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# Job Opportunity: Head of Recreation, South District

Senior Executive Officer, Pay band 3  
Salary from £47,252 - 50,927  
37 hours per week

We're looking for an experienced recreation management professional to join our team in the South District. Based in Lyndhurst, Hampshire you'll lead and manage recreation matters across the south of England.

We work with a wide-range of partners and employ a growing number of specialist recreation staff to welcome millions of people each year. We're open all year round too, making sure our forests are safe spaces for all.

**Closing date: 11.55pm, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025**



## Thank you for your interest in this role

Welcome and many thanks for your interest in Forestry England and the work we do in its South District. For over 100 years we've been shaping and caring for our forests in the south of England for the benefit and enjoyment of all, for this generation and the next.

We live and breathe forests. We're foresters, professionals and experts. We're a passionate team who love to share our enthusiasm and want to make a positive difference for people and the environment. Together, we're using our scale and expertise to grow the nation's forests for everyone. We're already adapting our landscapes for tomorrow and getting stuff done today. We are creating amazing places and experiences for people to enjoy. We're providing vital homes for wildlife, making our air cleaner to breathe and producing sustainable timber. As you can see, we're doing a lot. And we need you to join us in growing a better future.

We seek the very best talent to grow our fantastic team here in the District. We want superb staff that share our commitment and love for forests and the wider environment. In return you will get opportunities to develop your skills, experience and to leave a legacy. We believe in providing you with a fulfilling career alongside an appropriate balance of work and life that supports your personal growth too.

Before becoming Forest Management Director in South District in 2021, I worked across the UK in local and national roles to help create and sustainably manage woodlands.

I've been inspired by the scale, diversity and quality of our work, the people I've worked with, and how we have continually evolved - to meet new challenges and the changing needs of society. I'm confident that you will find similar satisfaction from your part in our story.

So, thank you very much for your interest in Forestry England and I hope to meet you soon.

**Craig Harrison, Forest Management Director, South District**



You will be responsible for overseeing operational delivery of recreation including health and safety, public access provision and commercial recreation activities across our woodlands, which includes seven counties, so lots of variation and never a dull day.

You'll be working with a diverse professional team including foresters, ecologists, recreation managers, civil engineers, communications and finance colleagues... sharing each other's professional skills and supporting one another to maximise delivery. You'll play a key role in the District senior management team, with opportunities to shape and support the direction of the whole team



- Your work will underpin us managing recreation within working landscapes and internationally important habitats
- As well as core business, you'll be able to engage in a wide variety of projects across the District
- Our work - and your involvement - makes transformational, on the ground differences for wildlife, people and the climate
- Some of the circumstances you'll deal with will be unique, for example the centuries of cultural heritage and forest laws in the New Forest
- You'll be based at The King's House, a historic building which is also home to the New Forest Verderers Court
- You'll have the opportunity to manage your work and team with a good degree of autonomy, empowered to make decisions



- You will be a member of the District Senior Management Team, lead by example and report to the Forest Management Director
- You will lead the district recreation team in support of our mission and vision.
- You will lead development of the District Business Plan for recreation, ensuring delivery ambitions reflect staff capacity & budget availability
- You will manage budgeting and financial control of the recreation team, reporting to the District Director and national recreation colleagues
- You will oversee operational delivery of recreation including health and safety, public access provision and commercial recreation activities



## Leadership

- Strategic one team, cross functional vision & approach
- Senior Management Team Member
- Lead by example - Forestry England Values, H&S Champion
- Act as coach, mentor, leader, professional, with a delivery focus

## Team & Line Management

- Ensure Business Plan objectives are reflected in team & individual plans
- Team skills development and Personal / team performance continuous improvement
- Line manage 6 Recreation Managers and a team of ~45 people
- Delivery in line with policies and procedures including HR
- Build and maintain good team morale

## Good working relationships

- With district colleagues and national colleagues, partners, customers, stakeholders and the public





## Business & Delivery Planning

- Business Plan Long Term Financial Modelling
  - 5 year rec outlook/programme
  - detailed 1-2 year rec programme
- Maintain a Recreation investment pipeline and list of desired projects, should opportunities arise
- Produce and maintain a Recreation Delivery Plan that includes:
  - Horizon scanning and risk analysis
  - Policies and procedures, procurement

## Delivery & Business Plan Monitoring

- Business & Performance monitoring
  - Monthly commentary
  - Review & respond / adapt
- Compliance monitoring



## Recreation Core Activity

- Moors Valley Country Park and Alice Holt Forest Park
- New Forest recreation
- Wider beats including smaller recreation sites
- Permissions
- Community engagement, Volunteers & Education / Learning

