



Forest Therapy Guide Partnership Journey: Building Sustainable Relationships



The journey to establishing organizational partnerships requires patience, adaptability, and genuine relationship building. The most successful forest therapy guides approach potential partners with:

1. A spirit of collaboration rather than pure sales ~ Relationships are key!
2. Do your homework regarding the specific organization
3. Flexibility in adapting offerings to meet organizational needs
4. Clear articulation of forest therapy's benefits in the partner's language
5. Professional documentation and communication
6. Consistent follow-through and reliability
7. Genuine passion for connecting people with nature

By approaching partnerships as ongoing relationships rather than transactions, forest therapy guides can create sustainable programs that support the health and well-being of both communities and the land, while providing a regular source of income and meaningful work.



1. Preparing the Soil (Self-Assessment)

Clarify your vision, strengths, and ideal audience. Determine what makes your forest therapy approach unique. Define your non-negotiables and flexibility points.

Key Questions

- What is my unique approach to forest therapy? What are my passion areas (ie Education, Health care, Conservation projects)?
- Who do I most enjoy guiding (age groups, fitness levels, special interests)?
- What types of natural settings energize me as a guide?
- What schedule and frequency would be sustainable for me?
- What compensation structure would make this viable for me?
- What are my non-negotiables versus flexibility points?

Supporting Materials

- Professional biography/resume highlighting relevant training, certification, and experience
- Professional headshot for marketing materials and proposals
- Professional email address
- Certificate of insurance
- Wilderness First Aid certificate or Basic First Aid certificate (depends on where you guide, conditions and access to medical help)

2. Planting Seeds (Initial Outreach)

Research and identify potential partner organizations that serve your target audience. Make thoughtful initial contact with decision-makers. Introduce the concept of forest therapy in their language. Open doors to further conversations.

Key Questions

Identification

- Which local organizations already support wellbeing or environmental initiatives?
- Which entities manage suitable natural spaces (parks departments, conservation groups)?
- What healthcare organizations might value nature-based wellness options?



- Which educational institutions might incorporate forest therapy to support their wellness focus/curriculum?
- What corporate wellness programs exist in my area?
- Are there tourism boards or visitor centers that promote local experiences?
- Are there Recreation Programs or Library Programs I could feed into?

Value Alignment

- How does forest therapy align with this organization's stated mission or values?
- What evidence-based health benefits would resonate with this specific partner?
- How might my services address an existing gap in their programming?
- How could my offerings enhance the partner's community engagement?
- What data points - evidenced research or testimonials could strengthen my proposal?

Reaching out

- Who is the appropriate decision-maker to approach first?
- Would a warm introduction through a mutual connection be possible?
- Is a formal proposal letter or a casual exploratory email more appropriate?
- What concise language clearly communicates my offering in their terms?
- What brief evidence should I include in this initial contact?
- How can I demonstrate familiarity with their organization without overwhelming them?
- What is my main intention with this first contact interaction?

Supporting Materials

- One-page overview of your forest therapy services and benefits
- Sample session outline showing what participants experience
- Small collection of testimonials from previous participants
- Research summary of forest therapy health benefits with citations
- Business cards with contact information and professional branding
- Spreadsheet for tracking partnership communications



3. Nurturing Growth (Partnership Development)

Build relationships through meaningful conversations. Listen deeply to understand partner needs and constraints. Co-create possibilities for collaboration. Present a compelling case for partnership while listening deeply to understand their needs.

Key Questions

- How can I demonstrate the experience (perhaps offer a mini forest therapy session or provide specific examples of an experience)?
- What partnership models might work for this organization?
- What concerns or objections might they have, and how can I address these?
- What questions will help me understand their priorities and constraints?
- How can I keep the conversation collaborative rather than transactional?
- What examples can I provide that would highlight value and takeaways for their organization?
- What next steps would be reasonable to propose at this stage?

Supporting Materials

- Introductory slide deck (5-10 slides explaining forest therapy and your offerings)
- Video introduction showing you guiding a session (1-2 minutes)
- Photo library of appropriate forest therapy locations and sessions
- Sample itineraries for different session lengths (60-min, 90-min, half-day)
- FAQs document addressing common questions and concerns
- Brochure or one-pager summarizing forest therapy benefits and your services

4. Tending Together (Agreement & Implementation)

Formalize partnership details and responsibilities that address both parties' needs and constraints. ECreate clarity around expectations and responsibilities to ensure a smooth working relationship. Deliver exceptional forest therapy experiences that fulfil the partnership goals.

Key Questions

Develop the model

- What specific deliverables will I provide?



