

ZOOSCHOOL.ORG

# Cat Tales

## Wildlife Academy

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**Zookeeping & Wildlife Management  
Certification Program**



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# Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

## COURSE CATALOG

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### Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

*Operated by Cat Tales, Inc. - DBA Cat Tales Wildlife Academy*

17020 N Newport Hwy, Mead, WA 99021  
(509) 238-4126

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## Board of Directors

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is owned and managed by Cat Tales, Inc. The governance and operational oversight of both the academy and the corporation are the responsibility of the Board of Directors and its management committee. Board officers serve annual terms. Below is the current roster of Officers and Board Members:

President

Ryan Wyche

Treasurer

Debbie Wyche

Vice President

Randy Grey

Other Board Members

Douglas Hoiby

Heather Keepers

Rhiannon Walthers

Secretary Janae

Carrothers

Julia Conrath

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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](http://www.wtb.wa.gov); E-Mail: [workforce@wtb.wa.gov](mailto:workforce@wtb.wa.gov)

# About

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 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 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 and all tools and supplies germane to the animals' care, training/handling, 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. Audio & Video Surveillance Equipment is used throughout the zoo property in public and staff areas for animal and human security. The maximum class size is 10, and the student/teacher ratio is 10 to 1.

## Our Licensing

Rest assured, Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is licensed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board of Washington State. Cat Tales, Inc. holds a license from 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. CATTALLES is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation and a Washington State charitable corporation. These licenses ensure our commitment to compliance and quality education.

## Our Mission

We are dedicated to promoting the highest animal welfare standards, enhancing the health and well-being of individual animals, and contributing to the conservation of endangered species and their ecosystems. We are committed to advancing the science and practice of animal care, conservation, and welfare through experiential learning, research, and collaboration with a network of leading zoological institutions.

## Our Vision

Our vision is to be a premier center of excellence in zoological training, research, and education. We strive to develop a new generation of skilled animal care professionals with the latest knowledge, tools, and techniques for animal care, conservation, and welfare.

We aim to be a leader in zoological training and a catalyst for positive change in the global community of animal care professionals dedicated to advancing the science and practice of animal care and welfare and promoting the conservation of endangered species and their habitats.

# Team

Our staff and Board members power our mission and vision in amazing ways. We couldn't accomplish much without their energy, dedication, and talent. Learn more about the people behind our organization.

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## Debbie Wyche

**Director of Wildlife Education & Board Vice President**  
**Cat Tales Wildlife Center**

### Profile

With a distinguished career spanning over 35 years, I have developed an expertise in exotic animal and wildlife management, specializing in felids. My founder and management supervisor role at Cat Tales Wildlife Center exemplifies my leadership in the field.

### Professional Experience

**Cat Tales Wildlife Center**

**Founder & Management Supervisor**

- Spearheaded animal care and wildlife management initiatives with a focus on carnivores.
- Led the organization to meet and exceed all local, regional, and state requirements for licensing and permits, ensuring compliance with the highest animal welfare and training standards.

**Cat Tales Wildlife Academy**

**Lead Instructor**

- Served as the primary educator for over 25 years, dedicating my career to the training and development of future wildlife professionals.
- Developed and refined curriculum to align with employer expectations and industry standards, significantly enhancing student readiness and work ethics.

### Key Achievements

- Administered comprehensive licensing programs that ensured the center's adherence to state and non-profit operational standards.
- Pioneered innovative education programs that expanded zookeeping and wildlife management learning opportunities.
- Contributed to board development and grant writing efforts that secured vital funding for nonprofit initiatives.

### Education & Continuing Studies

- Engaged in ongoing research and studies to advance wildlife conservation and educational methods.
- Actively enhanced the educational landscape by introducing cutting-edge teaching methodologies and technologies.

### Vision

I am committed to shaping a brighter future for wildlife through education and advocacy, ensuring that animals and those dedicated to their care thrive in a rapidly evolving environment.

