



Candidate Pack:

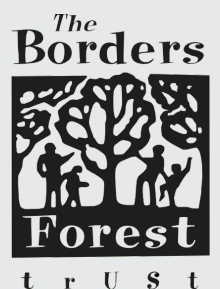
Native Woodland Lead

Location: Ancrum, near Jedburgh, Scottish Borders.

Salary: £33,000 FTE.

Hours: Full time (37.5 hours per week).

Closing date: Midnight, Sunday 4 October 2026.



Welcome from Laura Alcock-Ferguson Chief Executive, Borders Forest Trust

Over the last 30 years we have engaged in landscape scale restoration, buying and restoring land in the Southern Uplands.

Our team has also been planting woodlands, restoring peatlands, wetlands and meadows, across the Borders, giving nature a helping hand to survive and thrive. This restoration work is supported by a committed membership, a large group of volunteers, and a programme of education to connect future generations with nature, and strong partnerships.

Over the last five years we have acquired and regenerated new land in the Southern Uplands and to support our ambitions to maintain our rootedness in community, our team has expanded, bringing new skills, helping build the organisation to meet the challenges we and nature face. We inspire others to connect with the land and nature by offering cultural and heritage projects. We also extend our reach by encouraging and advising other landowners to embrace our vision, and it is this latter strand of our work that this role will take forward, continuing the superb work of the previous post holder.

At BFT, we have an internal goal too: to be the place where a diverse mix of talented people are supported to do their best work for the benefit of nature and people across Southern Scotland. We are driven by reaching for our vision, through the team work and dedication of our passionate and creative team of staff, trustees and volunteers.

To build on our achievements we seek a knowledgeable and experienced Native Woodland Lead. You'll need to harness your skills, your confidence in working with members of the public to increase and manage tree cover on their land, and your knowledge and passion for landscape restoration. You'll also work closely with the BFT team to bring volunteers to these, and our own BFT sites, to manage those sites (closer to central Borders).

This is an exciting opportunity to continue the brilliant work of our previous post holder, supported by our joint funder, Woodland Trust, for a very special organisation with passionate people who are truly dedicated to our vital purpose.

Thank you for your interest and I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Laura Alcock-Ferguson



Background on Borders Forest Trust

Borders Forest Trust was founded in 1996 by a visionary group of people determined to address the lack of native woodlands in Southern Scotland. This was an area once covered in expansive wildwoods which supported myriad species but sadly, native woodland now covers just 1.4% of the Scottish Borders.

Our founders were local people who inspired their own dedicated community of volunteers, all passionate about doing something about this lack of biodiversity and about showing how one valley in Southern Scotland could be restored to nature.

Since our founding in 1996, Borders Forest Trust has transformed over 3,250 hectares of land across the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway – an area larger than the city of Inverness. Over 2.8 million trees have been planted by BFT; equivalent to over 10 trees for every person living in the South of Scotland today.

These 2.8 million trees are planted across a range of sites:

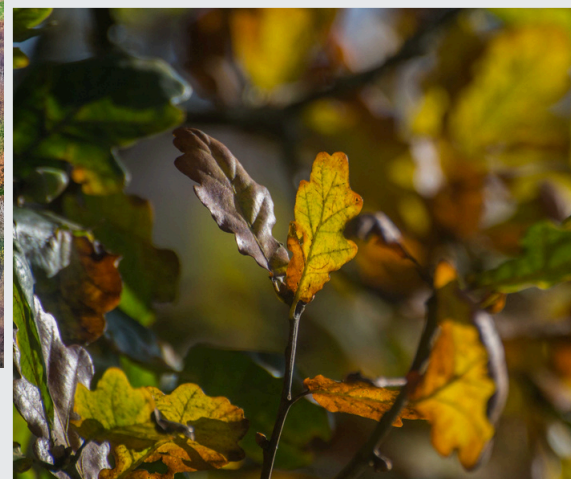
- 1.4 million on BFT owned land at the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland
- 1.3 million trees in outreach with other landowners
- 65,000 in communities.

The work of Borders Forest Trust is still rooted in communities and driven by a passion for restoring lost habitats across the South of Scotland. Our work has revived native woodlands, montane scrub, peatlands, wetlands, heathlands and wildflower meadows.

