



TURTLE ISLAND PRESERVE

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Volunteer Handbook

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

Eustace Conway: Founder & Director 828-265-2267

Desere: Office Manager 828-406-1190 (mail@turtleislandpreserve.com)

Volunteer Info (volunteer@turtleislandpreserve.com)

MISSION - Turtle Island guides people through experiences with the natural world to enhance their appreciation and respect for life. We achieve this through a more comprehensive understanding of nature combined with the lessons of our elders and traditions.

Who are we? - Turtle Island Preserve was founded by naturalist and adventurer Eustace Conway in 1986. He inherited the vision of earth stewardship from his maternal grandfathers' legacy of Camp Sequoyah, founded in 1924. Turtle Island today, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit education center, a continuation of this rich educational family heritage. Our programs celebrate lifestyle practices of earlier people from our great grandparent's time, back into prehistory. We orient to the basic foundation of where things come from and where things go. We plant and harvest in our gardens, we milk goats, make cheese, craft bowls, spoons and tools of all size and description. We hunt and gather wild foods and medicines and natural resources abounding in our huge natural preserve. We cook exclusively over fire, gathering our own wood. We completely made the many buildings of our farmstead; carved literally right from the wilderness.

Turtle Island Preserve Volunteer Program

GOALS

To offer individuals in our community and around the world a variety of opportunities to learn while providing Turtle Island the support and assistance it needs, to strive forward fulfilling the mission stated above.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote community service by providing volunteer opportunities
- Foster and promote interest in natural living, primitive skills, and living simply
- Encourage volunteers to reach their individual goals.
- Provide a balanced and enhanced atmosphere at Turtle Island Preserve.
- Create comfort, support and calm for the interns, visitors, employees and management.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULES

Arrive at your assigned work area on time. If you are unable to report for your scheduled time, contact your Group Leader or Volunteer Coordinator. Some volunteer positions require a substitute if the volunteer is unable to work. If you are scheduled and cannot make it for some reason, you will have a list of other volunteers to call. If after you are unable to get a substitute, contact your Group Leader to see if he/she can help you with a substitute. If you cannot get a substitute, notify the Camp Manager.

RULES OF CONDUCT

- Volunteers are responsible for the same standards expected of regular staff & interns: to be prompt, dependable, efficient, and accountable for actions and accepting of supervision.
- Volunteers must complete Volunteer Orientation Training & Volunteer Application Package before they can be a volunteer at Turtle Island Preserve
- Volunteers are responsible for adherence to the guidelines of Turtle Island Preserve as well as reading, signing and adhering to Turtle Island Preserve Code of Conduct.
- Any volunteer who displays disruptive conduct, major personality conflicts, theft, drug abuse or any other unacceptable behavior as outlined in the Code of Conduct may be terminated.

LIABILITY

Your very presence on this campus is your agreement of complete personal liability. Please get familiar with the details of our participant release form and related information, for example: (Chapter 99E of the North Carolina Statutes) Under North Carolina Law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting exclusively from the inherent risks of equine activities.

POSITION CHANGE – TERMINATION – LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- If you would like to change your position assignment or if you need to leave the program for an extended period of time or terminate your service, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@turtleislandpreserve.com.

GROUNDINGS FOR DISMISSAL

- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty. Participation in underage drinking.
- Disregarding a supervisor's instructions
- Two consecutive non-reported (no-show) absences
- Unprofessional relations with guests, campers, staff or other volunteers while on campus
- Breach of confidentiality/gossiping
- Failure to follow Turtle Island Preserve policies and procedures

The Volunteer has a right to:

1. be treated in an environment which supports dignity, respect and consideration.
2. have cultural and personal values, beliefs and preferences.
3. participate in the development of his/her volunteer position.
4. personal privacy.
5. be free from all forms of harassment, neglect and exploitation.
5. be free from physical or mental abuse and punishment.
7. voice complaints or grievances without the fear of discrimination or reprisal.

If you have any concerns, questions or complaints about your rights or treatment, please let your leader or supervisor know – not your fellow workers and not guests. If you have a complaint, we want to resolve it as soon as possible. If during your volunteer time at Turtle Island Preserve you have voiced a concern to your supervisor and feel it has not been resolved, or if you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact Turtle Island Administration and leave a message. We will return your call or email.

COMPLIMENTARY MEALS

Turtle Island Preserve is pleased to provide a complimentary meal to our volunteers on the day you are working. Meals will be eaten with the community. Mealtimes are approx: 1pm Lunch 8pm Supper. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions for example: gluten free.

BENEFITS / RECOGNITION

There is a recognition program to formally acknowledge each volunteer's service. A Volunteer Awards Meal is hosted annually, usually on the same day as our SPRING EVENT.

