



Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration and Community Service

Team Leader Guide

Thanks for stepping up to be a team leader for your volunteer team. We greatly appreciate and respect your service and willingness to lead.

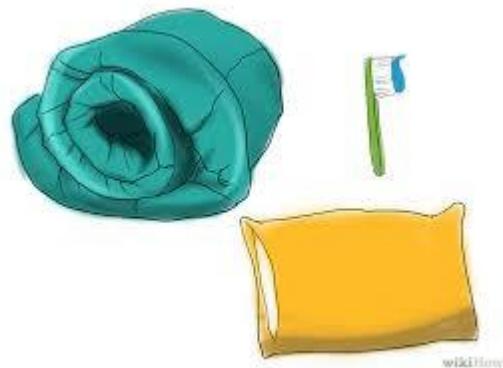
The purpose of this Team Leader Guide is to give you info and resources that will help you in preparing the ground work in forming a motivated, high energy team open to all the learning and inspiration that can come with a service trip. From our observation,



more a team puts into building their sense of purpose and esprit de corps beforehand the better the experience will be. Many of our volunteer projects involve hard work that requires volunteers to have some grit and persistence. Work conditions can vary from hot, blazing sun, buggy, and muddy to cold, rainy, windy and muddy. Having said that, those very same challenging conditions encourage volunteers to reach down and find the good will and joy of service that bonds them together and forms lifelong memories and lasting friendships.

What to Bring

- Sleeping bag or other bedding
- Pillow
- Bath Towel
- Work gloves
- Mosquito repellent
- Close toed sturdy shoes for work
- Sunscreen
- Sun visor, hat, or head covering
- Shorts
- T Shirts
- Pair of long pants and a long-sleeved shirt (light weight, fast drying fabrics if possible)
- Clothing you don't mind getting paint on
- Rain gear (Be prepared to work rain or shine)
- Water bottle for use on work site
- Bathing suit
- Shower shoes
- First-aid kit (individual or for your team)



Note: Each group is responsible for their own first aid and medical care during your time on the Gulf Coast. If your volunteer team is being divided to go out to project sites, each group should have their own first aid kit.

- You will be provided with your own bowl, plate, silverware and cup that will be reusable and washed by each volunteer through the week and checked in when you leave.
- Musical Instruments, Campfire Songs to Sing!

Your team needs to have transportation to get them to and from project sites each day.



December–April temperatures in Biloxi occasionally drop near freezing at night. Bring a jacket or sweatshirt and warm hat.

Don't be lulled, however, into thinking the sun is not a powerful force down here.

Sunburn and dehydration will take the vigor and positive spirit out of your team if you don't cover up with sunscreen or



clothing and drink lots of water.

Please pack only what you need. You will have the opportunity to wash clothes at a nearby Laundromat. Closest laundromat is Nick's Wash-n-Dri at 4173 Popps Ferry Rd, Biloxi.

It's your responsibility to secure any electronics or valuables you choose to bring on the trip. There are no lockers or ability to lock the doors of your cabin at Camp Wilkes. Your vehicles may provide a way to lock up valuables

If a member of your team experiences a medical incident, beyond what you can treat from your team's first aid supplies, 911 can be called. If the illness or injury is minor, you can consult emergency room personnel by calling the following, depending where you and your team are.

The closest medical facility to Camp Wilkes is:

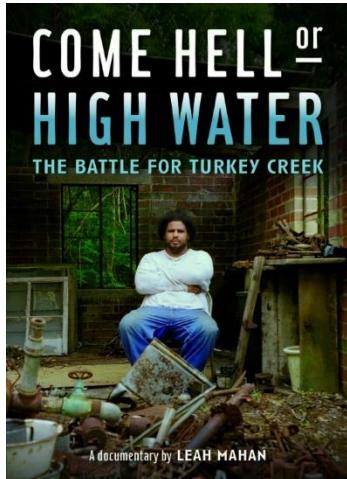
[Biloxi Regional Medical Center Emergency Room](#) (228) 436-1191



The 14-unit ER features designated units for trauma, cardiac and pediatric patients. Biloxi Regional's triage system facilitates speedy assessment and care, and treatment is administered on the basis of urgency. Every effort is made to see each patient promptly.

