



Role Descriptions

Midweek Practical Conservation Volunteers

What do practical conservation volunteers do?

Countryside Management Service (CMS) midweek practical conservation volunteers create and restore wildlife habitats and work to improve access to the countryside. Much of this takes place on local authority owned sites as part of long-term management plans.

In the winter months tasks tend to involve habitat management, including hedge planting, clearing ponds or scrub clearance. In the summer months, construction work such as building a path or gate would be a more likely task.

Often the groups assist local Friends of Greenspaces and Parish Paths Partnership (P3) members with practical tasks.

Induction

Prospective volunteers will be asked to attend an induction before starting with CMS. This will entail meeting with a member of staff to discuss what opportunities are available and suitable for the needs of both CMS and the volunteer. Volunteers will be asked to supply any relevant personal information such as related experience or any medical conditions which may impact upon the type of work offered. However, experience is not essential as training is provided on the job. Any additional volunteer support needs will be discussed and where practical, measures will be put in place to address these needs.

Where possible introductory meetings will be held at the appropriate Area Office. This gives the prospective volunteer a chance to learn more about CMS, meet members of staff and other volunteers, and have a brief tour of the base. If this is not possible induction materials will be sent to the volunteer prior to attendance at a practical task. Staff will then set aside time to talk through the induction materials on site.

When?

There are three groups that meet weekly on sites around Hertfordshire:

Day	Group	Working in and around...
Tuesday	Eastern	Bishop's Stortford, Ware, Hertford, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Broxbourne
Wednesday	West & Southern	St Albans, Potters Bar, Borehamwood, Rickmansworth, Hemel, Berkhamsted, Tring
Thursday	Northern	Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston, Buntingford, Stevenage, Welwyn

Details of tasks including times and locations can be found on the CMS website, on the volunteer notice boards, or by contacting the Area Offices. Please note that task information is subject to change. Final details will be confirmed a few days before the task. Volunteers can phone the appropriate Area Office for details within office hours.



What to wear?

Please wear old, protective clothing and sturdy footwear. Protection against the weather such as sun cream, a hat or a waterproof is advisable.

CMS supply protective clothing such as goggles, hard hats, and gloves which must be worn as advised.

At the site

Volunteers are welcome to join the tasks for all or part of a day. Volunteers who are attending a full day should bring a packed lunch. Those who are coming for a half day should inform the group leader when they are leaving. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. Toilet facilities are not usually available.

All volunteers are advised to carry their membership cards issued at induction.

CMS support and benefits

Each volunteer is inducted by a member of staff who will become their point of contact should any problems arise. When out on a task, new volunteers will be paired up with those who are more experienced to provide support.

There are a range of training opportunities for volunteers to further their skills depending on the abilities and interests of the individual and of CMS.

Volunteers can train in leading tasks, first aid, and various habitat management skills, and in turn support and develop new volunteers.

Agreed travel to and from training days can be claimed if volunteers are using public transport or their own vehicle. Practical conservation task leaders may wish to claim their home to work mileage for the days they have been asked to lead tasks. To do this, volunteers must fill in an Expenses Claim form (available on the CMS website or from the area offices) and return it to their appointed member of staff. Valid tickets for public transport or VAT fuel receipts must be attached to the form.

Where a volunteer has shown ongoing commitment to a role, they are eligible to receive a pair of overalls and claim £25 towards the cost of a pair of safety boots.

Social

There are usually plenty of opportunities to mingle and chat with other volunteers. The midweek volunteers have two annual social events, a summer tour and a Christmas task. These are enjoyable get-togethers which usually consist of a guided walk around a local nature reserve, a meal, and a chance for us to thank all the volunteers for their hard work.

The CMS newsletter allows volunteers the opportunity to keep up to date with projects and to find out what else CMS officers have been working on recently.

First aid

The task leader will be trained in first aid. A first aid kit is kept in the vehicle or carried on to the work site. If you do have an accident, however small, or even a near-miss, please let us know so we can keep a record of the incident and ensure appropriate treatment. Recording near-miss incidents helps us to prevent accidents.