DISCOUNTED MERCHANDISE

Volunteers may purchase merchandise at a discounted rate of 25% off the regular price when a senior staff member is available to man the store.

FAMILY

At this time, volunteer opportunities for families with young children are very limited. Special arrangements need to be made in advance for junior volunteers. However, after 15 days of service, individual volunteers can schedule with the Camp Manager a day visit to Turtle Island Preserve with their family (up to 4 guests). The volunteer is fully responsible for their guests while they are at Turtle Island. If guests are joining us for a meal, the fee is \$10 per person.

TRAINING

Turtle Island Preserve is prepared to provide all volunteers with high caliber orientation & training that will result in professional volunteers who will exhibit a positive image for the Preserve and a commitment to our guests and the families we serve. It's important that ALL volunteers attend the TIP orientation & training. This orientation should be reviewed or attended at a minimum of once per year or additionally if required by the Preserve for all volunteers. Training and orientation topics include:

- The Volunteer Handbook
- TIP Mission and History (Including Farm Tour)
- Volunteer Benefits & Recognitions Program
- Volunteer Responsibilities
- Dress Code and ID
- Protocol for reporting
- Fire, Medical, Emergency Safety
- Guest/Camper Safety
- Code of Conduct

EVALUATIONS

Intermittent evaluation of volunteer performance and involvement will be conducted.

TURTLE ISLAND CULTURE

We achieve excellence through competence, continuous improvement, innovation, leadership and accountability.

The "Turtle Island Culture" connects eight standards of behavior to daily actions that help us maintain operational excellence to deliver high quality service and experiences for all who visit.

Turtle Island Culture also nurtures each volunteer by developing a sense of purpose, providing worthwhile work and giving each of us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the people we interact and work with.

By living these standards in our daily activities, together we are building a stronger community and future for Turtle Island and planet earth. Our goal is to create a great place for animals and plants to thrive, community members to work, guests to visit, & volunteers to volunteer.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

- 1. Attitude**
- 2. Appearance**
- 3. Commitment to Co-Workers**
- 4. Communication**
- 5. Community Respect**
- 6. Safety Awareness**
- 7. Service Recovery**
- 8. Sense of Ownership**

ATTITUDE

It all begins with a positive attitude about the people we serve and work with. Our goal is to *exceed* our guests/visitors expectations. We are committed to providing the highest quality of care and meeting our guests and co-workers needs with the utmost kindness, compassion, courtesy, empathy, respect and friendliness.

We will demonstrate our Commitment to a Positive Attitude by...

- Promptly welcoming, acknowledging, and serving all visitors with a smile and direct contact. Don't allow people to feel excluded or ignored.
- NOT treating visitor/guest questions as an interruption to our work: they are our reason for being here.

Continued

- Reminding ourselves that campers and their families are the most important aspect of our organization.
- Ending each conversation with “Is there anything else that I can do for you?”
- Reminding ourselves that our guests and campers, have feelings, emotions, fears, anxiety, likes and dislikes.
- Sharing a service excellence mindset.
- Conveying the right attitude at all times. The professionalism, efficiency and guest/camper-centered attitude projected by everyone can be the difference between having a child and their family return year after year - or not.

APPEARANCE

We need to take pride in our personal appearance. While this is a primitive camp experience, there is no reason to look or feel dirty or unsanitary. Please follow our simple dress code:

- Wear Volunteer T-Shirts while on duty
- Comfortable & durable non-skid, closed toe shoes/boots
- Avoid strong colognes/perfumes
- Jewelry kept to a minimum
- Clean Pants

We will demonstrate our Commitment to a Professional Appearance by:

- Being sure Volunteers all have a clean TIP t-shirt
- Keeping our bodies clean and work areas neat

COMMITMENT TO CO-WORKERS & STAFF

We are linked to one another by a common purpose: serving our guests and our community. Our co-workers and staff are our team members. We all deserve respect and support.

We best serve our guests and families when we all work together. We will demonstrate our Commitment to Staff and Co-workers by...

- Treating co-workers and staff with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Being supportive by offering help and setting an example of cooperation
- Being honest and kind in all our interactions with one another
- Being a mentor
- Respecting obligations to our co-workers
- Respecting cultural diversity
- Welcoming new employees and volunteers.
- Treating every co-worker and staff as a professional.
- Recognizing that we each have an area of expertise. We can all learn from each other.
- Treat one another with professional courtesy and respect *at all times*
- Treating *co-workers* and staff as *customers*
- Observing the No Underage Drinking of Alcohol policy.

