

COMMUNITY *Design* REPORT

PROGRESS UPDATE: June 2022



Community Design

Wilderness Torah is designing the Center for Earth-Based Judaism as a home for **regenerative Jewish culture, climate change resiliency, and cultural repair**. The iterative, community design process aligns with the seven-year *Shmita* (year of “release”) cycle. More than 150 community stakeholders from Wilderness Torah, Camp Newman, the greater Bay Area, and around the world have participated in multiple charrette events, with more to come.

Themes

Community participants affirmed these core themes in designing the Center for Earth-Based Judaism.

Building

Use natural building and alternative architecture

Fire

Support safe fire and honor fire trauma in Sonoma

Land Resources

Support the cyclical relationship with land and water

Plants

Use native and culturally relevant plants



**Wilderness
Torah**
*Center For
Earth-Based
Judaism*

FOCUS AREAS

Community participants have provided invaluable input to shape the design of the Center for Earth-Based Judaism (CEBJ). The site will be on URJ Camp Newman's 500-acre campus in Sonoma County, which was devastated by the 2017 Tubbs wildfire. In building back, community feedback has reinforced the values of accessibility, Indigenous Solidarity, ecological restoration, and sustainability.



ACCESSIBILITY

- Geographic access from outside Sonoma County
- Physically accessible once on-site
- Accessible for different needs (e.g., ASL interpreters, chemical sensitivities, large-print signs)

Design Challenge: *Maintain the wild beauty of the natural landscape while supporting an ADA-compliant and dignified experience for everyone.*



WATER

Access to natural "living" water to create a year-round *mikveh*, an immersive, spiritual bath used in Jewish tradition at important life transitions and holidays for ritual purity.

Design Challenge: *Locate natural sources of water and design a space that's accessible to people of all abilities and genders.*



INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY

- Indigenous Solidarity was understood as encompassing the way we will tend to the land, handle fire, and design programs.
- Be in right relationship with the native peoples of the area.
- Prioritize Indigenous Solidarity Learning programming.

Design Challenge: *Honor the time to build authentic relationships with native peoples. Take concrete steps to involve native peoples in the process. Incorporate decolonial practices into the design. Discover ways to support the efforts of native peoples in the region.*



FAMILY FRIENDLY

- Accessible to families at all life stages (e.g., with strollers)
- Family lodging in one area with close proximity to programming

Design Challenge: *Create a fun place that is accessible for families with children and parents at all stages.*

Giving Gratitude

Thank you to the Wilderness Torah community members who participated in the design process. We are grateful for your time and passion. A special thanks to the generous foundations for their financial contributions: Chaiken Foundation, Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah, Contra Costa Jewish Community Center, Upstart, Gaia Fund, and Opaline Fund.

