



Save Our Magnificent Meadows (MM) project

Job Description

Job Title: Conservation Officer (Part-time 3 days per week)

Salary: £24,560 pa + pension and insurance (pro-rata)

Location: Somerset Wildlife Trust, Callow Rock Offices, Cheddar

Reporting to: Head of Conservation Policy and Strategy

Responsible for: Delivering the MM project alongside other Trust staff and with Plantlife (project lead partner).

Specifically the delivery of habitat survey and grassland conservation advice in the Mendip Hills National Conservation Area (NCA) and landowner liaison. Delivery of biodiversity benefits as determined by the project objectives. Work with project partners to maximise effectiveness and add value to the overall project.

Introduction to organisation

Somerset Wildlife Trust has worked for 50 years to protect and enhance the natural environment of Somerset, with many successes on and off our nature reserves. Our goal is to support a working landscape that has nature at its heart, where both people and wildlife can thrive. We aim to act as catalyst and inspiration for local communities to work together in achieving this vision for Somerset. The Mendip Hills NCA is one of the key areas where work has been focussed to date, as it holds many invaluable wildlife habitats including species-rich limestone grasslands and lowland meadows.

Background to post

This post has been created to deliver the Somerset element of the Save Our Magnificent Meadows (MM) project, a high profile UK-wide partnership project – led by Plantlife – that is taking emergency action to conserve the remaining species-rich meadows and grasslands and is engaging the public about their heritage. The post is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is one of 15 posts established across the UK to deliver the SOMM project.

The postholder will work closely with other Trust staff and with Plantlife to ensure the aims of the SOMM project are met.

The Somerset element of this project will take action to conserve the remaining species-rich meadows and grasslands in the Mendip Hills and engage the public in their heritage.

Key responsibilities

1. Targeted surveying of lowland acidic, limestone, calaminarian and neutral grassland habitats within the Mendip NCA.
2. Assisting with grassland plant species identification workshops and landscape, habitat and species management training for volunteers, members of the public and landowners.
3. Assist with and run project events, open days, guided walks, public awareness raising, publicity and marketing, liaising with key Trust staff.
4. Providing information and conservation management advice to targeted landowners, tenants and managers about the wildlife and biodiversity value of their land through farm advisory visits, telephone contacts, correspondence and appropriate data records. Includes assisting with applications for the Entry Level and Higher Level Grant Schemes.
5. Undertake Arc GIS habitat mapping work
6. Provide data as requested to assist with reporting and accountability to SWT, partners and funders.
7. Work proactively with volunteers across the Trust and seek opportunities for volunteers to engage in our work across the Mendip Hills.
8. Undertake other duties as reasonably requested from the line manager.
9. Observe health and safety procedures in the workplace to ensure personal safety and to safeguard the interests and safety of all staff, trainees, visitors, and others at the Trust.

Travel

The officer will be required to travel to sites across the Mendip Hills National Character Area. While there is shared access to a work vehicle, it is preferable for candidates to also have access to their own transport for work.

Person specification:

Essential

- Minimum of two years experience of habitat survey and working with land owners and managers on nature conservation advice
- Experience of practical management of a number of different wildlife habitats found in the project area.

- Degree level qualification or equivalent in an ecological and conservation/farming related discipline.
- Use of GIS (ArcMap in particular)
- Knowledge of habitat and species management, issues associated with wildlife conservation, and the issues and pressures affecting farmers, foresters, and land managers. Committed to the environment and wildlife conservation.
- Good communication, negotiation and diplomacy skills, with an ability to enthuse, motivate and support landowners and volunteers.
- Self-motivated, organised and capable of setting up and managing events for land managers, farmers, conservationists, the general public and the media. Able to meeting deadlines and work under pressure.
- Willing to take a flexible approach to the work programme, including evenings and week-ends when appropriate.
- IT competent in word processing, spreadsheet and system management.
- Possession of full, current driving licence

Desirable

- Practical involvement with agricultural business management.
- Familiar with the Mendip Hills area
- Knowledge of current agri-environment schemes.
- Knowledge of Integrated Habitat Survey techniques

Hours and leave

The position is part-time, 3 days (22.5 hours) a week. In addition to public and bank holidays, the annual holiday entitlement is 25 days. Part-time employees are entitled to the above, on a pro-rata basis.

Overtime

TOIL can be taken when you have worked additional, agreed time beyond your contracted hours.

The Working Time Regulations 1998 state that staff must not work in excess of 13 hours per day (including rest breaks) and that staff should not work in excess of an average of 48 hours per week. Therefore staff should not owe or accrue more than 15 hours Toil in any one-month period, except in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the CEO

Pension

The Trust currently operates a Stakeholder Pension Scheme, to which new employees are entitled to join. Full details will be given to new employees.

Selection process

All recruitment is coordinated by the HR & Facilities Manager. Interview panels for all posts are reviewed and agreed by the Management Team. Candidates will be assessed on how well they match the relevant competency profiles and the person specification as set out in the job description.

Equal opportunities

At all stages of the recruitment process there will be no discouragement and/or discrimination of candidates because of their sex, age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, class, political or religious beliefs, HIV antibody status (including AIDS), marital status, sexual orientation, “spent” criminal convictions, disability or any other reasons unrelated to the requirements of the job.