

Volunteering
for the
Railway Land
Wildlife Trust



About Us

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust is an environmental charity. The Trust was set up in 1988 when local people came together to campaign for the Railway Land to be designated a Local Nature Reserve and protect it from development.

Our vision is for everyone in our community to connect with the natural world. To this end we:

- *Provide lifelong environmental learning and engagement for all*
- *Run the Linklater Pavilion as a focus for local environmental action*
- *Offer nature-based solutions to the climate and ecological crises*
- *Care for the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve in partnership with the Lewes District Council*

Volunteers are involved in all areas of our work and we strive to provide interesting, varied and accessible volunteering opportunities.



Education Volunteering

We offer engaging hands-on learning experiences that creatively meet many areas of the primary and secondary curriculum. Education volunteers are vital in allowing us to offer quality learning sessions to schools.

Education volunteer role

Description

- Be part of a team welcoming school groups to the Railway Land Nature Reserve
- Support education staff to deliver planned activities around the nature reserve
- With support and training as necessary, deliver planned activities for small groups of pupils
- The opportunity to lead larger groups exists if desired (if so, full training and support are given)
- Feed into the planning of future sessions, and helping to evaluate education activities

Skills, experience or qualities

Desired

You don't need to be an expert, however we do value enthusiasm for nature, and an ability to share this with young people.

- Experience of engaging with school aged children or the clear desire to gain experience of outdoor education
- Friendly and outgoing with good communication skills
- Reliable
- Adaptable and well organised
- A commitment to environmental and conservation issues

Time commitment

School visits generally run from 9.30am - 2.30pm and volunteers usually need to be on site from 9am-3pm. Occasionally we ask volunteers to come in for training at a time that suits.

Benefits of volunteering in the role

Benefits specific to this role also include the opportunity to gain experience in outdoor education, teaching, ecology and small-group facilitation; or an opportunity to apply your previous experience, where this experience is very valued.

For more information, please contact Milly Hawkins, Head of Learning on

education@railwaylandproject.org.uk



Support and Events Volunteering

Community events are an important and very enjoyable part of our work. We try to provide a range of activities that have a broad appeal. Some events are seasonal, such as apple pressing, Tree Day and our annual festival. In addition, we run talks, guided walks, and conferences such as our Tree Summit. As well as this, we often run nature connection sessions and meet ups as part of our projects, and take a stall to external events, and need volunteers to support staff in running sessions and talking to people about our work.

Volunteer responsibilities

Some volunteers are involved in planning, promoting and running events, others prefer just to come and help on the day. Responsibilities include:

- Supporting staff in running sessions; no experience needed, just enthusiasm!
- Helping to run stalls at external events
- Researching and deciding upon activities
- Organising the resources needed for activities
- Developing ideas / themes for events
- Liaising with potential speakers
- Promoting events – putting up posters, promoting through existing networks, writing press releases, uploading information to relevant websites etc.

- Welcoming people / stewarding / monitoring numbers
- Helping with refreshments
- Helping with setting up and tidying away
- Giving feedback on what went well and what could be improved

Qualities and skills required

- An interest in environmental and conservation issues
- Enthusiasm
- Adaptability and willingness to get involved
- Able to work to guidelines
- Friendly, with good communication skills



Benefits of the role

- Meeting new people
- Working in a beautiful environment
- Helping to support local conservation
- Training in running outdoor activities at community events
- Gaining experience in events management and promotion
- Getting to know the diversity of possibilities on the various projects running at the RLWT

Time commitment

Events usually run for between 4 and 6 hours, occasionally longer. We generally organise volunteer shifts in two-hour blocks. The time commitment for planning and promotion is adaptable.

