**Conservation Lead - South Wiltshire**

**Job Description and Person Specification**

**Reports to:** Director of Conservation and Land Management

**Contract:** Permanent Full Time

**Hours:** 37.5 hours per week (Mon– Sun) with a requirement for occasional weekend and evening work

**Based at:** Langford Lakes Nature Reserve, with office space at Elm Tree Court, Devizes and opportunity for some home working. This role will cover a portfolio of nature reserves and will require regular travel to sites in central and south Wiltshire, occasional travel to sites in north Wiltshire and Swindon.

**JOB PURPOSE**

To ensure that our land management decisions are driven by evidence and achieve positive outcomes for nature’s recovery. Implement the Trust’s key strategic aim to support nature’s recovery by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our nature reserves and increasing the amount of land, rivers and wetlands managed for the benefit of wildlife.

**DIMENSIONS**

Direct line management reports: There will be no direct line management responsibility, but you will supervise trainees, work placement students, volunteers and contractors

Budget responsibility: You will have responsibility for the budgets and the management of specific projects in addition to overseeing Countryside Stewardship schemes.

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Accountable for ensuring nature reserve Management Plans are reviewed and updated for the sites within the portfolio for the role. Working with the Estate and Farm Officers, ensure each nature reserve has a clear vision and a measurable, prioritised and deliverable strategy for management.
* Work closely with the Estate Officer and farm team throughout the year to create and report against work programmes and budgets.
* Plan and deliver a strategic annual programme of biological monitoring in order to:
  + Monitor condition, identify trends and assess management requirements and prescribe appropriate management actions
  + Monitor compliance with Countryside Stewardship and other scheme or regulatory requirements, taking action to alter management as required.
  + Submit biological records to the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre.
* Compile and submit claims for agri-environment schemes.
* Develop and deliver conservation projects on WWT Nature Reserves and also within the context of the wider landscape, engaging with neighbouring landowners and other stakeholders to ensure the delivery of a nature recovery network and ensure our sites act as key core biodiversity areas.
* Lead volunteer tasks and training on WWT nature reserves relating to surveying and monitoring.
* Provide expert advice and guidance to the estates team, consultants and contractors for on-site works.
* Support land acquisition assessments and the creation of new nature reserves through assisting with land assessment in terms of current and potential value for wildlife.
* Support the Director in remaining abreast of government and other grants, schemes and regulations relating to land management and conservation
* Support the recovery of nature through providing advice to the wider community; engaging with neighbouring landowners and other stakeholders
* Provide the first point of contact for enquiries about the nature reserves
* Lead guided walks and deliver talks and events
* There will be times when you will be required to support other team members with practical management tasks, such as habitat management or livestock handling.
* Any other duties as may be required which are commensurate with this 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.

**BACKGROUND**

The Trust needs to ensure that our land management decisions are driven by evidence and positive outcomes for nature’s recovery. For our nature reserves to function effectively as core biodiversity areas they each require a clear vision, adaptable management plan and systematic monitoring. Within the changing environment of land management schemes and incentives, we require a rationalised approach to agri-environment schemes that balances income with flexibility to achieve the desired outcomes for nature.

**WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

You will report to and work closely with the Director of Conservation and Land Management ensuring that they are kept fully appraised through regular reports, meetings, emails and phone calls. You may be asked to deputise for them as required. In your region you will work regularly and closely with the Estate Officer and Livestock Officer for south Wiltshire, in addition to being part of a wider team of staff and volunteers caring for our reserves. A key function is to develop close ties with volunteers, contractors and neighbouring landowners. You will work with the Communications Department to promote WWT reserves via social media, TV and radio, on-site interpretation, website and printed media and provide information to and engage with other WWT staff members and support their work. You will work closely with all staff who use the Trust reserves as a key resource, including education and wellbeing teams, café managers and care farm staff.

**KEY CHALLENGES**

Working under the Trust’s 2030 Strategy you will need to work alongside the wider team to rationalise and prioritise your work programme. Tasks such as updating management plans, designing and delivering monitoring, drawing up new agri-environment agreements and assessing new land acquisition opportunities all need to be balanced with the day to day operation of the nature reserves. Our reserves are under pressure and only by their careful monitoring and management can we ensure that they continue to fulfil their role in nature’s recovery. In addition to ensuring our reserves receive optimal care, we need to continue to work with our neighbours and seek ways to increase their size, buffer them from external impacts and link them up as part of a network of wildlife habitats.

**SCOPE FOR IMPACT**

The Trust’s nature reserves are outstanding examples of the habitats found within Wiltshire. Within your large and diverse portfolio of nature reserves there is immense opportunity and there is scope within this role to proactively bring forward your own ideas and develop innovative projects. There will be opportunity for personal development by taking the lead on aspects of a variety of projects, such as agroforestry and reedbed creation. You will also be encouraged to look outwards and build a network of working relationships outside of the Trust, locally and nationally.

**EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED**

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|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Qualifications | * To be educated to degree level in a relevant subject or have proven substantial relevant experience. |  |
| Knowledge and Experience | * Technical ecological knowledge and identification skills for UK species and habitats. * Ecological survey and biological recording and monitoring and evaluation techniques. * UK habitat and land management techniques. * Environmental legislation and legal requirements relating to working in designated sites | * Knowledge and identification of species connected with chalk habitats is highly desirable. * Knowledge and experience of using UKhab classification. * Knowledge of Wiltshire including local priority species and habitats and their conservation techniques. * Delivery of landscape scale projects * Conservation / environmental project management * Working with key partners/stakeholders, e.g.: Local Authorities, Natural England, Environment Agency, other NGOs, Farm Clusters * Knowledge of Health and Safety legislation. * Budget management * Securing funding and grants * Knowledge of Countryside Stewardship schemes and managing land under these agreements * Knowledge and experience of conservation grazing farming systems * Supervising staff, volunteers and contractors |
| Skills | * Species ID and survey skills * Writing and implementing conservation land management plans. * Proven ability to engage and work effectively with local communities and the public. * Team working * Good written / oral skills. * Leadership skills * Effective organisational and time management skills * Able to solve problems effectively * IT skills – MS Office | * Practical conservation and habitat management skills * Use of GIS. * Use of CMSi * Writing articles for magazines/ websites |
| Personal attributes | * Self-motivation and drive. * Strong interpersonal and influencing skills including the ability to communicate with a wide range of people * Excellent customer care. * Ability to deal with matters in a sensitive manner when required. * Able to work with limited supervision and be a pro-active member of the team * Approachable and dynamic manner. * Self-awareness * Ability to mentor younger team members or volunteers. |  |
| Additional requirements | * Valid full driving licence and use of own vehicle. |  |

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.

*THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT*

The provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act relating to the non-disclosure of spent convictions do not apply to this job.

**YOU MUST, THEREFORE, DISCLOSE WHETHER YOU HAVE ANY PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS.**

If successful, you will be required to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Check from the Disclosure & Barring Service. The level of check required for this job is a Basic disclosure.

A copy of our Policy Statement and Code of Practice is available on request.