



Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary, Org.

70 Inda Road
Perkinston MS 39573
(228)365-6578
Info@gulfcoastprimatesanctuary.org

GULF COAST PRIMATE SANCTUARY

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Lifetime Care • Second Chances • A Place to Belong

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary depends on dedicated volunteers to help provide the highest quality of care for the rescued primates who call our sanctuary home.

Volunteering at our sanctuary is a privilege and a responsibility. The safety and well-being of our animals, volunteers, staff, and visitors always come first.

Because our residents are exotic animals with individual histories and needs, animal contact is not automatically part of volunteering. Volunteers earn additional responsibilities and privileges through training, experience, reliability, and demonstrated commitment.

1. VOLUNTEER WAIVER & BACKGROUND CHECK

Before beginning volunteer service, every volunteer must complete and sign the Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary Volunteer Waiver, Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Agreement to Follow Sanctuary Rules.

The waiver serves as the volunteer's required information and acknowledgment form. A separate volunteer application is not required unless specifically requested by the sanctuary.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All volunteers 18 years of age and older must successfully complete a background check before beginning volunteer service.

Background checks are part of our commitment to protecting:

- Our primates
 - Our staff
- Our volunteers
 - Our visitors
- Our sanctuary property

Background checks may include criminal history and other legally permissible information relevant to volunteer eligibility.

Certain offenses may result in disqualification, particularly offenses involving animal cruelty, violence, crimes against children or vulnerable individuals, sexual offenses, theft, or other conduct that presents a safety concern.

A criminal record does not necessarily result in automatic rejection. When appropriate and legally permitted, the sanctuary may consider the nature of the offense, how long ago it occurred, its relevance to the volunteer position, and other circumstances.

Background-check information will be kept confidential and accessed only by authorized sanctuary personnel.

The sanctuary reserves the right to require an updated background check when appropriate.

2. SIGNAGE & SAFETY RULES

All volunteers must read, understand, and follow all posted sanctuary signage and safety instructions.

Signs may include:

STOP — AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

NO UNAUTHORIZED ANIMAL CONTACT

DO NOT ENTER WITHOUT STAFF APPROVAL

KEEP GATES AND DOORS SECURED

DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS

DO NOT TOUCH THE ANIMALS UNLESS AUTHORIZED

STAFF INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES

Failure to follow posted signs or staff instructions may result in immediate suspension or termination of volunteer privileges.

3. ORIENTATION & TRAINING

All new volunteers must complete sanctuary orientation before beginning regular volunteer duties.

Training may include:

- Sanctuary rules and expectations
 - Primate safety and behavior
 - Cleaning and sanitation
 - Feeding procedures
 - Enrichment procedures
 - Gate and door security
 - Emergency procedures
 - Disease prevention
 - Visitor safety
- Photography and social media policies
 - Confidentiality

Additional training is required before a volunteer may perform specialized duties or advance to a higher volunteer tier.

4. VOLUNTEER TIER SYSTEM

Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary uses a four-tier volunteer system.

Advancement is based on more than hours. Volunteers must demonstrate:

Reliability • Attendance • Safety • Knowledge • Attitude • Training

Hours alone do not guarantee advancement.

The sanctuary reserves the right to advance, hold, suspend, or remove a volunteer from any tier based on safety, behavior, performance, or sanctuary needs.

TIER 1 — SANCTUARY SUPPORT VOLUNTEER

0–24 HOURS

All new volunteers begin at Tier 1.

Responsibilities may include:

- Cleaning
- Grounds work
- Maintenance
- Food preparation
 - Laundry
- Supply organization
- Event assistance
- Administrative assistance
- General sanctuary support

ANIMAL CONTACT:

NO DIRECT MONKEY CONTACT

Volunteers may observe the animals from approved areas but may not touch, feed, enter enclosures, or otherwise interact directly with the monkeys unless specifically instructed and authorized by sanctuary staff.