Our work with landowners inspires them and gives them the knowledge and access to tree planting grants and our volunteer groups to plant trees on their land. Our community and outreach initiatives connect people of all ages and backgrounds to the natural world, fostering stewardship and providing pathways to nature-connection, and ensuring future generations can both enjoy and care for the natural world.



Carrifran Wildwood, © Colin McLean, 2025



Dairy Wood, © C. Patience, 2024



Photo © Borders Forest Trust

Borders Forest Trust - Strategic Direction

Our Vision

Our vision for Southern Scotland is a place where a rich tapestry of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by volunteers and local communities.

Borders Forest Trust is a charity established to restore native woodland habitats to Southern Scotland, an area with the lowest percentage of native woodlands in mainland Scotland. We aim to demonstrate large scale ecological restoration in action, and inspire landowners, statutory bodies, local communities and policy makers to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We work in partnership with a wide range of local and national organisations as well as landowners, universities, colleges and schools. We are supported by a committed group of volunteers, supporters and donors.



Our Strategic Priorities

Increase native woodland cover – ‘revive the Wild Heart’

BFT owns land so that we can undertake large-scale ecological improvements on it, largely through the planting of new native trees and by restoring upland habitats. We aspire to extend this ‘Wild Heart’ of Southern Scotland.

Enhance existing woodlands and associated habitats

Beyond the sites we operate we also engage in inspiring, reaching out to, and advising other landowners, local communities, and professional foresters. We encourage them to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We also engage with other bodies to advocate and promote best practice in restoration and planting.

Enable people of all ages to engage with woodland habitats

A key element of BFT’s work is fostering an interest in woodland culture with local communities. Since 1996 BFT has worked in over 100 sites across the south of Scotland, and with every school in the Borders, pioneering community forestry and innovative woodland education; as well as promoting forestry skills development, and has a specialism in working with young people and vulnerable groups.

A well-run organisation

BFT’s internal operation is run by a small, dedicated staff team and a board of volunteer Trustees from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

Background on the Native Woodland Lead Role

Why do we have a job vacancy?

Our previous Native Woodland Lead worked with BFT for four years and recently decided to return to Wales. We are therefore recruiting for a new Native Woodland Lead to build on the strong foundations she established and to make the role their own.

Thanks to the brilliant work of our previous colleague, you will step into a role that has nurtured positive relationships with landowners and the BFT team, and has an excellent set of handover notes and a well versed/ informed group of colleagues to work with – ready and able to support the new post holder. In her own words, the previous post holder left this message for the successful candidate: “Congrats on the new job, I hope you’ll love it as much as I did.”

Projects, responsibilities, achievements and new opportunities:

The role of Woodland Creation Lead is diverse and will provide the new post holder with a varied and interesting array of tasks:

Working with Local Landowners

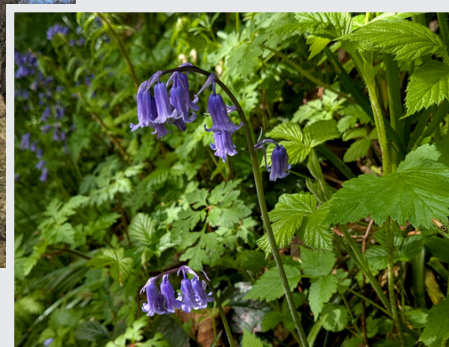
This role is all about helping local landowners, farmers and communities bring more native woodland to life – whether it be new native woodland or improving the condition of ancient woodland. You will offer free advice, site surveys, woodland plans and guidance on funding, helping people turn good ideas into thriving woodlands.

It’s a great opportunity to make a positive difference across the landscapes of the South of Scotland – well beyond the boundaries of our own sites. And the results can be impressive: during the four-year tenure of our last wonderful Woodland Creation Lead, more than **130,000 native trees** were planted in partnership with local landowners and community groups.

Your key objectives each year are to meet landowners, promote tree planting, ancient woodland management, and promote tree planting funding opportunities to the Borders Community and landowners. Specifically, through this post’s work, each year we aim to enable 100Ha of new woodland creation (utilising the funding mechanisms listed below) and investigating and securing opportunities for the ongoing management of 20Ha of Ancient Woodland.



Photo © Borders Forest Trust



Drygrange Bluebells © A. Monaghan, 2026.

