Seasonal work – what do you do when there’s no more work at Santa’s grotto?

Many employment sectors rely upon seasonal labour to meet the changing demands of the job, and, with the possible exception of working as an elf at Christmas time, there’s nothing as reliable as seasonal outside work in the visitor attraction trade. Despite endless marketing promoting the likes of ‘Scumlington – a great break for all the family all year round!’ it’s always been true that a sunny summer weekend during the school holidays can have even the smallest visitor attraction packed out, whilst the same place is deserted on a Monday morning just a few months later.

To cope with this seasonality most countryside services and country parks rely heavily upon seasonal workers. Although much conservation work is best done in the winter, there is always more work in the summer than can justify full-time staff all year round. Some of this is unskilled work, some quite the opposite. Car parking, litter clearance, education work, catering and event management are all highly seasonal. Education, in particular, is important, as it can, in the few weeks of the summer term, bring in enough money to support the park for much of the rest of the year. Most schools like the summer term, bring in enough money to support the particular park or record of achievement.

Volunteering is an ideal way to gain experience and find out what conservation is all about.

Seasonal and part time work can be a great opportunity to get into some exciting events! Event management is a high-pressure, job which can offer short-term employment, good wages, and the chance to get into some exciting events!

Seasonal and part time work is a great opportunity to get experience of a new type of work and improve your CV. Many full-time staff started off as seasonal, voluntary or part-time, building experience and networking, whilst finding out about the countryside sector from the inside.

Matthew Chatfield, Editor www.naturenet.net

About a career in conservation volunteering

Volunteering is an ideal way to gain experience and find out what conservation is all about.

If you are thinking of a career in conservation, it is invaluable to have some experience to put on your CV or record of achievement. Volunteering gives you this, as well as helping to build your confidence, enhance your knowledge and develop professional skills.

Here are some of the benefits:

- Experience - try out a wide variety of conservation work to get broad experience - it will help you decide which aspect of conservation you want to go into.
- Knowledge - learn about conservation by spending time with like-minded people and professional conservationists.
- Insight - find out what working in conservation is really like. You might find it’s not for you after all! Whatever you discover, it’s bound to help your future decision-making.
- Employment prospects - whether you are applying for a job or a place at university, voluntary work is something very positive to have on your personal record of achievement, CV or application form, as it shows commitment.
- Contacts - if an organisation knows how enthusiastic and capable you are, the word soon gets around. Use the grapevine to your advantage.
- Commitment - getting involved as a volunteer is one of the best ways to show that you are serious about working in conservation.
- Contributing - many organisations, including the RSPB, depend on volunteers. Your efforts will be of real benefit to wildlife and the environment.
- Fun! - whether your time on a reserve is a working holiday, helping in your spare time, or a longer-term placement, you’ll have a great time as a volunteer.

Source: RSPB Volunteering Development

For More information please email: volunteers@rspb.org.uk or call: 01767 692341

Qualifications v Experience

Your very first full-time job in this field is often difficult to find. There are an awful lot of other people, just like you, chasing a limited number of jobs. So how can you improve your chances of being one of the successful ones? Read on!

Then consider the poor employer. They also have a difficult task, deciding which half dozen applicants to invite for interview. How can they possibly decide which to select from lots of remarkably similar application forms? Only by selecting those few individuals who appear to meet all of the job requirements. In other words, those applicants who are both qualified and experienced – and therein lies the dilemma:

If you are busy getting your qualifications, then how do you get the experience?

The solution found by very many of today’s countryside and conservation professionals is to spend some time as a volunteer. This could be as a voluntary ranger working at a local park or nature reserve at weekends, or as a longer term volunteer for a block of several months. Most voluntary positions are unpaid but some do provide basic accommodation and a few may provide expenses. What all these positions do provide is real, live, indispensable, hands-on...
Do you have a green dream?
Finding it difficult to see the wood from the trees?
Do you dream to be working for environmental organisations? My Green Dream will help you connect with individuals already working in the field of conservation. This is your chance to have a Mentor who will guide you through the trials of entering into the world of conservation.
www.mygreendream.co.uk

Blue Ventures is an award winning not-for-profit organisation dedicated to facilitating projects and expeditions that enhance global marine conservation and research. Blue Ventures continues to offer opportunities and field experiences to people wanting to become actively involved in marine conservation.

