

# **Shasta Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation**

## **Guidelines, Policies and Procedures**

### **Section I - General Policies**

#### **Permits**

SWRR holds permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the State of California Department of Fish and Game. The permits are reviewed yearly and we must follow the regulations required by those permits.

#### **Membership**

Volunteers must become a member of SWRR prior to working on a shift. We depend on membership dues for a large portion of our income, thus becoming a member supports your volunteer activity. Our insurance plan also requires that all volunteers are members.

New volunteers will serve a probationary period. The outcome of the new volunteer's status will be based on the judgment of their supervisors, mainly the Center Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator or Team Leader.

#### **Health and Liability Insurance**

Volunteers should be aware that there is no health insurance coverage by the organization. Injuries or sickness caused by the work or the wildlife must be covered by the health insurance of the family. Shasta Wildlife only has normal commercial insurance for property and general liability that covers visitors. When volunteers are involved in an activity on behalf of the organization they are not eligible for general liability coverage. Volunteers are not employees; therefore there is no workmen's compensation coverage available.

#### **Age Requirements**

Children under 13 are not permitted to be at the center. Child care must be arranged for underage children during the 4 hour shift

#### **Young Volunteers Policy**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows volunteers between the ages of 13 to 18 to work with migratory birds if they are under the direct supervision of an older, experienced and capable person.

Shasta Wildlife adopts this policy for treatment and care of all wildlife and adds additional criteria. Young Volunteers should understand their status is probationary and their commitment to the work will always need to be demonstrated to the supervising Team Leader. All volunteers need to understand that Shasta Wildlife is a working, intensive care facility with little occasion for relaxing or recreation.

Additional criteria may be developed for young Volunteers by the ACC (Animal Care Committee), either on a group or an individual basis. One such criterion could require parental involvement or a sponsor Volunteer to work alongside the young Volunteer until they have

demonstrated skill development and a commitment to work.

### **Working at the Center**

A volunteer shift is 4 hours one day per week. You can schedule your shift with the Volunteer Coordinator and your Team Leader. We do ask that once your shift is scheduled, you follow through with the commitment. It is understood that there will be times that personal commitments may interfere, so please see the list of alternates to schedule your replacement. Sometimes it is possible to trade shifts with someone. If you cannot find a replacement call the Volunteer Coordinator. Please do not be a "no show". The animals depend on us.

If you have extra time and would like to come to the center on another scheduled shift please feel free to do so. Check the schedule at the center or contact the Volunteer Coordinator to see what shifts need help.

### **Time and Mileage Sheets**

Time and Mileage Sheets are important for our financing. Please log in and out using the book provided. Remember that your time and mileage is for anything you are doing as a volunteer service: working at the center, doing a rescue, running an errand, etc. Keep records of your time and miles on their log sheet for rescues, meetings attended and shifts worked at the center. Reports for the government are made at the end of the year and are used for grant applications.

### **Meetings**

As a volunteer at SWRR you are a member of the ACC. There are always questions about the care of our patients and a certain amount of confusion during a shift will occur. In an effort to help with communication and answer those questions, the ACC meets once a month. Volunteers are expected to attend as many of these meetings as possible. This is part of your training. Bring your questions and concerns to these meetings.

The ACC has elected an AAC (Animal Advisory Council) to coordinate the activities of the committee. These volunteers will be responsible for making policies and helping the center to run as smoothly as possible.

### **Training**

Training at SWRR is conducted by senior volunteers, is ongoing and required by the permits we are issued. We will have an orientation for new volunteers as required and training throughout the year. Each new volunteer will receive the majority of their training from their Team Leader.

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) has wonderful training opportunities. The IWRC has several training courses that are presented at various locations around the country, while some courses are being offered on the Internet. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to complete these courses whenever possible.

### **Grievance**

If you are dissatisfied with any part of your volunteer work or have a problem with another

volunteer, you are encouraged to talk to your Team Leader or the Volunteer Coordinator. If this option is not effective, you may meet with the AAC. The Council meets as needed. Problems can usually be solved in an informal manner or by switching shifts. All attempts will be made to work out differences that may arise. It is important to remember that your volunteer service is valued and appreciated. All efforts will be made to make it a positive and enjoyable experience.

A strong, cohesive volunteer team is the key to a successful busy season. Please do not let problems go unaddressed.

