

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

Professional Zookeeper Program



Cat Tales Wildlife Center
17020 N Newport Hwy
Mead, WA 99021



Phone: (509) 238-4126
Email: mail@cattales.org
Web: www.zooschool.org



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Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

COURSE CATALOG

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Cat Tales, Inc. - DBA Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is solely owned and operated by Cat Tales, Inc. All operations and aspects of the school and Cat Tales, Inc. are determined by the Board of Directors and its management committee. Board officers are elected for a one-year term. The current list of Officers and Board Members are as follows:

PRESIDENT

Ryan Wyche

SECRETARY

Marilyn Valentine

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Douglas Hoiby

Heather Keepers

Rhiannon Walthers

VICE PRESIDENT

Debbie Wyche

TREASURER

Nancy Morrigeaux

Location of School Administration Office

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

17020 N Newport Hwy, Mead, WA 99021

(509) 238-4126

This school is licensed under Chapter 28C.10 RCW

Inquiries, concerns, or complaints regarding this school can be made to the

Workforce Board,

128 10th Avenue SW, Olympia, Washington, 98501.

Phone: (360) 709-4600; Web: www.wtb.wa.gov; E-Mail: workforce@wtb.wa.gov

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Deborah (Debbie) Wyche – Instructor

Wildlife Director – Cat Tales Wildlife Center

Director / Training Supervisor – Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

Experience and Education

- 35+ years of exotic animal and wildlife management experience, specializing in felids.
- Founder and management supervisor of Cat Tales Wildlife Center.
- Primary Instructor for Cat Tales Wildlife Academy for 25+ years.
- Administrator of all local, regional, and state licensing / permits as they relate to animal care, vocational training, and nonprofit status.
- Skill driver (instructor) with the goal of increasing the job quality and work ethics of students for employers while incorporating industry standards, rules, and regulations.
- Current study includes working toward a better future for wildlife and those who care for it, everything nonprofit including Board Development and Grant writing, and the continuing development of our online education programs to enhance the learning opportunities as the state of zookeeping instruction changes.

Lisa Grey – Instructor

Executive Director – Cat Tales Wildlife Center - 2018 to present

Experience and Education

- Property management including HR, ADA compliance, Fair housing, Civil Rights, BOD meetings & annual owner meetings.
- Experience & knowledge in insurance, damage mitigation, structural assessments and maintenance, disaster preparedness, etc.
- Create and run programs for children, low-income households and experienced in property inspections and file audits.
- Currently manage social media, fundraising, PR, HR, and day-to-day zoo operations.

Randy Grey – Instructor

Maintenance & Operations Supervisor – Cat Tales Wildlife Center - 2018 to present

Experience and Education

- Experienced in painting, masonry, carpentry and drywall in high end client homes, leading painting crews.
- Leading and running a small warehouse specializing in providing private and corporate business quality produce, proteins, and other food goods.
- Currently maintains zoo grounds, exhibits, supplies and inventory. Construction of new and/or repaired animal housing and exhibits, building improvements, everything required under maintenance and operations from the ground up.
- Supervision of volunteer work crews.

Licensing

Cat Tales, Inc. is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), under the Animal Welfare Act, as a Class C exhibitor (All zoos are given that classification.) Cat Tales Wildlife Center is also licensed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife as a rehabilitation center for native species. Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is licensed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board of Washington State. CATTALES is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation and a Washington State charitable corporation.

Facilities

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is located on a four-acre wooded site north of Spokane, Washington in the rural suburb of Mead. Cat Tales Wildlife Center is arranged for easy access for the public, providing a walk-through pathway near the animal's exhibits. The exhibits themselves are designed to be as natural as possible. The staff and students spend most of their time outdoors in the Wildlife Center. This provides the best learning environment for animal observations and hands on experience. In-person instruction is held either on the Wildlife Center grounds, or in the main support building which also houses the computer/records room, the natural history museum, and animal support areas including dietary preparation.

