

WHITE HAWK ECOVILLAGE

General Information Packet

Thank you for your interest in our growing community! We hope the information here helps you become more informed concerning some of the details of how White Hawk operates and maybe even inspires you to begin the path towards membership. White Hawk Ecovillage is so named due to an unusually pale light-morph Red-tailed Hawk that lived around the land for many years, popular among local residents, and an inspiration to early developers of our community.

A lot of information about White Hawk is available on our website and within this packet. *However, staying in touch with current members is probably the best way to learn about White Hawk.* We strongly encourage you to read the website, attend a meeting, take a tour, and talk to current residents. In the coming weeks or months, you may even be deciding whether to join this group, build a house, and create a life here. You are likely to have a lot of questions. This packet will hopefully answer some of them. If upon reading this, you want to take your involvement to the next level, feel free to request or download the entrance form, fill it out and submit your \$250 entrance fee to become an official White Hawk Prospective Member and gain access to our members Yahoo! group.

Of course, feel free to contact any current White Hawk resident if you have more questions. We're happy to help and look forward to the possibility of being your neighbors!



1. Membership Categories

STEP 1: PROSPECTIVE MEMBERSHIP: If you think White Hawk is right for you, feel free to become an official Prospective Member by:

- Filling out Entrance Form and contributing **\$250** (non-refundable entrance fee).

As an official *Prospective Member*, you will be added to the members e-mail group, thus gaining access to certain documents, communications, and meeting minutes; all the while establishing a closer relationship with White Hawk. You are encouraged to visit, attend and contribute to monthly meetings, and participate in discussions as well as continue to explore if this community is right for you.

STEP 2: ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: When you know White Hawk is right for you, complete your membership process and become a part of our community by:

- Contributing **\$750** (non-refundable membership fee).

As an *Associate Member*, you are considered an official member of the community. You can make proposals and participate in committees and other White Hawk projects. During this period, you can reserve a lot for one year by paying a 10% lot deposit and showing a mortgage pre-approval letter. You can submit building plans to the ARK committee, and look forward to construction.

At this point, membership has a right to raise any concerns about granting Associate Member status. If it is determined that any concern has merit, arrangements will be made to work towards resolution. The \$750 check will not be deposited and kept by White Hawk until there are no objection to membership being granted. Any lot deposits/reservations during this phase go into escrow. Your 10% lot deposit locks down the lot of your choice and the lot price for one year.

STEP 3: FULL MEMBERSHIP: When ready to build, become an official co-owner of White Hawk by:

- Paying full lot fee (or complete purchase of home) and signing lease.

As a *Full Member*, you will co-own White Hawk Ecovillage and have equal voting and blocking rights to every other full member. You can begin construction of your home!

Timeline for membership and building:

The membership process can be as short or as long as you make it. For most people it takes 4-6 months. During that time, you should visit White Hawk, write a bio, read bios and old minutes, design a house and select a lot, pay the rest of your membership dues, pay your lot fee, and get your home financing straightened out. Once you are ready to build, it should take between 6-12 months to construct your home.

2. Communicating and Decision-Making

Decisions at White Hawk are made by consensus. Put simply, this means that all members have the opportunity to be involved in decisions. Any Associate or Full Member can make a proposal, and everyone else gets a chance for input or questions. After discussion, members agree to move forward with the proposal or not. Even if a member is not present for a decision, they still have two weeks to review it before it becomes “official.” Prospective members are encouraged to participate in discussions, but only Full Members can block or vote.

This process requires patience and communication. There are several ways we communicate for decision-making at White Hawk.

- Meetings—Either at the monthly general meeting or at special meetings or committee meetings.
- Email—Either by using our Yahoo! memberlist or private email addresses.
- Telephone—In the past we’ve had conference calls. Lately, we’ve used the phone less, but that might change as circumstances change.

You can find out more about the consensus process by visiting the Decision Making page under "Our Community" at www.whitehawk.org

3. Mission, Vision, and Community

As a community, our shared values are stated in our mission and vision statements. Though we value ecological sustainability, we realize that none of us have achieved it and not everyone is at the same spot on their path towards it. Though we call ourselves an "ecovillage", there is no single shade of green living that you need to achieve before moving here. There are many different ways to live and care about our surroundings. We want our community to be a comfortable place for anyone who values this land, and we know that in time we will all find better ways to live in harmony with nature.

