

# GREENBOOK

A HANDBOOK □ GUIDE TO

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# GREEN BOOK

2015 EDITION

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Welcome to Lothlórien Nature Sanctuary and Elvin H.O.M.E. membership. This booklet is your basic guide to what Lothlórien is all about, the land and facilities, policies and procedures, traditions and lore and the ways you can enjoy and help Lothlórien. A lot has changed since the last version of the Greenbook a few years ago. We have revised our by-laws and tried to write down policies that had been spread by word of mouth. We celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization and we are looking forward to at least 30 more. Lothlorien is still an all volunteer organization. Everything that is done on and for the land is done by volunteers. Lothlorien is an ongoing ever changing never changing place of co-creation, the place of dream flower with a thousand petals. There is no amazing “They” who take care of everything; there is only us. We are all in this together. Lothlórien belongs to all of us.

*We are the elves of Lothlórien  
Keeping each other alive.  
Teaching respect for our mother earth  
Helping the dream to survive.  
For we believe every child is a star  
Reflecting the rainbow light  
And the Heart Tree that grows inside us all  
Flowers with love day and night.  
~by Leaf and Laughing Starheart*

**Elvin HOME and Lothlorien** are deeply entwined branches of the same tree. Elvin H.O.M.E. (Holy Order of Mother Earth) Inc. is a federally recognized 501 (c) 3 religious organization. It is the legal organization that provides our interface with outside entities, paying for insurance and utilities, filing proper tax, insurance and other paperwork, all those things that are necessary to maintain our standing in the outside world. The federal recognition means that we are eligible for charitable donations and grants and that some donations to Elvin HOME and Lothlórien are tax deductible. Business decisions are made by the Governing council with as much input from members as possible.

**Mission Statement** Elvin HOME, Inc. is not a religion. It is a religious organization maintaining a sanctuary where all earth respecting religions, faiths, spiritual paths and beliefs are honored and respected, from those who see divinity in Earth itself to those who regard Earth stewardship as a sacred trust, to those who view protection and care of our common home as practical common sense. We practice extreme ecumenicalism and hope that people with many viewpoints can come together in a place of respect to learn from one another and build community.

**Governing Council** is Elvin HOME, Inc.’s Board of Directors. They decide on projects, the best use of Elvin H.O.M.E., Inc. resources, help establish and enforce rules and deal with problems and conflicts. The council is not just an advisory board of outside experts; Council members commit to specific projects or areas of the work necessary to maintain Lothlorien and keep Elvin HOME in good graces with members and outside entities. There are two levels, staff and steward whose must be approved by a majority of Governing Council. Staff have a smaller time commitment and can be a sort of apprenticeship. Stewards commit more time and can vote on Council decisions. The Vice President is elected by the members to be a sort of member-at-large and conduit for concerns, opinions and project ideas between members and the rest of the Governing Council. Council meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1:00, usually in or near long hall although sometimes those cold January and February meetings are relocated.

You can find the complete version of the newly revised Elvin HOME Inc. by-laws at the end of this booklet.

**Lothlórien Nature Sanctuary** is over 100 acres of forest tucked into the hills of southern Indiana along the edge of Indiana’s limestone belt. We are located about 20 miles south of Bloomington and 10 miles north of Bedford, not far from Lake Monroe. We talk about Lothlórien, the place, more than we talk about Elvin HOME, the organization. Many people refer to it simply as “the Land” and that is because the land itself is central to all we do. The land is owned, as much as any piece of earth can be owned, by all Elvin HOME members, not just the organization, but a group of individuals. From way back in the early 1980s when it was just an idea, Lothlórien has been thought of as a commons and “a woodland meeting ground, survival education center and green haven for elfin folk.” It is also a space for spiritual, natural and ecological exploration for the practical practice of spiritual notions.

### **Membership**

1 year --\$30

5 years-- \$110

10 years--\$150

Lifetime-\$420

There are no membership or festival fees for children 12 and under and no festival fees for those 65 and older. Memberships and events are the main sources of income for the care of Lothlórien. This fee covers the costs of keeping people informed about Lothlórien through mailings, flyers and the web and contributes to its general support.

Membership benefits include:

- reduced fees for Elvin HOME sponsored events
- free attendance at Solstice ReUnion
- the right to camp on Lothlórien between events (\$8 per night)
- the right to speak in the biannual Grand Councils held during ELF Fest and Wild Magick
- the right to vote in the Vice President election, and a copy of this Greenbook and other mailings, and most importantly,
- shared ownership of the land. Only members are allowed to stay overnight on Lothlórien between events.
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Event fees include a short-term membership for the duration of the event.

### **The Wheel of the Lothlorien Year**

The land is always here, of course, and members are always welcome at their HOME to camp have a picnic, or take a hike, but just like the natural world some times of the year are busier than others. We may not strictly follow the agrarian round we do have our own activities that ebb and flow with the seasons. As winter ends people start trickling back. Our open season gets underway when **Earth Steward Weekends** begin with Opening Weekend, the weekend closest to Spring Equinox, and continue full force until ELF Fest. This is usually the busiest work season of the year, waking the place back up from winter, cleaning up from winter’s storms, picking up projects that were put aside during the cold months. This is when a lot of work gets done maintaining structures, planting

gardens, tidying up the festival field, clearing paths and caring for the woods to get the land ready for another season of camping and festivals which begin with ELF Fest at the end of May.

**ELF Fest** is a 6-day long gathering over Memorial Day Weekend. We celebrate the fertile earth and the return of warmer weather, green leaves on the trees and longer days. There are rituals and other celebrations, musical performances, drumming, dancing, and workshops on a variety of spiritual, environmental and creative arts.

**Solstice Reunion** is in June on the weekend nearest the Summer Solstice. This is a thank you festival for our members and a sort of open house for potential members and other visitors. Usually a relaxed and slower paced festival held in celebration of the apex of sunlight and the longest days.

**Wild Magick Gathering** is a 4-day celebration of Fall Equinox, held the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of September, celebrating the Harvest and the winding down of summer days into fall, the changing leaves and season and the balance of night and day.

**Witches' Ball** is in October, an early celebration of Samhain and Halloween, with costumes, pumpkin carving, tasty treats and other traditional Hallows activities. Witches' Ball also marks the end of the regular camping season.

**Full Moons** Open to everyone Full Moon celebrations are held throughout the year usually on the moon's fullest day. People gather around dusk for planning and rituals are held shortly after dark.

Other seasonal holy days, observed under many names by people of many spiritual traditions, including Vernal Equinox, Beltane, Lammas, **Thanksgiving potluck** and **Winter Solstice** are also usually observed here with gatherings, rituals or ceremonial feasts. We welcome other private or group celebrations to mark seasonal, elemental, holy days or spiritual occasions from your path or tradition and encourage members to share their traditions with other members.

