

Candidate Pack

Senior Ecologist South District

Salary: £40,388- £43,482

Grade: Higher Executive Officer / Pay Band 4

Contract type: Fixed term (3 years)

Working pattern: Full-time (37 hours/week)



Forestry England

Join us and help shape our forests

This is an exciting opportunity to join our Environment and Planning Team in the South District of Forestry England.

Key elements of the role:

- Provide senior technical leadership on ecology, biodiversity delivery, and ecological standards across the district.
- Lead ecological input into SSSI improvement programmes, ancient woodland restoration (PAWS) and nature network projects.
- Ensure all ecological work aligns with professional standards, statutory requirements, and best practice.

We are Forestry England.

We are the country's largest land manager.

We care for the nation's forests for people, nature and the economy.



About Forestry England

Forestry England is part of the Forestry Commission.

We manage England's beautiful, diverse, productive, and publicly owned woods and forests.

At over 250,000 hectares, we are the largest single land manager in England.

About South District

Our District employs over 160 people and covers an area of 46,000 hectares that reaches from Sussex to Dorset, and from Berkshire to the Isle of Wight.

The forests in our District are as diverse as the populations that surround it, with ancient broadleaf woodlands in the South Downs, to mixed conifer forests and open heathland in the internationally renowned New Forest.



We are committed to connecting everyone with our forests.

We will evolve them to thrive and be resilient for the next century, and beyond.

We are growing the future.



We pride ourselves on being a progressive and inclusive organisation that offers a range of benefits including:

A generous holiday entitlement

25 days holiday, plus 2.5 days extra leave (in addition to Bank Holidays). Earn five days extra holiday per year, after 5 years' service.

Substantial training, development and volunteering opportunities

Five days a year allocated to your own personal learning and development, and three days paid volunteering (within working hours) per year.

Flexible working arrangements

The right to request flexible working and part time hours, and options for informal blended working arrangements.

Access to the brilliant Civil Service Pension Scheme

Including an industry-leading 28.97% employer pension contribution, every month.

We are one Forestry England.

Every person in Forestry England makes a difference.

We support and invest in each other to be healthy, motivated, and engaged.



About this role

We are looking for an experienced and highly motivated Senior Ecologist to provide expert ecological leadership across the district. This is a key role within the Planning & Environment team, supporting delivery of our statutory responsibilities, driving nature recovery, and ensuring that all our operations meet the highest ecological standards.

You will work across the whole South Forest District, covering diverse habitats, species, and projects- from SSSI enhancement and PAWS restoration to landscape-scale biodiversity programmes.

We're looking for someone who can combine deep ecological expertise with strong leadership, excellent judgement and the ability to work confidently across a diverse operational landscape.

Think beyond a lifetime

We make plans today for a better tomorrow, so our business and our forests are sustainable and fit for the future.

Be adventurous

We approach challenges with creativity and adventure, embracing research and innovation to stay relevant.



Key work areas for this role

- Oversee specialist surveys, baseline assessments, monitoring frameworks and habitat prescriptions.
- Manage relevant ecology and SSSI budgets, ensuring efficient, compliant, and timely delivery against statutory obligations.
- Line-manage members of the Ecology team, supporting professional development and building ecological capacity across the district.
- Build and maintain excellent professional relationships and communications providing expert advice to Forestry England staff, contractors, and partners to ensure ecological risks are managed and opportunities for enhancement maximised.
- Undertake regular travel to locations that are inaccessible by public transport

Do it together

We get our best results when we work with others, and we encourage diverse perspectives so we make better decisions.

Look out and look after

We care about our colleagues, volunteers, partners and customers, and we take a stand against unsafe behaviour.



Essential experience

- Extensive experience working in applied ecology, ideally within land management, forestry, conservation, or a similar sector.
- Strong knowledge of UK habitats, protected species legislation, SSSI management and ecological survey.
- Experience in planning and delivering ecological programmes or projects, including budget responsibility.
- Ability to communicate ecological issues clearly to a wide range of colleagues, partners and contractors.
- Experience supervising staff or leading technical workstreams.
- Competent IT user including MS Office

Desirable experience

- Competent using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Strong ecological knowledge and understanding of the key ecosystems found in the district.
- Experience or understanding of the UK forestry sector, the UK Forestry Standard and UKWAS certification.
- Experience of procurement and contract management.



Essential qualifications

- Full UK driving licence
- A degree (or equivalent experience) in ecology, conservation, environmental science or a related field.

Desirable qualifications

- Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

You will be asked to demonstrate the following success profile behaviours:

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

Find out more about [Civil Service success profile behaviours](#) on [GOV.UK](#).





Forestry England

**For more information, and to apply for
this role, visit Forestry England Careers**

**For more information about the role contact
fcruitmentteam@forestryengland.uk**