



# Volunteer Handbook

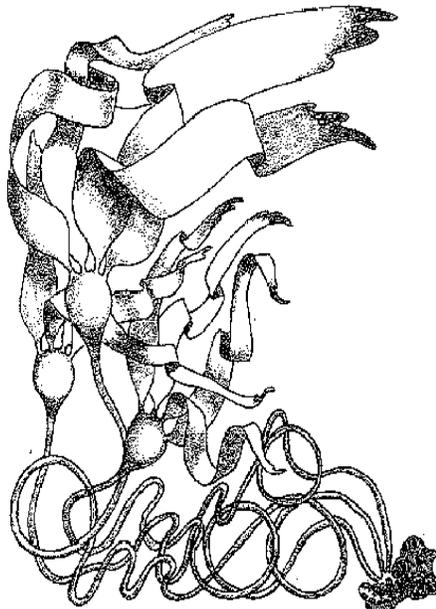
Fort Worden State Park  
532 Battery Way  
Port Townsend, WA 98368  
(360) 385-5582  
[www.ptmsc.org](http://www.ptmsc.org)

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## OUR MISSION: INSPIRING CONSERVATION OF THE SALISH SEA

First of all, what is the Salish Sea? From Wikipedia: “The Salish Sea is the intricate network of coastal waterways located between the south-western tip of the Canadian province of British Columbia, and the north-western tip of the U.S. state of Washington. Its major bodies of water are the Strait of Georgia, The Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Puget Sound.”



Photo credit: [www.thelivingocean.net](http://www.thelivingocean.net)

The Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC) is an educational and scientific organization devoted to inspiring conservation of the Salish Sea. The organization was founded in 1982 by two teachers and was initially run entirely by volunteers. Over the years it has continued to grow in a steady, thoughtful manner, and its volunteers, now numbering more than 180, continue to be integrally involved in the organization. Throughout its development it has remained committed to its mission of engaging people of all ages in understanding and protecting the marine environment. Through its various programs, the PTMSC:

- Teaches respect for and stewardship of the myriad life forms in the marine environment;
- Creates active educational experiences for groups of all ages;
- Offers professional development and curriculum design workshops for teachers;
- Provides exhibits, programs, and publications featuring local marine and shoreline organisms, habitat, history, flora, and fauna;
- Encourages meaningful volunteer experiences in PTMSC activities;
- Offers the general public opportunities to participate in citizen science research;
- Partners and cooperates with other organizations dedicated to the conservation of the Salish Sea; and
- Encourages understanding of and participation in emerging local, national, and international decisions and issues affecting the marine and shoreline environment.

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# **PTMSC BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEER CORPS**

## **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is a group of volunteers who meet monthly to help set direction and policy for the PTMSC. A small committee of Board members selects candidates, interviews them, and then presents the list to the entire Board for a vote. The public is welcome at the meetings. Call 385-5582 x104 for a meeting schedule. A list of current members can be found at <http://ptmsc.org/about/staff-board>.

## **Staff**

Full, part-time, contracted, and temporary employees make up the staff, each of which wear many hats. Each year the PTMSC applies for a grant to receive four individual-placement AmeriCorps members. From year to year the number may vary, based on what is granted. Each summer, one or two seasonal interns are hired to assist with camps and exhibit operations.

## **Volunteer Corps**

Our volunteer corps consists of about 110 regular volunteers and more than 70 additional volunteers who work occasionally or on specific events. Our volunteers are among our most important and valued assets, the best advocates for the marine environment and the PTMSC that we could imagine. We have volunteers of all ages and walks of life. Some volunteers are here almost every day, others only once or twice a year. Regardless of how often they frequent the PTMSC, they all offer their abilities, interests, skills and time. Although volunteers work here for different reasons, they are united in a common purpose: learning about and conserving the marine environment.

# **PTMSC OPERATION**

## **Access**

As of 2014, Fort Worden State Park is now co-managed by both the state and the Public Development Authority (PDA). This means that visitors and volunteers attending the Marine Science Center can park in a separate designated parking lot adjacent to the Cablehouse Canteen Store free of charge on a space available basis.