# Team

## Lisa Grey

### Executive Director

#### Profile

An accomplished executive with a comprehensive property and facility management background, I possess a multifaceted skill set encompassing HR management, ADA compliance, and civil rights advocacy. My extensive education and experience enable me to drive operations focusing on safety, efficiency, and inclusivity.

#### Professional Experience

Current Role: Executive Director

- Manage daily operations, including HR functions and public relations, to ensure seamless organizational performance.
- Spearheaded social media campaigns and fundraising initiatives, significantly increasing engagement and financial support.
- Oversee property management tasks such as inspections, maintenance, and compliance with housing regulations.

#### Key Competencies

- **Property Management:** Expert in conducting structural assessments and developing disaster preparedness plans to safeguard properties.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Skilled in navigating fair housing regulations, ADA compliance, and championing civil rights to ensure equitable management practices.
- **Human Resources:** Proficient in overseeing HR operations, including staffing, training, and performance evaluations.
- **Community Programs:** Passionate about designing and implementing outreach programs targeting children and low-income households.
- **Maintenance Oversight:** Manage all aspects of property upkeep, from routine maintenance to complex damage mitigation strategies.
- **Insurance and Risk Management:** Knowledgeable in handling insurance matters and implementing risk mitigation solutions.

#### Education & Professional Development

Engaged in ongoing professional development to stay current with industry trends and regulations.

#### Vision

Dedicated to leading with integrity and innovation, I am committed to leveraging my skills to enhance organizational effectiveness and community impact. I aim to continue developing programs and strategies that promote safe, sustainable, and inclusive environments.

---

# Team

## Randy Grey

### Maintenance & Operations Specialist

#### Profile

An experienced maintenance and operations specialist with expertise across various trades, including painting, masonry, carpentry, and drywall installation. Recognized for maintaining high quality and customer satisfaction standards in high-end residential projects and managing complex logistics in a warehouse environment. Currently responsible for the comprehensive upkeep of zoo grounds and exhibits, demonstrating a commitment to excellence in facility maintenance and team leadership.

#### Professional Experience

##### Zoo Maintenance Manager

- Oversee the maintenance of zoo grounds and exhibits, ensuring all facilities are operational and meet safety standards.
- Led projects for constructing new animal housing and exhibit spaces from initial planning to completion.
- Manage inventory and supply chains to support daily operations and special projects.
- Supervise volunteer work crews, providing training and leadership to ensure high-quality workmanship and team cohesion.

##### Warehouse Operations Manager

- Directed a small warehouse distributing high-quality produce, proteins, and other food goods.
- Implemented effective inventory management and logistics strategies, enhancing product delivery and customer satisfaction.
- Cultivated strong relationships with private and corporate clients, ensuring a stable and loyal customer base.

##### Lead Painter and Crew Manager

- Led painting crews in high-end client homes, focusing on premium service delivery and impeccable finish quality.
- Mastered and applied techniques in painting, masonry, carpentry, and drywall installation, ensuring professional results that meet client expectations.

#### Key Skills

- Trade Skills: Proficient in painting, masonry, carpentry, and drywall installation.
- Project Management: Experienced overseeing large-scale maintenance projects from inception to completion.
- Logistics and Inventory Management: Skilled in managing supply chains and inventory for operational efficiency.
- Leadership: Effective at leading and mentoring teams, enhancing productivity and work quality.

#### Vision

I am dedicated to applying my diverse skills in maintenance and operations to ensure optimal facility functionality and aesthetics. With a proven ability to manage complex projects and lead teams, I want to continue contributing to and growing within the field.



# Our Unique Experience

If you want to pursue a career in animal care or zookeeping, you may have realized that most positions require prior experience. That's where our program comes in. Our unique approach immerses students and [faculty](#) in the facility's daily operations and animal care.

Our program stands on a solid foundation of over 40 years of combined instructional experience, during which we have nurtured and educated over three hundred students in Professional Animal Care and Zookeeping.

