

November 2019 Witchcamp Council Meeting Summary Minutes

(Consensus approval on February 8, 2020)

The next online WCC meeting will be April 25-May 9, 2020
(April 26-May10, 2020 in Australia).

Reps, Camps, and Guilds Participating in This Meeting

Redwood Magic: George
Litha Camp: Sainda
Teen Earth Magic: Ingrid
Earthsong: Churaig
Winter Witchcamp: Matt
Winter Witchcamp: Katie
Cloudcatcher: Susanne Rae
Cloudcatcher: Pablo
Wild Maine: River
Wild Maine: Simon
Vermont: Beth
California: Madrone
ROOTS: Melissa
BC Camp: Willow
Witchlets: Rahula
CRAFT: Irisanya
Spiralheart: Yarrow
Spiralheart: Babka Stu
Tejas: Wren
Tejas: Deanna
Dragonrise: David
Dragonrise: Fortuna
HERETICS: Raven
Aurora Borealis: Jane
Aurora Borealis: Cynthia
Wildkin: Gael
PORTAL: Dawn
Continuity Rep: Paul

CONSENSUS DECISIONS

Witchcamp Council Statement of Trans and Non-binary Solidarity. (This statement is included at end of these minutes and on Cornucopia at witchcamp.org)

WCC reps will assist their Camp and Guild Communities in Applying the BIRCH Consensus on Trans, non-Binary and Marginalized People. (These consensus are included in the body of these minutes.)

WCC reps will assist their Camp and Guild Communities in Applying the BIRCH Consensus for the DARC Statement. (The DARC statement is included at end of these minutes and on Cornucopia at witchcamp.org)

Moving the Teacher Database from Witchcamp.org with certain conditions.

Accepted Wildkin as member of WCC

Action Items

- We need someone to administer the WCC facebook page. Irisanya volunteered.
- Reps will distribute the WCC Statement of Trans and Non-binary Solidarity to their home communities.
- Reps will assist their Camp and Guild Communities in Applying the BIRCH Consensus on Trans, non-Binary and Marginalized People and in Applying the BIRCH Consensus for the DARC Statement.
- Continuity Rep will search for person with javascript skills to create app for teacher database.
- Tejas and Portland are checking into hosting a WCC F2F meeting in November 2020.
- Yarrow and Wren are interested in creating an Organizer support cell.
- DARC statement, Emerging Communities letter, and the BIRCH consensus on Trans, Non-binary, and Marginalized people will be posted to files in google group and on Cornucopia by CR.

Financial Report

WCC currently has \$2,991. We spent about \$600 since the first of the year which was mostly for website related expenses. WCC received 2 tithes valued at about \$325. Spiralheart pays for our hosting fees for our website as their tithe and in addition sends a small donation to WCC.

Outreach Report

Jane has managed the Facebook page and is stepping down from this responsibility. She has been posting information from other camps and communities on the page. She also created a chronological list of camps to keep straight where the thread is being thrown. We need someone to replace her.

The summary minutes of each meeting are now being made available to Reclaiming communities as reps disseminate them. They are also posted in Cornucopia.

We accepted Wildkin Camp from Australia as a new member of WCC.

Tech Report

Paul is coordinating website work. Jane is overseeing Facebook. Katie is updating camp information on website. Yarrow is investigating alternatives to the current Teacher Data Base. Anne Campbell is our website consultant.

Cornucopia is almost ready to go. We have been testing it with a few individuals and it is working. **It would be lovely if each rep could find something they would like to submit and use the outlined procedures to upload the document to Cornucopia.** If you are looking for ideas of what to submit, go to cornucopia and look at the categories. Katie and Beth are learning the necessary tasks to be “librarians” for Cornucopia.

