

3/17/2009

Mission:Wolf
Staff Volunteer Inquiry
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MISSION:WOLF
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Volunteer Staff have created this packet of information on how you can offer your time, expertise, and energy at the refuge.

Thank you for your interest in Mission: Wolf. Our sanctuary provides a remote and peaceful refuge for captive wolves and wolf dog crosses in the Southern Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Visitors and volunteers are welcome to visit, camp, work and learn about wolves. Due to our remote location and need for staff to live on site to provide 24 hour wolf care we have created a solar powered facility that is operated by four to six people. Our first priority is to provide for all of the resident wolves' needs, our second is to respond to the demand for public education from visiting groups and schools and offering volunteer learning experiences. Our last priority is to spend the least amount of time necessary to complete business details and time-consuming correspondence.

Mission: Wolf's mission has three parts to it. Our first goal is to provide the resident wolves a lifelong, secure and healthy sanctuary. The second is to provide extensive education that allows the timid and shy wolves to illustrate why wolves do not belong in cages, and the outgoing or tame wolves are Ambassadors that allow people to overcome fear through a personal experience. The third is to reduce our dependency on marketing and sales by operating with solar and wind energy systems, recycled building materials, and daily energy conservation behavior.

Our volunteers and staff come from all over the world and from different walks of life, but daily life at Mission: Wolf requires that we all agree:

We are all here for the wolves.

Living and working for the wolves requires self-motivation and stamina.

Be prepared for anything, and know how to respond to the unexpected.

None of us should place a burden on the refuge.

If you feel that you can follow these simple guidelines, Mission:Wolf will welcome you and appreciate your contributions. The rigors of caring for any animal are great and doing so for

wild-spirited animals such as wolves teaches us a great many lessons in patience, determination and endurance. Help the wolves live a good life and create your own adventure.

Living for Wolves.

We cannot emphasize it enough that the wolves are the reason we are all here. It is our primary goal to care for and provide them a peaceful sanctuary to live out their lives . Our daily tasks revolve around assuring that the wolves are fed, have access to fresh water, have available vet care, and have enough room to live their lives without people disturbing them. In addition, wolves need fences to protect them from people, and we are constantly working on projects to help make the wolves lives more comfortable, while accommodating visitors.

Four basic staff positions operate the refuge and remind us that we are here for the wolves – animal caretaker, education, membership/correspondence, and refuge coordinator. Although we ask one staff member to be responsible to oversee each function we often all work together as a community team to achieve our goals. This means you will likely end up working with people of different interests and skills. Patience, communication and respect must be exhibited at all times around the wolves as they easily pick up on our attitude. Don't be surprised to find the wolf caretaker getting a Boy Scout Troup working on a project, or the facility's manager helping out with daily feed.

Respect and Honesty:

Respect and Honesty are the most important attitudes an individual needs to possess if they are to help Mission:Wolf. By developing and sharing respect for the wolf we will hopefully develop respect for our environment and ultimately for each other.

Want to feed a wolf?

Waters:

It is crucial that **the wolves have fresh drinking water at all times**. During summertime, late spring, and early fall, fresh water is provided by a gravity fed watering system. During the colder rest of the year, the pipes and hoses freeze, and requires hauling buckets of water from the spring or well tank to each enclosure daily.

Big Feed:

As a wolf the one thing that is ever present on your mind is food. Simply put, wolves live for food. Every Wednesday and Saturday we grant them their wish with Big Feed. Since this is similar to wild conditions, competition among pack members is high. Most food is dead livestock (horse & cow) or road kill elk and deer. These are not of butcher-block quality; they look and smell bad. This meat must be cut into small pieces and distributed to the seventeen enclosures evenly and in a timely manner. Elder wolves receive smaller portions of meat that are partially cooked on a daily basis.

It is very important that every one's belly gets full and a minimal amount of dominance displays are provoked.

Daily Feed:

Older wolves are provided a warm meal every morning. This reduces the size of Big Feed meals, which in turn reduces stress on the wolves' bodies, and allows for providing vitamin and mineral supplements, as well as homeopathic remedies.

Though feeding is the Caretaker's responsibility, all staff are encouraged to participate in the feeding. Since different wolves have different needs, each has its own feeding strategies. Work closely with an experienced 'feeder' the first few times. **All food is to be thrown over the fence or passed through feeding slots.** No hand or fence feeding! If you have a piece that is too large or heavy to throw over the fence, please ask a staff member to assist you.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER ANY ENCLOSURE ON YOUR OWN, FOR ANY REASON.

Wolves need space.