After Witches Ball when it gets too cold for most people to camp, the land returns to its quietness and things are tucked away and secured for the winter. The land is never truly closed, and facilities are more limited, for example, water to the festival field is shut down so pipes don't freeze, but members are still welcome on the land for winter walking, personal rituals and truly hardy souls can still camp.

### **Festivals**

Festivals at Lothlórien are a little hard to describe. They're part family reunion, part party, part camp meeting. They are also the primary income source for the expenses of care and upkeep of Lothlórien. No two festivals are exactly alike, depending on weather conditions, combinations of people and other more elusive elements each event seems to take on its own unique personality. Overnight, or gradually over a few days, the empty field turns into a colorful village of tents and tarps. Merchants bring their handicrafts, jewelry, funky clothing, magical tools and other useful and unusual goods to sell. The daylight hours might be long and lazy, sitting around talking, resting in the shade, listening to music floating across the field from the stage, meandering through the woods or they might be bustling, wandering around to check out the merchant's wares, helping with the current building project, moving firewood, cooking food, traipsing back and forth replenishing ice and water supplies or attending one of the workshops, on spiritual, magical and ecological subjects, tarot, wild plants, solar panels and any number of things. There will be music, both organized on stage and spontaneous. The nighttime hours will be filled with ritual, ceremonial drumming and dancing in Thunder Shrine or conversations around the fire.

Unlike many other festivals, Lothlórien does not have headline speakers or workshop presenters. Festivals are something we create together for one another. Everyone is a star. If you want to perform, present a workshop or organize a discussion, do so. Let the Council organizers know ahead of time so it can be added to the schedule and heralded around the field.

Grand Council is another important part of the two larger festivals, ELF Fest and Wild Magick Gathering. This is the Elvin HOME version of a stockholders' meeting. Members and guests can talk to the Stewards and staff to share ideas and concerns, make suggestions, propose ideas and hear about progress and plans for projects on the land.

### **Preparing for Lothlórien-What to Bring**

Lothlórien events are camping events. The festival field offers semi-primitive camping, with more amenities than a backcountry trail camp and less pavement and artificial light than a KOA campground. There are several camping circles where many people can camp together, camping along the loop of driveway (popular with merchants) and smaller sites tucked along the edges between festival field and forest and between circles.

The space is set up to meet many of your needs. There are showers, composting privies and running water on the festival field, and a wide variety of natural campsites; you will need to bring your own shelter and other personal needs. During Elvin HOME sponsored events, firewood is provided. Below are some of the basics of what to bring.

**Shelter-** You will need to bring your own tent, tipi, yurt or other shelter. There is minimal space for vehicle camping or small pop-up campers on the festival field (you can also camp out of your vehicle in the parking area—it's just a hike to activities and facilities.) The festival field has no grid power, so there are no electrical hook-ups on the field for RVs, buses or other large campers. Bringing large vehicles is strongly discouraged; we simply don't have the room. If you're traveling or living in a large vehicle, please contact us in advance to make sure we can find a space for you.

**Clothing** -Southern Indiana weather is noted for its ability to change quickly, so bring clothing for a variety of weather, rain gear, jackets, etc. especially during ELF Fest and Wild Magick when the seasons are shifting. And of course, feel free to bring your ritual robes, dancing clothes, fun costumes or whatever helps you express your inner elf or spiritual self. Skyclad is acceptable, but please stick to the festival area and stay away from the front gate and borders with neighbors.

**Food** -Community fire pits are available in each camping circle. You will need to bring your own utensils for cooking and eating. Try to pre-cycle by packing food in containers you can reuse or take home with you. Ice is available onsite. Firewood for cooking is provided for Elvin HOME events and can be purchased on site when you're camping on your own. During the two larger festivals, there is also the option of moderately priced meals, usually breakfast and dinner, served out of the long hall kitchen and there are frequently vendors selling a variety of food.

**Water** -We have plenty of fresh, safe water for showers, dishwashing stations and drinking. Bring refillable containers for drinking and other water to refill. (Not only is the water potable, it's also portable.) We strongly discourage bringing lots of little plastic water bottles; they overwhelm our recycling stations and we have nowhere to take them.

**Ice** is available, for a small donation on site. It is available at the ice house up front near the troll booth made by our own ice machine.

**Lighting**-Bringing a flashlight and candles or other lighting is a good idea. Please no Coleman lanterns or other super bright lights. Tiki torches and other lights that use petroleum distillates are also discouraged, especially during dry seasons. Never leave unattended candles burning in your tent, near dry leaves, on stumps or anywhere else that might be flammable. (Trees are made out of wood!) Remember to pack up your candleholders, especially glass ones, when you leave.

**Trash**-We've always tried to be pack it in pack it out place. Please recycle and precycle e.g. by packing food in containers that can be reused, and take your trash with you when you go. Bring a trash bag; pack it out in your cooler, etc. If you can't take it with you, please donate a couple of dollars toward our dumpster fees.

**Et cetera** - Of course you should also bring your own toiletries, medicines, sun block, insect repellent, musical instruments, magical tools, books, paper and whatever else you will need to survive and enjoy the woods for a few days. You are welcome to set up altars or otherwise prettify and personalize your campsite, but please take your pretties with you when you leave. We also suggest that you bring along some grass seed for reseeding your camping spot.

### Special Considerations

**Information for Merchants**- You are welcome to bring your crafts, clothing, magical goodies and other wares to sell during festivals. There is no extra fee to vend at Lothlórien Nature Sanctuary during Elvin HOME events. All sites are on a first come, first served basis. Be considerate of others in your use of space. Driveway frontage is limited, so set up deep not wide. Elvin HOME, Inc. takes no responsibility for sales to individual members or guests nor are we in any way responsible for recording or collecting any sales taxes or other fees that might be due to any governmental entity.

**Pets**- Your pets should be left at home during festivals. We respect your love for your pets, but having animals at festivals is difficult for both humans and animals. Under special circumstances, a limited number of pets (e.g. in need of medication) may be allowed on a case by case basis, but your request must be reviewed by our Pet Committee *before* the festival. Between festivals, your pets can come with you, but our Secretary needs to have their current shot records on file. Service animals are of course always welcome. Please see our very detailed Pet Policy at our website for more information.

**Kids**- Children are an important and welcome part of festivals and of Lothlórien. Children 12 and under are not required to pay festival fees or have a membership separate from their family. Anyone under 18 who is attending an event without their own parents should have a signed note or waiver stating that their parent is aware and all right with their child being here. You are responsible for your own children and making sure that they know the rules, but everyone should look out for the safety of all children. Younger children should be with you, in our organized kids' activities, or with another responsible person. Children under 12 should not be in Thunder late at night without an adult. Kids can earn a "free range" bracelet by demonstrating that they are familiar with the land and the rules.

