# Intern & Volunteer Programs

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**How to create, manage, and grow a program that works best for your facility.**

# Back Story…

How BTN's program came to be:

- Long hours of endless animal care
- Unreliable and extremely minimal help
- Volunteers had freedom to come and go without obligation
- Volunteers showed up unannounced but we were too desperate to send them away
- Old-time volunteers were "settled in their *unorthodox* ways" and would not listen, let alone change their ways
- Permission was granted for high risk animals to minimally trained people out of desperation.
- Liability was not under control

**End Result: "I'd rather just do it myself!"**

# So what do we do about it?

- We need structure and rules.
- We need to know who all of our volunteers are and have them listed with signed waivers.
- We need to hold volunteers more accountable for their schedules and daily tasks.
- We need them to help us where “help is needed” not chosen by them
- We need quality over quantity
- Answer: We need to implement a new program.

# All the Reasons why not to do it:

- "There's no time to stop and think let alone create and manage a program. We are too busy with the animals!"
- "Who is going to oversee it?"
- "I have nothing to offer interns in return."
- "People don't like change therefore I'll lose all my help."
- "Who do I contact to start an intern program?"
- "Who is going to train them all?"
- "I don't like people which is why I work with animals."

# So how do we get started?

- First wait for off-season, or a slower time of the year to begin.
- Schedule a date, in advance, to sit with your chosen team of entrusted staff/volunteers. Picking a date in advance gives them time to come up with ideas to bring to the meeting.
- Discuss and create a program structure that is manageable and within your means.
- **DELEGATE** roles and offer incentive to those taking a lead.
- Set parameters to keep order. Parameters that you, yourself are willing to stay within.
- Come up with a date for the changes to begin and a plan for new recruitment.
- Begin networking with local universities/colleges regarding accredited intern programs. This will provide you with students who will receive a pass/fail grade from their institution. Accredited interns tend to work harder knowing that they are at risk of failing the internship if they screw up.

You CAN do this!

# The Meeting

- Brainstorming is the best way to start. Keep your committee small and selective. Choose level-headed people with different backgrounds. It helps if you plan to start an intern program, to have a student or someone with local networking abilities on your team.
- Come up with a realistic design for your program and ways that it can expand in the future to meet your needs ideally. Start small and organized. Keep it simple and direct. Create rules, guidelines and possible reasons for termination when/if needed.
- It helps to have roles. Start with designating a coordinator. Someone who can manage, communicates well, is consistent, and not afraid to keep order but is 'likeable'. Other role options: book keeper for files, applications, etc. Assistant coordinator if you plan to run the program yourself.
- Come together with a plan for recruitment and advertisement. Website, social media, local colleges, job fairs etc.
- Consider ways to implement the new program without "shocking" your existing volunteers to the reform.

# Introducing the Program

- Start with a mandatory meeting for all existing volunteers. Review and provide agreements for each of them to sign. Ask them to follow the new rules and design by including incentives. For those who have given long term help, consider giving them roles like "lead volunteer" or "trainer". Or if you have these in place already, you may choose to grandfather some of them in but still ask them to "lead by example" and to help you with the new changes.
- Encourage everyone existing to help you with the new program changes.
- Be prepared to possibly lose some of those unwilling to bend to the new ways. Sometimes you will find this to be a "brick off your shoulder" and removal of negative energy. Do not let volunteers hold your growth back. They must learn to grow with you or they can choose to leave. Be grateful for their time but do not feel in debt to them if its going to hinder on your own abilities to make your organization better for EVERYONE.
- Stay firm with your decisions and stay CONSISTENT. Be fair to all and award those who earn it. Do not cave in to the rules that have been made and most importantly LEAD BY EXAMPLE.
- "It's OK to terminate a volunteer's position". Once these rules have been placed "in writing" and signed off on, you now have the ability to use these "rules/agreements" as a basis. They will back you up when making firm or uncomfortable decisions.

  i.e. "according to the volunteer agreement that you signed…"

  "You are in violation of the agreement and unfortunately at this time I have to suspend you or terminate you from the program."

