

Vacancy: Community Engagement Volunteer

Organisation: Wessex Rivers Trust

Closing date: Ongoing

Location: Wylde Valley with the potential to engage other communities on the headwaters of The Hampshire Avon.

Responsible to: Lindsey Death Engagement Officer and/or Tracy Standish, Senior Education Officer.

Background Wessex Rivers Trust (Wessex RT) is an environmental charity, dedicated to the protection and conservation of rivers and chalk streams in the Wessex area. Wessex RT is part of the Rivers Trust movement; the umbrella organisation helping to protect and enhance most of the UK's rivers. The Trust acknowledges that educating and engaging with a wide and diverse audience is essential to sustaining long-term interest in our local rivers and chalk streams and empowering local communities to take ownership of these precious habitats.

To deliver on this ambition, the Trust is working on a 5-year engagement programme on the headwaters of The Hampshire Avon. Funded through Wessex Water's Partner's Programme with support from Wiltshire County Council, Our Healthy Headwaters is supporting communities on the headwaters of The Hampshire Avon to take positive action that will improve the health of the river catchments. The project has four core areas of focus:

1. 'Save Every Drop' - Promoting water-saving behaviours at home, school and at work.
2. 'What's Going Down the Plughole' - Raising awareness of the chemicals used in domestic cleaning, personal care and in gardening.
3. 'Septic Smart' – Awareness-raising campaign about how to use and maintain septic tanks in ways that minimise pollution to rivers and groundwater.
4. Pet Medications - educating communities about the impact of spot-on pet treatments on aquatic life.

Role summary and purpose

We are looking for volunteers to support the Engagement Officer on the various elements of the Our Healthy Headwaters Project. The focus will be to engage people of all ages to understand, care for and protect their local river by making changes to the way they use water. A range of engagement strategies will be used to find positive and meaningful connections between communities and their headwater. Tasks could vary greatly depending on your experience and interests, and you may have the opportunity to get involved in a range of activities. Time commitment will be variable but is likely to be about one day per month but can be determined by you depending on your availability, frequency and seasonality of activities.

Volunteer Activities

1. Supporting Wessex RT team members to run community events. This will include engaging with participants as well as helping to set up and pack away kit.

2. Attending talks and presentations to help reinforce messages when an information table is needed.
3. Helping at walks, talks and other outdoor activities.
4. Potential for river monitoring.
5. Use local knowledge to inform the activities and connections with communities.
6. Possibility of supporting education staff at school riverbank sessions (during school term-time and evening uniform groups).
7. Potential to contribute to Wessex RT communications work, such as blog posts, magazine articles, social media and event display interpretation boards.

Skills and Abilities

1. Ability to communicate with a wide range of audiences.
2. Passionate about sustainability
3. Genuine enthusiasm and passion for educating people about rivers, chalk streams and the ways we can help improve the rivers in the headwaters of The Hampshire Avon
4. Willingness to work with children and young people whilst in the river (if wanting to get involved with education sessions).

Why volunteer for Wessex RT?

1. The opportunity to learn more about chalk stream heritage and wildlife.
2. The opportunity to champion the region's chalk streams and highlight the pressures they face, helping to safeguard them for nature and future generations.
3. The opportunity to meet other local people with similar interests.
4. Receive support and training from Wessex RT staff, including basic water safety training.
5. Being involved in enjoyable, outdoor activities.

Miscellaneous

1. All Education Volunteers will be required to undergo a DBS check and provide a satisfactory reference.
2. Ideally participants would have their own transport or be able to travel around the local area. Mileage expenses will be paid at 45p per mile as set out in HMRC's Approved Mileage