The Teacher Data Base is no longer compatible with witchcamp.org. We cannot due certain necessary updates to witchcamp.org because of it. It is also an insecure site. Yarrow has researched an alternative to it and come up with a template. The cost of this service would be about \$220-250 per year. We

approved a proposal to separate the teacher database from witchcamp.org and move it. First we need to find someone with javascript skills to create an app to allow teachers to update their applications.

Next WCC Face to Face Meeting

Our next face to face meeting will be in November of 2020. Tejas and Portland are seeing if they can host it.

Statement of Trans Solidarity and Support

Following discussion, consensus was reached on statement to be shared widely with home communities and camps.

Consensus was achieved for the statement in solidarity with trans and non-binary people. 19 reps agreed. there were 0 disagrees, blocks, or abstains. Statement has been posted to spider, cornucopia, to all WCC reps, and it will be part of the minutes. Reps may bring this statement to their communities in whatever way it makes sense for them.

Shall actions by camps and guilds about how to implement this statement be part of next WCC agenda?

Statement was developed collaboratively by working sub-group of WCC members and edited by Beth, with help from Melissa Moon and Yarrow, incorporating suggestions from on-line meeting representatives.

How to implement and be accountable to this statement is up to individual communities and camps. Facilitator of thread suggests "In my opinion, it does not preclude communities/guilds producing their own statements. In my opinion, it also demands that individual communities and guilds develop their own methods of accountability and support, and make those known."

Perhaps next step for WCC could be to develop or provide links to resource guides on how to be a trans ally.

Also brought up - "if it is time to discuss adding another agreement for camps to make to belong to WCC - something along the lines of within the next 2 years camps (and guilds) need to have an actionable plan to support trans and NB folk at camp. as others have said, statements are great, and this is clear for this group, but it's not always proving enough and what i was hearing repeatedly is a call for action - as well as clear policies around trans inclusion as well as other forms of inclusion and anti-racism (to touch on another thread)."

Point of view that "statements are not particularly helpful in terms of creating change. I hope that our time would be spent on adjusting policies and behaviors and I would be worried if our time is spent on aspirations. More helpful, in my mind, would be to simply cite the relevant lines from the principles of unity as a document which already has consensus and potency in the context of determining witchcamp policy, and then briefly describe actions to be taken by camps to stay in compliance with the consensus."

Current Practices & Protocols for camps sharing financial information and budget.

This thread intended to be a starting place for camps to share budgets and financial information.

Apparent that camp budgets are vary widely.

Some camps financially healthy, others less so. Some are adult only, some all ages or family oriented, some are full week, others 4 days or less. Attendance ranges from 30-130.

Discussion included sliding scale and how that is handled, tithing to indigenous peoples of the land camps are on, payments to teachers and organizers, varying overhead costs between camp venues, and other financial concerns.

It was stated that “ We heard at Dandelion that there's really big differences in costs and payments. We need to have a frank discussion, setting aside our discomfort, about fair pay for teachers and organizers. Financial transparency in how we organize is absolutely essential for building trust and resisting capitalism. “

Winter Witch Camp, posted their last year’s budget and offered to help other camps by sharing his budgeting and bookkeeping process.

Birch Proposal: The DARC/BIPOC Statement

The Decolonizing Action in Reclaiming Communities (DARC) and Black Indigenous and People of Color(BIPOC) statement was presented at Dandelion. **The FINAL CONSENSUS #4: BIRCH** to make a public statement of support for the [DARC statement](#), call for Reclaiming communities to work with it as it evolves. Take back to cells, ritual planning, teaching cells, communities, at minimum reading it, talking about it and doing work around it.

The consensus of WCC was for reps to assist their Camp and guild communities in applying the BIRCH consensus. There was much discussion about the statement and strong support for working with it in home communities. There were some questions about how to bring this to communities successfully. One suggestion was to look at this as an opportunity for communities to engage in reflection and discussion about this issue as well as address some of the specific asks in the statement.

Introducing the DARC statement to Home Communities

There is a consensus about reps assisting in bringing the DARC statement to their home communities. Some reps have been doing this work in camps and guilds already with varying success. there was a request to share ideas about how reps might work with the DARC statement in their camps and guilds. how we can support each other?