# Incentives for volunteers and interns

1. The experience! This is an opportunity to work with wildlife up close and personal. You may be desensitized to it but this is new to them. Make them earn the experience.
2. Write letters of recommendation for those deserving.
3. Completion Certificates
4. End of season/semester parties. Potluck parties, pizza parties etc.
5. Photos with an animal
6. Getting trained on a higher risk animal within reason.
7. Customized name tags
8. Climb the ladder…from trainee to trainer, to lead to senior volunteer, to even administrative or executive assistant. These titles offer great incentive for those applying to jobs in the field or those looking to apply to grad school and vet school. Many interns thrive on these opportunities and are not turned away by the "un-paid" experience.
9. Volunteer of the Month award. Intern of the semester award. Other fun awards.
10. Shout outs in newsletters and social media and/or website.
11. Always thank your volunteers and interns for their time. Let them know that they are valued and appreciated.
12. Create an online social media group that is accessible only to your volunteers and interns. Allow them to post and communicate with each other. Use this platform as a main form of non-verbal communication and a place to post announcements. This provides a feeling of unity for your volunteers. Many student volunteers enjoy making friends this way.

# Procedure for accepting new volunteers and interns

**New Volunteers**

- All volunteers must fill out volunteer/intern application, circle volunteer at top
- Interview applicants in person or over phone and inform them…

-Minimum hours required for, 4 hours/day, 16 hr monthly requirement, 6 month commitment

-Tetanus shot must be up to date within 5 years, proof of tetanus must be given asap

**-Proof of rabies vaccination must be provided before working or training with rabies vector animals**

- **Insure that they initial and sign volunteer agreement**

• Update Current Volunteer Spreadsheet by inserting a line (relatively alphabetically by last name) with name, phone number, emergency contact information, date of tetanus, and yes or no for rabies vaccination. Missing or out of date information is colored red, if volunteer has rabies shots put 'yes' in green. Active volunteers are bolded, and inactive are not
• File the application and proof of tetanus together in the current volunteer organizer, include their volunteer agreement in the back of the organizer
• Have them fill out a time sheet and training log with all required information included at the top and keep it in the volunteer timesheet binder

Inactive volunteers
• Collect the volunteer's time sheets from binder in clinic. Collect their application, tetanus records, and agreements from the active volunteer organizer
staple it all together or leave it loose and file everything together in the inactive volunteer filing cabinet, located in the staff building, alphabetically by last name
Update the volunteer spreadsheet by finding their name and information and unbolding it to show they are inactive

Reactivating old/returning volunteers
• Locate the volunteers files in the inactive volunteer filing cabinet and remove all of their information
• File their application and proof of tetanus together in the current volunteer organizer, include their volunteer agreement in the back of the organizer
• If they are missing any of this information, have them complete whatever is needed
• Put their timesheets into the volunteer binder in the clinic
• Update the Current Volunteer Spreadsheet by locating their name and info and putting it in bold, if their name is not on the spreadsheet, Update Current Volunteer Spreadsheet by inserting a line (relatively alphabetically by last name) with name, phone number, emergency contact information, date of tetanus, and yes or no for rabies vaccination. Missing information is colored red, if volunteer has rabies shots put 'yes' in green.

**Accepting Interns**

- **All interns must fill out volunteer/intern application, circle intern at top. Include level of internship and whether it is accredited on the application**
- **Interview applicants in person or over phone and inform them of the requirements**
- **Once the intern is accepted into the program, file their application, tetanus proof, and Intern Agreement in the intern organizer.**
- **Add their information into the current volunteer spreadsheet and put it in bold, under App, write Spring 20--, Summer 20--, or Fall 20--, for which ever season (spring, summer, fall) and year applies**
- **Create a quick reference sheet for current interns, include name, phone #, level, and emergency contact information and put it in the front of the intern binder where timesheets are located**