**Health Concerns**- We do our best to accommodate everyone's needs. If you need electrical access for a CPAP machine or have other health conditions we should be aware of, please let us know ahead of time or when you arrive and we'll do our best to find an appropriate camping spot with the access

you need. We have an EMS team on duty at the larger events in case of emergencies or if you need help.

### **Getting here**

A map with directions is available on our website. The physical address for GPS or online mapping is: 559 McFadden Ridge Rd; Bedford, IN 47421. If you need further help or are not on line, please contact us.

### **Through the gates**

WELCOME HOME!

*Elen síla lumenn' omentielvo.*

Sign in at the troll booth at the front of the driveway. During larger festivals, (ELF Fest and Wild Magick Gathering) registration folk and parking trolls will be there to greet you, sign you in, and help you get oriented. At smaller events, registration will be set up on the festival field or someone will be making the rounds with the “black bag” to sign you in. Between events, use the honor system self sign-in box at the Troll Booth. Just fill out the forms and drop them in the box with any fees. You are encouraged to preregister, especially for the two large festivals, on line or by mail.

When you sign in at ELF Fest and WMG, you will be given an age and color-coded bracelet as part of our due diligence to stop underage drinking and other things that might be a problem for everyone. Please keep yours on.

*Breathe deep. Shake off the everyday and feel your troubles falling off and melting away at least for a while. You are here!*

Once you are all signed in, head on down the driveway to the festival field. Find yourself a camping spot; unload as quickly as possible and head back up to park your vehicle. Set up your campsite. Preferably in that order.

There, you're done! Oh wait, you probably need a little more information than that about where things are on the field, like where you can camp, where you might want to camp and some other general information about where things are.

## **Practicalities: Festival Facilities, Camping & Land Care Resources**

### **Festival Field Facilities**

Lothlórien is meant to be a safe haven for animals and humans and a place where nature is protected; it is also a place for practical experimentation in alternative technologies. Although some people might wonder what this has to do with religion or spirituality. For most of us, this is fairly simple; we are all stewards of the Earth, whether as spiritual practice, sacred duty or pragmatic protection of the Earth where we all live, through restoring and protecting one small part of the

planet. Some of our facilities are working experiments in alternative, more eco friendly technology, so they require a bit of explanation.

**Where to Camp** (yes, it was an open scrub field when we began.) Lothlorien's main camping area is arranged around a circular driveway. There are named camping circles with fire pits around the field, Children's, Wayne's World, Shamans, Healers, Scientists and Warriors around the inner ring of the driveway and places like Woodland Tree , Pan Camp, Faerie Camp, Upper Boom and Thunder Grove tucked further back. Merchants usually set-up along the driveway.

There are other camping areas a short walk away from the driveway along the edges and between and behind the larger camping circles. These are great if you don't need much space or are looking for a more secluded spot. Although some people camp together, or camp in the same spot year after year, camping spots are all first come first served. The camper and out-of-vehicle camping that is available is across the bottom of the loop. The quietest area for camping is in Theatre and Scientist Circle on the right as you round the last curve of the loop.

**Troll Booth/Ice House** This is where you signed in, but it's also the area where you can pick up and pay for ice, charge your cell phone on the grid power.

**Parking-** Please unload as quickly as possible to avoid blocking the circle and to minimize the number, noise, and exhaust of vehicles in the festival area. Unless you are camping out of your vehicle in the van camping area, please return to the front and park in the north road parking area. Spaces are color coded on the ground and on your parking pass for size. If you need help with parking, talk to the parking troll or registration person on duty. Please pull all the way into spaces and park tightly. We try to fit as many cars as efficiently as possible without cutting more trees.

**Fire Pits & Fire Safety** Please keep fires in designated fire pits. Do not dig new pits or to use fire rings where there isn't already a fire pit. During Elvin HOME sponsored events, firewood is provided and is included in camping fees between events. Please do not burn ground wood, except small sticks or twigs for kindling and please do not use gasoline or other such products to start fires. If you are visiting someone else's campsite, please be considerate. People differ about whether they mind having paper trash, cigarette butts, etc. thrown into the fire, please be polite and ask.

The established fire pits on the festival field are community fire pits. Please use them in that spirit. Sharing a fire or welcoming other campers to your fire, letting them cook on your existing fire rather than lighting another one are good ways to meet new friends, conserve firewood and create community. It also promotes the Elvin ideal of KEOA (Keep Each Other Alive.)

Be aware of your children around fire and always use good sense and discretion. Never leave a fire unattended. In case of emergency, fire extinguishers are located at wood surrounds, in each composter, inside Radiance Hall and in several other locations around the Festival Field. Campers are also encouraged to bring their own.

**Composting Privies** There are two composting privies diagonally opposite each other on the festival field, one across from long hall and the other near Healers. These well-ventilated privies convert a mixture of human waste and vegetable matter into compost that can be used on flowerbeds, around trees and elsewhere to enrich the soil. The heat of the composting process kills most germs, but as a safety precaution, this mulch is not used in garden plots where any low-growing food crops might be planted.

**Composter Instructions:** After each use, toss a little sawdust, wood ash or straw down the hole. These materials not only compost well, but also help eliminate smells and aerate the mixture. **Please close the lid.** This keeps the heat generated by composting down inside the compost doing its job. It also discourages flies and helps odors draft out of the building through the exhaust system above the range of human noses. Fruit & vegetable scraps or peels, eggshells, toilet paper cores and most anything you would normally put into a compost pile can be added to the compost. Please don't put meat scraps, tampons, disposable diapers or plastic packaging or anything non-biodegradable into the chutes.

Please use the sinks in the composters for handwashing only so the sinks don't clog and the drainage area round composter doesn't get overloaded. The lights in the composters are on timer switches to help conserve their supplies of solar power.

**Showers/Water/Dishwashing Station/Sauna** All those water-centered facilities are located together near the long hall and next to the orchard.

**Showers** A combination of passive solar and a wood-fired boiler heats and stores warm water in a series of tanks. Unlike the old days of trial and error, warm showers are now the norm rather than the exception. For everyone's safety, only trained operators should feed wood to the fire.

Inside the shower house there is a large shower stall for families, sinks and mirrors for shaving, contact applying, prettifying yourself and so forth. One shower stall has a ramp entry and handrails for handicapped access. There is also an open air solar shower behind the main shower house. If you are camping between events, check with the person who signed you in or some other staff member about how to use the shower. On bright, warm days, the solar heat is usually sufficient for a few people to take warm showers. The grey water from the shower goes into the orchard and garden beds behind it. Please use biodegradable soaps and shampoos and take your things with you when you leave the shower.

