

# Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary

## Volunteer Information & Application



Thank you for your interest in the volunteer program at Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary. The following information is designed to help you get a sense of what we do and what will be expected of you as a volunteer.

### **HOURS**

Volunteer schedules begin daily at 8am and run in three, four-hour shifts: 8am-12pm, 12pm-4pm and 4pm-8pm. The season begins in April and runs through October.

### **SPECIES ACCEPTED**

The animals we accept for care include raccoons, opossums, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, woodchucks, skunks, fawns, bear, fox, bobcat.

### **SAFETY**

The animals we care for are wild. The safety of both our volunteers and animals are important. No matter how experienced or knowledgeable, volunteers will not be handling animals without training and supervision.

### **TRAINING**

All volunteers are given a tour of our facilities prior to committing to the program and are welcome to come and observe what we do. Full-day training sessions are offered to animal care volunteers in early spring. Hands-on training occurs as you work at the Sanctuary.

### **ANIMAL CARE VOLUNTEER DUTIES**

Typical volunteer duties include:

- *Mixing formula/preparing food*
- *Washing and sterilizing feeding equipment*
- *Maintaining records*
- *Transporting animals*
- *Laundry*
- *Picking up supplies/medications*
- *Cleaning cages and changing bedding*
- *Assisting with feeding*
- *Assisting with final releases*

### **ANIMAL CARE VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older
- Provide a minimum of one, four-hour shift weekly during the spring to autumn seasons
- Be willing to learn, accept supervision and follow procedures
- Fulfill your commitment on time
- Provide your own transportation to and from the Sanctuary
- Dress appropriately
- Be able to lift 20 lbs

### **ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

You may decide you want to help Antler Ridge but do not wish to provide hands-on care for the animals. Volunteers are needed in many other areas including cage building and maintenance work, transporting animals, clerical work and fundraising.

### **SUMMARY/COMMENTS**

Our mission is to provide proper care to the animals at our facility, return healthy animals to their natural habitat and to educate the public on the best ways to co-exist with the wildlife that share our environment. The work we do is time consuming, certainly not glamorous, at times heartbreaking but also very rewarding. It takes a special individual to donate their time and talent to the betterment of helpless creatures and we appreciate your choosing our facility. If you have any questions, call 973-800-2420 or email [Kcorless@aol.com](mailto:Kcorless@aol.com)

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### **VOLUNTEERING AT ANTLER RIDGE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Volunteering needs are varied and include everything from care and feeding of the animals to cage maintenance and many behind-the-scenes opportunities. The only experience needed is an appreciation for wildlife and the importance of volunteering. It's not glamorous work but it's vital to the care and release of the animals. As a volunteer, you become our ambassador to the community on education and preservation. Your gift of time will always be appreciated. Training is hands-on and given by experienced volunteers.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

During our busy season (March 31- October 31), there are three shifts which last around four hours: morning 8am-12pm, afternoon 12pm-4pm and evening 4pm-8pm, seven days a week. We ask all volunteers to commit to a weekly schedule of at least one day a week. Our preference is that you have a set schedule but we allow for floating shifts if necessary. All scheduling will be reviewed in detail during orientation and training. After orientation, volunteers are asked to commit for our entire busy season. This will ensure quality and continuity of care during our busiest of time.

### **HANDLER**

This position involves the direct handling and feeding of animals on a regular basis from infancy to release. You will also be cleaning cages, preparing food and taking part in other regular shift chores. You will be trained in all aspects of animal's handling. Pre-exposure rabies vaccinations are recommended for everyone and are required for anyone wishing to work with raccoons, skunks and any other rabies vector species. Vaccinations are the responsibility of the volunteer.

### **GROUND, CAGING AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE**

All areas of the Sanctuary need to be maintained on a regular basis. This position may include mowing, trimming, raking and heavy lifting. Our cages and facility may be in need of repair, reworking or improving. This would include skills in carpentry, building and painting. These opportunities are on an as-needed basis with a minimum of once per month to inspect areas, plan and execute repair work.

### **BEHIND-THE-SCENES OPPORTUNITIES**

These include but are not limited to our education and fundraising committees, supply shopping, answering phones and general office work. If none of these opportunities work for you but you have a talent or skill that you think might be beneficial, please let us know.

