

Natural Capital Project Officer

Background

Covering 9,700 sq km of land and sea, the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere was the first UNESCO Biosphere in Scotland and offers an opportunity to lead on landscape scale nature recovery that will be good for nature, good for people and good for the local economy. 69% of the Biosphere area is within Scotland's first Natural Capital Innovation Zone which also includes delivery of Scotland's first Regional Land Use Framework. Together these make the UNESCO Biosphere an exciting and dynamic place to work as multiple partners come together to explore new approaches to addressing the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change at scale in the region.

Past initiatives have involved the development of a Natural Heritage Management Plan that identifies high focus habitats and species within the Biosphere, an annual nature friendly farming conference run in partnership with NFUS and the Regenerative Farming Network, providing grants for small-scale native tree planting, and facilitating and contributing to discussions and policies related to land use and nature in Scotland. We've also engaged local communities and some of our local businesses in understanding how they can help nature through the development of community green spaces and local gardens.

We are currently involved in development of some exciting and innovative projects to deliver nature-based solutions that can benefit business, the environment, and wider society, such as a whole farm natural capital audit methodology, river catchment restoration and other nature restoration opportunities.

We are now looking to recruit a dedicated Natural Capital Officer to lead on delivery of the Borderlands Natural Capital: Embedding Agricultural Resilience for a Productive Future with On-farm Plans Integrated with Nature (OPIN) project (Borderlands Whole Farm Plan project).

This is an exciting time to join our UNESCO Biosphere and to make your mark as we develop our Nature Recovery program, working with a team covering skills in land use, biodiversity, business development, communities, learning, marketing, and communications who together are responsible for ensuring that the sustainability ethos of the Biosphere is good for people and the environment.

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and Natural Capital Scotland Programme

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal is an exciting new partnership to unlock the potential for sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the South of Scotland and North of England. One component of this effort is the Natural Capital Scotland Programme, made up of several natural capital pilot projects that will deliver innovation across a blend of revenue- and capital-based activities to support new ways of working that reflect the role of natural capital in underpinning regional economic and community development, and



landscape scale land-use planning and management. The Biosphere is at the forefront, leading one such pilot project in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council.

Over five years, our *Embedding Agricultural Resilience for a Productive Future with On-farm Plans Integrated with Nature (OPIN)* project will conduct whole farm audits on 12 farms to:

- audit a suite of natural capital assets, the farm's carbon footprint, and business costs in order to provide a baseline.
- identify options to increase natural capital health, including biodiversity, soil health, carbon sequestration, water management,
- reduce farm input and carbon emissions, build adaptation and resilience into the farm business, and improve business sustainability.
- with the farmer, select interventions or management changes to implement on the farm.
- measure change, if any, from implementing interventions or management changes.

In summer 2024 a holistic audit methodology was developed with SRUC through a grant from UNESCO/abrdn. This will inform the audit tools used for the OPIN project.

The Role

The Natural Capital Officer will join a small team focussed on delivery of Nature Recovery in the Biosphere. The Natural Capital Officer will lead on the delivery of the Borderland OPIN Project, with support from other team members as required. A steering group comprising local partner organisations will assist with strategic guidance and direction.

With a good knowledge and understanding of natural capital, audit methodologies, and agricultural operations, you will be engaging with farmers, organisational partners, and an advisory group to: conduct or oversee audits; interpret audits to develop holistic farm plans; oversee interventions; and provide reports of outcomes and outputs.

You'll be joining a multi-disciplinary team in the Biosphere covering Nature Recovery, Communities & Education and Business Development.

There is some flexibility for this post-holder to work remotely except for on-farm and in-person meetings, including a minimum of monthly in-person team meetings and occasional all-staff meetings at our offices in Newton Stewart.

Anticipated start date summer 2025.

Applications

Closing Date for Applications is 12 noon Monday 12th May 2025.

1st interview date will be online on 23rd May 2025.

2nd Interview date will be in person on 6th June



Application forms must be completed although you are welcome to also submit a covering letter and CV.

All applications to be submitted electronically as PDF documents.

Please save each file in the following format:

YourNameNaturalCapitalApplicationForm.pdf

YourNameNaturalCapitalCV.pdf

YourNameNaturalCapitalCoveringLetter.pdf

Applications emailed to: info@gsabiosphere.org.uk

For more information or to arrange a time to discuss the role please contact;

Ed Forrest

Director Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

ed@gsabiosphere.org.uk



JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title	Natural Capital Officer
Base	Biosphere Offices, 37 Queen Street, Newton Stewart
Reporting to	Nature Recovery Manager
Responsible For	Interns (tentative)
Salary Band	£35,000 to £38,249 p.a.
Pension Contribution	Employer contribution of 8% of salary
Contract Period	Five years
Contract Hours	Full-time (37.5 hours per week) It may occasionally be necessary to attend meetings outwith normal working hours (for which time off in lieu will be given).

