

# VIRSOLEIL



LA DORDOGNE,  
FRANCE



# HANDBOOK



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON  
**ECOSYSTEM  
RESTORATION**  
2021-2030

DEAR

# EARTH RESTORER!

---



We live in interesting times. We can see the many ways in which vast numbers of people are suffering in many parts of the world. We can see materialism, waste, pollution and war. We can also understand that every person and every living thing is endangered by human induced climate change. It has become impossible for us to ignore what is happening. We have been called to act for the benefit of all who are alive and future generations.

As individuals, no matter how hard we work, it is not possible to consider restoring the Earth...but together we are an amazing force and if we so choose we can restore all degraded landscapes wherever they are on the Earth. Restoration needs to be at the centre of human intention. When we collaboratively study how to restore the Earth our lives have real meaning. When we live our lives restoring the Earth we know we are doing what we can to redress many of the mistakes of the past and ensure that future generations will enjoy a fully functional Earth.

You are at the heart of this initiative. Congratulations and thank you for choosing to join the Ecosystem Restoration Communities movement to help restore paradise on earth. We want you to have the best experience restoring with us.

Let's restore the earth!

**John D. Liu**  
Founder, Ecosystem Restoration Communities movement





# WELCOME!

## TO VIRSOLEIL

This handbook is for volunteers and participants of courses and experiences organised at Virsoleil, providing background information about the restoration initiative and the location, and practical advice concerning travel, what to bring, and what to expect during your stay.



## ABOUT US

Claudia and Teryl Chapel accepted stewardship of the Farm in 2018 after renowned architect and artist Lucien Cohen and Ruth Hinze, Claudia's father and stepmother, passed away leaving the land and farm buildings in their care. The site is a 300-year-old farm with a stone house, a barn, and several outbuildings on 3 hectares of open fields and woodlands on South facing gently sloping terrain (farmlands and woodlands biome).

With Teryl's background in regenerative design and Claudia's background in healing arts they have embarked on their collective vision of creating the Center for Regenerative Living at Virsoleil. They are restoring this land and buildings to a thriving example of a polyculture farm and learning center.

After attending an ERC experience at Rancho Via Organica in March 2019 in San Miguel D'allende Mexico, Teryl and Claudia were inspired to join the ERC network and are excited to share Virsoleil with others.

## CONTACT US

Email [teryljchapel@gmail.com](mailto:teryljchapel@gmail.com)  
Email [claudiachapel@gmail.com](mailto:claudiachapel@gmail.com)  
Cell/mobile: +33 06 73 16 45 84 (English)  
+33 06 73 16 49 04 (French, English)



*We envision a fully-functional, peaceful, abundant, biologically diverse Earth brought about through cooperative efforts for the ecological restoration of degraded lands.*

Teryl & Claudia Chapel

# FAST FACTS

## ABOUT VIRSOLEIL



- Water retention
- Tree planting
- Compost making
- Soil building
- Regenerative entrepreneurialism
- Erosion control
- Habitat creation
- Community building
- Food growing
- Natural building

The weather in Spring and Fall is usually mild, beautiful, and can be rainy and muddy so raingear and waterproof or rubber boots are recommended. In Summer you may expect warm and sunny days. Our work schedule will be adjusted to work with the weather conditions.



Shared, indoor accommodation in the barn loft dormitory and in the cottage next door. Tent and van camping is also available.



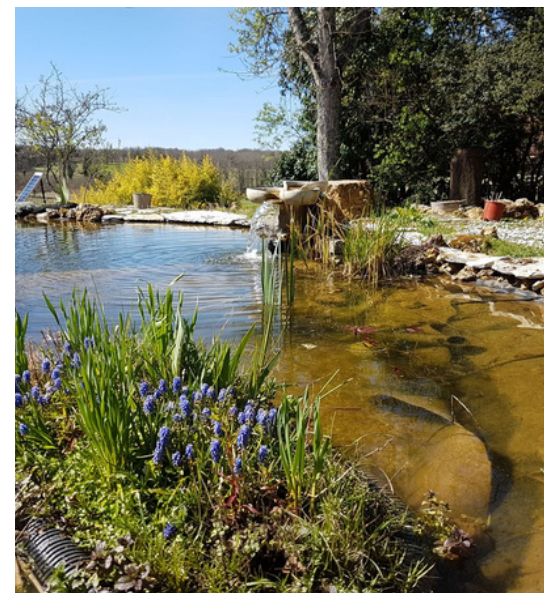
Electricity, cellphone reception and WiFi



Showers, compostable toilet



Kitchen facilities, with three healthy organic meals a day featuring both omnivore and vegetarian options



Natural swimming pond/water catchment pool

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT VIRSOLEIL

Earth restorers who come to Virsoleil can expect to experience a balance of personal restorative time.

