

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.

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

Volunteers ages 13 to 17 must complete the following requirements:

1. Produce a letter of recommendation from an adult other than a parent or guardian
2. Complete the application form, sign-up sheet, membership form and a release of liability form signed by a parent. A parent/guardian is encouraged to attend the New Volunteer Training Class with his/her child.
3. Read and understand the SWRR Policies and Procedures Manual.

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 permits 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 four 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. It is the individual Volunteer's responsibility to find a replacement. See the list of alternates to find and schedule your replacement. This can also be done by trading 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 for SWRR you are also a member of the Animal Care Committee (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. See the SWRR website for the meeting schedule.

Training

Training at SWRR is conducted by senior volunteers. It is ongoing and required by the permits we are issued. All volunteers must take at least 2 hours of continuing education each year. Records are kept on each volunteer and are available to the California Department of Fish and Game. A mandatory training and orientation class for new volunteers will be offered prior to our opening season. Updated information is posted on our web site. This program is intended for new volunteers to better understand the definition of rehabilitation and what it entails, learning about the permits all volunteers with Shasta Wildlife must abide by, and gaining knowledge on bird and mammal care.

Various classes are offered at Shasta College from time to time, as well as from other sources.

These opportunities will be posted at the center and on our web site. 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, a special grievance committee will be created to resolve the problem. Problems can usually be resolved 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. If you have a problem, please bring it to the attention of your team leader or the volunteer coordinator.

When working to resolve problems it is recommended that written logs are kept with dates and descriptions of exactly what happened, who was involved, who witnessed the incident(s). 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 volunteer coordinator.
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 caller 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. An up to date tetanus shot is recommended.

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. We always encourage the concerned public to bring in the injured or orphaned animal to the center if at all possible. 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 SWRR center, anywhere on SWRR property or while working at any function produced by SWRR.

Web site

The latest version of this manual is always available for download on the SWRR website, as well as other useful information for both Volunteers and the general public. The web address is:

<http://www.ShastaWildlifeRescue.com>

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 out-shelters, SWRR 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 approved training is also appropriate. SWRR also recognizes the value of long-term experience, including individual training with a mentor, as has been achieved by some of our current out-shelter volunteers.

Out-shelter Volunteers and 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 and 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 approved training per year as required of all volunteers in the MOU.
4. Volunteers dealing with high risk mammals must provide proof of current rabies vaccination.
5. Out-shelter facilities shall meet the standards of our MOU as well as any additional rules and regulations of Fish and Game.
6. The Education Team will conduct an annual visit of all out-shelter facilities for the education birds and animals. Recommendations will be made for any changes that need to be made to the housing of these birds and animals.
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 and Facilities:

1. SWRR will prepare records of all existing out-shelter volunteers and facilities. The records shall include: name of volunteer, physical address of facility, species out-sheltered, level of care, and length of time volunteer has provided this service, and photos of the shelter provided for the bird or animal in their care.
2. One or more members of SWRR will arrange to visit the out-shelter, once a year. The purpose of the visit will be to evaluate the facility to ensure that it meets the standards of the MOU and SWRR. In the event that the yearly visit finds issues or concerns, they will work with the out-shelter to make the appropriate changes.

"New" Out-Shelter Volunteers/Facilities:

1. An out-shelter must be in an area where the bird or animal will not violate any city ordinances. It is usually recommended that the volunteer own their property to insure that the appropriate caging can be built.
2. The volunteer must be an active volunteer in good standing for at least one season and has specifically worked with the species that is to be out-sheltered.
3. All out shelters must provide caging for their specific species consistent with the recommendations of the MOU.
4. SWRR will work carefully to ensure the success of the new volunteer in their desire to become an out shelter.
5. As with the existing out shelters the new out shelter will provide volunteer, physical address of facility, species out-sheltered, level of care, and length of time volunteer has provided this service and a photo of the shelter and caging.

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.
- Volunteers wanting to become a member of the education team must be approved by the other members of the education team. Volunteers must join the ed team on least four program presentations prior to acquiring the ed bird or animal. It is important to be sure that the volunteer can answer questions from the audience and has a good working knowledge of SWRR. The volunteer must be comfortable with public speaking.
- Training with an experienced ed handler for the specific species, if possible, is highly recommended. For example if an American Crow should come to SWRR and be a candidate for the ed program the volunteer should seek out the help of one of our senior volunteers that have had crows in the ed program. The same applies for owls, hawks etc. From time to time we will get a non-releasable animal that we have not had in the program. In this case the ed team works together to learn what is needed and seek out the best possible out-shelter.
- 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 14 years of age and be a member of SWRR for at least one season.
- 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 at 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 within approved caging. Large mammals WILL NOT be shown to the public in the open, even 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. A professional 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 children and 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. Give safety advice to the person that might want to cuddle a young raccoon that could have rabies. Also helpful is advice on when not to attempt a rescue.
- If at all possible wear your SWRR tee shirt and name badge to the programs.