**Drinking Water** You can fill your containers for drinking and cooking water from one of the frost free pumps located in this area.

**Dishwashing Station** a community dishwashing sink, supplied with biodegradable dish soap and drain racks is available.

**Sauna** Our rebuilt wood-fired sauna is attached to the shower house. Bring a towel to sit on. Be respectful of others the space. No candles (that's what happened to the previous one.)

**Firewood & Recycling Stations** Covered shelters located at each "corner" of the circle hold firewood and containers for recyclables. During Elvin HOME events, firewood is dropped off and recyclables picked up at each of these a couple of times a day by the field services crew. What we can recycle is limited by what is accepted by our local recycling centers. Right now, we can recycle metal, and some plastics and glass. Please crush aluminum cans and rinse food cans. Please sort your recyclables and put them into the appropriate barrels. Take as much with you as possible

Better yet, 'precycle' by packing your food in containers you can reuse and take back home with you. Minimize the volume of plastic by bringing large refillable water containers instead of cases of small plastic bottles for drinking water. Remove corks and lids from plastic and glass bottles. There are also small containers for batteries, candle stubs and corks. Please don't leave trash in or around the

recycle bins. It attracts insects, raccoons and other creatures not conducive to a pleasant camping experience. Plastic wrap and Styrofoam meat trays are not recyclable.

**Gazebos** There are 3 open-sided shelters located around the field, in Scientists', Healers' and in the family camping area behind Children's Circle. These are great spots for group kitchens, workshops, hanging out, first aid stations, kid's activities or getting out of the rain. They are not individual campsites.

**Long Hall** is at the center of Radiance Shrine at the uphill edge of the festival field. It is a multi-purpose, wholly solar community building. During inclement weather, it can serve as a dry, temporary shelter. A basic first aid kit, information boards, and Lost & Found are located just inside the west entrance. Elvin HOME's archives and office and a battery bank are in rooms on either side of this entrance. The main room downstairs serves many functions. It is banquet hall, meeting room and theater seating for live music and other entertainments. It is also a space for workshops, arts and crafts, dances and ceremonial space when it's too cold or wet to be outdoors. A beautiful stone fireplace helps heat the whole building during chilly evenings or winter afternoons.

**Kitchen** During ELF Fest and Wild Magick Gathering and sometimes at smaller events reasonably priced home-cooked meals are served out of the Café in the Long Hall kitchen. The Thanksgiving feast and meals for everyone at the end of a hard day's work at an Earth Steward weekend are also prepared here. Like many kitchens, this one is a center of activity, where people gather to talk, share a meal or get warm. Food in the pantry is for the Café and group meals. If you use anything belonging to the kitchen, please clean it, replace it or return it and put it away.

**Library** The second floor holds Lothlórien's library. We have a large collection of books and other resources on alternative energy, organic gardening, herb lore, magical systems and many other topics, along with a large collection of general interest, science fiction and fantasy fiction for general reading. Children's books and art materials are located at the west end. A lounge for conversation and reading is located at the east end. In case of deluge, high winds or other forms of tent collapse and during early or late season Earth Steward Weekends or winter events, people may sleep on the floor upstairs.

Please turn off lights when you leave. If you need to charge your cell phone, please take it up front to the Troll Booth or Ice House where there is grid power.

**Playground** Our playground with swings, slides and other fun stuff for the kids is in a shady area at the back of Children's Circle. Eventually there will also be an area with benches and tables for children's activities and to give parents a comfortable place to sit while they are watching their kids.

**Sheds** There are two sheds for storage of Lothlórien's tools and other materials, the garden shed and its lockers on the field for lawn mowers, garden tools and other landscaping materials and the "front shed" for construction materials and workshop space.

## **Community Gathering & Ritual Spaces**

In addition to the facilities designed to meet the practical needs of those camping, there are also other spaces on or near the festival field that are used during festivals for rituals and gathering the

festival community together. There is more information about these sites as Sacred Space in the section on the Land as Sacred Space.

**Thunder** is located at the innermost edge of festival field, along the ridgeline tucked into the edge of the woods. This is the space where sacred drumming, chanted invocations and inspired dancing take place. Thunder Shrine is a *strong* energy focus and center of many festival activities. Please see the General Guidelines section for more information about its traditions and expectations.

**Lightning-** is on the open hillside at the center of the festival field with stage on one side. It is a place for rituals, music and theatre, morning meetings and Grand Council. In spring, we dance around the Maypole to welcome back the fertile summer storms.

**Heart Tree Circle** is tucked away just off the driveway on the north side of the field, Heart Tree Circle is a small shaded circle of trees and flowers. It is a popular spot for handfastings and other intimate ceremonies or lit by candlelight at night, a quiet spot for a momentary pause.

**Song Shrine** is a short walk away from the festival field. Rocks form seating around a natural bowl in the woods creating a small natural amphitheater. It has a small stage used during festival for poetry, performance, workshops and acoustic jams.

### Leaving Lothlórien

When you pack up, please take everything with you, including your trash and most recyclables. Lothlórien may not be the wilderness, but a “pack it in, pack it out” philosophy should prevail. If you absolutely cannot take your trash, you may purchase specially marked trash bags or donate to the dumpster fees. Please leave your campsite clean and spread a little grass seed to help the space recover and regenerate quickly; we usually have grass seed available at ELF Base or the Troll Booth. If you use ropes or clotheslines to hang tarps or other things in your campsite, please be kind to the trees and untie them before you go. Solar lights are fine during festivals, but please take them with you when you go so that between times visitors can enjoy the natural darkness and starlight. Tokens of your love for Lothlórien can be left behind in some shrines, e.g. Ancestors and Heart Tree, but please don’t leave things in campsites, especially metal or glass, vases or candleholders can fill with water and attract mosquitoes, or freeze and burst over winter and things can be covered by tall grass, moved by weather or critters and become dangerous to animals, bare feet or lawnmowers

### The Land Itself & Sacred Space

All of Lothlórien is a Green Haven—a refuge from steel, pavement and bright lights of cities— where the tallest things are trees, where you can walk barefoot in the grass, and look up at a night sky deep with stars. People may come to Lothlórien for years and never go further than the festival field, satisfied and absorbed with the activities of the festivals, visiting with friends and adopted family around the campfire, listening to music, joining in rituals or drumming and dancing around the fire in Thunder. Nevertheless, if you have a yen to stand in the shade of taller trees, there are over a hundred acres of woodlands to explore.