Parking on the beach or near the boat ramp will still need a Washington State Parks Discover Pass displayed to avoid being ticketed.



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## Hours

Hours of operation for the general public at the PTMSC exhibits change with the seasons. There are also a few special events that occur each year.

### **Spring: Early April to early-June**

Both the Aquarium and Museum are open Friday through Sunday from 12 to 5pm.

### **Summer: Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day**

Both the Aquarium and Museum are open every day except for Tuesdays from 11am to 5pm.

### **Fall: Labor Day to the end of November**

Both the Aquarium and Museum are open Friday through Sunday from 12 to 5pm.

### **Winter: Early December to early April**

The Aquarium is open by special arrangement. School groups, youth groups, and other visitors need to call to schedule.

The Museum is open Friday through Sunday from 12 to 5pm.

## Other Events

The PTMSC offers many kinds of activities in which volunteers can participate. Here is a selection:

- Tides of March Auction: March 2005 marked the first annual PTMSC Auction, and it has continued annually since then. This event is our most important fundraiser and offers fun and creative items for purchase — and wonderful food! There are both silent and live auctions. Volunteers help with the auction in some capacity, either in the advance planning or on the day of the event. Planning begins in October or November of the prior year.
- Day summer camps for youth, ages 3-13 years
- Public guided low tide walks
- Fall/Winter Lecture Series (October to March)
- Protection Island Cruises with P.S. Express and *Adventuress*
- Education Programs (K-12 programs, adult programs, etc.)
- Annual Meetings: Generally in early May to review the state of the organization, past successes, and often featuring a guest speaker notable in the marine biology field.
- Outreach events such as the Wooden Boat Festival, and other community conferences.

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## **VOLUNTEER Essentials**

From here, on our handbook focuses directly on you, our volunteers. You are extremely important to us, as friends and the people who make PTMSC the wonderful organization it is.

A very exciting aspect of the PTMSC is the wide variety of volunteer opportunities available. Many opportunities are seasonal in nature. For example, divers and collectors may be needed in the spring and fall to help with gathering animals for our collections and for their releases. Citizen scientists are needed for specific projects that may take place every week in the summer or just two or three days out of the year. Ongoing projects require a stronger volunteer commitment because of the time and training involved. These are core volunteer opportunities, and they include exhibit interpreting and greeting, some citizen science projects, Board of Director's work and maintaining tanks.

Volunteers have the opportunity to become involved in many aspects of the work PTMSC does, but each decides how much time he or she has to give and what each wants to do. Below is a list of opportunities. Core tasks are noted with \*\*.

### **Education and Interpretation**

- Aquarium docents and greeters\*\*
- Museum docents and greeters\*\*
- Education Program assistance\*\*
- Outreach events/tabling

### **Citizen Science Research**

- Marine Mammal Stranding Network
- Sound Toxins
- BEACH
- Puget Sound Seabird Survey

### **Administrative**

- Development (fundraising, grant writing, board of director's work)
- Auction committee (planning, day-of help)
- Gift Shop
- Computer technical assistance
- Data entry, filing, mailings, copying
- Library assistance
- Posting flyers

Data entry/analysis

### **Maintenance**

- Home Crew (tank maintenance and animal feeding) \*\*
- Carpentry, painting, plumbing
- Weeding, gardening

### **Arts & Other Skills**

- Photography
- Graphic design



**Note:** The Citizen Science list is not inclusive of every project, but represents the more regular and continually funded projects.

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## **BENEFITS**

### **Membership**

We encourage all of our volunteers to become members of the PTMSC. Members receive unlimited admission to the center for three generations of family members, special invitations to field trips and lectures, discounts on programs and at our Gift Shop, and the knowledge that your tax-deductible contribution helps support our mission. Volunteers can earn a basic membership by logging at least 60 volunteer hours per year. The earned membership is granted for the calendar year following the year that hours were worked.

