



SABLE POINTS

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Volunteer Keepers Guidelines and Expectations 2012

Please read this document carefully, initial each page and sign the last page.

So you want to be a Volunteer Lighthouse Keeper?

Thank you for your interest in the volunteer lighthouse keepers' program at one of our lighthouses. The 2012 season will be the 17th year of this very successful program. The following paragraphs describe some of the key responsibilities we assign our volunteers. These guidelines have been established to insure the smooth operation of our lights and to help our volunteers have a positive experience. Please read carefully and initial each page of this entire document and then sign and date the last page.

A Volunteer Keeper's Life

The purpose and mission of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association is to preserve, promote, educate the public and make our lighthouses accessible to all. The primary responsibilities of volunteer keepers' are to greet visitors to the lighthouses, provide visitors with historical information about the lighthouses, and operate the lighthouse gift shop and to give tours to the top of the towers. Volunteers are very busy, often greeting 300 to 800 visitors a day. Keepers who are on site during the spring and fall months provide tours and programs for large numbers of school groups. Volunteers are required to learn basic historic information about our lights and about lighthouses in general. They must be energetic, comfortable speaking to the public, able to climb stairs, able to handle money in the gift shop and able to work long hours.

Additional Responsibilities

In addition to providing visitors with a fun, informative and educational experience at the lighthouses, volunteer keepers have numerous other responsibilities. They are asked to maintain the facilities by sweeping floors, sidewalks, and tower stairs, removing trash from the keepers' quarters and grounds, and thoroughly cleaning the keepers' quarters upon your departure. Other duties at Big Sable Point Lighthouse and Ludington North Breakwater Light include maintaining inventory records in the gift shop, keeping the gift shop stocked, neat and orderly. Volunteers are trained to operate the computerized cash register in the gift shop. Computer experience is helpful. Keepers are responsible for balancing the cash receipts at the end of each day and preparing the bank deposits.

Tours of Duty

Volunteers work as lighthouse keepers for periods of one or two weeks. A schedule for 2012 is included with this application. Usually six or seven volunteers live and work on site during each tour of duty at Big Sable Lighthouse. At Little Sable and the North Breakwater Light four or five volunteers are assigned to work at the lights.

Living Quarters

At Big Sable Point Lighthouse, volunteer keepers live in the second floor keepers' quarters. Quarters consist of two living rooms, four bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The six or seven volunteers share one kitchen and provide all their own food. The keepers' quarters are well equipped with dishes, cooking utensils, appliances (coffee maker, toaster, microwave, etc.) and some paper products. A gas grill is located outside. Keepers provide their own food, bedding and towels and personal items. A washer and dryer are provided for the keepers use.

At Little Sable Point Lighthouse, volunteer keepers live at 384 18th Avenue, Mears, MI which is about two miles from the lighthouse. The residence has sleeping accommodations for up to five people, two bathrooms, a living room, and a fully equipped kitchen, including a dishwasher. A washer and dryer are also on site in the basement. Outside there is a fire pit, picnic table, Adirondack chairs and a gas grill. Keepers provide their own food, bedding, towels and personal items.

At the Ludington North Breakwater Lighthouse, volunteers live in a home located within the Ludington State Park. The house has sleeping accommodations for up to five people, 1 ½ bathrooms, living room, and dining area, a fully equipped kitchen and laundry room. There is a deck with a gas grill outside. Keepers provide their own food, bedding, towels and personal items.

All residences are heated but not air conditioned. We are not able to accommodate overnight guests. Rooms are assigned in random order by staff.

State Park Permit

Because all three residences and two of the lights are located within a state park, volunteer keepers must have a permit to enter the park. Michigan residents can purchase a park sticker for their license plate when they renew their plates. Out of state keepers will need to purchase a permit at the state park. The parks close at 10:00pm and keepers are asked not to enter or leave the park after that time.