Job Purpose

The post holder will be responsible for supporting and delivering the Borderlands OPIN project that audits and plans enhancements of natural capital on farms within the Biosphere located within Dumfries & Galloway.

Principal Duties

- Lead on the delivery of the OPIN Borderlands project.
- Recruit and manage consultants/advisers/researchers to aid delivery of the OPIN Borderlands project.
- Recruit, oversee, and interpret natural capital audits on 12 farms.
- Contribute to the adaptation and evaluation of natural capital audit methodology.
- Evaluate farm operations related to chemical inputs, carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, business goals and plans.
- Write holistic farm management plans (On-farm Plans Integrated with Nature) that benefit natural capital and incorporate business needs and farmer goals, providing recommendations for interventions to take on the farm for natural capital and business benefits.
- Manage delivery and implementation of on farm interventions as required.
- Provide reports of outcomes and outputs.
- Build strong relationships with local farmers and landowners.
- Raise the profile of natural capital in the Biosphere.
- Represent and support the promotion of the Biosphere and its natural heritage at meetings, to communities, visitors and special interest groups through talks, events and publications.
- Support and promote the delivery of actions to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Report regularly to GSAB Director and project advisory group on progress against actions and targets.

Please note that in addition to the principal duties listed above, the post holder will from time to time be expected to carry out other duties that are commensurate with the above responsibilities and determined by GSAB's Partnership Board.

Existing staff generally work a minimum of one day a week from the office in Newton Stewart, with preference for two days a week. The other days are likely to involve 'agile working' meeting with local stakeholders, hot desking at partner organisations or working from home. We strive to offer a flexible working environment and are open to discussion on specific situations, including job share.

We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We welcome applications from everyone, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.



Natural Capital Officer Person Specification

Requirements <i>Essential (E) or Desirable (D)</i>	
1. Experience	
Experience working on projects related to natural capital, land use or conservation	E
Provision of carbon, biodiversity, soil or other audits	D
Working with the agricultural community	E
Project management	E
Use of spatial data	D
Writing reports and plans	E
Collaborating and coordinating partners, stakeholders and third parties	D
Working to deadlines	E
Working as part of a team	E
2. Education and Training	
Degree level qualification in an environment, ecology or land management subject	E
Minimum of 2 years relevant experience	E
Ongoing commitment to Continued Professional Development	E
3. Skills and Abilities	
Full suite of Microsoft packages	E
GIS mapping	D
Good written communication skills	E
Record keeping/organisational skills	E
Good verbal communication and meeting facilitation	E
Good negotiation skills and ability to work with a range of people	E

Requirements <i>Essential (E) or Desirable (D)</i>	
4. Knowledge	
Natural capital	E
Ecosystem services	E
Scottish farming practice	E
Scottish land and habitat management	E
Scottish biodiversity	D
Scottish Policy on land use, biodiversity, climate change, farming and forestry	D
Understanding of UNESCO Biosphere and/or protected area management	D
Understanding of current issues facing rural communities including economic, social and cultural issues	D
5. Personality Factors	
Good interpersonal skills	E
Supportive team player	E
Attention to detail	E
Reliable	E
Self-motivated	E
Able to work under pressure	E
6. Other Requirements	
Flexible approach to work duties	E
Observe requirements for confidentiality	E
Driving License and willingness to drive	E

Terms and Conditions

Salary

The starting salary will be determined within the salary band based on the skills and experience of the successful candidate. The employer may elect to start the successful candidate at the bottom of the band and award an increase subject to performance following a successful probationary period.

Pension

All staff will be automatically enrolled into a suitable Workplace Pension Scheme if eligible. The employer will contribute 8% to the Workplace Pension Scheme provider, which is dependent on a minimum 5% contribution from the employee.

Annual Leave

All staff will receive 25 days annual leave, rising after three years to 30 days.

Bank Holidays

All staff will receive 4 floating bank holiday days which are added to their annual leave entitlement.

All staff will receive 4 fixed days bank holiday days covering Christmas and New Year.

Overtime

There is no paid overtime available however “time off in lieu” is given for working outside regular office hours.

Notice and Probation

All new staff are required to complete a six-month probationary period during which time 1 weeks’ notice to terminate employment can be given by either side and/or the probationary period extended.

At the end of the probationary period, a minimum of one month’s notice in writing is required from either employee or employer. This will increase by one week’s notice per full year worked after four years’ service up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

Mileage

Access to a vehicle is required with business mileage available for eligible travel within the Biosphere boundary at currently £0.45/mile, in line with HMRC guidance.