

CREATING A MORE RESILIENT WORLD





THIS IS MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH WILDERNESS TORAH...THIS IS THE CONNECTION TO JUDAISM I HAVE BEEN YEARNING FOR!

- Program Participant

ABOUT US





MISSION

Wilderness Torah promotes healing, belonging, and resilience. We awaken and celebrate earth-based Jewish traditions through inclusive and intergenerational **village-building**.

VISION

A vibrant, resilient world, where humanity remembers how to care for each other and our precious earth.

HEALING, BELONGING, AND RESILIENCE

Challenges are mounting everywhere we turn.

For many of us, the world's challenges—and our own—can seem to be mounting everywhere we turn. There is disconnect with the self, community, earth, and Spirit.

We're facing:

- Climate crisis
- Nature-deficit disorder
- Social isolation
- Mental health epidemic
- Lack of safe, authentic community spaces

Judaism arose from an agricultural society closely related to nature's cycles. Over our Jewish history of repeated exile and trauma, we became increasingly disconnected from our earth-based roots.

TRANSFORMING JEWISH LIFE

WHAT IS EARTH-BASED JUDAISM?

Earth-based Judaism is a movement to reinvigorate Jewish traditions that guide us back into regenerative life ways. Earth-based Jewish practices reweave the fabric of resilient, Jewish village life, and inspire and cultivate ethos and action toward the stewardship of our precious earth.

Wilderness Torah fosters vibrant village life that reconnects us to self, community, earth, and Spirit.

Wilderness Torah is a pioneer and leader in the earth-based Judaism movement—a response to “nature-deficit disorder” and loss of communal village structures that long ago underpinned Jewish life and well-being.

Wilderness Torah began in 2007 to mentor and initiate people to thrive at each life stage; reweave the fabric of resilient village life; cultivate love and stewardship for our precious earth; and reinvigorate Jewish traditions that guide us back into regenerative life ways.

In the last seven years (2016-2022), we've served over 11,000 at our festival, community, and youth programs.

Over the next six years, we plan to serve almost 30,000 people in those same core program areas.

Our diverse, intergenerational community members are all ages, all denominations, and hail from all over the United States and across the world.

VILLAGE-BUILDING

We thrive by supporting each other to heal, find our gifts, and serve in community. Youth are mentored to discover their truth; adults are initiated to steward that which is greater than themselves; and elders are honored for their life experience and earned wisdom. The village becomes a context for collaborative leadership, mutuality, celebration, and radical inclusivity.

In Wilderness Torah's Village, we learn to live on earth informed by deeply rooted Jewish tradition while seeking and integrating the revelations needed for today.

WILDERNESS TORAH SERVED OVER 11,000 PEOPLE IN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS (2016-2022). OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS, WE PLAN TO SERVE ALMOST 30,000 PEOPLE IN THESE PROGRAM AREAS AND OTHERS:

9,800

FESTIVALS

11,342

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

5,466

YOUTH PROGRAMS



TRANSFORMING JEWISH LIFE, CONT.

In the past 15 years, we have demonstrated how an earth-based approach widens the doorway to a meaningful Jewish life while catalyzing a healing and reciprocal relationship with the Earth. This work happens through:



Cherished, multigenerational community festivals, like Passover in the Desert and Sukkot In-Gathering



Youth programs that seed a new generation of leaders; these in-person, mentor-led, nature-based, rite-of-passage experiences set a new standard for regenerative Jewish education



Mentoring initiatives



Leadership in the field of Jewish Outdoor Food, Farming and Environmental Education (JOFEE) and the wider Jewish community

In Wilderness Torah's Village, we learn to live on earth informed by deeply rooted Jewish tradition while seeking and integrating the revelations needed for today.

CULTURE CHANGE

We need extraordinary culture change to meet today's challenges.

Wilderness Torah is committed to honoring the 7-year Shmita (sabbatical) cycle. During the Shmita year, tradition instructs us to rest the land, release debt, and renew ourselves for the next cycle. We took the Shmita year 5782 (2021-2022) to slow down, deeply reflect, and take the next step in our evolution. We developed this strategic planning process aligned with our evolving values:

- Focusing on community
- Embodying the change we envision
- Evolving cultural dynamics to become a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just organization and community



We've honed our mission, clarified a bold vision, and created potent strategies. Our new theory of change articulates our core values and approaches that help us realize our vision.

