



GIBBON CONSERVATION CENTER

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit center for the study, preservation and propagation of highly endangered species

Information for Volunteers

Organization Name: Gibbon Conservation Center (GCC)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 800249, Santa Clarita, CA 91380 USA
Street Address: 19100 Esguerra Rd., Santa Clarita, CA 91390
Phone: 661-296-2737 Fax: 661-296-1237
Email: info@gibboncenter.org Website: www.gibboncenter.org
Volunteer Coordinator: email: volunteer@gibboncenter.org

You can fax applications, but NOT driver's license, passport or insurance copies.

[Online Volunteer Application](#) [Printer friendly version](#) of volunteer application and info
[Adult Liability Release](#) [Minor Liability Release](#)

Types of Volunteers: Full-time resident volunteers live here at the Gibbon Center. Part-time volunteers live at home or another local location and drive here.

Location: Saugus (in Santa Clarita), California. The Center is about 1 hour north of Los Angeles International Airport, off Interstate 5. It is 9 miles east of Six Flags Magic Mountain Amusement Park. The nearest grocery store is 3 miles away in the town of Santa Clarita, which can be reached from a bus stop half a mile from the Center. [Dial-A-Ride](#) (door to door service) is also available for \$2 with 24 hours notice. There are, among other businesses, a shopping mall, three large movie theaters, and several international restaurants within 7 miles of the Center. Since the Center is in a canyon, there is no television reception. However, we have over 200 movies on video available. Even though the Center is rather isolated, it is an ideal location for someone who wants to "get away from it all", and who enjoys such solitary pursuits as hiking, bicycling, reading, writing, bird watching and stargazing.

Costs for Participants: Fees apply to cover training, lodging, and utilities. Check with the Volunteer Coordinator for more information. The resident volunteer is responsible for all travel, food (an average of \$100 per week), vaccinations and medical tests. That includes transportation to and from the Gibbon Center. We will send you information about a shuttle van that goes to and from LAX and Burbank airports. There is also a train, and taxis. Volunteers should stay in a hotel close to the airport (at the volunteer's expense) if their flight gets in after 6 pm, because the gibbons and staff go to bed early. You are also responsible for transportation for any additional trips, such as going home for a holiday.

Resident volunteers: we strongly prefer that you use a telephone calling card, and send us a copy. If you'll not be using one, a \$200 deposit in advance is required for telephone usage. The unused amount will be returned to you at your request within 2 months following your departure. International volunteers must send a copy of a calling card that they will use PLUS \$200 deposit. For your peace of mind, please black out the numbers on the calling card copy before sending it to us. You may elect to use your cell phone, but be advised that reception is spotty.

Copies of the volunteer's driver's license or other photo ID, and proof of health insurance that will be valid in Los Angeles County, California, are required. These documents cannot be faxed; you should attach copies to an email or mail them by post.

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Housing: Housing is provided for resident volunteers—one of 2 trailers (possibly shared with another volunteer) 30 feet (about 9 meters) from the house. Trailers do not have restrooms. Laundry facilities, bedding, dishes and towels, and access to the kitchen and bathroom are provided. If the volunteer prefers, they can stay in a hotel at their own expense. There are several within 7-10 miles from the Gibbon Center.

Dates: Year round. Residents: 60 day minimum, but we prefer that you stay longer, no maximum. For part-time, day (commuting, local) volunteers, we require a commitment of at least 2 days per month. There is generally a shortage of volunteers from September through April.

How to Apply: Request volunteer application (or print out and send completed), send resume and 2 letters of recommendation.

Work Done by Volunteers: There are 3 types of volunteer positions (for both residents and part-time):

1. **Assistant Primate Keeper** prepares gibbon food, feeds captive gibbons, changes water, cleans kitchen and bathroom, and cleans enclosures. For resident volunteers, this requires a full day of work (from about 7 am to 5 pm), 7 days per week. May also (depending on skills, needs of the Center, number of volunteers, and personal preference) do behavioral observations, medicate gibbons, do library research, word processing on Macintosh computer, filing, fund raising and maintenance of grounds and enclosures. This position is physically strenuous and requires good physical condition. (If you aren't in good shape when you come here, you will be when you leave!)