Vehicle Access to Big Sable

One parking space for each volunteer keeper (or couple) is available at the lighthouse property. No camping or use of motor homes is permitted on the lighthouse grounds. At Big Sable, the road from the state park campground to the lighthouse is used only by lighthouse employees, volunteer workers, and state park employees. Because the general public is not permitted to

drive on the road there is heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic, volunteer keepers should not use the road between the hours of 10:00am and 5:00pm. Friends and relatives of volunteers who plan to visit during the keepers' tour of duty should be advised that they are expected to walk to the lighthouse. These restrictions on the use of the road are a part of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association agreement with the DNR and Ludington State Park.

Application Procedures and Interviews

All applicants must be current members of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association. A membership form is available on our web site at www.splka.org. If you do not have internet access, please call our office at 231-845-7343 and ask to have a membership form mailed to you. New volunteer applicants must complete, sign and return the attached application form along with 1) a cover letter explaining why they want to be a volunteer keeper; 2) two letters of reference/recommendation, and; 3) a brief resume. Application materials should be submitted as soon as possible. Personal interviews are required for participation in the program. Submitting an application and/or participating in an interview do not guarantee a volunteer keeper position.

Orientation Program

All new volunteers who are accepted as keepers and scheduled into the program are obligated to attend one of the all day orientation programs conducted in late April.

Returning Keepers

Returning keepers must complete a new application form each year, but do not need to include the letters of reference or the resume. Returning keepers are not required to schedule interviews. The spring orientation is optional for returning keepers but they are welcome to attend. Returning keepers will need to be updated on any new policies/procedures or new information prior to beginning their tour of duty, this may occur when they report for their tour of duty.

Prior Applicants

Volunteer applicants who applied in previous years, but were not scheduled to work in the program, must submit a new application indicating their interest in the 2012 program and dates on which they are available. These applicants do not need to submit additional references or resumes.

Preferential Treatment

Regardless of years served, all Keepers are equal at SPLKA. There is no seniority as a Keeper and no Keeper or Couple shall receive preferential treatment or be given authority over any other Keeper, regardless of the amount of time spent volunteering.

Confirmation Fee

In 2012, we will begin to request a Lighthouse Keepers confirmation fee, \$25.00 for singles or a maximum of \$40.00 for couples from the same family, in order to help offset increasing operational expenses of this program. This was a difficult decision to make, as we greatly value the time, expertise and experience of our Keepers and we **DO NOT** wish to be a financial burden. To be clear, we will **NOT** be charging you for Lighthouse Keeping, but will use this fund to assist in bettering your Keeper experience. In response to our Keepers requests for more assistance at the end of the day's end, we hope to add increased support on-site. Please do not send in your confirmation fee until you receive confirmation you have been scheduled to work and given the dates of your tour. Once you receive notification of your tour of duty send (within two weeks) the confirmation fee and your acceptance of your assigned dates to: SPLKA Keepers Program, PO Box 673, Ludington, MI 49431. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding as our organization grows and we lay the groundwork for a brighter future!

Volunteer or Vacationer?

Many newspaper and magazine articles inappropriately portray this volunteer experience as a relaxing and leisurely vacation. In reality, applicants should clearly understand that volunteering at any of the Sable Points lighthouses is **not** a vacation. The hours are long, and welcoming guests usually requires the efforts of all of the volunteers who are on duty. Keepers work as a closely-knit team and develop long-lasting friendships with one another, but it is essential that all volunteers pull his or her weight and fulfill volunteer keeper roles. Most keepers find ample time after the lighthouse closes at the end of the day to stroll the beach, explore the park, and enjoy Lake Michigan's spectacular sunsets. But perhaps the greatest benefit of working as a volunteer keeper is the satisfaction of knowing that one's efforts have contributed to the restoration, preservation and interpretation of the lighthouses that are truly unique to the Great Lakes and the history of Michigan.

Agreement and Signature

I have read the above guidelines and expectations for volunteer keepers and if I am accepted as a volunteer keeper I agree to follow the guidelines and to the best of my ability comply with all expectations of keepers.

Signature

Date