

Job Description - Nature Networks Project Officer (PB5)

Job Summary

Forestry England's Biodiversity Plan sets out a bold ambition for nature recovery in the nation's forests. Working across five principal focus areas, Forestry England aims to restore resilient biodiversity in the nation's forests, delivering our vision to ensure that these forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

Forestry England's Biodiversity Programme is a multi-year work stream to accelerate nature recovery at scale in England. With a multi-million-pound budget, supported by Defra and a growing portfolio of external funders, the programme makes a significant investment in nature recovery, alongside Forestry England's parallel ambitions for sustainable timber production and connecting people with our forests.

The 'Nature Networks' project is a new addition to the wider Programme, aiming to create over 15,000 ha nationally of dynamic habitat corridors along roads, rides and watercourses, improving ecological connectivity and enabling species movement across forest landscapes.

Forestry England's Yorkshire District covers an area from Hartlepool to Spurn Head, stretching to the Yorkshire Dales and Huddersfield in the west, with work focused around the North York Moors National Park. As Nature Networks Project Officer you will oversee the development and delivery of Yorkshire District's Nature Networks project, managing it through concept and definition project stages, to facilitating effective implementation on the ground. The post holder will be responsible for bringing the concept of nature networks to life, delivering at scale and pace to meet Forestry England's ambitions for nature recovery.

You will develop key project documentation, including ecological feasibilities and project plans, working closely with other colleagues such as forest planners to link nature networks with existing open habitats and protected sites. As nature networks move into their delivery stage, you will plan operations and work closely with foresters and ecologists to turn them into a reality on the ground. In the longer-term, you will develop management plans for new networks and working with contractors and volunteers.

This is an exciting role, at the forefront of nature recovery in Forestry England. Reporting to Yorkshire's Nature Recovery Team, the post holder will also work closely with the national Nature Networks Manager, Yorkshire's Sustainable Forestry team and other district-based staff, including ecologists, planners and foresters. The post holder will be part of a growing team of colleagues across the country delivering similar nature recovery projects, sharing expertise and experience.

Key Responsibilities & Accountabilities

Land Management

- Lead on the development of land management plans for nature network projects, working closely with district and national colleagues.
- Lead the investigation of appropriate techniques which will deliver the vision for nature networks in restoring dynamic open space at scale, ensuring there is a sound evidence base for our interventions.
- Collaborate with the foresters and/or ecologists to deliver the agreed land management plans.
- Procure and manage contracts, services and contractors, including graziers, forestry contractors, consultants and academic institutions.
- Ensure Forestry England procurement and contract management regulations are followed throughout the Project

Project Management

- Lead on the development of the vision and project plan for nature networks in Yorkshire District.
- Apply appropriate project management principles to ensure effective and timely project implementation.
- Produce, maintain, and review relevant project documentation throughout the project lifecycles.
- Develop annual and long-term work programmes and budgets for projects
- Manage a delegated budget
- Support funding bids for external funding and ensure that commitments to funders for the projects are appropriately met through project delivery.
- Work with the Nature Networks Manager to ensure that programme, corporate and funder reporting requirements are met.

Knowledge and Monitoring

- Work with the England-wide Biodiversity Programme team and colleagues from Forest Research and wider academia to share, develop and apply best practice, drawing on the Forestry England team's extensive in-house expertise and experience.
- Undertake or commission feasibility studies to explore innovative approaches to secure nature recovery across nature networks.

Communications and Public Engagement

- Work with district and national communications colleagues to develop and implement communications plans for projects.
- Where relevant, support the development of partnerships with neighbouring landowners to increase the scale and effectiveness of landscape scale nature recovery.
- Showcase the project to internal and external stakeholders to gain support for projects, nature recovery and further delivery within the nation's forests.

Location-Specific Information

The post is based at our Pickering office, North Yorkshire, until early 2028 when the offices will move to Dalby Forest. There are blended working opportunities including home working and the use of DEFRA offices in York.

The duties of this post will require the applicant to sometimes travel to remote locations that are not accessible by public transport. You will therefore need to hold a full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK and be willing to stay away from home. We are willing to consider any proposals put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the job by other means.

Skills, Knowledge & Experience

Essential Professional and Technical experience

- A track record of successfully developing, managing and coordinating land management or nature recovery work.
- Experience managing and prioritising workloads, meeting deadlines, solving problems, and managing budgets
- Practical experience of a range of land management interventions, for example in forestry, nature conservation, or farming.
- Experience managing or supervising contracts.
- A great team worker, adept at working under your own initiative and as part of a multi-disciplinary team, taking ownership of the responsibilities of the role, building collaborative working relationships with colleagues, and being adaptable in the face of changing situations.
- An excellent communicator, both written and verbally, able to adapt to a range of audiences and undertake external stakeholder engagement.

- Competent using information technology, and sound knowledge of Microsoft Office suite, especially Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams.

Desirable

- Knowledge and/or experience of working with livestock and/or graziers.
- Working knowledge of environmental legislation and designations, including their practical application, as well as UK operational forestry and regulations.

Qualifications

Essential

- Land management, ecology, forestry, or environmental management qualification, or equivalent professional experience in nature-focused land management.
- A full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK.

Desirable

- A recognised project management qualification
- A member of a relevant professional body, e.g. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Institute of Chartered Foresters

Success Profiles: Behaviours

- Seeing the big picture
- Delivering at pace
- Working together
- Making effective decisions