Some of the grant schemes we support landowners with are:

Borders Tree Grant Scheme (BTGS)

BFT works in collaboration with our partners at Tweed Forum on this great scheme that provides applicants with up to £1500 of funding to plant native trees in areas of land up to 0.25Ha in size. The applicants/ landowners have a diverse range of support needs, with some doing all the legwork meaning that applications only require a check over and a few tweaks for submission, others might need a lot more assistance – e.g. a site visit, species advice and securing quotes from suppliers.

Each year BFT aim to support approximately 25 applications during the tree planting season. The Woodland Creation Lead and Line Manager attend regular meetings relating to this scheme with our partners at Tweed Forum.

MOREwoods

This is a Woodland Trust tree planting scheme and BFT are partners/ agents working in the Borders region. These grants enable landowners and farmers to create new woodland (500+ trees on at least half a hectare of land), providing trees, funding and expert advice to boost productivity, resilience and the health of the environment.

Our former Woodland Creation Lead has described this scheme as ‘beautifully straightforward and self-explanatory’.

BFT have 5 MOREwoods projects on the go – all at various stages of the process. The new Woodland Creation Lead will be supported by other BFT team mates to complete them.

Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)

Scottish Government tree planting grant scheme. From time-to-time opportunities arise with this grant scheme.

New Opportunities

The new Woodland Creation Lead has a few juicy ‘exciting’ projects to get stuck into when they start at BFT.

- **Ancient Woodland along Liddel Water:** Patches of Ancient Woodland along the Liddel Water near Newcastleton – home to the only existing population of Marsh tits in Scotland. Some site meetings have taken place and there are various opportunities for more focused work.
- **Hillslap:** A 50ha “landscape restoration” site. To date our former team-mate has submitted a BTGS application for very scattered planting across the entire site. Some constraints maps have been produced, and the large Juniper population has been mapped so that its health and size can be monitored. This exciting project is covered in handover notes for the new post holder to take forward.

BFT Sites

This diverse role not only focuses on woodland creation and also covers a variety of site management responsibilities for some of our Community Sites and land holdings in the Borders region.

We have a long-standing track record of establishing and supporting community woodlands, going right back to Wooplaw Woods – the first community woodland in the UK, established in 1987.

Today, BFT supports numerous community-led sites as well as managing our own sites, and the sites of our subsidiary company, including woodland and other habitats across the Borders. Over recent years, our Woodland Creation Lead has worked closely with BFT's Community & Education team to update site management plans, ensure/ monitor site safety, maintain healthy habitats and develop activity programmes for practical activities at these sites. The result has been a wonderfully eclectic mix of conservation sessions with volunteers, community groups and schools. Think: scything festivals, tree planting days, bamboo and invasive species control blitzes, and pond dipping.

So, if you enjoy getting outdoors, working with people and getting stuck into practical projects, there will be plenty of opportunities to get your hands dirty!



BFT volunteers at Drygrange. © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Volunteers & staff making benches. © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Job Description

Objectives of the Post

The Native Woodland Lead will develop and support the delivery of new native woodland planting schemes, including flood prevention and water quality plantings, and identify suitable ancient woodlands to be brought into conservation management in the Scottish Borders (for roughly half of the week).

This will involve promoting the project and identifying and managing a pipeline of landowners; liaising with and advising private landowners and farmers; providing planting and woodland management advice and guidance; producing woodland management plans, assisting with applications for funding and supporting practical implementation and co-ordination of the planting and management works, and co-ordinating other BFT staff to support this work when needed.

The post holder will also liaise with the funding partner, Woodland Trust Scotland, as well as partners of the Borders Tree Planting Grant, principally the Tweed Forum and Scottish Forestry.

For the other part of the role (roughly half of the week), the Native Woodland Lead will also site manage BFT's non-upland sites, through planning, identifying works to be carried out to better the environmental/community benefit of these sites, managing contractors, liaising with local communities, volunteers and other staff members involved in the sites to ensure good site management and activities are completed on time and within budget. These currently include Drygrange, Lindean, and Ettrick Willows, and through BFT's subsidiary company, KEH Brownlie: Purvishaugh and Blinkbonny Meadow.

Principal Duties

Working with other Landowners

- Develop a pipeline plan for landowners that BFT can work with for the planting of 20 hectares of new native woodland for delivery per year.
- To promote BFT's outreach work through a range of mediums including promotional articles, posting information on the BFT website and social media, and attending community events.
- Work with landowners, farmers, community groups and schools to advise and encourage new woodland planting projects and improved conservation management of ancient woodlands.