Lothlórien is made up of two main areas of land; a deep valley surrounded by rocky ridges called Faerie where the wild holds sway and ridgetop called Avalon, with the Festival Field and parking, all the areas more shaped by human activities.

Lothlórien is not only a haven for humans; it is home to a wide variety of plant and animal life, including some rare, even endangered species. Bobcat and otter tracks have been spotted. Deer, wild turkeys and other creatures find shelter in the pine groves or the deep grass in the far reaches of the valley. The marshy nature of the valley makes it attractive for water loving birds, including great blue herons and wood ducks. Faerie and its surrounding ridges teem with wildflowers. In the almost 3 decades that the elves have been on the land second growth forest is well on its way to replacing what were once were overworked scrub fields.

A stream, Gullet's Creek, winds through Faerie. On hot summer days the stream is a popular spot for a cooling dip; it has several spots deep enough for splashing about and wading. The limestone ridges are full of boulders and geodes.

### **Paths**

Paths link all the parts of the land. They connect upper areas of the land, linking festival field and parking, skirting along the edges of the field to shrines or campsites that are more secluded, rambling through the upper woodlands. Switchback trails lead down the ridge sides into Faerie Valley, intersecting and splitting, some winding far back along ridges or across the valley, others leading straight to the stream. The usual and most direct way to reach this path into Faerie is to simply follow the driveway and continue straight downhill past Heart Tree Circle and Thunder Shrine straight into the tree line at Woodland Tree Circle. Another trail leads down where the northern border meets the ridgeline near Ancestors Shrine.

For deeper explorations of the woodlands, the more rugged paths leading down into Faerie will eventually reconnect. The valley is large and secluded enough to feel totally surrounded by nature, but not so large that you can become lost, at least not for long.

Please stick to paths/trails as much as possible, especially on hillsides to protect the soil from erosion. The paths down the ridges and into the valley can be rugged. Remember, too that, animals, water, fallen trees, shifting earth and seasonal growth may all affect the route of a path. The deeper into Faerie that you go the more frequently paths can change. At times, especially in late spring, the valley is prone to flooding and in summer, stinging nettles and coarse grasses take over. You may need to climb over an occasional log or skirt around a new hole in a path.

### **Going in: Shrines, Sanctuary and Spirit**

Lothlorien has been called “the land of a thousand shrines.” Most everyone who wanders the woodlands for a while finds a special spot, a favorite tree or stone, a turn of the stream that speaks to them. These “official” shrines are only some of the special places in the forested hills of Lothlórien

### **Sub-elemental Shrines**

Long ago when Lothlórien was still just a vision waiting to manifest, the early elves, like people in countless other earth-centered traditions talked about simplifying the complexity and power of the

natural world into the elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Spirit. There was brainstorming about what the meeting points of those five basic elements would be in the natural world.

A few years later in our early explorations of the land, places on the land that seemed to resonate geologically or functionally with these elemental meeting points, were dedicated as shrines. These sub-elemental shrines are located throughout the land and some have even been relocated to accommodate changes. They are listed here in a semi-geographic order, the ones on or near the Festival Field followed by the ones further away.

**Thunder Shrine** This dome-covered shrine is on one edge of the festival area where camping circles meet the forest edge. It is a sacred space for drumming, dancing and chanting, for rhythm and moving meditations with its own customs and traditions. A stacked rock wall where people can sit surrounds a sand-covered dance floor with a few natural rocks and a ritual fire pit at the center.

**Lightning-** is on the open hillside at the center of the festival field, a place for the creative energy and power of the heavens to be welcomed to earth with rituals, music and theatre. In spring, we dance around the Maypole to welcome back the fertile summer storms. The beribboned Maypole stands at its center year round, symbolic of the connection between humans and the forces of weather and nature.

**Song-** is a natural bowl in the woods between the Festival field and the northern hill area. Rocks create seating for a natural amphitheater. There is a small stage there for poetry, performance and workshops.

**Steam** –is a movable shrine, originally the sweat lodge across the stream, then in various locations in Faerie now grounded as the Sauna attached to the shower area, but also any sweat lodge built and celebrated on the land.

**Dust-** all the roads and paths on the land are considered part of the dust shrine. Fluctuating, permanent and temporary at the same time and fitting into all the spaces between like dust blown by the wind.

**Flame-** all fire pits, whether cook fire, hearth fire or sacred fire. Rock-ringed fire pits for communal use are located in each camping area for cooking, light, warmth and ritual. Keep fires small. Remember elves are here to protect the trees, not burn them.

**Radiance** is along the driveway at the entrance to the festival field. It includes the Long Hall, sometimes called Radiance Hall, with all its many uses, the surrounding patios and **Grandma's Garden**. Radiance is the place where needs of the body are met so that the mind can float free. Radiance and its state set tone and mood that radiates across the field. Grandmas' Garden is a pleasant garden spot of old time flowers frequently used for workshops and tea parties.

**Silence-** sheltered by the pine and cedar grove behind the orchard. The sounds of the world are muted by the branches of the evergreens. A boulder forms a natural altar in a pine needle covered pocket of the hillside providing a secluded place for meditation or quiet thought.

**Rain-** Springs flow and merge at the base of the hill at the northernmost edge of Faerie. Water flows from deep within the earth then gurgles over and under mossy rocks.

**Mud-** is also a sort of mutable shrine, but its main spot is at the base of the hill on the path that leads from the Festival Field into Faerie. Mud of various colors can be found here and mixed into purifying body paints.

**Crystal-** is near the southern border of the land. Small streams merge, tiny waterfalls ripple through an area where nearly every rock is full of crystal-filled geodes.

### **Other Shrines and Special Places**

As other special places on the land were discovered, other shrines were created.

**Heart Tree Circle** is a circle of trees right on the Festival Field. It is a physical representation of the compact between the elves, the land and the heart of the forest, the Covenant of Blood and Sap. It is frequently used for handfastings and other intimate ceremonies. People leave tokens of affection, loss and connection around the trees at its center. We had planned to plant a circle of tree somewhere on the land, but found this one already growing.

**Orchard-**at the edge of the festival field, sloping behind the showers is the magic apple orchard. Avalon means the place of apples and beyond that mythic imagery, and fruity practicality, ashes of elves who have passed on to other realms are scattered there and fruit trees have been planted in memory of them. The fruit trees have not fared well, but the annual kid's garden of pumpkins usually does quite well.

**Mothers Shrine** is a small shrine tucked into the tree line behind Thunder. It dedicated to the memory of all our mothers. Several members have placed their mother's ashes or other tokens of remembrance there.

**Circle Rock** –just off the field, just off the trail in the edge of Robinswood there is a large rock marked naturally with a white circle. It's in a small dip with just enough room for a few people to stand. It has been used for Full Moons, and many other small or personal rituals.

