

Wolf People Internship/Volunteer Training Guide

Internship Basic Program

The internship program at Wolf People consists of a 3 month period and includes all of the noted training. With successful completion of the training, the student wolf handler will receive a Certificate of Completion to add to their resume'. We are flexible in that if the student wishes to remain for a period of time or return as a volunteer as many of our interns do, we will try to accommodate this request. Special skills and abilities of the intern will be noted on the certificate.

The student will receive room and board for their participation in the intern program. During their training, they will also be trained to act as a guide on the tours, to acquire the food for the wolves (meat runs) and to work in the Wolf People gift shop on Hwy 95 in Cocolalla. The store helps to support our wolves so it is very important. After training in these areas, if the student wishes to and proves qualified to conduct tours and/or work in the store on their own, they will received a stipend for these duties.

Volunteers will receive some of the same internship training depending on their area of expertise, interest and in what capacity they will be working at the facility. Unless the volunteer has been an intern or wolf handler previously and has maintained a relationship with the wolves through frequent visits, they will not be allowed any physical contact with the wolves.

There is a two week probationary period for all interns to make sure they are mentally and physically equipped for the internship. It is fun and rewarding but is also hard work.

Basic Introductions

The intern will be introduced to the wolves over several days repeatedly as we make our observation rounds and at feeding times. At this time a tutorial will take place regarding the history of wolves, their social, intelligent and complex behavior patterns in the wild and at the facility. These are domestic wolves but it will be continually stressed they are still wolves. The behavior of each wolf will be noted as to their reaction to the intern and the intern's reaction to the wolves. The intern will not be allowed to feed or make any physical contact with the wolves at this time but the reaction of the wolves to their presence and their reaction to our wolves is a deciding factor to determine if they are a good candidate for the internship. Caution and respect for the wolves on part of the intern is a necessity and the absolute ability to follow directions is imperative.

When the intern has reached a level of adjustment and their presence is accepted by the wolves, we will begin formal training. This time frame is different for every intern and will be controlled by their own abilities and respect for the wolves and the rules.

Formal Training of Interns Will Include the Following

Animal Observation-our wolves are observed daily regarding their behavior, food consumption, elimination and physical appearance. Any unusual behavior or possible illness is noted and decisions are made as to what steps to take to remedy the problem.

Personal stories will be shared about each wolf, how they came to be at Wolf People, and what their subspecies blend might consist of. Any other pertinent information as to age, health and behavior will be discussed. This information will be repeated throughout training until the intern knows and understands each wolf personally.

Food acquisition, safe handling of raw meat and proper storage will be taught.

Interns will learn how to prepare the raw meat and chicken fed to the wolves properly. A less than glamorous part of the job but a necessary one.

Some wolves have special dietary needs and the intern will be taught how to get the wolves to take their meds, supplements and prepared foods.

Interns will be taught how to feed and water the wolves safely.

There will be daily training on how to help properly and safely clean the enclosures and habitat for the wolves.

To some extent interns will learn how to help construct and maintain the enclosures and housing for the wolves.

Interns will learn how to check the perimeters of the enclosures, including all fencing. They will also check the enclosure grounds for digging and learn the proper way to fill in these areas.

Medical staff-This is normally handled by the owner or wolf handler but as the need arises, interns may be asked to observe or assist with segregation of wolves for dental or medical procedures.

Gift shop/store-Interns will be taught how to engage and assist the public; money skills with using the cash register, calculator; receiving and counting out cash; some computer skills; retail sales; unpacking and stocking and much more that might well assist them in other employment in the future. This is also a great arena for the intern to share what they have learned about the wolves they are caring for with the public.

Interns will learn the training and handling of Ambassador Wolves for public outreach programs including schools and public events.

Interns will learn safe handling of wolves for transportation.

Interns will be involved in on-going training during guided tours conducted by the staff. They will repeatedly hear information about the different wolves and have the

opportunity to see how the guests, from children to seniors, react to the wolves as they interact with the wolf handler.

Interns will observe and assist with tours, in watching the guests, so they do not go past the second barrier. A couple of our wolves are playful and love brightly colored jackets and head gear and given the chance would like to acquire them for toys. Interns are instructed to wear dark or neutral colored clothing and no leather garments or gloves.

Interns will learn to handle, move and transfer the wolves in the appropriate manner for the individual wolf and the intern's ability and level of interaction with the wolves. We treat all of our wolves with the respect due them and their different personalities. There is no promise the intern will ever come into physical contact with one of the wolves as it is based on the intern's individual learning and compliance for their safety, the public and that of the wolves.

Interns must assist in not allowing contact between the public and the adult wolves as Idaho Fish and Game forbids it. Pups 6 months or younger come under a different category and it will be explained to the intern.

Interns will be trained on how to assist the wolf handler in the transfer of 1 to 2 wolves at a time to the 5 acre photo pen and to assist the photographer in acquiring their photos of the wolves playing and running around the area.

Any intern that enters an enclosure by themselves, injures a wolf or endangers themselves or others by not following the rules, will be up for review and if determined to be a safety risk, will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Our goal in this internship is to educate our interns as to the nature of our magnificent wolves so they can truly understand how similar their lifestyles are to humans and the important role the wolf plays in our eco-system. Wolves were our original wildlife managers and when living in the wilderness they benefit our world as they are needed to help keep balance. As the interns gain knowledge, we watch them grow in leadership abilities, public speaking, self-confidence and discipline. We are also making a change, one tour at a time, with the public and hope through our efforts and training of these young people, they will further our efforts and wolves will eventually be understood and live safely without persecution in the wilderness. Throughout evolution, wolves gave us our canine friends so it is the least we can do for them.

Thank you for your interest in our Internship Program and our 25 magnificent wolves.

Please contact us for more information on our Internship/Volunteer Programs or if you have any questions regarding your application.

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