- To improve the conservation management of ancient woodlands by building on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) of the Scottish Borders and exploring the potential for survival, restoration and expansion of ancient woodland remnants. Aiming to prepare woodland plans for 20 hectares of ancient woodland restoration or woodland expansion of AW sites per year.
- To assist applicants with drawing funds from Forestry Grants Schemes, the Woodland Trust MOREwoods project, Trees for Your Farm, or the Borders Tree Planting Grant project. The postholder will act as the Borders agent for the MOREwoods project and Trees for Your Farm.
- Support the delivery of montane scrub planting on appropriate sites.
- Co-ordinate and implement practical tree planting and woodland management outreach work where necessary.

Borders Forest Trust and BFT Subsidiary sites:

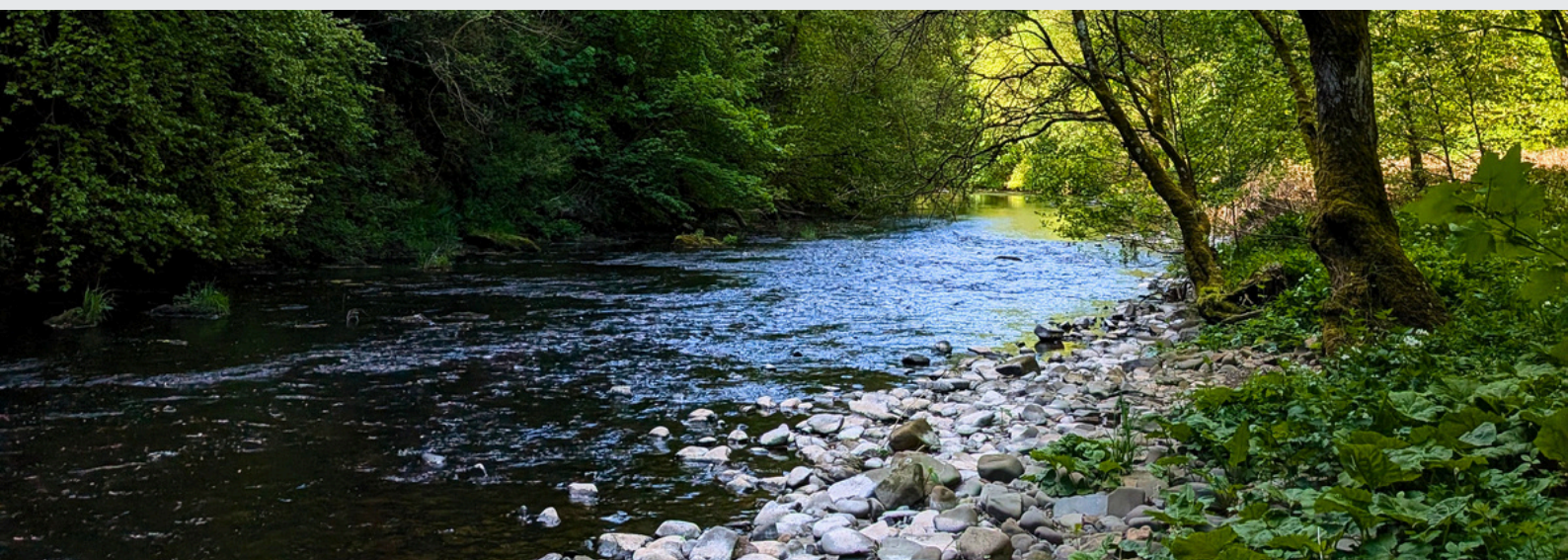
- Carry out regular checks of BFT owned Borders sites, produce management plans and carry out appropriate management within BFT's budgets, by liaising with the Head of Land Management.
- Work with the Community & Education team to develop annual programmes of practical tasks aligned with site management plans.
- Coordinate works undertaken on BFT sites by contractors, ensure health and safety documents are in place, and works are carried out in accordance to specification



Other duties

- Be responsible for meeting health and safety requirements including written risk assessments and working in accordance with BFT lone working policy.
- Contribute to BFT literature, annual reports / budgets and reports to funding bodies.
- Support the success of BFT by carrying out specific and general tasks as required.