## Business as usual delivery oversight & support

- Health & Safety
- Unauthorised trails risk management

## Business Improvement

- Recreation improvement projects
- Cross functional work with a recreation element
- Develop and implement new and innovative approaches to deliver public benefits and income

## Recreation Projects

- Support the New Forest car parking project
- Work with colleagues on New Forest Campsite and other overnight stay projects
- Support the national Visitor Centre optimisation project





## Qualifications

- Desirable - a degree in a relevant discipline, project management

## Essential professional & technical experience

- Team management
- Outdoor recreation management
- Managing health & safety, wellbeing and incident management
- Business acumen
- Budget management

## Desirable professional & technical experience

- Understanding of Forestry England recreation management practices
- Managing business partners and tenants
- Volunteer management
- Project Management

## Civil Service Success profiles - behaviours & strengths

- Leadership - *Team leader & Motivator*
- Working Together - *Emotionally intelligent, Relationship Builder*
- Working at Pace - *Organiser, adaptable*





South England Forest District manages 46,000 hectares of the public forest estate across West Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of White, Dorset and South Wiltshire. The varied, mixed woodlands produce some 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber each year, of which 25,000 m<sup>3</sup> is hardwood. Forestry England manages 47% of the New Forest National Park.

Much of the land is of high importance for nature conservation, supporting 29,000 hectares of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of which approximately 27,000 ha are also designated at a European level as Special Areas of Conservation.

The majority of the land managed by the district is also within areas designated for their landscape value, including 7,500 hectares within Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) and 31,500 hectares across two National Parks.

We are the largest outdoor recreation provider in the South with over 45 million day visits by the public each year. We have two major Forest Visitor Centres at Moors Valley Country Park and Alice Holt Forest.

**“A district full of unique landscapes, internationally important habitats, and lots of people”**



The New Forest is a spectacular landscape made up of a unique mix of woodlands and open habitats that are globally important for nature conservation. The significance of the New Forest is reflected in the fact that it has the highest possible conservation status and is legally protected.

It is a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) for Birds, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and a Ramsar site (land listed as a Wetland of International Importance).



Verderers Court

Much of the New Forest is subject to Common Rights administered by the New Forest Verderers. It is subject to its own laws dating back centuries but now based on various New Forest Acts, principally of 1877, 1949 and 1964, and specific parts of other legislation.



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Forestry England is the country's largest land management organisation, as we tackle issues ranging from climate change, biodiversity decline and health and wellbeing..

We manage beautiful, diverse, and productive, publicly owned woods and forests. With 1,500 forests and over 250,000 hectares, we are the largest single land manager in England. We aim to connect everyone with the nation's forests, caring for them to enable everyone to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and business to grow.

### Our business

With an annual turnover of £100 million, we are the largest provider of home-grown, sustainably produced timber in England. We were the first national forest service in the world to have achieved full certification of all its forests for sustainable management. We sell around 1.4 million tonnes of timber each year, nearly half of England's annual supply of home-grown timber. We also generate income from hosting over 500 commercial partnerships and let land and buildings for residential or commercial use.

The Forestry Commission is divided into three parts - Forest Services, Forest Research and Forestry England. Our national office is in Bristol. Forestry England's land holding is divided into six geographic Districts, including South District. The Forestry Commission is part of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

### Our forests

Over half of our landscapes sit within statutory nature or landscape designations, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) and National Parks making them some of the most valuable habitats for nature and landscapes for public enjoyment. From carbon capture and flood prevention to a positive impact on our mental health, the benefits our forests and diverse landscapes bring to society are valued (19/20) at £580 million.

### Our visitors

Our forests host 230 million visits each year, providing memorable experiences from live music and iconic arts projects to mountain biking, dog walking and Gruffalo spotting.

## Our staff

Nationally we have over 1,000 dedicated members of staff and 1,900 dedicated volunteers looking after more land and more trees than any other organisation in England. There is a wealth of expertise and experience, coupled with a love for forests and wildlife that makes us a world leader in forest management.

Our South District team employs around 170 members of staff in teams including Land Management and Forestry, Recreation and Public Affairs, Planning and Environment, Estates and Land Agency, Civil Engineering, Communications and Marketing, and Business Support and Finance.

## Our plans

This is an exciting time to join Forestry England as we look to secure and grow the economic, social, and natural capital of our forests.

