

Make a Difference! Join the Fun!

Become a Volunteer

Without the commitment and hard work of volunteers, our Zoo would not be in existence today! Whether you are a retiree, college student, teacher on summer break, church group, service organization, or a family looking for the right place to give your time and talents, we need you at the Zoo!

We have tasks for all talents: carpentry, handyman, construction, office help, special events, gardening, greeting visitors and more.

We provide a fun, safe environment that is always changing. No matter what you do as a volunteer, you are contributing to the health and happiness of the Zoo animals and visitors.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact our the Marketing Department at 755-0894 or by email” avirkler@nyszoo.org

Become a Docent

Are you passionate about wildlife and conservation? Would you like to help the greater community understand and appreciate nature? Then we would love to have you join the Docent Team at The New York State Zoo!

What does the word "docent" mean?

The word “docent” refers to a volunteer educator. As a docent, you have the unique opportunity to become an integral part of the Zoo’s Education Department. Zoo docents have a love for animals and a desire to ensure the protection of wildlife for future generations.

What does a docent do?

- Teaches Zoo visitors about wildlife and conservation
- Participates in both on-site and outreach education programs
- Utilizes our live Education Animal Collection (EAC) and biological props to enhance educational experiences
- Interprets wildlife exhibits to visitors at the Zoo
- Leads educational tours of the Zoo
- Participates in continuing education courses taught by Zoo staff and wildlife professionals.

What benefits do I receive as a docent?

Satisfaction -- you help others understand and learn to respect the natural world

Friendship -- you meet and work with others who share your interests

Knowledge -- you learn new skills and receive extensive training in natural history, zoology, and conservation

Fun and excitement -- you are a part of a dynamic and dedicated team of professionals!

Who can be a docent?

No matter what your educational background may be, the #1 qualification is a commitment to the Zoo’s mission of conserving wildlife!

- Docents must be at least 18 years of age
- Docents must be able to volunteer a minimum of 3 hours per month, and a total of 40 hours per year.

How do I become a docent?

- Fill out a Volunteer Application and Docent Questionnaire (available upon request)
- Interview with the Docent Recruitment Committee
- Complete Docent Basic Training
- Follow our Individualized Docent Track Program