2. **Center Assistant** may (depending on skills, needs of the Center and personal preference) do maintenance of grounds and enclosures, behavioral observations, cleaning of food preparation area, library research, fund raising and word processing. Center Assistants must keep a minimum distance of 6 feet from all enclosures.

3. **Clerical Assistant** may (depending on skills, needs of the Center and personal preference) do word processing, fund raising, library research and behavioral observations.

Special Skills or Requirements for Volunteers: Volunteers must be self-motivated and have a love for animals. You must be able to work alone, since there may be no other volunteers for periods of several days. However, either (or both) the director and a paid assistant are here 24 hours a day. Word processing ability (Macintosh Microsoft Word), library research skills, maintenance skills, and the ability to get along with a variety of people, are preferred volunteer attributes.

All volunteers must be at least 21 years old and resident volunteers must be at least 23 years old. Our weather conditions can be extreme—reaching 105 degrees F. in summer, and in winter, down to 35 degrees F at night with chance of rain.

No smoking is allowed at GCC. Please bring unscented toiletry articles and do not use perfumes, or scented deodorant or aftershave. You will need to be cautious when wearing hats, hair accessories, jewelry, glasses, or very loose clothing when near gibbon enclosures, because the gibbons might grab them. Long hair should be tied back to prevent it from getting pulled. If you wear glasses or contacts, you must bring an extra pair. Face jewelry/piercings, earrings, and necklaces must be removed before working near the gibbons. (This rule is essential to prevent the gibbons from ingesting jewelry, and to

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prevent a painful injury to the volunteer. If you feel you must wear face jewelry here, we need advance notice with a description of it before you arrive, and you will need to bring your own non-disposable face shield and wear it while feeding the gibbons.)

No one who has a compromised immune system can assist with food prep or feeding the gibbons. They could jeopardize the gibbons' health or their own.

No one is permitted to touch the gibbons, or to allow them to grab you. Because two of our many goals are breeding and study, we want the gibbons to be bonded with their gibbon cage mate, not with people.

Since the GCC is in a rural portion of Los Angeles County, we can only receive dial-up internet access. Only one person at a time can use the internet, and large files cannot be downloaded.

Medical Requirements:

1. **Assistant Primate Keepers** must have all of the following medical tests and vaccinations completed before entering the facility:

- Fecal test (Ova and parasite)
- Fecal test (Cryptosporidium)
- Fecal culture: Salmonella, Shigella, Vibrio, Yersinia, Aeromonas, Staphylococcus aureus and Campylobacter
- 18 (approx.) panel blood chemistry hematology (CBC)
- Tetanus vaccine (within the last 5 years)
- Tuberculosis test within the last year (or physician's certification that you had a chest x-ray negative for tuberculosis)
- Rubeola ("regular") measles vaccination (or physician's certification that you had measles)
- Hepatitis B test Hepatitis B vaccine series if the hepatitis B test shows you have no antibodies (because Hepatitis B vaccine is a 3-injection series which takes 6 months, time constraints may prevent a volunteer from completing the series before arrival at the Center. The volunteer must have had at least the first and second injections before beginning work here and then continue with the third injection on schedule. The price for a hepatitis B injection here in the Los Angeles area is about \$100 per shot.)
- You should be sure your health insurance is valid in Los Angeles County, California AND that you let your insurance carrier know you will be working with wild animals.

We suggest that you read the following before your arrival, which should be available at a college library:

Ellefson, J. O. 1974. A Natural History of the White-handed Gibbon in the Malaya Peninsula. In, Natural History, Social Behavior, Reproduction, Vocalizations, Prehension. Gibbon and Siamang, vol. 3. D. M. Rumbaugh, ed., 1-136.

Baldwin, L., & Teleki, G. 1976. Patterns of Gibbon Behavior on Hall's Island, Bermuda, In, Suspensory Behavior, Locomotion, and Other Behaviors of Captive Gibbons. Gibbon and Siamang, vol. 4. D. M. Rumbaugh, ed., 1-105.