For more information, please contact Helen Meade

Email: coordinator@railwaylandproject.org



Lewes District Council



South Downs

National Park Authority



Practical Conservation Volunteering

We carry out practical conservation work to restore important wildlife habitats and carry out maintenance of the sites. The work is varied and makes a significant contribution to the running of the each site. There are three potential sites;

- **On the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve itself, Lewes**
- **Butts Meadow with the Changing Chalk Project, Eastbourne**
- **Landport Bottom with the Changing Chalk Project, Lewes**

Role description

Tasks will vary according to location, seasons and volunteers but could include;

- Carrying out a variety of practical management tasks
- Scrub management
- Fence building, maintaining paths and steps
- Seed sowing, hedgerow planting, weeding, raking
- Creating natural barriers
- Litter picking
- Graffiti removal
- Carrying out sensitive management with consideration to the rare chalk grassland habitat and associated wildlife
- Participating in wildlife and habitat condition surveys
- Interacting with other members of the conservation group and members of the public

Skills, experience or qualities desired

No prior experience of habitat management or wildlife conservation is required, just an interest and enthusiasm for engaging with it and the commitment to follow health and safety procedures. Sharing your knowledge will always be welcome, along with:

- Moderate physical fitness for carrying out habitat management tasks on uneven ground (including using hand tools such as loppers or hand saws)
- Enthusiastic and cooperative
- Able to follow instructions and work in a small team, being mindful of everybody's safety
- Please wear clothes suitable for practical work and sturdy footwear



Benefits of volunteering in this role

- Part of a friendly supportive group who meet regularly with a common cause
- Mental health benefits of being outside in nature and building a relationship with a particular beauty spot
- Share your own knowledge and skills - support other volunteers and share ideas about how to look after the site
- Opportunity to learn about the ecology and management of the site and the wider Downland, while contributing to its restoration and maintenance
- Learn new skills such as plant and animal species identification, surveying techniques, estate management
- Training in the safe use of hand tools
- A chance to celebrate of the cultural heritage of the Downs and local area

There are also extra ad hoc sessions, workshops or opportunities to attend Railway Land Wildlife Trust or Changing Chalk special events.

Changing Chalk
connecting nature, people and heritage

Led by

National
Trust

Time commitment

Attendance is on a drop in basis after prior communication with the group leader so they can arrange tools etc and notify people if session cancelled, There is no obligation to do a full session. There are regular sessions available to volunteer at;

1. The Meadow Minders group at the Railway Land Wildlife Trust Lewes meets outside the Linklater Pavilion on the first Sunday of every month at 10am, and on the third Wednesday of the month at 2pm. For more information contact Jemma Carnell jemma@railwaylandproject.org

2. Changing Chalk at Butts Meadow in Eastbourne meet every Second Saturday of the month 10am – 3pm. For more information contact Jennie Smith; chalklife@railwaylandproject.org

3. Changing Chalk at Landport Bottom meets every third Saturday of the month 10am – 1pm. For more information contact Jenny Lindhop;

 **HERITAGE
FUND**



Chalk Life Dog Life

- The Chalk Life Dog Life project is part of the bigger Changing Chalk project, which aims to restore and protect chalk grassland habitat, and connect local communities to this rare ecosystem on their doorstep. Chalk Life Dog Life involves getting to know your local chalk grassland site, and the wildlife that lives there, site checking, lookering (monitoring livestock), and creating conversations about the ecology and history of the chalk grassland and the need to protect this rare habitat.

Chalk Life Dog Life Role description

Interacting and engaging with the general public

Site walking and checking

Partnership working – communicating with other team members and coordinator

Complete monitoring and evaluation data



Skills, experience or qualities desired

- Regular walker on a chalk grassland site
- Approachable and friendly
- Positive, empathetic
- Interest in chalk grassland
- Dog walkers welcome

Time commitment

Roughly one day per week.



Training and support

- Induction
- Lone working training
- Health and Safety training
- Dog behaviour training
- Chalk grassland ecology training
- Wildlife ID training

Benefits of volunteering in the role

Part of a supportive group, helping to protect and restore a rare and declining habitat. Opportunities in receiving free training and being part of a supportive group working to look after this habitat.