Our priority is to provide the wolves with as much space and habitat as possible and we are ever expanding their enclosures by adding fencing to existing pens. Currently, we have seventeen enclosures comprising approximately thirty acres. Additionally, we have two time-share enclosures, one 12 acres and the other 20 acres. Fencing is overseen by the Refuge Coordinator, and is a job that requires a great deal of strength and stamina as all the hauling of fence rolls, posts, etc. is done by human labor. There are other tasks such as attaching ground and top mesh to the six to eight foot tall chain link that doesn't require as much energy. Fencing is always on-going and is a great job to do when large groups are willing to lend hand and muscle. Especially in the summer, most of the work involves a lot of heavy lifting and hauling.

On-going and up-coming projects:

Our primary goal is to provide the best possible life we can for the resident wolves. This will mean that for the next ten to fifteen years Mission: Wolf will have plenty to do. There will be both physical and lighter tasks that will need attention, so regardless of ability or experience, there is always a task that needs help doing. Projects include fence building, gate repairs, welding, building the new horse barn, and many more. Your job as a volunteer/staff is to have *the motivation to see a need and complete the task independently.*

Visitors and Tours:

"Education vs. Extinction" is our purpose.

Although protecting the wolves from people IS one of our main goals, it is equally important to provide an inspiring and educating experience for every single visitor that makes it up our driveway.

Your first two weeks at the refuge should offer plenty of opportunity to tag along and study other tours as they happen, and we have lots of material you can memorize and study to further WOW the guests! Every car and truck and campervan that rolls in here has people inside that want to help wolves, and it's up to us to motivate and inspire them so that they go home and motivate and inspire everyone in their lives! After you begin to give tours, as all volunteers are expected to do, you'll see that more often than not it's a wonderful experience with happy people and

happy wolves. Mission: Wolf is unique in that we offer a very intimate experience to many, if not all visitors without charging a dime. We prefer to interact and live without the burden of expectation and disappointment that more often than not comes along with money changing hands. But, we do depend heavily on the donations of guests to keep ourselves eating and the sanctuary running, so go ahead and charm em!

RULES OF THE PACK

For the protection and peace of the resident wolves, everybody's safety, and maintenance of our resources we have compiled some guidelines to follow while living at the sanctuary.

1. Never attempt to enter any enclosure on your own.

Kent Weber or Tracy Brooks must accompany all visitors/volunteers. No exceptions!!!! Do not enter or attempt to enter any enclosure under the influence of any medications, prescriptions or otherwise, especially alcohol!

2. Never put your fingers, hands, arms, clothing, or any other objects through or close to the fences.

3. Please do not walk around any enclosures without permission. After you have been shown around the sanctuary, and introduced to the resident wolves, you are free to visit the outside of the wolves' enclosures and sit quietly in designated areas.

4. Do not yell or attempt to break up any wolf fights or dominance battles.

The animals may seem to be fighting but most often they are simply performing a very important ritual in their social structure. Notify any staff member if you feel that something is not right with a wolf or any enclosure/gate.

5. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times! This is especially important during tours. Whenever children are present, extra energy and attention is needed to ensure them a safe visit. Remember most parents are themselves so mesmerized by the wolves, they can easily lose sight of their children.

6. Roughhousing, yelling, partying, running, arguing, and general excitement are strongly discouraged.

This is a refuge for wolves. They can be very sensitive to our behavior. Please limit these activities to the adjoining forest.

7. Quiet. Some of the animals are very **shy** and for that reason we ask that you **respect their space** and not go near these enclosures without the permission of a staff person.

8. Tools and Tasks. If you have any doubts of how to use a tool or complete a project ask for assistance. If something is broken tell a staff person immediately so that the situation can be corrected.

9. Two at a Time. Always work as a team and have a second person with you when working on fences, gates or cleaning enclosures near the wolves.

Volunteering and Staffing

We gratefully accept help ranging from one hour to several years. We have recently started a small horse sanctuary and need help with daily horse care as well as barn and fence construction. These demands, coupled with the isolation and sustainable energy systems we've surrounded ourselves with, keep life at the sanctuary interesting to say the very least. To help you prepare for your volunteer experience, we have organized this material to inform you of our goals, facility operations, daily tasks, expectations of volunteers as spokespeople for wolves, daily life in a community with one kitchen, and of course, the interactions with our four-legged friends, in the hope that your time spent here will be as productive as possible for both you and Mission:Wolf.

