**Project:** *The Philosophers’ Camp: Grandly Simple*

**Dates:** Friday, October 3 – Sunday, October 5, 2015  
**Location:** SUNY-ESF’s Masten House, Newcomb NY  
**Registration:** Open June 1, 2015  
**Cost per/person:** $750.00/person includes the full program plus materials, room & board

**Description:** In 1858 ten scholars left New England society for a sojourn in the Adirondacks. Seeking to reacquaint themselves with their wild surroundings they hunted, rowed, fished and camped. In a poem written to commemorate the excursion he attended and helped organize, Ralph Waldo Emerson names them *freemen of the forest laws*, and here they were also free of societal and professional boundaries. Thus liberated they fell naturally into a cross-disciplinary cadence that reflects the style of unity between self, other and world that has come to characterize the Camp and mark its intellectual significance. This diverse group of men represents a synthesis of the arts and sciences in thought and practice. Our autumn revitalization of the Philosopher’s Camp, located in the landscape and tradition of the original gathering, draws on the expedition itself and its vibrant legacy. Our readings and conversations will be an opportunity to enter into the spirit of the original Philosophers’ Camp by engaging in shared inquiry and discovery.

Seminar discussion will be led by St. John’s faculty member and Dean of the Graduate Institute David Carl. St. John’s is the third oldest college in the United States, with campuses in Annapolis, Maryland and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Its distinctive approach to liberal arts education focuses on the study of great books in the fields of math, science, philosophy, history, and literature. All classes at St. John’s, graduate and undergraduate alike, are Socratic-style discussion classes.

**Additional Program elements** include an introduction to the history and culture of the region from SUNY-ESF’s Northern Forest Institute Program Coordinator Paul Hai and evening poetry readings and discussion led by Environmental Philosophy Program Coordinator Marianne Patinelli-Dubay. Participants will take a guided hike through surrounding Forest Preserve land and over water and open each day with a guided meditation at sunrise.

**Readings** are meant as preparation for seminar discussion. The texts listed have been chosen for their lyrical, poetic, philosophical and scientific elements and as lenses for participants to see through and beyond. With that in mind, this project aims to show the beauty and utility of applying the seminar method to teaching and learning in the Humanities and in the physical sciences. Seminar leader David Carl represents St. John’s College, Santa Fe, a Liberal Arts institution founded on the principles of teaching and learning the Liberal Arts through discussion-based inquiry and on the study of great books in the areas of mathematics, science, literature, history, music, and philosophy.
Selected readings will be compiled and provided to participants at the time of registration along with a full syllabus/program. Participants will also receive a copy of the primary text, *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*.

**Participants/audience:** This project is intended to become an annual event for 8-10 discussants in collaboration with St. John’s College and other institutions and organizations. Year-one should include, but not be limited to, representatives in leadership positions from a variety of groups and organizations with the twofold objective that 1) their experience might encourage participation more broadly throughout the organization/group in future years and 2) that these groups/organizations might form a cooperative to fund a Fellowship program to underwrite participation more broadly.

**SUNY-ESF’s Northern Forest Institute:** Environmental Philosophy Program Coordinator Marianne Patinelli-Dubay is responsible for design and facilitation of rich conversations like this one across a range of disciplines. Educational initiatives in this program are intended to bridge humanities content with HWF-specific field knowledge and experience in order to understand the impacts of ESF’s relationship between scientific research and the policy it advances. Particularly, to further a connection between theoretical philosophy/ethics and community relationships with an eye towards the resolution of regional issues that arise from the impact of science on human and non-human communities. An ongoing series of original projects are brought about in collaboration with institutions and organizations throughout NYS for the benefit of NFI’s primary audiences.

**Outline:**

**Friday, October 3, 2015**

5 – 6pm: Cocktail hour  
6 – 7pm: Dinner and welcome  
7 – 9pm: Evening program: Revitalizing the cultural history of the Philosophers’ Camp in the Adirondacks, includes readings from:

Saturday, October 4, 2015

8:30 – 10am: Breakfast  
Noon – 1pm: Lunch  
1 – 3pm: A Guided hike *in the tempered light of the woods*: *Way-making as an expression of the deliberate life*  
5 – 6pm: Cocktail hour  
6 – 7pm: Dinner  
7 – 9pm: *Dark behind it rose the forest*: *An evening of poetry*

Sunday, October 5, 2015

8 – 8:30: A guided meditation at sunrise: *Only the day dawns to which we are awake*  
8:30 – 10am: Breakfast  
Noon – 1pm: Lunch and depart