Study groups and work our way through The Me and White Supremacist Workbook by Layla Saad, or authors like her.

PORTAL is looking at ways to include this material into our core classes.

World Tree Lyceum put some of this material into the community core class we taught last year, and have expanded it to a 7 week class to accommodate more (and in response to feedback). We've long had a discussion on the POU in Elements of Magic - somewhat more lengthy discussions are one of the plus points of online classes which have less time constraints.

Optional Offerings at camps. It could be accessible on web sites, and be suggested reading before camp. A path specifically around anti-racist work.

To seek appropriate training for our org team so that as a team that influences camp culture we are educated appropriately in these issues. To reach out to the other 2 Australian Camps and see if we might approach this from an Australian perspective as there are so many cross-threads between the camp communities.

SpiralHeart is trying to become an actively anti-racist community, with anti-racist paths our last two camps and the one coming up. We are not nearly there yet. We are trying to continue to "provide the support necessary to center trans and nonbinary people in leadership positions" as our draft statement says. We're also in the beginning stages of opening to disability justice.

Continuity Rep

Paul, the current CR is recommending that we create a CR team. The reasons for a team is that it is more in line with Reclaiming values of shared power. WCC history, values, and processes are held by several folks, a shared responsibility. If a CR is ill, unavailable or who knows what, someone else can step in. for instance.

Paul wants to be a mentor or have limited in role in WCC by November, 2021. Beth from Vermont is currently exploring the possibility of being on this team. It would be a good thing for some folks to engage in some of the organizational joys of facilitating 3 continents of witches in the magic of Reclaiming witch camps.

Guild Discussions

We have this thread so that guild reps may have a place to share info specific to guilds.

A thread of this conversations concerned core classes. Core classes at camps are often not as comprehensive as those taught in non-camp venues. The core classes at camp are often the most accessible to folks who come from areas where there is not an active Reclaiming community. It is agreed that is important to offer elements at camps for first time campers.

Core classes are now being taught online which makes them accessible to many and allow for a more thorough experience.

Camps' experiences with campers who sign agreements about drugs and alcohol and then violate them?

There was a discussion of this issue. This thread was not minuted in order for folks to have open and frank discussions of this topic.

How do we support camp organizers, particularly those of new and struggling camps?

This conversation was introduced as a thread to include ideas and methods for cross-pollination between camps, regional gatherings, promotion of camps and classes, ways to support teaching, core classes and workshops in remote areas.

The emerging communities letter was posted and referred to. It also featured in a separate Loomio thread.

There exist levels of support between various camp communities.

Cloudcatcher, Earthsong, Tejas, Winter witch camp and Spiralheart continue to offer organizer/spinner/ambassador scholarships.

3 year model for organizing cited as a way to mentor:

Year 1 - can try out new things, has a net of experienced folks, brings fresh ideas.

Year 2 - basically knows what works, does heavy lifting and anchoring

Year 3 - Guiding, questioning, providing safety net for other two. Recruits replacement.

It is suggested we look at how other traditions handle some of these issues. As an example, both Katrina Messenger's "Reflections Mystery School" and Ivo Dominguez Jrs' Assembly of the Sacred Wheel have been actively addressing similar issues in their own ways.

Other statements included: hope to see a guide to Reclaiming lingo developed, and like to see shared with Camps is that notion of uniqueness, within the umbrella of Reclaiming, that Camps can and have developed.

One idea that had initial support was the concept of an organizing mentoring cell or group.

Proposal was started – outcome:

Setting up an Organizer Support Cell

10 People voted on this proposal, 2 were willing to help create a cell of organizers/former organizers willing to serve as support in some capacity or another. 4 stated they are interested in being part of the cell, with 5 asking to be kept informed, maybe later.

