

**Lifeforce Orca Stewardship Study Camp  
and  
Research Equipment for Lease  
April 2008– November 2008**

The Lifeforce Foundation is a Vancouver-based ecology non-profit organization that was formed in 1981 to provide a public service to help people, animals and the environment. The Lifeforce mission is to promote stewardship and protection of cetaceans and their marine habitats. All life on earth is dependent on a healthy ecosystem.

Some of the main goals of the Lifeforce projects are to assist in developing Marine Mammal Protection Regulations, developing Marine Wildlife Monitoring Standards; contributing to an Orca Recovery Program and the creation of Marine Protected Areas. We are seeking volunteers to assist in conducting the following Marine Life Programs in the Vancouver, British Columbia area from April 2008 to November 2008. Volunteers will receive an unforgettable and rare work experiences helping the endangered Southern Orca Community and other marine wildlife.

The Lifeforce Marine Life Programs are not university-affiliated. To date, no publications have resulted from this work. However, there is a potential for data to be published. We are collecting data on-going research projects with the goal of publishing papers such as the "Behaviour and Travel Patterns of the Southern Orca Community". We are also studying methods to keep wildlife away from environmental hazards such as oil spills. Project Leader, Peter Hamilton, has published papers on methods to enrich the environments of captive animals.

We would also like to announce the availability of research equipment for projects in the Vancouver, BC and WA area. A 20' boat, a 12.5' Wildlife Rescue Trailer and research/rescue equipment are available for lease (year round).

**Volunteers Needed**

The research experience that volunteers could gain from this position includes data collection and analysis; marine mammal ID training, archiving and cataloguing photographs, developing stewardship programs, public relations; development of media and public education materials, and office work.

Volunteers would be assigned a specific research project as determined by Lifeforce; and would be expected to complete a report as directed. If requested, Lifeforce will help students design and implement a project for undergraduate or graduate credit. Due to our limited budget the work is determined by available funding. The guaranteed work is limited to a land based study of orca and boat traffic interactions and marine mammal sightings.

Volunteers are required to pay a \$1500 (US) charge for a 7 day period. This includes basic training, materials and camping accommodation. Volunteers will have to provide their own flights/transportation, camp gear, food and basic needs.

Volunteers should meet most of the following requirements:

1. Volunteers must be able to work in the Vancouver, BC and Pt. Roberts, USA. Current travel documents are required to cross the US/Canada border.
2. Volunteers must have a motor vehicle and/or provide own transportation.
3. Volunteers must be able to commit to a 7 – 10 day consecutive work period.
4. Volunteers must be able to work up to 12 hour shifts and be able to work consecutive days (3 to 4 days). Camping is provided and volunteers are responsible for their own camping equipment and food.

5. Volunteers should be used to working under difficult situations such as long hours and rough weather.
6. It is preferred that volunteers have marine wildlife and habitat protection as a career goal or at least a main interest.
7. It is preferred that volunteers have experience with data collection and field work; be knowledgeable of local marine life and identification.
8. Volunteers must be able to work well with the public since distribution of educational materials to boaters may be required and park interpreter work may be necessary.
9. Volunteers must speak fluent English.
10. Some knowledge of wildlife rescue work is preferred.
11. A criminal background check may be required.
12. The research is required upon acceptance of the applicant.

As stated, Lifeforce will decide what project(s) a volunteer will be assigned to. In general, volunteers work on shore to record marine wildlife activity. If funding is available, the volunteers may participate in one or more of the following programs:

1. **Whale and Dolphin Hotline.** Lifeforce provides a telephone hotline for the public to be able to report marine wildlife stranding, harassment and/or sightings.

2. **Orca Research.** Under a Department of Fisheries and Oceans Research permit Lifeforce has conducted studies of the behaviour and travel patterns of orcas. We obtain data to provide the public with educational materials to help everyone have a better understanding of the complex lives of orcas. We also gather photographic/video data for displays. Some of the images have been used in an educational field guide on orca behaviour to help people understand how to operate a boat if whales are in the area. This information would help prevent injury to people and the whales.