[Biloxi Regional Medical Center](#) 150 Reynoir St. Biloxi, MS 39530

Resources for Team Building, Learning about Issues affecting the Gulf Coast Region, and the Importance of Volunteer Service:

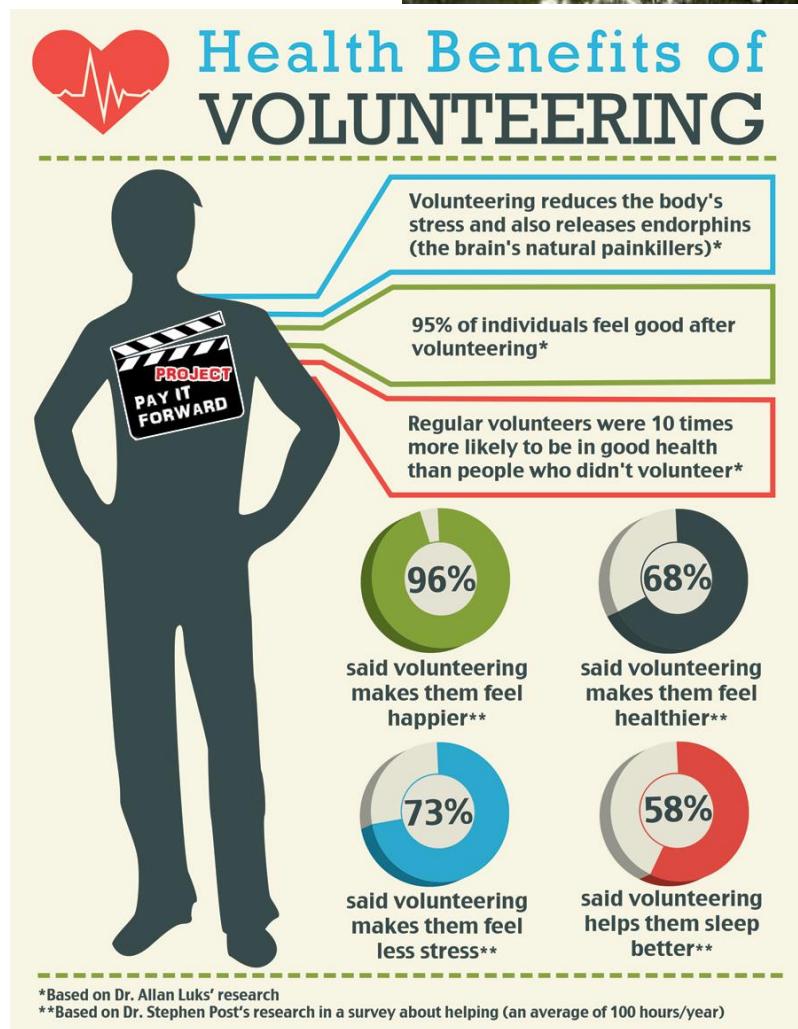


[This is an excellent article](#) on the community of Turkey Creek, where we've sent volunteers in the past. This presents some of the issues that this community has faced. CCI will have a copy of the film "Come Hell or High Water" for volunteers to see if they like when they come down.

[Bill Moyer's Report on Turkey Creek](#)



[This study shows benefits of volunteering](#)



[New York Times Article Babies Born with Urge to Serve](#)



[Interesting findings about acts of heroism](#)



Bill Greene/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

Volunteer Facility Info





The facility we use to house and feed volunteers is Camp Wilkes , 2109 Camp Wilkes Road, Biloxi, MS 39532. This usually works in most GPS devices. Generally there are no scouts or other youth groups using the facility at the same time we are.

Be sure your volunteers know what to expect when they arrive. Camp Wilkes is a rustic with old buildings that require our tender loving care. The cabins have concrete floors, bunk beds with foam mattresses and, depending on the cabin. Some cabins have showers in the cabin others have separate shower buildings, when the camp is full we have one shower for every eight to ten people. As you can probably tell cooperation and consideration for others sharing your cabin is essential for a decent housing experience.



There are brooms, mops and buckets in each cabin. Also you'll find spray bottles with bleach water in each cabin to wipe down sinks, toilet lids, and shower stalls. Use a cap of bleach in spray bottles to clean toilets and a cap of bleach with water in each mop bucket used.

Toilets flush into a septic system that will plug up if anything besides a modest amount of toilet paper is flushed down. That means watch your toilet paper use and please dispose of feminine products in the disposal provided. If a toilet becomes plugged there should be a plunger in every bathroom. If in doubt of what to do, contact a CCI staff person. Most cabins are heated, but some are not, so bring a sleeping bag or an extra blanket.



All volunteers dine at the Dining Hall at Camp Wilkes. Again this is an old facility with long mess hall style tables.

When there are large groups of volunteers at Camp Wilkes we will stagger the meal times.



We offer a variety of food with ample portions, but please instruct your team to be considerate of those to follow. We aim to have seconds for those with big appetites once everyone has been served. We offer a vegetarian option at all meals.

Breakfast is continental style with bagels, breads, butter, cream cheese, peanut butter and jelly as well as a variety of cold and hot cereal plus fruit. Coffee is served at breakfast only.