This job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities of the role and is not intended to be an exhaustive list. The post holder may be required to undertake additional duties appropriate to the level and nature of the role. BFT reserves the right to amend the duties and responsibilities in line with organisational needs.



Personal Specification

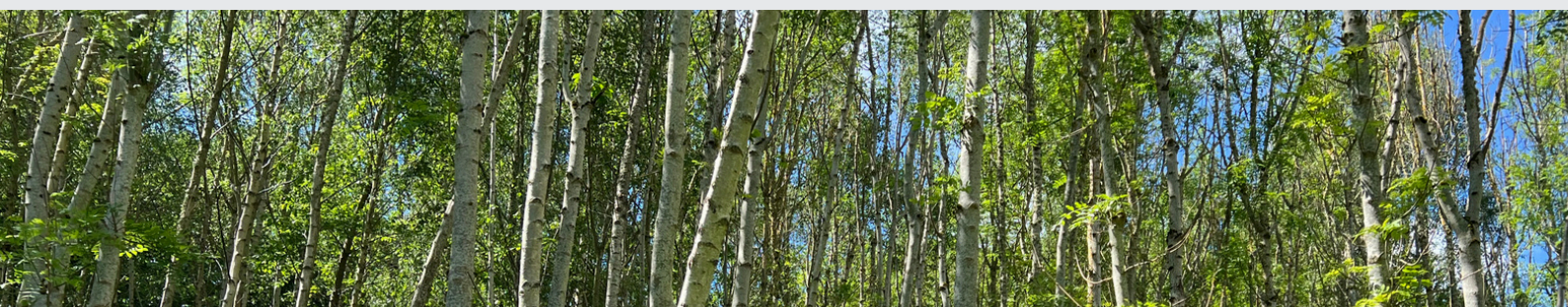


Qualifications / Education

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Degree in relevant subject	Desirable
Project management qualification	Desirable

Experience

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Experience working in forestry and/or ecology	Essential
Experience of working with stakeholders such as landowners, farmers, community groups and schools	Essential
Experience of working with funders, including applying for funding, coordinating all reporting against outcomes and liaising with and maintaining personal relationships with funders	Essential
Experience of organising and running outreach events, including monitoring and improving them against outcomes	Essential
Experience of writing risk assessments	Desirable
Budget management experience	Desirable
Experience of managing contractors on land management activities	Desirable
Experience of site management planning	Desirable
Experience of involving volunteers in site management	Desirable



Skills / Knowledge

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Knowledge of biodiversity and nature restoration	Essential
Strong written and verbal communication skills	Essential
Awareness of health and safety considerations of working with landowners, sometimes in remote locations	Essential
IT skills (Microsoft Office or relevant software)	Essential
Numeracy skills	Essential
GIS and land mapping skills	Essential
Data analysis skills	Desirable
Social media skills	Desirable
Report writing skills	Desirable

