**Trainee Project Officer - Protecting the River Irfon catchment’s freshwater biodiversity project.**

**Job description**

**Contract:** Fixed-term 12 months; Full-time 1.0 FTE

**Location:** Hybrid- Mid Wales (centred on Llanwrtyd Wells or Builth Wells)/Oxford/Home

**Responsible to:** Project Manager, R. Irfon Nature Networks Project

**Responsible for:** Assisting with all aspects of the project; engaging with the project’s training programme.

**Background**

Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) is a friendly, experienced, evidence-based conservation charity that works to protect UK and European freshwater wildlife through practical, evidence-based and innovative nature conservation projects.

Our organisation is well respected nationally and internationally, and we work with a network of statutory and NGO partners both in the UK and Europe.

This post is part of a new strategic programme to demonstrate and practically apply the Freshwater Network concept, a new approach to freshwater biodiversity conservation developed by Freshwater Habitats Trust, which considers all freshwater and wetland types as an interdependent network, linking Important Freshwater Areas, floodplains and Wetland Opportunity Areas. Following demonstrations of the concept in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the New Forest we now have an opportunity to extend this concept in the upland environment of the catchment of the R. Irfon in Mid Wales, which is an SAC and one of Britain’s finest rivers, placing a special emphasis on the critical role of small waters and wetlands which research demonstrates are essential for maintaining freshwater biodiversity.

**Role**

This is a key developmental project for FHT and trainees will be provided with the essential experience and skills for a career in UK freshwater conservation.

# Job description

You will assist with the delivery of the following elements of the project, and receive technical training in the skills required to do this:

1. Delivering river, fen and bog restoration work on sites in the R. Irfon catchment (including SACs – the main rivers, SSSIs and a range of sites supporting priority wetland habitats), continuing and developing an established programme of work with private landowners who own the sites, conservation partners and contractors.
2. Implementing a programme of floodplain wetland habitat creation at three sites, including pond creation work and floodplain grassland restoration work.
3. Running a citizen engagement programme, called GroWet, focused on the propagation of a suite of 10 endangered wetland plants in people’s homes, and subsequent translocation to FHT and partner pond, river floodplain and wetland creation and restoration sites. This programme has substantial engagement with both conservation-literate and disadvantaged public audiences, working closely with professionals and contractors involved in ‘green engagement’.

You will have a framework for learning comprising goals for skills and experience to be gained, and will be supported with formal and informal learning sessions and materials developed by FHT. Training will take place based both at the main Oxford office and in-situ in Mid-Wales where you will be based. Training will consist of:

* In-project training (48 weeks 1 -1.5 day/week), comprising a mix of formal training and shadowing (60:40), undertaken in the office and through site visits and covering all areas relevant to the project including: practical management; habitat design and creation; wetland species survey and identification; species licencing; plant propagation; hydrology/geology; research; community engagement; developing project briefs; project management; and finances.
* Extended training (48 weeks / 0.5 -1 day/week), comprising a mix of formal training and shadowing (40:60), undertaken in the office and through site visits, and covering the wide range areas relevant to freshwater management and ecology, but which are not part of the project including: Natural Flood Management techniques; river/stream surveys; integrated catchment management; pollution control; eDNA techniques; Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Great Crested Newt protection and licencing; freshwater policy.

There will be opportunities to support our work in all parts of England and Wales where Freshwater Habitats Trust is working.

**Key responsibilities**

* Work under the direction of the Project Director, R. Irfon project staff and other senior FHT staff to assist in the delivery of the project
* Engage with the learning framework

**Additional general responsibilities for the post holder**

* Understand and follow FHT’s internal procedures including Health and Safety, information management systems, site protocols etc.
* Work closely and constructively with your manager and colleagues in all areas of your responsibility.
* Undertake other duties as the Senior Management Team may from time to time require.

**Person Specifications**

**Qualifications and experience**

* A specific degree qualification is not required but applicants should have a desire to pursue a career in conservation and an interest in freshwater biodiversity.
* Good organisational skills
* Full current driving licence.

**Personal qualities**

* Ability to manage workload and competing priorities effectively
* Good verbal and written communication skills
* Good interpersonal skills - approachable, professional and courteous
* Attention to detail and able to deliver on time
* Ability to work independently and as part of a team.

**What do we have to offer**

At Freshwater Habitats Trust we value employees' unique views and encourage them to develop their interests. Besides paying a competitive salary we also offer the following benefits:

* The option to work flexibly, hybrid or remote working.
* 35-hour week
* 25 days of annual leave plus bank holidays
* Pension with 6% employer contribution
* Mobile phone allowance
* Working from home allowance
* Free eye tests
* Free Employee Assistance Program
* Mileage pays.