**Opportunity:** *An opportunity has arisen for three volunteers to join DWT’s nature reserve’s team, volunteering for around 37 hours a week for 6-12 months. Volunteers will receive* ***accommodation*** *and* ***training*** *to enable them to help manage DWT’s 62 nature reserves to a high standard.*

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| **Purpose:** |
| Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) is a supporter led charity that has spent 60 years protecting Devon’s wildlife by:   * creating bigger, better protected and more joined up nature rich areas; * fighting for nature friendly laws and policies; * building and sharing greater knowledge and understanding of nature; * inspiring people to connect with and care for nature - for wildlife’s benefit and for their own wellbeing.   DWT is part of The Wildlife Trusts, 46 independent charities whose goal is nature’s recovery. Key 10 year goals for DWT are to recover wildlife across at least a third of Devon’s landscapes and seas, make the most of nature’s role in fighting climate change and to inspire one in four people to engage with and take action for nature. We believe nature is for everyone and that everyone can play a role in bringing wildlife back in abundance.  DWT’s nature reserves are pivotal to our mission. They are havens for wildlife, protecting some of our most precious habitats and rarest species. They provide a reservoir of wildlife that can spread into the surrounding 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, work towards our vision too.  In this role, you will be part of the nature reserves team helping DWT to manage more reserves to a high standard. With support and working as part of a small team, you will have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of reserves’ management that fit your skills and competencies. Your skills, knowledge and confidence will grow through training and guidance from experienced staff.  If you are hoping for a career in nature conservation, this role would provide excellent training and experience. |
| **What the task involves:** |
| The key tasks that your volunteering may involve are listed below. Your ability to perform these tasks will develop over time and we will provide training.   1. **Nature Reserve Management**   Nature reserve management and maintenance tasks which may include:   * + Path maintenance: cutting and surfacing, brushcutting, litter clearance.   + Access work: gate, kissing gate and boardwalk construction.   + Fencing boundary repairs: hedgelaying, turf banking, stock fencing.   + Habitat management: would include woodland, grassland, heath and reed bed management. Scrub control, tree felling and bracken management.   + Installing countryside furniture such as bridges, interpretation panels and benches as well as a wide range of other activities as required by Nature Reserve Management Plans.   + Monitoring site management - conducting site integrity monitoring and recording the effects of management work.   + Some biological survey work on the Trust’s Nature Reserves (mostly May to September) - providing all the necessary information to support management plans and work programmes   + Compliance with all Health and Safety requirements.  1. **Public and community relationships**    * Gain knowledge of the nature reserves.    * Assist in maintaining a good working relationship with local communities, school groups, visitors and other agencies.    * Offer guidance and advice to the visiting public.    * Run guided walks / events. 2. **Supervision**    * Lead volunteer parties, ensuring the volunteer groups do the work well and safely.    * Supervise work experience students and visiting educational groups. 3. **Other Activities**    * Undertake any other activities relevant to the role as required.   Although some time may be spent in the office and workshop the largest proportion of the  work is outdoors. This means working in all weathers. |
| **Skills and abilities** |
| DWT is looking for enthusiastic individuals who are committed to nature conservation. We are looking for aptitude and potential more than current ability. Applicants with enough relevant experience to know this role will suit them will be at an advantage (such as voluntary experience with conservation volunteer groups or other nature conservation organisations).  You will need to be polite, open to learning and prepared to work as part of a team. It is essential that you can follow instructions, guidelines and protocols. Ideally you will be able to show initiative when responding to day-to-day challenges. All volunteers must follow DWT’s Health and Safety procedures.  The role is physically demanding (your fitness levels will quickly build though!), and you will need to be prepared to work in all weather conditions. Because the role involves driving some of the Reserves Team vehicles, a full, clean driving licence will be a strong advantage, as a lack of driving licence could cause delays in training or make certain experiences inaccessible (due to needing someone to drive you to training or events possibly clashing with workloads).  We recognise that some people may need additional support to volunteer in this role. If you are interested, but are concerned that a disability, language barriers, economic circumstances or other matters would prevent you from applying, please do speak to us. |
| **Where:** |