One person handling creation of this cell seems like not enough. There may be enough people to be on the cell, although at the moment we are not certain exactly what the cell would be working towards.

There are quite a few ideas and ways established camps offer or could offer support to wider community of camps.

Question of forming a cell could be brought to spring meeting.

Consent and ethics of ritual; unspoken norms and culture of Reclaiming

VWC is looking deeply and critically at how we are and are not inclusive. Recent years we have created a guidebook (the first year we printed & gave to every camper), last year - posted online and printed 20 hard copies. Guidebook (on VWC website) is intended to help everyone with camp culture, ritual etiquette, lingo, how to give constructive feedback, consent culture, gender and pronouns, principles of unity. There is mixed results with. This year we asked a group of 4 campers (organizing

and resource roles) to re-imagine the first day experience at camp as one of inclusion, welcome and acceptance. It was fairly successful and we plan to continue this work for camp 2020.

Reclaiming has seemed to emphasize a form of what I think of as psycho-drama, with emphasis on an arc that takes campers via trance to (usually)dark places. The surprise element seems to have been thought of as essential piece. While I have appreciated this on a personal level, I now wonder if we have outgrown that at this point in our cultures.

We do, though, have that psycho-drama plot line in our arcs: go to the difficult place, resolve a problem, come out again, with an emphasis on the individual and individual healing. This is something that's been extremely valuable to me personally. And I'd love to find a way to weave more collective work into the mix, more solidarity action.

I don't think we'll ever outgrow them, as they are deeply embedded in our psyche from an early age (even as we re-work them, re-vision them and find the original, non-patriarchal-overlay, true meaning). The traditional arc mirrors the journey of life, where we are the heroes who learn, find our allies, face challenges, overcome them (or fall down and learn from them and overcome the next time or the time after), and mature into our true selves in the process. And, in my not so humble opinion, when a camp lacks a well-defined story and arc, the rituals tend to flounder, feel not as focused, and the magick seems weaker.

I didn't mean to focus on arc so much as the practice of using surprise and psychodrama in a potentially triggering way. what are the ethics of doing this? do we share enough about planned rituals so as to fully inform to campers and those attending our rituals what will transpire during the ritual? in order for them to consent to participating?

How do various camps get active consent for deep "surprises" before ritual? What is our/your culture for objecting to/changing/stopping a ritual in progress? One idea I had was to develop a culture of standing to the outside witnessing and grounding. If most everyone did that when they can't, in spirit or good conscience, participate in the action of the ritual, it would change the ritual, even become the ritual. And those priestexing the ritual would see and feel what is happening. Hopefully.

Something akin to this came up at EarthSong this year when a grief ritual was held in relation to the land. People were given opportunities to express grief, rage and other emotions. Some campers later fed back that they felt triggered, alarmed, activated, fearful etc and would have liked to have known beforehand this was happening and had a clear exit or safety strategy. At following rituals, an outside space was included in the casting that was available as a safe space.

At many camps we now use something called *Ritual Conspiracy* which is a practice that has come to us thru Diana's Grove Mystery School. This is so helpful in letting folks know pertinent information and content of the upcoming ritual. I/we have used this time to help give context and awareness to any number of things. I am a believer in consent culture and personally, not a fan of "surprises", so using Ritual Conspiracy to prep for what's coming, has been really useful. Seems like major consent issues should be brought up there...and also as part of ritual.

A discussion about volume of distress/anger/grief in ritual might be interesting. There is that cultural bit, but also white people centering ourselves and our experience, another white supremacy characteristic. This is particularly problematic in a mixed group with the volume being from whites

upset about current events...or ancestors... symptomatic of white racism. Good things to explore in discussion!

BIRCH Proposals: Trans and Non-Binary and Marginalized People

The following proposal was approved by consensus. *WCC reps will assist their Camp and Guild Communities in Applying the BIRCH Consensus on Trans, non-Binary and Marginalized People.* Camps and guilds will check in on what they learned bringing the below proposals to their communities.