**Robinswood Circle-** just off the festival field, along the path to Song Shrine is a shady circle for woodland workshops and rituals.

**Goddess Shrine-** where two trails meet on the upper ridge near the northern border, in a place where huge rocks form a jumbled bowl in the earth, bright colored objects are left to celebrate the earth mother and other goddess archetypes.

**Ancestors-** at the northern border, at the edge of the ridge edge of Avalon; just before the trail winds down into Faerie is a spot to remember those who have gone before us. Long before the elves arrived on this land a small cabin was built by neighborhood teens. The cabin itself is gone, itself fallen into little more than memory, but people leave small tokens, gifts of food and drink in remembrance. The elves who first cared for that particular piece of land followed vodoun as part of their path. They turned the area into a place to honor all those we consider our ancestors, by blood or by deed.

**Rock Valley-**In dry seasons it is a jumbled rocky passageway that leads from the center of the upper areas of Lothlórien down into Faerie. In rainy seasons, it becomes a stream, carrying water down the ridge side, sometimes flowing, sometimes lying puddled in the rocks. It is a reminder of the area's ancient past at the edge of retreating glaciers. People have piled rocks into altars. Children have built fairy houses; some so longstanding they have been reclaimed by moss. It is a rugged, shortcut from uphill to down.

**Darkwood**-tucked into the ridge bottom at the edge of Faerie, lying in deep shade between Rock Valley and Rain Shrine is a place where the decay that brings change and renewal to the living forest is evident.

**Deer (or Unicorn) Meadow**-At the far back of Faerie, sheltered by steep ridges, tucked into a curve of the stream lies a large open meadow. In spring, it is covered with bluebells and other flowers. In the summer, it is covered in deep, deep grass that provides safe haven and winter bedding for deer. Or maybe unicorns.

### **General Guidelines, Policies & Expectations**

Common sense and common courtesy go a long way, so does respecting the privacy and personal property of other humans and the needs of the animals, plants and the land itself. This may be a place set aside from the world and things might be a little more relaxed and we may follow a slightly different set of social conventions while we're here, but what is illegal in the outside world is still illegal here, what is inconsiderate behavior in the outside world is still rude here. Keep Lothlórien safe.

The policies that are in place have been arrived at through custom and tradition, hat and sometimes through long, arduous discussion. The guidelines and rules are meant to help us all get along safely and to protect the wellbeing of the organization, the land and its non-human inhabitants or address recurring problems. Some of the longer policies are summarized here; those full texts are available on our website or posted around the land.

#### **General**

- We are open to all sorts of people; please respect differences-- in spiritual beliefs, gender, clothing options, taste or distaste for drumming, and so forth.
- Lothlórien is a safe space. Respect personal boundaries. People may act more openly here. They may wear fewer clothes, but personal space is still personal space. No still means no and a maybe should be interpreted as a no.
- Please read and follow the by-laws.
- You must be a member to camp or stay overnight. Camping is only allowed on the festival field unless you have made other arrangements.
- Always ask permission before taking pictures, especially if any individuals might be identifiable.
- Things left behind longer than two weeks becomes the property of Elvin HOME unless you have made prior arrangements.
- Things left on shrines and altars should be left alone.

#### **Personal Responsibility, Alcohol, etc.**

- No violence toward people, the land, animals, or structures.
- Ask permission before touching drums, altars or other people's things.
- Public Displays of Affection are all right, but if it moves beyond PG, remember our little rhyme:
  - PDA is okay, but
  - If it gets intense
  - Take it to the tent.
- Don't endanger Lothlorien's welfare by bringing illegal substances or activities onto the land.
- Excessively drunk and obnoxious behavior interferes with other people's fun.

- Remember that there are neighbors when driving in and out and on nearby roads as well. Never, ever drive off the land if you have been drinking.
- Keep sound at reasonable levels (e.g. quieter after 11 p.m.) and keep it on the festival field and other areas devoted to humans.

### **Responsible Land Care**

- Council approval is needed for new shrines, fire pits, paths or other lasting changes to the land.
- Use only biodegradable soaps for bathing and dishwashing.
- Keep soaps, insect repellants, sunscreen, etc. out of the stream.
- No hunting or fishing.
- Nonrenewable resources like stones, crystals or wild plants should not be removed from the land.
- You are welcome to harvest wild foods or pick medicinal herbs and the produce in the main garden is for everyone, but please take only what you need and can use right away; leave enough for others, wildlife and reseeding. Also, be sure you are not picking them from someone's private garden.
- If you are camping long term, please move your campsite every couple of weeks to protect the grass.

### **Trash & Recycling**

- Take your trash and other things with you when you go. We have very limited recycling.
- No cigarette butts on the ground. (Filters can take up to 12 years to break down, are toxic to wildlife and just plain gross.)

### **Fires & Wood**

- Keep fires in established fire pits.
- No cutting of trees or burning of ground wood. (Twigs and small fallen branches can be used for kindling.)
- Because of the risk of introducing invasive species please do not bring in wood from other areas.
- Use wood conservatively. We're elves; our goal is to protect trees not burn them.

### **Kids**

- Children are an important part of Lothlórien. We believe that children need the chance to wander freely and explore the natural world. We are very happy that Lothlorien is a place where children can do that, but not all children who visit Lothlórien have had the chance to become "woods smart."
- Help children who visit Lothlórien with you learn to respect trees, wildlife and other parts of the natural world and safe ways of being in the woods.
- No kids under 12 at stream or deeper woods without an adult or older teen.

### **Pets**

- Pets are not allowed at Lothlorien during major festivals.
- If your pet has special needs, we may make a limited number of exceptions for festivals with prior arrangement through our pet committee each time.

- Between events you may bring your pets, but please bring or have on file with our secretary their current medical records. Your pet should be under your direct control while you are here and you are responsible for cleaning up after your pet.
- Service animals are always welcome.

\*The full Pet Policy is posted on our website and at the land.

## Special Places

### Thunder Basics\*

- To balance the needs of all, both in and outside of the dome, respect is the most important word-for personal space, instruments, etc.
- Quieter drumming and other sounds after midnight and Sunday mornings.
- No glass in the Dome.
- Give drummers, dancers & especially fire tenders space.
- No unaccompanied children under 12.

\*The full Lothlorien Thunder Dome document is available at our website and posted around the land.

### Sauna

Etiquette rules:

- Bring a towel.
  - Nudity is optional, but no pressure one way or the other.
  - Bring water to avoid dehydrating.
  - No sex in the sauna
  - No smoking in the sauna
- Check with other sauna occupants before raising the steam intensity - some people can handle more heat than others.