Cycling out interns
• Ensure that interns have met required hours
• Create a spreadsheet with the interns who completed the program, Title it the appropriate season and year, include their names, levels, and if the internship was accredited. Print the sheet out and add it to the Intern Organizer on top of previous years of intern information
Does intern want to stay on as a volunteer?
No: If intern does not wish to stay on as a volunteer, collect their info (app, agreement, timesheets, tetanus record) and file it with the inactive volunteers in the staff building filing cabinet and un bold their names in the volunteer spreadsheet.
Yes: Use same procedure as accepting new volunteers. They do not need to fill out a new application, but they do need to initial volunteer agreement and discontinue use of their intern timesheets. You may discard their intern agreement forms. On the volunteer spreadsheet, under App, you may remove the intern season and year indication

# BTN's Volunteer Minimum Requirements

- 18 or older for animal care and daily operations
  *youth volunteers, ages 12-17, are allowed to volunteer during onsite events only
- Provide proof of recent tetanus shot within 5-7 years
- Commit to the program for a minimum of 6 months including possible holidays.
- Must work (1) 4 hour shift per week on the same designated day
- Maintain a 16 hour per month minimum quota
- Training shifts are 9-1pm with most shifts, for experienced volunteers, can start no later than 1pm.
- There are exceptions during busy season for later or shorter shifts but are only open to volunteers as additional shifts outside of their regularly scheduled shift.

# Just because they apply..

- Don't feel obligated to accept every applicant
- Waiting lists can and do happen. This will help keep you grounded and organized without feeling overwhelmed by having too many new people all at once.
- Provide a brief phone or in-person interview with your applicants, especially interns. Always formally interview your intern applicants.
- Formalizing this process provides the interviewee with a level of professionalism and a high standard has already been set.
- It will be easier to eliminate the "bunny huggers" through interviews
- Create a questionnaire; some broad questions and some more specific pertaining to the program. Allow the interviewee to do the talking. Explain the program details, requirements, restrictions, and rewards.
- Go with your gut and avoid "hiring" on the spot
- You can always have an assistant to initial or call-back interviews to speed up the process

*Volunteers and Interns will read and sign the following agreements. In conjunction to the agreements is a manual that is read and signed on their first day of work.*

# Volunteer Agreement

Name: _____ Start Date :_____

2016 Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge
Volunteer Guidelines and Agreement

On behalf of the staff of Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge, welcome to our Volunteer Team! We are grateful that you chose to dedicate your time to this organization and the care of our wildlife! Please take the time to read this agreement, initial after each section, and sign, print and date at the end that you accept and agree to all terms.

___**Minimum Requirements**: Prior to starting the volunteer program at Back to Nature, we ask you to commit your time to BTN for a 6 month period, which involves a minimum of one 4 hour shift per week with a minimum of 16 hours per month(all training shifts start at 9am). Any missed shifts will result in a required make up day. You must provide a photocopied proof of a recent tetanus shot (within 3-5 yrs). A strong work ethic and a positive attitude are necessary attributes to being a part of the BTN team. On your first day, you will read our volunteer manual thoroughly before you begin working as a volunteer. You will learn to care for several of our educational ambassadors and, in some cases (by approval of the management), train on the care of rehab wildlife. You must be willing to assist and work in several parts of the facility (indoor and outdoor), including the Visitor Center, Prep Building, various side work tasks, and animal care areas.

**___Scheduling: We are very appreciative that you are offering your free time to help the animals of Back to Nature. We do however, ask that you treat this position like a job when you are here and act accordingly. We require you to you work a consistent schedule and maintain an open line of communication (to the volunteer coordinator-Kelly) regarding schedule changes, concerns and absences. No calls/No shows are not tolerated, and will result in termination. The staff and the animals rely on you to be here on your scheduled day and times. A notification via text message and/or email to the volunteer coordinator is required for all absences. ANY missed days will place you in a deficit to your 4 hour weekly requirement. These will consequence in a scheduled make up day no later than 30 days of missed absence. This is not to be taken lightly as a consistent schedule for all BTN volunteers and interns is necessary. All planned absences should be made aware to the coordinator as soon as possible, so we can make arrangements to acquire extra help. Lack of consistency to your schedule may result in suspension or termination from the program.**