You can find our mission and vision statements at www.whitehawk.org under "About Us".

Though we value our mission and vision statements, they are not written in stone. Nothing can be in a dynamic, living community. We know that many of our plans will come to fruition, but some will change along the way. White Hawk will be whatever its residents make it, and that can be wonderful and still look many different ways. Just because we’ve planned something one way doesn’t mean it has to stay that way. We encourage new members to bring their ideas and create their own vision for White Hawk. Over time, we will all leave our mark on this village.

So, how is the community set up? Every member is considered to be an equal member. Though longer-standing members may have more knowledge about how things have been done, we aim to avoid situations where some members have the prerogative to make decisions while others feel left out. That being said, in order to participate in White Hawk, new members (even prospective ones) should speak up and try to find ways to get involved.

White Hawk operates currently on a “volunteer” basis. When a decision needs to be made, those who care to be involved talk and make the decision. When a job needs to be done, those who want to help work together and get it done. When an unexpected bill arises, those who feel they can chip in do so. Not all members need to participate in, or support, all projects. However, White Hawk is member-built and depends on members to create a good community. That means everyone needs to pitch in to make it happen. You decide when and how, but without participating members, White Hawk would not exist.

When a member (or group of members) decides to work on a project, only those interested participate. We each try to contribute according to our own sense of responsibility, time constraints, tastes, etc. Usually, when someone has an idea, those interested in helping will contribute and also share in the bounty. Others simply don't get involved in that particular project.

Some White Hawk work, and other projects, happen in official committees. Committees develop over time on an "as needed" basis.

Some examples of committees that have existed in the past and probably will exist in the future:

- Steering Committee – creates meeting agendas and works on overseeing the general business of White Hawk
- Earth Stewardship Committee – manages our common land and natural resources
- Website Committee - keeps public White Hawk website updated
- ARK—architectural review committee which reviews all building plans to ensure compliance with White Hawk policies and also deals with emergency preparedness.

We are a diverse group of households. We appreciate people who will contribute positively towards this project in whatever capacity that may be. And we appreciate people who can live with their neighbors having different interests and beliefs.

4. Common Land and Buildings

Many of the decisions that we have to make together at White Hawk revolve around our common assets—our shared 120 acres, our shared road, and our shared buildings.

We encourage members to find useful and productive activities to engage in at White Hawk, and we have plenty of space available. See our Land Use Policy on the website—it is how we make decisions about how to use our land. The use of common land needs to go through the proper proposal process.

We've been working on the assumption, created long ago, that we will use approximately 1/3 of the land for agriculture, 1/3 for the village and related activities, and leave 1/3 undeveloped. This means each Full Member household who desires, in addition to their lot and 100 feet extension of their lot, generally speaking, has access to approximately 1-2 acres of land for agricultural projects to use for the production of food, fuel, or fiber. Larger projects are possible, but require consensus. Any agricultural project on common land should abide by the Northeast

Organic Farming Association of New York Farmer's Pledge found at <http://www.nofany.org/farmers-pledge>.

Our main goal is to eventually have a common house. A common house is like a community center, and can contain anything we want. We've imagined cooking, dining, and meeting spaces, as well as laundry, workshops, library, game room, offices, bed and breakfast, teen room, children's play room, etc..

We don't know what common buildings might exist in our future. Any structure that White Hawk can imagine, design, fund, and build is possible. We talked in the past about having a barn, about having picnic areas, meditation cabins, animal shelters, gazebos, carports, sheds and storage buildings, and many others.

5. Home Design

When designing a home at White Hawk, you can go about it several ways. You can make your own plans, hire an architect, or choose one of many options in between. We recognize that each household has different needs and skills, and that you are the most powerful resource for determining what is right for you. In addition to having to meet New York State building codes, White Hawk has a list of community requirements and guidelines for you to use during the design process, called the ARK Guidelines. These guidelines are available to official Prospective or Associate Members upon request. We promote:

- energy-efficiency
- natural and local materials
- small footprints

White Hawk members can recommend designers and/or builders. You can also choose your own architect or designer, or find home plans online or for purchase from another source. The Ithaca area has several options for builders familiar with more environmentally friendly building practices. Yet another option would be to copy the home plans from an existing White Hawk house.