For more information, please contact Jenny Lindop email: chalklife@railwaylandproject.org

Wellbeing in Nature (WiN)

Wellbeing sessions run on a Wednesday and Friday. We have a lovely welcoming community of WiN participants and volunteers; none of us are experts and we learn together, noticing, naming and learning about the natural world. The WiN Project ensures that people with personal experience of mental health issues engage with appropriate and enjoyable walks and activities, which are agreed with them and during which they are supported in a safe and nurturing environment.

We have 2 roles where people can Volunteer

1. Skilled volunteers who teach us about birds, bees, wildflowers, rivers and local wildlife, or share skills in yoga, breathing, mindfulness.
2. Support volunteers who help keep the group together, welcome and check in with participants, make a cup of tea. To support the delivery of all aspects of Wellbeing in Nature sessions in conjunction with the Wellbeing Project Coordinator.

Skills, experience or qualities desired

- Good communication skills
- Ability to get involved and participate in a hands-on way
- Understanding of the current challenges for people with mental health issues and of the underpinning principles of working with people with lived experience of mental health
- Basic understanding of Health and Safety requirements
- A passion for improving the life chances of marginalised people, especially those who are or have faced mental distress
- Commitment to equality of opportunity at every level
- Willingness to work flexibly

Main tasks

- Support the wellbeing walks and sessions
- Provide a supportive, listening ear to participants, rather than offering advice (unless it is specifically asked for)
- Stay alert to what's happening within the group & if anyone is struggling - report any relevant issues back to the project coordinator
- Support small groups or individuals, ensuring that they feel safe and supported
- Participate in group activities/ discussions where possible, but put volunteer role first
- Lead activity sessions if requested / agreed
- Ad hoc duties as required
- Develop your own role in a way that supports & nourishes your potential
- Be able to be flexible to changes in activities / schedules due to weather etc

Benefits

The opportunity to gain experience in outdoor education, teaching, ecology and small-group facilitation; or an opportunity to apply your previous experience, where this experience is very valued.

Time commitment

To be agreed roughly 4 hours per month.
11am to 12.30pm Wednesday or Friday

For more information, please contact Ellie Moulton
email: wellbeing@railwaylandproject.org

NatureLinks Project

The NatureLinks Youth Action Project has three pillars at its heart; adaptation to climate change, increasing biodiversity and promoting wellbeing. The project aims to facilitate connections to nature across the Lewes District. Young people will be the central stakeholders leading the project, connecting with experts and local groups to help support the natural world.

There are two primary volunteer opportunities with the NatureLinks project;

1. Youth Volunteer (14-24yrs)

2. Support or expert volunteer

Youth Volunteer

Are you a young person (14-24yrs) looking to gain experience and volunteer in an area you are passionate about, while also supporting our natural world? This could be:

- Working on nature restoration projects i.e. hedgerow planting, building ponds, sowing wildflowers, wetland restoration
- Wildlife monitoring and surveying
- Gain skills in planning or volunteering at events or workshops
- Support with documentation of projects – filming and photography
- Outreach on social media and other publicity tasks
- The opportunity to facilitate and lead in certain areas, full training and support are given
- Developing ideas for environmental project initiatives you wish to pursue

Skills and experience

No skills needed just enthusiasm to get involved with the project! We want to help you upskill.

Benefits

Benefits specific to this role include the opportunity to add skills to your CV, meet experts, network with local organisations, increase well-being by spending time supporting beautiful blue and green spaces. The opportunity to gain experience in events, publicity, teaching or ecology. Whatever your interests, it is really all about you, the young person and deciding what skills you want to gain.

Support or expert volunteer

Do you enjoy working with young people? Or if you have youth work experience or expertise to share, we do have opportunities for adults to come and volunteer. This would be supporting our monthly sessions, youth actions projects or events.

Time commitment

Variable to be agreed.

