

CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE DIRECTORATE

MONITORING ECOLOGIST

(Band D, full-time (37.5 hours; though 30 hrs/week will be considered); permanent)

Based in Grantown on Spey with flexible home working

Overall Purpose

We are facing the twin crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss, it is also the UN decade of ecosystem restoration. There has never been a more urgent need to fully understand the impact of our actions on nature, is conservation action working? is it happening at the right scale, place and time? This pivotal role will lead and develop a comprehensive understanding of the National Park's species, habitats and ecosystems, and help monitor change over the long-term through a dedicated Cairngorms Nature Index and Atlas/biological data repository. Data will be used to provide the evidence to guide long term conservation and land management, as well as policy development and investment. The postholders work will significantly contribute to better targeting resources and action in the National Park, and to understand the impact that our policies and projects are having to ensure that we are able to meet our 2030 and 2045 targets for biodiversity.

Delivery of the Cairngorms Nature Index, providing a baseline for the quality and extent of the key ecosystems in the National Park and a robust framework to monitor change and evaluate success over time.

Responsibilities

Delivery of Cairngorms Nature Index and Atlas.

- Delivery of the Cairngorms Nature Index (CNI) specifically working with experts and stakeholders to refine ecosystem assessment methodology, define ecosystems, collate data, select ecosystem indicators and set reference condition using CNI methodology.
- Establish a framework for CNI monitoring and repeating analysis supporting delivery of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan.
- Develop a suite of case studies and resources to communicate the CNI results to a wide range of stakeholders including policy makers, land managers, conservationist, and communities.
- Embed CNI in the Parks' Cairngorms Nature Network, ecological restoration and land management work streams. Identifying opportunities and mechanisms for securing improved connectivity, ecological functionality and delivery for priority species on land within the Park.
- Work with stakeholders to identify needs and service requirements and create a Cairngorms Atlas for the collation, analysis and use of biological data in the National Park.
- Take a strategy lead on biological data at CNPA working cross departmentally and with partners to ensure projects and initiatives have robust ecological monitoring

programmes in place and clear data pathways to ensure data is utilised by the CNI and Atlas.

- Encourage, develop and support biological recorders and recording schemes, highlighting and encouraging citizen science-led information gathering about the Park's wildlife.
- Ensure resources and partnerships are in place to support ongoing delivery of the CNI, Atlas and recording activities. Formulation of projects and funding applications where appropriate.
- Project management of the CNI, Atlas and recording projects, reporting to progress and delivery to programme boards and advisory groups.

Communication

- Undertake stakeholder engagement and consultation with regard to CNI, Atlas and biological recording and data in the Park.
- Developing and running specialist workshops i.e CNI methodology and technical ecology sessions on indicators and reference condition.
- Promote and raise awareness and understanding of importance of data and evidence specifically in relation to ecosystem monitoring and evaluation.
- Foster strong and effective relationships and support from partners and stakeholders to secure a collaborative approach to delivery of the CNI, Atlas and recording activities.
- Represent CNPA at a range of local and national stakeholder forums (i.e Scottish Government, statutory agency, conservation, land management, data and academic).
- Provide link with universities and researcher institutes. Keeping up to date with relevant research and initiatives and bringing this learning and opportunities back to the Park.
- Working closely with engagement colleagues to develop relationships, resources and activities to support local wildlife groups, communities and recorders in the collation of biological data.

Line Management

- Managing staff to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the relevant parts of the Corporate and Operational Plans and to ensure effective performance of staff and prepare appraisal reports for staff, identify and help to meet training and development needs and implement Health and Safety procedures;
- Management of contractors and volunteers.

General

- Contribute to the work of the Conservation and Climate Change Directorate and CNPA as a whole and ensuring compliance with financial procedures;
- Contribute to the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan;
- To conduct other work, as necessary; and

- All post holders are required to be flexible with regards their job description so that the organisation can adapt to new opportunities and priorities over time.

Person Specification - Knowledge, experience and training

ESSENTIAL

- A degree, or equivalent, in Ecology or a relevant conservation topic;
- Excellent knowledge of biodiversity, conservation, ecosystem ecology and restoration gained from demonstrable substantial relevant experience.
- Comprehensive and demonstrable understanding of monitoring and surveillance strategies and techniques for evaluating ecological restoration and functionality.
- Experience of working with large and complex environmental and biological data sets and good understanding of data pathways and challenges.
- Proven understanding of partnership working and building of relationships with key stakeholder- organisations and individual experts.
- Articulate and excellent communicator with strong interpersonal skills, with proven ability to communicate and explain complex ecology and/or biological data and analysis topics to practitioners, stakeholders and a wide variety of user groups i.e research and conservation peers through to community groups.
- Project management experience of small to medium projects with multiple partners and stakeholders.
- Experience of line management of staff, contractors and/or volunteers
- Excellent communication skills – verbal, written and presentational;
- IT skills – word processing, spread sheets, data bases, basic mapping skills.
- Full UK driving licence or access to driver if disability prevents driving.

DESIRABLE

- Expertise of ecosystems, species, habitat management and a good understanding of land management issues within the Cairngorms.
- Knowledge of ecosystems, functionality, and monitoring in countries with similar ecosystems to that's of the Cairngorms. i.e Southern Norway.
- GIS knowledge and experience of its application in conservation projects.
- Practical application of biological/ecological data analysis.
- Development of citizen science activities.
- Use of technology to support biological recording i.e apps.