**Catchment Officer – Central England**

**Job description**

Contract: Permanent, full-time.

Location: Oxford Office.

Responsible to: Peter Case, Senior Project Officer.

Responsible for: Delivering Freshwater Habitats Trust practical projects and coordinating catchment partnerships in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, particularly in the River Ock and River Thame catchments, and potentially in 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 and Buckinghamshire concerned with the protection and restoration of freshwater and wetland habitats which now require a dedicated Project Officer.

This is an exciting new role with varied activities, including both desk-based and field work. We are looking for an enthusiastic officer, with a good range of skills and some experience of practical habitat delivery, particularly for freshwaters. If you enjoy working as part of a team and making a difference to the conservation of freshwater wildlife, then this is the job for you.

**Role**

Working as part of an existing, the Project Officer will primarily: (i) coordinate catchment partnerships in the River Ock and Thame catchments, and (ii) deliver practical freshwater conservation and natural flood management projects in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

You will be responsible for:

1. Delivering existing practical habitat creation projects, both on floodplain sites and more widely in the landscape, including in the Oxford national Important Freshwater Area.
2. Supporting the development of new practical freshwater conservation and Natural fFood Management (NFM) projects, working with landowners and stakeholders.
3. Coordinating of the Catchment-based Approach (CaBA) hosting groups in the River Ock and Thame catchments, working with senior staff and a range of partners.

**Key responsibilities**

**Catchment partnerships coordination**

* Liaise with the members of the catchment partnership, including joint-leads and funders.
* Coordinate quarterly partnership meetings.
* Track and disseminate information relevant to the partnership and provide regular updates to partners.
* Disseminate information about the partnerships, including in via newsletters and social networks.

**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.

**Habitat creation and management delivery**

Develop and complete practical habitat creation and management projects including:

* Drawing up outline and final plans and specifications.
* Liaising with landowners and/or site managers to put in place formal agreements.
* Managing contractors undertaking practical works.
* Obtaining necessary permissions and consents.
* Ensuring that high quality technical delivery is achieved by drawing on both external and internal scientific knowledge and evidence.

**Additional general responsibilities for the post holder**

* 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.
* 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 work.
* 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 and management systems.
* Contribute positively at meetings and to the maintenance of a constructive working environment.
* Undertake other duties your line manager or other Senior Management Team members may from time to time require.

**Competencies**

**Qualifications**

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

**Knowledge and experience**

* Project and budget management experience.
* Experience of landowner engagement and stakeholder coordination.
* Knowledge of restoration ecology, particularly for freshwater habitats.
* Knowledge of Natural Flood Management and catchment management.
* Experience of practical site work delivery and contractor management.
* Knowledge of land management stakeholders and policy.
* Computer literate: Word, Excel and GIS are essential.
* 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.