For more information, please contact Ali Wheeler
email: naturelinks@railwaylandproject.org



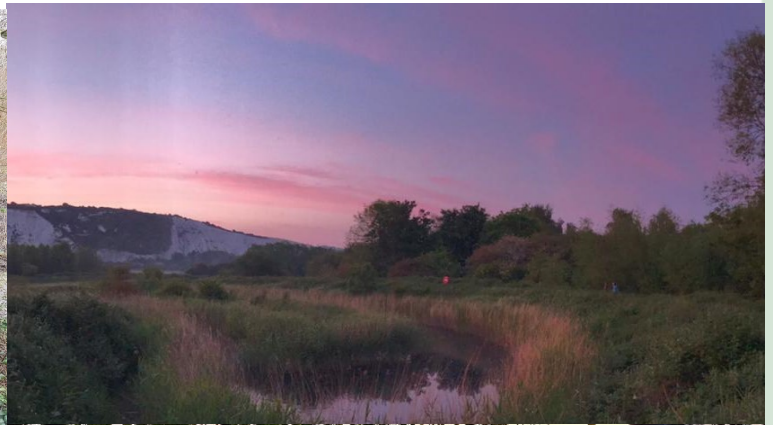
What We Offer You

As a volunteer for the Railway Land Wildlife Trust, you will be joining a group of committed, friendly people who want to support a thriving natural world in their local area. As well as working in beautiful surroundings, there are abundant opportunities for people to connect with the natural world and with each other.

In addition we offer volunteers:

- Support from designated member of staff
- Induction into the Trust, its work and how we work with and support volunteers
- Any training that is necessary for you to undertake your voluntary role
- Opportunities to learn more about the local ecology and the network of projects going on to support it.
- Opportunities to attend RLWT special events celebrating our volunteers, including social get-togethers, our annual general meeting (AGM) and promotional events.
- A full written reference can be provided after a suitable period of time. This will depend on the role(s) you undertake.
- DBS clearance will be provided if necessary for your role.

for everyone in our community to connect with the natural world



Meet The Team



CEO - Helen

Helen oversees the work of the Trust. She works with Trustees on the strategic direction of the Trust, with staff on making sure that we are reaching as many people as we can in imaginative and accessible ways, and with volunteers on community events. She help to build partnerships with other organisations and develop new projects.



Head of Learning - Milly

Milly runs our thriving environmental education program, which offers a wide range of engaging, hands-on sessions to meet learning objectives right across the curriculum and beyond. The reserve provides many inspiring opportunities for learning, including studying our river and chalk stream, our wonderful mosaic of habitats, or the fantastic range of creatures that live here.



Wellbeing Project Coordinator - Ellie

Ellie runs the Wellbeing in Nature project which supports people who are struggling with their mental health to connect to nature and each other. Spending time in nature connecting to our senses can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve our mental outlook, as well as providing gentle exercise



Changing Chalk Life Rangers - Jenny L & Jennie S

Changing Chalk is a big multi-partner project across the Eastern Downs, led by the National Trust. The project is working to restore rare and threatened chalk grassland habitat and provide opportunities for people to learn about its history and ecology. Jennie and Jenny are working as Chalk Life Rangers and there are plenty of ways to get involved with our work.



NatureLinks Team - Ali & Beth

Ali and Beth run the NatureLinks Community Action Project. It is a three year Lottery funded project aiming to address the climate and biodiversity crisis with positive nature-based solutions, and increase wellbeing through nature connections. Young people are the central stakeholders on this project.



Meadow Minders Coordinator - Jemma

Jemma coordinates the Meadow Minders group, who undertake practical conservation sessions on the Railway Land



Administrator - Judy

Judy works part-time and carries out much of the integral administration that enables the Trust to run smoothly. Managing the venue hire, Friends of the Railway Land scheme, spaces for our holiday clubs, bookkeeping and ensuring our website is up to date.