The dining hall seating section is always open to you. Feel free to mingle there and enjoy an apple from the bowl that's always out as well as what you need to make hot tea, regular or herbal. The kitchen closes after supper please respect the need to have food available for our meals. It's a bummer for someone not to have enough at meal time because somebody got the midnight hunger and went scrounging!



Water bottles can be filled from any of the taps at Camp Wilkes. The water is good without a chlorine aftertaste.

Most teams carry their lunch with them to their volunteer project. After you have your breakfast you'll have a chance to make a brown bag lunch with a choice of turkey, cheese, tuna, peanut butter, jelly sandwich with chips and fruit.



Be sure your team members have water bottles. Dehydration is the most common ailment that affects our volunteers and can render them very sick. Volunteers working outside should drink at least a quart of water/day and more if they're working in hot sweaty conditions. As a team leader make sure you see your team members taking water breaks. Once you arrive at Camp Wilkes and have your project info, be sure to note whether you need to bring an Igloo cooler of

water to your work site. It is your responsibility to contact kitchen staff to get and fill your water cooler to be taken with you and your team. Also once you have your project assignment you will get a list of what working conditions to prepare for.

There are a number of camp fire rings throughout Camp Wilkes. Volunteer teams are encouraged to use these for evening group reflections and camaraderie with other teams. Any musical instruments you might bring add to the merriment! Fire wood is what you can scrounge from the grounds, please do not cut down any living trees. There are fire bans frequently placed so check with CCI staff before you start a camp fire. We'll provide lighters as needed. Once your team is done with your fire be sure to get a bucket of water and put it thoroughly out.



Camp Wilkes is a substance free facility. If your team has members over 21 and you as team leader reach an agreement within your team to permit alcohol use it must be done off the Camp Wilkes grounds.

Tobacco use is allowed at Camp Wilkes outside of all buildings. Please make sure butts are completely out and placed in an outdoor trash can.

There is wi-fi at Camp Wilkes with very low broadband access, it should be used for email and text only. Please do not stream video as it will exclude use by others.



We try to reserve Wednesday night as our Community Night at Camp Wilkes. We usually bring in a guest speaker to speak to us about their experience of living in the Gulf Coast Region. So if possible try to be at Camp Wilkes on Wednesday night!

Watch your speed limit coming down Camp Wilkes Rd it's posted at 10mph which is nearly impossible, but be aware the caretaker has little children as well as neighbors who do complain when people speed down the road. This is a Boy Scout camp and young children do come for meetings, so treat it like you are driving through a school zone. You're in the South take it as one of many opportunities you'll have this week to slow down.

Encourage volunteers to use the hiking trails around Camp Wilkes. There is a network of trails on this 89 acre property, but it's difficult to get lost because the property is hemmed in by water, fences and roads. Encourage your team to take advantage of the beautiful shoreline on the Back Bay of Biloxi to reflect and give gratitude. Unless it's closed off, the dock is always open. Swimming is possible near the dock, although the water is cold and beware, alligators have been spotted in the area. No swimming is allowed around sunset and after dark.

There are poisonous snakes in this part of the country. They tend to hear you coming and are well away before you arrive, but be aware especially when uncovering debris or wood when out on your volunteer projects. It's always a good idea to ask about all work site dangers that your team should be aware of and take pre cautions against.

Team leaders should expect to meet with the CC International Volunteer Coordinator every eve after Supper generally at 7pm to go over the day, address concerns and questions and plan for the next day. This is a good time to exchange info with other team leaders.

Practice Leave No Trace principles when out in the field with your projects. Please take the time recycle when disposing of waste. A recycling system for Camp Wilkes will be explained upon your arrival. In order to reduce our waste we do not use disposable plates or service ware. We use a Red Cross approved dishwashing method that cleans and sanitizes your dishes. Take the care to wash your dish well after eating and make sure it's positioned in the dry rack to actually dry.

Projects!



Volunteers who come to the Gulf Coast can choose to focus their project in basically three areas:

Early Childhood Education: This usually entails assisting teachers in various Head Start classrooms in the area. We also offer opportunities for all volunteers to end their volunteer day by helping at a Boys and Girls Club afterschool program that runs from 3:00 to 5:30. This usually involves helping kids

with homework and playing games with them. Volunteers often comment on their experiences building relationships with the kids they work with over the course of the week.

Environmental Projects: Volunteers may work on a number of projects like removing invasive plant species from nature preserves, building oyster shell reefs, planting trees and other plants, cleaning up trash and other debris often related to hurricane damage, and building and maintaining hiking trails. We work with organizations like Land Trust of the Mississippi Coastal Plain, Audubon Society, Natural Capital Development, National Wildlife Refuge, Horticulture for Humanity, Mississippi Dept of Marine Resources as well as local parks.