This proposal was based upon a BIRCH consensus which is below:

FINAL CONSENSUS #1: We as BIRCH are consenting that we are asking our home communities across the world to have a process of accountability against transphobia.

FINAL CONSENSUS #2: To create structures in our local communities to bring marginalized people into leadership roles and to support them while they are there.

FINAL CONSENSUS #3: Create structures within local communities to financially and magically support marginalized people to do the work in communities that call for it.

How to constructively provide difficult feedback to folks wanting to be on the teaching path?

There was much interest in this topic. Constructive feedback is an essential part of the development of teachers and can be quite challenging to do well. It was suggested that it might be more successful as a zoom conversation or on the agenda of the next F2F meeting.

Vermont included Donald Engstrom-Reese's guide to sustainable critique in their camp guidebook. This format was utilized for every lunch time ritual feedback session. It worked well.

Emerging Communities Letter that was presented at Dandelion

This letter is posted in the WCC google groups in a message and in Cornucopia under WCC and Reclaiming documents.

There is so much of interest in this letter. The folks who wrote this letter are less interested in Witchcamp Council as a means to further the issues brought up in this letter because it is very camp oriented. Many of the communities represented in the group do not, for many different reasons, hold camps. They see BIRCH and other branches of Reclaiming that may more directly impact or support the communities in our group.

There is so much in this document that resonates for the EarthSong Community. There is growing feedback about 'too many American voices', a sense of hegemony and the desire for a unique Australian and EarthSong culture whilst remaining strongly Reclaiming.

Next WCC Online Meeting will be April 25-May 9, 2020 (April 26-May10, 2020 in Australia).

These dates aren't ideal for everyone. The posted poll was not conclusive. I asked for any strong preferences for March 7-21 or the April 25 start date. I have not heard any responses so I picked the

April 25 start date since I will be traveling for much of March. This later date also gives us a bit more time between meetings.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

A discussion about volume of distress/anger/grief in ritual might be interesting.

Reps talk about experiences with DARC statement in their communities

Reps talk about experiences with BIRCH consensus on Trans, Non-binary, and Marginalized People in their communities.

Inclusion at camps for new campers

Pre-camp and in-camp info and education about gender and race.

Something along the lines of within the next 2 years camps (and guilds) need to have an actionable plan to support trans and NB folk at camp. as others have said, statements are great, and this is clear for this group, but it's not always proving enough and what i was hearing repeatedly is a call for action - as well as clear policies around trans inclusion as well as other forms of inclusion and anti-racism (to touch on another thread). So agenda for next meeting

Camps and guilds magical work with climate change and other earth, air, fire, and water related issues.

What are some links to resource guides on how to be a trans ally?

Witchcamp Council Statement of Trans and Non-binary Solidarity (Consented upon by WCC, November 23, 2019)

As the Reclaiming Witch Camp Council we categorically state: trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary folks are who they say they are.

Trans and non-binary people are part of the integral fabric of the Reclaiming tradition as ancestors, elders, teachers, visionaries, organizers, community members, and descendants.

Witchcamp Council rejects the gender binary and, in concurrence with many other cultures, recognizes the existence of numerous genders.

We honor each person's right *to* make known their pronouns. We support, respect and acknowledge this by addressing everyone by their pronouns.

Witchcamp Council categorically states that DNA is not destiny, biology is not gender, and biological essentialism is flawed and totally invalid.

We are in agreement with the Reclaiming Principles of Unity, and reaffirm that "we welcome all genders, all gender histories, all races, all ages and sexual orientations and all those differences of life situations, background and ability that increase our diversity."

We encourage all camp communities and guilds to provide the support necessary to center trans and nonbinary people in leadership positions, (where it does not already exist).

When we support each other, we thrive. Supporting each other requires being accountable to each other and being willing to change, as individuals and as a tradition. We commit to accountability and willingness to change.