COMMUNICATION

The goal of communication is mutual understanding. We must be committed to *listening* attentively in order to fully understand what needs to be done. Close attention should be given to both verbal and non-verbal messages.

We will demonstrate our Commitment to Communication through...

- Everyone will be greeted with a warm friendly “hello”, “good morning”, “good evening.”
- Use the “Hello Principle” by acknowledging anyone within 10 feet of you and verbally acknowledging anyone with 5 feet of you.
- When talking with anyone, make eye contact and acknowledge them.
- Avoid interrupting

COMMUNITY RESPECT (PRIVACY)

It is the responsibility of everyone to protect the privacy and confidentiality of every person who lives and works at TIP. No Volunteers are to visit community member private living quarters, EVER. Volunteers are not encouraged to date or have romantic relations with Turtle Island clients, interns or staff members. No one will speak to guests about the location of Directors private living quarters or provide personal information to anyone about anyone.

Never reveal information that is covered by the non-disclosure agreement that you signed in the volunteer application packet. In addition, never disclose information to the press, or media that has not already been made public by the organization itself. This includes, but is not limited to, news announcements, financial data and staffing changes, personal information about co-workers or staff members. Do not use logos or trademarks without permission.

We will demonstrate respect for our Staff's & Residents Privacy by...

- Always making others aware of your presence when approaching
- Leaving others' private quarters and belongings unmolested
- Adhere to confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information with media

SAFETY AWARENESS

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure an accident-free environment.

We will demonstrate our Commitment to Safety by...

- Creating awareness of potential hazards (like yellow-jacket activity).
- Reporting any safety issues immediately to a supervisor.

SERVICE RECOVERY

If a visitor expresses complaints, do not be defensive; their perception is their reality. To reverse a potentially negative situation use **ACT**:

- **Acknowledge:** Acknowledge and listen to the complaint with no excuses;. Summarize what you heard to confirm you understanding. By apologizing, we are telling the guest that we are going to take care of situation. "I'm sorry we didn't meet your expectations".
- **Correct:** Correct the issue or make it right. Offer suggestions for resolution; ask whether those suggestions will meet their expectations. Take action to resolve the problem. Inform/contact your supervisor with information so they can follow up with guest.
- **Thank:** Thank the guest for bringing this to your attention. Always end with, "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

SENSE OF OWNERSHIP

Every Volunteer must feel a sense of ownership toward his or her job. We will take pride in what we do and how we do our job. We will feel responsible and be in control of the job that needs to be done.

We will demonstrate our Sense of Ownership by...

- Being accountable. Understand and accept your responsibilities.
- Taking responsibility for the guest experience. No one will say: "That's not my job" - If you are unable to meet the request, find someone who can. Contact the appropriate person or take care of the situation immediately.
- Taking pride in what you do as demonstrated by dressing appropriately and keeping work areas clean and safe.
- Understanding the marketing values of guest satisfaction, word of mouth
- Following organizational policies and procedures.

- Paying attention to detail to make sure we have the necessary tools to do our job effectively.
- Role model and mentor others.
- Creating a culture that helps people feel appreciated included and valued.
- Following the golden rule and treating guests and their families like we would like to be treated under the same circumstances.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

VOLUNTEER HEALTH

Make sure your records are current and accurate.

INFECTION CONTROL

Infection is a risk to guests, visitors, volunteers and staff. Infectious diseases can be spread through direct contact, through water or air. For example, a person can get infected if organisms enter his/her bloodstream (e.g., through a small cut or puncture wound) or are breathed in or ingested. For example: To avoid contracting giardia – do not ever drink live creek water. Basic “infection control measures” are in place to decrease the risk of infection transmission at our camp. These include regular hand hygiene & taking standard precautions like not sharing your hairbrush or bedding with others.

1. Hand Hygiene

Hand washing (decontamination) is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Hand washing protects guests, staff members & volunteers from the spread of infection. Infectious organisms can easily contaminate hands and be spread from place to place or person to person. Decontaminate hands by washing with warm water and soap. Hands should be washed before and after using the restroom, before and after eating, after removing gloves and any time hands are contaminated. Standard procedures for hand washing will be taught to every volunteer in your training

What types of diseases can good hand washing prevent the spread of?

- Influenza
- Respiratory Viruses & the common cold
- Diarrheal diseases
- Infections from one patient to another in the hospital

2. Respiratory Etiquette

Many diseases are spread through simple sneezes and coughs. When you sneeze or cough, germs can travel 3 feet or more! Cover your mouth and nose with either a tissue or the crook of your elbow to prevent the spread of infection to others. Be sure to burn used tissues and decontaminate you hands right away. Please do not spit or “hock loogies” on the ground.