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy features an up-to-date facility with a reception area, a computer and animal records room, and a multi-purpose room. Training equipment includes a working Zoological Park featuring large carnivores and native wildlife, all tools and supplies germane to the care and training/handling of the animals, and maintenance of the zoo grounds. The school has a break room for students with a microwave, refrigerator, sink, and tables and chairs. Both male and female lavatories are available. There is parking available. The facility is located 5 miles from the closest public transit. This is an ADA accessible facility with handicapped ramps and lavatories. For both animal and human security, Audio & Video Surveillance Equipment is used throughout the zoo property in both public and staff areas. The maximum class size is 10 and the student/teacher ratio is 10 to 1.

Student Records & Grades on File

Student records will be maintained by the school for 50 years or until the school closes. If the school closes, records may be forwarded to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Upon graduation, each student will be given a copy of his or her transcript. These records should be maintained indefinitely by the student. Students may request copies by writing the school. Student records are available for review by the student at any time.

Professional Zookeeper Program

--Course Overview--

Part One - Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations (weeks 1 thru 24)

Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management (weeks 25 thru 48)

The **Professional Zookeeper Program** is designed to develop animal/wildlife health and welfare related skills, the supporting teamwork & relationships inherent to success in a professional animal care setting. Understanding the backbone and front side of a zoological facility and its organization is an important part of the program.

Successful completion of **Part One - Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** (or equivalent) and **Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management** are required for Graduation and to acquire the **Professional Zookeeper Certificate of Achievement**

Part One - Introduction to Zookeeping and Facility Operations (Weeks 1-24)

Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations is the all-inclusive beginning to understanding people/animal relationships and the role of public relations and teamwork in professional animal care.

The **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** course consists of 24 clock hour weeks at 30 hours per week. A minimum of 720 hours of practical internship training is required to complete the **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** course.

In the **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations instruction and applied skills**, students will learn basic husbandry and management of zoo animals through virtual and practical internship training using the animals located at the Wildlife Center for illustration of technique. This includes, but is not limited to,

- safety and emergency protocol,
- cleaning, sanitizing, & maintenance of exhibit and holding areas,
- wild animal nutrition & diet preparation,
- record keeping, behavior observation, animal enrichment,
- back-up & an introduction to lead zoo keeping,
- and related government regulations.

The **Facility Operations instruction and applied skills training** include, but are not limited to,

- various aspects of basic zoo support and operations,
- public relations, fund raising & public education,
- exhibit and grounds maintenance,
- construction and horticulture.

This training is accomplished on the Wildlife Center grounds.

The course subjects are taught through a combination of virtual and practical internship training throughout the program. The order in which the studies occur may vary slightly as current emphasis fluctuates to meet the educational needs of the students and to meet the current standards of the animal care industry, including rules and regulations. Successful completion of all course subjects is required for advancement.

Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management (Weeks 25-48)

Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management

Prerequisite **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations**, or Equivalent Experience (To be determined by the Review and Acceptance Committee)

Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management covers more advanced study and implementation of the skills taught in the **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** with the concentration on Leadership skills and an introduction to Small Zoo Management. The management skills taught can be utilized in many business applications as the student will learn a comprehensive background to the structure of an animal/people related facility.

The **Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management** course consists of 24 clock-hour weeks at 30 hours per week. A minimum of 720 hours of practical internship training is required to complete the **Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management** course.

In the **Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management instruction and applied skills**, students will learn through virtual and practical internship training, leadership in professional animal care and small zoo operations. Virtual and/or in-person classes and practical internship training will review instruction covered in **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations**.

- Using the animals located at the Wildlife Center for illustration of technique, students will implement the conditioning or training of specified animals to assist in their husbandry, health, medical management, and welfare.
- Depending on the species and animal's history, the wildlife housed at Cat Tales are protected contact animals and under rare circumstances are free contact.

Other areas of instruction and implementation will include, but are not limited to,

- the role of leadership in zookeeping incorporated in the supervision of
- animal husbandry,
- animal health & welfare,
- dietary preparation and delivery,
- and related recordkeeping.

Also covered and assigned is

- advanced enrichment,
- onsite and outreach conservation education programs (use of ambassador/program animals not guaranteed).
- species specific and age-related animal care including geriatric animal concerns and quality of life assessment.
- the role of the zookeeper in veterinary care & procedures.
- and employment readiness.