We encourage members to communicate with White Hawk residents and/or the ARK Committee at each stage of building. We can help by offering you the pros and cons of various choices previously made, from design to material selection.

Our plan calls for 30 houses. Some lots at White Hawk can accommodate a basement, others can only have a slab or crawlspace. So which lot will you choose? Technically, construction can happen on any lot, but may be limited by factors such as connection to wells, road access, etc. or may mean associated costs for supplying these utilities to your preferred lot. You can hook up to septic. You'll need to get connections to NYSEG electric and gas, which can be included in your construction mortgage budget. There is currently a phone line and internet access.

6. Bank Information

In order to build a house and acquire your lot, most members get a mortgage. Chemung Canal Trust, a local bank, has worked with us extensively and at this point is probably the best place to get financing for this particular type of project because they are already familiar with our project and have written all of the mortgages here so far.

Chemung offers a fixed-rate construction loan that turns into a traditional mortgage. You only have to attend one closing. For Chemung, or other banks for that matter, it is likely you will need at least 20% down payment plus closing costs. Any well-documented construction, design, or deposit costs can be counted towards your down payment.

You are welcome to use other banks, but they will have a lot of questions and it will probably add time to your financing/construction process.

Current White Hawk members are also a great resource for helping you deal with the bank.

7. Financing and Costs

Project Costs: Most things at White Hawk are paid for by lot fees, monthly dues, or optional donations.

To build the village, we are relying mostly on lot fees. The first 10-11 lots pay for the infrastructure. The next 8-9 pay for the land. The last 10 pay for the common house and anything else we can think of if there's money left over.

Optional donations cover things like the playground or trees for the orchard. This system allows people to contribute when they want to be a part of something, but doesn't force everyone to contribute to everything.

Member costs: You will likely have your mortgage payment. You will have your monthly dues which include property taxes and association fees. (Association fees cover things like road plowing/maintenance, community internet, taxes on common property, etc..) Outside of that, it's like living anywhere - you will have your utilities, optional donations, and other expenses.

8. Getting Familiar...

If you decide to move forward with membership, we assume you'll want to learn everything you can about White Hawk. We want to get to know you, too. The best way to get to know each other is to attend White Hawk events, such as meetings, and to spend time together. Sometimes we have potlucks, campfires, game nights, or even work parties at which we can mingle.

You can also read about White Hawk on our website, or our Members Yahoo! Group once you've become a Prospective Member. In the past, White Hawk members chose to write short biographies about themselves as a way of introducing themselves to everyone. We'd like this tradition to continue.

Once you've become a Prospective Member, you can also read present and past messages we send on our memberlist. You are welcome to reply and participate in discussions, however,

please be sensitive to the amount of email being generated. We strive for a balance between staying informed and being overloaded by too much mail.

Keep in mind as you read through the Yahoo! Group that White Hawk Ecovillage is in the development stage and, as a constantly evolving community, some information may be outdated. It is important to see how the group has operated in the past, but the best way for you to become familiar with us, and us with you, is to actively be involved in our current community.

9. Visiting

People often ask us: What is White Hawk? White Hawk is a community under construction. Though we have a mission and vision statement we have all agreed to, in the end White Hawk will be whatever its members make of it. Despite whatever twists and turns our development may take, we hope that this is a place of opportunity and joy.

Please check the website for upcoming meeting dates. We typically meet once a month to make decisions and report on important matters to each other. We strongly encourage interested parties to attend meetings, become a Prospective Member if they feel moved to, and become a part of the ongoing discussion about White Hawk's future.

If you ever want to visit White Hawk and need accommodations, you have several options:

- Sometimes, members have space available for a night or two. Ask one of us and we'll check with everyone and get back to you.
- Camping on the land is always available for a few nights (and you can use the bathrooms at a neighboring house). We've had RVs park in our parking lot— there is plenty of space.
- There are many fine bed & breakfasts, hotels and campgrounds in the Ithaca area—search the internet for these accommodations.

While you're here, you might want to check out the Ithaca area—there are lakes, waterfalls, parks, the Ithaca Farmers' Market, the Ithaca Commons, Cornell University, music festivals, wineries, restaurants, and many other attractions. Danby State Forest is right around the corner from White Hawk if you like to backpack.

Please visit, stay in touch and feel free to ask any questions! We look forward to helping and getting to know you!