I FEEL VERY GRATEFUL TO WILDERNESS TORAH FOR HELPING CONNECT ME BACK TO AN ANCIENT EARTH-BASED FORM OF JUDAISM WHICH I FEEL IS SO RELEVANT FOR MYSELF AND MY FAMILY. I FEEL LIKE I'M ON A PATH TO REINTEGRATING JEWISH TRADITION AND SEASONAL CYCLES IN MY FAMILY'S LIFE.

- Yom Kippur participant

THEORY OF CHANGE



INCLUSIVE, INTERGENERATIONAL VILLAGE-BUILDING

WILDERNESS TORAH IS FILLING THE JEWISH NEED FOR ROOTED SPIRITUAL CONNECTION WITH THE EARTH.

– Community Member

The village becomes a context for collaborative leadership, mutuality, celebration, and radical inclusivity.

CULTURE OF INITIATION

We honor, empower, and initiate people at all life stages.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Centers shared leadership and responsibility for each other and the earth.

MENTORSHIP

We see the inherent gifts in each other and support the growth of our full human potential.

THEORY OF CHANGE

CORE COMPETENCIES

MENTORSHIP
COMMUNITY
MOVEMENT-
BUILDING

There is increased understanding of Judaism's earth-based roots.

More individuals connect to meaningful Jewish experiences.

Jewish practice and ritual is revitalized.

A network of inclusive and intergenerational villages develops, proliferates, and thrives.

Earth and humanity are in harmonious, sustainable relationship. Our culture is transformed.

A VIBRANT, RESILIENT WORLD, WHERE HUMANITY REMEMBERS HOW TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER AND OUR PRECIOUS EARTH.

STEPS OF CHANGE

VISION

VALUES

HEALING

BELONGING

RESILIENCE

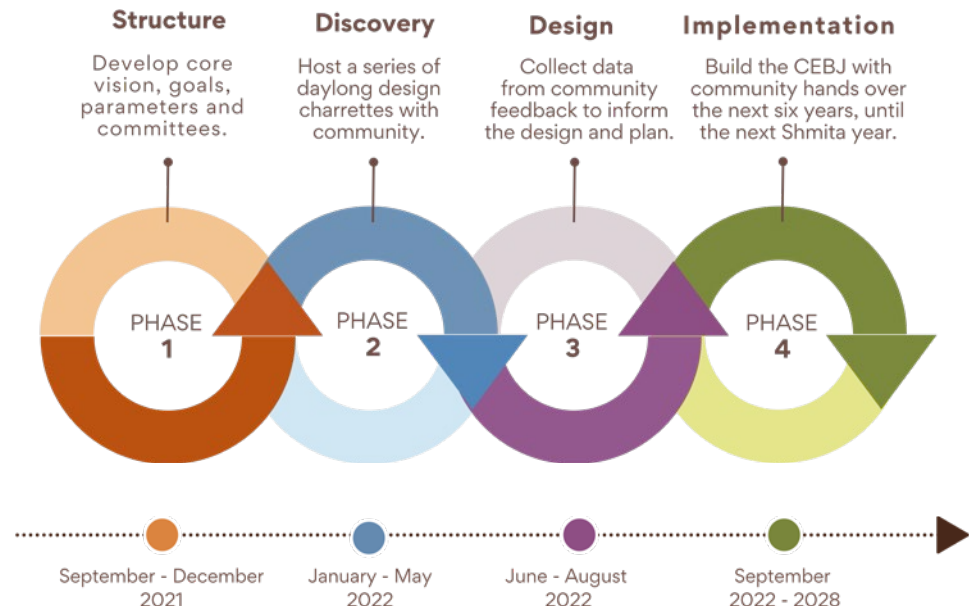


STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

THE CENTER FOR EARTH-BASED JUDAISM

Together we will build the Center as a Bay Area hub and national training ground for regenerative Jewish culture, climate change resiliency, and inclusive community.

In collaboration with URJ Camp Newman, Wilderness Torah is realizing its founding vision of launching the Center for Earth-Based Judaism. The Center is a cross-cutting initiative that enhances our ability to host experiential and immersive experiences.



CURRENT
Center for Earth-Based Judaism land

VISION
Beautiful flowing waterfall, ideally year round. A place to hike to, rest, find peace.



