

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Nature Recovery Shadow Volunteer

Forest: Pickering Office, Yorkshire District

Country	England
Location	Forestry England Outgang Road, Pickering YO18 7EL
Supervisor	Tom Andre
Position Type	1-2 days a week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	5 th January 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.

Yorkshire is one of the smaller districts in Forestry England, but we pack a lot into our activities in the district. Yorkshire District is based from a hub at Pickering, where our staff go out as far north as Guisborough, as far west as Stainburn near Harrogate, down to Bishop Wood near Selby and over east coast at Broxa and Wykeham. Our main forest blocks are on the southern edge of the North York Moors, making Pickering the perfect gateway to all our biggest areas of forests.

We are proud to be able to offer this shadow volunteer role focussing on Nature recovery, to enable individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in nature recovery, landscape scale restoration, conservation and forest planning, the opportunity to gain experience in the sector by working alongside our team of experts.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities by work shadowing current staff, developing on the job skills, including development of forest planning, hands on conservation work, management of the historic environment and seeing behind the scenes at how our forests are planned, managed and run.

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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 after 35 hours of volunteering.
- Volunteer uniform.
- Formal training opportunities - first aid, risk assessment, and manual handling where appropriate.

Purpose

The Nature Recovery Shadow Volunteer role is designed to give you an in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Nature Recovery Teams at Forestry England. You will get to work with a range of different team members who are involved with nature recovery, the historic environment, forest planning, ecology, and forestry. With behind-the-scenes insights from shadowing the team, you'll learn how nature recovery happens at a landscape scale and understand what's needed to make it a success. You'll also get the chance to develop and lead your own projects that contribute to one of our priority areas for nature recovery.

Key work areas

Shadowing the team

You'll spend time with the team across a range of specialisms. This will include our ecologists, project managers, historic environment specialists, foresters, GIS specialists, planners, and leadership team.

Hands-on work

You'll work alongside the team out-and-about in the forest with hands on tasks. This could include activities like vegetation clearance, tree planting, collecting monitoring data, and marking out felling or fencing projects.

Working with volunteers

We want to grow the work we do with our brilliant volunteers. You'll work with the team to host volunteer days and potentially even help to set up new groups focussed on nature recover and sustainable land management.

Embed a safety-first culture in our teams

Always ensure personal safety by following job risk assessments and by carrying out PPE and safety checks, in compliance with policy guidance.

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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 supervisor.

Typical Tasks

The role will be flexible, allowing the team to have your support with whatever work and projects they have running at the time of your placement. Here are some of the tasks you may be involved with and asked to support or even asked to do independently further into your placement.

- Processing data collected from surveys. This could include surveys of woodland creation or restocking sites, surveys for protected species or historic environment features.
- Turning wildlife camera footage into valuable ecological data. This could involve collecting SD cards, analysing footage, and using Citizen Science or artificial intelligence tools to turn video footage into insight.
- Inspecting our scheduled monuments to ensure they are receiving appropriate management and being protected into the future.
- Leading or supervising volunteer tasks, focussing on ecological or historic environment activities.
- Supporting site visits from partner organisations and with the public.
- Keeping our GIS records up-to-date.
- Contributing to ambitious monitoring plans for our Wild Newtendale project (a large-scale nature recovery project in the North York Moors National Park).
- Ground truthing surveys and other records (like boundaries) to ensure our records are accurate.
- Assisting with inspections of potentially hazardous trees to ensure users of our forests are safe.

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 specifications 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.

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What interests you in this role

This is your opportunity to tell us about you and why you want to be a Shadow Volunteer. Give us an insight into who you are your reasons for applying to be a Shadow Volunteer.

Experience

Essential

An interest in the environment, Forestry England, nature recovery, or forest management.

A willingness to give everything a go, whatever the weather.

Desirable

Seeking a career in the environmental sector, environment, or forestry management.

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 lead groups and activities.

Communication

Essential

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

A willingness to be shown and told what to do with an open mind to help you learn new skills.

Ask questions when you need help

Deliver Results

Essential

Motivated and capable of working under own initiative.

Ability to prioritise and organise your time and resources effectively to meet agreed deadlines and objectives.

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Desirable

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.

Take responsibility for own work, learning from experience, mistakes, and constructive feedback.

Other

Able and willing to work 1-2 days per week, predominantly weekdays, or very occasional weekends when there is an event or volunteer group on.

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.

Applicants must be over 18. This role will require a DBS check.

This role may require you to hold and continue to hold, a full current driving license.

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#). Make sure when applying, you type the Shadow Volunteer Role Name shown at the start of this document when asked “Which volunteer role you would like to apply for”.

For the Forest, please type in and select “*District Wide Yorkshire*”.

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.

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If you have any problems with the application or questions please email victoria.tofte@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: 6th January 2026