[Our campus](#) is unique. It serves as a functioning wildlife sanctuary and a teaching zoo, open to the public year-round. With a focus on carnivores, our students receive hands-on training in the daily care and management of these magnificent animals.

We provide practical training using our [current animal population](#), ensuring that students at all skill levels gain hands-on experience in animal care. Our program emphasizes the importance of animal welfare and health-related skills, teamwork, and relationship-building within a modern zoological facility. It requires outdoor work in all weather conditions to prepare students for the realities of working in animal care. We offer in-person and virtual classroom instruction, including webinars, online courses, and meetings.

[Our program](#) provides students with invaluable hands-on experience in animal husbandry, behavior and management, conservation education, and safety. Students work near the carnivores and other animals at the sanctuary, gaining practical skills and knowledge to serve them well in their future careers. Our experienced faculty members provide personalized attention and guidance to each student, ensuring that they receive a comprehensive education in the art and science of animal care.

In our program, we prioritize fostering a strong community of students and faculty who share a passion for animal care and conservation. Our small class sizes enable students to form close relationships with one another and with faculty members, creating a supportive and collaborative environment. Students can learn from one another's experiences and perspectives and work together on projects and assignments. We believe this sense of community is essential to creating well-rounded, effective professionals in animal care.

Our wildlife sanctuary and teaching zoo provide an exceptional environment for research opportunities, and students have the chance to participate in ongoing research projects. Through hands-on experience, students can contribute to scientific research in animal care and welfare. Our program is committed to providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the field, and research experience is an important part of this commitment.

# The Animals

For over 30 years, we have provided safe sanctuary, shelter, nutritional diets, clean water, enrichment, veterinary care, comfort, and more for over 100 cats, including lions, [bobcats](#), [tigers](#), [cougars](#), [servals](#), caracals, [lynx](#), leopards, clouded leopards, jaguars, and a liger (a hybrid offspring of a male lion and a female tiger). [Coyotes](#), [foxes](#), [wolves](#), and [bears](#) have also found forever homes with us.

Our sanctuary is filled with wildlife that comes to us as orphans from the wild, from people who garnered the animals illegally, or those who realize that tigers or other wildlife don't domesticate well.

Our sanctuary is not just a place; it's a community. Our dedicated staff and students, who are professional, safety-oriented zookeepers, spend long days ensuring the health and welfare of the animals. They also generously share their time, knowledge, and compassion with all who visit our gates, making our sanctuary a place of learning and understanding.

## Our collection of family members changes with the seasons.

At the Cat Tales Wildlife Center, our family is diverse and ever-changing. Alongside the big cats, we've provided care for a wide range of animals, from small and large exotic pets, farm animals, parrots, and reptiles to the more familiar puppies, kittens, dogs, and cats. Some of these animals are not on public display, but they play a crucial role in our educational programs, offering hands-on experience for our students. Most of the non-feline animals arrived as orphans or unwanted pets, and we've taken them in as part of our rescue program.

# Our Campus

The 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 designed to provide easy access for all visitors, with a walk-through pathway near the animal exhibits. The exhibits are created to mimic natural environments as closely as possible. The staff and students of The Wildlife Academy spend most of their time outdoors on the Wildlife Center grounds, allowing for the best learning environment for animal observations and hands-on experience.

In-person instruction is held on the Wildlife Center grounds or in the main support building, including a computer/records room, a natural history museum, and animal support areas for dietary preparation. The maximum class size is 10, ensuring a low student/teacher ratio of 10 to 1.

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy has a modern facility with a reception area, a computer and animal records room, and a multi-purpose room. The training equipment includes a working Zoological Park with large carnivores and native wildlife, along with all necessary tools and supplies for animal care, training/handling, and maintenance of the zoo grounds.

