

MAKING PLACES GREENER

Biodiversity officer



Biodiversity officers are passionate about green spaces. Their job is to protect and enhance the local natural environment, and to get the public involved too. They do this by working with the Environment Agency and others groups like wildlife trusts. It's an outdoorsy life, which involves leading walks and doing fieldwork. You'll also be expected to give talks and head up discussions, so you'd better not be shy. You'll want a relevant degree or HND, and you'll need to know about geographical information systems. If you can get experience, all the better. Try your local Groundwork Trust or any organisation linked to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

Degree needed

Degrees in environmental, life and urban and land studies are relevant to this role. HNDs in similar areas or in land or estate management represent an alternative route, but employers will probably require experience as well.

Master's level qualifications are taught at certain universities, enabling students to build on their academic knowledge and also to gain practical experience.

The Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management is the professional body which represents ecologists in the UK and abroad. The institute works to develop competency and the professional standards of ecologists, and promotes ecology and environmental management as a profession.

Good courses

- BSc (Hons) Environmental Management (University of Wales, Bangor)
- BSc Environmental Geography (University of York)
- BSc/BA combined honours Environmental Science (Ecology) (Oxford Brookes University)
- MRes Ecology and Environmental Management (University of York)
- MSc in Ecology and Management of the Natural Environment (University of Bristol)



Ben Tongue at work
Health Environment Manager, University of Bradford



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Facts and figures

Starting salary

Approximately £20,000, rising to £30,000.

Working hours

Generally 9am to 5pm.

Days' holiday per year

On average 25 days per year.

Skills and experience

Knowledge of geographical information systems, strong IT skills and administrative abilities are essential.

Would suit

Someone committed to the ideas and principles of sustainable development.

Likely employer types

- Local government and statutory agencies including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), English Nature, Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency
- Non governmental organisations such as The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and Wildlife Trusts
- Consultancy
- Industry
- Media and public relations
- Teaching and research

How many jobs available?

There is anecdotal evidence that demand is growing for people in this type of role as a result of steadily increasing environmental regulation.



Meet the expert
Ben Tongue,
University of Bradford

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Did you know?

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers is in the middle of a three-year campaign to increase the amount of work it does with under-represented communities, such as black and minority ethnic groups.

Number of people employed in this field

Since it was established in 1991 the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management has amassed around 3,000 members working in national and local government, industry, non-governmental organisations, teaching and environmental consultancy.

More information

- The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers is a useful starting point for individuals keen to build up experience in an environment-related career www.btcv.org.uk
- Groundwork Trusts work with communities throughout the UK to improve quality of life and the environment www.groundwork.org.uk
- www.eco-uk.com is a recruitment agency aimed specifically at those looking for a job in an environment-related career.

"I love being outdoors and getting people involved. Everyone finds they love it too. Green spaces really cheer people up. Imagine how bland the place would be without us."