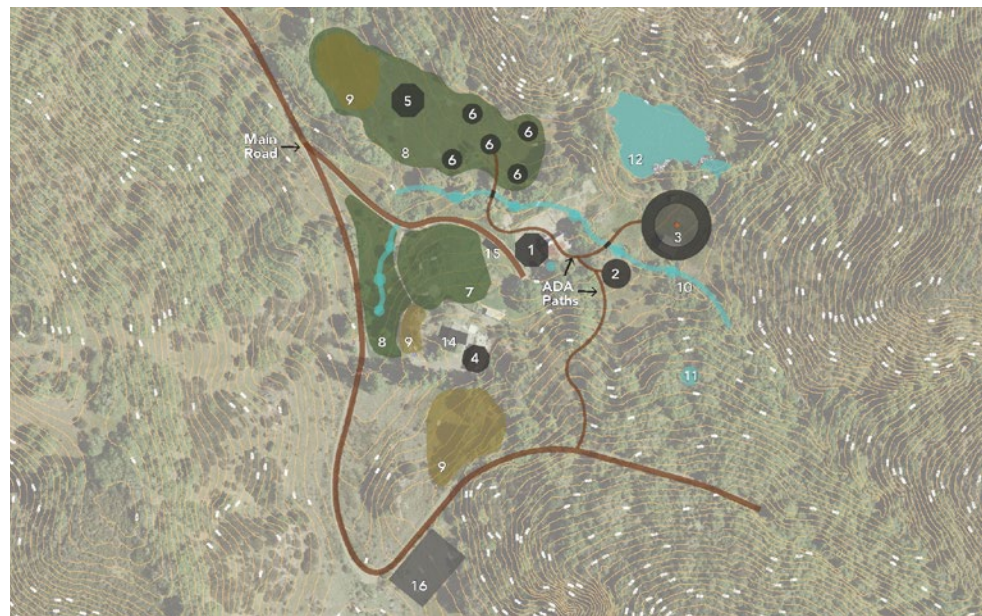
VISION
Permaculture perennial plantings. Accessible location for maintenance and hands-on workshops and community interaction.



CENTER FOR EARTH-BASED JUDAISM, CONT.

TOGETHER WE ARE BUILDING A LONG-TERM COLLABORATION BASED ON JEWISH VALUES AIMED AT CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCY. ...WE BELIEVE THAT WE WILL CREATE A SYNERGISTIC PARTNERSHIP AT CAMP NEWMAN THAT WILL SERVE THE BROADER COMMUNITY MORE POWERFULLY THAN OUR ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO SEPARATELY.

- Ruben Arquilevich
 VICE PRESIDENT FOR URJ CAMPS, NFTY AND IMMERSIVES &
 FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAMP NEWMAN



SITE PLAN

- 1. Welcome Pavilion
- 2. Kids and Family Area
- 3. Ceremony Space, Sacred Fire
- 4. Staff Area
- 5. Classroom, Workshop Space
- 6. Ancestral Skills Areas
- 7. Terraced Gardens
- 8. Orchard
- 9. Camping Areas
- 10. Rain Gardens
- 11. Rain Tank
- 12. Existing Pond
- 13. Waterfall
- 14. Main Parking
- 15. ADA/ Unloading
- 16. Overflow Parking

PROGRAM TIMELINE

We will build the Center for Earth-Based Judaism at URJ Camp Newman through permaculture design and hands-on community build workshops. The Center will be home to our regional and national programs.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
		Ongoing building and development with Camp Newman						
WORKSHOPS AND HANDS-ON BUILDING		Workshops and Hands-On Land Development 2023						
HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS				Shavuot In-Gathering 2025				
			High Holidays 2024					
			Sukkot 2024					
SHABBAT EXPERIENCES			Shabbaton 2024					
YOUTH AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES				Family Camp 2025				
			B'Naiture 2024					
					Wilderness Torah Fellowship 2026			

STRATEGIES

What do we mean?

How will we get there?

STRENGTHEN OUR BAY AREA REGIONAL VILLAGE

Our regional Bay Area village is the heart of who we serve. We commit to invest more deeply in village life, showcasing how a locally-rooted, intergenerational community with shared leadership, mentorship, and a culture of initiation can build a more resilient future.

