

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION BOOKLET

Dade City's Wild Things  
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All Volunteers are required to take a tour of Dade City's Wild Things. Tours are purchased through the Gift Shop

### Age

Junior Volunteers must be 13 to 17 years of age to participate without their parent's presence. Parents must consent in writing.

Adult Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

### Liability and Medical Screenings

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 should be disclosed at that time. Please see "Requirements" for additional information.

### 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 either substance or uses the substance while at the preserve or while representing the preserve at an outreach event will be immediately and permanently terminated.

### 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 "Availability and Training."

Positions within our Volunteer department are based on availability, satisfactory completion of assigned tasks and supervisors 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.

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

#### Minimum Commitment

Volunteers must commit to 2 hours a session to be considered active. New volunteers should schedule their time in 2 to 4 hour blocks, at least twice a month.

#### 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 tour, participants must complete at least 15 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 or education assistance or “odd tasks.”

#### Responsibilities

As a Volunteer, your responsibility is to:

Follow policies and procedures established by the Volunteer office.

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.

Fulfill your commitment, find a substitute, or notify the office as soon as possible.

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.

Accept Wild Things 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)

Be considerate and contribute fully to maintaining a smooth relationship with all guests, staff and other Volunteers. Be flexible. We all “wear many hats” to accomplish our duties to the animals and guests. To fully participate, we ask you do, too. Provide suggestions to your supervisor if these might increase the effectiveness of the Program.

## Dress Code

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

Shirt -A volunteer shirt (One shirt is given for work and one for dress functions.

Pants/Shorts – They must be well fitted for safety.

Shoes -No exposed toes. Boots, hiking style shoes, sneakers are acceptable. Shoe laces must be tied.

Jewelry -For your safety and the safety of our animals, no jewelry will be allowed with the exceptions of post earrings, wedding ring sets. 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. A plain or Wildthings logo cap is acceptable.

Personal cleanliness is a must due to the fact that our Volunteers are meeting a lot of visitors. 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 for Wildthings 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 sure 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 hours prior to closing time. Special events are sometimes held in the evenings (Jungle nights, Boo-in-the-Zoo), 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.

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. ) Volunteer Scheduling cards are located in the Zoo kitchen or the gift shop.

### 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 Zoo 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.

### No-Show

Failure to appear for a scheduled lecture, fundraiser shift, special events job, school program etc., more than once without making provisions for a substitute or calling in can 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 Zoo's image and efficiency.

### Arrival

Only Volunteers are allowed on property. If you do not have transportation, you will have to part outside the gated property and walk in. If you are a Junior Volunteer you will have to wait for a keeper to meet you at the gate to be escorted in and off property. If you do drive into the zoo, everyone will drive at or below 5 miles an hour. You must wait for the gate to shut every time you enter or leave the property. You do not allow anyone (no exceptions-no matter who). Everyone must use call box to gain access. If you can not enter or leave with someone at the gate, you must wait till they call and gain access or they leave before entering. There is no exceptions! !

## Daily Routine

Volunteers must check in at the Zoo kitchen upon arrival at the Zoo. Clocking in and out on your time card is necessary each time you volunteer. Time cards are not to be removed from the Zoo 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.

**Absolutely – NO WALKING AROUND THE ZOO UNATTENDED!!!**

DO NOT touch any animals or go near any cage unattended or you will be immediately removed from the zoo.

All special events will have a special sign-in/out sheet at the zoo kitchen and it will not be necessary to use your time card at those events.

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

If you need hours for Community Service then a keeper or other employee must initial all hours on a daily basis.

## 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 pocketknife or multi-purpose tool. Volunteer aprons are available for certain Volunteer jobs to be determined by the zoo keepers.

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

Only Animal Care Staff are allowed in animal cages especially the carnivore, bears and primate areas. At no time will volunteers be allowed in animal cages or within pvc perimeter area while animals are present in the area.

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 cleaning project.

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

## Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed in the park. No smoking is allowed in any of the buildings or in animal areas. This includes in the offices, kitchen, freezers or coolers, storage areas, shop. No smoking is allowed while operating equipment, such as carts, lawn tractors, trucks or power tools, etc.

