

Area Ecologist –West Midlands

Location

West Midlands (England)

About the job

Job summary

Never has there been a more important time for trees and forests to help tackle the climate emergency and provide a much-needed sanctuary for people and wildlife. We aim to at least treble tree planting rates in England by the end of this Parliament, reflecting England's contribution to meeting the UK's overall target of planting 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament. This acceleration in current planting rates in England will contribute to meeting the net-zero by 2050 ambitions, and to government's wider environmental targets. This is supported by the £640m Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) announced in the March 2020 budget.

The Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission have set up a joint NCF tree programme for England to support the forestry sector, landowners and communities in the delivery of these ambitions.

Forestry Commission leads the delivery of the following parts of the tree planting programme:

- developing sector capacity
- woodland creation on public land
- woodland creation on private land
- promotion and engagement

If you are passionate about the role of forestry in creating a better future for England, and want to play a key part in realising that, we want to hear from you.

By joining the Forestry Commission, you will become part of a team of passionate, committed colleagues, and be able to build on a wealth of expertise to take this ambitious work forward. You will be able to make your mark by helping the Forestry Commission to transform how we work together and reach new stakeholders.

This role will provide ecological advice on forestry schemes and proposals to Area colleagues and support the work of the national Natural Environment Advisors. This local, expert specialist advice will enable well informed and timely decision making that fully accounts for the existing ecological interests of both woodland and non-woodland (open) priority habitats and species and their potential for enhancement in line with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

The post will be situated within the West Midlands of the North West and West Midlands Area Field Team. The Area contains over 239,000 hectares of woodland ranging from internationally important ancient and designated woodlands and very productive commercial plantations. The West Midlands area is varied from the rolling Hills of Herefordshire, hay rich meadows of Worcestershire, the Meres and Mosses of Staffordshire and Shropshire to the urban conurbation of Birmingham and everything in between. The area has the Wye Valley AONB, Shropshire Hills AONB, Malvern Hills, Cannock Chase AONB and part of the Cotswolds AONB the largest National Nature Reserve in the Wyre Forest. The West Midlands has nationally significant proportions of several important habitats, including 20% of England's lowland meadows, 10% of England's broadleaved woodland and 9% of the wood pasture and parkland, lowland heathland and acid grassland. The Ecologist will work closely with existing area Ecologist based in the North West on a range of issues relevant to Area Team Operations including grants and regulations.

Job description

Purpose of the Job:

1. Expand woodland cover: a. champion the multiple benefits of new woodland as business opportunities for land owners and as natural capital (including biodiversity, water quality, flood management, carbon sequestration, etc) for the wider environment and society; b. Assist Woodland Officers in facilitating the design and delivery of new woodlands optimising the benefits they can deliver to the owner and as natural capital; c. Assist Woodland Officers in the administration of the Forestry Regulations relating to woodland creation (Environmental Impact Assessment); and d. Assist Woodland Officers to administer/process applications for grants.
2. Protect our existing trees and woodlands: a. Support Woodland Officers in the administration of Forestry Regulations: i. Forestry Act – Felling Licences, ii. Environmental Impact Assessments – deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries, and iii. Habitats Regulations – re forest operations within Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar sites to ensure that tree felling is carried out in accordance with the principles of the UK Forestry Standard; b. advise on the links with other legislation such as those pertaining to European Protected Species; and
3. Improve the condition and resilience of our existing woodlands and wider treescape: a. champion the benefits of actively managed woodland; b. support woodland owners and managers in responding to key challenges of pests and diseases including: ash dieback, Phytophthora ramorum, deer and grey squirrels; c. work to increase resilience within woodlands to the challenges of a changing climate; and d. facilitate closer working across the forestry sector – for instance between markets, contractors, managers, etc
4. Engaging partners, stakeholders and the public: a. encourage, enthuse and support key partners and stakeholders to help facilitate the expansion, protection and improvement of our woodlands and treescape; and b. at shows and events champion the many values of trees and woodland to the wider public helping them understand and appreciate the importance and values of active management.
- 5.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

- *In-depth understanding of woodland and forestry's role in providing biodiversity benefits (habitats, species and ecosystem services), and how to build the resilience of the woodland resource*
- *Working knowledge of environmental impact assessments, habitat and species surveys and how they apply to forestry and conservation*
- *Working knowledge of environmental regulations, standards and good practice of relevance to forestry and nature conservation*
- *Experience of advising on conservation land management including on non-woodland priority habitat restoration / creation*
- *An understanding of the key Section 41 habitats present across the Area, both wooded and open habitat types such as species-rich grassland and lowland heathland*
- *Competent IT user with experience of the MS Office suite of applications*
- *Excellent verbal and written communication skills*

Desirable Criteria

- *Expertise in ancient and native woodland restoration*
- *A knowledge of the peatland resource and its condition assessment.*
- *Experience of the planning system, development control and planning gain and land-use change*
- *Experience of successfully operating in a complex stakeholders' landscape*
- *Experience of developing site management plans for protected areas and priority habitats*
- *Working knowledge of the forestry sector*
- *Masters degree in Ecology, Environmental Management or a closely related discipline*
- *Membership of (or working towards membership of) the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF)*

Technical Skills

- Degree or equivalent in Ecology, Environmental Management or a closely related discipline.

Benefits

- A Civil Service pension
- A range of family friendly benefits
- An environment with flexible working options
- Learning and development tailored to your role
- A culture which promotes a diverse and inclusive work environment
- A range of wellbeing benefits including discounted Civil Service Healthcare, access to an Employee Assistance Programme 24/7, Bike to Work Scheme, plus many more.
- 25 days annual leave, with 1 additional day for each years' service up to 5 years (pro rata)
- Ability to buy or sell 5 days annual leave
- 3 days volunteering per year (pro rata)

Salary £35,870 - £38,842

To apply, please visit [here](#).

Closing date: Apply before 11:55 pm on Sunday 8th January 2023



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