| This role is based at Woodah Farm, which offers accommodation for volunteers and houses the office base and workshop for the Reserves Team.  Woodah Farm, Doddiscombsleigh, EXETER, Devon, EX6 7PR  <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/nature-reserves/woodah-farm-rural-skills-centre>  DWT manages 62 Nature Reserves totalling over 2200ha in area and managed by a team of Reserves Officers, Assistants and Volunteers.  The role will undertake management tasks across DWT’s entire land holding and work with a variety of colleagues and other volunteers.    To find out more about our nature reserves, please visit our website.  <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/nature-reserves> |
| **When and how often:** |
| We are ideally looking for volunteers who can commit to a 7.5 hour / five-day week (Monday to Friday, with occasional weekend days) for 6 months, but would recommend volunteering for a full calendar year to experience reserves’ management across the seasons and to get the full benefit of training and mentoring support.  However, this is a volunteering role so there is flexibility if it is needed to allow for things like part-time paid work, job-seeking and to facilitate equal access to the opportunity. Where this arises, we will look at each situation on a case-by-case basis. |
| **Who is the supervisor:** |
| Crystal Edwards  Reserves Officer |
| **Expenses/equipment available:** |
| **Accommodation**  Accommodation will be provided at Woodah Farm, a farm house on the edge of Dartmoor. The accommodation in on the first floor and comprises 3 bedrooms, open plan sitting room and kitchen, bathroom and garden. NB. Woodah Farm is in a fairly isolated location. The buses are infrequent. You would be living at your volunteering base with some of your volunteering colleagues.  **Transport**  Transport from Woodah Farm to each work site will be provided, using DWT’s own vehicles. Travelling on DWT business in private vehicles will not be expected and should not be necessary.  **Personal Protective Equipment**  You will be provided with a DWT T-shirt, fleece and waterproof coat. Work gloves, boots and chainsaw trousers are provided for your use along with any other protective equipment you may need.  **Tools**  Are all provided. |
| **Health and Safety / Risk Assessment** |
| Each nature reserve and activity will have a full risk assessment with which you will be expected to become familiar. We ask that volunteers ensure their tetanus vaccinations are up to date. |
| **Benefits of volunteering** |
| Full instruction and guidance will be given for all tasks as necessary. This is likely to include the use and maintenance of tools such as brushcutters, power scythe and winches, as well as a wide range of hand tools. The member of staff leading each task will usually give this training. Formal training courses will be arranged for some / all of the following:   1. Use of Chainsaw - National Proficiency Tests Council certificate 2. Use of Brushcutters - Lantra 3. Basic First Aid 4. Working Safely - General health and safety in the workplace   This Voluntary role provides an excellent grounding in the work of a Nature Reserves Officer. Previous volunteers have gone on to find work as Reserves Officers, Advisory Officers and other related jobs. Comments from previous Reserves Team Volunteers include: “The Full Time Volunteer project is outstanding, I have had the opportunity to learn so much from absolutely lovely people in stunning locations, and I believe this opportunity has truly set me up for a career in the conservation sector.” “It’s great seeing the different ways different people approach things and the different skills. It’s a well-balanced team all with different fortes. We’re learning to think like a Reserves Officer.” “Amazing”  We aim to be responsive to the volunteer, to ensure, as far as possible, that you benefit from your time with us in ways that are important to you. We will be as flexible as we can to enable you to balance your commitments and to make volunteering more accessible to you (see below). |
| **Inclusivity** |
| We believe that ‘Nature is for Everyone’: that everyone, regardless of their background, physical or social circumstances, can enjoy & benefit from nature, learn about wildlife & be part of a growing community of wildlife enthusiasts. ‘Everyone Counts’ is a core value of DWT.  DWT is committed to promoting equality and diversity; to promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences strengthen the organisation, make it a better place to work and to volunteer, and helps us to reach and inspire more people to better fulfil our charitable purpose. DWT aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities through all that we do, and to pro-actively tackle and eliminate discrimination.  If there is any adaptation that would help you to access and enjoy this voluntary opportunity, please speak to us. |
| **How to apply** |
| For enquiries or an informal discussion about the role contact: Crystal Edwards on [cedwards@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:cedwards@devonwildlifetrust.org) or 07989662796.  To apply please complete the application form and information gathering form and send to the Volunteers Officer [volunteering@devonwildlifetrust.org](mailto:volunteering@devonwildlifetrust.org) or if by post marked Confidential to Cricklepit Mill, Commercial Road, Exeter, EX2 4AB no later than **09:00 on Monday 29th April 2024.** Interviews are expected to take place at the start of May. The date will be confirmed in due course.  Applications in other formats will be accepted as long as it covers the information required in the application forms.  Because we are committed to making conservation open to everyone, if you are disabled and meet the minimum criteria for the role, we guarantee to interview you.  If you are selected, the role will be dependent on satisfactory references. |