

## Woodland Officer- West Midlands

Never has there been a more important time for trees and forests to help tackle the climate emergency and provide a much-needed sanctuary for people and wildlife. Our Prime Minister and our government are committed to creating 30,000 hectares of woodland a year across the UK by the end of this Parliament. This acceleration in current planting rates in England will contribute to meeting the net-zero by 2050 ambitions, and to government's wider environmental targets. This was supported by the announcement at the 11 March budget of £640m for a new Nature for Climate Fund 'to support natural habitats like woodland and peat'.

The Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission have set up a joint tree planting programme for England to support the forestry sector, landowners and communities in the delivery of these ambitions.

Forestry Commission will lead the delivery of the following parts of the tree planting programme:

- developing sector capacity
- woodland creation on public land
- woodland creation on private land
- engagement

If you are passionate about the role of forestry in creating a better future for England, and want to play a key part in realising that, we want to hear from you.

By joining the Forestry Commission, you will become part of a team of passionate, committed colleagues, and be able to build on a wealth of expertise to take this ambitious work forward. You will be able to make your mark by helping the Forestry Commission to revolutionise how we work together and reach new stakeholders.

Our staff engagement levels are consistently well above the Civil Service average and staff turnover is well below. We value our people, we look after them, and we will look after you. We hope you will join us for the challenge.

### **Job description**

We are seeking dynamic individuals with experience in forestry and/or land management, who are quick to learn and inspire and enthuse others. The Woodland Officer role can be seen as the 'face' of the Forestry Commission to landowners, managers and stakeholders. Each Woodland Officer has their own geographic area of primary responsibility, enabling them to develop a strategic view of the local landscape, a network of local stakeholders and understanding of the challenges and opportunities.

In your 'patch', you will be at the forefront of delivering the Forestry Commission's incentives and regulations, and able to provide advice and support to the private forestry sector in addition to Local Authorities and Defra colleagues. Internal team working is also integral in the Woodland Officer role, for example across the Area Team (e.g. assisting others in 'alleged unlicensed felling' investigations) and the wider Forestry Commission (e.g. opportunity for review of national guidance and procedure). Through both, you will have the ability to assist the Forestry Commission build strong working relationships to help create and manage diverse, resilient multi-purpose woodlands.

The North West and West Midlands is a diverse area ranging from large urban areas to sparsely populated rural areas. The area has a population of over 12 million and a roughly a quarter of England's woodlands (235,000ha).

The Area Team soon to be around 30 is led by the Area Director and includes two Partnership and Expertise Managers one each for the NW & WM a Local Partnership Advisor, a Deer Officer, an Ecologist, a Promotion and Engagement officer, three and half Field Managers, 12 Woodland Officers, three Woodland Creation Officers, a Technical Support Officer and an Area Admin Officer. The new woodland officers will be working as part of both their local and wider team. The team have 5 offices across the Area with three in the WM ~ Cannock Ludlow and Worcester. The main Area

office is in Penrith.

There are two Woodland Officer Areas to fill within the West Midlands one based in and around Worcestershire and one in North Shropshire. The counties are both well wooded at approx. 10% containing their respective AONBs such as the Malvern Hills and a part of the Cotswolds in Worcs and in Shropshire the Shropshire Hills and UNESCO World Heritage Site. There is a diverse array of land ownership with both private and public sector, from the very large traditional Estates to NGO's, Local Authorities and Farm and hobby owners, with a very active forestry sector and agents to support these owners.

Worcestershire has a growing university city, is very central with good infrastructure, beautiful landscapes, historic architecture and low crime. Worcester has also played a prominent role in Britain's history for over two thousand years.

Shropshire is historically significant regarded as one of the birthplaces to the Industrial revolution at Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge and bordering Wales it was central to the Welsh Marches and its many conflicts across border. The area has a good standard of living, low rate of crime and beautiful environment. You are never far away from stunning countryside and within a short drive of Metropolitan cities and the coast.

### **Responsibilities**

Expand woodland cover:

- Champion the multiple benefits of new woodland as business opportunities for land owner and as natural capital (including biodiversity, water quality, flood management, carbon sequestration/substitution, etc) for the wider environment and society;
- facilitate the design and delivery of new woodlands optimising the benefits they can deliver to the owner and as natural capital;
- administer the forestry Regulations relating to woodland creation (Environmental Impact Assessment); and
- administer/process applications for grants.

Protect our existing trees and woodlands:

- Administer Forestry Regulations to include: i. Forestry Act – Felling Licences to ensure tree felling is carried out legally in accordance with the principles of the UK Forestry Standard as appropriate; ii. Environmental Impact Assessments – afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries, and iii. Habitats Regulations – re forest operations within Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation;
- advise on the links with other legislation such as those pertaining to European Protected Species; and
- provide specialist advice to planning authorities re the impact of proposals on existing woodland and how new trees and woodland could be used to enhance new developments.

Improve the condition and resilience of our existing woodlands and wider treescape:

- Champion the benefits of actively managed woodland;
- support woodland owners and managers in responding to key challenges of pests and diseases including Chalara ash dieback, Phytophthora ramorum, deer and grey squirrels;
- work to increase resilience within woodlands to the challenges of a changing climate; and - facilitate closer working across the forestry sector – for instance between markets, contractors, managers, etc.

Engaging partners, stakeholders and the public:

- Encourage, enthuse and support key partners and stakeholders to help facilitate the expansion, protection and improvement of our woodlands and treescape; and

- champion the many values of trees and woodland to the wider public helping them understand and appreciate the importance and values of active management.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### *Essential*

- Good interpersonal and influencing skills demonstrating the ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with internal colleagues and our customers.
- Ability to prioritise and manage a varied workload.
- Good computer skills with experience of MS Office and Excel.
- Ability to proactively deal with complex and contentious issues relating to people and woodland interests, leading to the delivery of project outcomes and development of work areas as necessary.

### *Technical Skills*

- Proven knowledge and experience of lowland forestry, with a focus on multifunctional woodland management and creation practice.
- Degree/Higher Diploma in forestry / land management / countryside management and/or significant equivalent and related experience in forestry / woodland practice.

### *Desirable*

- Experience of practical woodland management
- Experience and knowledge of forestry regulations, incentives and tree health
- Experience of promoting, designing and establishing new woodland
- Experience of working in partnership across delivery organisations
- Experience in facilitating market growth in the forestry sector
- Experience of supporting integrated land / woodland management.
- Practitioner level understanding of landscape
- Membership of (or working towards) a relevant professional institute (e.g. Institute of Chartered Foresters).
- Evidence of maintaining Continuous Professional Development

Salary: £31,973- £34,650

To apply, please visit [here](#).

Closing date: Apply before 11:55 pm on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021



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