

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Planning and Environment Shadow Volunteer

Location: Pickering Office, District Wide

Country	England
Location	Forestry England Pickering, Outgang Road, Pickering YO18 7EL
Supervisor	Tom Andre
Position Type	1-2 days per week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	6 th July 2025

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.

Though Yorkshire is one of the smaller districts in Forestry England, we pack a lot into our activities in the district. Yorkshire Forest 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 back towards the 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 within the Planning and Environment Team, to enable individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in conservation, ecology, heritage, forest planning or GIS, 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

- On the job training relevant to the role, from your experienced supervisor, along with gaining knowledge from other team colleagues.
- Relevant formal training courses that will support you in your day-to-day role - first aid, risk assessment, manual handling for example.
- 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.

Purpose

The Planning and Environment Shadow volunteer role is designed to give an individual an understanding of the roles and responsibilities this team have within Forestry England. You will get to experience a range of different roles within the team, from GIS technicians to ecologists, historic environment advisors to planning foresters. There are some brief role profiles below to give you an idea of the sort of jobs you may be involved with.

Key work areas

Forest Planner

The forest planner works cross-departmentally to use their wealth of knowledge to inform the creation and implementation of forest plans. Their role is to carefully balance the needs for wildlife, sustainable timber and public access in our forests to ensure we are meeting all our responsibilities.

Ecologist

The ecologist works across all areas of the district to offer support and advice on environmental issues like habitat management and restoration and species re-introduction programmes. The role involves managing projects and contracts that help to ensure wildlife is considered at all levels of forest management, and to create and maintain spaces appropriate for specific species. They also survey various environments, so we know what species we have in which parts of the forest.

GIS and Planning Assistant

The role of the GIS and planning assistant is to support the district with any GIS needs. GIS is 'Geographic Information System' and means working with digital mapping software to support a range of colleagues with tasks such as tree safety management surveys, forest plan visualisations and mapping data such as historic monuments or species data.

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Historic Environment Advisor

The role of a historic environment advisor is to monitor the preservation of historic features across the forests. They liaise with other departments to advise on what sort of work can take place on and around a historic monument and the best way to progress with any forestry works without damaging any heritage features. The historic environment advisor is also responsible for inspecting and monitoring scheduled historic monuments, which are protected in law.

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.
- 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.

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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; examples can be from other work or volunteering experiences you have had. We expect this post to be very popular, so please give us a well thought out answer with plenty of detail so we can get to know you a little.

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 and your reasons for applying to be a Shadow Volunteer.

Experience

Essential

An interest in the environment, Forestry England, woodland management, or recreation. A willingness to give everything a go, whatever the weather.

Desirable

Seeking a career in the environmental sector; countryside ranger, environmental or forestry.

Previous or current experience working as a volunteer or in a role similar to this opportunity.

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, an open mind to help you learn new skills and ask questions when you need help

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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.

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 the rest of the team, demonstrate willingness (or be 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 your own work, learning from experience, mistakes, and constructive feedback.

Other

Able and willing to work 1-2 days per week, predominantly weekdays although may very occasionally include weekend working.

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.

This post may require you to hold and continue to hold, a full current driving licence.

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#).

Make sure when applying, you type and select for the forest, please type “**District Wide Yorkshire**” for question 1.

Type **Planning and Environment Shadow Volunteer** when asked “Which volunteer role you would like to apply for”.

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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 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 July 2025