LIFE ON THE ISLAND:

St. Helena Island Lighthouse was built in 1873 and is located in the Straits of Mackinac (Michigan) in Northern Lake Michigan on a beautiful 260 acres uninhabited island. GLLKA owns approximately 3.5 acres where the light station is located. The remaining part of the island is owned by the Little Traverse Conservancy. You will travel to the island from our Upper Peninsula land in Gros Cap, which is west of St. Ignace, on a 14-foot inflatable motorized Zodiac. Since there is not a dock on the mainland, you will need to wade into the water to load into the boat, so water footwear and shorts are a must.

All the buildings are powered by solar electricity. There is no running water, only an outside hand pump which has the water tested every spring. Our bathroom facilities are clean latrines/outhouses set back in the woods. Both toilets have benches & toilet seats that are covered with a tent for privacy and to keep rain off. We do have heat on demand filtered lake water showers that are refreshing. Living conditions are similar to camping in a RV.

The island is home to non-poisonous snakes (mainly garter snakes which are harmless), eagles, snowshoe hares (rabbits), and other wildlife. There is an abundance of wildflowers, such as; Showy Lady Slippers, Yellow Lady Slippers, Indian Paintbrush, and various other gorgeous plants. The island also has a healthy crop of poison ivy and wild parsnip which we keep off our walking paths and trails. We will help identify these for your awareness.

St. Helena Island is a chance for you to go back in time and enjoy the life of a lighthouse keeper at a historic landmark. Not only will you be experiencing a keeper's life, but you will be prolonging history with restoration work. As a volunteer assistant keeper you will have various duties to do throughout the day as it is a working community. There are activities that you are able to do while on the island; such as walk the trails, restoration work, watch for shooting stars & northern lights, kayak, freighter watch, walk the beach, eagle watch, read, relax, take a nap, or sit and enjoy the island version of the “big screen TV” - looking out the large boathouse door. We do take safety very seriously and have communications with various emergency response units in the event that there is a medical emergency at the light station.
WORKING COMMUNITY:

The assistant keeper’s primary areas of duties are:

• assisting with getting people safely on and off St. Helena Island
• helping in the kitchen with the meals & washing dishes
• pumping water for cooking and hand wash use
• writing daily in the log book
• cleaning the buildings – dusting, sweeping, organizing, wiping down, etc.
• maintaining the lighthouse – repairing, painting, cutting brush, etc.
• preparing fresh bake goods for our St. Helena Experience and other functions

LIVING QUARTERS:

The Keeper’s quarters are comfortably furnished and the kitchen is well equipped with two propane fueled ranges and an electric refrigerator, dishes, utensils, pots and pans, paper products, and cleaning supplies to assure that the food preparation is convenient and safe. The main dwelling has a summer kitchen, winter kitchen, dining room, parlor, and office on the main floor. There are four bedrooms upstairs. The basement is used for storage of supplies and equipment.

BEDROOMS: (You supply your own sheets and your bedroom will be assigned prior to your stay.)

• Tower View - 1 double bed
• Bridge View - 1 double bed
• Woods View - 2 twin beds & 1 double bed
• Lake View - 2 twin beds & 1 double bed
GENERAL CONDUCT OF KEEPERS:

• No alcohol, illegal drugs, vaping, or marijuana will be permitted on the boats or the island.
• Flip flop type of shoes for showering only.
• Your luggage should be duffle bag type, water resistant, and lined with a plastic garbage bag or a waterproof dry-bag for transport to the island as your bags could get wet.
• No pets belonging to keepers are allowed on the island without special approval. Should a boater arrive with a pet, it must be on a leash and kept outside.
• If a keeper/guest is wet, please respect the wooden floors.
• Please make an effort to shut all windows in all buildings if it should rain.
• Swim or kayak in designated areas with a buddy or being supervised.
• When on a boat or kayak a PDF/lifejacket must be worn at all times.
• Let a head keeper know if you go off on the trails or kayak. Please be sure you are back before dusk as we have had people get lost after dark. Take a charged cell phone & a map.
• No admittance on the balcony of the tower unless given permission by a head keeper.
• Respect nature.

GETTING TO AND FROM THE ISLAND:

The island is 2 miles from the mainland in Gros Cap, which is about a 15 - 30 minute boat ride - depends on waves and weight in the boat. You will travel in one of GLLKA's 14 foot Zodiac boats which are very sea worthy. However, you will need to wade in the water to get to the boat on the mainland. So water shoes of some sort (old tennis shoes) are needed along with shorts. There is a dock on the island that entails climbing 1 - 3 rungs on a ladder. Since the boats do not have coverage from rain or waves, you could get wet. So please make sure your belongings are packed according to the packing list.
PACKING LIST: Geared for 3 - 4 day stay (increase clothing amounts if staying longer)

- bedding - sleeping bag & bottom sheet or sheets (twin or full) & pillowcase. Pillows & blankets will be provided.
- warm pajamas
- undergarments
- 1 - 2 towels & washcloths
- 2 long sleeved shirts
- sweatshirt or sweater
- 4 - 5 pairs of socks (over the ankle)
- 2 pair long pants
- 2 - 3 pairs of shorts
- raincoat - highly recommended
- bathing suit & towel
- hat & sunglasses & sunscreen
- mosquito repellant
- shoes or hiking boots - (flip flops allowed for showering)
- water footwear - old tennis shoes, water shoes, water sandals/shoes - for water use only
- old shirt & pants/shorts for restoration work or walk around the island.
- warm jacket, hat, & mittens (check weather in the Straits area as it is usually 10° cooler on the island)
- work gloves
- flashlight (with extra batteries)

OPTIONAL ITEMS:
- watch
- cellphone & charger
- camera & battery charger
- backpack/bag
- soft drinks (pop) as we serve coffee, tea, & sugar-free lemonade

The list is a general list so some items may not apply to you.

PLEASE PUT ALL OF YOUR BELONGINGS IN BAGS THAT KEEP THINGS DRY FOR TRANSFERS FROM THE NORTH SHORE / 349 GROSS CAP. WATERPROOF DRY BAGS OR DUFFLE BAGS WITH PLASTIC GARBAGE BAG INSERTS WORK TOO. WATER SHOES & SHORTS ARE NEEDED TO WADE TO THE BOAT - YOUR FEET WILL GET WET AND YOU WALK ON POINTED ROCKS.
SHOWERS

HAND PUMP

TOILETS

NIGHT TOILET

We hope you will find your time as a volunteer keeper at the St. Helena Island Lighthouse to be both enjoyable and rewarding. Please feel free to contact Mark & Michele or our office should you have any questions or concerns. You are entitled to a 20% off discount at the GLLKA gift shop the days before or after you are at the lighthouse. Of course, please make sure you have signed up for a GLLKA membership as this is required. Applications are online @ gllka.org and funds are due by May 31st.

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Be sure to checkout our live webcams @ www.gllka.org.

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