Smoking is only allowed in break areas. We also ask that you dispose of your butts in a proper trash receptacle. Please do not toss them on the ground.

## Guests of Volunteers

When you are scheduled for work, please do not bring guests. You are certainly welcome to enjoy the zoo when you are not scheduled, but you may not bring family into the zoo free of charge. Any guests brought with a Volunteer will be given a 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. A special event for Volunteers and their guests is set-aside during the season as THANKS to everyone in the Program.

## Valuables

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

## People Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, Volunteers should seek help from Zoo 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 your Zoo by getting all the facts in writing.

### 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 and/or someone in the Zoo 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 response 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. □□□

### 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 planet and its 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 as well, you might be able to refer visitors to another area for information. 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 Animal Care staff person or the Gift Shop.

### What We Do

GET CLOSE! Dade City's Wild Things specializes in bringing people and animals together. We deliver safe, fun, intimate, educational encounters with over 150 exotic animals, filled with natural wildlife, bears, deer, birds, monkeys, big cats and small mammals are exhibited in an up-close manner.

"Encounters" are scheduled as needed, where visitors can experience a "once in a lifetime", walking tour of over 150 animal exhibits. You will be amazed at how close you will be to stalking tigers, bears playing, lions roaring, monkeys playing, otters swimming, birds calling, and much more. It will be an experience you will never forget.

Dade City's Wild Things 2008

I have read the Volunteer Information Booklet and understand and agree to follow all the rules.

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

# Dade City's Wild Things - Volunteer Sign Up Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile No. \_\_\_\_\_ Tshirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers Liscense \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your strengths \_\_\_\_\_

What are your weakness \_\_\_\_\_

What animals are you experienced in? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you looking for in this program? \_\_\_\_\_

What days are you able to work? Times? (min 2 hours) \_\_\_\_\_

What experience with animals do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any medical conditions? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your expectations when you volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted of a crime? If so what? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope to gain from volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Volunteer areas interested in:

Tours \_\_\_\_\_ Food Prep \_\_\_\_\_ Internet \_\_\_\_\_ Grants \_\_\_\_\_ Enrichment \_\_\_\_\_

Ambasador \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Program \_\_\_\_\_ animal programs \_\_\_\_\_

gift shop \_\_\_\_\_ hospital \_\_\_\_\_ computer work \_\_\_\_\_ cage building \_\_\_\_\_ misc \_\_\_\_\_

Every Volunteer must attend a tour - Date of Tour \_\_\_\_\_ confirm: \_\_\_\_\_

Release of Liability for Volunteers

Read Carefully before signing

I, \_\_\_\_\_/or guardian \_\_\_\_\_, in consideration for being permitted to participate as a Volunteer at Dade City's Wild Things, hereby release and discharge Dade City's Wild Things, Stearns Zoological Rescue & Rehab Center Inc, Kenneth & Kathryn Stearns and their respective officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, subcontractors, representatives, successors, and assigns, and all persons conducting, directly or indirectly, the activities surrounding involvement as a Volunteer at Dade City's Wild Things from any or all claims, rights, demands, actions, causes of actions, expenses, damages, which I or my heirs, personal representatives, successors, assigns or anyone claiming by, through or under me ever had, now have, or may have against the parties identified above arising from any injury, act or omission relating in any way to my participation as a Volunteer.

I fully understand that this Release includes, but is not limited to any claims, rights, demands, actions, cause of actions, expenses and damages whatsoever which may arise from any injury, act or omission, caused, occasioned, or contributed to, actually or allegedly, by the negligence, sole or concurrent, of one or more parties released herein.

I also fully understand the risk involvement in my participation as a volunteer including, but not limited to, those risks involved with the working with wild and/or endangered animals in their habitats, and fully assume said risk for any injury, losses or damages of any kind resulting from such risks involved in associated activities.

I acknowledge that I have read, fully understand and voluntarily agree to this release and that no oral representatives, statements or inducements apart from this Release have been made to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name - Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian (if under 18)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name – Parent or Guardian