



Gorcott Biodiversity Officer (GRCF)

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:	Gorcott Biodiversity Officer
Salary:	£24,000 (17months fixed term contract to end of March 2023)
Hours:	37.5 hours across the week - Normally worked between Monday to Friday 08.00 to 17.00 with occasional evenings and with approximately 2-3 weekend days a month (for which hours can be accrued as TOIL (Time off In Lieu) or equivalent time taken off in the week)
Reporting to:	Biodiversity Manager
Responsible for:	Volunteers and contractors
Location:	Between Colletts Farm Office, Dorsington, Warwickshire, CV37 8AU and Gorcott Hill Wood Heart of England Forest site
Date:	July 2021

JOB SUMMARY

This role is suitable for an experienced biodiversity officer to deliver positive biodiversity and volunteering outcomes at Gorcott Hill Wood as part of our Green Recovery Challenge Fund project – Growing Future Forest Guardians (GRCF GFFG).

In this role you will work with, and be supported by, our biodiversity team (Biodiversity Manager, Biodiversity Officer, Biodiversity Data & Survey Officer and Biodiversity Intern) 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 closely with the Gorcott Outdoor Learning Officer, volunteers, and contractors, to deliver biodiversity and volunteering outcomes as part of the project. This role will also work with our wider staff team across the charity contributing to our biodiversity strategy throughout the Forest which involves working to achieve our vision of a 30,000 acre contiguous woodland.

The Gorcott Biodiversity Officer will have experience of writing management plans, leading volunteer groups from a range of backgrounds and supervising contractors. This role will oversee the instigation of woodland habitat conservation management, creation of a new circular woodland ride, restoration of 4 spring-fed ponds, installation of stock-proof fencing, collation of baseline biodiversity survey data and commissioning of specialist surveys. This role will develop and deliver a volunteer programme for out of work adults and young people to enable them to develop the necessary skills as a pathway to employment. In addition, the role will support the Gorcott Outdoor Learning Officer to deliver volunteering & work experience opportunities for young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Develop and deliver Gorcott Hill Wood habitat enhancement projects

- Research and write management plan for Gorcott Hill Wood.
- Plan, organise and implement Gorcott Hill Wood site-based habitat enhancement projects such as woodland ride creation, woodland management (rhododendron removal), pond restoration and grassland enhancement.
- Assess each project and identify best means of delivery: volunteers, contractors, or other partner.
- The timings for all projects will need to take into account specific requirements of certain species such as great crested newts, reptiles and breeding birds.
- Ensure work is undertaken safely including the production of relevant risk assessments.
- Liaise with local stakeholders such as statutory bodies, partners, local communities and local wildlife groups to support the delivery of any projects.
- Work with and supervise contractors to deliver on-site habitat enhancement projects.
- Implement biosecurity measures for all projects in line with the Heart of England Forest's procedure.
- Secure any relevant permissions for habitat management work.
- Manage any delegated budget, seeking quotes to ensure best value for money, recording and tracking expenditure for each project.
- Ensure all projects are delivered on time and to budget.

Wildlife surveys and monitoring at Gorcott Hill Wood

- Organise and carry out targeted habitat surveys at Gorcott Hill Wood, including fixed-point photography.
- Organise and implement species surveys for priority groups (e.g. birds, bats, butterflies, dragonflies, bees, amphibians, reptiles, fungi).
- Work with local experts and ecological consultants for species such as aquatic / terrestrial invertebrates, to deliver more detailed wildlife surveys and training.
- Work with the biodiversity team to train volunteers in species 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.
- Share wildlife records collated with Local Biological Record Centre and contribute to national datasets such as Butterfly Conservation's UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), British Trust for Ornithology's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), English Winter Bird Survey (EWBS) and Bumblebee Conservation Trust's Bee Walk Survey.