The school also provides a break room for students with a microwave, refrigerator, sink, tables, and chairs. Lavatories are available for both males and females, and the facility is ADA-accessible with handicapped ramps and lavatories. Audio & Video Surveillance Equipment is used throughout the zoo property in public and staff areas to secure animals and humans.

# Begin Your Career in Animal Care, Conservation, and Wildlife Education

The **Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification Program** at Cat Tales Wildlife Academy is a comprehensive, hands-on program designed to prepare students for professional careers in animal care, wildlife management, and conservation. This transformative program equips students with the technical skills, scientific knowledge, and practical experience needed for success in zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation organizations, and governmental wildlife agencies.

## Program Highlights

- **Animal Care Expertise:** Master the techniques of animal husbandry, enrichment, and health management to ensure the welfare of animals in your care.
- **Wildlife Management & Conservation Knowledge:** Gain a comprehensive understanding of biodiversity, species preservation, and the vital role zoos and wildlife sanctuaries play in conservation.
- **Public Education & Conservation Messaging:** Learn to effectively communicate conservation topics to the public, preparing you to act as an ambassador for wildlife and ecosystems needing protection.
- **Nonprofit Operations:** Understand the financial and operational challenges of running a nonprofit facility, including animal care funding, community engagement, and public education programs.

Through a curriculum that emphasizes animal welfare, public education, and conservation strategies, the **Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification Program** at Cat Tales Wildlife Academy prepares aspiring professionals to excel in the dynamic fields of animal care and wildlife management.

**The Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certificate of Achievement is awarded for completion of:**

- **Part One: Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations and**
  - **Part Two: Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management**
- 

## Program Overview

### Part One: Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations

This foundational course introduces students to the core principles of zookeeping, animal care, and facility operations, as well as the role of conservation education. It provides a solid grounding in animal husbandry and welfare practices, preparing students to manage daily responsibilities with professionalism and compassion. Key areas of study include:

- **Animal Care & Husbandry:** Gain expertise in the daily routines of feeding, cleaning, behavioral observation, and enrichment for a wide variety of species.
- **Facility Operations:** Learn the essentials of zoo operations, including safety protocols, enclosure maintenance, and record-keeping.
- **Nonprofit Operations & Funding:** Understand how nonprofit wildlife facilities operate, including the financial requirements of funding animal care, rescue, and facility management.
- **Public Education & Conservation Messaging:** Develop skills in public outreach to communicate the importance of wildlife conservation to diverse audiences.

The **Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** course consists of 24 weeks, with 30 hours per week and a minimum of 720 hours of practical internship training. All instruction takes place at the Cat Tales Wildlife Center, providing students with hands-on experience in a real-world setting.

# Program Overview

## Part Two: Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management

Building on the knowledge and skills from Part One, this advanced course focuses on leadership in wildlife management, conservation strategies, and public education in captive and wild settings. Students learn to apply wildlife management principles to support animal welfare and engage the public in meaningful conservation education. Key areas of study include:

- **Wildlife Management Techniques:** Learn techniques for managing captive animal populations, habitat design, behavior monitoring, and health care.
- **Conservation Strategies:** Explore conservation practices, such as captive breeding, species reintroduction, and biodiversity management in captivity to support global conservation goals.
- **Nonprofit Management:** Develop leadership skills in managing a nonprofit wildlife care facility, focusing on operational oversight, fundraising, and community outreach.
- **Public Outreach & Educational Ambassadorship:** Gain practical experience in communicating conservation messages, educating the public about wildlife preservation, and advocating for the importance of biodiversity.

The **Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management** course is also a 24-week program with a minimum of 720 hours of practical training. Students participate in hands-on projects involving animal conditioning, geriatric care, habitat enrichment, and conservation initiatives in partnership with local agencies.