___**Dress Code:** The dress code is as follows: CLEAN black, khaki, earth green, brown and gray cargo style long pants, no holes or mid-drift bearing clothing, a clean official refuge logo shirt purchased in the gift shop, rain or water proof boots. NO tight pants (leggings, yoga pants, exercise pants, shorts etc.) of any kind, no tight or low cut BTN shirts, esp. those that expose cleavage. Plain, earth tone color hats, sunscreen, bug repellent, and sunglasses (not mirrored) are allowed. NO iPods, earphones or cell phones allowed; the animals deserve your full attention. No facial piercings, loose jewelry, or other examples (hair color, heavy makeup, strong perfumes/colognes, etc.) that would not be acceptable in a professional work environment. Please try your best to maintain proper hygiene within the standards of working with animals. Please keep yourself especially your hands and boots, as clean as possible.

# Vol. Agreement cont'd

___**Code and Conduct**: Patience, a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, a professional demeanor and an open mind are expected behaviors to display during your time spent at Back to Nature. Everyone will work and learn at different paces. There is no competition allowed here. It is based on your attitude, motivation, and work ethic as to how much you learn and move forward. Please respect those with whom you work and remember that they are here for the animals, as you should be. Please keep your personal conversations to a minimum and only on your break time (which is 10 minutes during your 4 hour shift). You must notify the POINT person prior to taking a break. Poor attitudes, disagreeing with or mistreating staff, gossiping, talking loudly (esp. in the rehab and animal care areas) mistreating other volunteers, interns, or the public, not following safety rules and sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated! You can and will be terminated immediately for any of these concerns. We are a public facility welcoming visitors, donors and citizens bringing injured and orphaned animals in for care on a daily basis. Most visitors have never been here before. You are expected to treat the public with the utmost respect and always direct them to a staff member until you are properly trained to speak with them. Taking photos of our resident wildlife is permitted if you are outside of the enclosure. If and ONLY if, you have received approval by a staff member, you may be allowed to photograph some of the residents while you are in their enclosures. **You CANNOT photograph Rehab wildlife. Posting photos of the residents on social media or web is not allowed unless you have received approval by STAFF. If you are caught posting unapproved photos, especially of rehab, you can lose your position at BTN.**

___**SAFETY FIRST**: When you read the volunteer manual you will learn about the proper safety procedures required while working at Back to Nature. Please initial this section once you have done so, stating that you agree and will follow all safety rules. No exceptions!!! Failure to follow these rules can result in immediate termination. Important safety rule examples:

-Never leave an enclosure unattended without LOCKING it first.

-Never enter, touch, provide treats, or remove an animal from its enclosure without explicit instructions and permission by a staff member. If you are assigned an animal you have not been trained on 3 times, you cannot enter the enclosure until given permission by a staff member.

-Harassing, aggressively hosing, threatening, yelling, putting an animal at risk of escaping, releasing an animal from its enclosure, or harming any animal on this property will IMMEDIATELY RESULT IN YOUR TERMINATION.

# Vol. Agreement Cont'd

___**Time Management**: It is important to watch your time throughout the day to keep on track of your assigned tasks. If you fall behind on time, you MUST notify a staff member so you can receive assistance. You cannot come to us at the end of your shift and explain that you "did not have enough time" to care for an assigned animal or complete your assigned side work. It is your job to keep on track with your tasks and ask the staff for assistance if you fall behind. Do not ask a teammate, as they may fall behind as well.

___**The Experience**: What you can expect to gain from the staff and skilled volunteers of Back to Nature is a training experience focused primarily on the safety, daily care, and enrichment of several of the resident wild animals at Back to Nature. You will be assigned daily tasks each day that you are scheduled to work. These tasks include animal care, behavioral documentation, daily enrichment, various indoor and outdoor side work tasks, assisting in the Clinic, and working in the Visitor Center: accepting intakes, greeting visitors, and managing admission and gift shop transactions. Side work tasks include, but are not limited to, dish washing, laundry, garbage collection, organizing, landscaping, raking, etc. Often, the staff gives scheduled tours, educates off-site, and oversees fund raising events. These are additional areas (often requiring additional hours) open to learning and participating for all volunteers. As far as animal care, there are some animals that are off limits to direct contact. You will not be allowed to work directly with the bobcats or the raccoon, for safety purposes. In some cases, experienced volunteers that have earned the trust of the staff, have received prior approval of the staff, and have received their rabies pre-exposure shots, will be trained to assist with such animals as the rehab raccoons and other rabies vector species. To the majority of the volunteers at this refuge, these animals are off limits for safety purposes. Learning the rehab areas of the facility is a privilege and is not guaranteed. It is based on the decision of the staff as to who will be allowed to assist with the rehab area.