### **Docent Training**

PTMSC offers training events for both the Aquarium and Museum. There are often guest speakers, field trips, and sessions with the PTMSC staff. Docents may specialize in one exhibit or work in both. Exhibit content, as well as the role of the docent, how to interact with the public, and being an ambassador of the organization are covered in these sessions.



### **Observing in the Exhibits**

The exhibits are one of, if not the main area, where the organization utilizes volunteers due to the amount of time the exhibits are open and having a small staff. The exhibits can hold many valuable and rewarding experiences and learning opportunities, however volunteering in the exhibits isn't for everyone. Volunteers in the exhibits serve as our main contact with the public and allow PTMSC to offer visitors an intimate experience where questions are answered, information is shared and people feel welcomed and included. We encourage volunteers to try out docenting and/or greeting in either exhibit, but understand if it isn't your cup of tea. Let us know what you prefer as we want to make your experience volunteering a positive one!

To help you get your "sea legs", docents-and greeters-in-training are assigned to work with experienced volunteers in the exhibits until the docents- and greeters-in-training feel confident to work unassisted. Volunteers aren't expected to go "solo" in the exhibits as the main interpreter until they are comfortable and prepared. For some of you, that means a handful of shifts; for others, that means a few months of observing. The PTMSC staff is here to guide you, and we don't rush any volunteers into taking their own shift. Let us know as your observations continue if you're feeling ready to take your own shift(s). It is greatly appreciated when volunteers sign up for a regular weekly shift. It's the best way to learn quickly, while being extremely helpful and efficient for PTMSC.

Always remember that it's okay to say, "I don't know." This encourages you and visitors to seek out the answers. A staff member is assigned to each exhibit, and referred to as "exhibit lead". They are there to answer questions and offer assistance. The "exhibit lead" (usually an AmeriCorps member or an intern) is ultimately responsible for the building and programs. They are backed up by a permanent staff member, the "staff of the day".

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As a volunteer working with a trainee, try different ways to help the trainee learn the roles of greeting and interpreting such as: modeling techniques, quiz the trainee, give them a scenario, let them interpret and provide positive reinforcement, have a good time!

**The PTMSC policy for youth volunteer docents:** those under the age of 13 are considered trainees and need to have a guardian with them until it has been deemed that the youth, their guardian, and the PTMSC staff feel the volunteer is ready to go “solo.” In the meantime, youth volunteers should not be left in the exhibits by themselves.

**The PTMSC gets a wide array of visitors of varying beliefs.** If visitors challenge us for a discussion of exhibits that relate to evolution, denial of climate change, or any other controversial topic, we ask staff and volunteers to be polite, refrain from arguments, and acknowledge the visitors’ thoughts, but point out to them that we are a science institution and so our exhibits are based on scientific evidence only.

### **Greeter Training**

Training specific to the Aquarium and to the Museum Gift Shop computer POS (Point of Sale) systems is done individually so that interested volunteers have ample chance to practice.

PTMSC policy is that volunteers under the age of 16 are not permitted to run the POS systems in either the Aquarium or Museum. Also be aware that we have some volunteers who don’t feel comfortable operating the registers --- those volunteers will be paired with volunteers who are comfortable. You will be made aware if you are working with someone who isn’t permitted to use or comfortable using the registers. Additionally, alert staff if you need to step away from your volunteer post to use the restroom for example. This applies especially if your post is the Gift Shop, as we never want to leave this area unattended.

### **Job-Specific and Special Training**

Specialized training is given for all volunteer jobs. For example, if you choose to help out on a Home Crew, you’ll receive training and supervision in cleaning the tanks. Many volunteers work on Citizen Science research projects, some of which call for extensive training. Other projects just require interest, willingness to learn, and careful record keeping.

### **Additional Training Opportunities**

In the past, we’ve often offered a longer-scope volunteer enrichment series. From year to year what is offered may change, but each year we plan ongoing opportunities for learning: enrichment classes, workshops, a lecture series, and informal brown-bag lunches. We support volunteers continuing their education in as many ways as possible.

