

**“ We do not inherit this land from our
ancestors: we borrow it from our
children”**

Haida Indian Saying



**Thank you for caring enough to help
make this tiny part of the earth, the
Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo, a
better place for all children .**

The Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo is now a part of Global Wildlife Trust, Inc. a 501(C)(3), not for profit institution.

Catoctin Wildlife Preserve

Volunteer Information Booklet

Policies, procedures and answers to most frequently asked questions about our Volunteer Program.



Volunteering is a privilege of membership.

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So, you want to volunteer...?

This booklet will give you the information you need to decide whether a volunteer experience at The Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo is for you. In it, you will find out the rules, regulations and policies of volunteering. You will learn what to wear, how your training will proceed, and how you might become involved in this unique and rewarding endeavor.

We want to be very frank and upfront with you—this volunteering environment is not for people who won't get a little dirty. It is not for folks who must live in air-conditioning all summer. It is not for folks who think that volunteering at the zoo means “playing with the animals” all day. Thank you for thinking of us, but this is not for you.

It is for people who like being outside with other people. It is for people who don't mind pitching in where needed, even if it means getting a little (or even a lot) dirty. It is for people who have a respect and admiration for animals and nature, and realize that we must teach that respect and admiration to others if we are to protect it.

You do not need a degree in biology to volunteer here. You do need a degree in life skills—communicating with peers and zoo guests, being responsible for the living things in our care, being flexible, being patient and having a sense of humor.

Beyond the work we do with our amazing and precious family of animals, we do equally important work as ambassadors for those animals. And we can only be effective ambassadors if we attend to them and represent them with kind, professional care.

Read through this booklet thoroughly. Call us with any questions. Think about whether or not you can make the time commitment. **If you decide that this is a good match for you, then you will need to do these things:**

1. Fill out the application and mail it back to us.
2. Become a member of the zoo. This can be done online or in person.
3. Attend a training session. Contact the office to find out when the next one is being held.
4. Let us know when you are available to volunteer so that we can work out a schedule with you.
5. Obtain proof that you are current on your tetanus vaccine. Call your doctor's office to get a copy of the record.
6. Smile and relax. We will take good care of you. And you will become one of Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo's Volunteer Ambass-ZOO-dors.

Thank you for your interest.

Anti- Zoo Advocates

If a Visitor hotly contests the idea of Zoos and believe, animals should be left in the wild, explain that animal husbandry is the very best of animal care and mortality is generally less than in the wild. Good Zoos attempt to promote understanding and appreciation of the diversity of life and the fragile nature of the ecosystem.

Our aim is to make the public aware of its responsibility in preserving our unique planet and its wonderful natural resources.

Baffling Question

Someone poses a question you cannot answer:

If you are approachable, this will happen all the time. If you know the exhibits and the graphics well, you might be able to refer visitors to another area for information. If you do not know the answer (say that you do not know the answer after all we are learning new things daily)

Do not guess and do not give misinformation. This is very unprofessional. Keep track of what you do not know and find out for future reference. Refer them to an Gift Shop staff member.

General Zoo Information

First Aid

First Aid kits are located in the Gift Shop and Food Sale Areas. Please review emergency procedures. Offer the first aid kit but do not administer it yourselves.

Animal Donations

Animal donations are accepted only after it has been approved by the Curator and Director. If someone asks you about animal donations, have them contact the Gift Shop or call the Preserve office for a donation form.

Special Events

Annually, events include Earth Weekend, Catfish Derby, Members Picnic, Jungle Nights Sleep-Overs, Wild Wednesdays summer camps, Sunset Safaris and Special Animal Exhibits.

Rest rooms, Telephones, Snacks

There are no public telephones. For family to reach you in an emergency, direct them to the incoming office number – 301-271-4922.

Rest rooms are located in the entrance of the Tropical Building and in four other seasonal spots around the park.

Drink machines are scattered around the Preserve.

The Snack Bar is located directly behind the sun bears.

Visitor RE-ENTRY Procedure

As the name would imply, One-day Admission is valid for that entire day. Visitors may leave and reenter the Preserve only if they have identified themselves to the staff at the Gift Shop counter. They should have their hand stamped or receipt for reentry.

How to handle...



People Emergencies

If a child is lost and afraid, have the child remain with you, the parents are usually nearby. If an uncomfortable amount of time has elapsed, escort the child to the Gift Shop and have them gather information to be announced over the public address system. DO NOT go in search of the parents. Children and parents both in search of each other become a sad comedy of crossed paths.

To report a severe emergency, go to the nearest Preserve staff member. If you are unable to leave the situation, send a responsible person in your stead. STAY CALM. Help is on the way. Gently but firmly, keep other visitors away from the problem area.

