

## Task Description for volunteer.



### **Opportunity: Nature Reserve Work Parties**

#### **Purpose:**

DWT's vision is for a Living landscape that will restore natural areas by reassembling damaged and fragmented blocks of woodland, meadows and marshes. It will reconnect the living tissues – the streams, and hedges and waysides – that link them to pockets of wildness in our towns, villages and countryside. DWT nature reserves are pivotal to this. They are havens for wildlife; protect some of our most precious habitats and rarest species. They provide a reservoir of wildlife that can move around the reconnected landscape. Landowners can learn from best practice trialled on reserves to restore other damaged habitats. And Nature Reserves are for people too – they are a place where visitors can experience nature and hopefully, as a result, support our aims.

As a volunteer on a nature reserve, you will be helping to make this happen.

#### **What the task involves:**

Predominantly habitat management on nature reserves, but there may be wildlife surveys to take part in especially in the summer.

DWT reserves cover a range of habitats, but much of habitat management involves vegetation control, such as the clearing of encroaching scrub using hand tools such as bow saws, loppers, slashers and grass hooks. The majority of this kind of work takes place in the winter months.

Other tasks you might encounter include: hedgelaying, dry stone walling, making steps and revetments, fencing or mending of existing fences and gates, tree planting, coppicing, swaling (controlled burn), footpath maintenance,

We have to leave the site clear, safe and tidy. Logs and brash may be made into habitat piles, but often there will be a bonfire to dispose of the waste

We work in all sorts of weather, and conditions under foot can often be wet, muddy, uneven or on slopes.

#### **Skills and abilities**

You don't need to know much about conservation as trained staff and volunteers will be on hand to teach you the skills you need.

You are encouraged to work at your own pace, to take rests when you need them, and therefore you do not need to start with a high level of fitness.

If you have doubts about your ability to take part or think you may need some adaptations in order to participate fully, do please talk to the organiser. Nature

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reserves can be remote, inaccessible and tricky underfoot in parts and the tasks won't suit everyone all of the time. However, our aim wherever possible is to work with you to enable you to join in and it's surprising how easy that can be to do sometimes, with a little lateral thinking.

### **Where, When and how often:**

Regular, through the year:

- Bystock Pools Nature Reserve, near Exmouth, 10am – 3pm, alternate Tuesdays
- South Devon and Dartmoor , 10am – 4pm, every Wednesday.
- Meeth Quarry Nature Reserve, 10am-4pm, second Wednesday of each month all year and first Saturday from November to March.
- Andrew's Wood near Loddiswell, 10am-4pm, second Thursday of every month.
- Warleigh Point, near Plymouth, 10.30am – 4pm, third Thursday of every month.
- Woodah Farm, near Doddiscombsleigh, 9.30am- 2pm, last Saturday of every month.

Occasional/ad hoc

- Uppacott Wood, near Barnstaple
- Swanpool Marsh, near Braunton
- Halsdon, near Dolton
- Old Sludge Beds, near Exeter
- Reserves in the Blackdown Hills
- Ruby Country Reserves (North West Devon, on the Culm measures)

Additional work parties are occasionally organised with partners on other sites.

NB End times are approximate. Volunteers may stay for all or part of the day. However, if you are going to miss the start time, it is advisable to contact the work party leader so that you know whereabouts on the reserve to find the group.

### **Who is the supervisor:**

Each work party has a Nature Reserve Officer or Voluntary Warden responsible for it. However, the actual task may also be led and/or supported by another member of the Reserves Team or one of the full-time volunteers.

Each group works to a reserve management plan. The group leader will explain what needs to be done, how and why, and they will be available through the day to ensure you know what you are doing and are doing it safely.

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### Expenses/equipment available:

You will need

- to wear appropriate shoes. Steel-toe capped boots are recommended, but certainly with good ankle support, a good grip and reasonably waterproof.
- weather appropriate clothes, and be aware that clothes can get snagged on bramble or burnt by sparks from a bonfire so don't wear anything that is precious or that snags or burns easily.
- sun cream and sun hat in summer.
- plenty of water, and a packed lunch if staying all day.

Unless otherwise stated, DWT will provide all the tools you will need and protective gloves (not to be worn with swinging tools).

Where possible, DWT will bring a storm kettle, tea and coffee, and biscuits.

Volunteers are encouraged to volunteer on their local reserves, and travel expenses are available as agreed in advance. Talk to the task co-ordinator.

### Health and Safety/ Risk Assessment

All DWT Nature reserves and activities are risk assessed. Please ensure you are up-to-date with your tetanus injections.

You will receive a health and safety induction during which your group leader will tell you about anything specific to the task or site that you need to know, and will show you how to use, carry and store tools safely.

You may be asked to sign in and give an "in case of emergency" contact number. Please tell the group leader if you leave early.

If you have any medical conditions, it is your responsibility to decide if the work is suitable for you, if there is anything of which the group leader should be aware and if there is anything you would want the group leader to tell paramedics if there is an emergency.

### What's in it for the volunteer?

Nature reserve work parties are hard work but fun. There develops a sense of comradeship, and the people are all friendly and welcoming.

The group leaders are usually very generous with their knowledge and you can often learn quite a lot about the site and the wildlife of the site.

It's satisfying to see what you have achieved, and to come back later and see the benefit to wildlife.

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It is a great way to keep fit!

### **How to apply**

Reserve work parties are advertised in Help Needed and on the website. Please ring up the contact for the work party before your first time so that they know to expect you, and in case any of the arrangements have changed.

If in doubt over who to contact, try Dawn Lenn, Volunteers Officer, 01392 279244, [dlenn@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:dlenn@devonwildlifetrust.org)

NB the Bystock work party is full at present, but if you wish to be on the waiting list, let Dawn Lenn know.

**Task start date:**

**Task review date:**

**Task end date:**