Thank you,

Kelly Simonetti, RN  
Director, Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary  
973-800-2420  
kcorless@aol.com

Visit us on the web at [antler-ridge.com](http://antler-ridge.com)

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### **WORKING AT A WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTER: THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Becoming directly involved in wildlife rehabilitation can be rewarding. You will see and handle animals you've only viewed from a distance or in pictures or videos. It can be a wonderful feeling to help an animal and watch baby animals grow and develop. You also become a valued member of the Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary team. Many life-long friendships have formed while working together for a common cause. But the most rewarding part is opening your hands and setting a wild animal free.

There are, however, negative aspects to wildlife rehabilitation. When applying for a position with Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary, please ask yourself the following questions to see if this activity fits well with your personality and abilities.

### **HANDS-OFF POLICY**

In DOMESTIC animal rescue such as SPCAs, humane societies, farm sanctuaries, etc., touching and cuddling can be beneficial to the emotional well being of the animal. The exact opposite is true with wildlife rehabilitation. The goal of wildlife rehabilitation is to release animals back into the wild. Because of this, it is imperative that the animals in our care remain wild and do not become habituated to people, including staff. Wildlife rehabilitation is a hands-off type of animal work and a professional distance must be maintained at all times.

**Question: Can I refrain from touching, holding and comforting an animal, even a cute baby animal?**

### **PRE-CONCEIVED IDEAS**

Because of televised programs about wildlife rescue or wildlife rescue veterinarians, many people have elevated ideas about what working in a wildlife center is like. In the real world, wildlife rehabilitators are working with minimal funding and equipment to save as many animals as possible. Equipment and caging are often donated and antiquated. Xrays and surgery are not available on-site and veterinary care often involves a lengthy commute.

**Question: Can I set aside any preconceived notions I may have and be willing to work in an environment with limited resources?**

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Working in animal care at Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary requires bending, kneeling and carrying buckets of water up to 30 lbs. Cages are cleaned and disinfected with dish washing liquid and bleach.

**Question: Can I meet the physical requirements of volunteering? Can I work around these chemicals?**

### **REHABILITATION OF ALL WILDLIFE**

Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary accepts all mammal species of NJ wildlife. This includes animals often thought of as undesirable such as skunks, raccoons and opossums.

**Question: Can I provide compassionate care to animals I find undesirable, smelly or ugly?**

### **FEEDING CARNIVORES**

Many animals in our care are carnivores. This means there will be dead animals that will be fed to carnivores. Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary will sometimes feed frozen mice that are used for food. Most of these are thawed and fed whole.

**Question: Am I comfortable with the idea that animals are fed to other animals?**

**Question: Can I prepare and process these to feed to the other animals?**

### **EUTHANASIA**

Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary receives over 1,000 animals each year. Many of them come to us suffering from severe injuries or illness. Some might not reach the level of health necessary for release. These animals cannot be warehoused and the rehabilitation on duty may make the decision to euthanize the animal. *Note: Volunteers and interns will never be asked to euthanize an animal.*

**Question: Can I remain emotionally distant and accept that euthanasia is a necessary and compassionate part of wildlife rehabilitation?**

# Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer Information & Application



## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Thank you for your interest in Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary. Please complete the following information for our records. Please PRINT legibly. Any applicant under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Currently working?  Yes  No

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you drive:  Yes  No

How many days per week would you be able to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

What days or shifts would you be interested in? Day(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Shifts(s): \_\_\_\_\_

How soon would you be available to start? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any previous experience working with animals:  Yes  No

If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you have pre-exposure rabies vaccinations?  Yes  No

How did you hear about Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain briefly what you wish to volunteer at Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary: \_\_\_\_\_

- Special Interests (*check all that apply*):
- Handler/Hands-on animal care
  - Cage building/maintenance
  - Transporting animals
  - Information recording/clerical
  - Fundraising
  - Other (*please describe*):

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary, 52 County Road 661, Newton, NJ 07860.

# Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer Agreement\*



I understand that it is a **privilege** to work with wild animals and it also entails responsibilities. An Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary volunteer shall always be compassionate in dealing with the wildlife in his/her care. While the animals' safety is important, a volunteer must always consider his/her own safety as well.

## AS A VOLUNTEER I AGREE TO:

- Show up on time for my scheduled shift or give at least 24 hours notice that I will be unable to be at the Sanctuary on my scheduled day. I understand that two failures to appear without notification will result in my removal from the volunteer program.
- Always wear proper gloves and other protective gear for handling each species and recommended by Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary or any state and federal regulations. Gloves and gowns are provided at the facility.
- Follow all steps and precautions to prevent the escape of an animal, injury to an animal or injury to myself and/or other volunteers.
- Notify supervisor IMMEDIATELY if I am bitten or scratched by any animal and the skin is broken as well as any other injury incurred while volunteering.
- Notify supervisor IMMEDIATELY if an animal is injured, escapes or its condition appears to be threatened or in distress at any time.
- Maintain all standards of cleanliness and personal hygiene for the protection of both myself and the animals.
- NOT handle any rabies vector species (RVS) such as raccoons, skunks, fox, coyotes, groundhogs and bats without obtaining Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary RVS Certification and providing proof of rabies immunity. Proof of immunity includes pre- and/or post-exposure rabies vaccination documentation or a current blood titer in my file. Volunteers must have a copy of their vaccines and/or titer in their file. Titers must be rechecked annually.
- Follow the care and feeding instructions provided by Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary.
- NEVER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE bring a visitor, family or guest with me to Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary without prior permission. ONLY approved volunteers will be permitted on the premises.
- Refrain from coddling or babying rehab animals. I understand this is STRICTLY PROHIBITED as human imprinting is a death sentence to a wild animal. I understand there are no warnings concerning this policy and failure to comply will result in my immediate expulsion from Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Not leave the Sanctuary until ALL assigned tasks are complete. This includes but is not limited to scrubbing all cages, changing bedding, making sure all animals are fed and have fresh water, dishes washed, garbage removed and floors swept and cleaned. I will be courteous of the volunteers arriving the following shift/day and agree to leave the Sanctuary the way I would like to find it.
- Become familiar with Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary's mission statement, philosophy, policy and procedures. I understand and accept that there is a risk of exposure to many zoonotic diseases (those transmissible from animals to humans). While ordinary common sense and good hygiene will prevent infection, I understand that it is important to tell my doctor that I work with wildlife on a regular basis.

By signing below, I agree that I have read, understood and agree with the terms and conditions of volunteering at Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Policies and rules are subject to change without prior notice.*

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## VOLUNTEER INFORMED CONSENT

I have received a copy of the Antler Ridge Volunteer Training Manual and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary.

In the event of an accident, injury or illness while carrying out my duties as a volunteer, I authorize Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary to obtain/advise the necessary medical treatment. I will not hold Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary or any of the principles of Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary responsible for any injury incurred in the process of fulfilling my volunteer duties.

I understand volunteers can be terminated without notice with or without cause. If I do not agree with the terms of this contract at any time, I may resign immediately and am not bound to volunteer any further.

- I certify that I am at least 18 years of age and that I do not have any health conditions or have made Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary aware in advance of any health conditions that would limit my ability to carry out the duties required of a volunteer at Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary.
  
- If volunteer is under 18 years of age, I (*parent or guardian*) \_\_\_\_\_  
agree to accompany (*name of volunteer*) \_\_\_\_\_  
on their regular volunteer shift and take full responsibility for our actions while volunteering.

## RABIES VECTOR SPECIES (RVS)

I understand the facility cares for Rabies Vector Species (RVS) and I have received information regarding the hazards of working with RVS. I understand that I should be pre-vaccinated in working with RVS and I fully accept the risks of working with these animals.

- I have my pre-exposure vaccinations and understand I will have to have a titer or booster if I am exposed to rabies.
- I do not have my vaccinations and choose not to work with RVS and will be responsible for my own actions.
- I do not have my vaccinations and choose to work with RVS and will be responsible for my own actions.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/Home Phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, please notify (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

I am allergic to the following medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any health conditions and/or limitations: i.e., hearing loss, vision, physical condition: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_