



Job Description

Senior Project Officer (Water and Land Stewardship)

Reports to	Head of Water and Land Stewardship
Responsible for	No direct reports but opportunity to line manage in the future
Location	Hybrid work based at home, once a fortnight in the office based in Leatherhead, and regular travel across the South East.

The role

The Water and Land Stewardship Team (W&LS) lead the identification and delivery of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to improve rivers and catchments across the South East. Through evidence, stakeholder engagement and on-the-ground experience, this new senior role will lead and develop NbS project opportunities. You will aim for impact, scale and collaboration.

You will be responsible for delivering projects to scale up NbS across the SERT area, and lead the 'South East demos' for the Ofwat Innovation Mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions project, a flagship five-year innovation project with water industry partners across the UK. Working with colleagues at SERT to deliver NbS measures on the ground will give you the opportunity to make a real difference, using this to help regulators and policy makers address barriers and build enablers for NbS at scale.

You will lead walkovers, report on project opportunities identified, and develop projects on the ground, including natural flood management, riparian corridor enhancement and land management to increase catchment resilience. You will work closely with land managers to co-design feasible NbS options delivering multiple benefits. Your recommendations will be informed by data and evidence, and part of your role will be contributing to the effective collation of this across the Trust and the region. This will include identifying and reviewing nature market opportunities including through Biodiversity Net Gain, water resource, natural flood management and water quality, and you will look to capitalise on these opportunities and find ways to combine them with public funding (e.g. developing agri-environment schemes) to develop blended funding approaches. Working with our regional water companies, you will use your understanding of their drivers and processes to find ways of delivering more nature-based solutions with them in our catchments, building on existing relationships and projects within the Trust and the wider Rivers Trust movement.

Crucially, you will take a collaborative partnership approach, building close relationships with our regional water companies, farmer clusters and other NGOs as well as regulators and local authorities, and provide a vision for these stakeholder groups to drive improvement of our rivers and catchments.

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

While the role covers the entire SERT area, we expect to develop a geographic focus towards either the East (Sussex, Kent) or West (Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey).

Key duties & responsibilities

- 1. Develop and lead strategic stakeholder relationships to drive water and land stewardship activities**
 - 1.1** Build an in-depth understanding of the water industry and its processes, working closely with partners on projects and leading SERT's input to relevant working groups
 - 1.2** With project partners, develop and lead the Ofwat Mainstreaming NbS Demo project
 - 1.3** Work with farmers and landowners to develop their approach to nature recovery
 - 1.4** Foster relationships with regulators and local government bodies including Natural England, Environment Agency, county councils, to help mainstream NbS delivery
 - 1.5** Work closely with existing partnerships including relevant Catchment Partnerships, Nature Partnerships and others to ensure NbS for water are represented in relevant plans and projects and identifying potential project opportunities and collaborations

 - 2. Work with evidence to make a case for nature based solutions and inform project outcomes**
 - 2.1** Collate lessons learnt from NbS projects across SERT to improve internal processes and inform external stakeholders, and test new approaches in ongoing projects.
 - 2.2** Use spatial and other evidence to identify opportunities and benefits of NbS, and communicate findings to potential business funders, landowners and the public.
 - 2.3** Accurately collate and process data to assess benefits NbS, including bespoke monitoring as well as using standard metrics such as Defra's Biodiversity Metric.

 - 3. Lead project development, management and delivery**
 - 3.1** Take responsibility for project management including risk and budget management, contractor management, reporting to funders, and relevant administrative duties.
 - 3.2** Develop project bids and proactively identify and secure funding for projects, developing SERT's project pipeline for NbS
 - 3.3** Lead internal and external project teams to gain specialist advice, manage project scope and take responsibility for high quality outputs.

 - 4. Site visits and engagement to develop nature-based solutions**
 - 4.1** Conduct physical site visits e.g. to rivers and farm holdings to assess site condition and opportunities, survey to verify and improve desk-based analysis and mapping.
 - 4.2** Develop long-lists of potential opportunities and constraints for NbS, prioritise them and take them through to concept designs ready for development and delivery
 - 4.3** Collaborate with landowners and other partners to understand potential blockers to NbS and support development of solutions.

 - 5. Support SERT mission and values**
 - 5.1** Identify and lead on opportunities to communicate internally and externally our work including articles, blogs, events, and tweets.
 - 5.2** Take responsibility in representing the Trust at significant meeting/events and take the lead for coordination and facilitation as required.
 - 5.3** Mentor and support junior members of staff across different teams and share expertise and knowledge across the organisation.
 - 5.4** Actively engage and support the work and growth of SERT, delivering the Trust's vision, mission, and core values and support development of SERT's strategy.
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Person specification

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Training & Experience		
Experience identifying pressures on rivers and landscapes and identifying NbS options for improvement.	X	
Proficient IT skills and ability to use data analysis tools and software including for example Excel, GIS.	X	
Experience of project management including budgets, reporting and evaluation.	X	
Experience of working in partnership with a range of other organisations (charities and non-governmental organisations, volunteer groups, Local Authorities and Government Agencies, water companies, farming businesses).		
Experience developing projects including e.g. identifying resource requirements.		X
Experience working with the farming community, ideally on environmental issues.		X
Experience of working with people from a wide range of backgrounds and ages.		X
Experience developing concept designs and supporting information for delivery of NbS.		X
Ability to prepare successful funding bids for a range of funders.		X
Knowledge & Understanding		
A good working knowledge of rivers and freshwater habitats and associated landscapes, as well as nature-based solutions including natural flood management.	X	
Demonstrable interest in the farming and horticultural sector in the South East, as well as related government policies such as Environmental Land Management.	X	
An understanding of the water industry in England and relevant policies and plans.		X
Familiarity with the rivers in the South East of England.		X
A comprehensive understanding of nature markets (Biodiversity Net Gain, Nutrient Neutrality, etc) and how to access funding opportunities.		X
Working knowledge and active interest in agri-environment funding and farm advice.		X
Skills & Personal Attributes		
Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to interact with and engage a range of audiences.	X	
A passion for partnership working and demonstrable collaborative approach, willing to show leadership and facilitate stakeholder decision making.	X	
Ability to communicate complex topics and develop evidence-led approaches and solutions.	X	
Strong organisational and planning skills, able to prioritise workloads.	X	
Practical, problem-solving mindset.	X	
Miscellaneous		
Commitment to equality of opportunity.	X	
Happy to work some weekends and evenings, particularly through months April to September, with time off in lieu.	X	
Current driving licence and able to travel to sites not accessible by public transport.	X	
Suitable, safe home working environment.	X	