Tier 1 allows new volunteers to learn how the sanctuary operates and demonstrate that they can consistently follow rules and safety procedures.

TIER 2 — TRAINED SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER

25–49 HOURS

Volunteers who demonstrate reliability, responsibility, and proper safety practices may advance to Tier 2 with staff approval.

Responsibilities may include:

- Advanced cleaning duties
 - Food preparation
- Approved enrichment preparation
 - Sanctuary projects
- Assisting trained staff with animal-care routines
 - Approved educational activities

ANIMAL CONTACT:

NO DIRECT MONKEY CONTACT

All interaction with the animals remains under the direction of authorized sanctuary staff.

**TIER 3 — ADVANCED ANIMAL CARE
VOLUNTEER**

50–99 HOURS

Tier 3 volunteers have demonstrated continued commitment to the sanctuary and a strong understanding of primate safety and husbandry procedures.

Advancement requires staff approval.

Responsibilities may include:

- Preparing approved enrichment
- Assisting with enrichment activities
- Assisting with approved animal-care procedures
- Learning individual animal behaviors
- Assisting experienced staff with approved animal-related duties

ANIMAL CONTACT:

DIRECT CONTACT IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY PERMITTED.

Animal access is determined by:

- Individual animal temperament
 - Animal history
 - Species
 - Current health
- Sanctuary safety protocols
 - Volunteer training
 - Staff approval

Some animals may never be appropriate for direct volunteer contact regardless of a volunteer's hours.

TIER 4 — SENIOR / APPROVED PRIMATE CARE VOLUNTEER

100+ HOURS

Tier 4 is the highest level of volunteer access and is earned — not guaranteed.

Volunteers must demonstrate exceptional:

- Reliability
- Judgment
- Animal-handling knowledge
- Understanding of primate behavior
- Respect for sanctuary rules
- Attendance
- Professionalism
- Ability to remain calm around animals
- Ability to follow staff instructions

Additional training may be required.

MONKEY CONTACT PRIVILEGE

Direct monkey contact may be granted ONLY at Tier 4 and ONLY with specific staff approval.

Reaching 100 hours does not automatically grant monkey-contact privileges.

Direct contact is determined on an animal-by-animal and situation-by-situation basis.

Some animals may never be available for direct volunteer contact.

Even Tier 4 volunteers may be required to work behind barriers or under direct staff supervision.

The Sanctuary Director or designated senior staff member has final authority over all animal-contact privileges.

5. MONKEY CONTACT IS A PRIVILEGE — NOT A RIGHT

Our monkeys are not pets.

Volunteers must never assume that an animal wants to be touched or interacted with.

Volunteers may not:

- Pick up a monkey
- Hug or kiss a monkey
 - Chase an animal
- Initiate unwanted interaction
 - Offer unauthorized food
- Bring personal food into animal areas
- Enter an enclosure without permission
- Open gates or doors without authorization
- Allow unauthorized persons into animal areas
 - Allow visitors to touch animals
- Attempt to break up an animal fight

If an animal moves away, the interaction ends.

The welfare and comfort of the animal always come first.

6. FAMILY & GUEST VISITS

Active volunteers in good standing may request to bring immediate family members or approved guests to visit the sanctuary.

All family and guest visits must be scheduled and approved in advance.

A volunteer may not bring an unexpected guest to the sanctuary.

Family members and guests are considered visitors, not volunteers.

They may not:

- Perform volunteer duties
 - Clean animal areas
- Prepare food or enrichment
 - Enter restricted areas
 - Open gates or doors
- Handle sanctuary equipment
 - Feed animals
 - Touch animals
- Enter animal enclosures
- Assist with animal care

ANIMAL CONTACT FOR FAMILY & GUESTS

A family member or guest does not receive animal-contact privileges simply because they are accompanying a volunteer.

Even if the sponsoring volunteer is a Tier 4 volunteer, their family members and guests may not participate in direct monkey contact unless they independently meet sanctuary requirements and receive specific authorization from sanctuary staff.

