

THE CONSERVATORS OF THE ASHDOWN FOREST

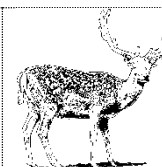
Countryside Manager

Job Evaluation: NJC M3 SCPs 33 to 36: £36,900 - £39,800

Hours per week: Equivalent to 37 hour week

Flexible working with weekday out of hours, weekend and Bank Holiday rota

Reports to: The CEO



CONTEXT

Originally a deer hunting forest, Ashdown Forest is now one of the largest public access spaces in the South East.

The responsibility for managing Ashdown Forest on behalf of the Owner, who since 1988 has been the Ashdown Forest Charitable Trust, lies with an independent body, The Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest. The Board, created in 1885, has been regulated under a series of Acts of Parliament, the most recent being the Ashdown Forest Act 1974. Subsequent relevant legislation includes The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the 1992 EC Habitats Directive, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000, and Commons Act 2006 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC)2006. This extensive legislation relates mostly to the protection of wildlife but also to the duties of local authorities regarding biodiversity and the status of Common Land in the modern age.

OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE POST

The Countryside Manager leads a team of seven staff and large number of volunteers who manage the Ashdown Forest's lowland heathland and woodland habitats. They will ensure delivery of the Countryside Stewardship scheme. The team also ensure safe access and high quality visits to the Forest for the public.

Be part of the rota providing a uniformed, mobile presence on the Forest to welcome and advise visitors. Respond to a range of events on the Forest. These will include both planned events and reactive issues. Advising visitors on the site's bye-laws will be a key focus.

The Countryside Manager will own the international protected site's management plan with associated delivery plan and budget. They will work closely with statutory bodies, a large number of stakeholders and the public.

The post will also identify a stream of projects that will be funded by partners such as The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF), the Friends of Ashdown Forest and other sources.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Duties

1. *Habitat Management*

- Creation and delivery of the Ashdown Forest management plan

- Delivery of the Countryside Stewardship agreement including:
- Recording progress and livestock grazing reporting
- Conservation planning such as heathland restoration
- Strategic management of related programmes, including Grazing and Deer management operations
- Develop ecological monitoring to support site management
- Liaison with Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- Woodland management and liaison with Forestry Commission.

2. *Amenity*

- Manage the Forest's amenity infrastructure including car parks, signage, tracks and other infrastructure
- Coordinate safety work such as tree surveys and fenceline inspections
- Assist the CEO and other staff in working with groups and individuals who access or border the Forest
- Respond to queries from commoners, residents and public as required
- Contribute to the education and interpretation programmes
- Coordination of Forest events with the Communications & Public Engagement Manager. This covers all events on the Forest to ensure that they do not negatively impact the protected habitats

3. *Line Management*

- Line management of seven Forest staff plus volunteers and related contractors
- Development and delivery of an annual work programme
- Budget forecasting and management
- Alongside the CEO and Business Services Manager to develop and renew policies, procedures and key performance indicators
- Ensure that H&S policies and standards are developed, maintained and implemented. This will include supervising and arranging training as required
- Deliver high quality reports and presentations for internal, Board and external purposes
- Provide expertise and support to the CEO and other members of staff as necessary
- Headline management of the buildings, vehicles, machinery, equipment, tools and other resources used by the Forest team, including inventory control and recommendations for disposals and acquisitions

4. *External Relations*

- Working with the CEO, liaise with Natural England, Forestry Commission and other authorities to deliver the management plan
- Work with wider partners for both landscape scale deer management and supporting the grazing programme. This includes relationships with neighbours and partners such as Wakehurst Place
- Liaison with other conservation and amenity organisations to learn from and advise others
- Act as an ambassador for the Ashdown Forest in all interactions
- Liaise with the SAMMs project staff to develop a wardening programme for the Forest
- Manage the Basic Payment Scheme or any successor support schemes on behalf of the Conservators

To carry out all other such duties as may from time to time be determined by the CEO.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:**Qualifications/Education/Training:**

Essential

1. Degree level qualification or equivalent level of education
2. Management training
3. First Aid at Work Certificate

Desirable

4. Degree level qualification in environmental studies/countryside management or related subject
5. LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection and Survey
6. Driving license to include B & E trailer test
7. LANTRA Tractor Driving, or equivalent experience
8. NPTC Chainsaw Certificate CS30 &31 (or equivalent)

Experience:

Essential

1. Experience of a leadership role in a land management or conservation team with evidence of delivery and successful outcomes
2. Experience of financial/budgetary control for budgets
3. Proven successful experience in the preparation of funding applications and preparing business cases
4. Experience in risk assessment and health & safety for outdoor working.
5. Significant experience of working with stakeholders, including the local community

Desirable

6. Project management experience
7. Experience of partnership working and liaison with agencies such as Natural England and DEFRA.
8. Experience of working with a "not for profit" organization or other types of corporate bodies, e.g. local authority
9. Development and management of a volunteer workforce
10. Experience of working in or managing a training team

Knowledge:

Essential

1. Extensive knowledge of heathland conservation and woodland management
2. Knowledge and understanding of land management legislation and practical delivery, covering matters ranging from public access and governance, to the protection of endangered wildlife, including Habitat Directives, Acts of Parliament and Regulations
3. Knowledge of Countryside Stewardship, the Basic Payment Scheme and awareness of the direction of travel in government policy on funding the environment.
4. Understand cross compliance regulations which underpin the Basic Payment Scheme and Countryside Stewardship

Desirable

5. Working knowledge of data recording and relevant software
6. Species identification skills
7. GIS experience and experience with countryside management software (CMSi). Bespoke GIS, database, and web mapping solutions.

8. Clear understanding of the working relationships with Central Government i.e. DEFRA, Natural England, the Forestry commission and the Environment Agency.

Skills & Competencies:

Essential

1. Good interpersonal skills
2. Analytical skills, ability to plan and co-ordinate
3. Ability to plan, communicate, manage and evaluate organisational objectives and goals
4. Ability to organise and prioritise work activities and meet deadlines
5. Ability to act as a confident advocate for the Ashdown Forest in public situations
6. Effective communication including excellent written, verbal and listening skills
7. Report writing, record keeping, presentation and interpretation skills
8. Fully competent with the use of ICT

Desirable

9. Proven leadership, line management, team motivation and organizational skills
10. Fully competent in dealing with the legal implications of proposed actions and able to respond with appropriate advice

Personal Attributes:

Essential

1. Confident in dealing with conflict successfully and diplomatically
2. Enthusiastic, flexible and resilient
3. High achievement, motivation, and ability to plan and manage own and others workload within timescales
4. Clear and logical tactical thinker

Other:

Essential

1. Hold a valid full driving licence
2. Ability to work weekends
3. Ability to work out of hours