BIODIVERSITY OFFICER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Biodiversity Officer
Salary: £25,000
Hours: 37.5 hours across the week - Normally Monday to Friday 09.00 to 17.00 with occasional evenings and weekends
Reporting to: Biodiversity Manager
Responsible for: Wildlife volunteers, contractors
Location: Colletts Farm Office, Dorsington, Warwickshire, CV37 8AU
Date: June 2020

JOB SUMMARY

The Heart of England Forest is looking for an experienced Biodiversity Officer to deliver positive biodiversity outcomes throughout the Forest. With 7,000 acres of land, the Forest currently consists of 600 acres of mature woodland, around 4,000 acres of new planting, as well as grassland, hedgerows, heathland, farmland and wetland. The Forest is also home to a wealth of wildlife including many LBAP priority species and Red List bird species.

In this role you will work with, and be supported by, our biodiversity team (Biodiversity Manager and Biodiversity Data & Survey Officer) to deliver operational plans to ensure that the Heart of England Forest achieves the aims and objectives set out in its strategic plan.

This role involves working with the staff team across the charity, volunteers, and contractors, to optimise biodiversity throughout the Forest and contribute to achieving our vision of a 30,000 acre contiguous woodland.

Most of the Forest is situated within the Warwickshire Avon catchment and this role will focus on planning, developing, and implementing the delivery of conservation enhancement projects in a variety of habitats, with a primary focus on wetland habitats. These could include pond restoration (it is estimated there are more than 50 ponds within the Forest) and wetland creation combined with natural flood management; enhancement of arable and pasture fields to improve species diversity; as well as species-focussed projects such as those specific to water voles and high priority butterflies and birds.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Develop and deliver wetland and habitat enhancement projects
- Plan, organise and implement site-based habitat enhancement projects such as pond restoration, wetland creation and grassland enhancement.
- Assess each project, identifying best means of delivery: volunteers, contractors, or other partner.
- Ensure work is undertaken safely including the production of relevant risk assessments.
- Liaise with local stakeholders such as statutory bodies, partners, and local wildlife groups to support the delivery of any projects.
- Work with contractors to develop options and detailed designs for on-site habitat enhancement projects.
- Supervise contractors undertaking large-scale on-site habitat enhancement projects.
- Incorporate issues regarding non-native species, and methods of control, in any project planning.
- Implement biosecurity measures for all projects in line with the Heart of England Forest’s procedure.
- Secure all relevant permissions, e.g. flood consents, for any project work.
- Manage any delegated budget, seeking quotes to ensure best value for money, recording and tracking expenditure for each project.

Wildlife surveys and monitoring
- Organise and carry out targeted surveys of priority habitats within the Forest (e.g. ponds / wetlands, watercourses, grasslands, hedgerows).
- Set up and implement ongoing site monitoring of habitats and species, including fixed-point photography.
- Analyse survey results and site assessments and produce reports identifying biodiversity enhancement opportunities.
- Work with local experts including county recorders for species such as water vole, otter, and aquatic / terrestrial invertebrates, to deliver more detailed wildlife surveys and training.
- Train volunteers in survey techniques and methods including habitat condition assessments as well simple soil and water quality tests.
- Input species, habitat, and environmental data into our database system and QGIS when required.
- Report survey results to the Warwickshire and Worcestershire Local Biological Records Offices, as well as LBAP partnerships, Warwickshire’s Habitat Biodiversity Audit, and special interest groups, updating data sets.

Volunteer engagement
- Identify opportunities for volunteer involvement in biodiversity enhancement projects.
- Involve and support volunteers in a range of practical habitat enhancement tasks and wildlife surveys.
- Lead volunteer work parties, when required, undertaking a variety of habitat enhancement and management work.
Engage with local stakeholders
- Liaise with statutory agencies, local councils, local catchment partnerships (Warwickshire Avon CaBA) and neighbouring landowners where appropriate.
- Work with local stakeholders including special interest groups such as Warwick Natural History Society, local recorders, local universities, Habitat Biodiversity Audit, LBAP Coordinators and Warwickshire and Worcestershire Biological Records Offices.
- Assess how local stakeholders can collaborate and contribute to biodiversity enhancement opportunities within the Forest.

