



Wild Paths – new careers in nature conservation South West Wildlife Trusts – Training Programme

Information for Candidates

The Wild Paths Training Programme is designed to enable participants to gain a broad range of hands-on experience that will give them the skills and confidence to make a valuable contribution to the conservation of the natural heritage, and to communicate with, inspire and enthuse others about our natural heritage. It is ideal for someone who is looking for a career working outdoors with wildlife and people, but candidates do not need to have any prior formal training in this sector. Candidates will however need to demonstrate a genuine desire to work in natural heritage conservation.

The aim of The Wildlife Trusts is to contribute to the creation of *Living Landscapes* –the name given to our approach to restoring and reconnecting large areas of habitat to allow wildlife to adapt to climate change and other environmental challenges. Within your host Trust you will be a key member of a team assisting with the management of our nature reserves, surveying and monitoring wildlife and engaging people and communities in natural heritage activities. The Wildlife Trusts are keen to reflect the diversity of the British community within our workforce, and applications from under-represented groups, for example people from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background or people with disabilities, are particularly welcome. Candidates need to be over 18, but there is no upper age limit.

What placements are on offer?

There are 10 practical and engagement placements on offer across the South West, in Avon, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire. Candidates are invited to apply via a single process to up to two placements (we will ask you to prioritise). Details of each placement can be found by clicking the links on the Wild Paths webpages hosted by Dorset Wildlife Trust.

Each placement starts on 1st September and lasts for 10 months, with an expectation that trainees attend an average 32 hours training time per week. Trainees will receive a bursary of £1000 per month, to pay for rent, bills, food etc., whilst they are in training.

How will the training be delivered?

Training will be delivered;

- Locally - a work-based learning approach will be utilised, where trainees will learn from and alongside conservation practitioners locally in their Wildlife Trusts, one of whom will act as their mentor.
- Centrally – all trainees will attend two short residential training sessions at Wildlife Trust centres (subject to Covid restrictions) plus several one-day workshops. These will cover key skills such as



First Aid & Health & Safety, as well as transferable skills such as interview techniques and time management. They will also complete a suite of 12 health and safety and personal development options via e-learning.

- Tailored to each individual – key industry tickets such as chainsaw (CS30 and 31) and brushcutter will be attained where individual skills gaps exist. Training in practical skills such as tractor or 4x4 driving, in species monitoring e.g., GIS skills; or specialist skills such as working with people with mental health difficulties or animal husbandry will be given where needed.

What does a trainee do on a day-to-day basis?

When trainees are not on formal training such as chainsaw training, they will be involved in work-based training activities as follows;

Nature reserve management and maintenance skills including:

- Traditional habitat management techniques appropriate to the local landscape to include hedgelaying, woodland management through coppicing and felling, grassland, heathland, reedbed and scrub management to include techniques such as swaling.
- Working with stock and conservation grazing schemes.
- Problem plant management e.g., Bracken & Himalayan balsam.
- Path maintenance: cutting and surfacing, brushcutting & litter clearance.
- Access work: gate & stile construction.
- Fencing boundary repairs: hedge laying, turf banking & stock fencing.
- Installing countryside furniture such as bridges, gates & boardwalks as well as a wide range of other activities as required by Nature Reserve Management Plans.
- Monitoring site management - conducting site integrity monitoring and recording the effects of management work.
- Some biological survey work on the Trust's Nature Reserves - providing all the necessary information to support management plans and work programmes.

Engaging people with natural heritage including:

- Gain knowledge of the nature reserves and local landscape.
- Assist in maintaining a good working relationship with local communities, landowners, school groups, visitors and other agencies.
- Offer guidance and advice to the visiting public.
- Run guided walks/events/activities for people who have previously had limited access to the natural environment.
- Prepare new interpretation material.
- Developing leadership skills so that trainees are able to confidently and safely lead volunteer work parties from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Supervise volunteers, work experience students or visiting educational groups on nature reserves.

These activities are potentially subject to change, should the need arise, due to Covid safety precautions.

Trainees will be required to keep a learning journal during their placements, so that they can refer to their notes for interviews, future roles etc.



What formal qualifications and accreditations can trainees gain?

Each placement offers slightly different opportunities which are given in the placement descriptions, but all trainees will expect to gain the following:

Awarding body	Qualification or accreditation and level
CIEH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency First Aid at Work Level 2
LANTRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brushcutter
NPTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS30/31 Chainsaw maintenance, cross-cutting & felling
AQA Unit Award Scheme (8 core units shown here plus a choice from 8 optional units)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Management (2 units) • Hedgelaying • Conservation grazing • Fencing • Coppicing • Leading a group • Woodland Management

What are the core requirements/minimum criteria for candidates?

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some knowledge and interest in wildlife, livestock, and the natural environment • Some awareness of community projects (any sector)
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid full driving licence held at time of application • Ability to work with a range of people from different age groups and backgrounds • Adaptable and flexible, with proven qualities as a strong team player, able to work closely with others, and ability to work on one's own initiative • Ability to learn new practical skills • Ability to absorb and apply new information • Ability to take responsibility for your own actions
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A genuine desire to work in natural heritage conservation and to inspire others • Motivated to learn, approach your training with enthusiasm and a good attitude • Good time keeping • Enthusiasm and motivation required to work in all weathers, often on difficult terrain.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must be able to demonstrate ability in Maths and English to GCSE grade C or equivalent (please get in touch if you are not sure about how to show this). Please also note that people who hold higher degrees i.e.: Masters (including Integrated Masters degrees) or PhDs are not eligible to apply to this scheme.
Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must have a right to reside and train in the UK
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum age 18 • No maximum age limit

How do candidates apply?

It is recommended that candidates carefully read these notes, and the individual placement descriptions, before completing our straightforward 2 step application process as follows:

Step 1: Download and fill in our simple application form available on the website **and/or** if you are feeling more adventurous or just hate forms, send us a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, a link to a webpage, or a YouTube video (or similar) where you tell us a bit about yourself and why you want to work in conservation and what is currently preventing you from achieving this.

Step 2: We do need everyone to fill in our short information form so that we have all your contact details, know which placement(s) you want to apply to and some additional background data about you to help us monitor the efficacy of our recruitment process.

Then just send the information form **AND** either the application form or alternative info to recruitment@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk or by post to Colleen Smith-Moore, Wild Paths Project Co-ordinator c/o Dorset Wildlife Trust, Brooklands Farm, Forston, Dorset, DT2 7AA, who will acknowledge receipt of your application.

If you have any questions about the scheme prior to applying or any difficulty with opening the forms, either email Colleen or give her a call on 01305 264620. Because we are committed to making a career in conservation open to everyone, if you are disabled and meet the minimum criteria for the post, we guarantee to interview you. We also use an anonymous sifting process to remove as much unconscious bias as possible.

Deadline for applying for the 10 placements starting in September 2021 is **5 pm on Sunday the 6th of June 2021.**