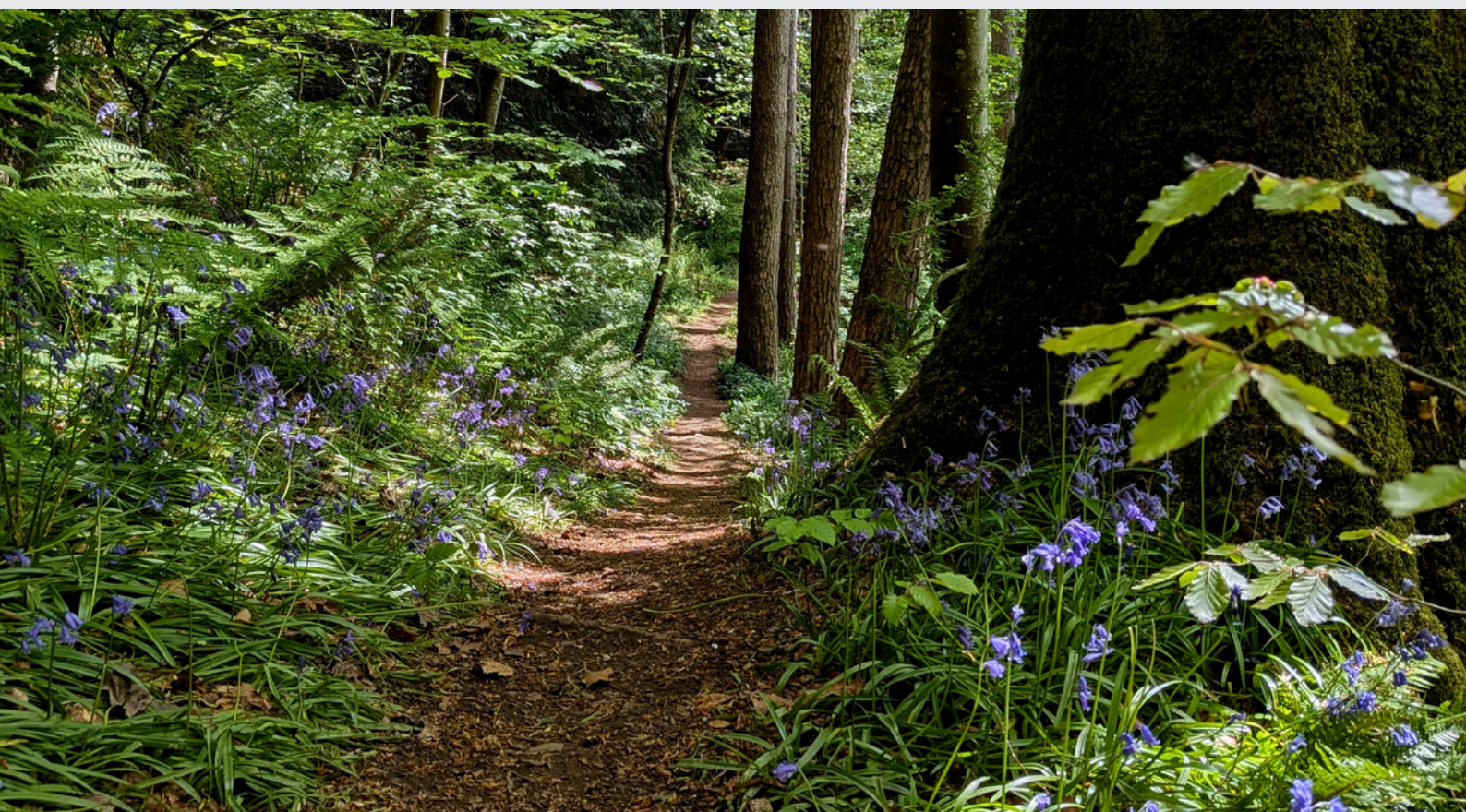


Personal Attributes / Competencies

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Strong ability to work independently, setting and dedicating self to targets and self-awareness about progress against	Essential
Strong planning and organisational skills	Essential
Attention to detail	Essential
Strong commitment to and passion for nature restoration and understanding of its importance	Essential
Positive, solution-focused attitude	Essential
Commitment and contribution to work positively as part of a wider team and support colleagues	Essential
Able to lone work, safely, while following policy and procedure and health and safety	Essential

Other Requirements

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Right to work in the UK	Essential
Clean driving license and access to vehicle	Essential
PVG Scheme Approved or willing to be	Essential
Willing to work flexibly across multiple locations	Essential
Willing to work flexibly in working hours, including working during some weekends and evenings	Essential
Willingness to work outside as required, throughout the year	Essential





Gameshope, BFT Wild Heart Sites, © A. Monaghan, 2026.

What it is like to work at Borders Forest Trust

We are a small, dedicated team with 12 posts and our staff range from people who have been here for 25 years to our most recent recruits who have joined us in the last year or so. We have a lot of knowledge and energy to share and look forward to you joining us, to share your knowledge and energy, if you are successful.

Your role will involve teamwork across all areas of the organisation, and particularly with the Communities and Education and Land Management teams, who you will meet with regularly.

Many staff attend the office near Ancrum, Jedburgh, on Mondays, and our staff meetings are monthly on Mondays, while the remainder of the week is often spent working at our sites or with other landowners.

As a BFT employee, you will be supported in your role with regular 1:1 meeting with your line manager, as well as monthly face to face meetings in the staff team.

We support our staff with significant development and learning opportunities, linked to a learning plan as part of annual performance appraisals. This is in addition to mandatory training support on subjects such as health and safety, first aid, GDPR.

We are currently updating our website, and several behind-the-scenes improvements are ongoing, all of which will help you and all our staff to be supported to perform even better in their roles.

Photo © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Photo © Borders Forest Trust.

