Woodland Officer – Greater Exmoor and North Wessex Downs and Swindon

Location
South West England

About the job
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, of which 7,500 ha per year are anticipated to be in England, 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 in the 2021 budget of £640m for a new Nature for Climate Fund 'to support natural habitats like woodland and peat' and the publication of the England Tree Action Plan.

Job description
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 an 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.

These Woodland Officer posts will cover

1. The Greater Exmoor area
2. North Wessex Downs and Swindon

The substantive office for these roles will be either; Bullers Hill near Exeter or National Office Bristol.

Professional membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters or another relevant professional body is desirable.

Responsibilities
Expand Woodland Cover:

- Champion the multiple benefits of new woodland as business opportunities for landowner 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:

- Forestry Act – Felling Licences to ensure tree felling is carried out legally in accordance with the principles of the UK Forestry Standard as appropriate.

- Environmental Impact Assessments – afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries,
- 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 or 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.

Benefits

- A Civil Service pension
- A range of family friendly benefits
- An environment with flexible working options
- Learning and development tailored to your role
- A culture which promotes a diverse and inclusive work environment
- A range of wellbeing benefits including discounted Civil Service Healthcare, access to an Employee Assistance Programme 24/7, Bike to Work Scheme, plus many more.
- 25 days annual leave, with 1 additional day for each years' service up to 5 years (pro rata)
- Ability to buy or sell 5 days annual leave
- 3 days volunteering per year (pro rata)

We aim to provide a great place to work, whichever location you work from. Blended working forms part of our flexible and inclusive approach to future ways of working. It is an informal arrangement which gives you the option to work some of the week from home, and some of the week from our Forestry Commission workplaces, subject to role requirements, business needs, and regular review. Informal blended working arrangements will be available as agreed with the line manager.

Salary £32,612 - £35,343
To apply, please visit here.
Closing date: Apply before 11:55 pm on Sunday 19 March 2023