Scottish Wildlife Trust
We offer training and work experience on our wildlife reserves under NEW DEAL / TRAINING FOR WORK. Lantra skills certificates offered in Chainsaw, brushcutter, treeplanting, footpath construction, post and wire fencing amongst others. Government eligibility rules apply. For more information email pgilbert@swt.org.uk.

Northern Ireland:
VSO is an international development charity working through volunteers. Alongside local partners, we aim to encourage more sustainable methods to help disadvantaged people make a viable living and look to the future. Visit www.vso.org.uk/environmentjobs/ to find out if you have the skills to change lives and make this difference...

The National Trust
Is Europe's largest conservation charity which relies on the support of volunteers to carry out its vital work. The National Trust welcomes volunteers of all ages from all walks of life. For further information email volunteers@nationaltrust.org.uk or call 0870 609 5383

Volunteering will also speak volumes about your level of dedication, too. An application form will not only show that you are one of the few who has both qualifications and experience, but your volunteering will also speak volumes about your level of dedication, too.

The downside, of course, is that too many dedicated applicants chasing too few jobs will tend to reduce the pay levels for all concerned and this is a lively topic on our website's Discussion Board. Visit www.countryside-jobs.com for more.

Niall Carson, CJS.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park
Volunteer Programme offers a variety of Volunteering Opportunities. Come and get involved in activities such as Practical Conservation Tasks, Wildlife Surveys, Interpretation and Events. To find out more get in touch with Zoe Morris, Volunteer Development Officer, Tel: 01389 722600 or email zoe.morris@lochlomond-trossachs.org.

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Northern Ireland:
England – Midlands

Conservation Projects Volunteer Officer
Work alongside BTCV staff on all aspects of practical conservation work.
Gain valuable practical skills, knowledge of relevant health & safety, experience of project planning & management and accredited training in first aid, leadership & minibus driving. BUT Enthusiasm more important than experience, ideally you will be resident in Northamptonshire or be prepared to relocate. Driving licence held for 2+ years and over 21 (for minibus driving insurance requirements) desirable.

Community Projects Volunteer Officer
To promote & actively involve local community groups in practical action to improve their local environment. Organise & lead practical activities; support & encourage local groups & school groups;

England – Anglia

Broads Authority Seasonal Vacancies (March - October 2005). Volunteer opportunities also available. For further details and an application form please visit our website www.broads-authority.gov.uk or telephone (01603) 610734.

Conservation Volunteers - BSE/Haverhill, Suffolk:
We are running several conservation projects on a number of sites. We provide training, tools and protective gear. Bring a packed lunch and wear suitable clothing. You will need to be reasonably fit. No minimum commitment is required. Contact the Park Rangers (01284 763666). Email: anna.valdiserri@stedsbc.gov.uk.

Volunteer Park Rangers - Suffolk: Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Activities include practical conservation, patrols and events. No qualifications required, just a keen interest in the countryside, a willingness to get involved and reasonable fitness. We provide training, tools and protective gear. Contact the Park Rangers (01284 763666). Email: anna.valdiserri@stedsbc.gov.uk.
BTCV Volunteer Officer Programme

BTCV turns global environmental ideals into local ideas. Our vision is a better environment, where people are valued, included and involved. Each year we successfully deliver thousands of projects and activities across the UK and in dozens of countries across the world.

BTCV is the UK’s leading charity working with people to bring about positive environmental change. Across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, BTCV helps 130,000 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds take practical action to improve their own environments.

Our work inspires people of today who will be the policy-makers of tomorrow. Many former volunteers and staff are now influential decision-makers in local, regional, national and international organisations. We look to them to support our approach and promote environmental volunteering as an essential part of active citizenship.

The Volunteer Officer programme brings you into the organisation and gives you experience of organising real projects. Each VO when accepted has an individual plan for learning and a manager to support their development. VO’s are involved in many aspects of BTCV work. Working alongside professional staff in partnership with many other environmental sector organisations.

Some typical roles and opportunities are:

**Project Leadership:** Can you manage a group of volunteers to carry out a practical conservation project? Cover all the topics through a programme of training and experience: Leading people, organising a project safely, training and education, volunteer welfare, dealing with the public and media. Project leadership is core to many of BTCV’s roles and develops from day projects, to residentials, our green gym projects, community projects and international projects.

**Project Organisation:** Can you set up a project? Cover all the topics through working on real sites: Conservation practice, risk assessment, negotiation, design, costing and fundraising.

**Project Management:** Every project requires the right information to be recorded and reported to funders/stakeholders etc. Planning, budgeting and reviewing.

