

Job Description - Nature Recovery Manager

Job Summary

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 co-ordinated effort to deliver a step-change in nature recovery. Our species recovery work focuses on the reintroduction of key influential species, such as beaver, wildcat, pine marten, white-tailed 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 shift our land management to restore and enhance natural processes.

With a multi-million pound budget, supported by Defra and a growing portfolio of external funders, the programme makes a significant investment in nature recovery, alongside Forestry England's parallel ambitions for sustainable timber production and connecting people with our forests.

The role is based in Forestry England's North District which covers Northumberland, Cumbria, County Durham and North Lancashire. The initial focus will be on Wild Kielder, which, at 6,500 hectares, is England's largest nature recovery project. Following a number of years of planning and feasibility work, the project has now reached the implementation phase; initial programmes will focus on the introduction of herbivory and on the restoration of degraded peatland. There will also be a focus on restoring thriving populations of 'missing' species, for example golden eagle.

The Nature Recovery Manager will oversee the strategic development and delivery of a suite of wild area and species recovery projects in North District under the Forest Wilding Programme. This will include overseeing existing projects and developing new ones, ensuring that these progress through the project lifecycle to effective delivery on the ground, reporting on progress to project and programme boards, and managing dedicated project officer staff.

The post holder will be a skilled project manager, bringing ecological experience and insight, developing and maintaining standards to deliver projects on time and on budget. You will have a strong track record of implementing nature-based projects using your land management expertise, collaborative working skills, and team leadership experience. Managing internal and external stakeholders and developing partnerships with stakeholders, landowners and funders will be a key part of this role, alongside the successful implementation of a robust communications plan. You will be willing to challenge established norms on management for nature and help drive nature recovery at scale and pace.

This is an exciting and fast paced role which will involve working across all Forestry England business functions, with partners, external stakeholders and external suppliers. Reporting to the Head of Land management in North District, the post holder will work alongside the national Forest Wilding Programme team, as well as other district-based staff, including ecologists, planners and foresters. The post holder will be part of a network of colleagues across the country delivering similar nature recovery projects, sharing expertise and experience.

Key Responsibilities & Accountabilities

- 1) Detailed project planning, control and implementation, including:

- Manage district-based forest wilding projects, applying appropriate project management frameworks in accordance with Forest Wilding Programme guidance and principles, to ensure effective and timely project implementation
- developing and maintaining appropriate project documentation, including project management plans, land management plans, stakeholder management plans, and communications plans
- managing the delegated forest wilding budget, as a component of the wider Forest Wilding Programme budget
- procuring, commissioning and managing contracts and contractors, especially for practical land management, feasibility studies, and ecological survey and monitoring
- identifying and managing project risks and issues, managing project scope, overseeing change control, and escalating where necessary with Senior Responsible Owners and the Forest Wilding Programme Manager
- ensuring projects integrates Forestry England’s principal functions of timber production, nature recovery and engagement with visitors, resolving cross-functional issues at project and district levels
- ensuring forest wilding projects meet the defined project objectives, outcomes and benefits
- monitoring project progress and performance, including through milestones and gateway reviews, and reporting on these to Project Boards and the Forest Wilding Programme

2) Provide strong technical leadership in ecology and nature-focused land management, and its integration with forestry, especially through:

- Leading and managing district-based forest wilding officers, responsible for delivering wild area and species recovery projects, providing line-management, coaching and mentoring, supporting personal and professional development, and promoting a positive and inclusive culture.
- Initiate and support the development of appropriate project initiatives, such as strategic land management plans, feasibility studies, and implementation plans, to produce a workable programme of nature-focused land management
- working with technical experts, contractors and colleagues to implement the strategic land management priorities on the ground
- using best practice, technical knowledge and scientific evidence to contribute to the meeting Forestry England’s strategic ambition for nature recovery and resilience in the Nation’s Forests
- working with the Forest Wilding Programme team to support the implementation of a coherent evidence framework, which both supports our decision making and monitors the outcomes of our land management

3) Develop and manage strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including:

- supporting the district senior leadership team and relevant project boards, in providing confident and coherent leadership and governance to nature recovery projects
- managing the engagement and communications with colleagues and internal stakeholders of forest wilding across the Forestry Commission family
- managing the engagement and communications with external partners and stakeholders on district-based projects, especially those with a high-risk factor and high influence on the outcomes of the projects, through effective stakeholder management and communications plans
- representing Forestry England and the Forest Wilding Programme with relevant external projects, working groups, conferences and other forums, both in district and, where relevant, nationally

4) work with Forest Wilding Programme team and district colleagues to explore, secure and develop external funding for Forest Wilding projects, for example through:

- UK Government grants, especially Defra’s Environmental Land Management Landscape Recovery Scheme
- corporate sponsorship

- biodiversity net gain
- green finance

Location-Specific Information (optional)

Any Forestry England office within North District, [with hybrid home working available]. Travel across England will be required.

Skills, Knowledge & Experience

Essential Professional and Technical experience

- Previous knowledge and practical experience of managing change at pace in the environmental sector, including planning, risk, issue and dependency management.
- Strong ecological background, with experience in land management implementation for nature conservation outcomes.
- A skilled project manager, able to manage and prioritise workloads, meet deadlines and solve problems, and manage budgets
- Strong evidence of stakeholder management, demonstrating negotiation and influencing skills at a high level.
- A great team worker, with a strong track record of collaboration and relationship management.
- Strong leadership and communication skills.
- Experience of analysing and evaluating complex or conflicting evidence to provide usable advice and guidance to multi-disciplinary teams.
- An excellent communicator, both written and verbally, able to adapt to a range of audiences.
- Competent using IT and Microsoft Office.

Desirable Professional and Technical experience

- Sound experience in the forestry sector
- Experience of procurement and contract management.
- Competence in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Working knowledge of environmental legislation and designations, including their practical application.

Qualifications

Essential

- Ecology or environmental degree, or equivalent professional experience in nature-focussed land management.
- A full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK.

Desirable

- A recognised project management qualification

- A member of a relevant professional body, e.g. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Institute of Chartered Foresters