Assistant Wildlife Ambassador Caretaker

Part-Time | Year-Round | Animal Ambassador Program

Position	Assistant Wildlife Ambassador Caretaker
Program	Animal Ambassador Program
Reports to	Wildlife Coordinator
Employment type	Part-time, year-round (averaging 26 hours per week)
FLSA classification	Non-exempt (hourly)
Pay	$17.00 – $19.25 per hour, based on experience
Schedule	Weekend availability required
Location	On-site at Balsam Mountain Preserve, 81 Preserve Road, Sylva, NC 28779

ABOUT BALSAM MOUNTAIN TRUST

Balsam Mountain Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire people to be responsible stewards of the natural and cultural resources of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains through education and conservation leadership. The Trust is located in the heart of Balsam Mountain Preserve, a low-density residential community encompassing more than 3,400 acres of permanently conserved land.

Our Animal Ambassador Program is central to our mission and to the Western North Carolina community, delivering environmental education throughout Jackson and Haywood Counties.

POSITION SUMMARY

Balsam Mountain Trust seeks an experienced animal caretaker to support all aspects of our Animal Ambassador Program, including the daily husbandry, health, and welfare of our 16 animal ambassadors. Working under the direct supervision of the Wildlife Coordinator, the Assistant Wildlife Ambassador Caretaker helps deliver progressive, welfare-focused care to animals who serve one of the most important roles in our organization: connecting people with wildlife.

This is an excellent opportunity to join a small, dedicated team committed to long-term welfare initiatives and exceptional animal care.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prepare diets and feed animal ambassadors according to established nutrition plans.
- Observe and monitor the health, behavior, and general well-being of each animal, and promptly report concerns to the Wildlife Coordinator.
- Maintain accurate, timely records of husbandry, health, training, and enrichment activities.
- Clean, sanitize, and maintain animal habitats and support areas.
- Conduct positive reinforcement–based training and participate in welfare assessments.

- Plan, implement, and document enrichment programming.
- Assist in preparing animals for off-site and external education programs.

Additional Responsibilities (as assigned)

- Assist with coordinating and supervising the animal care volunteer program.
- Support the improvement and development of animal facilities.
- Participate in environmental education outreach programs with animal ambassadors.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- College coursework in zoology, biology, or a related field.
- Two or more years of experience in an animal husbandry facility; experience with exotic species or in a zoo setting is preferred.
- Strong oral and written communication and interpersonal skills, and the ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Ability to work outdoors in all seasons and weather conditions, including snow, heat, humidity, and heavy rain.
- A valid driver's license and the ability to drive safely on mountain roads and terrain.
- Availability to work weekends on a regular basis.
- A current tetanus vaccination, or willingness to obtain one before beginning animal care duties.
- Successful completion of a pre-employment background check.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Ability to learn and safely operate power tools and maintenance equipment as needed.
- Familiarity with animal care record-keeping software or similar systems.
- Proficiency with Microsoft 365 applications (e.g., Outlook, OneDrive).

WHAT YOU BRING

- **Organization:** You manage multiple priorities well and know what needs attention first.
- **Initiative:** You solve problems proactively and anticipate issues before they arise.
- **Attention to detail:** You take pride in accuracy, from diet preparation to record-keeping.
- **Teamwork:** You bring a positive attitude and a willingness to help others.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

The physical demands and work environment described below are representative of those required to perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Regularly stand, walk, bend, kneel, and climb on uneven, steep, or slippery outdoor terrain.

- Lift, carry, and move up to 50 pounds, including food, bedding, equipment, and animal transport crates.
- Work outdoors in all seasons and weather conditions, including extreme heat, cold, snow, and rain.
- Handle and work in close proximity to live animals, including animals that may bite, scratch, or otherwise cause injury.
- Exposure to animal waste, cleaning and disinfecting agents, allergens, and potential zoonotic disease; personal protective equipment is provided and required where appropriate.
- Drive Trust or personal vehicles on mountain roads, including off-site programs.

COMPENSATION AND SCHEDULE

This is a part-time, year-round, hourly (non-exempt) position, averaging 26 hours per week. Pay ranges from $17.00 to $19.25 per hour, based on experience. Weekend availability is required, and the schedule may vary based on animal care and program needs. Any hours worked over 40 in a workweek will be paid at one and one-half times the regular rate, in accordance with federal law.

There may be an opportunity for this position to expand to full-time based on organizational needs and funding.

HOW TO APPLY

Please email a cover letter and résumé, as attachments, to Rachael Hart at **rhart@bmtrust.org**. Your cover letter should explain your interest in the position and describe your experience relevant to the responsibilities outlined above.

Review of applications will begin on November 1, 2026, and the position will remain open until filled. The anticipated start date is December 1, 2026.

Any offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of a background check and confirmation of the required vaccinations.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Balsam Mountain Trust is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

Applicants who need a reasonable accommodation during the application or interview process, or who wish to request a medical or religious accommodation related to the vaccination requirements, may contact Rachael Hart at rhart@bmtrust.org. Requests will be considered in accordance with applicable law.

Employment with Balsam Mountain Trust is at-will. This job description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed; it is not an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, or qualifications, and it does not constitute an employment contract. Duties may change at any time based on organizational needs.