We look forward to working with you! Welcome to the BTN 2016 Volunteer Team!

Sincerely,

Kelly Verduin

(407) 761-3611 text or call
Kelly@btnwildlife.org or btnwildlife@yahoo.com
Administrative Manager/Volunteer & Intern Coordinator

***Communication, consistency and proper planning with your volunteer coordinator is crucial to having a successful, fulfilling experience!**

# What makes one an intern vs. a volunteer?

- It's simple, don't over think it!
- Interns can receive school credit but do not have to.
- In cases of receiving credit they are susceptible to failing the program if they do not meet the requirements expected.
- Interns are held to a higher standard of work and scheduling therefore treated like employees.
- Interns are on an accelerated/possibly specific, training program vs volunteers.
- Interns hold the title of "intern" and can use this title to their advantage in many application processes
- Interns must COMPLETE the program by meeting the requirements and time constraints.

# Intern Minimum Requirements

- **Spring/Fall Internship (15 Weeks)**

- Beginning Level: 97.5 hour requirement. 1 credit hour.
- Intermediate Level: 195 hour requirement. 2 credit hours.
- Advanced Level: 292.5 hour requirement. 3 credit hours.

- Most Spring and Fall shifts are 9am to 3:30pm

- **Summer Internship (13 weeks)**

- Beginning Level: 84.5 Hour Requirement. 1 credit hour.
- Intermediate Level: 169 Hour Requirement. 2 credit hours.
- Advanced Level: 253.5 Hour Requirement. 3 credit hours.

- Some morning, afternoon, and/or late night shifts are required for Summer Interns.

- For all semesters:
- A mandatory orientation takes place the Saturday before the first day of the internship (A BTN work week starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday). Approval is only decided after a formal interview with the internship coordinator, proof of a recent tetanus shot within 3-5 years, and age must be over 18. A waiver and manual must be read and signed prior to start date. A strict, set schedule will be given during the mandatory orientation to fulfill your hour requirements throughout the internship.

- *Both students and non-students can be considered. If you are seeking credit, you must contact your school department advisor and provide their contact information to the intern coordinator for official approval.

- **A certificate of completion will be provided on your final shift to all interns that have successfully completed program.**

# Introduction to Intern Agreement

- *On behalf of the management and staff of Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge, we welcome you to the BTN Internship program. This internship is a 15-week program in spring and fall, and a 13-week program in the summer. It is focused on teaching you about the captive care of a variety of exotic and native, non-releasable wild animals. You will also learn to aid in the care of injured and orphaned FL-native wildlife. During this program we ask that you follow all directions, hold a consistent work schedule and respectfully communicate with the management (specifically the intern coordinator), animal care staff, volunteers, and fellow interns. We also ask you to take initiative on previously trained tasks, follow all safety rules, and maintain a positive attitude. Below is a list of rules that we expect you to follow along with a brief description of each section of the program. When you are done reading each section, we ask that you initial each point and sign at the bottom stating that you agree with, and will follow these internship guidelines.*