In case of a medical emergency, Volunteers should seek help from Preserve staff as soon as they can. The Good Samaritan Law applies. We DO NOT administer any kind of first aid. We may offer our First Aid Kit supplies for visitors to use, but we CANNOT TOUCH anyone. Make sure an Incident Report is filed at the Gift Shop desk. This protects the Preserve by getting all the facts in writing at the time of the incident.

Animal Emergencies

If inedible objects are thrown into exhibits, it is important that the animals do not eat the object. Prompt attention is important. Contact an Animal Care person or anyone with a radio so it can be followed up on.

If you see any behavior that is unsafe and you can correct it in a diplomatic way, do so. Report serious (life threatening) actions and your actions taken to the Volunteer office as soon as possible. If routine, report it to staff or leave a message for the appropriate staff before you leave that day.

Report unusual animal behaviors, any inappropriate visitor behavior and other problems that do not require emergency response as soon as you can to the Volunteer Office.

Visitor Problems – Related Challenges

If a visitor is totally disenchanted with the Preserve, be sympathetic, not defensive. There may be situations the visitor is not aware of. Ask Visitor specifically what they did not like so you can take their suggestions back to the staff. Acknowledge legitimate complaints and suggestions. Explain situations when you are able. Refer questions you cannot answer to Gift Shop or Animal Care staff. If a Visitor want to register a formal complaint, contact the Office.

Assertive Visitors

If a Visitor refuses to accept your information, contradicts you, disagrees with you or embarrasses you; Do not be defensive. Explain that, as you understood the information Determine what the person disagrees with. The Visitor may be right and you will learn something. Thank the person for sharing information with you.

Above all: Keep Your Sense of Humor!



Participant Requirements

Open Opportunity

CWPZoo's Volunteer Program offers many diverse opportunities for the Volunteer. We welcome and encourage participation from all sectors of the community.

Age

Junior Volunteers must be 13 to 17 years of age. Parents must consent in writing. Adult Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

Membership

Memberships are purchased through the Gift Shop and are valid for one full year from date of purchase. Memberships must be kept current while volunteering.

Liability and Medical Screenings

Because of our varied work environment, all volunteers must also show proof of a current tetanus booster. Your doctor will be able to provide this documentation or booster shot. Volunteers obtain this at their own expense.

In all cases, a release of liability must be signed before volunteer work begins. All volunteers must complete and sign an official registration form. Any medical conditions or allergies that could become a safety issue for you or the animals must be disclosed at that time.

Eligibility

We strive to create positive matches between our zoo's needs and the interests and abilities of our applying volunteers. Our application and interview process is designed to help us make those matches. Please see "Ability and Training."

Positions within our Volunteer department are based on availability, satisfactory completion of assigned tasks and supervisor's approval. All positions may not be open at the time of you begin volunteering and everyone will not qualify for every position.

If you request a position that is not open or one that you do not qualify for, you will be notified and encouraged to select something else.

Whether junior or adult, all volunteers must be in good standing at their school, employment or home to participate. People who have been suspended, expelled or "grounded" at their school, employment or home are also suspended from volunteer duties until they return to their regular activities.

Minimum Commitment

Volunteers must commit to a minimum of 12 hours a month for at least 3 months of the year to be considered active. New volunteers should schedule their time in 3 to 4 hour blocks, at least twice a month. Trained volunteers may be able to schedule for full days, based on availability and the needs of the department.

Volunteer time is generally scheduled during regular business hours. Special events are sometimes held in the evenings (Rumble in the Jungle), and special projects may also be scheduled after-hours. Alert the coordinator if you are interested in after-hours activities.

Volunteers who are not maintaining an active schedule will be notified that they are in danger of losing their volunteering privileges. If a satisfactory schedule cannot be rearranged, they will be suspended from the program. Volunteers who wish to resume a schedule after suspension may have to wait until the next open house for new volunteers. Depending on the length of time away from the program, they may also have to attend additional orientation or training sessions to become current on information and procedures.

Ability and Training

Volunteers must demonstrate basic ability required for each job. They should be enthusiastic and show pride in themselves and in their volunteer work.

In addition to the orientation training, participants must complete at least 20 hours of general involvement (GI) and attend and pass any necessary training classes. The first 15 hours of duty allows you to become familiar with several different areas, staff and tasks as we become familiar with you and your strengths. Duties usually consist of grounds or building cleaning, guest services, special events, education assistance or “odd tasks.”

Concurrent with your GI are information and training sessions. About 50% of this information is provided to you in written form for you to study and learn on your own. The other 50% is accumulated through brief classes and hands on training. Participants must complete all parts of this process before applying for a specific area of interest.

For these specialized positions, advanced training is required. Each position differs and so will the training. Generally, the number of hours committed increases, and performance evaluations are involved. Health screenings may also be required to work with the animals.



areas, maintenance, offices, the residence and the property beyond the zoo perimeter.

