

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust



Volunteer Placement: Trainee Reserves Officer

Introduction

The Volunteer Trainee Reserves Officer (VTRO) will work with the Reserves Officer, and the wider Conservation Team, to contribute to the management of the Trust's nature reserve estate. The placement will run for 6-12 months, with a minimum commitment of 6 months, working variable hours over 4-5 days per week and based at our main office near Leicester City Centre. This is an unsalaried, volunteer training placement for which the Trust will provide £300 per month contribution towards living costs, as well as a training allowance and appropriate personal protective equipment.

The Conservation Team

The Trust currently employs ten conservation staff based at its offices in Soar Lane, Leicester. The Reserves Officer, who will supervise and train the VTRO, manages the Trust's Midweek and Sunday Volunteer Groups, and works alongside the Conservation Officers who manage the Trust's 32 nature reserves. These are spread across the region and cover around 3000 acres, including two National Nature Reserves, one Special Protection Area, 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 10 ancient woodlands. There are a further eight reserves staff who manage our Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

Although management of the nature reserve estate is a top priority, the Trust has in recent years substantially increased its other conservation activities. These include initiating innovative area-based conservation projects and working in partnership with other organisations and landowners, work that is led by our Wider Countryside conservation team.

Have a look at our website for more information about the Trust's work, at

<http://www.lrwt.org.uk/>

and for the Midweek and Sunday Volunteer Groups, at

<http://www.lrwt.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/nature-reserve-management/>

Role description

This placement is ideal for someone who is looking for a career in conservation as it will equip you with the skills and experience that will help you stand out from the crowd in this highly competitive employment sector. The VTRO will be working with the Reserves Officer, who will provide plenty of in-house training to allow you to develop the skills and gain experience in carrying out practical tasks on the Trust's reserves, maintaining tools and equipment, and organizing and leading a large volunteer group.

Main areas of work

Full time, this placement runs from Monday to Friday (35 hours). Generally you will spend 3 days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) working with the Reserves Officer, Conservation Officers and volunteers on practical tasks on the reserves, and the remaining 2 days based in the office. The placement can be reduced to 4 days a week (28 hours) to accommodate part time work. The hours vary depending on the work being carried out. The earliest you would usually need to start is 8.00am and the latest finish usually 5.00pm, and any hours over a 35/28 hour week can be taken as time off in lieu.

The week is broadly split as set out below. All activities will be carried out after initial, and with on-going, training and supervision.

Practical work (60% of time): carrying out a wide variety of practical tasks on the Trust's reserves using hand tools and machinery, regularly carrying out tools maintenance and vehicle checks, and leading and supervising the volunteer groups.

Administration (30% of time): writing articles for 'Billhooks and Biscuits', the bi-monthly volunteer newsletter and helping with the mail-out, writing work reports, collating information for the task file (eg risk assessments, site maps, work details), updating the volunteer database and helping send out volunteer packs.

Health and safety (10% of time): giving tool and risk assessment talks when out on task, act as a first aider, carry out risk assessments, regularly check first aid kits.

By the end of the placement you should have gained experience of volunteer leadership and recruitment, a wide range of practical habitat management skills, knowledge of health and safety issues, learnt how a variety of habitats are managed for nature conservation, and gained experience of using a variety of power and hand tools and 4 x 4 driving.

Training

6 months commitment:

- First Aid at Work
- On-going, in-house training and work-shadow experience (this will vary depending on the season)
 - Fencing (e.g. stock, post and rail, wire)
 - Grassland management (eg scrub clearance, mowing, controlling thistles & ragwort)
 - Woodland management (eg coppicing, thinning, felling, planting, ride work)
 - Heathland management (eg scrub clearance, bracken removal)
 - Wetland management (eg ditch, pond and river work)
 - Access improvements (eg step, stile, gate, bridge building)
- Hand tool use and maintenance
- Strimmer/brush cutter, pedestrian flail and powerscythe use and maintenance
- Group leadership
- Health and safety (risk assessments)
- 4 x 4 on and off road driving experience

Over 6 months commitment:

- Continued in-house training (as above)
- Chainsaw NPTC certificated training (maintenance, cross cutting and felling trees up to 380mm)
- Pesticide application NPTC certified training (safe handling and application of pesticides using a knapsack)

Members of the Conservation Team have a broad range of knowledge and skills in reserve management and species ecology, which you would be welcome to draw upon. We also have a

vast selection of reference books and receive all the latest environmental and wildlife publications, which can be borrowed.

You will also have access to site management plans for all of our reserves which will explain the history of the reserves as well as its aims for the future. This will help you to understand the conservation theories behind the practical work

What we are looking for

We are looking for someone with a real passion for nature and a strong desire to work in the conservation, environment or related industries. You will need to be able to work and engage with a range of people from different age groups and backgrounds and be willing to supervise, motivate and lead others. You'll show lots of enthusiasm, self-motivation and a good sense of humour and the drive and energy to learn and develop within this placement.

A reasonable level of fitness and strength is required to be able to tackle the practical tasks on site and you should have the willingness to use power tools after training. Good computing skills to undertake the administration that is required and good organizational and communication skills will also be needed.

A full, clean driving licence with at least one year's driving experience is vital to be able to undertake this role.

If you have experience in similar work or relevant educational qualifications, and access to your own vehicle, this would be desirable.

Other details

As this is a voluntary trainee placement, it is important to think about how you might support yourself throughout it and where you might live, as no accommodation can be provided. However, we are able to offer £300 per month as a contribution towards living expenses. The successful applicant would need to be willing to relocate to Leicester or be within a reasonable commuting distance of our office in Soar Lane, Leicester. Please bear in mind that on our practical task days we meet at the office first, at 8am, and drive from there in the works vehicle to whichever reserve we are working at. This can be up to an additional hour's travel time each way.

This placement allows for 25 (pro rata) holiday days.

The Trust has an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, available on request. The requirements for outdoor work in areas with access difficulties should be borne in mind by applicants.

Please give this careful consideration before applying for this position.

Prospective candidates should complete the Trust placement application form and return it to: Andy Neilson, Reserves Officer, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.

E-mail: aneilson@lrwt.org.uk

Post: The Old Mill, 9 Soar Lane, Leicester, LE3 5DE

Closing date for applications is 9am on Monday 14th January 2019. Interviews will be held on Friday, 25^h January 2019.

As a charity with limited resources we are not able to acknowledge postal applications unless an S.A.E. is enclosed. If applicants have not heard from us by 5pm on Friday 18th January they should assume that they have been unsuccessful this time.