# Intern Agreement

_____**Scheduling**: You are given a set schedule by your intern coordinator that is expected to be followed each week. Changes in days and times are only to be made for specific reasons and ONLY, if given approval by your intern coordinator. In the event that you have an emergency, a notification via text message to Kelly (intern coordinator) is required. A 24-hour notice is expected otherwise. Do not intend on calling in for a shift one hour before you are scheduled unless it is an emergency! This may result in termination of your position as an intern of BTN. Sick days are LIMITED and a doctor's note will be required after your first absence. Any days missed MUST be made up by the end of the term, no later. If you have a schedule change for the week of final exams, you must notify your intern coordinator immediately once your schedule is issued. For example: "Needing time off to study" is not acceptable. ANY missed days will place you in a deficit to your weekly requirement. It is your responsibility to manage your time outside of this internship. This is not to be taken lightly as a consistent schedule for all BTN interns is necessary. If you decide that the internship is not for you, all hours worked during your scheduled intern time will be forfeited. You cannot convert to a volunteer by including your intern hours. Same goes for dropping levels.

_____ **Your Goals:** Each of you will learn at different levels and work at different paces. Your opportunities to move up and learn more are based on your work ethic and motivation. We understand that you have a reason for being here, and perhaps a specific goal intended before your internship is over. Some may be possible to reach. We ask that you express your goals and ideas as we may be able to guide you better into that direction. Communicating your concerns and/or ideas (to your intern coordinator) is essential. Hard work does pay off! Please note the reason why you are here and what goals you wish to accomplish during the program:_____

_____**Animal Care Routine**: When you arrive to work you are expected to be ON TIME. You will park in the public parking lot, located outside of the main gate. You will report to the 'Clinic', sign in on your time sheet (located in the INTERN TIMESHEET binder) AND notify a staff member or "point person". You will be assigned your tasks for the day via the marker board displayed inside of the 'Clinic.' (In time, you will be entrusted to carry a set of access keys to the low-risk enclosures. To do this you have to swap out your car keys for a set of access keys.) You will be expected to follow this 10 step routine:

1. Health Check AKA "Role Call" for every animal you are assigned to.
2. Check the Behavior Log sheets on your animals for previous day's info.
3. Review their daily enrichment activities; begin prep if necessary or you may wait to prepare enrichment once feeding and cleaning have been done (keep in mind, some enrichment involves changing normal feeding routine).
4. Food Prep your animals (if you have birds of prey, food prep is done after cleaning their enclosure). Clean up your prep area and wipe down table before moving on to next task.
5. Gather Cleaning Materials needed and proceed to cleaning one enclosure at a time. Sanitize your tools and boots between each group of animals.
6. Lock Your Enclosures while inside enclosures and lock your perimeter gates and wildlife walk when you are finished. Fake locking perimeter areas is only allowed for low risk animals and for temporary purposes. Never leave an enclosure unattended and unlocked.
7. Clean up your Mess, dishes, tools, toys, etc.
8. Document Your Animals in the animal behavior logs. Each resident animal must be documented everyday on their behavior, health, and eating patterns. You must also note what you did while in with them. This will help us and you keep a better record of how they are doing, and will notify us of any issues. Any concerns regarding the animal(s) you are assigned to care for that day also are addressed to a staff member! Relaying information back to staff is of the utmost importance!

When working in a resident animal's enclosure, you are expected to be our "eyes and ears." SAFETY rules must be followed. While thoroughly cleaning each enclosure, you must take notice of all behaviors exuded by the animal(s), including condition of their enclosure, their diet, their general health and behavior, and their bowel movements.

# Int. Agreement cont'd

_____**Side work**: Throughout the day, in between tasks and before you leave, you are expected to complete your assigned side work tasks. These are tasks listed on the marker board next to your animal care tasks. Side work tasks include dish washing aka dish pit, cage scrubbing, putting away cages and dishes, sorting dirty laundry, garbage collection and dumping, produce pick-up from the nearby Publix, sorting produce and putting it away, cleaning fridges and freezers, sweeping and mopping, shed organizing, landscaping, raking, sidewalk sweeping, assisting staff, feeding/cleaning clinic animals, etc. ALL side work tasks are necessary and must be completed by the end of your shift. Everyone is responsible for washing their OWN dishes, buckets, and tools as well as helping at the dish pit area. DO NOT leave a mess for someone else to clean up or for bugs crawl all over (this includes inside food prepping). Always clean up immediately after you are done working in an area and organize a messy area before you start.