Remember that lectures and training opportunities attended, whether hosted by the PTMSC or by other organizations, can be counted as “education” volunteer hours if it will be furthering your skills as a PTMSC volunteer.

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## Library and Docent Guides

While reference books must remain on the premises, volunteers may check out books from the PTMSC library for two weeks at a time. The library is housed in the ‘Officina’ building behind the Museum. There is a check-out clipboard where volunteers can sign out books, DVDs, and periodicals. Additionally, staff has created docent guides/manuals for each building. The manual for the Aquarium contains details about nearshore habitats. The Museum docent manual details each exhibit. Both manuals offer suggestions for how to interpret the exhibits. These guides can also be read in pdf format – contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you’d like them in this format, or visit [PTMSC.org/volunteer](http://PTMSC.org/volunteer) for links to the manuals.

## Volunteer Gatherings

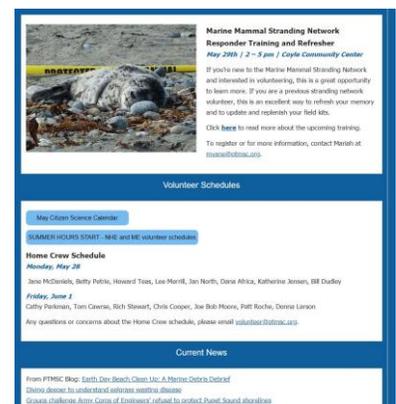


We host two exciting volunteer recognition gathering events each year – in July and December. These events are an opportunity to socialize with staff and other volunteers, and also where we honor and recognize the efforts and achievements of our amazing volunteers. We hold a “button ceremony” where volunteers who’ve achieved an hour landmark (50, 200, 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500 hours, and so forth) earn their official color-coded button.

# VOLUNTEER BASICS AND EXPECTATIONS

## Volunteer Communications

The Volunteer Coordinator emails the PTMSC *Volunteer Update*, usually on Saturday afternoon. It lists upcoming events, announcements, open exhibit shifts, and other opportunities. If you don’t have email, just let the Volunteer Coordinator know how you want to receive this information. You can also get information from our website [www.ptmsc.org](http://www.ptmsc.org). From that website, you can link to our blog. You can also request to be notified of new blog entries by email. We expect to make increasing use of online opportunities as they become available to us.



## Work Schedule (Applies primarily to core volunteer opportunities)

We request that volunteers choose days and times that work best for them, either on a weekly or biweekly schedule. If that is not possible, we gratefully accept any help you can give — even once a

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year support. We understand that many of our volunteers are travelers; we will work with your schedule and simply ask that you alert us when you cannot fulfill a commitment.

### **Logging Your Hours**

Please be sure you use the Volunteer Database on the designated computers in each building: the greeter station computer in the Aquarium, and the Gift Shop computer. Please make note if you've worked with an AmeriCorps member and select the appropriate name in the log. If needed, ask staff for help. It's important that your hours are accurately recorded for the work you do, including hours worked away from the center. If you're not able to enter hours yourself, please email them to the Volunteer Coordinator. Your hours count! Volunteer hours are valuable in grant funding because they show our level of community support. Hours can also help us estimate how much effort is going into various parts of our operations. Individual hours are used for awarding complimentary memberships and other volunteer recognition.

### **Attendance Policy**

We ask that volunteers arrive at least 5-10 minutes before an exhibit shift, to allow time to help open the exhibit and/or get an update on the day/plan. In return, we try our best to start programs and work sessions on time. If you cannot come on the day and time you are scheduled, contact the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible so a replacement can be found. Leave a message at 385-5582 x120 for the Volunteer Coordinator. **On the weekends**, please contact either the Aquarium greeter station at x111 or the Gift Shop greeter station at x114. Leave a message if necessary.