Should problems continue, you can make use of a more formal grievance procedure. First, a written description of the problem and all attempted solutions should be submitted to the AAC.

When a volunteer is not working with the team and has generated complaints from other volunteers, the volunteer can expect the following:

1. A verbal discussion about the complaints and possible solutions. Written records of the discussion will be kept by the Council.
2. A written warning that the situation has not improved.
3. A final discussion and another written description of the problem with notice of dismissal if any more complaints arise.

### **Privacy**

A volunteer's personal information will not be made public. When you volunteer for a shift or are an alternate, however, your phone number will be available to other volunteers at the center for the purpose of volunteer coordination.

Telephone inquiries for information or rescues that you can't handle will be referred to the volunteer best suited for the situation. Do not give out the volunteer's phone number. Get the number of the inquiring public and tell them to expect a return call from SWRR.

### **Safety**

The safety of our volunteers is very important. Please be aware that any wild animals can inflict injuries. Do not take any chances with teeth, talons, claws or beaks.

Proper training is important and is provided for the safe handling of the wild animals we encounter. If you have not had this training we ask that you do not attempt to handle, rescue, feed or medicate any animal.

At times we are asked to go to someone's home to pick up an injured animal. Caution must be addressed for these rescues. It is best that we encourage the concerned public to bring in the injured or orphaned animal to the center. We never know who is inviting us to their home. If it is necessary to go out on a rescue, consider not going alone. If you feel you have no alternative but to go on a rescue alone, it is imperative that you inform someone of the address and phone number of where the rescue is to take place.

There is a small risk of zoonoses when handling any animal. These are diseases that are transferable from animals to humans. Gloves and masks are available for your protection. Wash your hands often with warm soapy water. Always wash after cleaning cages and other housing.

### **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

Volunteers of SWRR are not permitted to be under the influence or in possession of alcohol or any illegal substance at the center, on the center's grounds or at any function produced by SWRR unless specifically specified.

Those volunteers who are in violation of this policy will be subjected to SWRR's grievance protocol outlined above.

## **Section II**

### **Requirements for SWRR Out Sheltering Volunteers/Facilities**

**Definition of out shelter:** An out shelter, a.k.a. "satellite" per our Fish and Game MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), is where specialized care not available at Shasta Wildlife Rescue's facility in Anderson is given to animals at another location, usually the caregiver's home. This includes all SWRR Ed Animals (Educational Birds or Animals).

In determining appropriate standards for evaluation, the AAC (Animal Advisory Council) recognizes the importance of compliance with our MOU from the Department of Fish and Game. The standards for required training in the MOU allow wildlife programs to use some discretion in determining appropriate training. To this end, while IWRC certification is highly desirable, other AAC approved training is also appropriate. The AAC also recognizes the value of long-term learning experience, including individual training with a mentor, as has been achieved by some of our current out shelter volunteers.

Out shelter Volunteers/Facilities will be categorized as either "Existing" or "New". The same basic standards of competency and safety will be used in evaluating both categories. In addition, there are listed below additional specific requirements for each category.

#### **All out shelter Volunteers/Facilities must meet the following requirements:**

1. Be a member of Shasta Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation.
2. Sign a waiver of liability for providing out shelter care.
3. Complete a minimum of two hours of AAC approved training per year (specific training to be determined.)
4. Volunteers dealing with high risk mammals **must** provide proof of current rabies vaccination.
5. Out shelter facilities shall meet the standards of the AAC as interpreted from our MOU as well as any additional rules and regulations of Fish and Game.
6. The AAC will conduct an annual visit/inspection of all out shelter facilities as per the guidelines described here. Appropriate action, if needed, will be taken.
7. Large mammals are protected under the Animal Welfare Act. Large mammals and their caging for both out sheltering and as Ed Animals **MUST** be approved by the California Department of Fish and Game's Statewide Wildlife Rehabilitation Coordinator and by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Handlers must have a current valid permit from both agencies. They are subject to all the rules, regulations and conditions on the permit and are subject to surprise drop-in inspections a minimum of four times per year.
8. Out shelter and Ed Animals are not to be considered the property of the handler. They are not pets. They are wild and should be considered the property of the State of California and the Federal Government. We are the caretakers and must abide by those regulations set forth by the issuers of the permits.