_____**Time Management**: It is very important to watch your time throughout the day to keep on track with your assigned tasks. If you fall behind on time, you MUST notify a staff member as soon as you realize, so you can receive assistance. You cannot come to us at the end of your shift to explain that you "did not have enough time" to care for an assigned animal or complete your assigned side work. It is your job to keep track of your tasks and ask for staff assistance when you fall behind. Do not ask a teammate, as they may fall behind as well.

_____**Breaks**: During your 6.5-hour work days, you are given a 20 minute break to cool off, eat, drink, and rest. The break areas are located at the picnic tables under the pavilion and inside the prep building. Breaks are not allowed in the clinic and only in the visitor center if given approval. Drinks and lunches can be placed in the designated volunteer refrigerator. Please take your break in between enclosure cleanings (and not within the first or last hour of your time here). You MUST (individually) notify a staff member when you leave AND return from break! Do not leave a mess behind before taking a break and each enclosure you are assigned to MUST be locked and checked. In the event that you are not feeling well, (i.e. overheated or dizzy), it is imperative that you notify a staff member immediately! It is very dangerous to become ill inside an animal's enclosure! Your safety and health must be taken seriously.

_____**Code and Conduct**: Patience, a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, a professional demeanor and an open mind are necessary qualities for you to convey during your time spent at Back to Nature. Everyone will work and learn at different paces. It is based on your attitude, motivation, and work ethic as to how much you learn and move forward. Poor attitudes, disrespecting, disagreeing with or mistreating staff, gossiping, mistreating other volunteers, interns, the animals or the public, not following safety rules and any kind of sexual harassment will not be tolerated!! You can and will be terminated immediately for any of these concerns. We are a public facility welcoming visitors, donors and citizens bringing injured and orphaned animals in for care on a daily basis. Most visitors have never been here before. You are expected to treat the public with the utmost respect. ALWAYS greet the public visiting

and ask if they need assistance (esp. when they are carrying an animal in. Always direct the public with general inquiries and intakes to the Welcome Center where staff or an authorized volunteer can assist them. DO NOT handle incoming wildlife or allow public to take an animal out of its carrier or box. All rabies vector species are off limits to any contact. You are expected to treat the public with the utmost respect and always direct them to a staff member until you are properly trained to speak with them. Taking photos of our resident wildlife is permitted if you are outside of the enclosure. If and ONLY if, you have received approval by a staff member, you may be allowed to photograph some of the residents while you are in their enclosures. You CANNOT photograph Rehab wildlife. Posting photos of the residents on social media or web is not allowed unless you have received approval by STAFF. If you are caught posting unapproved photos, especially of rehab, you can lose your position at BTN.

# Intern Agreement cont'd

___**SAFETY FIRST**: RULE OF THUMB: NEVER enter an enclosure until the door behind you has been latched. ONLY open a door wide enough to get your body and tools inside. NEVER open a gate while the animal is near it. DO NOT TOUCH any animal without permission from a staff member. Lingering in an area, especially the rehab raccoon, bobcat and fox areas, where you have not been authorized is not allowed...ever! The outside rehab area is off limits until you have been properly trained. When you read the volunteer/intern manual you will learn about additional safety procedures required while working at Back to Nature. Failure to follow all rules can result in immediate termination. The safety of the people and animals of BTN comes first! Getting bit by and animal that you have not been given permission to handle may lead to further investigation of the incident which can result in termination.

___**The Experience**: What you can expect to gain from the staff and skilled volunteers of Back to Nature is a job-training experience focused on learning basic animal husbandry skills for captive wildlife as well as FL native wildlife rehabilitation. You will learn to care for many of the resident wild animals at Back to Nature, approx. 20 different species. Often, the staff gives scheduled tours, educates off-site, and oversees fund raising events. These are additional areas (often requiring additional volunteer hours) open to learning and participating in for most interns. In regards to animal care, there are some animals that are off limits to direct contact and daily care. You will not be allowed to work directly with the bobcats or raccoons for safety purposes. In some cases, experienced volunteers that have earned our trust, have been given prior approval by management, and, most importantly, have received their *rabies pre-exposure shots, will be trained to assist with such rehab animals as the raccoons and other rabies vector species. To the majority of the volunteers and interns of BTN, these animals remain "off limits". However, there may be opportunities to assist with their enrichment and food prepping. Learning the rehab areas of the facility is a privilege and is not a guaranteed area to gain experience. It is based on the decision of the management as to who will be allowed to assist with the rehab (in the rehab room or outdoor rehab area). Most of you, however, will be trained on the song birds and rehab gopher tortoises.