- Provide year-round programs and community support offerings.
- Embed shared leadership, mentorship, and a culture of initiation across all aspects of village life.
- Enhance our annual cycle of multigenerational, land-based events.
- Grow and deepen programming in the Bay Area for youth and families with young children.
- Grow and deepen local teen programming.

EXPAND OUR REACH AND SCALE THE MOVEMENT OF EARTH-BASED JUDAISM

We will scale our programs to reach new audiences and pursue opportunities to build and grow the movement of earth-based Judaism nationally.

- Leverage partnerships to disseminate successful programs and curricula nationally.
- Train and initiate other national Jewish leaders into the movement.
- Increase awareness of earth-based Judaism through content creation and thought leadership.

INTEGRATE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGHOUT OUR WORK

We will embody diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice (DEIJ) in the work that we do, building a community where all feel seen, respected, and reflected in the leadership. We will work to dismantle white supremacy patterns and culture in our organization and programs. We will work toward solidarity with regional Indigenous communities. We will partner with other communities to steward and protect the future of the earth we all share.

- Invest in our cultural evolution “from the inside out,” embedding diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice across our culture and operations.
- Center and create space for Indigenous solidarity.
- Engage in climate change resilience at the Center for Earth-Based Judaism.

BUILD A STRONG, REGENERATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

We will build the organization’s capacity to deliver on our strategic priorities at a high level, becoming both financially secure and operationally sound, and ensuring we are staffed appropriately at both the lay and professional levels.

- Build a revenue model for long-term financial sustainability.
- Invest in and evolve our staff and leadership teams.
- Strengthen and grow our board.



IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELINE & MILESTONES

REGIONAL VILLAGE PROGRAM TIMELINE: BUILDING THE MOVEMENT OF EARTH-BASED JUDAISM

Our regional Bay Area village is the heart of who we serve.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
	Existing programs remain ongoing with program growth over time. This includes regular Shabbat activities, festivals and holidays, B'Hootz and B'naiture programs, Neshama Quests, and existing leadership development opportunities.							
CENTERING LEADERSHIP			Adult and Elder Initiatory Programs	2024				
		Village Angels	2023					
		Shomrim	2023					
CREATING SAFE, JUST, EQUITABLE, AND DIVERSE SPACES		Affinity Groups	2023					
		Shared Learning and Partnership with Marginalized Communities		2023				
INVESTING IN YOUTH AND FAMILIES	Young Family Programs and Festival Spaces 2022–2023							

MILESTONES

GOAL 1

BUILD THE BAY VILLAGE

- Launch family programs by 2022 and a family camp by 2024.
- Launch membership model by July 2024.
- Launch programs at the Center by 2024.
- Triple regional program participation by 2029.
- Support our community members in becoming more connected to self, to community, and to nature/earth.
- Grow festival programming into destination events for our regional and national participants.

GOAL 2

SCALE THE MOVEMENT

- Build first national partnership for Neshama Quest by 2023.
- Launch Residential Wilderness Torah Fellowship in 2026.
- Expand Wilderness Torah as a national thought leader in earth-based Judaism.

GOAL 3

UPLIFT JUSTICE AND RESILIENCE

- Implement DEIJ and Indigenous solidarity as a major focus of our organization.

WILDERNESS TORAH IS REKINDLING THE SPARK IN PEOPLE'S SOULS BY BRINGING THEM TOGETHER, EXCAVATING MEANING FROM JEWISH RITUALS, AND DOING SO BY WEAVING IT ALL TOGETHER WITH NATURE/THE LAND.

- Community Member

FINANCIALS & STAFFING

Wilderness Torah financial projections for the next seven years are shaped by two core beliefs:

1. Invest in professionalizing our work at a deeper level to ensure a more sustainable operational approach.
2. Our people are the program.