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## Career opportunities

Graduates of the **Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification Program** are prepared for a variety of career paths that involve direct animal care, wildlife management, and conservation education. Career opportunities include:

- **Zookeeper:** Provide daily animal care and enrichment in zoos and wildlife sanctuaries.
- **Wildlife Manager:** This position oversees wildlife populations, habitat design, and conservation programs in zoos, sanctuaries, and governmental agencies.
- **Conservation Educator:** Serve as a public ambassador for wildlife, educating visitors about species conservation, biodiversity, and the role of zoos in preserving endangered species.
- **Animal Rehabilitation:** Work with injured or orphaned animals to rehabilitate and, where possible, reintroduce them into the wild or provide lifelong sanctuary care.
- **Nonprofit Management:** Lead nonprofit organizations dedicated to wildlife rescue, conservation, and public education, overseeing operations, fundraising, and outreach efforts.

While we cannot promise employment, we provide our skilled and dedicated graduates with the tools and resources they need to pursue rewarding career paths within the industry.

# Enrollment Information

Enrolling in a vocational zookeeper program can be a life-changing experience. It offers the opportunity to turn a passion for animals into a meaningful and fulfilling career that positively impacts the lives of animals and the world around us.

## Financial Information

### Tuition and Fees

The One-Year Program is divided into Two (2) Six-Month Courses with the following Tuition and Fees.

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

- Tuition ----- \$750.00
- Book & Training Fees - (required) (nonrefundable once received) --- \$250.00
- **TOTAL FOR PART ONE — \$1,000.00**

#### **Part Two - Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management (weeks 25 - 48)**

- Tuition ----- \$750.00
- Book & Training Fees - (required) (nonrefundable once received) --- \$250.00
- **TOTAL FOR PART TWO — \$1,000.00**

#### **TOTAL COST of Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification ---- \$ 2,000.00**

- Payments can be made in two installments—one for each Course or in advance for the Full Program.
- Students are required to purchase their own basic personal clothing and footwear. A 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 germane to the course are furnished by the school.

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## 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.

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## 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) Applicants who withdraw no later than midnight on the fifth business day (excluding all Sundays and holidays) after signing the contract or making an initial payment will receive a full refund of all money paid, provided that they have 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 the tuition cost plus the 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 before completion of 25 percent of the contracted time, the school may retain 25 percent of the tuition cost, plus the 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 the 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 the registration fee (equal to 10 percent of the tuition cost, or \$100, whichever is less).

## Admission Procedures

### 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](#).***
2. Return the application and current photo to the admissions office at the same address as the Wildlife Center. Applications can be sent by email to [mail@cattales.org](mailto:mail@cattales.org) or completed online.
3. Request and return a copy of your transcripts for 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 to determine the applicant's acceptance or rejection. All the above-mentioned items must be on file at the Wildlife Academy before the personal interview.
7. You will receive final notice of your acceptance (or refusal) in letter form. Any specific requirements of applicants will be included.

### Former Students

Students re-applying for a course they 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 submitting the petition for re-entry to the program or course, the faculty will notify you of approval or denial.

# Admission Information

## Program Start Dates for 2025

- January 8, 2025
- March 5, 2025
- May 7, 2025
- June 18, 2025
- September 3, 2025
- November 5, 2025

## Attendance Calendar

Programs start during June, September, November, and March. Due to demand or other circumstances, additional or alternate start dates may exist. 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. Students are frequently scheduled to begin their fall, summer, and spring days at 7:30 a.m. Winter hours vary depending on the weather.

## Admission Requirements

- All applicants for admission to the Cat Tales Wildlife Academy must be at least 18 years old and high school graduates. 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 that would affect their ability to safely and satisfactorily perform the responsibilities required of all Wildlife Academy students. This includes, but is 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, 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 about an applicant's disability is voluntary and confidential and will be made individually. If this information is presented, Cat Tales Wildlife Academy will reasonably attempt to provide 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 for the program; some programs require medical documentation because of the rigors of the 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 the training, and the work environment. Cat Tales Wildlife Center and Academy houses inherently dangerous animals, and the students will work in their proximity.** Though we have STRICT safety rules in place, we reserve the right to restrict access to areas of the Zoo to any student 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 who owns personal pets must provide proof of a current health certificate and shot records for each pet living with that applicant. (Personal pets are not allowed on the park grounds at any time.) For safety reasons, guide dogs and service animals are restricted.

