

Job Description - South West Moors Project Officer (PB5)

Job summary

Our vision is that the nation's forests will provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England. We believe in the positive, long-term impact that forests can have on people's lives, England's biodiversity, a thriving green economy and our response to the climate emergency.

The South West Moors Project Officer will lead a focused piece of work to critically understand the values of Forestry England's highly productive plantations on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor. To understand the threats posed by our changing climate to those forests and the wildlife that lives there, and the opportunities presented. To bring those issues together in a single vision and high-level strategic plan that will inform the renewal of the next generation of Forest Plans.

The South West Moors Project Officer will inspire others to support our work in growing the future, championing our Forestry England values. Together we are Forestry England, we grow forests for all, for life.

The postholder will liaise closely and develop their plans and ideas with the Beat Foresters and their teams, and the Area Ecologists. Networking with colleagues working on forest resilience across the country, and all parts of the Forestry Commission will be expected.

The postholder will be part of the Forest Planning team led by the Operations Manager - Planning.

West Forest District is responsible for the sustainable management of over 37,000ha of the nation's forests and woodlands in the West and South West of England, including 3000ha in moorland settings on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor.

The district team extends to some 170 employees, with frontline delivery through our 17 remotely located delivery teams (5 forest centre and 12 forest beats) which are supported by our network of highly valued volunteers and contractors.

The postholder will be based at our forest office at Haldon Forest Park, Exeter, Devon (other Forestry England office locations within the district may be considered).

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.

If the successful applicant is new to Forestry England then they will need to be embedded within a Forestry England office for a significant proportion of the working week during an induction period.

The postholder will be expected to travel to different office and depot locations as well as remotely located woods & forests to support the remotely located delivery teams as may be required; and to attend national meetings and training events. This will most likely require travel by car, and thus a current driving licence is seen as a requirement of the role although candidates may put forward a proposal that satisfies the business need to travel without recourse to driving.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Collaboration & Research

- The initial focus of the work will be to establish the value of our forestry plantations on the South West moors today, understanding the ecology, people and economic values and potentially using a natural capital approach to objectively quantify those values. This may require the commissioning of additional research and survey work to fill in critical gaps in our collective knowledge. Document using Forestry England's Sharepoint, the evidence base collated for the project.
- Foster a positive team working relationship between the operational beat teams, and the area ecology team so as to inspire and engage everyone in the project, deriving knowledge, harnessing expertise and building insight and trust. Be open and realistic as to the challenges inherent in the business, promoting transparency and constructive dialogue.
- Collaborate and build relationships with stakeholders including statutory bodies, NGOs, academic institutions and community groups to support sustainable forest management. Co-ordinating with other team members to ensure consistent messaging and avoiding of duplication of effort.

Community engagement and communications

- After the initial stages of the project, undertake a programme of community and stakeholder engagement and consultation to help shape the vision and strategy as it develops. The future of our forests on the south-west moors is likely to be sensitive and contentious requiring pre-agreement of a communications plan for the project.
- Liaise closely with the communications and marketing team to champion and promote the work undertaken and direction of travel.
- Support the production of a publicly available final strategic management plan for the South-West Moors (the Our Shared Forest plans for the Forest of Dean and Savernake Forest's may be a useful template - see: [Our Shared Forest | Forestry England](#) and [Our shared forest - Savernake Forest | Forestry England](#)).

Project Management & Monitoring

- Positively collaborate with finance and business support to maintain clarity on approved expenditure plans and monitoring of spend against delivery.
- Undertake realistic project planning and adherence to existing Forestry England systems and processes to manage the project delivery on time and to budget.
- Feed into monitoring and reporting on progress of the Nature Recovery Programme in a timely, transparent and accurate manner.

Nature Recovery

- Identify, develop and implement nature restoration projects in the south-west moors consistent with the emerging strategy, ensuring readiness for funding opportunities and supporting both existing and new initiatives.
- Deliver strategic ecological monitoring and analysis, contributing to evidence-based decision making and natural capital approaches.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- Knowledge and experience of working with protected species, and designated habitats (including peatland) and thus understanding of application of environmental legislation.
- Proven ability to work positively and collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.
- A strong track record of successfully research and writing land management plans & strategies with varied community and other stakeholder engagement.
- Strong networking, communication and influencing skills.
- Ability and competence in use of IT packages including MS Office and GIS mapping software.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Understanding of climate science and climate change scenarios and impacts on native species and habitats of Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor.

Qualifications

Essential

- A degree or equivalent in one of: forestry, ecology, nature conservation or environmental management.