



# Volunteer Manual



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## **Introduction**

Welcome to Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS)! We are so glad you have decided to join our team. Your efforts are essential to our success. The contributions you make will add to a legacy that began in 1980 when Harry and Darlene Kelton founded PHSS.

As a wildlife rehabilitation facility, we strive to rescue, treat, and rehabilitate sick, injured, and orphaned brown pelicans and other wildlife. Over the years we have developed a number of policies and procedures that, when followed, help to ensure the best results for the care and rehabilitation of our patients. Please review the following information carefully. Your compliance with these policies and procedures is required and allows you to “help us help them” and return wildlife to their natural environment.

If you find that you need clarification on any of these sections, please feel free to ask any of our staff members.

## **Attendance/Scheduling/Time**

PHSS operating hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays. There are two volunteer shifts daily: A morning shift which takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and an afternoon shift which takes place from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Our goal is to have a minimum of two volunteers and one intern per shift. Please be sure to indicate which shift/s you are available.

## **Waivers**

Each volunteer is required to review and sign a waiver.

## **Background Checks**

PHSS is located on property leased from Miami-Dade County and is therefore required to conduct background checks on all employees and volunteers pursuant to the Shannon Melendi Act. The nationwide criminal background checks shall include a report as to whether the staff member or volunteer is listed on the Nation Sex Offender Public Registry, and a comprehensive report and analysis, obtained from no less than two independent databases/sources, on their nationwide criminal history. The Background Check shall be repeated every three years.

Any staff member or volunteer shall be prohibited from working or volunteering on park property owned or operated by Miami-Dade County if they meet the following criteria:

- (1) has been convicted of a violent felony or conspiracy to commit a violent felony within the past five (5) years; or
- (2) Has been convicted of a felony involving the trafficking of a controlled substance within the past (5) years; or
- (3) Has two (2) or more convictions for a violent felony, for conspiracy to commit a violent felony, or involving the trafficking of a controlled substance; or
- (4) Is a sexual offender or a sexual predator.

All staff members and volunteers shall notify PHSS of any arrest within forty-eight (48) hours of such arrest. Failure to report such arrest within 48 hours of the arrest may result in the termination of the volunteer or staff position.

Please complete the Background Check Authorization Form located in the back of this manual.

## **Services and Programs**

### Education and Community Outreach:

Thanks to our energetic outreach volunteers, the PHSS also connects with many surrounding communities by participating in area events which further creates a sense of awareness. Speaking engagements and presentations may be scheduled through the Education and Outreach Coordinator.

### Community Partnerships and Collaborations:

Group workdays have always brought much-needed help to the PHSS and provide corporations with an opportunity to give back to the community they serve. Each year, hundreds of participants from local schools, businesses and industries arrange to donate their time and talent to our various ongoing assortments of projects and regular everyday tasks. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator to coordinate a workday for your group or business.

## **PHSS Animal Care Basics**

### **Disease Control**

You are the front line for defense against spreading diseases. Please be sure to change your latex gloves frequently and wash your hands frequently. Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

### **Handling PHSS Animals**

While we appreciate your previous experience with animals, please allow PHSS staff members to demonstrate and teach you our preferred method for handling our animal patients and education animals – do not handle education ambassadors or any animal without staff permission.

## **Habitats and Cages**

Please do not enter a habitat or open a cage unless instructed to do so by a PHSS staff member. Please respect the privacy of rehabilitating animal patients by limiting your entries to and exits from their habitats to the bare minimum needed for their care.

## **Off-limit Areas**

Volunteers are not allowed near nesting birds and may be restricted at times from certain habitats, cages and treatment areas.

## **Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is the humane and painless killing of an animal that cannot be rehabilitated. Situations that call for euthanasia are those where an animal is near death or can be spared unnecessary distress and pain. Be aware that animals in our care will be euthanized only when necessary, based on the judgment of our experts. This may conflict with volunteer's religious practices or lifestyle; if you have objections to or questions about this practice, please speak to an experienced staff member to learn more. Euthanasia is a very difficult subject to cope with. It is something you must think about before making a commitment to work with any animal shelter or rescue organization. As a volunteer, it is important to consider the emotional burden placed on staff. Please do not add to the difficulty by asking staff, "Why didn't Thumper make it?" Careless (though well-intentioned) comments such as this could cause added pain to a staff member.

## **Dress Code**

All volunteers are required to purchase and wear a volunteer t-shirt at all times while on property and at outreach events. At this time, long pants/jeans are preferred, but shorts/cropped pants are allowed (up to mid-thigh) at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator. Comfortable, safe footwear is absolutely necessary. Sneakers, work shoes or boots are ideal. Do not wear heels, open-toed shoes or sandals; even when you anticipate volunteering inside doing clerical work, appropriate footwear and clothing is essential.

Please leave purses and other valuables at home or locked in your trunk. We do not have secured storage space available for volunteers and cannot be responsible for personal items left at the Station. Most tasks involve water and we recommend that you do not carry your cell phone with you unless absolutely necessary. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. Long, dangling or hoop earrings, chunky rings and bracelets pose a safety concern with handling both animals and chemicals used in cleaning and are therefore prohibited. Lastly, volunteers are asked to refrain from wearing strong-smelling fragrances such as perfume, cologne, and body lotion as they can be disturbing to both the patients and staff.

## **Check-In Required**

It is vital for PHSS to collect statistics on the number of volunteers and volunteer hours. Please indicate your attendance on the Volunteer Board at the located near the front door.

## **Volunteer Disciplinary/Termination Policy**

A problem situation requiring disciplinary action or termination of a volunteer would be one of willful or blatant misconduct that endangers the safety of people or animals or undermines the goals or purposes of our work at PHSS.

Grounds for Disciplinary Action include but are not limited to:

- Failure to support the PHSS or PHSS's policies to the public while representing the PHSS as a volunteer
- Willful disregard of instruction given by a program supervisor or another staff member
- Disrespectful behavior towards PHSS staff, the public or other volunteers
- Willful defiance of PHSS procedures or policies in their performance of volunteer duties
- Failure to uphold your volunteer agreement commitment

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

The program supervisor will meet with the volunteer. The staff person will decide what action needs to be taken to correct the situation or improve the volunteer's understanding of our policies and procedures and appropriate behavior. Disciplinary action may range from a written warning to termination of the volunteer's service.

### **Emergency Procedure**

In case of emergency, such as a hurricane, please call ahead and ask if it is safe to volunteer. PHSS abides by regional evacuation orders. If other emergencies occur and you do not know how to proceed, contact a PHSS staff member.