ORGANISATION AND ROLE OUTLINE

The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) is an environmental charity dedicated to achieving healthy river ecosystems for all across the South East of England. The Trust’s mission is to deliver outstanding river ecosystem enhancement through science-based action, collaboration, education and engagement.

SERT is a member of the national Rivers Trust, and is part of the rivers trust movement which is comprised of over 60 local trusts that are described as having ‘wet feet’ because they concentrate their efforts on practical environmental enhancement works on the ground. The Trust’s core values are central to all we strive to achieve, including bringing positive energy, expertise and specialist knowledge to develop good relationships and to deliver to a high standard making a real difference to rivers and their catchment areas.

The Water Resources Lead is an exciting new position leading the Trust’s work to address water scarcity issues. The role will bring together businesses, communities and partners to develop a common understanding of water resource challenges and support actions to deliver more sustainable and resilient water resources across the region for the benefit of both people and the environment.

The Trust is currently growing and is developing a new Water and Land Stewardship Team, which this position will be part of. You will contribute to the development of this team and provide an interim team lead.

Initially the role will involve direct line management of one member of staff and will also work with and manage colleagues who will contribute to delivering different elements of the projects involved. A key element of the post will be to bring in additional funding to continue the role and ideally to recruit and manage further staff.

The Trust’s office (in Carshalton, SM5) has closed due to Covid and is not expected to re-open. Consequently it will be relocated within a central part of the SERT area. It is expected that the position will primarily be home-based, with travel across the SERT area, and so you will need to be able to provide a suitable home working environment.

We are looking for a suitably experienced person with a good understanding of the needs and water use of different sectors, particularly the water industry and the food and drink supply chain. The position will suit someone with strong leadership and organisational skills, as well as a good communicator who enjoys participating in and leading a team.
You will lead on water resource related issues for the Trust developing and overseeing the delivery of projects which help to tackle water scarcity issues in the South East (SERT area). You will lead the Trust’s current primary project on water resource issues, engaging with water companies and regulators, and lead the ‘Water for All’ project, which works with businesses and communities in the South East to help them understand where their water comes from, decrease their water use, and support them in delivering actions to contribute to a more sustainable future for water in the environment. You will be responsible for developing new project and funding opportunities for the Trust including grant applications and establishing partnership projects, including those adopting a payment for ecosystem service approach.

The Water for All project is already underway, carried out by SERT staff. You will oversee, and expand the impact of the project and bring it to the successful conclusion of its first phase in autumn 2023. During this time you will develop future phases for the Water for All Project with associated funding streams which will enable the various elements of the project to continue and expand so that its impact is sustained and the project has a lasting legacy.

The Water for All project covers four workstreams:

1. Working with partners in our Catchment Partnerships to develop a natural capital approach to map water-derived ecosystem services in at least five river catchment areas. This will provide an evidence base to inform and direct measures and actions to address water scarcity, which will be delivered through the project, as well as informing future delivery by other organisations and the development of future projects. Development of this natural capital approach is already underway with two Catchment Partnerships and your role will be to oversee its continuation and rollout to other catchments with the SERT team.

2. Working with businesses to deliver measures to conserve and make better use of water. The primary activity undertaken under this area is the development of the Holistic Water for Horticulture project which you will oversee. The project is working towards more sustainable water use in the fruit sector in Kent and involves Kent County Council, water companies, retailers (supermarkets), growers and producer organisations (www.holisticwaterforhorticulture.org/). The project is backed by Signatories of the Courtauld 2025 Water Ambition (https://bit.ly/2MPoONN) and is one of four Collective Action projects in the UK aiming to improve the quality and availability of water in key sourcing areas for food and drink. There is the potential to expand this workstream either extending it to other farm businesses within the food and drink sector or by working with different types of business, should you see a demand.

3. Working with communities including residents, schools, gardeners and allotment holders, facilitating them to make their own difference by providing them with the knowledge of where their water comes from and the resources and support to deliver improvements to the water environment (e.g. low flow valves, rain gardens, water butts) and monitor them (e.g. with ‘Smart’ meters). Some work has already been delivered in this area but you will significantly expand its reach and impact, through a combination of overseeing others in their delivery of outputs, and leading work yourself.

4. Working with water companies. Water companies supply up to 90% of the water used in the SERT area and so influencing their actions has the potential to make a widespread difference. The role will build on the significant amount of work that has been undertaken in this area during the PR19 process in preparation for the current round of water company business plans. You will support staff in their engagement with Water Resources South East and the preparation of water company Water Resource Management Plans. Under this workstream you will also engage with the EU Interreg 2 Seas European Regional Development Funded PROWATER project (https://www.southeasterrivertrust.org/prowater/) which works with water companies to
establish a payment for ecosystem services model that would fund effective landscape and natural capital enhancements to support improved sustainability of water resources.

Finally, you will work with and support the SERT Catchment Officers who host catchment partnerships (https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/about/) to identify, develop and secure funding streams for projects which address water scarcity and enhance the resilience of the water environment.