Hunger and Homelessness: Mississippi has a high rate of people living below the poverty line. Many of these people are trying to get back on their feet after the hurricanes of recent years. Our projects focus on organizations that do community outreach. We primarily work with Hope Community Development and Moore Community House of East Biloxi.

We are happy to put together a mix of these different types of projects for your volunteer team.

Each Volunteer Team will alternate sending volunteers to help in the kitchen for meal preps and clean up.

Also if you have an issue while you are out on a volunteer project: for example something doesn't feel safe or you've finished early and are looking for more work call notify the CC International Volunteer Coordinator.

Day Off Possibilities:

When planning your day off, CCI staff have maps with Biloxi Area Attractions. In relation to your service we recommend:

Hurricane Katrina Memorial 133 Main St, Biloxi. Somber memorial showing personal effects from the storm. Nearby are tree carvings rendered from live oaks that were destroyed by the storm. Always open. Free.

Biloxi Visitor's Center, 1050 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, They are open 7 days/week and show a powerful 50 minute film on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on Biloxi. It shows everyday at 10 and 2. Free.

Gulf Islands National Seashore Park 3500 Park Rd Ocean Springs, MS Visitor Center shows an excellent film to understand the barrier islands and bayou wetlands, eco systems. The park also has hiking trails and a spot where there's a pretty good chance you'll see an alligator sun bathing. Free.

Friendship Oak Tree. A 500 plus year old live oak on the Univ of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Campus at 730 East Beach Blvd Gulfport, MS. Free.

Another amazing old live oak is the "Ruskin Oak" on a short dead end street called Ruskin in Ocean Springs. The street goes back toward the Gulf and is on the right side of the street just before the street ends. It is on private property, of which the owner is ok with visitors going up to the tree so use utmost respect when parking and walking around the tree. Free.

There are a number of wonderful art museums in the area that speak to the rich history of this area as an arts community: They include: Dusti Bonge Art Museum, Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Walter Anderson Museum of Art, and Shearwater Pottery. All of these charge an admission.

Beaches: There are miles and miles of beaches along Hwy 90 from Biloxi to Gulf Port, with parking lots to pull off. Also a sweet beach in Ocean Springs on Front Beach Dr.

Recommended Eating Places in the Area:

Vietnamese: Phi Long Noodle House, D'Iberville, MS Authentic Vietnamese excellent Pho'

Le Bakery, Biloxi Great place to stop for after project snack: bubble tea, bakery treats as well as an amazing sandwich menu

Southern BBQ: Pleasant's in Ocean Springs and The Shed also in Ocean Springs (Best for large groups, live music on weekends)

Seafood: This area is known for it's seafood, although it's pricey. Shaggy's on the beach provides a seaside family dining experience.

Remember with large groups be sure to get reservations to make sure they can handle your group size.

Closing Out and Finishing Strong:

So you've had a terrific week of work with your team and you may be thinking it's all over! Not so fast! We need your team to finish strong in the way you clean and leave your cabin for the next folks to come along. The cleaning job you do should represent the quality of your team. Here is the punch list to be completed and approved by CCI before your departure: (Be sure to wear provided rubber gloves when working with bleach water spray)



Showers:

- All shower walls and shower curtains sprayed with bleach/water solution and wiped down
- No hair or debris anywhere in drains, walls or floors
- Mop shower stalls and shower area floors. Be sure to put a cap of bleach in each mop bucket used.
- No soap, shampoo or anything else left behind

Bathroom:

- All sinks and toilets wiped down inside and out with bleach/water spray
- Walls of stalls sprayed and wiped inside and out
- Roll of toilet paper in each stall
- Mirrors cleaned with glass cleaner

- Floors cleaned and mopped
- Bunk Area
- All personal items removed
- Make sure all bunks and mattresses are dusted off.
- Wipe all table tops with bleach/water spray
- Sweep and mop floors

Sweep Porches

Remember that Community Collaborations strives for constant improvement. We welcome your feedback in making this the best possible experience for your volunteer team and for those that follow you. Once you've had CCI staff check out your cabin, we'll then collect your evaluation of your experience while here on the Gulf Coast. That evaluation will be given to you to fill out toward the end of your week.

As in so much of life if you can keep the principles of "**Leave it better than you found it**" and "Think about the next guy to come along" and "See something, Do something," we will build a positive, caring community. Your good energy and willingness to do the extra deed will set forth a positive vibe that will give a beautiful strong sense of community to our week together. You as team leaders are essential to building that success and we

Thank You for your efforts!