People engagement
- Support / lead guided walks (this may include weekend & bank holiday working).
- Support educational visits where required.
- Support other stakeholder visits.
- Assist with the planning and delivery of Heart of England Forest events.
- Be an ambassador for the Heart of England Forest

Communications
- Produce news stories for use on the website.
- Contribute information and photographs for the social media communications plan.
- Contribute to articles and news stories in the monthly e-newsletter and bi-annual magazine to help raise awareness of forestry issues.

In addition, the post holder will:

General
- Demonstrate and promote the values of the Heart of England Forest.
- Maintain a commitment to high standards of health and safety at all times. Ensure all work, including any work undertaken by contractors and volunteers, is undertaken within the Heart of England Forest health and safety policy and processes.
- Commit to continual professional development.
- Play an active part within the wider Heart of England Forest team.
- Make active use of information and resources gained via personal networks to inform the development of this role.
- Perform any other duties consistent with the role and / or reasonably required by the Biodiversity Manager or Chief Executive.

Hours
Normal working hours will be a minimum of 37.5 per week, normally between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday. However, occasional out of office hours work may be required, which may include evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

Location
The post will be based in the Heart of England Forest head office in Dorsington. The post holder must have the willingness and ability to undertake extensive travel across the Heart of England Forest on a daily basis to meet the demands of the role. The postholder will need to ensure their vehicle has an up to date MOT and is insured for business use.
PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Experience in a relevant role, particularly watercourse management & wetland creation for aquatic species
- A good knowledge of British ecology and wildlife
- Experience of working with volunteers and contractors
- Good project management skills
- Contract management and site supervision
- Good IT skills (including MS Office and software for recording / monitoring)
- Good presentation skills, including production of PowerPoint presentations
- Experience of undertaking wildlife surveys and monitoring
- Knowledge of environmental legislation and policy relevant to the post
- Report writing
- Time management
- Strong interpersonal skills with an ability to build relationships and engage effectively with people at all levels
- Good communication skills, both oral and written
- Able to communicate Heart of England Forest values and standards to supporters and stakeholders
- Self-motivated and proven experience of ability to work on own initiative
- An innovate, can-do, enthusiastic work ethic
- Committed to conservation
- Effective team worker
- A flexible approach to work and willingness to undertake some evening and weekend work as required.
- Full clean driving licence

Desirable

- Working knowledge of agricultural and water policies relating to landscape conservation
- Experience of working with local community groups
- Budget management
- Data input and analysis experience
- Experience of using QGIS or other mapping systems
- Willingness to develop new skills and take on new areas of responsibility
- Knowledge of climate change issues
- Knowledge of Health and Safety Regulations
ABOUT THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

*Planting tomorrow’s great native woodland*

The Heart of England Forest is an exciting and ambitious charity. We want to help reverse centuries of woodland decline and plant one of the largest forests in England. Our goal is to create a huge, unbroken woodland – a refuge from the modern world where people can rediscover nature and wildlife can flourish. It’s an ambitious vision, which we’re determined to make happen, one tree at a time.

The Heart of England Forest is not only a perfectly positioned lung for the Midlands, but a breath of fresh air for the nation. With over a million new native trees planted so far, this project is restoring our native woodland – providing a safe and permanent habitat for wildlife as well as an escape for people from the urban environments surrounding it.

The forest stretches up the Warwickshire / Worcestershire border, from the present-day borders of Shakespeare’s Forest of Arden to the edge of the Vale of Evesham – the north Cotswolds to south Birmingham. It’s an area dense in cities, towns and industry. Which is why we’re creating a place to walk under shady canopies and through airy glades, away from the bustle of city life.

The UK has less than a third of the native tree cover of many other European countries, including France, Germany and Italy. Planting tomorrow’s great native woodland has already started. With 7,000 acres of land, the forest currently consists of 600 acres of mature woodland and around 4,000 acres of new planting. We have planted an incredible 1.8 million trees so far, that’s over 13% of the way towards our goal of a 30,000-acre forest. But with patience and your support, who knows how far it will grow!

*More information can be found at www.heartofenglandforest.com*