

Job description - Area Ecologist (PB6a) - Marches

Job summary

Our vision is that the nation's forests will provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England. Our Area Ecologists play a key role in the delivery of that vision by providing ecological advice and inspiring others to support our work for nature. The postholder will provide ecological advice to operational teams to ensure species, habitats and designated sites are managed in accordance with wildlife legislation, policy and best practice guidance. The postholder will also carry out monitoring of a range of habitats and species and support our planning and recreation teams in decision making.

This role reports to the District Ecologist and will be based from the Mortimer Office near Ludlow.

You will have the opportunity to work with experienced colleagues, passionate about their contribution to sustainable forestry, conservation and the organisation's overarching strategy. You will help to connect everyone with the nation's forests, caring for them for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and business to grow.

You can expect to spend two thirds of your time outdoors, often independently and remotely and you will usually be expected to manage your own time to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

The role is funded by DEFRA rather than Forestry England generated revenue and is therefore subject to government spending reviews. While DEFRA has indicated long-term support for Forestry England's Biodiversity Programme and we expect funding to continue, it is possible that funding levels may change at the end of any financial year depending on DEFRA's budget allocations. In the event of funding changes, we would prioritise retaining staff posts wherever possible. This approach is consistent for roles within publicly funded organisations. We are committed to keeping staff informed and supported through any changes.

The position is a 3-year fixed term appointment with the possibility, but no guarantee, of extension or permanency. The position is a full-time post to work 37 hours per week. Normal working hours are Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm with an hour lunch break; and Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm with an hour lunch break. This can be worked flexibly by agreement.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Operational Delivery

Work with Beat teams and District staff to ensure operational plans and recreational activities comply with protected species legislation and provide advice on a range of ecological constraints and opportunities.

Through the completion of wildlife surveys and assessments inform project managers of wildlife constraints and opportunities associated with forest and management interventions.

Foster a positive team working relationship so as to inspire and engage everyone to drive beneficial change for the benefit of wildlife. Be open and realistic as to the challenges inherent in the business, promoting transparency and constructive dialogue.

Habitat Management and Enhancement

Plan and deliver habitat management across key sites including statutory designated sites, ancient woodland and priority habitats.

Use forest operations as an opportunity to enhance habitat condition and connectivity through collaboration with the Beat teams.

Support the Forest Planning team with preparing Forest Plan revisions and management plans by using local and expert knowledge to inform management decisions.

Identify, develop and implement nature restoration projects ensuring readiness for funding opportunities and supporting both existing and new initiatives.

Monitoring

Deliver strategic ecological monitoring and analysis, contributing to evidence-based decision making and natural capital approaches.

Permissions, Volunteers and Contract Management

Collaborate and build relationships with stakeholders including statutory bodies, NGOs, academic institutions and community groups to support sustainable forest management.

Advise Permissions and Beat teams through consultation process on the suitability of permission applications.

Manage volunteers and work with contractors and partner organisations to achieve shared objectives. Utilising existing groups and agreements engage with and facilitate groups and individuals to aid habitat management and species monitoring.

Proactively liaise with communications and marketing colleagues so as to champion success and promote our work.

Location-specific information

The postholder will be based in the Mortimer office near Ludlow, Shropshire.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- good wildlife identification skills, especially for protected species.
- experience or an understanding of forestry and woodland management.
- up-to-date knowledge of environmental legislation, particularly biodiversity, and experience of its application to land management.
- excellent team and partnership working, with a track record of interdisciplinary working and with experience balancing ecological requirements with commercial and social objectives.
- competent IT user with experience in MS Office suite of applications.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- experience monitoring schedule 1 birds, particularly raptors
- experience or understanding of the UK forestry sector, the UK Forestry Standard and UKWAS certification.
- experience of managing small nature recovery projects.
- good knowledge of biodiversity net gain and/or experience of the planning system.

Qualifications

Essential

The successful applicant is very likely to have a degree or equivalent in ecology, nature conservation or environmental management or comparable experience.

Desirable

- Membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- European protected species licenses (EPS)
- Schedule 1 license