### **Dress**

If you are working with the public, you will be greeting them as a representative of the PTMSC. Please dress neatly and always wear a name button. We ask that you wear PTMSC logo clothing when working with the public. These shirts can be purchased in the PTMSC Gift Shop in the Museum. You can purchase gear that you are wearing for volunteer purposes at cost plus tax (within reason) after 20 hours volunteered. Prior to 20 hours you can purchase a short- or long-sleeved t-shirt at cost plus tax. If you'd rather not purchase PTMSC gear, there are loaner t-shirts you can wear during shifts, then wash and return after use.



### **Volunteer Space**

There are designated volunteer spaces in each of the exhibits. These are where you will find the exhibit schedules, the button banners, news, articles of interest, announcements, and signs for classes and events, etc. There is often food in these areas; it's up for grabs. This is also where you can store your belongings (backpacks, purses, coats). Our volunteer spaces are small, but please offer suggestions if you can see a way to make this space more comfortable.

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## **Safety**

Staff members are primarily responsible for safety of everyone in the exhibit, but volunteers should be aware of safety protocol and alert staff immediately to problems. Fire extinguishers, fire alarm and “emergency clipboard” locations will be reviewed at your intake orientation session. Please familiarize yourself with these locations. The emergency clipboards are to be taken out of the building by a staff member in the event of an evacuation of the buildings. Evacuation meeting locations are at the end of the Aquarium on the pier, the large metal floats next to the Museum, and in case of a park wide emergency – the flagpole in the upper parade grounds.

## **Smoking and Eating**

Please refrain from smoking or eating while working with the public or in the exhibits.

## **Phone Use**

Personal cell phone calls should be avoided when volunteering, but if you must talk, please go outside of exhibits and only when there are no visitors to tend to. The office phones are available for short, local calls or for emergencies.

## **Water**

We do not have running fresh water in the Aquarium, but there is a saltwater tap and sink in the prep room. There is a freshwater hose outside the Aquarium on the dock. In winter, freshwater can be obtained at the Museum sink, the public bathrooms, or in buckets in the Aquarium.

## **Restrooms**

The closest public restrooms are in the building next to the Museum. The next closest restrooms are north toward the lower campground and Pt. Wilson Lighthouse.

## **Recycling**

We do our best to recycle. We have bins for paper products, plastic, glass, and aluminum cans.



## **Leaving Objects for Staff or Other Volunteers**

We have extremely limited space in both buildings! While donations are much appreciated, please confirm with a staff member that we can use and store your donation before you drop it off. If you leave items for the attention of staff or other volunteers, please clearly mark who it is from and for whom it is intended. Otherwise, it adds to the clutter and may not make it to its destination. Please check with staff if a visitor wishes to donate some object.

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## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

We will strive to ensure that your involvement with the PTMSC benefits everyone. Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged.

As a volunteer, you have a right to:

- Be offered an "equal opportunity" to volunteer at the PTMSC;
- Be interviewed and considered for a volunteer position;
- Receive training, supervision, and staff support to perform the job well and with confidence;
- Be respected as a person with individuality, uniqueness, and value;
- And work in a safe environment.

### **Background Checks & Policy with the Public**

The PTMSC hosts youth among our visitors program participants. All potential adult volunteers are subject to background checks against criminal registries. When positive background checks arise, a conversation is held between the potential volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator to assess if it is appropriate for that person to become a PTMSC volunteer.

When representing yourself as a PTMSC volunteer, please refrain from lifting up or touching any children in the exhibit, and refrain from going anywhere alone with a youth, outside the view of others, including classrooms. Additionally, we ask that volunteers do not provide any direct medical treatment to minors; ask staff for help.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Should you, at any time, be unhappy with your situation or uncomfortable with a staff person or another volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible to discuss the situation. The PTMSC strives to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions or problems in confidence without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate and settle your problem on a fair and equitable basis.

