doesn't always feel like... but ensure that deep down you are feeling a big YES to this potentially challenging side to it before jumping in!!

### *Intention setting*

Put some thought into what is drawing you to do this quest. Is it to seek guidance on your purpose? Is it to release old stuck patterns/emotions/trauma? Is to deepen your connection with inner, outer or true nature? Seeking to know your gifts or your shadows (important to know or it will always undercut your efforts)? To learn to be receptive and open?

Try to frame your intent as a question ('quest-I-on' in case you hadn't noticed!) especially if it is clarity that you are seeking.

**Preparation exercise 1** – write 2 to 3 pages of free flowing writing - i.e. non-stop with your pen never leaving the page, it doesn't have to be formed in proper grammar – in response to the question 'what is it that I am seeking on this quest?' Use this exercise to hone your intent, the more specific the intent the more potent it will be.

**Preparation exercise 2** - repeat the above flow writing exercise in response to the question 'how bad do I want it?' – referring to your commitment to pursue your intent.

**Preparation exercise 3** - spend a whole day on a 'wandering quest' with the intent explore the question 'what do I need to experience now in the lead up to this quest?'. Walk out your front door and let yourself be guided by your intuition as to where you should go. Pause often. Ask for guidance (from whatever/whomever makes sense to you – helping spirits, power animals, higher Self, gods or goddesses, Great Spirit, the universe, etc). Take time to reflect on what you encounter both in the inner and outer worlds along the way; pause to accept the gifts the landscape is offering. As much as any answer or guidance you may receive, this exercise helps orient you to your receptive and intuitive side.

Ensure you have cleared your diary and to-do list before you arrive and inform your loved ones that you will be out of contact so no one is expecting anything from you during the retreat time (you can still make contact with your family before and after the solo time if needed).

### *Preparing for re-integration*

Also prepare by clearing some time for yourself for when you return! Leave as much space as possible especially in the first week home. You may be surprised at how different you feel and you will be more sensitive to the energy of the people and places around you. Do something grounding in the first couple of days home, go for a barefoot walk in nature etc. Avoid over-stimulating places.

I also highly recommend identifying a few friends or family members to be your support crew on your return. A key phase of a classic rite of passage is the return to the community, where the initiate is recognised as changed and supported in that change. So let your inner circle know that you might be going through some changes and would appreciate some holding in that.

### **Packing List**

Here is a list of recommended items in addition to your personal clothing. Keep in mind there is potential for cold days and nights in September, including frosty morning.

- Emergency whistle - required
- Piece of cord (around 20cm long) to use for buddy system - required
- Enclosed shoes for walking (we need to be aware of snakes although it is unlikely we will encounter them)
- Tent - you can also just use a tarp if you are already comfortable with camping and really want to push yourself, however it is advisable to also have a tent just in case the weather turns bad. There are also quite often very active mosquitos so a bug mesh is a good idea.
- Sleeping bag
- Camping sleeping mat and pillow – optional but best to bring it at least for group time so you get good sleep then
- Head torch
- Trowel (for burying human waste). You can get collapsible hiking ones from outdoor stores.
- Rubbish bag
- Rain jacket and pants (pants make it much more fun if you have a day of consistent rain, and can be a good wind shell too)
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, long sleeved clothing
- Water bottle
- 20L water container for drinking and personal use during solo time – you can fill this up with rainwater at the venue
- Solar camp shower - totally up to you if you want to wash during the AllOne time, but these can offer a little bit of pampering in the form of warm(ish) water!
- Whatever you need to support your fasting - some sea salt is recommended and/or you may also like to bring the ingredients from the 'Master Cleanse' (lemons, cayenne pepper, maple syrup to give you a little bit extra) or snacks for the AllOne time if not fully fasting. Note that **camp stoves are not permitted**.
- Any food you want for the AllOne time if not fasting and any bowl/cup/knife/spoon etc you might need
- Notepad and pen
- Natural fibre cloth to sit or lie on
- Appropriate clothing for warm and cold weather. Note you will want to bring clothes warm enough to be outside past sunset in – this means beanie, gloves/hand warmers, warm jacket and other layers, wool socks, thermal underwear
- A blanket is very useful both for in and out of the tent to wrap yourself in
- Biodegradable toiletries - everything is off grid here so please no chemical-based products.
- Any personal medications
- Protection from mosquitos (and flies depending on time of year) - repellent, long sleeves, fly net face covering
- Offering substance (nonfood) — could be balga (grass tree) resin. To collect this, just go for a walk in the bush and look for globules of orange-brown resin around the trunk.

- A copy of 'Sky Above, Earth Below' by John P Milton. You will need to order this from Amazon well in advance (optional)

If you don't already have camping gear and don't want to buy any, ask your friends if you can borrow some. I also have some spare gear you can borrow if needed.

