**Freshwater Projects Officer – Oxfordshire**

**Job description**

Contract: Permanent, full-time.

Location: Oxford Office.

Responsible to: Jeremy Biggs, Freshwater Habitats Trust CEO.

Responsible for: Developing and delivering Freshwater Habitats Trust practical projects in Oxfordshire, particularly in the catchment of the R. Ock, and adjacent areas.

**Background**

Freshwater Habitats Trust is a small, friendly and ambitious conservation charity, which works to protect UK and European freshwater wildlife through practical, evidence-based and innovative nature conservation projects. Our organisation is well-respected nationally and internationally, working with a network of UK-based partners in both the public, private and NGO sectors, and internationally with the European Pond Conservation Network and others.

FHT has a number of practical projects in progress and under development in Oxfordshire concerned with the protection and restoration of freshwater and wetland habitats which now require a dedicated Project Officer.

**Role**

The Project Officer will lead and implement practical projects with private and public landowners in the Oxfordshire area, focusing mainly in the catchments of the River Ock. and support other FHT staff in the running of practical freshwater conservation projects in central southern England and the South Midlands.

You will be responsible for:

1. Delivering existing practical habitat creation projects, both on floodplain sites and more widely in the landscape, in the R. Ock management catchment and adjacent areas of the Oxford national Important Freshwater Area.
2. Supporting the development of new practical freshwater conservation and natural flood management projects, working with landowners and stakeholders.
3. Coordination of the Catchment-based Approach (CaBA) hosting group in the River Ock catchment.

**Key responsibilities**

**Landowner engagement and site identification**

* Liaise with potential landowners and partners to identify sites where biodiversity or nature-based solutions (such as clean water pond creation or Natural Flood Management measures) can be applied, including site visits and presentations.
* Assess site suitability and priority according to FHT’s aims, ensuring that only sites of high quality potential are selected to be included in projects.
* Liaise with colleagues to ensure efficient coordination of site identification in a particular area.
* Where possible, and funded, monitor your work and report back as part of team or other meetings.

**Habitat creation and management delivery**

Develop and complete practical habitat creation and management projects where some or all of the following are needed:

* Draw up outline plans for agreement by landowners and/or land managers using agreed templates (if possible).
* Draw up agreement with landowners/managers and ensure these are signed prior to work commences.
* Obtain quotes, select and set up agreements with contractors in accordance with FHT procedures.
* Ensure any permissions required are in place before on site work begins (e.g. for SSSIs).
* Carry out or ensure that suitable site checks and investigations are carried out prior to the practical delivery phase.
* Ensure adequate on-site supervision is provided by yourself or colleagues during habitat delivery work.
* Ensure that high quality technical delivery is achieved by drawing on both external and internal scientific knowledge and evidence.

**FHT administration**

* Ensure that you are familiar with FHT H&S and HR policies and implement as needed (e.g. holiday approval, sick leave etc).
* Provide information on request and in good time to the core team, in line with FHT policies.

**Additional general responsibilities for the post holder**

* Provide regular reports on your work to your line manager.
* Seek to improve your knowledge and understanding of best practice and evidence on relevant conservation issues, with a focus on freshwaters and associated habitats.
* Understand and follow FHT’s internal procedures including Health and Safety, information management systems, site protocols, including your personal responsibility for your health and safety.
* Contribute positively at meetings and to the maintenance of a constructive working environment.
* Undertake other duties your line manager or other SMT members may from time to time require.
* Ensure that you understand the Freshwater Habitats Trust strategy for freshwater biodiversity conservation and that your represent the views of the organisation in your work.
* Ensure that you understand FHT’s internal management systems and how to use them to support your work.
* Help to build a positive relationship between Freshwater Habitats Trust and its partners.
* Work closely and constructively with your manager and colleagues in all areas of your responsibility.

**Competencies**

**Qualifications**

* Degree or equivalent in a relevant subject (at least a 2:1).
* Full current driving licence.

**Knowledge and experience**

* Proven project and budget management skills.
* Good knowledge of restoration ecology for both freshwater and wetland habitat.
* Ideally, experience of contractor management.
* Knowledge of land management stakeholders and policy.
* Computer literate: Word and Excel are essential, GIS is desirable.
* Proven ability to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders, including landowners and the public.
* General interest in wildlife.

**Personal qualities**

* Ability to manage workload and competing priorities effectively and meet internal deadlines through effective forward planning.
* Good verbal and written communication skills.
* Good interpersonal skills - approachable, professional and courteous.
* Attention to detail and able to deliver on time.
* Ability to work independently and as part of a team.