

Shadow Volunteer

Role name: Recreation & Conservation Ranger

Forest: The New Forest, Lyndhurst, Hampshire

Country	England
Location	The New Forest The King's House, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NH
Supervisor	New Forest Recreation Rangers
Position Type	1-2 days per week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	23:59 on 5 th July 2026
Interview dates	Between 20 th - 24 th July 2026

Background Information

Forestry England are the country's largest land manager, caring for the nation's forests for people, nature, and the economy. The foundation of our organisation is our world-class sustainable management of the nation's forests.

South Forest District manages 46,000ha of land across West Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Dorset and South Wiltshire. The District is at the hub of some of the most highly populated parts of the country and the nation's forests here deliver a significant range of public benefits from a diverse range of places and activities. Over 60% of our land is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and over 70% of our land lies within protected landscapes - National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We therefore manage some nationally prized places which are a unique blend of forest and rare open habitats.

We host over twenty million day visits to our forests every year and local communities have a strong connection with our forests. Delivering multi-purpose objectives across these heavily designated and heavily used landscapes has its challenges, but we have an inspired team who take great satisfaction in delivering high quality land management and memorable experiences for our visitors.

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The New Forest is a spectacular landscape made up of a unique mix of woodlands and open habitats that are globally important for nature conservation. Forestry England manages 47% of The New Forest National Park, including much of the best-known ancient woodlands, wetlands and heathlands which are home to many rare species of plants and wildlife. In fact, we look after more land and more trees than any other organisation in England.

We are proud to be able to offer Shadow Ranger Volunteer opportunities for individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in conservation, community engagement, recreation, site management, working with volunteers and the public, and wanting to gain experience in the sector.

We have **two** Shadow Ranger voluntary positions available in The New Forest.

As a successful applicant, you will be given training and development opportunities by shadowing the Recreation Ranger team. You will also shadow other staff and develop specialist job skills including development of practical site management, working within communities, volunteer management and assisting supervision of a visitor hub, the Bolderwood Information Unit. You will experience engaging and working with the public, and delivering targeted conservation campaigns such as Pony Drifts and Deer Rutting in collaboration with the National Park Authority and local stakeholders.

You will learn about wildlife and deer management with the Keeper team, experience volunteer conservation tasks and learn how they work, and get involved in car park and tree inspections. You will also gain knowledge in how we grow and harvest timber with the Beat Forester team, and how ecology fits into design plans with the Higher Level Stewardship Team. The New Forest Shadow Ranger Volunteer positions enable individuals to gain experience of managing recreation in a protected landscape and promoting conservation of a diverse range of habitats and species, allowing you to experience a range of roles to see which interests you.

What we offer

- Training relevant to the role from your experienced member of staff you are shadowing, along with gaining knowledge from wider colleagues.
- Guidance and support in applying for further training or employment opportunities.
- Genuine out of pocket expenses which includes travel expenses beyond your reporting station.
- Volunteer parking pass to all 129 New Forest car parks after 35 hours of volunteering.
- Volunteer uniform.

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- Formal training opportunities - first aid, risk assessment, and manual handling.

Purpose

Working as part of the team to deliver key Forestry England messages through Recreation and Visitor Services. Experiencing a range of tasks, activities and procedures which Rangers undertake daily within their role including inspections of trails; keeping visitor areas tidy and well maintained; carrying out small maintenance tasks; litter picking; visitor engagement; and facilitating learning visits and activities. Delivering a high-quality visitor experience, learning how to connect the community with their local forest, and empowering visitors and locals alike to contribute to the conservation of protected habitats and species. This role would suit someone with an interest in forestry, recreation or conservation seeking a career in the environmental sector, visitor services, countryside management, community work, environmental or outdoor education.

Key work areas

Assisting the Recreation Rangers in the following activities:

- Ensure sites are managed to a high standard and in accordance with agreed management plans. This will also involve supporting the development of management plans, when required.
- Coordinate and deliver daily and weekly trail and facility inspections and ensure site recreational facilities and infrastructure are maintained and safe.
- Undertake and supervise practical tasks, involving contractors, staff and volunteers to use hand tools, whilst following the appropriate training and health and safety procedures.
- Ensure that all work conforms to Forestry England's health and safety policies and procedures. Promote a safe working environment by role modelling high standards of health and safety; through regular monitoring and recording of H&S compliance; and the prompt reporting of accidents and near misses ensuring that lessons learned are shared and implemented. Liaise with emergency services when required as part of our emergency response procedures.
- Respond to public enquiries. Engage with visitors onsite on a day-to-day basis, facilitating access to our community woodlands.
- Support the delivery of tree safety and other site surveys as and when required.
- Build and maintain good working relationships with external partners, tenants, and concession operators.