### What not to take on your quest:

- Electronic devices
- Books (journals for stream-of-consciousness writing or art are ok)
- Stove/fire making tools
- Any other human made items other than the essentials noted above
- Medicine items (objects you wear or work with for sacred purposes) that would be a distraction for you NOT to have e.g. wedding rings
- Expectations
- Complacency

People with the most experience can often be the ones who find it the hardest to let themselves fully be in the process. If you are well-practiced, please come with your 'beginner's mind' on!

### Food

3 meals per day are provided during the group time. During the AllOne time fasting is recommended. If you do not wish to fast or have contraindications (such as if you are pregnant or have diabetes) please bring food to take with you to have during that time.

I do recommend fasting if you have no medical reasons that prevent you from fasting. This might seem like the most challenging part of all but trust me, that fades in significance once you're out there. Food can be a big source of attachment and distraction, it is quite liberating to realise you can do without it for a while.

You can use the 'master cleanse' lemon-cayenne pepper-maple syrup concoction for fasting if cold-turkey water fasting seems a bit intense. Many people find that helpful. Some salt is good to take with you to keep electrolytes up and prevent light-headedness or cramps. If you have a very fast digestion a little bit of coconut oil can be taken out on your solo to cool the acid of your stomach.

Water: you will need to bring sufficient water for your solo time – 20L recommended. You can fill up containers with rain water there, however you can't leave your solo site once you are out there so will need 20L volume worth of containers!

Please inform me of any special dietary requirements by filling in the medical form at the end of this pack. For highly specific dietary requirements you may need to provide some of your own food. We provide vegetarian, mostly organic with gluten-free options, mostly based on Ayurvedic eating so things like warm buckwheat and apple porridge for breakfasts and dahl, vegetables and rice for dinners.

### Safety

There is very little in wild nature that can harm you. Most risks can be avoided by being aware of your surroundings. Some walking in the bush on the property is involved. The main risks are sunburn, dehydration, snakes, getting lost, fire, insect bites including potential for mosquito-borne illnesses, sprains and strains.

During the AllOne time there will be a buddy system in place. You will know where your nearest person is located and at the halfway point will be your check-in point. Each morning, one of you will

A Way of Nature program presented by Claire Vanderplank

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leave a sign, in the afternoon, the other will leave a sign. If one of you has not attended the check-in, the other will know and will come search for you. Everyone is required to have an emergency whistle (available from camping and army-surplus stores online).

If anyone has any potential health or safety concerns we may arrange for you to have a different check in system. To be discussed in person.

On the odd occasion, people do not complete the full 4 days of their Quest. I trust you will always do what is right for you, however for your psychological safety, I ask that you remain on the property until the end of the program even if you come back from the solo portion early.

### **Cautions/Regulations**

Please do not remove any items or artefacts including rocks and plant life. Do not light any camp fires and no cigarette smoking in or near the vegetated areas. Smoking is discouraged in general.

Please respect the wildlife as this is a sanctuary; this includes insects, birds, reptiles, fungi, flora and all life in the area. Please avoid any areas where there are obviously building materials stored.

Please do not camp directly under tree branches as they can fall.

Please know all individuals using the camp-kitchen / shower or toilets are responsible for any breakages and the proper use of those facilities. Please ask the caretakers if you need to know about the operation of any part of the facilities.

### **Travel Information**

Location: Sacha Boodja is located between Pingelly and Wickiepin, at the end of Snows Rd. It takes about 2.5 hours to drive from Perth.

Directions (from Perth):

- From Armadale take Brookton Hwy to Brookton
- Turn right at Great Southern Hwy to Pingelly
- As you enter the outskirts of Pingelly turn left at the sign to Wickiepin
- Approx 40kms is the sign to Gillimanning Rd - DO NOT turn here –
- Go another 2kms turn right into Snows Rd which is a dirt road. This road is not sign posted. To help identify it, there is a big old tree on the corner and just past Gillimanning Rd it goes into a rise with arrows on the bend – the last arrow points to Snows Rd.
- Follow Snows Rd over the cattle grid, continue following it down the hill to the t-junction and turn left (you will then be heading south).
- Approximately 500m turn right through the gate, you will see the Sacha Boodja sign, and follow the track up and around the outcrop. Turn right at the water tank. From there you will see the main building where we will be waiting for you!

Snows Road is now on Google Maps so you can put that in then just follow the last point above.

Carpooling: If you want to share fuel costs, carbon emissions and conversations, I recommend carpooling. Generally I will send out a group email a month or so before the Quest that will have the email addresses of everybody included so you can self-organise carpooling.

Standard two wheel drives are fine, but very-low clearance vehicles are not a good idea.