Volunteer engagement and skills development

- With the support of the Gorcott Outdoor Learning Officer, develop and deliver a volunteering programme to engage local people from a wide range of backgrounds with their local natural heritage at Gorcott Hill Wood.
- Identify and deliver a range of opportunities for volunteers to develop new skills, such as leadership, team building and conservation management, as a pathway to employment in the natural environment sector.
- Set up a midweek volunteering group for at least 10 people who are out of work and seeking employment.
- Set up a monthly weekend volunteering group for at least 10 young people aged 18-25.
- Support the Gorcott Outdoor Learning Officer to deliver volunteering and work experience programmes for young people and adults with SEND.
- Supervise work experience students and interns as required.

- Lead volunteer work parties, during the week and at weekends, undertaking a variety of practical habitat enhancement tasks and wildlife surveys.

Engage with local stakeholders

- Liaise with statutory agencies, local councils, local communities and neighbouring landowners where appropriate.
- Work with local stakeholders including special interest groups such as Butterfly Conservation, local recorders, local universities, Habitat Biodiversity Audit and Warwickshire Biological Records Centre.

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 08.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday. However, occasional out of office hours work may be required, including evenings, bank holidays and with approximately 2-3 weekend days per month.

Location

The post will be based between the Heart of England Forest head office in Dorsington where printers, laminators and other office equipment are available, and the Heart of England Forest site at Gorcott Hill, where practical delivery will take place. On days where no on-site delivery is required there may be the flexibility for the post holder to work from home. 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.

What do we offer?

- The chance to join an ambitious charity and play a part in creating and conserving a huge Forest for the benefit of people, wildlife and the environment
- Competitive salary with a Living Wage Foundation accredited employer
- 28 days holiday plus bank holidays
- Contributory company pension
- Group Income Protection Scheme
- Group Life Assurance Scheme
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Death in Service benefit
- Medical cash plan

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Practical experience in a relevant role, particularly woodland and grassland management
- A good knowledge of British ecology and wildlife
- Experience of working with, and leading volunteers, including young adults
- Experience of supervising contractors and contract management
- Good project management skills
- Good IT skills (including MS Office)
- 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
- Practical experience of health and safety principles and procedures
- Report writing and experience of writing habitat management plans
- Good time management skills
- 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
- Love of the outdoors and a willingness to work outside, all year round and in all weathers
- Effective team worker
- A flexible approach to work and willingness to undertake some evening and weekend work as required
- Willingness to develop new skills and take on new areas of responsibility
- Full clean driving licence

Desirable

- Experience of working with local community groups
- Experience of working with young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Minibus driving licence
- Qualified first aider / First aid at Work qualification
- Budget management
- Data input and analysis experience
- Experience of using QGIS or other mapping systems
- Knowledge of climate change issues

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 is an ambitious vision, which we are 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 Almost 2 million new native trees planted so far, we are 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 is an area dense in cities, towns and industry. Which is why we are 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 4,000 acres of new planting. We have planted an incredible 1.9 million trees so far, which is over 20% 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!

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The
National Lottery
Heritage Fund



Environment
Agency



We have recently been awarded a significant grant from the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund to deliver our Growing Future Forest Guardians Project at Gorcott Hill Wood in Warwickshire.

Launched in August 2021, the project is due for completion in March 2023. Over the next 17 months and alongside the charity's ongoing work to deliver its charitable objectives, the project will include the instigation of woodland habitat management at Gorcott Hill Wood, woodland ride creation, restoration of 4 ponds, as well as, collating baseline survey data, commissioning specialist surveys, and arranging training and surveys as part of a training and work experience programme for local young people and volunteers.

The Heart of England Forest is a vibrant and rewarding place to work. Joining the charity as part of the Growing Future Forest Guardians in the Heart of England Forest project delivery team offers the unique chance to play a key part in delivering momentous and meaningful work today, that establishes long-term foundations for further growth tomorrow.

More information can be found at www.heartofenglandforest.org