Educational learning and guided hands-on experience in restoration activities include:

- Introduction to soil biology
- Soil building
- Construction and composting with a bio-digester and thermophilic Piles
- Introduction to Soxx growing system for accelerated crop production
- Planting various herbs and food crops
- Using A-frame to locate contour lines for swale building
- Water catchment, distribution, and natural purification techniques
- Biochar making
- Introduction to pollinator habitat restoration
- Restoration of stone walls and structures

You will also experience conviviality around shared meals, and social time to make new friends, enjoy local wine tasting, canoe trips, visits to local markets, and enjoy walks around historical sites such as nearby ancient Roman roads and castles.



What I learned at Virsoleil is the power of community: you can do this by yourself but the strength is to do it together. It is possible to change people's minds and hearts and souls. I met interesting people, had lots of fun and got a feeling for what it is to be a regenerative farmer.

Francine, Amsterdam (2022)





# THE CULTURE

## IN LA DORDOGNE

---

The local language is French. Your hosts speak English and French and both are spoken at during activities. Very little English is spoken in the region outside Virsoleil, however the local people are very open to communicating if an effort is made to speak French even if it is but a very little. The culture is very traditional rural French. Many of our neighbours are third and fourth generation residents of the area and very proud of their heritage. It is a tradition to say “Bonjour” upon entering a shop or market. The currency is Euro.

# WHAT TO BRING

## TO VIRSOLEIL

---



- An open mind and willingness to share your skills and physical input
- Sleeping bag or sheets and towel
- Personal toiletries and biodegradable soaps, shampoo, etc.
- A tent is optional and space is available
- Work gloves
- Dust mask
- Sunglasses or other eye protection
- Work boots/closed toe hiking shoes
- Sunhat and sunscreen
- Rainwear
- Natural insect repellent
- Day backpack
- Musical instruments
- Medications and supplements

# HOW TO GET THERE

## FIND VIRSOLEIL

---

## OUR ADDRESS

---

Virsoleil  
628 Rue des Fosses  
24210 Ajat  
France  
[www.virsoleil.org](http://www.virsoleil.org)

Virsoleil is located in the nearly deserted hamlet of Les Fouilloux. Virsoleil means turn to the sun (source, light) in the regional Languedoc dialect.

If you are arriving by train Thenon Train Station is 3 km from Virsoleil. Please email your itinerary and we will make arrangements to pick you up and get you back to the station. The nearest airport is Bergerac, approximately 45 minutes Southwest of us. Note: if you fly into Bergerac you will need to rent a car or arrange a pickup. Bordeaux is the next closest airport and there is a shuttle to Gare St. Jean where trains to Thenon are available. If travelling by bus the nearest bus Station is in Brive L'Gaillard, about 45 minutes east of Thenon.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## AND INSURANCE

---



When you apply to attend a program at Virsoleil you acknowledge that you and you alone are responsible for your personal well being and safety. This means if an activity is causing discomfort or pain it is up to you to do what you need to care for yourself. All earth restorers are required to have personal health/accident insurance or travel insurance valid for our region. We adhere to the highest level of safety protocols and employ proper personal protection equipment for all activities. A safety briefing will be given at the first day orientation. Medical services, if required, are 15 minutes away in Thenon.

If you choose to leave the camp for a walk or trip to town we request you notify one of the staff members. We recommend having a mobile phone with our contact numbers with you while offsite in the event you require assistance. We encourage all visitors to arrive in a state of wellness! If for some reason you are exhibiting symptoms of cold, flu, or any potentially communicable illness immediately prior to arriving at Virsoleil, we ask that you postpone your experience until you are well.

We're excited to have you with us. Please reach out to us if you have any questions regarding your time with us.

Let's regenerate!

*Teryl & Claudia*

## JOIN THE MIGHTY MOVEMENT

---



Ecosystem Restoration Communities is a global, grassroots movement of more than 60 ecosystem restoration initiatives repairing the earth to create a world of abundance, to provide humanity with hope and a better future. The movement brings everyday people together to restore degraded ecosystems from the ground up, and is an official partner to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Learn more at [www.erc.earth](http://www.erc.earth)