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2. **Center Assistants** must have the following:

- tetanus vaccine (within the last 5 years),
- tuberculosis test within the last year (or physician's certification that you had a chest x-ray negative for tuberculosis),
- Rubeola ("regular") measles vaccination (or physician's certification that you had measles).

3. **Clerical Assistants** must have had a tetanus vaccine within the last 5 years.

Rewards: In addition to learning about primate behavior, you will have the opportunity to develop observational skills on nearly 40 behaviorally uninhibited primates. You will have the opportunity to work with and study one of the largest and rarest groups of gibbons in the world, including the Javan gibbon (there are less than 4000 remaining in the wild and only one additional pair in captivity in the U.S.) and the pileated gibbon (we are one of only 3 institutions that houses this species in North America.) Resident volunteers who have completed at least two month's stay may come again for less than the two month minimum. Volunteers will be sent the newsletter for one year free and can get reduced rates on gifts.

Commentary: The Gibbon Conservation Center (GCC), founded in 1976, is a non-profit organization and the only facility in the world devoted exclusively to the study, conservation and propagation of gibbons, and to education of the public about them. Since gibbons are serially monogamous primates, GCC houses them in naturally occurring small family groups to enable the species to reproduce successfully in captivity. We house the second largest group of gibbons outside their countries of origin, including 5 of the 17 extant species. The comfort and well-being of these primates is our primary concern. They are housed in spacious outdoor enclosures, ranging from 30 to 45 feet in length and from 12 to 20 feet in height. Most staff members and workers, including Director Alan Mootnick, are volunteers. GCC educates through lecture tours directed at elementary through college students (especially Anthropology and Biology students.) GCC has the largest gibbon library in the world, containing over 2500 scientific and popular gibbon articles, including over 100 dissertations. GCC also functions as a consultant to zoos, museums, government agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and rehabilitation centers in Asia on the care, maintenance and taxonomic identification of gibbons. GCC is a CDC registered quarantine facility.

[Printer friendly version](#) of volunteer info, [Online Volunteer Application](#)

Internships

For volunteers who are pursuing a relevant course of study and wish to complete an academic project as part of their volunteer stay, an internship level can be added to the regular Assistant Primate Keeper role.

PLEASE NOTE: As an intern, the volunteer will need to meet all Assistant Primate Keeper requirements and fees as well as meet the additional internship requirements. For resident volunteers who wish to add an internship component, a per diem fee is REQUIRED (not negotiable) amounting to \$5 per day per gibbon studied. Because of the required \$5/day/gibbon studied fee, the intern is advised to seek outside funding, (e.g. a grant). Any grant awarded must be shared with GCC.

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Non-resident interns (those not living at GCC) are welcome to study their own projects or those designed by GCC. They are encouraged to apply for outside funding, because a per diem fee of \$10 per day per gibbon studied is REQUIRED. In addition to this fee of \$10/day/gibbon studied, any grant awarded must be shared with GCC.

Southern California college interns who want to assist GCC with data entry, grounds maintenance, observations for GCC, and do not plan to use the data for their own project, will not be required to pay a per diem. Class credits are often available—speak to your professor.

Personal rewards include the gratification of contributing to the well-being of gibbons and learning more about these highly endangered apes. Successful interns will be given preference for conducting their master's or doctoral field studies at GCC.

To apply to be a primate keeper with the internship component, send a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae or resume and names of 2 references (preferably with email addresses) along with a description of the internship project you wish to pursue.

For further information, please write to Alan Mootnick at the address below or fax to 661-296-1237. Or mail to GCC Volunteer Coordinator at Gibbon Conservation Center, PO Box 800249, Santa Clarita, CA 91380 USA. We must receive your payment before your arrival to consider you an intern. No smoking is permitted at GCC.

For more information on volunteering with or without the interning component, contact Volunteer Coordinator: email: volunteer@gibboncenter.org. You can also fax applications (but not copies of driver's licenses, passports or health insurance) to 661-296-1237, or mail to: Gibbon Conservation Center PO Box 800249 Santa Clarita, CA 91380 USA

Thank You!

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