We hope that our research and education programs will help create marine sanctuaries, obtain Endangered Species status, determine any changes in travel patterns resulting from noise pollution etc. and monitor any effect of dwindling fish stocks in order to obtain fish quotas for wildlife. Understanding orca travel patterns will also help Lifeforce promote land based whale watching through **Orca Trails** - our program to alert Park Managers when orcas and other cetaceans will pass their marine parks.

3. **Marine Mammal Census and Boat Interaction Study.** In order to protect the endangered Southern Orca Community we are monitoring marine wildlife travels and their interactions with boats. We will also look at the feasibility of promoting ecotourism activity in communities and how these operations can be conducted under a Code of Ethical Ecotourism.

4. **False killer whale study.** This study will analyse data already collected to help understand why some dolphins follow boats and appear to interact with people. Information could lead to the development of methods to keep marine mammals away from dangers such as oil spills.

5. **Pinniped Predation Research.** Lifeforce is developing nonlethal methods to reduce and/or eliminate seal predation of endangered fish stocks. This research will help stop the shooting of seals and sea lions.

6. **Lifewatch Boater Awareness Program.** Lifeforce distributes whale watching guidelines to boaters on the water and the general public. The information advises boaters how to safely watch whales and other marine life. It also stops boaters who inadvertently or intentionally harass marine mammals. Lifeforce is the only organization providing this service in Southern BC. As part of the Lifewatch program we will conduct investigations of cruelty to marine wildlife.

7. **Marine Wildlife Rescue.** Lifeforce provides a 24 hour service to respond to marine wildlife injury, sickness, abandonment, stranding and other emergencies. This service includes responding to pollution problems such as oil and chemical spills. In addition, we will remove dolphins, porpoises, pinnipeds and seabirds trapped in fishing nets.

8. **Eco Friendly Boating.** In order to reduce and eliminate pollution of the Georgia Basin off Canada's West Coast, it is crucial that we provide ecology information and demonstrate how people can help to develop pollution-free lifestyles. This project will develop and demonstrate the necessary clean alternatives.

9. **Educational Materials and Displays.** Lifeforce publishes educational materials such as the Whale Watch Guidelines that we distribute to the public through the Lifewatch Program. We also

create public displays such as the Orca Centre in Point Roberts, WA. This "whale museum" includes information about human and environmental threats to marine wildlife.

10. **Developing Marine Wildlife Monitoring Standards.** Our goal is to draft a "Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Enforcement Policy" in order to provide a standard protocol for those who are conducting activities such as the distribution of whale watch guidelines to boaters.

These operating procedures could apply to individuals, organizations and government agencies that enforce guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of marine mammals and marine ecosystems. We hope to assist those efforts by providing information from basic "Introductions" to "How to Respond to Boaters in Violations of Guidelines". We are suggesting that Monitoring organizations should be giving a consistent message to boaters in order to avoid confusion and to gain the cooperation of pleasure and commercial boaters. The Policy would also be a valuable tool in training volunteers and/or staff.

Monitoring activities will be an essential part of future Orca Recovery Plans. The data collected during monitoring will contribute to our knowledge of various species. Their travel/behaviour patterns will contribute to the development of Marine Protected Areas. It is imperative that standards are developed

### **Volunteer Application**

If you are interested in applying for this position, please submit by email a letter of interest with your updated resume and letter of references. Please include your age and a current photograph (if you are not available for an in person interview).

### **Research Education Boats and Trailer (Pacific Northwest Areas)**

Individuals/organizations can lease our 20' boat and equipment for non-invasive research, conservation and education projects in 2008. The boat has been design to adapt to a variety of research equipment and operations for population studies, behaviour and travel pattern studies and boat traffic impact observations/monitoring.

The Marine Wildlife trailer is a 12.5' . The trailer is fully equipped for marine wildlife rescue work and includes cages, stretchers and cetacean float pontoons (for stranding work). It can be used as a base station for computer work, communications and small animal necropsy.

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