Salary, hours, and benefits at BFT

BFT recently completed an external review of salaries and benefits to ensure we remain competitive. We've included information on the key benefits and wellbeing support provided to all BFT staff below.

Salary	The salary for this role is £33,000 per annum, full time equivalent. BFT has recently completed an external Salary and Benefits Review including external benchmarking to ensure competitiveness, and the salaries BFT offer are not available for negotiation.
Location and travel	This post will be based from BFT's offices at Monteviot Nurseries near Jedburgh, although many days will be spent out with landowners across Southern Scotland. Some home working will be allowed and supported – with a minimum of 1 working day per week from the offices. Staff meetings happen monthly on Mondays. On other days, this role will require travel across the Scottish Borders and Southern Scotland. Due to the need to travel independently to landowner and BFT sites, candidates will need access to a car, with adequate insurance for business use. Agreed mileage is re-imbursed at a rate of 55p/mile and receipted expenses are paid monthly.
Hours and flexible working	This is a full-time role including occasional evening and weekend work. Full-time hours are 37.5 hours per week. Weekend/evening work is acknowledged through time off in lieu – please note we do not pay overtime. Flexible working patterns can be discussed. Focus on outputs and deliverables, rather than strict work patterns. Employees are empowered to manage daily working patterns to suit their work/life balance and the needs of the charity.
Annual leave	34 days annual leave per year inclusive of Bank Holidays (pro-rata for part time staff). Employees can choose to use bank holidays on alternative days to suit their work/life balance.
Pension	10%, 13% or 15% total contribution if contributed to by 4%, 6.4% or 8% by the employee.
Employee Assistance Programme	BFT takes staff wellbeing very seriously, and offers a range of ways of supporting this, including offering all staff access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This includes counselling, leadership, personal finance and life coaching, a virtual GP service and menopause support.
Other benefits	BFT allows well behaved dogs in the office. As part of the recently completed benefits review, BFT trustees approved further benefits which will be brought in over the coming months including life assurance for all staff and enhanced sick pay.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

BFT values diversity in the workforce as a means of broadening our talent base and achieving the highest level of performance, and we are aware that many people are under-represented within the environmental and forestry sectors. As well as following legislative requirements, BFT aims to work to good practice.

We are committed to inclusion and equality, and promoting equal opportunities in all areas of recruitment, employment, training and promotion. We welcome applications from all people, particularly those under-represented within our sector.

It is our policy, and the law, not to discriminate against applicants or workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, nationality, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our employees and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes.

Recruitment and Selection

Managers will ensure that no applicant, whether internal or external shall receive less favourable treatment on any of the grounds listed above at any stage of the recruitment process.

If there is anything BFT can do to make any reasonable adjustments to ensure you can engage fully in the selection process, please contact us at recruitment@bordersforesttrust.org for a confidential discussion. Only recruiting managers have access to this inbox and all queries will be kept confidential.



Wild Heart planting day, © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Volunteers, © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Gameshope Burn, Wild Heart Sites, © A. Monaghan, 2026.

How to apply

To apply for this role, please email recruitment@bordersforesttrust.org with a copy of your CV and covering letter.

What to include in your covering letter: unless you tell us how you meet all the essential points in the Person Specification (above), you are not likely to be shortlisted. Please also tell us how you meet the desirable points too, where relevant, as this will help you stand out.

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in our team. To help us monitor this, we ask all applicants to complete an Equality Monitoring Form. This is separate from your application and will not be used as part of the selection process.

A note on the use of AI: AI has environmental impacts which BFT is aware of. However, we also recognise that it can be a helpful tool when used at its best, but it should never replace your own voice. The best applications are honest, personal, and reflective of who you are and what you can bring to Borders Forest Trust.

Managers involved in shortlisting or interviewing will not use AI tools to screen, score or rank candidates, and any concern about the authenticity of an application will be explored at interview rather than assumed.

Timetable

Closing date	Midnight, Sunday 4 October 2026
Interviews near Ancrum (including a site visit near Melrose, Scottish Borders, likely up to 2.5 hours in total)	Tuesday 20 October 2026
Decision by	Tuesday 27 October 2026

Everything will be done to keep the selection process to one stage.

If there are any reasonable adjustments BFT can make, please do get in touch. All discussions are confidential.

Thank you for your interest, please do get in touch if you have any questions.
Borders Forest Trust, recruitment@bordersforesttrust.org.