**Publicity and PR:** Working in a low budget sector can you raise the profile of your project? Profile is needed for funders, to attract volunteers, and engage the community. Convince journalists to report your story, experience radio and TV interviews.

**Practical skills:** Can you lay hedges, build drystone walls and fences, repair footpaths, build bridges, fell and plant trees, build and restore ponds.

**Community involvement:** Can you engage with people to involve them in a conservation project? Reach out to disaffected young people, people with special needs, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities, people who have been socially excluded. Involve them in a local community project where they can affect their own environment.

**Community development:** Can you develop a group of individuals with a specific issue into an independent sustainable group? Learn how to facilitate change in people, to support but not smother, to empower in a real way.

**Training people:** Can you organise and deliver a range of training courses? Learn how to organise a programme of courses, deal with bookings, venues, and events. Assist with the delivery of suitable topics.

Not all roles and opportunities are available at all offices, since you will be working on real projects; it will depend on what is ongoing at any moment in time in your chosen location and the specialist skills of your manager.

We have no age restriction on our VO programme, being computer literate and able to drive can help in some roles. Agreed training and participation is free on all activities including international activities.
Training is delivered by the BTCV Institute for Environmental Conservation; these assessed, certificated, quality assured courses build into units of nationally accredited qualifications.

Joining BTCV as a Volunteer Officer will help you develop important skills which will increase your confidence and make you more readily employable. At the same time you will develop a good understanding of environmental issues and of the techniques involved in practical conservation.

In the year 2004 – BTCV managed 376 VO’s. 83% went on to further education or employment, of those 50% to an environmental job of those BTCV recruited 19%.

Look at the BTCV website [http://www.btcv.org/jobboard/jobboard.html](http://www.btcv.org/jobboard/jobboard.html) for the latest opportunities

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**Seasonal Access Ranger**

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

6 month contract £13,737 to £15,675 (with possible progression to £18,450)
Salary includes a supplement for weekend working  Based at appropriate regional base

We are looking to recruit three full time and one part time Seasonal Rangers, to join the existing National Park ranger service. The part time post is on a job share basis.

You need to be enthusiastic and adaptable, have experience in Countryside Management and a good knowledge of access issues. The ability to work on your own initiative, to meet targets and produce high quality work is essential. You will be required to carry out a range of practical countryside skills and be able to provide information and guidance to the public relating to the use of open access land and public rights of way. The role will include undertaking specific duties relating to the implementation of open access through the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

A qualification in Countryside Management and knowledge of CROW legislation is desirable. A full driving licence is required and applicants should be IT literate.

This post is subject to a CRB Disclosure.

For information pack and application form please contact Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yorebridge House, Bainbridge, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 3EE. Tel 01969 650456  Closing date: 16th March 2005 (noon)

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**BTCV South Manchester Conservation Volunteers**

Volunteering and Training days each week Tuesday - Thursday Meet 9.30am by coach station in Chorlton St, Central Manchester Bring packed lunch and warm clothes. Tea and coffee provided. Back by 5.00pm Wide variety of tasks.

More information: Katie Lowry 07740 899539  s.manchester@btcv.org.uk

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**Education Voluntary Officers**

Help develop & deliver the environmental education projects. The audience is varied from young children in schools & out of schoolclubs to community gps wanting to develop environmental projects in their areas. CRB check required.

**Practical Conservation Voluntary Officers**

Learn how to plan & deliver conservation projects for vols, learning many conservation skills such as woodland management & pond construction. NVQ Level 2 in Environmental Conservation available.  Both: Do you enjoy & appreciate the environment? Do you have a desire to help others to enjoy it too? All Voluntary Officers develop many skills incl: leadership, project planning, risk assessment, fundraising & administration. Training is provided in areas such as First Aid at Work & MIDAS Minibus driving (must be over 21 years &
England – South

REF 1086/7-DIRECT-28/2 LOC RUNNEYMEDE, SURREY
BE 4 25/2/05 JOB NATIONAL TRUST PAY DES

Warden / Visitor Services Assistant


Seasonal Countryside Visitor Services Assistant £6.57 per hour Join dedicated team, gaining experience in visitor management & membership recruitment. Working 2 / 3 days per week, Easter to Sept. To meet the challenge of recruiting new members, operating from a reception trailer in Runnymede car park. BUT Good communicator, enthusiastic & able to give information about property. Some selling experience an advantage but full training given. IV/3/3/05.

