

Job Description - Forest Planner (PB5)

Job summary

As England's largest land management organisation and guardians of the nation's forests, Forestry England is uniquely placed to deliver benefits for people, wildlife and climate. You can find out more about our vision in our Growing the Future (2021-2026) strategy. Strategic planning is critical in bringing together different strands of the forest and land management and ensuring our forests are still thriving in the changing climate. The plans must recognise the context of the woods in the wider landscape, notably in terms of resilience and nature's recovery at the landscape scale.

As a Forest Planner with Forestry England, you will help shape the long-term future of some of England's most diverse and valued landscapes. You'll lead the development of forest management plans that set the direction for how our woodlands are cared for over the next decades, balancing objectives for biodiversity, forest resilience, sustainable timber production and public access. Working collaboratively with colleagues across Forestry England and a wide range of external partners, you'll bring together evidence, data and professional judgement to produce UKFS-compliant Forest Plans and help maintain our UKWAS certification.

The role combines strategic planning with practical delivery. You'll use GIS and field surveys to inform decisions, consult widely with stakeholders, and support operational teams by providing high-quality data, mapping and specialist advice. Some of your time will be spent outdoors, often working independently, with flexibility to manage your own workload. You'll be part of a supportive district team and a national network of forest planning professionals, with access to tailored training, mentoring and development opportunities to grow your expertise and career.

The role will be based in the Chilterns office near Aston Clinton HP22 5NF, with flexibility for some optional blended working. Please be aware that this role can only be worked in the UK and not overseas.

The District consists of myriad of habitats from the largest productive coniferous forest, mixed broadleaved woodlands, heathland, chalk and acid grasslands, to streams in diverse landscapes in south-east of England. We are in the forefront of the climate change pressures, but also of the proactive planning to ensure that the forests thrive and continue to support society in the future. Our plans outline long-term view of suitable silviculture systems and ambition to create more diverse, healthy and connected habitats. We are accelerating our efforts in restoring Ancient Woodlands and trialling new tree species best suited for future climate.

The role will primarily focus on Chilterns, Bedfordshire, Weald and Kent areas of the East District.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Forest Planning

- collect and verify data relating to Forest Plan areas to inform the forest planning process
- design and prescribe long term forest management in industry best practice Forest Plans, which deliver resilient forests ensuring that the land is sustainably managed for people, wildlife and timber
- communicate, consult and build consensus with a wide range of Forestry England staff, statutory and non-governmental organisations to ensure proposed plans are in compliance with policies, UK Woodland Assurance Standard and UK Forest Standard

Data, mapping and monitoring

- interrogate and manage Geographic information Systems
- provide support in areas of data analysis to inform business decisions, including timber production and long-term financial models
- undertake and coordinate forest and habitat surveys to improve data and maintain monitoring programme

Operational support

- support teams in areas of survey, data management and mapping to ensure all opportunities and constraints are fully considered in forest management and operational decisions
- Contribute to other project teams as a forest planning specialist.

Project management

- Project manage a range of small to medium-sized projects related to forest planning, biodiversity, and forest resilience programmes, including project planning and the management of delegated budgets.

General responsibilities

- Champion high standards of health and safety within the team, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and guidance.
- Be familiar with and appropriately adhere to Forestry England Policies and Procedures.
- Undertake any other duties, reasonably requested by the Planning Manager.

The duties of this post require the applicant to sometimes travel to remote locations that are not accessible by public transport. You will therefore need to hold a full and current driving licence that enables you to drive in the UK. We are willing to consider any proposals put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the job by other means.

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

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- good team worker with the ability to work alone and use own initiative as necessary
- excellent written communication skills
- excellent verbal communication skills with an ability to bring people together and gain consensus
- working with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to manipulate and analyse spatial data
- competent IT user with experience in MS Office suite of applications
- knowledge or experience of land / environment management issues

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Knowledge and understanding of forestry industry standards and best practice, including UKWAS and UKFS
- Experience managing projects, including managing budgets and project teams

Qualifications

Essential

- degree or Higher National Diploma (HND) or significant equivalent experience in forestry or land management, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), geography or environmental sciences
- Full driving license that allows you to drive in the UK

Desirable

- membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) or a commitment to achieve membership