We acknowledge and recognize the overlapping nature of oppressions including a long history of sex and gender-based oppression. The support, celebration of and a clear statement on trans solidarity at Reclaiming Witchcamps is the specific focus of this statement.

BIPOC and Mixed Race Reclaiming Convergence Statement to Reclaiming on Anti-racist Practices

This is a broad statement and invitation for dialogue, inquiry and growth to the broader Reclaiming community as we approach the 2019 International Dandelion Gathering. It has been developed in active dialogue with Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and Mixed Race witches - priestesses, activists, teachers and organizers - who are actively involved in this tradition of witchcraft.

We acknowledge that the Reclaiming community has long been a spiritual home to People of Colour, and many have found their chosen family here. And yet many PoC Witches have also left this tradition because of systemic challenges that remain within it. The gift of a living tradition is that it is constantly changing and growing. It is within this spirit of constant change and growth that we invite a deep dive into growth and transformation for white-identified people in this community.

We define whiteness as a category of imperialist and capitalist race-hierarchy wielded to divide, dominate, and destroy. We understand that the category of whiteness has shifted through the generations and that it originally referred to pale-skinned British people specifically, especially those British people who were party to the invasion and colonisation of sovereign territories and Aboriginal countries, such as Turtle Island (North America) and Australia. Whiteness then expanded to divide poor pale-skinned people of European descent from both the enslaved people of African descent, and the dispossessed First Nations people. We use whiteness to refer to all those people who are now treated as white, in this continuing colonialism of cultures and spirits, and who therefore grow up with whiteness as default.

The following principles represent a magical boundary, an intention, and a clear line in the sand. These principles are offered in an act of self care, self love, and protection. These principles set guidelines of engagement for conversations about anti-racism and decolonization within this tradition and community.

- Reclaiming is an ethnically diverse tradition. Using “we” and ”our” to refer only to white people in this tradition is an act of erasure of BIPOC and mixed race individuals. We invite deeper sensitivity to the many “we’s” and ”our’s” used in Reclaiming and also specificity of language (“We as white people in Reclaiming need to address white supremacy and racism and its impact on...”)
- Whiteness has been the assumed default, the baseline and the standard in this tradition for far too long. It is never acceptable to assume that a fellow witch identifies as white

unless they tell you they do. Assuming whiteness is an act of erasure.

- White fragility is a slippery slope and enacts itself constantly. It does so in big and also subtle ways. It can look like demanding clarification and further information. It can involve the questioning of POC and mixed race witches, projecting upon us, and demanding our emotional labor. This must stop immediately.
- Do not speak about or for us. We wish to amplify and centralize the power and visibility of People of Colour and have the capacity and will to do so.
- There are no saviors in this work. We abolish the white savior mentality AND we disrupt the idea that we are here to absolve you or teach you about white supremacy.
- Being visible, loud and proud as People of Colour is a way we disrupt white supremacy.
- Liberation is the goal. Though we might enrich your teaching teams, rituals, consensus meetings and projects we are NOT here for your diversity.
- A culture of inclusion is DIFFERENT from diversity. When you create seats at the table and then expect us to act, talk, worship and relate to story as white people then diversity becomes harm. We demand an end to this. Our rage, joy, devotion, collaboration, magic and resistance are offerings to you individually and to our Reclaiming tradition as a whole. Do not expect them to look or behave through the lens of whiteness.
- Whether in the Americas, Australia, or many other areas Reclaiming Tradition is practiced, it is often on the colonized lands of Indigenous peoples. This means not simply acknowledging Indigenous peoples in rituals or classes, but requires a radical reconsideration of what it means to practice the Craft on lands that remain occupied by settler nation-states.

Signed by members of Decolonizing Actions in Reclaiming Communities (DARC)
Abel Gomez, Passia, Fio Aengus Santika, Sal Lavalley, Samantha Ravenna Shay, Heidi
Marian, Rachel Munchkins, Pabs