

BORDERS FOREST TRUST



Wild Heart Project Officer Job Description and Person Specification

Background

The Wild Heart Project Officer post presents an exciting new opportunity to join the work of Borders Forest Trust to engage people in ecological restoration processes and action, and improve the natural heritage value of two of its Wild Heart sites in the Southern Uplands.

Borders Forest Trust (BFT) is a charitable organisation established in 1996 to restore native woodland and associated natural habitats in the south of Scotland for the benefit of both wildlife and people. The South of Scotland has one of the lowest land covers of native woodland in the country and BFT was formed to address this issue and to date has planted more than 2 million native trees & shrubs. A key part of BFT's work is to engage with the wider community in habitat management; promoting better access to it and encouraging the development of a woodland culture within the community.

BFT manages a landscape scale ecological restoration initiative "Reviving the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland" on its 3 landholdings, the Carrifran Wildwood, Corehead & the Devil's Beef Tub and Talla & Gameshope. Together these sites span over 3,100ha of stunning uplands and valleys in the Central Southern Upland Hills where a range of upland habitats are being restored.

The post has been created to assist in the delivery of a new phase of the Reviving the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland programme which is part of the wider Tweed Forum co-ordinated National Lottery Heritage Funded Destination Tweed initiative. The NLHF funded Reviving the Wild Heart project aims to significantly enhance the biodiversity and landscape of two stunning areas of the central Southern Upland Hills, Talla & Gameshope and Corehead, and enable visitors to have greater connectivity to this land and its natural heritage. This will be achieved through delivering habitat restoration activities to improve biodiversity; providing volunteering opportunities for practical conservation and wildlife monitoring; improving access and volunteer facilities; creating interpretation and delivering education activities and training. The focus of this new position is to assist in the delivery of this work.

The post holder will be part of a small, enthusiastic and dynamic team and have the opportunity to contribute to restoring native woodlands and reviving woodland culture in some of the most beautiful 'wilderness' of south of Scotland working with a broad range of people and organisations. The work will involve a balance between office and outdoor work, requiring someone with a mix of skills including exceptional communication (including IT and social media skills), coordination and interpersonal skills; and an aptitude and passion for 'hands on' outdoor conservation, wildlife monitoring and recording and working with people.

Principal Duties

This full-time post will focus on creating and delivering participation and engagement opportunities through volunteer/training/community/education activities in two of the 'Wild Heart' sites – Talla & Gameshope and Corehead & the Devil's Beef Tub.

Specifically the duties will involve:

- To develop a calendar of volunteering opportunities and activities along with the Wild Heart staff team and promote opportunities and outreach
- To work collaboratively with the Wild Heart staff team to deliver a range of practical conservation activities including native woodland and montane scrub planting, and wildlife monitoring and surveying.
- To develop educational activities and events at Talla & Gameshope and Corehead in particular working with local schools
- To lead practical volunteer, education and community group engagement activities along with the Wild Heart Site team. This will include meeting working with a range of groups and organisations and the general public and ensuring health and safety requirements are met
- To develop and deliver training programmes for volunteers and participants to enable skills development and knowledge acquisition
- To develop monitoring and surveying programme to be undertaken with volunteers
- To develop new opportunities for engagement in the Wild Heart sites at Corehead and Talla & Gameshope
- To develop appropriate interpretation for the two Wild Heart sites that are both on-site and digital
- To assist, as required, in the delivery of the practical improvements to the sites such as access improvements, upgrade of volunteer infrastructure and facilities
- To work with BFT colleagues and Trustees to help build strong positive relationships with local communities, neighbours, and users of BFT sites through regular contact
- To work in partnership with other Destination Tweed Projects and staff members
- To ensure good photo-documentation of activities, and to contribute to BFT Social Media – Including Facebook, website and Instagram.

Person Specification

Required

- Experience in planning and delivering environmental education, leading guided visits and hosting events
- Possessing practical conservation skills and experience in leading practical conservation volunteering activities
- Experience in developing environmental interpretation
- Passionate and enthusiastic about the ecological vision of Borders Forest Trust
- Excellent communication skills – especially around reporting, feedback on progress with projects and liaising with different interest groups

- Ability to manage and prioritise a diverse workload

Desirable

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Experience in ecological monitoring and surveying
- Experience in developing and implementing training programmes
- Experience, or understanding, of ecological restoration
- Experience of working in small, geographically spread team
- Local knowledge of the Scottish Borders and South of Scotland.
- First Aid qualification, but training can be provided.

Terms and Conditions

Accountability

The Wild Heart Project Officer will be responsible to the Wild Heart Site Manager.

Salary

£23,000 - £25,000 depending on experience. This is a five-year fixed term contract in line with the duration of the NLHF Destination Tweed Project.

Hours of work

Initially 37.5 hours per week including evenings and weekends. Core hours are flexible and time off in lieu (TOIL) system is in place. Overtime is not paid.

Place of work

This post is both office and site-based on BFT sites. Office space is at the BFT Office in Ancrum, and the post-holder should consider this their base along with the Wildheart Sites at Corehead, and Talla & Gameshope. Working from home is an option that could be considered.

Travel

Clean driving license and own car required with agreed mileage expenses (in accordance with BFT's mileage policy) re-imbursed at a rate of 45p/mile. The Wild Heart Project Officer is responsible for recording mileage.

Disclosure

The successful applicant will be required to take part in the PVG process before taking up the post.

Application Process

Apply with a CV and cover letter to recruitment@bordersforesttrust.org by **midnight on 11 January 2023**. Interviews are expected to be held 19 January 2022 in the Scottish Borders.