Smoking Policy

While smoking is allowed in the park, our staff and volunteers must set a good example by abiding by the following: No smoking is allowed in any of the buildings or in animal areas. This includes in the offices, commissary, barns, den areas, etc.



Smoking is not allowed while operating equipment, such as golf carts, lawn tractors, trucks or power tools. We also ask that you discard your remains in a proper trash receptacle. Please do not toss them on the ground. Smoking in public is not allowed when you are in uniform.

Illegal Drugs/ Alcohol

We do not tolerate the use of alcohol or illegal drugs in our guests, staff or volunteers. Anyone who reports for duty while under the influence of any controlled substance or uses them while at the preserve or while representing the preserve at an outreach event will be immediately and permanently terminated.

Guests of Volunteers

When you are scheduled for work, please do not bring guests. You are certainly welcome to enjoy the preserve when you are not scheduled, but you may not bring family into the Preserve free of charge. Any guests brought with a Volunteer will be given the members discount.

When you are here “on your own time” or with guests, you must stay in the guest areas. No exhibit or non-guest access is allowed without Curator or Directors permission . A special event for Volunteers and their guests is set-aside during the season as THANKS to everyone in the Program.

Firearms/Weapons

At no time are volunteers to have firearms or other weapons while on the grounds of the zoo, while at a zoo function or sponsored event, or at any time while representing the zoo.



Valuables
Please leave important valuables at home or locked in your automobile. The Preserve cannot be responsible for personal items.

No-Show

Failure to appear for a scheduled lecture, Ambass-zoo-dor shift, special event, etc., more than once with without making provisions for a substitute or calling in may result in your dismissal. An unfulfilled commitment dilutes the strength of the Program. At best, the staff must search for a replacement; at worst, it hurts the Preserve's image and efficiency.

Daily Routine

Volunteers must check in at the Gift Shop desk upon arrival at the Preserve. Clocking in and out on your time card is necessary each time you volunteer. Time cards may not be removed from the Preserve premises. If there is a problem with your time card bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible so it may be rectified.

You will then meet with the coordinator or your area supervisor to review the tasks for the day. General volunteer tasks frequently change from session to session. Be flexible. If you designate and are selected for a specific area of interest, your routine will be more standardized.

If a task is completed ahead of schedule, please complete the safety checks for the area (fences closed, locked, tools away, scraps picked up, etc.) and then check back in with your supervisor.

Your Volunteer hours are totaled each month and records are important for our awards, evaluations and records.

Handy Items/ Tools

Some items that may come in handy while volunteering are: a watch, notepad and pen (pencil points tend to break just when you need them the most) and a small pocketknife or multi-purpose tool. Volunteer aprons are available for certain Volunteer jobs to be determined by the Volunteer Office.

 If a special project requires other tools that you may have and can safely use, the coordinator or area supervisor may ask you to bring them. The decision is yours. Marking or otherwise identifying your tools will help avoid any confusion later.

Restricted Access to Areas

Volunteers are allowed only in areas available to visitors. At no time will volunteers be allowed in carnivore, primate and venomous areas while animals are present in the area. Volunteers can be in these areas as along as animals are not present, they are accompanied by a staff member assigned to that area and have the supervisors permission.

If specific assistance has been requested by the staff member and approved by the supervisor, entrance may be permitted into secured areas where the animal(s) is not present, as in the case of an enrichment or re-dressing project.

Volunteers may enter other non-public areas only with the specific permission of the appropriate supervisor. (Permission once does not indicate permission thereafter.) Non-visitor areas include behind guardrails, exhibits, service

Policies and Procedures

Responsibilities

As a Volunteer, your responsibility is to:

1. Follow policies and procedures established by the Volunteer office.
2. Accept assignments with a level of responsibility that you can handle. If you believe a task is beyond your abilities, please tell your coordinator or area supervisor. There is no shame in recognizing your limits, but it can be dangerous if you don't.
3. Fulfill your commitment, find a substitute, or notify the office as soon as possible.
4. Use reasonable judgment in making decisions on your own where there is no understood policy, then, as soon as possible, consult with your supervisor for future guidance.
5. Attend all orientation and training sessions as scheduled, and undertake continuing education to maintain competence.
6. Accept CWPZoo's right to dismiss any Volunteer for failure to meet the program's guidelines, including unsafe practices, poor performance, poor attendance, etc. (Please see Disciplinary Policies)
7. Be considerate and contribute fully to maintaining a friendly relationship with all guests, staff and other Volunteers.
8. Be flexible. We all "wear many hats" to accomplish our duties to the animals and guests. To fully participate, we ask you do, too.
9. Provide suggestions to your supervisor if these might increase the effectiveness of the Program.