Long Term Staff Positions - Two month minimum commitment

Mission:Wolf is operated by four to eight live-in staff that take care of the wolves, horses, volunteers, buildings, tools, vehicles, office, and visitor needs. Our goal is to keep a minimum of two people on-site 24 hours a day to watch over the refuge. These positions are often filled by full time staff but may become vacant at any time and can be filled by motivated people who can dedicate a substantial period of time and energy. Everyone starts as a refuge assistant and learns all aspects of life at the refuge, including community living, cooking, cleaning and simple but vital rules relating to solar energy and water consumption. Staff will quickly find opportunities to work on their own projects and be requested to assist short term volunteers.

Core Staff: One year to five years

Animal Caretaker
Refuge Manager
Refuge Educator
Office Coordinator/Membership Coordinator

Support Staff: Two months to one year

Assistant Animal Caretaker
Construction Coordinator
Office Assistant
Education Assistant/Tour Guide

Refuge Assistant: One hour +

Additional volunteer staff are welcome to stay between one and six weeks. In return for daily help volunteers are allowed to select a campsite and use a community fire pit, picnic table, water and toilet. Volunteers may use our outdoor kitchen (gas range, sink w/cold water, table, solar light, minimal pans and utensils). After two weeks volunteers may receive some basic food supplies, if needed.

All of these positions require a lot of stamina, hard work, and self motivation. We do not offer formal internships because the nature of this job is one of unpredictability. Staff are expected to fulfill daily responsibilities as well as to work on group projects with visitors and handle those unexpected things that happen to arise.

Our first goal is to provide the resident wolves a lifelong, secure and healthy sanctuary; the second is to provide extensive education that allows the timid and shy wolves to illustrate why wolves do not belong in cages, and the outgoing or tame wolves are Ambassadors that allow people to overcome fear through a personal experience; the third is to reduce our dependency on marketing and sales by operating with solar and wind energy systems, recycled building materials, and daily energy conservation behavior.

A volunteers first responsibility is to protect the wolves from disruptions and noisy activity from visitors, youth camps and other volunteers. The second is to provide all visitors/volunteers a personal encounter as close as possible to the wolves without disturbing them. The third is to generate support by encouraging visitors to purchase items and donate supplies, materials and/or money. This includes working to maintain, repair and simply clean the buildings and tools other volunteers have offered.

Provision per length of stay:

Two weeks – two months: You bring your tent and sleeping bag; we provide food and use of outdoor kitchen.

Two month commitment: Assistant Staff, gets you a tipi (depending on availability), food, transportation, and a small weekly expense reimbursement of \$15.

Support Staff are offered housing (tipi or tent site), all food and kitchen supplies, use of community building bath and laundry, potential use of refuge vehicles depending on driving experience and refuge needs.

The Core Staff , in return for their commitment, are provided housing (simple cabin or tipi with futon), all food and kitchen supplies, use of community building bath and laundry, use of refuge vehicles for town trips for wolf-related business and supplies (valid drivers license and good driving record required).

All staff are entitled to weekly expense reimbursement.

Although it is not absolutely necessary to have a car, we've found that, of the volunteers who come and stay for an extended period of time, those that have their own vehicle or transportation

generally find life here a bit easier, if for no other reason than they are able to get away when and if the urge strikes. Occasionally a Mission: Wolf vehicle will need to go to town but it is best not to be dependent on others for your transportation needs. For the short term volunteers the ability to fully take care of yourself will usually require trips to town to make phone calls, shower, do laundry, get food, etc... and therefore requires a car.

For those with four-legged companions of your own: We ask you to leave them at home. The wolves can become agitated by dogs, thereby making their captive lives stressful; obviously not something we want to encourage.

Volunteering expectations:

We do not set limits based on a volunteer's age, but more on **ability, motivation and maturity**. To date we have received productive help from folks ranging from a teenagers to retirees- it is all totally dependent on the individual and to what degree they are able to motivate and provide for themselves in an informal, unstructured work environment. Regardless of ability or experience, there is always a task in need of attention. If possible we recommend you start by spending a week or two at the sanctuary prior to committing to an extended amount of time. This is not only enjoyable, but also allows you to see the remote and primitive setting of the refuge and the nature of the work that needs doing. Then, as you become more familiar with the workings and happenings of the sanctuary and of the resident wolves, we can decide how and where your talents can be best applied. Come with a backup plan so you do not find yourself dependent or trapped at the refuge.

Land, Cabins and Life of Staff

Facilities and Location

The Mission:Wolf Sanctuary operates on 200 acres of land next to the San Isabel National Forest. The people occupy a couple of acres that includes seven structures - visitor building, vet building("Puppy Palace"), office/tool shop, greenhouse, newly-built bio-diesel building, the trailer cabin ("Old Kitchen"), and community building. All structures are volunteer built with recycled materials and are solar-powered. We have a semi-reliable cell phone as well as a satellite e-mail system that are solar powered and used minimally. A solar-powered water pump delivers water to a storage tank for later use. A small barn houses up to four horses within a five acre pasture. Plans to complete a large barn are in the works. Two vehicles are available for staff use to gather food and supplies. The refuge provides a lifelong home for up to 30 adult resident wolves and wolf-dog crosses.