_____ **Dress Code**: The dress code is as follows: cargo or khaki style pants, (no holes, mid-drift bearing clothing, or spandex), an official BTN volunteer shirt, and rain boots. Rain boots are required for comfort and protection from the elements, and prevention of cross-contamination between enclosures. Hats, sunscreen, bug repellent, and sunglasses (not mirrored) are allowed. NO iPods, earphones or cell phones allowed in enclosures and must be limited to use only on breaks. Talking or texting on your phone anytime other than your break time, will result in confiscation of your cell phone until the end of the day. You are allowed to take photos of the animals that you are
assigned to work with; however, it is not permitted to post photos on the web without approval by your intern coordinator. These animals require, and deserve your full attention and focus. Taking "photo shoots" of the animals must be limited and is best while observing their behavior during enrichment. Photos of you with an animal are allowed only by approval. Please leave personal belongings LOCKED in your car, which must be parked in the visitor parking lot.

_____**Earning Additional Volunteer Hours:** Your hours are scheduled and required to be followed. You have a required amount of time that must be met each week. If you choose to work extra days, or stay longer than your required time, those hours will be considered volunteer hours and are to be logged on a separate volunteer sheet. Please do not arrive earlier than your scheduled time. We welcome you to extend your time to gain more experience, but you are not obligated to. Being that this internship holds a restricted amount of hours each week, you will not be allowed to finish this internship early OR use extra hours towards absences. Volunteer hours are completely separate.

Letters of Recommendation are on based on your performance and are not automatically given upon request.

# Signature

- *COMMUNICATION TO YOUR INTERN COORDINATOR REGARDING ALL ASPECTS OF THIS INTERNSHIP IS CRUCIAL TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL and FULFILLING EXPERIENCE.

- Please sign below that you agree and will follow the refuge internship rules and requirements:
- Print Name_____
- Sign Name_____Date_____
- We are all here, committing ourselves to hard work for the love and care of these animals. As interns, you play a major role in our daily care of them and we are grateful to have you!
- Welcome to the Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge team!
- Kelly Verduin
- Administrative Manager
- Volunteer/Intern Coordinator 4O7-761-3611
  btnwildlife@yahoo.com

# Daily Assignments

- Each volunteer and intern has a timesheet that is expected to be filled out at the end of each shift. It must be signed off by a staff or Point person prior to leaving.
- All new volunteers and interns have a training track sheet where they are signed off on new tasks. They are expected to complete these tasks with a trainer 3x before they can be "green lighted" to do the task alone.
- Everyone starts their shifts by checking in at the clinic volunteer/intern check in area. There is a large marker board where their names are listed with tasks ASSIGNED to them.
- Each task is listed on a magnet. Each volunteer will have 3-5 magnets next to their name.
- We assign: diet prepping, animal care, enrichment, behavior documenting visitor center hours and side work as a regular line up for each volunteer or intern.

Our volunteers are assigned to multiple and various tasks within their shift.
i.e. Assignment: Goat/Emu/Dish washing/mopping clinic

The goat and emu care includes: health checks, log reviews from previous day, diet and enrichment prepping, cleaning of enclosure, washing of tools and dishes, following all safety protocols and log documenting, and notifying staff of any concerns.

- Interns received higher quantities of work because their shifts are longer than most volunteers.

# Documents to Create

- Applications for volunteers and interns which includes waver
- Agreement Forms for both programs
- A manual
- Time sheets and binders
- Training Track Sheets
- Completion Certificates
- Call out/Missed Shift Track Sheet

# Good Luck!

- Open discussion…