In the **Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management instruction and applied skills**, students will learn through virtual and practical internship training, aspects of Small Facility Management including, but not limited to,

- fund raising,
- public education and relations,
- staffing and scheduling,
- volunteer training,
- local, regional, and federal regulations, licensing, inspections,
- acquisition and disposition of the animal collection,
- advanced record keeping, networking, inventory,
- zoo science, and emergency protocol.

Tuition and Fees

The One-Year Program is divided into Two (2) Six-Month Courses with the following Tuition and Fees Payments can be made in 2 installments - One for each Course or Payment can be made for the Full Program in advance.

Part One – Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations - Tuition -----\$750.00
Book & Training Fees - (required) (nonrefundable once received) -----\$250.00
TOTAL FOR PART ONE--- \$1,000.00

Part Two – Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management - Tuition -----\$750.00
Book & Training Fees - (required) (nonrefundable once received) -----\$250.00
TOTAL FOR PART TWO--- \$1,000.00

TOTAL COST OF PROFESSIONAL ZOOKEEPER PROGRAM-----\$ 2,000.00

Students are required to purchase their own basic personal clothing & footwear. Staff shirt is provided. Access to a computer and the internet is necessary for online study and research assignments. All work tools, and related training aids which are germane to the course are furnished by the school.

Financial Aid

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is not authorized to offer Federal Financial Aid. Applicants will be notified of known financial aid through non-federal outside resources and/or work study opportunities when available.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Refund Before Entering Class

- (1) A full refund of all money paid will be given to applicants if they are not accepted into the Wildlife Academy.
- (2) A full refund of all money paid will be given to applicants if they withdraw no later than midnight on the fifth business day (excluding all Sundays and holidays) after they have signed the contract or made an initial payment, providing that the applicant has not commenced training.
- (3) After five business days (excluding all Sundays and holidays), the school may retain an established registration fee equal to ten percent of the total tuition cost, or one hundred dollars, whichever is less. "Registration fee" refers to any fee, however named, covering those expenses incurred by an institution in processing student applications and establishing a student record system.

Refund After Entering Class

If training is terminated after entering classes, the student is obligated to the school according to the following formulas or maximum charges:

- (1) If you terminate during the first week or 10 percent of the contracted instructional time, whichever is less, the school may retain 10 percent of tuition cost, plus registration fee (equal to 10 percent of the tuition cost, or \$100, whichever is less);
- (2) If you terminate after the first week or 10 percent of the contracted instructional time, whichever is less but, prior to completion of 25 percent of contracted time, the school may retain 25 percent of the tuition cost, plus registration fee (equal to 10 percent of the tuition cost, or \$100, whichever is less);
- (3) If you terminate after completion of 25 percent and up to 50 percent of contracted instructional time, the school may retain 50 percent of the tuition cost, plus registration fee (equal to 10 percent of the tuition cost, or \$100, whichever is less);
- (4) If you terminate after 50 percent of the contracted instructional time, the school may retain the full tuition cost, plus registration fee (equal to 10 percent of the tuition cost, or \$100, whichever is less).

Attendance Requirements

Part One - Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations (weeks 1 thru 24)
consists of 720 practical clock hours broken down into 24 weeks of 30 hours per week AND

Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management (weeks 25 thru 48)
consists of 720 practical clock hours broken down into 24 weeks of 30 hours per week.

Completion of the Professional Zookeeper Program consists of 1440 practical clock hours broken down into 48 weeks of 30 hours per week.

Students will be required to be on the zoo grounds for a maximum of (10) ten hours per day. Full time employment or opposing work schedules are not recommended as they may interfere with progress in the program. Students will receive two weeks off each 6-month course (either during or between courses). The scheduling of such time off must be approved by the instructors to ensure proper support for the animals under the care of the students. Also, other time off for special circumstances may be arranged at the discretion of the instructors and will be considered on an “as needed” basis.