**Approval of "Existing" out shelter Volunteers/Facilities:**

1. The AAC will prepare a list of all existing out shelter volunteers/facilities. The list shall include: name of volunteer, physical address of facility, species out sheltered, level of care, and length of time volunteer has provided this service.
2. One or more members of the AAC will arrange to visit the out shelter. The purpose of the visit will be to inspect the facility to ensure that it meets the standards of the AAC, to review the number and species of animals handled by the volunteer during the last year, the current status of these animals, and any specific problems or significant details of the care of animals.
3. In the event that the AAC member finds issues or concerns, they will report back to the AAC. After review by the AAC, if it is determined that changes need to be made, a letter will be written to the out shelter volunteer and appropriate action will be taken.

**Approval of "New" out shelter Volunteers/Facilities:**

1. Attend a meeting of the AAC to petition for approval to be an out shelter volunteer/facility prior to providing out shelter services for Shasta Wildlife.
2. Provide a list of specific species to out shelter as well as level of care.
3. Request and provide the AAC with a written recommendation from the Center Coordinator, their Center Team Leader, or approved out shelter volunteer supervisor. Recommendation should address the volunteer's skills in caring for specific species as well as level of care.
4. Successfully complete one season of service as a volunteer at the Center and one season of service working under the direct supervision and training of an AAC approved out shelter volunteer.

It is the intent of the AAC to provide continuous, quality care for out sheltered animals by listing here the standards used to evaluate Volunteers/Facilities. The volunteers should be commended for their service and encouraged to continue their participation in this program. It should be made clear to the volunteer that the visit and inspection is necessary in order to ensure the best available care for the animals and to comply with our MOU, not to undermine their good work and intentions. Every effort will be made by AAC members to help the out shelter volunteer to make the changes necessary to comply. This process may include referral to a mentor to help facilitate needed changes.

### **Section III**

#### **SWRR Ed Animals**

- As stated by the permits issued to SWRR (Shasta Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation), each Ed Animal (Educational Bird or Animal) must be displayed or shown to the public at least 12 times a year. We are only issued permits for a limited number of Ed Animals and they all must be listed on the permits.
- The Federal and State Government closely watch what we do. They monitor how many Ed Animals we have for education, check that they all are on the permits and check that all our permitted birds attend a minimum of 12 programs a year. They require reports at the end of the year showing the public programs we have presented and which Ed Animal was there. If we violate these conditions it is entirely possible that SWRR WILL lose our permits.
- All handlers must be approved by the AAC (Animal Advisory Council).
- Because of time and commitment constraints of handlers each Ed Animal must have both a primary and a secondary handler. This will insure that the bird or animal will be available for 12 Ed programs a year.
- Primary and secondary handlers must be at least 18 years of age and be a member of SWRR for at least one year.
- It is the responsibility of the primary handler to provide adequate experience and training to the secondary handler. This is to insure that there is a familiarity and level of comfort between the handlers and the Ed Animal.
- Ed Animals must be under the handler's control at all times and not be in direct contact with the public at any time. Ed birds must be tethered to the handler's belt and must be kept a minimum of four feet of separation from the public. **NO TOUCHING IS ALLOWED** by the general public.
- We hold a U.S. Department of Agriculture APHIS Class C Exhibitor permit which means that large mammals are approved to be shown only behind approved caging. Large mammals **WILL NOT** be shown to the public in the open while on a leash or harness.
- If it should come to the attention of SWRR that a handler is not strictly following the policies of SWRR and the permits of the State and Federal government, the handler will be asked to return the Ed Animal to SWRR for placement with a handler that will abide by the policies and permits. Notice will be given to the State and Federal government of the dismissal. The name of the prior handler will be removed from the permit and the name of the new handler will be added to it.

- When we are presenting the Ed Animals to the public we are representing SWRR and all of its members. A professional bearing and attitude will leave a lasting positive impression with the audience. It is important to respect people and their questions. We must keep in mind that our volunteers and financial support come from the general public. The things we say and do will be remembered by both the children and the adults, so we must say and do the right things!
- Education is the key to preventing injuries and deaths of wildlife. If you can present a program that saves a wild animal you have done a good job. Stress to the public that they should bring orphaned and injured wildlife to SWRR's center where trained and experienced people can give them the best care. Remind them that wild animals do not make good pets. Also give safety advice to the person that might want to cuddle a young raccoon that could have rabies.
- If at all possible wear your SWRR tee shirt and name badge to the programs.