



## **Duck Tour Operators**

### **Driving an Original Wisconsin Duck**

Taking a Duck tour is more than just a jaunt through the woods and a splashdown into the water aboard a unique vehicle. The conversation and camaraderie provided by Original Wisconsin Ducks drivers themselves make the excursion a distinct experience. More than 100 applicants are considered each year to work as Duck Tour Operators for Original Wisconsin Ducks, but only 50 make the cut. It is one of the most sought-after summer jobs in Wisconsin Dells. Applicants must be at least 18 years old. Most are college students coming back to earn money for school, commandeering the big vehicles, armed with humorous facts, local lore and good old-fashioned Midwestern charm.

The process of becoming a Duck Driver is serious business. Most tour operators work their way up through the ranks with many candidates working a year in the maintenance shop before deciding to put in for a driver's position. Original Wisconsin Ducks conducts rigorous training of drivers as part of an overall standard of excellence that sets it apart from other amphibious tours. The training involves extensive written and practical testing, both internally and with outside agencies such as the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources and the American Red Cross.

Duck driver applicants must truly be dedicated to endure the intensive six-week training. Tour operators must learn to operate the large amphibious vehicles. After mastering basic Duck operation in an empty parking lot, they proceed to the woods where the driver learns to maneuver the Duck along miles of winding Duck Trails surrounding the Dells and the Wisconsin River. Only after recruits have perfected the scenic trails are they teamed with a senior, experienced driver to complete their first week of tours through the spectacular sights of Wisconsin Dells.

Beyond excellent driving skill, Duck operators must possess an outgoing personality and enjoy interacting with the thousands of visitors who experience the Ducks each season. During its 70 years of operation, Original Wisconsin Ducks has employed approximately 670 Duck Drivers carrying millions of visitors on amphibious tours of Wisconsin Dells.