Though not required as a participating student; the Animal Care Management may request pre-scheduled attendance due to an animal or other emergency concern. Cat Tales will and/or may be open to students during any 24-hour day, any day of the year. Students are frequently scheduled to begin their days in the fall, spring, and summer by 7:30 in the morning. Winter hours vary depending on the weather and commuting conditions. In-person and virtual instruction continues throughout the year. The school is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

The students will be scheduled for training and instruction at the start of the program, with their weekly/daily attendance requirement determined at that time. In general students will be required to attend 3 days per week at a 10-hour day or the equivalent to equal a 30-hour week. Student attendance will include the above hours scheduled Tuesday through Sunday, including at least one weekend day. The dates and times of the virtual and/or in-person instruction will be determined to fit the schedule of the students at the start of and throughout the course(s).

Clock hours must be kept current regardless of time off granted. Any other absences must be made up prior to the completion of the course in which they occurred. Failure to make up missed contracted time, responsibilities, or studies will result in no grade given and dismissal from the program. Unless specified, without written notice, the dismissal date will be as described in the [“Official Termination Date”](#) section.

Official Termination Date

The official date of termination of a student shall be the last date of recorded attendance when withdrawal occurs in any of the following manners:

- (1) When the school receives written notice of the student's intention to discontinue training.
- (2) When the student is terminated for a violation of a published school policy which provides for termination.
- (3) When a student, without notice to the institution, fails to attend classes for 30 calendar days.

Program Start Dates

June 14, 2023

September 13, 2023

November 1, 2023

Attendance Calendar

Quarters begin during June, September, November, and March. There may be additional or alternate start dates due to demand or other circumstances. Though not required as a participating student; the Wildlife Center may request pre-scheduled attendance due to an animal or other emergency or concern, the Wildlife Center will or may be open to students during any 24-hour day; any day of the year. At times, homework assignments are heavy and access to a computer and the internet is a necessity. Students are frequently scheduled to begin their days in the fall, summer, and spring at 7:30 a.m. Winter hours vary depending on the weather. The school is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Admission Requirements

All persons applying for admission to the Cat Tales Wildlife Academy must be a minimum of 18 years of age and be a high school graduate. Students must possess a High School Diploma with a GPA of 2.5 or greater, a General Education Development (GED) Diploma, or pass a graded entrance exam.

All applicants must demonstrate freedom from physical handicaps which would affect their ability to safely and satisfactorily perform the responsibilities required of all Wildlife Academy students. This includes, but not limited to, being able to lift 30 pounds and have visual acuity and manual dexterity to maintain safety and prevent physical danger while on school grounds. Students must provide proof of a recent physical examination, tetanus shot and tuberculosis test.

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy encourages diversity and accepts applications from all minorities. Cat Tales Wildlife Academy does not discriminate based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. Cat Tales Wildlife Academy acknowledges that information pertaining to an applicant's disability is voluntary and confidential and will be made on an individual basis. If this information is presented, Cat Tales Wildlife Academy will reasonably attempt to provide an accommodation to overcome the effects of the limitation of the qualified applicant. All inquiries about accommodations should be made to the admissions administrator upon registration of the program, some programs require medical documentation because of the rigors of curriculum.

Please Note – It is important that all applicants, prospective students, and those with disabilities; thoroughly read the entire catalog/website, the full description of training and the work environment. Cat Tales Wildlife Center and Academy houses *inherently dangerous animals* and the students will be working in the proximity of these animals. Though we have STRICT safety rules in place, we do reserve the right to restrict access to areas of the Zoo to any student whom we feel could pose a risk of injury or death to themselves, the animals, or others, whether intentional or not. Any such restriction could affect a student's ability to benefit from the program as presented. Refer to Conduct Requirements.

Any applicant owning personal pets must provide proof of current health certificate and shot records for each pet currently living with that applicant. (At no time will personal pets be allowed on the park grounds). For safety reasons the use of guide dogs and service animals is restricted.

Grading System

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy has established a grading system to ensure that the students graduated will have developed the skills needed to succeed in their chosen field. During the program, students are evaluated for vocational quality and efficiency. Grades are based on practical skills, teamwork, attendance, and assignments. Students must maintain at least a 75 percent average to advance to the next quarter. Students are evaluated daily, reviewed for practical skill advancement monthly, and graded quarterly on performance and attendance.