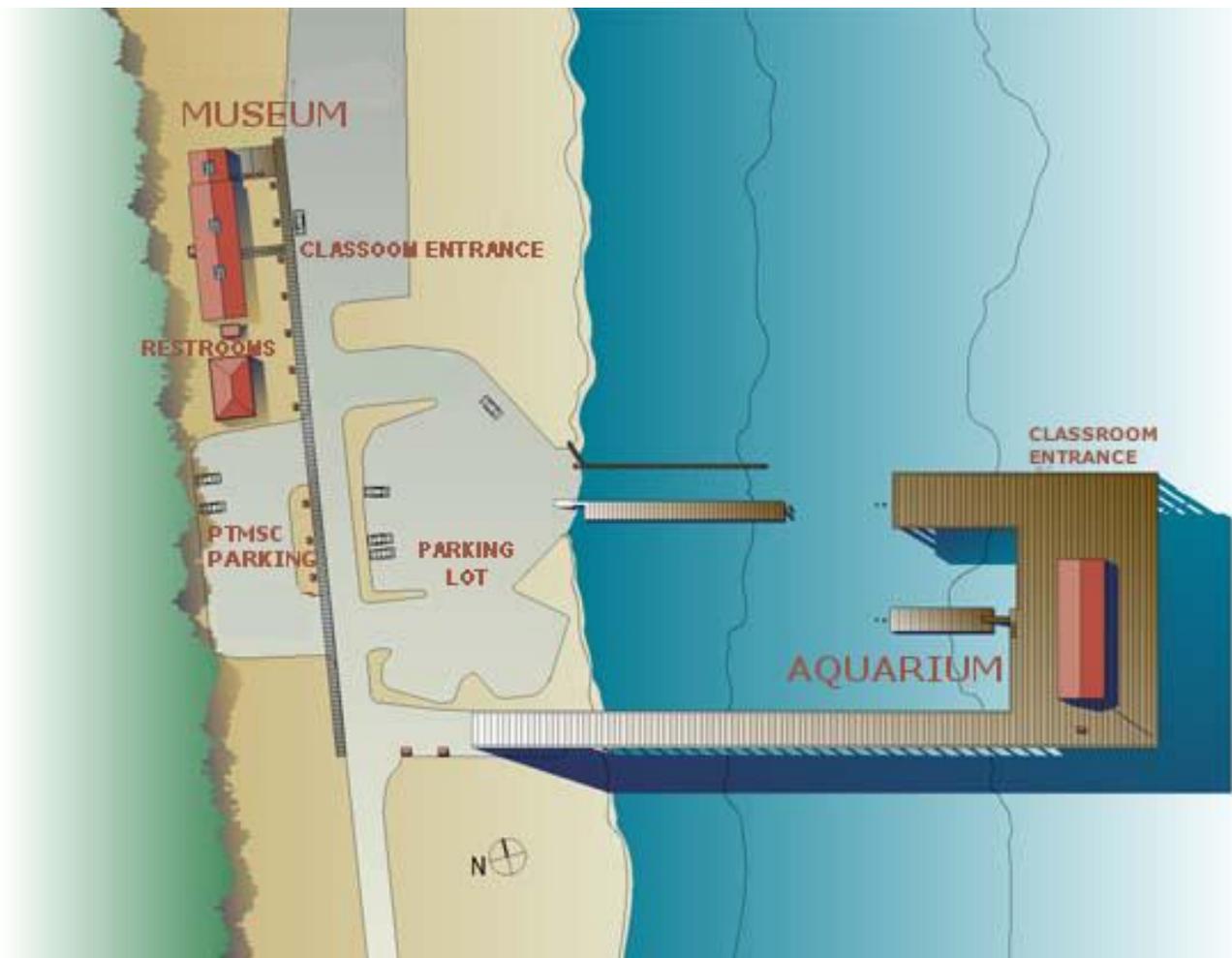
## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a volunteer, your responsibility and our expectations are that you:

- Read and sign the PTMSC Volunteer Code of Conduct at the end of this document; failure to comply with the code of conduct could result in termination from the Volunteer Program.
- Understand the requirements of time and duties before accepting them, and, upon acceptance, fulfill your commitment;
- Record your hours in the Volunteer Log every time you volunteer, whether it is at the PTMSC or elsewhere; (Volunteers are covered by L&I while working on volunteer tasks for PTMSC.)

