



Job Description

Job title:	Peatland Officer
Salary:	Salary £27,325 - £32,145 Access to employer's contributory pension scheme - maximum 5% per annum.
Hours:	Full-time hours – 37.5 hours per week.
Location:	Hybrid working/Ulster Farmers Union office. There will be occasional travel throughout the UK and Ireland.
Contract:	Contract ends on 31 March 2028.
Leave:	25 days (pro rata) per annum plus statutory holidays
Reporting to:	Policy, Technical and Communications Manager

Purpose

The Peatland Officer is a new post within the Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU). The role is being introduced to help raise awareness of the value of peatlands, its importance within Northern Ireland's net zero journey and its role in biodiversity.

The Peatland Officer role will work in the UFU to raise awareness of the need for peatland restoration/enhancement as part of sustainable farm businesses. Managing peatland to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions can have positive benefits including reducing the farm carbon footprint, increasing biodiversity, and helping to alleviate flooding. Many factors can affect the condition of peatlands such as historic drainage, extreme weather conditions over a prolonged period causing erosion, lack of resources to shepherd livestock, and the need for a sustainable stocking density. This role will involve working with a range of stakeholders, but principally focus on landowners and farmers who own or manage peatlands and peat soils. The post will help the industry understand the role of peatlands within the farmed landscape and the need for sensitive management for climate and biodiversity including the importance of restoration/enhancement where required to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and promote opportunities for farmers. They will also work with the horticulture sector in relation to peat-free alternatives. The workplan for the Peatland Officer will be developed and agreed upon with a small group of key stakeholders who will also contribute time and expertise to support the post holder.



Key responsibilities

- Working with farmers to raise awareness of the value of and opportunities associated with sustainable peatland management.
- Develop and deliver a communication plan to raise awareness of the value of peatlands and the need for restoration/enhancement for climate and biodiversity and to enhance the carbon footprint of the farm
- Help to identify and communicate best practices about sustainable management of peatlands and increase awareness of new agri-environment schemes when available.
- Provide a signposting/referral service for farmers considering peatland restoration/enhancement and/or participation in agri-environment schemes.
- Identify farmer/landowner concerns and attitudes concerning peatland restoration and peatland options in agri-environment schemes to help inform policy/delivery within DAERA.
- Identify research and development needs with the management of peatlands on farm land.
- Develop a programme of farm walks /knowledge exchange visits for farmers in partnership with Ulster Wildlife (UW) and College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) where appropriate.
- Contribute to researching and assessing the viability of peat-free alternatives for the horticultural industry & supporting the relevant UFU Committees and members in exploring the options.
- Assist UW team with landowner engagement where peatland restoration/enhancement is a priority providing independent advice on issues such as design considerations for peatland restoration to achieve a positive outcome also integrating with farming activities, and carbon insetting for the farm business to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Build an understanding of the role of peatlands in reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Help to identify and communicate best practice about sensitive management, achieve sustainable grazing levels, and increase awareness of new agri-environment schemes when available.
- Identify research and development needs in relation to peatlands on farms.
- Assist with reporting and claims processes to project funders.

No job description can cover every issue that may arise and subsequently, the post holder may be expected to carry out other duties with those itemised above.



Person Specification

The Peatland Officer will be educated to a third level in an agriculture or environmental discipline and be experienced in stakeholder management. The post holder will have experience liaising with various stakeholders to deliver projects, and working within project teams, supporting delivery of outputs on time and within budget. The post holder will be proficient in Microsoft Office with good all-round communication and organisational skills including writing documents and action plans.

Essential Criteria

1. Third level qualification in a relevant subject and at least 1 year's relevant full-time experience (or equivalent part-time experience) **OR** 3 years relevant full-time experience (or equivalent part-time experience).
2. Knowledge of Northern Ireland agriculture and land use, particularly on peatlands and/or peat soils
3. Knowledge and understanding of NI's biodiversity and the management requirements associated with designated sites.
4. Demonstrable experience of building & maintaining effective relationships with stakeholders.
5. Ability to communicate effectively, both written and verbally – effective presentation, report writing & the ability to converse with a diverse range of people at all levels.
6. Effective organisational skills including the ability to plan, manage and prioritise workloads to meet deadlines, plan and organise meetings and events.
7. High level of computer literacy with a good knowledge of Microsoft Office software.
8. Willingness and ability to work during the evening and at weekends where required.
9. Access to transport for business purposes to allow the post holder to carry out the full requirements of the role.

This post is part of the Peatlands Collaborative Technical Network and supported by the DAERA Environment Fund and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation in conjunction with the Ulster Wildlife Trust.