**Project Officer**

**Job description**

Contract: 18-month contract, 2.5 days per week.

Salary: £26,000 - 27,000 p/a.

Location: **New Forest National Park Authority**, Lymington

Responsible to: Freshwater Habitats Trust’s Technical Director

Responsible for: Delivery of the “Woodlands and Wetlands’ elements for the GRCF “Green and blue horizons from city to forest” project

Closing date: 14/10/2021

Interviews: 19/10/2021

**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 national network of UK-based partners, the Wildlife and Countryside Link organisations, and the European Pond Conservation Network.

The GRCF Green Blue Horizons project will kickstart action to confront the twin climate and nature emergencies with programmes to restore nature, begin our path towards net zero with nature, help new and diverse audiences connect with nature.

Through the project, the partnership (New Forest NPA, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Freshwater Habitats Trust, New Forest Land Advice Service, Countryside Education Trust and the Commoners Defence Association) will:

* Create wildlife-rich corridors, thriving wetlands, to buffer and extend SSSI network, link habitats to Bournemouth and Southampton (nature restoration).
* Reduce land-based emissions by restoring habitats, working with farmers, landowners, land managers to develop climate resilience (nature-based solutions).
* Develop volunteering and outreach focussing on those with most to gain, who will become more connected with nature and gain new pathways to employment (connecting with Nature).

**Role**

The 0.5 FTE Woodlands and Wetlands Project Officer will deliver a programme of capital work to enhance wetlands and woodlands in the New Forest fringe.

* Undertake management work in 10 woodlands (50 ha in the Northern Forest Fringe, The Waterside and Avon Valley) to extend the ecological network of high-quality sites and as an extension to the New Forest SSSI, transforming from the equivalent of unfavourable to favourable condition over 5 years.
* Undertake wetland creation (5 ha priority habitat) at 5 sites in poor condition to achieve 2 – 5 ponds, fen, and wetlands management, transforming to the equivalent of favourable condition over 5 years.
* Work with external contractors to undertake a scoping study and delivery of trial remediation measures to reduce the impacts from equine horse pastures on the running water environment of the New Forest.

**Key responsibilities**

Woodland management:

You will be responsible for delivering capital works to a shortlist of sites:

* Woodland management at 10 sites (50 ha habitat) working with contractors and landowners to seek improvements including: Non-native tree species removed, stream-side management to diversify in-channel biodiversity, coppicing, etc.
* Working with 5 community groups (15 volunteers) who will have volunteered time and gained new skills and greater understanding and enjoyment of the natural world. By participating in outdoor working in the project volunteers also gain associated benefits in terms of health, enjoyment and learning.

Wetland management:

You will work with partners in the Wessex and New Forest Catchment Partnership to identify 5 landowners where wetland creation/management will achieve benefits for freshwater wildlife and nutrient offsetting, including:

 • Creation of 2-5 complexes

 • Fen and wet meadow management

 • NFM wetlands

Equine Impact scoping study:

You will be responsible for liaising with an external contractor to:

* Undertake desk based mapping and summary report of the extent of horse paddocks in the New Forest and then assess proximity/impact to sensitive habitats (SSSI), and waterbodies (WFD monitored rivers, Priority Ponds and lakes) with ground truthing in autumn winter 22/23.
* Coordinate an external contractor to trial a shortlist of capital works which could reduce the impact of horse paddocks of sensitive habitats and WFD waterbodies at 2-3 sites identified during the scoping exercise.

General:

* Acting as first point of contact for landowners to raise awareness of the value of the New Forests woodland and wetland habitats.
* Contributing to the production of documents for reporting and publication.
* Dissemination of FHT objectives and project information.
* Data management.
* Liaison with project partners and stakeholders.
* Volunteer coordination, including recruitment and liaison.
* Providing content in line with the project communication plan.
* Liaise with Project Team (Technical Director, Project Manager, Woodlands and Wetlands Project Officer, and Water for Wildlife Project Officer) and to collate and track project progress for project reports.

**Additional general responsibilities for the post holder**

* Help to build a positive relationship between Freshwater Habitats Trust, New Forest National Park and their partners
* Work closely and constructively with your manager in all areas of your responsibility.
* Undertake other duties as the senior management team may from time to time require.

**Competencies**

**Qualifications**

* Degree or equivalent in a relevant subject.

**Knowledge and experience**

* At least 3 years’ experience of project delivery (preferably within the New Forest).
* Excellent organisational and data management skills.
* Proven experience in the field of practical habitat creation or management.
* Proven experience in volunteer coordination.
* Good knowledge of freshwater ecology.
* Proven ability to communicate effectively and persuasively.
* Computer literate: Word, Excel, database use and management, and website management tools.
* Full current driving licence.

**Personal qualities**

* Ability to manage workload and meet internal deadlines through effective forward planning.
* Team orientated and comfortable working with a wide range of partners.
* 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.