



## South Florida WILDLIFE CENTER

In partnership with The Humane Society of the United States

# Essential Capabilities of Volunteers

There are several volunteer opportunities within the South Florida Wildlife Center (SFWC), some of which are fulfilled by volunteers who work with wildlife. To safely and effectively serve as a volunteer at the SFWC, volunteers need to possess the following physical, mental, and emotional capacities. Your signature on this form indicates you believe you possess these basic capabilities, with your written acknowledgement of any limitations. Please note: some accommodations can be made and will be taken into consideration relative to role placement.

### Essential Physical Capabilities

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously (example: open cage door while handling animal).
- High level of manual dexterity to handle small tools.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery terrain.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to pick up containers.
- Ability to stand/sit for significant periods of time.
- Average vision (with or without correction) to move safely around the center, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read notes on animals' paperwork.
- Average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of animals, and to note signs of illness or injury.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to speak and effectively communicate in English verbally as well as in written form.
- Ability to maneuver well in tight spaces and react and move quickly in order to prevent animals from escaping (example: ability to quickly pursue and retrieve capture equipment to assist with an escaped animal).
- Ability to handle and restrain animals of small to large size (up to 50 pounds) with extreme caution and care. This requires average vision, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength, and mental alertness.
- Ability to capture loose and escaped animals with quick and quiet movements, and ability to use hands simultaneously with a blanket or net for capture.
- Must not have strong allergies to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning, or to animals in our care that can't be managed by medication.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odors, fleas, feces and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.
- Ability to judge an animal's reaction and to change voice to a soft or strong, authoritative tone in order to change an animal's response.
- Ability to reach cabinets and cages at least six feet in height, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to push carts and barrels of laundry; load and unload washer and dryer; fold clean laundry and put away, reaching shelves from ground level up to six feet, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to operate blender and microwave; retrieve items from standard upright or chest model refrigerator/freezer.
- Ability to wash dishes and put away in cabinets and drawers from ground level up to eight feet in height with use of step stool as needed.
- Average strength to assist with lifting small to medium size animals (up to 50 pounds) onto exam table, which is approximately four feet high.
- No known concerns about tolerating exposure to zoonotic diseases such as ringworm and mange.

- Ability to obtain and tolerate required prophylactic rabies vaccinations (for assisting with mammal rehabilitation only).

**Essential Mental Capabilities**

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- Ability to differentiate the needs of rehabilitation animals and domestic animals and adjust working mannerisms around each type of animal.
- High level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand words such as quarantine, euthanize and other common industry-related terms), and a mastery of the English language.
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Ability to observe and evaluate response to handling, as well as health and behavioral problems that are revealed during socialization.
- Ability to be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals; ability to remain calm with animals who are upset, behave sensitively and confidently, show good judgment and act appropriately in these situations.
- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognize limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Ability to work independently for long periods of time, as well as work in a professional manner within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

**Essential Emotional Capabilities**

- Able to control the urge to play with/pet the wildlife.
- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behavior without assistance.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally-charged environment with some animals that are unviable or abused, as well as the reality that some of the animals in our care may be euthanized.
- Ability to cope with the preparation of meat-based diets for the majority of the animals in our care.
- Ability to understand The Humane Society of the United States’ (HSUS) policies and positions regarding wildlife, animal control, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to appropriately and accurately represent those policies when interacting with the public or otherwise representing The HSUS.

Please indicate any reasonable accommodation(s) you may need in order to meet the essential capabilities of your volunteer position at the SFWC:

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<b>Volunteer:</b> Printed Name	Handwritten Signature	Date
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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Parent</b> or <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Guardian</b> (if under 18): Printed Name	Handwritten Signature	Date
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