Our ambitious five-year strategy - Growing the future: 2021-26 - will create and nurture superb forests for all to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and business to grow. We will contribute up to 2,400 ha of new woodland as part of the government's England Tree Planting Programme and understand the many benefits our forests bring to the economy, society, nature, and the wider environment. We will also identify new ways to generate income and explore new business opportunities and partnerships.

We will strengthen our engagement with our visitors to foster lifelong connections, while encouraging new and diverse groups to use and connect with our forests. We will also increase and strengthen our Forestry England brand.





The team are our biggest asset, and we are proud to offer a range of fantastic benefits to support them and their families.

## We offer work/life balance

- Flexible working to support a healthy work/life balance.
- 25 days holiday pa with an extra day's holiday entitlement each year over the first 5 years up to a maximum of 30 days per year, plus bank holidays and 2.5 extra days leave. (all pro-rata)
- Reimbursement of professional membership fees.
- Generous Civil Service pension - we contribute at least 28% of your salary - and we regularly offer pension roadshows to all our staff to help them plan their future

## We are family-friendly

- Maternity, shared parental and adoption leave for up to 52 weeks with the first 26 weeks at full pay, and paternity leave for up to 2 weeks full pay after the qualifying period
- Access to the Government's Tax-Free Childcare Scheme
- Opportunity to apply for unpaid career breaks
- A variety of special leave to help cope with those unexpected times in your life, including parental and bereavement leave

Many of our staff work flexibly in many ways, including part-time and compressed hours. Please talk to us at interview about the flexibility you need, and where possible we will try to accommodate your request.



## We look out and look after

- Free eyesight tests and £100 voucher for glasses for visual display usage
- Pay advances of up to £5,000 for computers, sports equipment, or training costs
- Free parking at all Forestry Commission sites (including Moors Valley Country Park and Alice Holt Forest) and free entry into our National Arboretum in Westonbirt
- Up to 15% discount at Forest Live Events, Forest Holidays cabins, & Go Ape outdoor activity centres
- Numerous retail discounts including 10% off at Forestry Commission shops and Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Three paid volunteering days per year (pro-rata for those who work part time) so staff can give back to their local communities
- Mental health awareness and Mental Health First Aiders who are a listening ear for staff and can help you access information, support and guidance
- District Wellbeing Champion events and initiatives



## We are inclusive

- Staff can connect with colleagues through our employee-led diversity networks championing BAME, LGBTQ+ and Women in Forestry
- Our Inclusion Ambassadors help to support staff access information and guidance on inclusion and diversity matters
- All staff receive inclusion and equality training and we recently launched Equally Yours, an innovative online game to get staff thinking and acting on diversity and inclusion
- We use our staff engagement surveys to understand what diverse groups think, what they love about working here, and to find ways to make things even better
- Our 'Forests for everyone' strategy outlines steps towards making Forestry England even more inclusive and diverse
- We mark annual celebrations including a full programme of events for Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Time to Talk, International Women's Day and Mental Health Awareness Week



## We love to learn and grow

- Extensive District and national induction programme
- Dedicated in-house technical training team to support operational functions - keeping our staff safe is central to everything we do
- 5 dedicated learning days a year to target the skills you need to take your career forward. You can do this in many ways from e-learning to traditional training, team activities to coaching and work shadowing
- Civil Service Learning online platform provides access to a host of high-quality training courses, workbooks, e-learning, and videos on a variety of useful and relevant subjects
- Nurturing early talent through our Apprenticeship and Graduate Development Programmes
- Each member of staff has a Forward Job and Learning Plan that sets out key work areas and ways to develop and grow their skills
- Regular learning lunches at both a District and national level

Amy Howells, Estates Officer

“Forestry England has supported further study at Harper Adams University - I am currently enrolled in the MProf Rural Estates and Land Management course, which will provide me with the qualifications and experience needed to progress towards becoming a rural land surveyor.

I’m studying whilst working, enabling me the opportunity to apply what I’m learning in a practical setting. This combination of academic knowledge and hands-on experience is already proving invaluable, and I look forward to using these skills to contribute further to Forestry England’s work in land and estate management.”



Beren Ashton-Butler, Forestry Works Supervisor

“Forestry England has not hesitated to support any relevant learning I’ve needed, including internal and role specific training.

They’ve also supported associate membership to the Institute of Chartered Foresters, allowing time for industry-related webinars for CPD, and funding a part-time distance learning MSc in Forestry from Bangor University - helping me flourish in my role, feel stimulated, challenged and well-rounded”

Kate Barnes, Business Support Officer

“Forestry England has really supported my professional growth by helping me to complete my AAT Level 1 and 2 Bookkeeping training - funding the courses and providing me with study time.