REVENUE

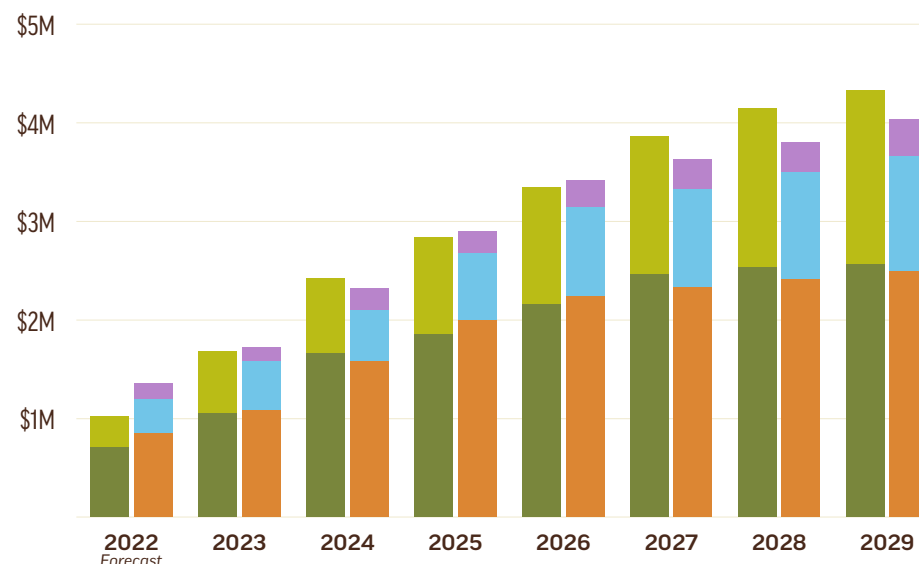
Revenue is derived from both philanthropic support as well as earned revenue. Philanthropic support will include funding from new and current sources. Earned revenue will come from a new membership model and program fees.

INCOME

- EARNED REVENUE
- CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS

EXPENSES

- OPERATIONS
- DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES
- PERSONNEL: SALARIES, BENEFITS, TAXES



EXECUTIVE TEAM

RABBI AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Responsible for new program development, curriculum development, spiritual offerings, and thought leadership. Serves as spiritual leader and mentors new clergy and the Village Angels. Works in collaboration with Executive Team.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Responsible for finance, operations, and organizational culture. Works in collaboration with Executive Team.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Responsible for fundraising and organizational development. Works in collaboration with Executive Team.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Responsible for program development and implementation, collaborating closely with Creative Director. Works in collaboration with Executive Team.

NEW PROGRAM STAFFING

2023

Director of Finance and Operations

Community Programs Manager

Indigenous Solidarity Coordinator

Development Associate

Community Programs Coordinator

Adult Initiatory Program Manager

2024

Program Director

Clergy/Spiritual Leader

Center Program Manager

Neshama Quest Program Manager

Community Programs Manager

2025

Director of Partnerships/ National Initiatives

Youth Program Manager

Grants/Sponsorship Coordinator

THANK YOU



JOIN THE VILLAGE, BUILD THE MOVEMENT

FOLLOW US



youtube.com/wildernesstorah

info@wildernesstorah.org

wildernesstorah.org

What would a more resilient world look like, where humanity remembers how to care for earth and each other?

We need your help to get there. The deepening of this work requires everyone. Through mentorship, community, and movement-building, we all have unique strengths and gifts to contribute. We honor, empower, and initiate people at all life stages—so we can all play a meaningful role in creating a more resilient world.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

Your support, gifts, and involvement are crucial. Thank you for all that you've already done. We look forward to partnering with you.

Visit wildernesstorah.org/strategic-plan to learn more and email info@wildernesstorah.org to start the conversation.

Contribute to the future:
wildernesstorah.org/donate

GRATITUDE

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this strategic planning process.

- Our **ADVISORY TEAM** for leading the way
- Our **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** for steering the process towards the future
- Our **STAFF** for your invaluable feedback and soulful work every day
- Our **COMMUNITY** for your participation at the town hall and your constant support
- Our **STRATEGIC PARTNERS** for your thoughtful input
- Our **STAKEHOLDERS** for investing your time in building a brighter future
- Our **FUNDERS** who contributed directly to this process: The Fred Isaac Fund and Jared Gellert
- **THIRD PLATEAU** for guiding us in a thorough and methodical process



THIS IS HOW WE WE'RE MEANT TO LIVE: IN COMMUNITY, IN PRAYER, IN HARMONY WITH NATURE. IN A WORLD WHERE WE'VE WANDERED TOO FAR FROM OUR ROOTS, I'M GRATEFUL TO WILDERNESS TORAH FOR PROVIDING A PATHWAY HOME.

- Passover in the Desert participant



אֵמֶת מֵאֶרֶץ תִּצְמַח

Truth will sprout from the earth.

PSALM 85:12

wildernesstorah.org/strategic-plan