

2024 Zoo Crew Lead Naturalist Position Description

General Summary

The Zoo Crew Lead Naturalist is an unpaid leadership position in support of the overall Zoo Crew Program in which you will be responsible for assisting and mentoring the Naturalist portion of Zoo Crew. The goal is for you to be able to lead and support peers in a positive and encouraging manner and mentor new and returning Zoo Crew Naturalists.

The Lead Naturalist will have the opportunity to hone their interpretation skills and build leadership skills as they take an active role on our Leadership Council and provide insight into how we can improve the Zoo Crew program. Requires a high level of energy and enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to work with groups of your peers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Zoo Crew Lead Naturalist is a leadership position within the Zoo Crew program. Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Serving as a member of the leadership council and participate in meetings and activities to prepare for the summer program.
- Creating and presenting morning activities/presentations about the Houston Zoo's conservation partners, initiatives, animals or interpretation techniques and Zoo Crew bonding activities
- Planning and facilitating daily morning teambuilding activities
- Taking attendance of all Zoo Crew participating as a Naturalist
- Demonstrating and teaching each Naturalist station and storytelling interpretation to Zoo Crew Explorers and make sure they are properly preparing to perform each station out on grounds
- Performing observations of Zoo Crew behaviors and interpretation skills out on grounds throughout the day, helping them and providing them with feedback as you see fit
- Assisting Teen Programs staff in distributing feedback forms to Naturalists and support Naturalists in providing feedback to their partners
- Identifying sections of Naturalist that are weak and could use improvements
- Complete a project to improve an aspect of the Naturalist section of Zoo Crew
- Acting as a first line of communication of any issues that arise involving Zoo Crew Naturalists
- May be asked to act as a fill-in in other Zoo Crew sections as needed

Schedule

Pre-Summer Planning

These meetings are opportunities for the Leadership Council to get to know each other and prepare for the summer.

Mandatory

- **Saturday, March 2, 2024:** 9am-4pm
- **Sunday, April 7, 2024:** 9am-4pm
- **Saturday, May 4, 2024:** 9am-4pm

Summer

The schedule is approximate and can change at any time between now and the start of the program. It is only meant to provide applicants with an idea of what to expect going into this position. There will be several small duties that are not included in the following outline. This schedule is consecutive beginning on June 3-July 5 or July 8-August 9.

- **Week 1:** Learn the ropes. Session 1 Lead Naturalists: Develop Naturalist station and storytelling rotation schedule. Test schedule with Returning Zoo Crew.

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- **Week 2:** Identify sections of Naturalist that are weak and could use improvements.
- **Week 3:** Continue daily duties. Continue mentoring new Zoo Crew on interpretation and storytelling best practices. Start documenting concrete idea/concept/implementation of improving an aspect of Naturalist.
- **Week 4:** Continue daily duties, continue mentoring new Zoo Crew on interpretation and storytelling best practices. Finalize plan for Naturalist section improvement project.
- **Week 5:** Continue daily duties but focus on finishing project. Implement improvement project.

*Please note, that accepted TLC members will be schedule for one 5-week session. If you would like to come in during weeks that are not part of your scheduled session, you are allowed, but you must participate as a Naturalist or Camp Mentor and not as a TLC member unless specifically asked by the current TLC members to assist or if there is a separate project or committee they are working on (ie Snake-Saving Campaign Committee). Additionally, to prevent burn out, you will only be allowed to participate in a maximum of 8 weeks during the summer.

Year-Round Zoo Crew

After the summer, Teen Leadership Council will have once monthly mandatory meetings. At these meetings TLC will be debriefing from the summer, planning for future events such as World Lemur Festival, and discussing future Zoo Crew projects.

Fall meeting schedule:

- September 7, 2024: 9am-4pm
- October 5, 2024: 9am-4pm
- November 2, 2024: 9am-4pm
- December 7, 2024: 9am-4pm

In addition to the monthly meetings, TLC will also be required to participate in either a leadership capacity or as a Zoo Crew in the events required for Year-Round Zoo Crew. Minimum requirements are as follows:

Fall (October– January)

- Two shifts of Zoo Boo
- One day of Camp Mentoring or Naturalist

Spring (January- May)

- Three shifts as Naturalist. This can include opportunities such as Naturalist station development, Spotlight on Species events, etc.

Qualifications and Requirements

- Have one year of Zoo Crew completed
- Be in good standing in the Zoo Crew program
- Be 15 years old by May 31, 2024
- Be between the ages of 15 and 17 *through* the end of your summer session
- Be able and committed to attend 3 mandatory meetings described above of meetings in the Spring
- Be able to commit to **ALL** 5 weeks of one of the Zoo Crew Explorers sessions in the summer.
- Be able to continue through the Year-Round Zoo Crew program. Additional once-monthly meetings beyond the Year-Round Program commitment will be required for the members of the Leadership Council.

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Preferred Skills

- Ability to lead Zoo Crew in your peer group
- Flexibility with day to day routines
- Knowledge of the Naturalist position and interpretation skills
- Knowledge of and experience leading team building activities
- Public speaking

To Apply

Submit application by Saturday, January 27th at 11:59pm. Interviews will occur between February 1-10, 2024. Applicants will be chosen based on their application, interview, and previous evaluations.

Parental/Guardian Agreement

Being part of the Teen Leadership Council is a significant commitment. We want to ensure that all TLC members and their parents/guardians understand and agree to commit to all required meetings/participation dates as outlined above.