

Welcome



Tuning to the Desert

G25070112

with Brandon Wert & Cameron Newell

July 6-12, 2025

Welcome to Tuning to the Desert. I'm excited to meet you and spend the week together exploring Ghost Ranch and our relationship to our physical environment. Both the low desert of AZ and the high desert of NM have long been soul-scapes for myself and life partner, Jodi. We intentionally raised our daughters spending significant time in both places with the belief that our internal and external landscapes mirror one another and this relationship positively affects our psychological and spiritual well being.

Tuning to the Desert is an invitation to immerse ourselves in the particular environment surrounding Ghost Ranch (external landscape) and to find connections between that discreet experience and our personal journey / story (internal landscape). Each day's immersion experience and reflection will be framed by one of the four traditional elements and a guiding prompt: Earth, what grounds us. Air, to what do we aspire? Water, what sustains us? Fire, what needs to die and what must come to life?

The immersive experience can be strenuous, including medium distance over-land route finding and a 3+ mile kayak paddle. Please see the required material/equipment list for details and suggestions for adequate preparation. The physical demands of the course will be interspersed with group reflections, quiet observation and engagement in ephemeral artistic creation, as modes of processing and integrating our individual and group experience.

GHOST RANCH EDUCATION AND RETREAT CENTER
280 Private Drive 1708, Abiquiu, New Mexico 87510 | 505.685.1000 | GhostRanch.org

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Each evening there is an invitation to gather for hospitality, good company and final reflections on the day.

Materials list:

- Headlamp (for night hike)
- Sturdy walking shoes, close toed footwear is highly recommended.
- Sun hat and sunscreen
- Backpack or hydration system sufficient to carry at least 2 liters of water and an extra layer of clothing
- A fleece or hoodie for cooler evenings
- A lightweight rain jacket (just in case)

Itinerary:

Sunday:

Arrive at Ghost Ranch

Dinner

Eve: Hospitality and course orientation

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Monday: Earth: A day to explore that which grounds us.

AM: Orphan Mesa hike. 6.5 mile hike (mix of double track, single track and over-land route finding) around a defining feature of the Ghost Ranch landscape.

PM: Leisurely engagement through ephemeral art.

Eve: Hospitality and evening reflections

Tuesday: Air: A day to explore aspirations.

AM: Sunrise hike to Chimney rock. 1.5 miles each way, 3 mile round trip approx 500 feet of elevation change.)

PM: Afternoon off to enjoy the ranch

Eve: Sunset hike to canyon overlook on Kitchen mesa trail. (Bring headlamp as we will be returning after dark.)

Wednesday: Water: A day to explore what sustains us.

AM/PM: Kayak from waterfront to King’s Cove. 1.75 miles 1 way, 3.5 miles round trip. Flat water paddle to a “hidden” swimming hole. We will pack a lunch after breakfast and picnic at the cove. Opportunities to swim, create a mandala or sand painting in the arroyo above the cove.

Eve: Hospitality and evening reflections

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Thursday: Fire: A day to explore what must die and what must come to life.

AM: Short hike to Campo Santo. Opportunities for group reflection, solo meditation, and attentive stillness in a sacred space.

PM: Hike to petroglyph site in Arroyo del Yeso. Opportunities for group reflection, solo meditation, and attentive stillness in a sacred space.

Eve: Campfire / Hospitality and evening reflections.

Friday: Capstone: A day to knit it all together.

AM/PM: Drive through Valles Caldera National Preserve and hike to warm springs for a dip. We will pack a lunch after breakfast then drive to a trail head approximately 2 hours from the ranch. Then a moderate 2 mile hike, 1- way, 4 miles round trip to a warm spring. We will picnic at the springs and return to the ranch for dinner in a leisurely fashion.

Eve: Final gathering, hospitality and evening reflections