The position will be within the new and establishing Water and Land Stewardship Team. You will contribute to the development of this Team, which will initially comprise staff working on water resource related projects and so you will provide the interim lead for the Team. As the Trust grows, the Team will include other water and land stewardship topics, e.g. natural flood management, farm advice and water quality enhancement. The Team will have a focus on delivering nature based solutions funded through Payment for Ecosystem Service mechanisms. For the right candidate, there is the potential to grow into being the lead for this wider Team.

**KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Lead on Water Resources for the Trust**

- Keep up-to-date on relevant policy and initiatives, leading opportunities for the Trust to make a real difference in addressing water scarcity.
- Provide the principal point of contact on water resources issues for water companies, regulators and water planners – including regional water resources planning groups.
- Develop projects and funding streams which will enhance water resources and sustainability of the water environment.
- Maintain and develop relationships with external organisations and work closely with partners in creating and achieving goals to support a more sustainable water environment.
- Support Catchment Officers and their Catchment Partnerships in identifying water resource issues and developing actions that will help address them.
- Oversee and support staff working on water resource projects.
- Responsible for good project planning and management.
- Ensure a good reputation for the Trust on water resources, including raising awareness of issues and promoting the Trust’s work.
- Any other duties as appropriate to the position.

**Lead the Water for All Project**

- Strategically lead the project to ensure project targets and outcomes are met for all workstreams and the impact of the project is maximised.
- Oversee and lead SERT staff working on the project supporting them to deliver project outcomes.
- Engage businesses, particularly water companies (which may need to include the water retail sector) and those in the food and drink supply chain, including supermarkets and producer organisations.
- Directly contribute to the delivery of the project where required, e.g. working with water companies, holding public talks, etc.
• Chair the Steering Group for the Holistic Water for Horticulture project, which is comprised of supermarket retailers, water companies, local authorities, producer organisations and growers.
• Develop future phases for the project beyond December 2023 and secure funding for its continuation.
• Responsible for all project management, budgeting and reporting.

**Contribute to Developing and Establishing the Water and Land Stewardship Team**
• Lead on Water Resources for the Team.
• Contribute to the development of the Team and provide an interim lead as the Team establishes.
• For the right candidate, become the overall lead for the Water and Land Stewardship Team.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**
Please keep these requirements in mind, together with the Trust’s core values, when completing your application. Knowledge, experience, skills and aptitudes will be assessed through the application process and at interview.

**What we need from you:**
• A passion for protecting the water environment.
• A thorough understanding of the drivers and impacts of water scarcity.
• A strong understanding of the needs of different sectors, particularly the water industry and food and drink sector, and how they can influence water in the environment.
• Demonstrable experience of strong organisational, project planning and management skills.
• An ability to lead and to motivate and inspire others.
• An ability to communicate complex environmental issues to a variety of audiences.
• Experience of successfully raising funds to deliver projects.
• A positive attitude and willingness to turn your hand to whatever is required.
• A suitable home working environment.
• A full driving licence and access to private vehicle for occasional work use.
• Right to work in the UK.

**It would also be ideal if you had:**
• A good understanding of natural capital and the nature based solutions that can be used to enhance it.
• Experience of working with the water, food and drink sectors, e.g. water companies, retailers, producer organisations, farmers.
• Experience of successfully line managing staff.
• Experience of successfully creating and managing project teams and staff.
• Experience of successfully managing programmes or projects with multiple workstreams.
**CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

**Salary:** £35,000 - £38,000 commensurate with experience and responsibility taken on. A higher salary for exceptional candidates may be considered.

**Contract period:** Initially fixed term to December 2023 (end of Phase 1) but expected to become permanent with continued funding.

**Pension & Life Assurance:** SERT operates a contributory pension scheme through the Rivers Trust and will pay 9% of salary subject to a 6% employee contribution. Life Assurance is included.

**Annual Leave:** Annual leave entitlement is 25 days plus public holidays.

**Hours of work:** The basic working week is 40 hours. Some evening or weekend work may occasionally be required for which time off in lieu can be taken. No overtime will be paid.

**Home working and vehicle:** You must be able to provide an appropriate working environment at home to give full attention to your employment and we would prefer the post-holder to be based in the SERT area, but this is not an absolute requirement. A full driving licence and access to your own transport is required to reach meeting locations which may be inaccessible by public transport.

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**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Please email the following to jobs@southeastriverstrust.org:

- a CV (two pages max.)
- a covering letter (two pages max.) focussing on your relevant knowledge, experience and skills and how they align to the position
- your salary expectation
- when you would be available to start.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Monday 5th April 2021**, with interviews taking place on **Wednesday 21st April 2021**. Please get in touch if you would like to apply and are unable to make this date.

If you would like to discuss the role further, please contact us on the above email.

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**APPLICANT PRIVACY POLICY**

When submitting your application to us, it is important you are aware of what will happen to your personal data after the position is filled. Please download and read our Applicant Privacy Notice from the website.