



Job Description

Project Officer (Water & Land Stewardship and Eden Farm Cluster)

- Member of:** South East Rivers Trust (Water & Land Stewardship team); Bore Place (Farming and Nature Together Team).
- Reports to:** SERT Head of Water & Land Stewardship.
- Responsible for:** No direct reports. Contractors as/if required.
- Location:** Hybrid working including home based, with regular office days possible in Bore Place, Chiddingstone and SERT offices, Leatherhead (2 days per month minimum). This role is expected to be actively working in the catchment area including frequent travel to site and meetings.
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The role

The Project Officer (Water & Land Stewardship and Eden Farm Cluster) will be at the heart of our growing programme of work to support farms and catchment stakeholders to improve the resilience of catchments, reduce diffuse pollution, replenish water resources, and restore nature.

This role is offered as a full time role which combines 2.5 days/week facilitating the Lower Eden Farmer Cluster with the remaining time focusing on supporting SERT's landowner engagement work to develop nature based solutions in other river catchments in Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

You will be responsible for facilitating and establishing a fledgling farm cluster in the Eden catchment, including identifying and securing funding to sustain the cluster. With cluster members, you will co-develop a nature restoration plan to address the three key pillars of the Eden cluster: Food security and agricultural support, water management (quality and resources), and landscape and nature recovery

We expect you will be out in the catchment on site visits, meetings and engaging with landowners. There is the option to work from the office of our partners in Bore Place with the Farming and Nature Together Team, and this would be encouraged, as well as regular team meetings in the SERT office at Leatherhead, and we will adapt requirements to suit the right candidate.

This role will work closely with existing roles supporting the catchment including: ecologists and the education team at Bore Place; water quality and sustainability leads at SES water; the Medway Catchment Officer; the Water and Land Stewardship team at the South East Rivers Trust; and a steering group of farmers within the catchment.

Beyond this, the role is varied and allows for an individual to take ownership for their own projects, seeking and developing resolutions whilst working collaboratively with a number of organisations and individuals, as well as learn new skills and grow within a supported environment. You will be personable and inquisitive, enjoy working with numbers, be able to explain technical concepts in simple terms, engage positively with partners, in particular farming businesses, and be passionate about rivers and the environment.

Applicants interested in reduced working hours or flexible working are encouraged to apply. While initial funding is secured for 18 months, this role is offered with a view to extension depending on funding available. This role is also available part time with focus on the Eden Cluster only.

Key duties & responsibilities

1. Facilitation of Lower Eden Farm Cluster and co-development of nature restoration scheme

- 1.1. Work with local farmers to identify needs and aspirations in relation to the three pillars, which is expected to include soil health, pollution control and nature restoration.
- 1.2. Develop the Terms of Reference for the cluster steering group, coordinate meetings of the farm cluster and organise and facilitate engagement events with farmers/landowners to bring in expert advice, regularly report to stakeholders and funders as required.
- 1.3. Seek funding opportunities for the continued facilitation of the cluster.
- 1.4. Through the farm cluster, and with input from local partners, co-develop a nature restoration plan.
- 1.5. Undertake or commission baseline biodiversity, soil and carbon surveys. Work with local partners to establish river monitoring, as required.
- 1.6. Estimate the costs and benefits of the nature restoration scheme – e.g. biodiversity gain, water resources replenishment, carbon sequestration, and support funding applications for green investment.
- 1.7. Identify future requirements for monitoring and develop a monitoring plan with farmers and local partners.

2. Engagement with land managers to identify areas for land management enhancement and nature restoration

- 2.1. Work with colleagues and use mapping approaches to identify areas in with the greatest potential for expanding and connecting habitat and enhancing climate resilience and water resources/water quality benefits, with a focus on the Eden catchment and other catchments as projects develop.
- 2.2. Carry out farm walkovers with farmers to ascertain potential nature-based solutions (NbS) which would fit with their aspirations and business planning - including soil management measures, wildflower strips, riparian buffers, in-field bunds, leaky woody dams, attenuation wetlands.
- 2.3. With farmers, develop land management plans and conceptual designs for specific measures.
- 2.4. Identify funding sources for the capital delivery and maintenance of on-farm measures and work with farmers/landowners to apply for these.
- 2.5. Use tools and models to assess the benefits of nature-based solutions and land management and communicate findings to a range of audiences including potential business funders, landowners and the public.

3. Further duties to support SERT's work on Water and Land Stewardship and Nature-based Solutions

- 3.1. Project management including budget management and reporting to funders.
 - 3.2. Development of project plans and identifying and securing funding for projects.
 - 3.3. Support the team with communicating internally and externally our work including but not limited to articles, blogs, events, and tweets.
 - 3.4. Take responsibility with the team and wider organisation in representing the Trust at any meeting as required.
 - 3.5. Take responsibility for building and maintaining good working relationships with partners, stakeholders, and the wider community, whilst growing and encouraging new ones.
 - 3.6. Actively engage and support the work and growth of SERT, delivering the Trust's vision, mission, and core values.
 - 3.7. Actively contribute to the Trust's external communications (websites, social media and presentations), profile and good reputation.
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Person specification

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Training & Experience		
Experience of agriculture, agro-ecology or land management (for example) or a relevant degree in a related area.		X
Experience working with Natural England countryside stewardship schemes and/or with other regulatory bodies such as the Environment Agency and DEFRA.		X
Experience of working with stakeholders in the countryside and farming community, ideally on environmental issues.	X	
Experience of project management including budgets, reporting and evaluation.	X	
Experience developing projects and applying for grant funding.		X
Experience of working with a range of organisations and developing and managing effective partnerships.		X
Project communications experience, for example writing social posts, blogs and press releases for a range of audience.		X
Proficiency in GIS and spatial analysis and/or use of excel for data analysis.		X
Knowledge & Understanding		
Working knowledge of relevant legislation and policy for example on wildlife management, land use, nature markets, flood risk, water resources.		X
Demonstrable interest in the farming and horticultural sector and associated food and drink businesses in the South East, as well as related government policies such as Environmental Land Management.	X	
Good working knowledge of rivers and freshwater habitats and associated landscapes.		X
Knowledge of nature-based solutions including soil management and natural flood management.		X
Understanding of water quality and water resource issues and how farming interacts with them.	X	
Skills & Personal Attributes		
Excellent written, oral and interpersonal communication skills.	X	
Ability to communicate complex topics and develop evidence-led approaches and solutions.	X	
Strong organisational and planning skills, able to prioritise workloads and develop their work.	X	
Excellent team working ability.	X	
Proficient IT skills, particularly MS Office and Excel.	X	
Practical, problem-solving mindset.	X	
Miscellaneous		
Happy to work some weekends and evenings, with time off in lieu.	X	
Driving licence and own transport which can be used for work purposes.	X	
Commitment to equality of opportunity.	X	