# Attendance Requirements

**Part One – Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations** (weeks 1 through 24) consists of 720 practical clock hours divided into 24 weeks of 30 hours per week AND

**Part Two – Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management** (weeks 25 through 48) consists of 720 practical clock hours divided into 24 weeks of 30 hours per week.

**Completing the Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification consists of 1440 practical clock hours, divided into 48 weeks of 30 hours per week.**

- Students must 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 instructors' discretion and considered on an "as-needed" basis.
- Though not required as a participating student, 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 fall, spring, and summer days 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 students will be scheduled for training and instruction at the program's start, with their weekly/daily attendance requirement determined at that time. Students must attend 3 days per week at a 10-hour day or the equivalent of a 30-hour week. Student attendance will include Tuesday through Sunday hours, including at least one weekend day. The dates and times of the virtual and/or in-person instruction will be determined to fit the student's schedule 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 before 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.

## Grading System

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy has established a grading system to ensure that graduate students 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 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.

An assessment may be administered after each lesson to determine the amount of learning that has taken place. Assessment 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 arrange additional practice, independent study, or tutoring if needed. Grades and/or assessments will be provided to the students monthly, and a final report and transcript will be provided after the program if the student is in good status. Other evaluation methods 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 once 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 Requirements

As a student of the Cat Tales Wildlife Academy, you are expected to meet the program's requirements, which include professional conduct during all virtual and/or in-person interactions, instructional hours, Wildlife Center duties, and outreach involvement. The program is designed as an award system that incentivizes you to excel in your studies.

Because of the nature of the Zookeeping field, a great deal of emphasis is 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 serious injury or death to a human or an animal.

Any student who violates safety procedures and regulations, who fails to make satisfactory progress, who interferes with other student's work, is insubordinate, boisterous, vulgar, or obscene, is 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 fully prosecuted by the law.

**Nothing in the policy prevents the student from contacting the [Workforce Board](#) at 360-709-4600 with a concern or complaint.**

## 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 violating a published school policy that provides for termination.
- (3) When a student fails to attend classes for 30 calendar days without notice to the institution.

## Program Completion

### Graduation

Successful Completion of Part One—Introduction to Zookeeping & Facility Operations (or equivalent) and Part Two—Advanced Zookeeping & Wildlife Management is required for Graduation and to acquire the Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification.

## Student Records and Grades on File

The school will maintain student records 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 to the school. Student records are available for review by the student at any time.

## Placement Assistance

Cat Tales Wildlife Academy does not guarantee job placement. A student's ability to benefit from the Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification Program is considered 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 for graduates who have shown quality advancement in the Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Program.

“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 a hundred-fold.”

-- Betty White



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This school is licensed under Chapter 28C.10 RCW.  
Inquiries, concerns, or complaints regarding this school can be  
made to the Workforce Board  
128 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W., Olympia, Washington, 98501  
Phone: (360) 709-4600 Web: [wtb.wa.gov](http://wtb.wa.gov)  
E-Mail Address: [workforce@wtb.wa.gov](mailto:workforce@wtb.wa.gov)

## Turn Your Passion for Wildlife into A Rewarding Career

The **Zookeeping & Wildlife Management Certification Program** is an in-depth training course for those aspiring to animal care, wildlife management, and conservation careers.

Spanning a 24- or 48-week period, the program offers hands-on experience with both exotic and native species, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills in animal husbandry, conservation, and public education.

Open to individuals over 18 with a high school diploma or equivalent, this program prepares students for professional roles in zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation organizations worldwide, emphasizing animal health, nutrition, safety protocols, and facility management.

# Cat Tales Wildlife Academy

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[ZooSchool.org](http://ZooSchool.org)



SCAN ME