Both: \ Must be willing to work weekends & bank holidays. ASK Large SAE to: The National Trust, North Lodge, Windsor Road, Old Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2JL 01784 432891 Fax: 479007 runnymede@nationaltrust.org.uk

Arundel Wetlands Centre seeks volunteer to question visitors entering & leaving for answers to a market research questionnaire. This will help us understand more about our visitors. No set times or days: most of the time you will be outdoors. Phone Geoff Squire 01903 881524 for more details and Volunteer Pack

REF VOL-DIRECT21/3 JOB WEST WEALD WOODS PROJECT ASSISTANT
BE 4 ? PAY 0

BTV Volunteer Officer Swindon Contact: Ben Rawlings 01793 430700
BTV Volunteer Officer Salisbury Contact: Jon Rich 01722 417601 Both: Work along BTV staff & be given the opportunity to learn practical conservation skills & gain experience in project management, vol leadership, client liaison & youth work. Responsibilities: leading & supervising vols; attending site visits & preparing site visit reports & risk assessments, liaising with clients & land owners & general office & tool store work. Free training provided incl: First Aid, Health & Safety, leadership skills & practical conservation skills. Will be asked to commit approx 2 dpw, have a genuine interest in the environment & be good team member with good communication skills. Pref 21+ years & have held clean driving licence for 2+ year’s.

Do you want to join a friendly team of volunteer conservationists involved in nature conservation projects and wildlife habitat management?

There are volunteering opportunities with BTCV Waltham Forest. If your goals include leading conservation projects, helping community groups or you just want to get your hands dirty, we have many interesting and worthwhile projects and environmental events coming up in 2005 (Year of the volunteer). Become a regular volunteer, meet like-minded people and learn conservation skills. It will be possible to develop, take on more responsibility and become a Volunteer Officer, which is a proven stepping-stone into paid environmental work. You can take advantage of the many free training courses available, including leading conservation projects, minibus driving skills, wildlife identification, pond creation and woodland management. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. No previous experience necessary, just a love of the natural world, a good sense of humour and a pair of sturdy boots.

For an activities programme or more information, contact: M.Blaxall@btcv.org.uk

Mark Blaxall, BTCV Project Officer, Lee Valley / Waltham Forest, 1 Connaught Close, Leyton, London E10 7QS, Tel: 020 8986 7173

REF VOL-DIRECT-21/3 JOB DEDICATED VOLUNTEER
BE 4 ? LOC OXFORD AREA PAY 0

DEDICATED VOLUNTEER

From late March to assist with pre- and post-re-introduction monitoring of water voles. This exciting new study will look at health & welfare implications of re-introducing captive-bred animals to the wild. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to observe first-hand techniques being used to health-screen & measure stress levels in rare species. All animals will be routinely anaesthetised, with basic biological samples being collected. BUT Ideally, enthusiastic, robust, energetic & committed. Able to carry out fieldwork as part of small, close-knit team also
Volunteering can be a great way to learn new skills and kick start your career.

At the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) there are countless opportunities to get involved in our work whether you want a casual arrangement or something more permanent. If you are looking to get full-time paid work in conservation and can spare three or four days a week, you could become a conservation trainee with BBOWT. You will get to meet new people from a range of backgrounds, experience new situations and gain many useful skills.

The tasks involved are varied and are all focused on giving you the experience needed to go forward in your career. As a conservation trainee you will have the chance to work on practical jobs such as vegetation control, livestock handling, installing fencing, maintaining public access and undertaking species surveys. On top of this, you will learn management skills such as leadership and communication, and grow in confidence.

BBOWT can offer you training in habitat management, brushcutter and chainsaw use, driving and maintaining a Land Rover, first aid, species surveys and monitoring, site management plan development, and pesticide application. The longer you stay the more you will learn. Working with BBOWT opens many doors for volunteers. Former conservation trainees are working across the three counties as reserve officers, summer wardens and on specific conservation projects as well as in similar posts with other Wildlife Trusts in the UK. To top off your volunteering, BBOWT have created new fixed term, paid posts ideal for experienced conservation trainees. Of the four new posts, three are trainee community reserve wardens working at Warburg, College Lake and Woolley Firs Nature Reserves. These posts are focused on improving visitor and volunteer involvement and enjoyment of the reserves whilst furthering conservation management skills. The fourth post is based at Sutton Courtenay Environmental Education Centre and involves delivering and developing the Centre’s environmental education programme aimed at school children. Alongside looking at how to open up the centre to new visitors and audiences. All four posts are on a one year fixed term contract.