A test may be administered after each lesson to determine the amount of learning that has taken place. Test scores that are below 75 percent are an indication that the necessary skills for entry into employment were not acquired. Administration may provide progress reports at predetermined intervals in the program. Students should make arrangements for additional practice, independent study, or tutoring, if needed. Grades and/or assessments will be provided to the students on a weekly basis with a final report and transcript provided at the completion of the program if the student is in good status. Other methods of evaluation may include oral quizzes, skill development tests, hands-on skill evaluation, and individual and group projects.

A student who fails a course in the program will be allowed to repeat the portion(s) of their training *one time* at a reduced tuition rate of 50% off the original enrollment fee. Should they fail to achieve the required passing grades the second time, they will not be allowed to re-enroll in the program.

Conduct

As a student of the Cat Tales Wildlife Academy, you will be expected to meet the requirements of the program. These include professional conduct during all virtual and/or in-person instructional hours as well as Wildlife Center duties and Outreach involvement. The program is designed as an award system providing you with incentives to excel in your studies.

Because of the nature of the field of Zookeeping, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on safety. All safety rules must be strictly observed. While the Wildlife Academy is home to some of the most beautiful creatures on earth, the animals at the Wildlife Center are also the most dangerous. A careless act could result in the serious injury or death to a human or an animal.

A student violating safety procedures and regulations, who fails to make satisfactory progress, interferes with other students' work, is insubordinate, boisterous, vulgar or obscene, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or does not make timely tuition payments is subject to immediate termination from the program.

Any student willfully causing harm to, or threatening to cause harm to any animal at the Wildlife Center will be immediately dismissed from the program and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Nothing in the policy prevents the student from contacting the Workforce Board at 360-709-4600 at any time with a concern or complaint.

Admission Procedure

NEW STUDENTS

1. Obtain an application from the Cat Tales Wildlife Center, 17020 N. Newport Hwy, Mead, WA. 99021; contact us at our facility by dialing (509) 238-4126 or download the application from the website www.zooschool.org/application-2022
2. Return application and current photo to the admissions office, located at the same address as the Wildlife Center. Applications can be sent by email to mail@cattales.org or completed online.
3. Request and return a copy of your transcripts for both your high school (or a copy of G.E.D. completion) and any previous college(s) attended to the admissions office. Proof of technical status will suffice, if practical.
4. Submit three (3) letters of recommendation from employers or teachers for the program.
5. Submit proof of a recent physical examination, tetanus shot and tuberculosis test.
6. The last step to acceptance is an in person, virtual, or phone interview that will determine the acceptance or rejection of the applicant. Prior to the personal interview all the above-mentioned items must be on file at the Wildlife Academy.
7. Final notice of your acceptance (or refusal) will be sent to you in letter form. Any specific requirements of applicants will be included.

FORMER STUDENTS

Students re-applying for a course, either missed with an approved extended leave of absence or a non-passing grade in a subject resulting in dismissal, should submit a petition to the program faculty. After the petition for re-entry to the program or course is submitted the program faculty will notify you, as to approval or denial.

Program Completion & Graduation

Successful Completion of Part One - Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations (or equivalent) and Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Small Facility Management are required for Graduation and to acquire the Professional Zookeeper Certificate of Achievement.

Placement Assistance

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy does not guarantee job placement. A student's ability to benefit from the Professional Zookeeper Program is taken into consideration upon acceptance to the instructional study and practical internship training required for graduation. Successful completion of the program will provide the student with employable skills. When available, networking or recommendation contacts will be provided to improve the possibility of employment to graduates that have shown quality advancement in the Professional Zookeeper Program.

Career Opportunities

- Zookeeper I - (Entry level)
- Zookeeper II – (Lead or Senior Keeper) - (requires completion of Program with honors)
- Animal Care Professional with Large Carnivore Experience
- Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Wildlife / Conservation Educator
- Nonprofit and/or Facility Operations - with Animal Care Background

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“There are those of us who are blessed with a love for animals, and we know how much pleasure and support we receive in return.

There are also those few, however, who go far beyond us and dedicate their entire lives to the well-being and protection of these invaluable creatures. For them, the personal rewards must be hundred-fold.”

-- Betty White 

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