- Share your ideas, suggestions, concerns, or complaints with the Volunteer Coordinator;
- Seek and accept feedback on your performance;
- Clean and maintain PTMSC t-shirts or sweatshirts to wear when working with the public;
- Serve as a "goodwill ambassador" for the PTMSC in the community at large;
- Be considerate and respectful of other volunteers, staff, and guests;
- Not overcommit yourself; you are at your best when you have had some rest;
- Be professional when representing the PTMSC and use the PTMSC property with utmost care;
- Ask questions when you are unsure; other volunteers and staff are always willing to help;
- Report any incidents, injuries, accidents, problems, or confrontations involving the public or other volunteers to staff so that we can appropriately follow up;
- Arrive at your designated time and leave at the end of the shift. When signing up to volunteer, make note of the day, time, and meeting place;
- And when in staff offices, please respect staff and keep noise to a minimum.

## MAP OF EXHIBITS



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## LOCAL BEACHES

Many local beaches are ideal for beach walking, tide pooling, and marine life sightings:

North Beach County Park  
Chetzemoka City Park  
Old Fort Townsend State Park  
Fort Flagler State Park  
South Indian Island County Park

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

The main number for the Port Townsend Marine Science Center is **360-385-5582**  
A menu system will prompt you to find the staff member with whom you want to contact.

If you have a question or need to change your volunteer assignment, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 360-385-5582 x120. This extension is checked by exhibit staff for last-minute volunteer changes. On the weekends you may call the Aquarium at x111, or Museum Gift Shop at x114 to alert staff.

Staff extensions:

Janine Boire, Executive Director: x102  
Liesl Slabaugh, Development Director: x101  
Diane Quinn, Program Director: x204  
Brian Kay, Administrator Coordinator: x104  
Ali Redman, Aquarist: x122  
Betsy Carlson, Citizen Science Coordinator: x301  
Carolyn Woods, Education Coordinator: x109  
Gabriele Sanchez, Volunteer and Programs Coordinator: x120  
Phil Dinsmore, Facilities Coordinator: x121  
AmeriCorps staff and interns: x110 and x115 (Aquarium offices); x113 and x116 (Museum offices)  
PTMSC Marine Mammal Stranding Network: x103

Emails: first initial, followed by last name @ptmsc.org. Example: gsanchez@ptmsc.org

In any emergency, **dial 911**.

If you find yourself in the Aquarium without staff and a problem comes up with the tanks after hours, please call Phil Dinsmore, 360-302-0294.

If you need to contact a state agency or a hotline:

Port Townsend City Police	360-385-2322 or 911
Jefferson General Hospital	360-385-2200
Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (Port Townsend)	360-302-3030
WSU Extension Office (Port Townsend)	360-379-5610

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## PTMSC VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a PTMSC volunteer:

- I have read and understand the Volunteer Handbook.
- I will conduct myself in a respectful manner, exhibit good conduct, be a positive role model, and listen and heed the instructions provided to me by staff.
- I will display respect and courtesy for other employees, volunteers, program participants, visitors, clients, and property.
- I will provide a safe environment by following PTMSC safety regulations, alerting staff to potential safety hazards, and not harming anyone, whether through discrimination, sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, or other harmful actions.
- I will respect the privacy of persons served by the organization and hold in confidence sensitive, private, and personal information.
- I will keep PTMSC staff informed of progress, concerns, and problems within the program(s) in which I participate.
- I will work cooperatively as a team member with staff and other volunteers.
- I will keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a PTMSC representative.
- I will avoid conduct that would jeopardize program effectiveness while representing PTMSC.
- I will not use vulgar or inappropriate language with staff, other volunteers or the public while representing PTMSC.
- I will not solicit gratuities, gifts, or bequests for personal or professional benefit.
- I will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs of any kind while representing PTMSC.
- I will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status or disability, or sexual orientation.

I have read the PTMSC Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the statements above. I understand that failure to comply with the above requirements could result in termination from the PTMSC Volunteer Program.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_