

# Woodsmoke Apprenticeship Application

"...leaders are neither born nor made - they grow." - Mary Cox.

**Thank you for your interest in becoming a Woodsmoke apprentice.** Below is some information for those interested in applying for an apprenticeship.

Working with Woodsmoke would allow you to join a small dynamic team of outdoor professionals, who teach the age-old methods of wilderness bushcraft.

We believe in the traditional apprenticeship scheme, where in exchange for hard-work, dedication and commitment, you will be rewarded with an opportunity to both learn and gain valuable experience *in-situ* from our small team of experienced and dedicated instructors. Provided you are enthusiastic and committed, there is no reason why you cannot progress to become a full instructor. In fact, you will be selected because of your potential to achieve this, although this is by no means *inevitable*.

**The following sections explain a little about what the position entails**, the attributes we expect you to have, and some of the duties that you will have to perform – as your role, even as an apprentice, may fluctuate from lecturer to listener and from the profound to the mundane - constantly.

## Who should apply?

Essentially, the apprentice position is open to all; however applicants must be **at least 18 years of age**. An indication of what we are looking for is detailed below.

## Work Period

Our instructors work for approximately six or seven months each year, and usually have other part-time jobs to provide them with an income whilst not working. Our UK season is from Mid-April to Mid-October. We would prefer to take someone on who can commit to the full UK season (i.e. all or almost all of the UK based courses). This is however a massive commitment and requires stamina and determination, but provides the best immersion and potential to further your own skills and experience and build a relationship with our team and our students. However, we may consider taking on two or three new apprentices to split the workload over the season.

## Attributes

Depending on the level of ability you bring to Woodsmoke as an apprentice, you may initially be concerned with learning the physical requirements of running our courses, and will not take part in teaching. However, it makes sense to us that you will possess the same attributes as our instructors for the reasons outlined above.

There are no nationally recognized qualifications **required** to teach bushcraft, but there are a number of very desirable attributes; some of which are listed below -

- **A genuine passion for bushcraft and nature:** We love what we do, and we are looking for people who have an infectious enthusiasm and will love the challenges and rewards of teaching wilderness living skills.
- **Observing and listening:** A good instructor must be a great listener. The only way to ascertain the character of your students is by communicating with them; and this means listening. You will also need to be a sensitive and insightful observer of people, with great instincts about the moods and interests of your students.
- **A good level of health and fitness:** Instructing is hard work. Sometimes you might work ten days straight, and all days are longer than twelve hours. You are also constantly on the move and in all different weather conditions. You will need to be tough, fit and healthy to survive a season of hard work in challenging conditions.

- **Knowledge and skills:** A proven interest in natural history is a prerequisite for the job. A desire to continually develop your skill base and knowledge of nature is **essential**. Your students will trust and respect you for your knowledge and skills.
- **Leadership:** The ability, and personality, to lead and to get on well with people - we are looking for the kind of personal charisma that means that a diverse range of people will want to look to you for leadership.
- **To be trustworthy, truthful,** and capable of establishing a rapport with people across a broad range of cultural, demographic and age categories. Integrity and loyalty to your fellow instructors will be paramount.
- **To be resourceful and organized,** with a sense of responsibility - Instructing should look effortless. It's an instructor's job to ensure that the background work is done in advance of any lesson and also be behind the scenes throughout each practice period.
- **To be patient, articulate, energetic,** positive, good-humoured, and have the ability to remain resolutely cheerful at all times.
- **To be a good communicator** capable of moving from addressing a group on matters of bushcraft, to practical safety issues, to one on one discussion with group members on any relevant subject. **The capacity to communicate effectively at group and individual level is of utmost importance.**

### Skills/background

The attributes outlined above are very important to us because many are 'soft' skills which are the hardest to come by and teach. Your level of practical skill and experience is less important to us because we are confident that if you are fit and dedicated that we can foster them in you. However it will be advantageous to your application to possess at least some of what is listed below:

**Please DO NOT write yourself off as an applicant if you do not have any of what is listed below; we know what we are looking for...**

- **Ideally, you will have worked or have personal experience** in the outdoors, which would have required the kind of skills listed above.
- **Have a fair existing skill base in wilderness bushcraft** and associated outdoor skills, e.g. navigation, knots, safe use of cutting tools, etc.
- **Have a passion for Britain's fauna and flora.**
- **To have a current recognized first aid qualification** will be essential (although this can be obtained prior to commencement). Preferably with relevance to Expedition Medicine, although this is not essential (but you must be prepared to gain the 'Wilderness Medical Training' *Advanced Medicine for Remote Foreign Travel certificate*).
- **Have a full, clean, driving license.** This one is very important as it essential to our work that you can drive. If you are serious about applying for this position and cannot drive, please start the process.
- **Preferably hold some mountain experience.**

### Duties

- **To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students** at all times. This takes precedence over any syllabus we aim to deliver.
- **To assist the instructors with whatever they need.** We are a small team who often anticipate the needs of each other. With time you will learn what needs to be done and when. You will be expected to complete the tasks set by the instructors to the best of your ability, every time and on time.
- **To ensure our students have the most enjoyable and informative experience possible.** Your part in this will revolve around assisting the instructors and to remain approachable and friendly at all times.
- **To be reassuring and confident.**

- **To cater and cook for groups in a backwoods kitchen.** After you learn what is required, you will be expected at times to prepare, cook and serve meals for the entire group, alone.
- **To work well with and support instructors.** As a small team, it is imperative that we all get on. At times the work is demanding and stressful and a tolerance for each other's needs is essential. We achieve this through a combination of skill, experience, hard-work and humour. You will be expected to do the same and give 100% at all times.
- **To pack, and clean, all equipment** before and after a course. You will be expected to arrive when the instructors do in the morning on the first day of the course to set up camp and to stay on after the course has finished in the afternoon to pack all equipment away.
- **To always be punctual, polite, professional,** well turned out, and have your personal equipment in order at all times.

### **Money Matters**

Apprentice positions are largely unwaged for the first season. As you demonstrate your commitment, over time you may be rewarded financially. We can discuss the instructor wage structure with you as and when it is required.

### **Food, Accommodation and Travel**

Food and accommodation are provided on the same basis as our students. You will be expected to live in the forest as we do and look after yourself and your equipment. Our instructors live in tents and under tarps all season and never leave the site while courses are running- except to collect supplies required for the courses.