Some Safety Rules:

- No Candles!!!
- Because of the small space and the proximity to a very hot stove (not to mention your body's loss of water during the sauna process) PLEASE carefully consider your state of intoxication before deciding to take a sweat. If you are having trouble with your balance or speech, you are too drunk to enter the sauna.
- Drink lots of water! The sweat process removes a lot of hydration from your body so don't forget to replenish it.
- If you feel dizzy or nauseated, please take a sauna break! The sauna should feel good, not sickening.

### Finding Solutions

People who discover Lothlórien are an eclectic bunch of individualists and while differences are respected, conflicts may still arise. Responsible, respectful behavior is expected from Lothlórien members and visitors. Individuals should try to find their own solutions first. However, when necessary, the council will attempt to be fair, listen to all sides of a problem and work toward solutions acceptable to all. If issues cannot be resolved amongst individuals, we have last resort procedures in place through our Grievance Policy. The Grievance Policy can be downloaded from our website.

Individuals who violate policies, depending on the seriousness of the violations, may suffer consequences, including: having an incident report filed, being confined to their campsite, probation and limited access for a year or camping season, being ejected from Lothlórien or having their membership revoked. In the case of severe or repeated violations that endanger others or the sanctuary as a whole, someone may be permanently banned from Lothlórien.

### **Visiting Lothlórien Between Events**

Although ELF Fest or Wild Magick Gathering may be the first thing that brings you to the land, Lothlórien does not just disappear like Brigadoon between festivals. Lothlórien is more than a few festivals a year and the land is far more than the festival field. There is more than a hundred acres of woodland to explore. If you are a member, it is your land, too. There are also Elvin HOME seasonal events, like Witches' Ball and Solstice Reunion that are smaller versions of ELF-Fest and Wild Magick. As a member, you can camp at Lothlórien anytime in exchange for a small fee or a little bit of labor to help the land.

When you camp between events, you will find that the festival field is a different space. It's quieter; you can hear the sounds of nature. The field seems much smaller. You should still camp in the designated areas. There's likely no one to operate the showers, but the sun usually warms up enough water for a few showers. As a member, you can camp for a week, a month or the season you are responsible for meeting your own needs for food, shelter, transportation and so forth. If you will be camping long term, you will need to move your camp at least once every week to 10 days, depending on the weather to protect the grass. If you will be camping when Elvin HOME or someone else is holding an event, you will need to make arrangements with whoever is sponsoring the event.

Members are also welcome to visit at any time just to enjoy quiet time in the forest, for restoration, communion with nature, meditation, or just to walk in the woods. Bring the kids and a picnic lunch and treat it like a park. You are also welcome to hold personal or group rituals and ceremonies on the land. All the major life passages have been marked at Lothlórien-- plenty of handfastings and weddings, wiccanings or christenings, memorials and rites of separation--celebrations of birth, coming of age, marriage, death, all the cycles of life. We encourage members to offer open rituals and ceremonies to share their traditions with other members.

**Sign in-** Please sign in whenever you visit. Not only do we like to know who's been here, but it's a good idea if someone knows where you are; think of it like signing in for hiking trails or caving,. If no one is on duty at the front gate, drop any forms, money and so forth in the honor system, self sign-in box at the Troll Booth. During Earth Steward Weekends and smaller festivals, a staff member will usually be patrolling with "the black bag" to sign people in, collect any fees, make sure memberships are current and answer your questions.

Please close the gate behind when you leave or if no one else is on the field.

### **Getting More Involved: Work and Community**

So, you've come to a festival or two and, as has happened to so many folks before, you've fallen in love with the land. It's become a special place to you; you've gotten to know some people, camped a

few times, explored the woods, come to a Full Moon or two and gotten some idea of the work it takes to take care of it and you want to become more involved.

All the work of Lothlorien is done by volunteers and new helpers are always welcome. We need people with all kinds of skills: gardening, carpentry, plumbing, painting and so but if you aren't skilled labor don't be discouraged. We can find a job for you at most any skill level and one of the amazing things about Lothlórien is that finding your niche and discovering new skills you never thought you had. Part of the experiment of Lothlórien is sharing skills and learning from one another. If you have an idea for something to help Lothlórien out or make it better, talk to the council; talk to folks who have been around a while to make sure it's possible and not breaking the minimal rules then take it on.

**Tokens**– Tokens are our credit system so that members who work for Lothlorien can earn not only our gratitude, but credits that can be used for festival, camping and other fees. Each hour of work is worth \$8 in tokens. Please complete a work log and have it signed off on by a staff member. The work log book is inside the Long Hall. After it's completed and signed, just leave it in the binder. If you're not a member, the first \$30 worth will be applied to your membership. Tokens can be earned in these basic categories:

- Priority jobs-we try to keep an up to date to do list of general land maintenance and other jobs that need to need to be concentrated on or need to be done most urgently. We also try to have a posted or with the work log book of things that can be done if no one's around.
- Priority project-Each year there are projects, construction, planting, repairs or so forth that the council designates as priorities. These projects
- Assisting Council Member –There may be tasks not necessarily on the priority list or even on the land that will help a steward complete their job. For example, helping the bookkeeping steward with filing, or shopping for field supplies
- Self-initiated and council approved job-if you want to create something or use your particular skills or materials for something that will benefit the land, or if you see a need that hasn't made it to the priority projects list yet that you can meet, bring a proposal to the council.

**Preregister with tokens**-If you are using tokens for festival fees please preregister via our website or contact us through other channels. This will help speed up things and avoid any confusion at the Troll Booth. If you want to share your tokens with someone else, please complete a token transfer form.

**No tokens given weekend before festival**-Because that weekend is our prep and set-up time and it's too late to get them recorded, we don't give tokens for work the weekend before WMG & ELF Fest. We've made exceptions after storm emergencies, etc. but it's a logistics mess for us. If you want to help with preparations in those last few days before a festival, your help can be used to cover early in fees or saved for later events.

**Volunteer During Events** - If you are only able to come to Lothlórien during festivals, but still want to work on something, some projects are ongoing through the festival. Helping hands are always welcome.

If you want and need to be at Wild Magick Gathering or Elf Fest, especially if you can't afford full event fees, you can be part of the staff it takes to make a festival happen. We always need help with parking, registration, field services (firewood, composters, recycling, etc.) and in the kitchen. Current

members who arrange ahead of time can work off all or part of their event fees helping with the work of the festival.

If you find yourself packing up your tent and heading out nearly every weekend and spending more and more time on the land, or you see yourself as part of a particular project or ongoing job, it might be time to consider becoming a contracted staff member.