- How can I incorporate a partner organization's themes or priorities?
- What timeline makes sense for a pilot program/walk?
- Based on our conversation, which partnership model seems most appropriate?
 - Revenue-sharing model
 - Flat fee per session
 - Seasonal contract
 - Program integration into existing offerings
 - Special event programming
- What payment terms and timeline are fair?

Articulate responsibility

- What resources or support will the partner organization provide?
- What marketing responsibilities would each party assume?
- How will scheduling, cancellations, and weather contingencies, gathering any medical concerns of participants, waivers be handled?

Address risk

- What insurance and liability considerations need addressing?
- How am I ensuring safety and knowing any mobility or medical concerns of participants?
- How will I tailor standard forest therapy practices to this particular audience?

Evaluation

- What evaluation metrics would demonstrate success?
- How will participant feedback be collected and shared?
- What process will we use to evaluate impact?

Supporting Materials

- Partnership proposal template including service menu with clear descriptions and pricing options
- Partnership agreement template outlining responsibilities that can be customized per organization
- Pricing structure with partnership options clearly defined
- Site assessment checklist for evaluating potential locations
- Safety protocols document explaining risk management approaches
- Weather contingency plans for different scenarios
- Accessibility information detailing trail conditions and accommodations



- Emergency procedures document with local emergency contacts
- Participant waiver form for legal protection
- Pre-session questionnaire to understand participant needs

5. Harvesting Fruits (Evaluation & Benefits)

Gather participant feedback and testimonials. Maintain consistent communication to strengthen the partnership beyond transactions. Document outcomes and impacts. Grow the partnership and celebrate successes together .

Key Questions

- What reporting format would be most valuable to my partner?
- How can I recognize and appreciate the partner's contributions?
- How frequently should we schedule check-in meetings?
- How will I collect and share participant stories or testimonials?
- Based on participant feedback, what program adjustments would enhance experiences?
- What seasonal or thematic variations might refresh the offerings?
- What additional training or professional development might enhance my service?
- What new participant groups might benefit from tailored offerings?
- Could specialized workshops supplement regular offerings?
- Are there opportunities for collaborative grant applications?
- Could we develop co-branded materials or resources?
- Are there related organizations where this partner could introduce me?

Supporting Materials

- Post-session evaluation form to gather feedback
- Thank you note templates for after meetings and events
- Impact report template for sharing program outcomes
- Quarterly newsletter template for staying connected with partners
- Infographic visualizing key benefits and outcomes
- Case studies of successful partnerships or programs
- Invoice template with professional formatting



6. Sowing Again (Renewal, Rejection & Referrals)

Revisit and refresh the partnership. Seek referrals to new potential partners. Apply lessons learned to future relationships. Transform initial rejection into a future opportunity through relationship building (let learning and perseverance be your mindset).

Key Questions for Partnership Renewal

- What changes or improvements can we make for the next season?
- How can we expand or deepen our collaboration?
- Are there new opportunities within your organization we should explore?

Key Questions for Handling Rejection

- How can I receive feedback graciously and learn from it?
- What specific concerns can I address in future interactions?
- How can I maintain visibility without being intrusive?
- What value can I provide even without a formal partnership?
- When would be an appropriate time for a follow-up proposal?

Key Questions for Referral Requests

- "While I understand this isn't the right fit for your organization, would you know of other organizations that might benefit from forest therapy offerings?"
- "Is there someone in your network who works with wellness programming who might be interested in this kind of offering?"
- "Would you be comfortable introducing me to [specific organization] that seems aligned with this work?"

Supporting Materials

- Partnership renewal proposal for extending successful relationships
- Referral request email template for expanding your network
- Calendar of relevant community events for networking opportunities
- Website or landing page showcasing your services and philosophy
- Social media profiles demonstrating your work and engagement



7. Enriching the Ecosystem (Expanding Impact)

Develop new offerings based on experience. Build a network of complementary partnerships. Contribute to the broader field of forest therapy.

Key Questions

- How can I contribute to the broader forest therapy field?
- What advocacy opportunities align with my values and expertise?
- How can I build a network of complementary partners?
- What new offerings could serve different populations or needs?
- How can I share my knowledge and experience with other guides?
- What research or documentation could benefit the field?
- How can I support policy changes that benefit nature-based wellness?

Supporting Materials

- Electronic payment processing capability
- Registration system to manage participant sign-ups
- Digital scheduling tool for booking sessions and meetings
- Poster templates for promotional use by partner organizations
- Email announcement templates for program marketing
- Social media graphics package partners can use to promote events
- Press release template for new partnership announcements
- Co-branding guidelines for partnership marketing materials
- Seasonal programming guide showing year-round possibilities