Having this backing has made a big difference in my ability to study and focus on the course work. I have been able to implement the training I have received in my day-to-day job.”



### Think beyond a lifetime

We make plans for today for a better tomorrow, so our business and our forests are sustainable and fit for the future.

### Be adventurous

We approach challenges with creativity and adventure, embracing research and innovation to stay relevant.

### Do it together

We get our best results when we work with others, and we encourage diverse perspectives so we make better decisions.

### Look out and look after

We care about our colleagues, volunteers, partners and customers, and we take a stand against unsafe behaviour.





## Lucy Andrews - Recreation Manager, New Forest

The care and kindness shown by the organisation and my colleagues makes this so much more than work. This is a place where you are encouraged to develop new skills, experience new roles and really live your best working life.

“I feel incredibly lucky to work for Forestry England and in the wonderful surroundings of the New Forest.”



## Ben Symes - Craftsperson, Moors Valley

“For me, the District has a great family feel. We all look out and look after one another and can contribute ideas and shape how we can make our forests better for visitors.

“I work at our visitor centre at Moors Valley and it is a very special place to work. I grew up quite close by, so I always came to the forest as a child. It’s great to see other people enjoying it just like I did all those years ago.”

To apply for this position, you will need to complete the online application form on Forestry England's recruitment network. Details will be included in the recruitment advertisement for this role.

## Your application must be submitted online by 11.55pm 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025

The online application process will ask for your contact details, employment history and qualifications. You will also be asked to provide a Curriculum Vitae and Statement of Suitability using examples to explain how your personal skills, qualities and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with reference to the criteria in the person specification.

You will also be asked several diversity-related questions as part of the application process. If you do not wish to provide a declaration of any of the characteristics you will have the option to select 'prefer not to say'.

We are keen to meet people with varied backgrounds - our view is the more inclusive we are, the better our work will be. We want to build teams which have a variety of experiences, perspectives, and skills, and we recognise talent as the basis of merit and potential.

We understand some people may not apply for jobs unless they can tick every box. But if you are excited about joining us and think you have much of what we are looking for, even if you are not 100% sure, we would love to hear from you.

## How will I know I have been shortlisted for interview?

All applicants will receive an acknowledgment of your application through the online Forestry England recruitment network within a week of the closing date. If you have been shortlisted for interview, you will receive a notification with details of your interview date and arrangements.

We will shortlist those candidates who most closely match our requirement using the criteria set out in the ‘Person Specification’ section. It is important you think carefully about this before you submit your application as we will use the information you provide to determine your suitability for the role and will progress those candidates whose skills and experience most closely match our requirements.

We currently expect interviews to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025, though this may be subject to change

## What if I am unsuccessful in my application?

We will let all applicants know through the Forestry England’s recruitment network. It is not possible to provide individual feedback to candidates that are unsuccessful at shortlisting stage.

We advertise a range of different roles across Forestry England, and we would encourage any unsuccessful candidates to not be discouraged from applying for future roles.



## How will I be interviewed?

You will be asked to attend a panel interview to have a more in-depth discussion of your previous experience and professional competence in relation to the criteria set out in the Person Specification. There will also be questions based on Civil Service Success Profiles

If you have a disability or special need, we will ensure we can make reasonable adjustments for you at the interview. Please contact us if you have any specific requirements.

## How will I know I have been successful?

Regardless of the outcome, we will notify all candidates as soon as possible after the final interview through Forestry England's recruitment network and/or by phone. Specific feedback will be given through Forestry England's recruitment network; however, you can contact us directly if you would like to discuss in more detail.

## What can I expect when I start?

Your line manager will contact you to agree a start date, your working arrangements, and any equipment/tools you need to undertake your role. We provide a thorough induction process for all new starters that includes a national, District and team induction to help you settle into your new role.

In the first few weeks your line manager will discuss with you any training needs and initial tasks. You will also be given lots of opportunities to meet different teams and members of staff from across the District to get to know more about our work.

If you would like to talk to someone about this opportunity, please contact:

Patrick West, Head of Recreation, East District

[Patrick.west@forestryengland.uk](mailto:Patrick.west@forestryengland.uk)

07770 968690

To find out more about Forestry England and our work visit:

[www.forestryengland.uk](http://www.forestryengland.uk)

You can also connect with us on our social media channels:

@ForestryEngland

@Alice Holt Forest

@Moors Valley

@ForestryEngland

@AliceHoltForest

@DorsetForests

@MoorsValley

@Engnewforest (New Forest)

@Seaeagleengland (White-tailed eagles)