CHILDREN

Children may visit with prior approval and must remain under the direct supervision of their parent or legal guardian.

Children may not run, yell at animals, knock on enclosure barriers, attempt to touch animals, feed animals, or enter restricted areas.

The sanctuary may limit family visits based on animal care, staffing, events, weather, construction, or visitor capacity.

7. STAFF AUTHORITY

Volunteers must follow all instructions given by sanctuary staff.

Volunteer privileges may be immediately suspended or removed for:

- Violating safety rules
 - Disobeying staff
- Improper animal handling
- Entering unauthorized areas
- Allowing unauthorized persons into animal areas
 - Inappropriate behavior
 - Violating confidentiality
- Misusing photographs or videos
- Failing to follow sanitation procedures
 - Creating a safety risk

Repeated or serious violations may result in termination of volunteer service.

8. ILLNESS & BIOSECURITY

Volunteers must notify the sanctuary and remain home when sick.

Volunteers must follow all sanctuary biosecurity procedures, including required handwashing, clothing, footwear, sanitation, and disease-prevention procedures.

Protecting the health of our animals is everyone's responsibility.

9. PHOTOGRAPHY & SOCIAL MEDIA

Volunteers may photograph or record animals only in accordance with sanctuary rules.

Volunteers may not:

- **Share confidential information**
- **Photograph private visitor information**
- **Share security procedures**
- **Livestream animal-care activities without permission**
- **Represent themselves as an official spokesperson without authorization**

Official sanctuary announcements and media statements are handled by authorized representatives.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers may have access to confidential information involving:

- **Animals**
- **Medical records**
- **Previous owners**
- **Rehoming situations**
 - **Donors**
 - **Visitors**
 - **Staff**
- **Sanctuary operations**

This information must not be shared without authorization.

11. VOLUNTEER ADVANCEMENT

Volunteer hours will be documented by Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary.

Hours are not the only factor used to determine advancement.

A volunteer who has completed 100 hours but has demonstrated poor judgment or unsafe behavior may remain at a lower tier or lose privileges.

A volunteer who consistently demonstrates exceptional commitment, safety, and knowledge may be considered for advancement when appropriate.

The animals — not the volunteer's desire for animal contact — determine when and whether advancement occurs.

12. FINAL AUTHORITY

Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary reserves the right to modify volunteer assignments, tiers, access levels, and animal-contact privileges at any time.

The Sanctuary Director and authorized staff have final authority regarding:

- **Volunteer assignments**
 - **Animal access**
- **Training requirements**
 - **Advancement**
 - **Suspension**
- **Removal of privileges**
- **Termination of volunteer service**

Our goal is simple:

**WE WANT VOLUNTEERS WHO UNDERSTAND THAT
VOLUNTEERING IS ABOUT SERVING THE ANIMALS —
NOT GAINING ACCESS TO THEM.**

Every level of volunteer service is valuable.

Every hour helps us provide better care for the animals who depend on us.

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to follow the Gulf Coast Primate Sanctuary Volunteer Policy.

I understand that:

- ☐ I must complete and sign the required volunteer waiver.
- ☐ I must successfully complete the required background check if I am 18 or older.
- ☐ I must follow all sanctuary signage and safety procedures.
 - ☐ I must follow staff instructions at all times.
 - ☐ Animal contact is a privilege and is not guaranteed.
 - ☐ Volunteer hours alone do not guarantee advancement.
- ☐ Direct monkey contact is reserved for the highest volunteer tier and requires staff approval.
- ☐ My family members and guests do not receive animal-contact privileges simply because they accompany me.
- ☐ My volunteer privileges may be suspended or terminated if I violate sanctuary policies.

Volunteer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Representative: _____

Date: _____

GULF COAST PRIMATE SANCTUARY

Lifetime Care • Second Chances • A Place to Belong

Thank you for giving your time to the animals who need us.