Volunteer Benefits

As a volunteer, you will be able to:

1. Be assigned and trained to a job that is worthwhile, challenging and that you can perform with confidence.
2. Expect that your time will not be wasted.
3. Know whether your work is effective and how it can be improved.
4. Receive a recommendation for outside employment, if requested.
5. Attend periodic programs and special events provided for staff and volunteers.
6. Be given appropriate recognition of your contributions to the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo.



Evaluations

Volunteers will be evaluated at the end of their training, annually during a conference with the staff and periodically throughout the season. Volunteers will be asked to evaluate the Volunteer Program annually.

Disciplinary Policies

Although every precaution is taken to education the Volunteer to equip them for their Preserve duties, from time to time a problem may occur. If any volunteer fails to comply with policies and regulations while at the Preserve or representing the Preserve at an outreach function, a conference will be setup with that Volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator shall inform the Volunteer as to the nature of the complaint. At that time there will be a review of Preserve policies with the Volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator will interview the parties involved and make every attempt to resolve the complaint. The Volunteer has the right to express their views at these interviews.

Any safety violations will be dealt with in a very serious manner. This may mean termination of duties.

If work fails to meet required standards, or if agreed time commitment is not met, (see section on Volunteer requirements), the Coordinator will set up a meeting with the Volunteer to go over the facts. An informed decision will be made as to what steps should be taken to resolve the situation to everyone's benefit.

Dress Code

All Volunteers are asked to report to work in a clean, official uniform and pants. In all cases, priority is given to safety over fashion.

Shirt - A volunteer "jersey" or collared shirt (One shirt is given to you after successful completion of GI and training tests. Volunteer shirts are to be returned at the end of your volunteer program.) Our shirts are worn tucked in.

Pants- Tan or khaki colors and a cotton/canvas type material is preferred. They must be well fitted. For safety, no flare or bell bottoms are allowed. Shorts are not allowed as they do not offer enough protection.

Shoes - No exposed toes. Boots or hiking style shoes are preferred. Sneakers are acceptable. Shoe laces must be tied.

Jewelry - For your safety and the safety of our animals, please refrain from wearing anything that can easily be dislodged. Oversized or "dangly" jewelry may become entangled in plant material or fencing or might be grabbed by one of the animals. This includes bracelet style watches, bracelets, long necklaces, hoop earrings, clothing chains, oversized belts. Rings can also be a hazard if they become caught in fencing or tools.

Hair – Must be kept short or pulled back to avoid entanglement in the working environment.

Name Tag – One is given to you after successful completion of GI and training tests. Replacements cost \$2 each. Tags are clipped to the front of your shirt or outer wear.

Hello!
My name is...

Personal cleanliness is a must due to the fact that our Volunteers meet many Preserve visitors each time they come to work. Fresh breath and clean, attractive styles are always met with approval by your peers and our staff and visitors.

Volunteers who do not come to work in acceptable uniform will be reminded once about the uniform code. The second time a Volunteer is out of uniform, we shall ask him or her to leave and return when clothing can meet specifications.

Your Role as Ambassador

Always wear your uniform when you are at the Preserve or when representing the zoo at any function outside the Zoo. You will then become a spokesperson/emissary for the Preserve and people will know whom to thank for a good time.

Remember that you are an ambassador for the zoo when you are in uniform. Your actions, appearance and comments are watched more closely than you may think and all contribute to the impression our guests form about us. Make every effort to ensure that it is a courteous, professional one.

Signing Up for Duties

Volunteer time is generally scheduled during regular business hours, beginning when the zoo opens and ending one hour prior to closing time. Special events are sometimes held in the evenings (Jungle Nights, Family Sleep-over), and special projects may also be scheduled after-hours. Alert the coordinator if you are interested in after-hours activities.



New volunteers may sign up for general grounds/facilities duties, special events, onsite education, and visitor services. After the completion of your GI and training tests, you will consult with the coordinator and may select from other areas as you both see fit. Returning volunteers may sign-up for any category they are qualified for.

One of the keys to successful volunteering and training progress is to be consistent. Try to set a regular schedule that you can stick with (Every Tuesday morning, every Sunday afternoon, etc.)

Promptness

Promptness is expected. Being late inconveniences all involved. This applies to both when you arrive and when you depart. Junior volunteers or others who are being picked up by someone need to make sure that arrangement is timely.

Substitutes

If you are unable to meet your scheduled Volunteer time, you are required to phone the Volunteer Office as soon as you are aware of it. You may obtain your own substitute (especially if you are doing an education program) from the list of Volunteers qualified to replace you.

If you do get a substitute, the Volunteer Coordinator must be made aware of the change. This keeps each department functioning in an orderly manner.