3. Special Disease Precautions

Volunteers who are sick with anything contagious (flu, cold, skin infection) need to call their supervisor and not perform regular duties until wellness is restored.

PARKING

Always ask your supervisor , before arrival – where to park. Unless instructed otherwise park in the area reserved for volunteers/staff in the east entrance parking lot. Reserved spaces are behind Nacho Mammás Café. ALWAYS keep thoroughfares open and clear. Try not to drive directly into base camp if you do not have to.

NO DRIVE ZONE

No one drives through Base Camp when camps are in session. Please make sure you are already aware of the activities going on the day you come to volunteer.

ENVIRONMENT OF CARE

The Environment of Care is made up of four basic components:

- Environment
- Buildings
- Equipment
- People

A variety of key elements and issues can contribute to creating the way Turtle Island Preserve feels and works for campers, families, students, staff and other visitors. These components can also be significant in their ability to influence positive outcomes, satisfaction and improve overall safety.

The Environment of Care is subdivided into seven specific functions:

- Security Management
- Safety Management
- Fire Safety
- Medical Equipment
- Hazardous Materials and Waste
- Emergency Management

SECURITY MANAGEMENT

We are in the woods, not inside buildings with locked doors, behind locked gates. It is VERY important that all Volunteers keep their eyes and ears open to any unknown persons they see at TIP. If you do not know who someone is, ask your coworkers and leaders immediately.

Security Tips:

- Always wear your Turtle Island Volunteer Identification.
- Keep belongings in your locked vehicle.
- If you see someone that doesn't look as if they belong, notify your leader and coworkers.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

It is important for volunteers to recognize and report hazardous conditions that may jeopardize the safety of anyone. For example, if you are walking down a road and see a tree branch on a trail that has fallen, please take the responsibility to

- a) Pick it up and remedy the situation OR
- b) Report it to your Group Leader or Supervisor

We host Farm Tours, Buggy Rides, Educational Programs, Camps and other visitors who are using our facilities on a regular basis; so it is important to understand that safety is part of everyone's job. Report any unsafe condition to your supervisor immediately. * No firearms are allowed in base camp without prior arrangements being made with Eustace. If you possess a current conceal-carry permit, please indicate that on your volunteer application packet.

FIRE SAFETY

Fire safety should be practiced at all times. Fire is only possible by combining three elements: **fuel** (wood, paper, gas, oil, etc), **heat** and **oxygen**. Smothering fires with dirt or wool blanket is a good first measure. Know the location of the nearest fire extinguishers & phone access.

If you discover an uncontrolled fire, following (R.A.C.E.) procedure:

- R – Rescue and Relocate people/animals to safety
- A – Alert others, sound the Alarm
- C – Confine the fire
- E – Extinguish

Portable Fire Extinguishers - Portable fire extinguishers are located in base camp for your use in extinguishing small, controllable fires. Become familiar with their location and learn how they operate.

How to use a portable fire extinguisher – P.A.S.S.

- P – Pull Pin
- A – Aim at the base of the fire
- S – Squeeze handle
- S – Sweep side to side

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

First aid supplies and medical equipment are kept sealed and dry at all times in large plastic tubs with tight fitting lids. There is a “mother kit” in the kitchen wood shed, and an overflow bin in the upstairs of the cookhouse. All counselors and group leaders carry a portable kit during official camps and group visits. Familiarize yourself with the nearest first aid supplies while volunteering.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE

Our standard policy with “garbage” generated by visitors is: Pack it in – Pack it out. We do not have municipal waste removal services to transport items to a landfill. Any actual landfill-bound trash has to be removed by turtle island staff, so we try very diligently to use all things to their highest purpose and reduce waste. Examples include: little plastic food cups = garden seed starting vessels, any paper products = get burned as firestarter. Even egg shells are separated, stored and pulverized for future use in the garden/barnyard. All recyclables are washed, separated and stored in large sealed bins behind the kitchen. Examples of items that do go into the turtle island main trash bin: plastic sleeve surrounding meat packages, plastic food wrappers, not burnable, not compostable, not recyclable items.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Please handle all emergencies calmly and without panic. Always keep all thoroughfares open and clear in the event that an ambulance or fire truck should need to drive into camp. Always know who is in charge and ask questions when you are unsure.

If you have questions/concerns regarding an issue in your area, contact your immediate supervisor. Your immediate supervisor may be your Group Leader or a Volunteer in a supervisory role. The Camp Manager would be next on the chain, followed by Administration.

THANK YOU! -We appreciate your studying the above information closely and carefully.
We are grateful for your time, energy and support!

Turtle Island Preserve is a Sequoyah Family Tradition founded in 1924.