

UKSA Project Officer – job description and application details

Project Officer – two posts

UK Squirrel Accord www.squirrelaccord.uk

Home-based with local travel

£28,000 per annum on a self-employed basis

Fixed term contract to March 2025 with possibility of extension

Application by CV and covering letter

Closing date: 30 November 2023

Project officers

Two posts covering Yorkshire, Lancashire and County Durham

One post in the east and one in the west

Reporting to: UK Squirrel Accord Director and Executive Committee

Contract: Fixed-term, self-employed, full-time role

Location: Remote working with local travel in counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and County Durham.

Occasional overnights. National travel for training/meetings may be required.

Start date: January 2024

Application deadline: 30 November 2023

Interview date: To be confirmed but will be on 14 or 15 December

Introduction

The UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA) is a UK-wide partnership of 45 leading conservation and forestry organisations, Government agencies and companies, with links to red squirrel community groups.

UKSA works collaboratively to preserve the UK's wooded landscapes and associated biodiversity under the following aims to:

- Secure and expand UK red squirrel, *Sciurus vulgaris*, populations beyond current thresholds.
- Ensure UK woodlands flourish and deliver multiple benefits for future generations of wildlife and people.

A range of Government policies state that there is a need to increase tree cover and the quality of our existing woodlands in England; insufficient grey squirrel management risks these targets being

realised. Grey squirrel damage also has potential implications for woodland resilience in the face of climate change and tree disease. Alongside these woodland impacts, grey squirrels negatively affect the survival of native red squirrel populations.

Job description

This is a new opportunity to join a growing partnership dedicated to protecting the future of the UK's red squirrels and broadleaf trees from the negative impacts of introduced grey squirrels. You will be line managed by the Director of the UKSA, with support from members of the Executive Committee and wider partnership. As such, your work will be delivered locally but with national oversight and strategic steer.

This project's aim is to expand the network of grey squirrel management groups across Yorkshire, Lancashire and County Durham, building on the work done to date by many stakeholders and existing volunteers.

The Project Officer role involves engaging with woodland owners and their agents, stakeholders and the public to provide guidance and advice on grey squirrel impacts on woodlands and how they can be managed. With an aim of encouraging and enabling collaborative, landscape-scale grey squirrel management activities.

A significant part of the role is to recruit and train volunteers, forming groups that will carry out grey squirrel management. You will work with landowners and managers to encourage, coordinate and support action. You will also support training and conduct field survey work as needed to deliver the project aims.

You will be expected to have experience and understanding of the issues regarding squirrel management. As well as being able to demonstrate an understanding of how these issues impact on the objectives and activities of the UKSA. You will need to show initiative and work autonomously, and establish excellent working relationships with colleagues, partners and volunteers.

You will feed back lessons learned to the UKSA Executive Committee to help refine and promote good practice.

UKSA is looking for an enthusiastic and energetic professional with experience of working on grey squirrel management and volunteering projects. You need to be a self-starter with excellent communication and organisational skills and an ability to work positively with a wide range of different stakeholders. While you will have a homeworking set up, you will also need to be comfortable with and have the means to undertake regular travel around their region and occasional relevant travel around the UK.

Responsibilities

1. Identify priority areas for grey squirrel management with UKSA Director, Executive Committee and local stakeholders

Working with the UKSA partnership and local stakeholders, you will identify priority areas where grey squirrels are having an acute impact on the health and vitality of woodlands (particularly SSSI and other high value woodlands). Where there are opportunities to influence the decisions of woodland owners and recruit volunteers to assist.

2. Expand the network of grey squirrel management groups across Lancashire, Yorkshire and County Durham

Using communication and influencing skills, and your knowledge and experience of forestry and grey squirrel management, you will recruit volunteers to support delivery and planning of and carrying out grey squirrel management in agreed priority areas. You will also engage with woodland owners and their agents, stakeholders, and the public to encourage land managers to undertake squirrel management in their woodlands. You will:

- Raise awareness among the public, landowners, managers, and agents as to the importance of squirrel management, individually or via group events, making the messages relevant to the audience and their interests.
- Recruit volunteers to undertake grey squirrel management and secure areas for them to work.
- Encourage collaboration between neighbouring landowners, recognising that landscape-scale approaches are more effective.
- Provide advice and guidance on suitable grey squirrel management measures and facilitate their implementation.
- Plan and carry out grey squirrel management – including trap and dispatch where appropriate.

3. Disseminate good or best working practices by supporting training and survey work

Working with landowners and stakeholders across Yorkshire, Lancashire and County Durham (as agreed), you will share knowledge and experience and undertake training and survey work to support grey squirrel management by:

- Engaging with woodland owners and their agents, managers and contractors, and specialist squirrel and wildlife management groups.

- Building local networks and running events to effectively build and disseminate best practice among the landowner/manager and volunteer communities.
- Use your experience on the ground to contribute to national UKSA discussions on the management of grey squirrels, including recommending updates to policy, guidance and regulation where these are proving a barrier to engagement or uptake.

Person Specification

Essential:

- A proven track record of engagement with stakeholders within the squirrel or land management sector, developing constructive partnerships and delivering results on the ground.
- Experience of recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Grey squirrel or equivalent management experience.
- Understanding and experience of practical wildlife management issues.
- Demonstrable skills in influencing and negotiation.
- Competent IT user experienced in MS Office, remote working and associated communications management.
- Ability to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends if needed.

Desirable

- Established networks and contacts with relevant stakeholders in the area.
- Qualification via Lantra or equivalent in grey squirrel management.
- Knowledge of native and invasive species and forestry issues relating to grey squirrels.
- Experience in environmental monitoring, such as small mammal survey work.
- Ability to produce high quality, visually engaging communications materials.
- Social media skills.

Other requirements

The successful candidate must have their own transport and reasonable travel expenses will be covered.

We offer:

- Salary of £28,000 per annum on a self-employed basis
- Laptop and mobile phone
- Travel expenses
- The chance to work with a unique conservation and forestry partnership that is leading the way in collaborative working to protect red squirrels and broadleaf trees.

How to apply:

Please submit a CV and covering letter explaining how you meet the person specification, giving relevant examples, to info@squirrelaccord.uk. Please ensure you specify your preferred work area – east or west of the project zone.

Selection will be by interview panel; you may be asked to prepare a presentation or undertake practical task as part of the selection process.

Closing date for applications: 30 November 2023

Interview dates: To be confirmed but either 14 or 15 December 2023

For queries about this role or the application process please contact info@squirrelaccord.uk

Send completed applications via email to info@squirrelaccord.uk by end of 30 November 2023.