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- Represent Forestry England on site and at stakeholder meetings and events, as and when required.
- Development and safe management of programmes connecting volunteers and local communities with the nation's forests.

The key work areas detailed are the typical duties expected of the role but are not an exhaustive list. The post holder may be reasonably requested to undertake other duties by their manager.

Person Specification

Read this section carefully as it will help you complete the [online application form](#).

We are not expecting you to have qualifications or previous experience in the environment sector. The Shadow Volunteer program is about giving you that experience. We are looking for enthusiasm, curiosity, ability to listen and learn, ask questions, show initiative and show responsibility for the people and environment where you work.

The application form will ask you questions based on the person specification below. You don't need to give examples related to the environment sector or forestry. They can be relevant examples from other experiences you have had. Please use as much detail as possible and utilise the whole word count limit.

What interests you in this role

This is your opportunity to tell us about you and why you want to be a Shadow Volunteer. This is the most important section as it gives us an insight into who you are and your reasons for applying.

Experience

Essential

A passion and enthusiasm for the environment, forestry, woodland management, recreation or forestry.

An interest in Forestry England and helping people to enjoy and learn about the New Forest.

Seeking a career or change of career to gain more knowledge of what it like to work in the environmental, forestry, countryside or visitor services sector is like.

Desirable

Experience or understanding of how an environmental, educational or community project or activity is managed through previous employment, voluntary work, or study.

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Working with Other People

Essential

Be approachable, open, polite, and helpful to others.
Respect diverse backgrounds, views, and approaches.
Willingness to work as part of a team as well as the ability to work on your own.

Desirable

Willingness and enthusiastic to assist with leading groups and activities.

Communication

Essential

Ability to listen and communicate with people from a variety of age groups, abilities, behaviours, and backgrounds.

Desirable

Ability to deal with difficult situations with tact, diplomacy and in a constructive manner.

Deliver Results

Essential

Motivated and capable of working under own initiative.
Prioritise and organise your time and resources effectively to meet agreed deadlines and objectives.

Desirable

Able to deliver a result for others or personal goal.
Understand and apply current legislation, rules, and procedures relevant to the job (e.g., Health & Safety, Risk assessment).

Learn and Apply

Essential

Listen to and observe your mentor and rest of the team, demonstrate willing to learn and repeat tasks to build experience.
Be open to change and show a willingness to undertake appropriate training to develop new skills and confidence.

Desirable

Take responsibility for own work, learning from experience, mistakes, and constructive feedback, and apply what you have learned.

Other

Able and willing to volunteer 1-2 days per week, predominantly weekdays although may occasionally include evenings and weekend volunteering.

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It would be desirable (but not essential) for you to hold a full current driving licence. Duties will require you to be fit and able to negotiate rough terrain. However, Forestry England is willing to consider any proposal put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the role by other means.

This role will require a DBS check due to substantive contact with members of the public.

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#). Make sure when applying that you type “**Recreation & Conservation Shadow Ranger**” when asked “Which volunteer role you would like to apply for”. For the Forest, please type in and select “**New Forest Beat Wide**”.

When completing the person specification areas please give examples of experiences you have had. These don't have to be in the environment sector they can demonstrate your experience or things you have done in any situation relating to the specification area.

If you are interested in multiple roles, you will need to complete multiple applications. You can, however, use the same information and answers for each so feel free to copy the information from one to the other, if you are happy this is correct.

If you have any problems with the application or questions, please email rosie.hernon@forestryengland.uk

If you consider yourself to have a disability, the application form will ask you to provide details of any support you may need or reasonable adjustments we can make to enable you to fulfil the role (as outlined in the role description for the placement you are interested in). If you are selected for a Shadow Volunteer role based on your application and interview this will help us discuss with you regarding what we can safely and practically put in place to enable you to carry out the role or other alternative solutions.

Closing date: 23:59 on 5th July 2026