



TALKING WATER NATURE RETREAT · CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

2026 Cordwood Construction Workshop

Build Something Real

Ready to get your hands dirty and learn a building method that is as beautiful as it is practical?

Just like last year, we're inviting builders, dreamers, homesteaders, and curious beginners to Talking Water Nature Retreat for a hands-on Cordwood Construction Workshop in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Whether you're just discovering cordwood or you've been wanting to try it for years, this is your chance to step into the process and learn by doing in a supportive, creative environment.

Cordwood Construction combines wood, mortar, and thoughtful design to create walls that feel earthy, artistic, and full of character. It is one of those techniques that stops people in their tracks – not just because it looks beautiful, but because it opens up a whole different way of thinking about shelter, materials, and what home can feel like.

At Talking Water, we love helping people move beyond theory and into real experience. This workshop is designed to give you practical knowledge, hands-on skill, and a deeper understanding of cordwood construction in a setting that feels inspiring, grounded, and welcoming.

DATES

October 23, 24 & 25, 2026

TIMES

Friday: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Saturday: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

Sunday: schedule shared with participants

LOCATION

Talking Water Nature Retreat

6405 Suck Creek Road, Chattanooga, TN

COST

\$485 per student

Discounts are available for purchasing multiple tickets, for bringing a teen, and for renting a cabin. Contact Bobbie for details!

CLASS SIZE

Space is limited to 12 students per workshop.

A note on our 2026 Cordwood dates: we've combined this year's cordwood sessions into a single workshop on October 23, 24 and 25. The change is for a happy reason. A close family member is getting married, and we wouldn't miss it for the world. Thank you for your flexibility!

What You'll Learn

In this workshop, students will be introduced to the core principles and practices of cordwood construction. We'll cover the basics of building with wood and mortar while helping you understand the design choices, prep work, and wall-building techniques that make cordwood both functional and beautiful.

Topics include:

- benefits of cordwood for sustainable, eco-friendly living
- material preparation and selection
- wall-building basics
- permitting and best-practice considerations
- design ideas for cabins, homes, sheds, and other small structures
- common questions, lessons learned, resources, and recommendations

Students will engage in both classroom-style instruction and hands-on building led by Bobbie Such (builder of Goldfinch Cabin) & the Talking Water team. You'll also have the chance to tour completed cordwood buildings and a wood kiln to see how these ideas translate into real structures.

What's Included

Each workshop registration includes:

- expert instruction
- hands-on cordwood building experience
- tour of a completed cordwood cabin & wood kiln
- vegan-friendly breakfast & lunch each day

Our goal is to make the learning experience both practical and nourishing.

Who This Is For

This workshop is a great fit for:

- beginners who want a strong introduction to cordwood
- DIY builders and owner-builders
- natural building enthusiasts
- people dreaming of cabins, sheds, studios, or small homes
- anyone curious about creative, low-impact building methods

You do not need prior experience. Just come ready to learn, ask questions, and participate.

Why Join Us?

Like our 2025 earthbuilding workshops, these gatherings are rooted in hands-on training, encouragement, and the belief that people leave more empowered when they participate in real work.

When you come to Talking Water, you're not just signing up for instruction. You're stepping into an environment immersed in natural experiences with forest trails, fresh air, creative energy, and a team that genuinely wants you to leave with skills you can carry into your own future builds.

From Our 2025 Students

"I had a great time at the cordwood building workshop last fall and came away with a much deeper understanding of the craft. Being able to take part in every step—from prep work to laying the logs—made the experience truly hands-on. Seeing the tools, materials, and techniques up close was eye-opening. The beautiful setting and the chance to explore finished cordwood buildings made it even more inspiring."

— BRAD W., 2025 STUDENT

"Just wow! This place is on the repeat list! We just spent 4 days staying in the Goldfinch cordwood home while we took the workshop on learning to build cordwood buildings. The home was a work of art!! Everything you need while maintaining a unique setup. Enjoyed morning views of the mountains with coffee each day. Then, the class. WOW. She is a wealth of knowledge. We learned so much!! Getting hands on experience with great leadership and instruction leaving us with confidence to start our own projects. If you are even thinking of building cordwood, TAKE THEIR WORKSHOP! We did everything from planning, making mortar, selecting logs, prepping logs, cutting bottles, framing windows, and then, putting it altogether and building an actual wall!!"

— MARK M., 2025 STUDENT

Let's Build Together

There is something deeply satisfying about stacking natural materials with your own hands and watching a wall begin to take shape. Cordwood Construction is practical, sculptural, and full of possibility – and we'd love to share that process with you.

Come spend a few days with us at Talking Water learning a time-tested, eye-catching building method in a mountain setting full of inspiration. You'll leave with new skills, new ideas, and a stronger sense of what might be possible for your own projects.

Ready to reserve your spot?

Reach out with any questions, or to claim one of the 12 seats.

Bobbie Such

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