

Western Downs

Practical Conservation Volunteer

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is looking for volunteers to assist with practical conservation tasks in a variety of different habitats (woodland, chalk grassland, heathland, and freshwater). This is a fantastic opportunity to work across the landscape, in an area stretching from Winchester in the west, to Petersfield in the east. An area vast in its biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage.

Role Description:

Our volunteering schedule is very varied, and includes tasks such as:

- Coppicing
- Scrub clearance
- Tree popping
- Invasive species management
- Hedge laying
- Tree planting
- Meadow cutting/raking
- Community engagement
- Access improvements on the South Downs Way
- Grassland/Meadow scything
- Ecological monitoring

Compulsory Training:

Volunteers will undertake an SDNPA induction, this will provide an overview of SDNPA volunteer policies and procedures, risk assessments, and safe working practices which must be adhered to at all times.

Any other specific training requirements will be met.

Equipment Provided:

Relevant personal protective equipment (PPE) and required tools are provided.

Further volunteer clothing will be issued once three task days have been completed.

However, please get in touch if you have any particular clothing needs to support your attendance on task.

Training Opportunities:

Once established, volunteers have the opportunity to gain the following qualifications:

- Outdoor first aid
- Brushcutter
- Off-road 4x4
- Defensive driver training

The SDNPA also organises hedge laying training, ID courses, and ecological survey training (butterflies, birds, ground flora) as per the requirements of the role.

Transport:

Access to own vehicle is preferable, but not required. Volunteers meet either at the task site, or at Wallops Wood. Pickups from public transport links are offered when operationally viable.



Responsible to:

- Assistant Rangers and Rangers.
- Volunteer Support Officer.

Commitment:

We ask for a commitment of at least 10 days a year (This is less for weekend-only volunteers, as our weekend tasks are only once a month). This allows you to make the most of your volunteering experience and also makes best use of our time and resource investment into volunteers.

Key Skills & Qualities:

- Friendly, reliable and self-sufficient
- Ability to treat everyone with dignity and respect, including other volunteers, SDNPA staff and members of the public.
- Willingness to work with/support staff and volunteers as part of a team
- Ability to adhere to all SDNPA volunteering policies and procedures
- Willing to accept direction/guidance

No previous knowledge or experience is required, just an enthusiasm to learn new skills & a commitment to improving nature and access within the National Park.

