**Swindon Project Ecologist**

**Job Description and Person Specification**

**Reports to:** Conservation Lead Swindon

**Contract:** Fixed Term Contract until March 2025

**Hours:** Full time 37.5 per week Monday to Sunday with some weekend work required

**Based at:** Home working with office and meeting space at Blakehill Nature Reserve

**JOB PURPOSE**

Support the Project Team, Swindon Borough Council staff, landowners and communities to develop and deliver nature based projects within the Swindon Forest Meadows project area, and bring forward tree planting and biodiversity net gain projects on sites throughout the project area.

**DIMENSIONS**

There are no line management or overall budget responsibilities for this role. You will have occasional control of discreet budgets relating to specific items of work. You will be required to supervise work placement students, trainees and volunteers.

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Work closely with the Project Team, Swindon Borough Council and other stakeholders to identify and evaluate opportunities for nature based projects, including the creation, enhancement and expansion of woodland and other habitats.
* Ecological survey and mapping using the Defra Biodiversity Metric and UK Habs to identify potential for delivering biodiversity net gain and tree planting.
* Securing support and buy-in by key stakeholders including Swindon Borough Council Ecology, Rangers and Property;
* Helping to prepare management and monitoring plans for each site.
* Drafting reports suitable for Swindon Borough Council decision makers to adopt the proposed sites.
* To deliver biodiversity gain metric surveys, calculations and reports (or similar for carbon and nutrient capture).
  + To undertake ecological and land condition surveys.
* Compile and submit project planning, permit and consent applications (e.g. SSSI consents, Planning Permissions, Environmental Permits, EIAs)
* To work closely with the Community and Volunteer Action Coordinator to develop, promote and deliver a programme of citizen science volunteer surveys and monitoring projects.
* Deliver training in surveying, monitoring and species ID to volunteers.
* To produce or input into reports or other work as required, for example a State of Nature in Swindon report/ Biodiversity Strategy/ Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
* To support Project and Swindon Borough Council staff to assess and respond to key planning applications and development proposals.
* Maintain tools and equipment.
* Help promote the project and assist with communications, publicity and events.
* Comply with relevant legislation applicable to the role, and Trust policies procedures, for example Health and Safety and protected species and habitats.
* Any other duties commensurate with the post.

**SAFEGUARDING**

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. All WWT staff will receive safeguarding training and must ensure that they comply with WWT’s safeguarding policy.

**WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

You will be part of the WWT Conservation and Land Management Team, which consists of the nature reserves and farm staff, the Water Team, Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre and the Chalkhill ecological consultants. You will report to the Swindon Conservation Lead and work closely with other Project and WWT nature reserve staff. You will regularly liaise with officers at Swindon Borough Council and other key stakeholders. You will work closely with key volunteers, voluntary wardens and supervise trainees and work placement students.

**SCOPE FOR IMPACT**

This is a new position created as part of the Swindon Forest Meadows Project, aimed at delivering nature’s recovery in the face of a loss of habitat as Swindon has grown. The world is in the midst of an ecological crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of nature to our health and wellbeing.  In the face of the ecological and climate crisis we need to find better ways to engage the Swindon Community, both in the developed areas, and in the surrounding countryside, to ensure nature is valued and meaningful action is taken. This role will be at the heart of finding innovative solutions, enabling and directing the use of grant money and private finance to the areas where we can make the greatest gains.

**EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED**

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|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Qualifications** | * Degree level (or equivalent) ecology qualification or * Extensive ecological knowledge and experience | * One or more protected species licences * Health and Safety training * Current First aid certificate |
| **Knowledge and Experience** | * Species ID and ecological survey and assessment, including protected species surveys and licencing. **Botanical and grassland survey skills and experience are particularly desirable.** * A sound understanding and knowledge of the ecology, habitat management and conservation requirements of priority habitats and species * Experience and knowledge of working on sites with a high nature conservation value and designated status. * Knowledge of UK environmental and wildlife policy, regulations and legislation | * Application of the DEFRA biodiversity gain metric * Knowledge of agri-environment schemes and farming practices * Experience of writing nature conservation management plans and reports * Experience of producing risk assessments for day to day operations * Experience of managing, mentoring and training placements, volunteers and of supervising contractors * Knowledge of practical land management techniques across a range of habitats * Experience of project management and managing relationships with clients and contractors * Experience of assessing and commenting on planning applications |
| **Professional Skills** | * IT skills, use of standard Microsoft software * Use of GIS, preferably ArcGIS, and data management, in the field and in the office. * Writing professional reports * Excellent presentation skills (written and verbal) and ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people using a range of media |  |
| **Personal attributes** | * Able to prioritise but be flexible and aware of the need to change priorities. * Excellent customer care * Ability to complete work within deadlines to a high standard * Tact, diplomacy and integrity * High attention to detail * Organisational ability, able to work at pace with a track record of meeting deadlines * Excellent people skills enabling strong relationships both internally and externally to be built and maintained * Ability to work well as part of a team but also have the motivation and initiative to work independently. |  |
| **Other** | * Full (clean) driving licence |  |

**Additional information**

This is a 37.5 hour/week Monday – Sunday contract. The post holder will be required to work evenings or weekends. Total hours worked each week will not exceed 37.5 hours (time off in lieu may be agreed in advance with the line manager).

**Special note**

This job description does not form part of the contract of employment but indicates how that contract should be performed. The job description will be subject to periodic review and amendment in consultation with the post holder. The post holder may be required to perform duties other than those given in this job description. The duties and responsibilities attached to the post may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of the responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and would not in themselves justify the re-evaluation of a post. In cases, however, where a permanent and substantial change in the duties of the post occurs, consistent with a higher level of responsibility, then the post would be eligible for re-evaluation.