

Forestry England Job Description - Estates Officer (PB5)

Job summary

The Estates Officer represents Forestry England in the management, protection and stewardship of the Public Forest Estate across South England Forest District, with a primary focus on the New Forest.

The role supports the Area Land Agents and wider Estates Team in protecting Forestry England's legal, environmental and operational interests. This includes coordinating responses to encroachments, boundary issues, utility and wayleave requests, unauthorised activities, land-use matters and estate incidents, whilst maintaining productive working relationships with stakeholders, partners, neighbouring landowners and local communities.

The Estates Officer acts as a key point of contact for estates-related enquiries and works collaboratively across Forestry England teams and external organisations to ensure estate management issues are investigated, recorded and resolved in a timely, professional and proportionate manner.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

- Support the Area Land Agents in the protection, management and enhancement of the Public Forest Estate, ensuring Forestry England's legal, operational and environmental interests are safeguarded.
- Investigate, record and manage incidents of trespass, encroachments, boundary infringements, unauthorised activities and land-use disputes, gathering robust evidence and maintaining accurate records to support Forestry England's position.
- Undertake site inspections and field investigations in relation to property boundaries, estate assets, planning matters, utility proposals, wayleave requests, public complaints and other estate management issues.
- Follow up site visits with appropriate correspondence, reports, mapping updates, recommendations and actions to ensure issues are resolved effectively and within agreed timescales.
- Coordinate and manage routine estates processes, including permissions, consents, licences, wayleaves and associated agreements, ensuring compliance with Forestry England policies and statutory requirements.
- Support the Estates Team and specialist consultants in managing utility and infrastructure proposals, liaising with utility companies, contractors, internal teams and regulatory bodies to ensure works are undertaken to agreed standards and conditions.
- Monitor temporary works, third-party activities and land-use permissions on the Public Forest Estate and take appropriate action where activities do not comply with agreed terms or conditions.
- Respond to estates-related enquiries, complaints and requests for information, providing clear, professional and consistent advice to internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop and maintain positive working relationships with key stakeholders including the Verderers, Natural England, New Forest National Park Authority, local authorities, parish councils, utility companies, commoners, neighbouring landowners and local communities.
- Work closely with Recreation, Land Management, Public Affairs and other Forestry England teams

to ensure a coordinated approach to estate management issues and to support wider district objectives.

- Make informed operational decisions within delegated authority, seeking guidance from the Area Land Agents on complex, contentious or high-risk matters.
- Contribute to the continuous improvement of estates processes, systems and ways of working, identifying opportunities to improve efficiency, consistency and service delivery.
- Provide support during emergency incidents such as storms, wildfire, flooding or other significant events affecting the Public Forest Estate, contributing to a safe and professional Forestry England response.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably requested by the Area Land Agents or wider management team consistent with the grade and responsibilities of the role.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- Practical experience of working in forestry, estates, rural property, land management or a closely related field.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to prepare accurate records, reports and correspondence and communicate confidently with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Experience of investigating issues, gathering evidence, assessing options and making sound operational decisions.
- Ability to manage a varied workload and prioritise competing demands effectively.
- Experience of building and maintaining positive stakeholder relationships.
- Ability to deal with conflict, challenge and sensitive situations in a fair, professional and robust manner.
- Good team-working skills and the ability to collaborate effectively across disciplines and organisations.
- Ability to work independently whilst recognising when matters need escalation or specialist advice.
- Competence in Microsoft Office applications and a willingness to learn and use specialist systems and databases.
- Full UK driving licence.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Experience working within an estates, property, legal or rural surveying environment.
- Understanding of the New Forest, its governance framework and key stakeholder organisations.
- Knowledge of wayleaves, easements, licences, boundary management or land-related agreements.
- Experience using GIS, mapping systems or spatial data applications.
- Understanding of health and safety requirements in a public forest environment.
- Knowledge of tree safety management, planning processes or utility infrastructure management.

Essential professional and technical experience

- a full driving licence
- strong written and oral communication skills are required with a regular need to write accurate site visit notes and letters; as well as the potential for difficult conversations requiring calm, clear communication and the need to develop strong working relationships with users of the forest

Desirable professional and technical experience

- previous experience of line management
- previous experience in an Estates/property/legal department
- knowledge of Foresterweb/GIS based mapping systems will be an advantage, although full training will be given