## Payment details

Exchange for the teachings and support during your Solo, food during group time and use of the land is offered on a sliding scale:

- Low income: \$808
- Standard: \$1008
- Abundant income: select any higher amount you feel reflects fair exchange, and know that your support enables both the participation of those at a lower wage and my ongoing ability to dedicate myself to this work!

Please note that these are not my commercial rates, but I am not going to compromise on having the Quest accessible to as many people as possible.

To secure your place a \$300 deposit is required. Full payment is due 1 month out from the Quest.

We can also agree a payment plan if that helps.

Bank transfer to my Australian bank account is preferred:

P&N bank

Claire Vanderplank

BSB: 806015

Account number: 01924067

You can also pay by paypal or transferwise to [womcreation@gmail.com](mailto:womcreation@gmail.com) (participant must accept the fees for using these services).

## Cancellation Policy

You must advise me at least 3 months prior to the start date if you wish to cancel your place so that there is reasonable time to fill your spot. A full refund will be offered in this instance, minus a \$50 admin fee.

If you cancel between 1 and 3 months out, your deposit is not refunded unless someone fills your place (minus admin fee).

If you cancel under 1 month out, no refund is given, unless someone fills your place (minus admin fee).

If the Quest needs to be rescheduled for reasons outside of our control (e.g. COVID), you will have the option of a full refund or having your payment transferred to the rescheduled or future quests.

## The forms you need to sign!

### Waiver for the program - the serious things

**Please read the following, ask if you have any questions and return signed form prior to the program.**

Any information provided by Claire Vanderplank (T/as Weapons of Mass Creation) or Way of Nature on such matters as climate, weather, environmental conditions, clothing, baggage, accommodation, food, fasting, transport and special equipment is given in good faith but without responsibility on the part of Claire Vanderplank or Way of Nature.

It is a fundamental condition of this contract that you accept the hazards involved with outdoor activities. You must acknowledge that delays and alterations and their results, such as inconvenience and discomfort, are possible where unforeseen circumstances arise.

Participants acknowledge that spending extended periods of time alone can cause you to experience unpleasant memories, thoughts and feelings. It is a fundamental condition of this contract that you accept the potential for these experiences when undertaking the quest. You may like to consider the support of a counsellor or psychologist if it is likely that the solo time will be psychologically challenging for you.

Participants assume responsibility for checking with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner before the quest if there are any physical or mental health concerns regarding fitness to undertake this program.

If you need to leave your solo time early unexpectedly, that is fine, however you must remain onsite for the duration of the program unless it is an emergency that you need to return home for.

Participants undertaking outdoor activities as part of this agreement must have a level of fitness commensurate with the services specified, and you are responsible for bringing the appropriate equipment. If, in the opinion of Claire Vanderplank or staff member, the health, fitness, psychological condition, behaviour or equipment of a participant may compromise the safe provision of the outdoor activities specified as part of this contract, or in the event that that participant's behaviour is considered unacceptably disruptive to the prejudice of other members of the group, we reserve the right to cancel or terminate your contract. In these circumstances you will not be entitled neither to a refund nor compensation.

I have read the Liability Waiver, Indemnity statements above and Cautions/Regulations and agree to be bound by and adhere to them.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

Signature

Date



## Medical declaration

Name:.....

Date of birth:

Do you suffer from any of the following conditions? (delete as appropriate)

- Asthma
- Fainting
- Heart trouble
- Psychosis
- Diabetes
- Migraine
- Raised blood pressure
- Knee pain
- Severe allergies
- Unsteady on feet
- Anxiety conditions
- Chronic Depression

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, please provide accurate details:

Epilepsy yes/no

If yes:

What specific epilepsy syndrome have you been diagnosed with?

Do you suffer from any other condition requiring that we should be aware of including previous injuries, medical treatment and medication? yes/no

If yes, please provide accurate details:

Are you allergic or sensitive to any medication (e.g. Penicillin), insect bites or food? yes/no If yes, please provide accurate details:

Are you taking any form of medication on a regular basis? yes/no If yes, please provide accurate details:

*Please ensure that you have adequate supplies of medication for your entire visit.*

To the best of your knowledge, have you been in contact with any contagious or infectious diseases, or suffered any recent condition that may become infectious or contagious? yes/no

If yes, please provide accurate details:

Do you have any special dietary requirements? yes/no

If yes, please provide accurate details:

Please provide any additional appropriate information concerning your health:

#### CONTACT DETAILS

Your mobile number:

Your email address:

Emergency contact name:

Emergency contact mobile number:

#### MEDITATION EXPERIENCE AND INTEREST

Do you have past experience with meditation or other spiritual practice?

What aspect of this retreat are you looking forward the most?

#### SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I have read and understood the above information and accept the inherent risks. The information I provided is true and correct:

Signature:

Name (please print):

Date: