Habitats and Species Officer – River Irfon Integrated Natural Resources Scheme

Job description

Contract: Fixed-term contract to September 2028. 1.0 FTE.

Location: Home-based, with regular travel to project sites in Mid Wales, centred on Llanwrtyd Wells and Builth Wells.

Salary: £28,000 per annum.

Responsible to: Freshwater Habitats Trust R. Irfon Integrated Natural Resources Scheme Project Director.

Responsible for: delivery of habitats and species conservation work, including delivery by volunteer groups, landowners and professional partners, in the Irfon Integrated Natural Resources Scheme project.

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, the New Forest and the R. Irfon in mid-Wales, we now have an opportunity to embed the concept in the long-term management of the R. Irfon as part of the Welsh government's Integrated Natural Resources Scheme. The job is an important opportunity to shape the way freshwater environments are perceived and managed in Wales as the R. Irfon is one of Britain's finest river systems and also a demonstration site for implementing the new Freshwater Network concept. The post will place a special emphasis on the critical role of small waters and wetlands which research demonstrates are essential for maintaining freshwater biodiversity.

Role

The successful candidate will be responsible for **practical freshwater and wetland conservation work with both professional and volunteer groups** undertaking habitat creation, restoration and management work (e.g. pond creation, fen and bog management, river and floodplain restoration work, in-situ rare species habitat management work, especially involving the endangered Freshwater Pearl Mussel), including working with

other Freshwater Habitats Trust colleagues. This work is also helping to build a new practical conservation volunteer audiences and will require co-ordinating work and maintaining relationships with local site owners, especially private farming landowners.

Job description

Habitat creation and management

- Develop, organise and undertake habitat creation projects including pond creation and river floodplains restoration
- Identify high quality river or stream locations which could be suitable for Freshwater Pearl Mussel reintroduction and assess sites for reintroduction programmes at a later stage
- Develop and organise habitat management programmes on private land and in SSSIs for Priority freshwater wetland habitats including purple moorgrass rush pasture, fen and lowland bog, including building a new audience of local conservation volunteers.
- Manage grazing regimes with partner farmers and landowners who are using electronic GPS 'NoFence' cattle collars, to enable, control or manage stock grazing on Priority wetland habitats.

Species conservation work

- Implement practical river habitat management for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, including woody debris management, tree management and some riverside fencing to enhance buffer strip width. This work will include co-operative working with the Freshwater Biological Association and Natural Resources Wales who have captive breeding populations for the species
- Identify and develop other species conservation programmes if possible (eg for uncommon freshwater invertebrates such as Fairy Shrimp, Eurasian Curlew which occurs on catchment Priority wetland habitats, uncommon wetland plants such as Pillwort).

Other work

- Support, in association with the Farm and Community Engagement Officer, the projects programme of engagement and training work to develop and extend your own management skills.

Administration

- Follow FHT standard information management systems for projects and finances
- Ensure that you are familiar with FHT H&S and HR policies and implement as needed
- Provide information on request and in good time to your line manager, your colleagues and the Senior Management Team, in line with FHT policies

General

- Ensure that you understand the Freshwater Habitats Trust strategy for freshwater biodiversity conservation and that you represent the views of the organisation in your work
- Seek to improve your knowledge and understanding of freshwater plant and invertebrate conservation and best practice, and evidence on relevant conservation issues, with a focus on freshwaters and associated habitats
- Ensure that high quality technical delivery is achieved by drawing on both external and internal scientific knowledge and evidence

- Ensure that you are able to work safely in accordance with the Trust's H&S policy
- Contribute positively at internal and external meetings and to the maintenance of a constructive working environment
- Undertake other duties your line manager or other members of the FHT Senior Management Team may from time to time require.

Person specifications

Experience/skills

- Proven experience of freshwater habitat and/or species conservation management
- Evidence of ability to work with partners involved in land or species management
- Degree, ideally in a relevant subject (ideally at least 2:1);
- A working knowledge of freshwater natural history and ecology which may be focused on either standing or running waters
- Good project and budget management skills
- An ability to work as a friendly and constructive member of a team, working toward common goals to deliver high quality freshwater conservation projects
- Good IT skills including MS Office; ability to work with GIS would be helpful but not critical as we can provide training and support
- Knowledge of the Welsh language is desirable
- Full current driving licence

Personal qualities

- Ability to work and manage time independently
- Team orientated and comfortable working with a wide range of partners
- Attention to detail and able to delivery on time
- Reasonably flexible attitude to working hours (we aim to be generously flexible for those with childcare commitments)
- Excellent time management and other organisational skills
- Good interpersonal skills, approachable and professional