Our water system is primitive and small, and consists of a gravity fed natural spring, to provide drinking water for the wolves and occasionally for humans too. A small solar pump feeds a limited supply of water from a well for staff use. Water is limited, valuable, and precious. Please be careful about wasting or using too much water. Also, be sure to check the storage tank level before using large amounts of water.

Kent Weber and Tracy Brooks live at the Mission: Wolf Farm, which operates on 40 acres of land about 5 miles away from the refuge. The farm includes a small solar-powered cabin, a large horse barn, a chicken coop and garden. It also acts a geriatric wolf care facility that houses up to five canines.

The refuge is 15 miles (of dirt roads) from the nearest highway and 25 miles (45 minutes) away from the nearest town. At an elevation of 9,300 feet, the sun's rays are intense, as are frequent storms and other unpredictable weather conditions. This remoteness may cause first time volunteers to consider arriving during the warmer months (May-Sept.).

Volunteer and Staff Life

What you'll see here at Mission: Wolf is the result of a lot of hard work by many dedicated people. Please respect it and set examples for others to follow. The wolves attracts a wide variety of people and personalities and, at times, people who would have very little else in common suddenly find themselves living and working in close quarters with each other. This can be difficult and stressful, but can also be a tremendous experience in learning to relate to our own kind, translating this learning to include love and respect for the wild environment. By living in harmony as a community, we have a lot to learn from and share with each other. To have a positive and happy community life, honest communication is needed. Be aware of how your habits affect others.

Everyone knows the reason behind recycling, so let's recycle as much as possible. This goes for compost food waste as well. Our compost is vital to the health of our greenhouses.

Unfortunately, we find that a small minority of visitors fail to dispose of their waste properly.

This results in bits and pieces of trash scattered by the wind and time. Please be a hero and pick up any trash you see within several miles of the sanctuary.

All of our lights, computer, music and video are operated by battery charged PV solar panels and a windmill, and the electricity necessary for power tools and appliances is supplied by a gas-powered generator. Our electrical system is small and limited so please be conservative. Please ask any of the staff before operating electrical items.

Most jobs have their perks and ours is no exception. There are many pleasurable things to do while staying here, both here at the sanctuary and within local driving distance. Mission: Wolf is surrounded on two sides by National Forest land offering miles and miles of wilderness walks and hikes. We are only minutes away from the picturesque grandeur of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and less than a days travel to the Great Sand Dunes National Monument.

Please freely express any questions or problems you may have while you are here. The four or five permanent staff members started their time with Mission: Wolf as a first time visitor/ volunteer and will be available to offer assistance. Chances are, we have experienced similar situations and will be more than happy to help out if we can. Volunteers must take the initiative to find work to do and ask questions if you are not certain of something. Direct communication is a must.

Mission: Wolf Around the Year

Each spring (April) and fall (Oct.-Nov.) the wolf bus tours the US with the directors and ambassador wolves. The refuge needs at least five staff that will commit to taking care of refuge duties in the directors absence. We find there are three seasons at the refuge that coincide with school and vacation schedules and allow us to keep two volunteers on site 24 hours a day all year long.

Summer - Starting in late May, new staff arrive and staff housing fills up quickly. The sooner you arrive and/or the longer you commit to staying the better are your chances of being provided a shelter (Tipi or cabin). Many summer staff supply their own tents. The refuge needs summer staff that can stay through the month of August and into September if possible.

Fall - We encourage staff to arrive in August in order to be trained to run the refuge by mid September when the wolf bus departs. Most schedules allow staff to stay through December and often into the New Year.

Winter/Spring - This is the most challenging time due to weather but it is also the most private time with few visitors. The wolves are in their prime with thick fur and a big attitude during mating season. The refuge needs staff that can commit to staying at the refuge during the spring tour (March through May) and into June if possible.

The above seasons have evolved to respond to both refuge and volunteer needs. You are welcome to create your own adventure and schedule. **No matter the season be prepared for anything.** Mission:Wolf is constantly affected by unpredictable circumstance such as, but not limited to, unexpected visitors that need to be shown around, cars breaking down, getting snowed in, or something happening to a wolf. The ability of our staff to handle any situation and work through it is vital in such a remote land where mother nature has her own agenda.

Hopefully, by reading this packet thoroughly, most, if not all, of your questions will be answered. If not, please let us know.

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Mission:Wolf

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