

Job Description - Assistant Species Recovery Officer - Beaver (PB6a)

Job summary

Forestry England manages England's beautiful, diverse and productive publicly owned woods and forests. We are the largest provider of home-grown sustainably produced timber in England, shaping the land we manage and building the future for wildlife, for people and for the climate. As part of our national Growing the Future strategy and Biodiversity Plan we are looking to restore fully-functioning ecosystems.

Forestry England's Biodiversity Plan sets out a bold ambition of 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.

Established in 2022, Forestry England's Forest Wilding Programme brings together two of these focus areas as part of a coordinated effort to deliver a step-change in nature recovery. Our species recovery work focuses on the reintroduction of key influential species, with more than 30 projects nationwide to re-establish populations of beaver, wildcat, pine marten, white-tailed eagle, golden eagle and wood ants. Alongside this nationwide effort, we have established Wild Areas on over 14,000ha of the nation's forests, bringing innovative approaches together with a sound evidence base to recover and enhance nature through restoring natural processes.

Beavers are a national priority species for Forestry England, engineering complex wetland ecosystems that are hubs of biodiversity and that store water in the landscape, mitigating the impacts of flooding and drought. Our Assistant Species Recovery Officer - Beaver will use their broad range of skills and ongoing training to directly support wild beavers in Gloucestershire through the Severn Vale Beaver Project with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and other partners. The work is varied and would suit a person who is self-motivated, well organised and able to demonstrate initiative to undertake tasks in a safe and efficient manner.

The post-holder will assist the Senior Specialist - Severn Vale Beaver Project (based at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust) in all areas of their work to support the successful restoration of wild beavers in Gloucestershire. Key parts of this role will be supporting the Senior Specialist in stakeholder and community engagement, as well as delivering on the reintroduction and monitoring of beaver populations.

This role will be based in Gloucestershire and the Severn Vale, working both within Forestry England land in the Forest of Dean and in the wider county in the Frome catchment.

This is a unique opportunity to join our dedicated Land Management Team in the West England Forest District, responsible for the sustainable management of over 36,500ha of the public forest estate in the West and South-West of England. The West District extends from the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the majestic oak and beech woods of Savernake Forest in Wiltshire, and to Idless Woods near Truro in Cornwall. The District is managed from the District Office at Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, supported by local delivery teams in the forest beats and recreation hubs.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Stakeholder and community engagement

- Support the Senior Specialist - Severn Vale Beaver Project in engaging with diverse stakeholders and with local communities to ensure the success of the project. This will require a successful candidate to adapt their communication style to suit their audience and deliver information at different levels of understanding.

Beaver reintroduction

- Support the Senior Specialist - Severn Vale Beaver Project in the process of applying for and delivering the terms of a wild beaver release licence. This will include practical tasks and ecological surveys associated with reintroducing beavers and site selection.
- Undertake and coordinate monitoring of reintroduced beavers with volunteers to document their dispersal and impacts.

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

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- Experience with stakeholder and community engagement
- A good understanding of beaver ecology, ideally with on the ground practical experience or knowledge of monitoring beaver.
- Excellent communication skills in a range of media to a variety of audiences, and an ability to bring people together and gain consensus.
- Experience working on development and/or delivery of a nature conservation project, with a sound understanding of ecology and the barriers and opportunities to species recovery.
- Experience working with stakeholders and/or community groups.
- Strong organisational skills and ability to plan own time efficiently.
- Knowledge and understanding of industry standards and best practice associated with species reintroductions and human-wildlife coexistence in the UK.
- Ability to work independently and in a team while maintaining good relationships and knowledge exchange with wider teams.
- Competent in IT including core Microsoft Office applications.
- A good understanding of Health & Safety in the workplace.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Direct experience working in species reintroductions, or in the management of captive or wild beaver.
- Experience of managing contractors and volunteers
- Experience in wider ecological assessment and land management.
- Experience dealing with wildlife conflict and complaints.

Qualifications

Essential

- Qualification in ecology or similar discipline and/or experience in conservation and/or land management
- A full driving licence

Desirable

- CL50/CL51/CL52 Natural England licence holder