**Seasonal Staff**-for someone who wants to stay and work just through the camping season. This is just a special arrangement for long term camping. You can take on a particular project or some job for the camping season to cover your camping fees. You are not part of the Governing Council, but with their approval, you can set up camp somewhere you won't have to relocate every few days. Staff and Stewards contract for specific jobs and time commitments. They are part of the governing council. Please see that section of the Greenbook for details about the differences.

All volunteer labor is appreciated and vital to keeping the dream of Lothlórien alive and flourishing. It takes a lot of work to care for Lothlórien and we know that most labor comes from the kindness of willing hearts and hands and love for the land. In some circumstances, we can show our appreciation of your labor can be returned as reduced

**Governing Council** – If you decide that you want to make a more formal commitment or if you see a need or want, you might consider joining Governing Council. We suggest that you sit in on a few meetings and talk to current council members about expectations and where we might need help before you submit a contract. Most people begin as Staff which requires an average 14 hour per month commitment for a clearly defined job or serves as a sort of apprenticeship for other jobs or helping a steward. Stewards commit to 28 hours a month and should be able to attend monthly meetings. Staff are encouraged, but not required to attend meetings.

Stewardship is sharing in the care for our common land; taking care of it for ourselves, for members who live faraway and cannot visit the land often, to ensure its continuance for those who come in the future and to honor and carry on the work of all those who have expended time, sweat and love on the land. Stewardship is a sacred trust.

**Vice President**-this is a relatively new way that you can contribute to Lothlorien and Elvin HOME. The V-P is elected each year by the membership and becomes a voting steward. The VP looks for member opinions and suggestions and makes proposals to Governing Council on behalf of members. He or she lets members know about events and projects and helps carry out member projects if they are approved. The VP also leads Grand Council at ELF Fest and WMG.

### **Community**

**Community** is one of the most important aspects of Lothlorien, but it is an intangible thing that's not easy to pin down. It grows from shared love of the land, from the camaraderie of digging holes or hammering nails together, from the neighborliness of camping in the same circle for a week talking and eating food cooked over the same fire, or the instant bond of sharing a tarp during a downpour, from or the euphoric connection of rhythm and ritual, drumming or dancing around a sacred fire. It's seeing a spark of recognition in a stranger's face and knowing that you've found your tribe.

Community grows spontaneously and easily through the shared village and experience of a festival. People have met at Lothlórien and married their lives together. Extended families and clans of friends with roots in Lothlórien meet in other places and times across the country and throughout the year. Although it has sometimes been a mixed blessing, social media has helped strengthen our ties to other people who care about Lothlorien and keep alive over the distance and time. We find out that people exist those other 50 weeks of the year. We are able to discuss ideas for Lothlorien and hash out problems. Festival anticipation can build, plans be made and new friendships continued after everyone goes home.

*"A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves." ~ Wendell Berry*

### **Traditions & Symbols**

Another important part of building community is having shared traditions and symbols. This booklet as a whole is an attempt to set down our traditions of behavior and procedure.

**KEOA-Keep Each Other Alive** What does that mean? Elfin folk help keep one another going on many levels, a jumped battery, a hot bowl of soup, a shared ride, holding the other end of a board, a day of childcare, a pat on the back, a couch to sleep on, a word of encouragement or just an attentive ear. It also means supporting our elfin merchants, artists and other craftspeople.

**Every Child is a Star** We are all equal. We are all stars. We stand as circle of equals and everyone should have a chance to shine and give others the chance to do the same (see KEOA above.) Although this idea may not be directly talked about often, it is an underlying philosophy of Lothlórien. There are no big name stars at Lothlórien's festivals; these are events we create together.

**Heart Tree & Elvin Shield-** The Heart Tree is the symbol of Lothlórien. It is a green and growing tree with a heart at its center. It symbolizes the heart of the forest, the bond between humans and nature and the inner elf that grasps the ways of nature. The shield is a more intricate representation of the Heart Tree. On the shield, the Heart Tree is encircled with stars all the colors of the rainbow or the chakras representing all the components that go into a healthy whole and the diversity of beliefs and paths that exist within the membership and community of Elvin HOME.

### **Beyond the Borders**

One model of care for the earth is to care deeply for one small part of it, to share in that care and pass it on. Lothlórien began with a vision of land owned in common by members, of protecting woodlands and experimenting with practical ecology. It is a sanctuary and a retreat, but not a turning away from the world. People who come to Lothlórien carry a bit of it with them back into the world and a little of everyone who has worked, cared for or just loved Lothlórien remains in the land. On the scale of all the things on the Earth that need to be protected and cared for, Lothlórien is a tiny piece, but its reach extends far beyond its borders through care, inspiration, knowledge and renewal. People shape their yearly schedule around the festivals and eagerly await returning to the

land and seeing their friends again. The thrumming of the land and the thought of summer green buoys spirits through cold grey winters

This little experiment in sanctuary has been the subject of serious academic study by anthropologists, folklorists and others; it has been mentioned in books on festivals, communities, forestry and more. Lothlórien has a longstanding relationship with IFRI (International Forestry Resources and Institutions.) They bring scholars from around the world and teach them to inventory and measure plant growth and study the ways people use and relate to forests using Lothlórien's forest and people as a training ground, studies which are one part of the body of work of a 2010 Nobel Prize winner in economics. Thousands of lives have been touched by Lothlorien. People may be around for a while and get what they need, meet the people who are meant to be part of their lives, learn about the forest or nature or community and move on. Some people are only at Lothlorien for a short while but it leaves a lifelong impression. We receive mail from people who were here for a week once 20 years ago and cherish that memory. People leave and return not just with the cycle of the seasons, but with invisible cycles of years and change. Inspired by efforts and ideas on the land, many people have gone on to start their own organic garden, tiny piece of sanctuary or permaculture farm or work with organizations that protect forests and wildlife. It is a continual encouragement to realize how much it matters that a few people could band together to protect one small piece of land and inspire others to do the same

Lothlórien's continued existence shows what a few people can do when they band together to protect one small piece of land and inspire others to do the same. Many people have come and gone over the years. As a community, all passages of life, joyous and sorrowful, have been celebrated on Lothlórien, birth, death, marriage, separation and reunion. People have been sent off to war and welcomed home again. People who have cared for Lothlórien from the beginning to now are not perfect, just devoted; wherever people band together there will be squabbles and differences. Wherever humans come together there will be squabbles and differences and the more dissimilar those people are the more differences there will be, but if a group of quirky, sometimes cranky, eccentrics make a dream manifest for over a quarter century, then there is still hope for the world. Hope, love of the land, never-ending possibilities, working together with tolerance and respect for people with different ideas and spiritual paths to become guardians of earth through stewardship of one small part are part of what makes Lothlórien special. These things hold the dream in place.