If you can spare one day a week, you can join in one of the midweek teams or a work party on a specific reserve. You can be out on the reserves doing many of the practical tasks of a conservation trainee. BBOWT will give you training for the tasks you are involved in and provide personal safety equipment.

On a more ad-hoc basis, or if you are not sure if conservation work is for you, there are lots of short term volunteering opportunities. You can check on our livestock on reserves, take part in summer surveys, monitor water vole levels, help out in the offices or work with local groups on fundraising across all three counties.

With over 90 nature reserves, acres of countryside and miles of watercourses to survey, and two offices to look after, whatever your skills there will be an opening at BBOWT to suit you. For more information visit the website at www.bbowt.org.uk or call 01865 775475.
A Volunteer's Perspective: A year out in Lake Vyrnwy - Klare Sanderson

To stand on the dam and look over the lake, which is surrounded by heather moors, oak woodlands and conifer plantations, set against the backdrop of the Berwyn Mountains is really very picturesque and I certainly never got tired of the view during my 9-month stay. Consequently, I felt very fortunate to become a long-term volunteer at Lake Vyrnwy reserve, which was part of my HND in Countryside Conservation. My placement started in November and I became involved with various projects, including drying seed for the heather restoration project, as well as cutting conifers down from the moors. The moorland is an important part of the reserve and is part of the Berwyn Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due to it being such valuable habitat for moorland birds like the hen harrier in upland Wales. Some of the heather has been lost due to intensive farming methods and the restoration project is trying to rectify the situation. In my first few months, I was also sent on numerous training courses including 4x4 vehicles, ATV and chain saw. These courses as well being lots of fun necessarily prepared me for confidently using the various machines at the reserve.

Winter work
After Christmas, I was responsible for cleaning and repairing over 300 nest boxes ready for the spring. These were hopefully to be used by the breeding migrants like pied flycatchers and redstarts as well as other resident birds. One major benefit has been picking up information from an excellent team with such a great knowledge of natural history. By the end of March, we had opened two new trails and planted over 600 trees as part of the hedgerow restoration programme. Other winter jobs were fencing, hedge-laying and hide maintenance.

Spring surveys
From April onwards I began field vole, crow and fox surveys. These were a real treat for me as it meant I spent a lot of the time up on the moors with the stunning views of the Berwyns and Snowdonia. It involved lots of walking through heather and bilberry as well as getting to see meadow pipits, short-eared owls and hen harriers! Throughout spring, I helped the wardens with numerous bird surveys including black grouse and golden plovers and then in the summer helping the warden with nest protection watch. A fantastic opportunity to gain vol management & people skills. Help with the work of National Trust & RSPB. Free accom within walking distance of site. BUT Good knowledge of birds, especially peregrines, outgoing personality with lots of enthusiasm, tact & diplomacy. Previous quad bike training desirable but not essential. ASK

Kirsty Bourton, Buddens Farm, Puddletown Road, Hyde, nr Wareham BH20 7NU 01929 472226 K.Bourton@btcv.org.uk

Please remember to double check the BE4 (closing date) of the vacancies. And - contact only the number or address given - or you may annoy the personnel officer who will decide your future.
**KEY NB:**

**REF** CJS reference no.  | **JOB** Title
---|---
**BE4** 'Before' deadline for applications. **IV** = Interview date. | **LOC** Location
**PAY** £ range - usually per annum (but check starting point) | **FOR** Employer
**DES** Description of Job  | **BUT** But they want ...  | **ASK** Ask for Details /Application Form from ...

**BUT:** Please check the BUT section to ensure that you have all of the required qualifications / experience before you apply.

**ASK:** Contact ONLY the number or address given – or you may annoy the Personnel Officer who will decide your future...

| Asst | esp | Direct | env | env | esp | rel | org | incl | info | IV | pref | SAE | SAE | temp | vol | wb | 2+years’ | p/t |
|------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|-----|
| assis/t/ant | especi/ally | sent direct to CJS | = environ/ment | equiv | equi/valent | = interview | = organisation | = include | = information | = interview | = preferably | = stamped self-addressed envelope | = horticulture | = certificate | = temporary | = volunteer | = week beginning | = 2 or more years | = part-time |
| c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c | c |

? = no info/unclear  | [yes] = yes that is what it says